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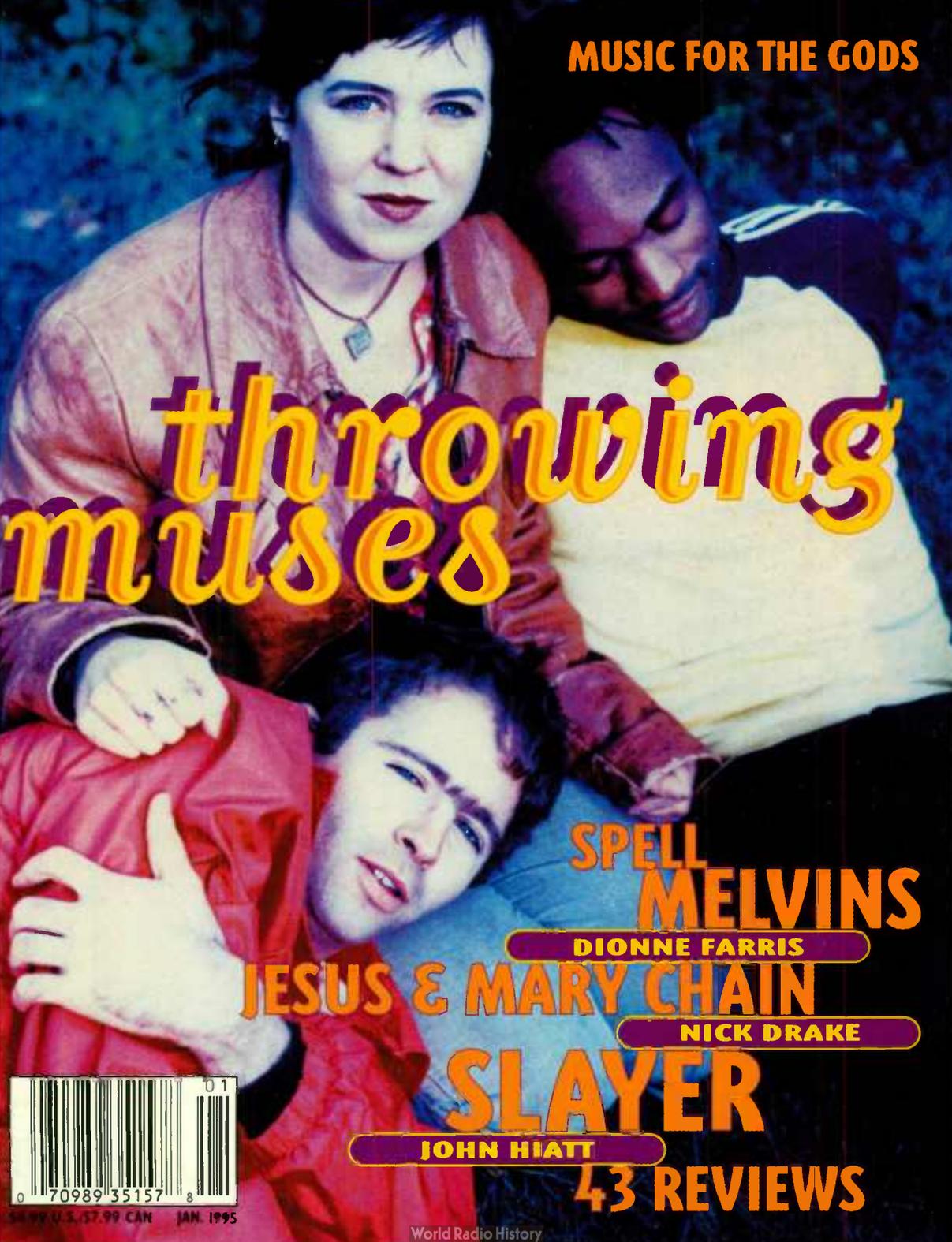
**BEST NEW MUSIC**

**MASSIVE ATTACK**

**THE WOLFGANG PRESS**

**KING CRIMSON**

**MUSIC FOR THE GODS**



# throwing muses

**SPELL  
MELVINS**

**DIONNE FARRIS**

**JESUS & MARY CHAIN**

**NICK DRAKE**

**SLAYER**

**JOHN HIATT**

**43 REVIEWS**



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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A radio interviewer called the other day to ask about backlash against alternative artists that have "made it." I responded that backlash against successful artists is just an everyday part of pop culture and is no way exclusive to alternative music.

Okay, so the radio guy got a good soundbite. How do you feel about it? Is backlash inevitable? Where do you draw the line between mainstream success and alternative sell-out? What do you think when one of your favorite bands suddenly becomes a MTV darling? Let us know, by mail, fax (516-466-7159) or email (cmj@cmjmusic.com).

- As a regular Letters To The Editor feature, the CMJ editors will be posing questions to you, our esteemed readers—this is the "Q" part— as well as answering some of your questions directly.

In reference to the Yo La Tengo tour diary in your November issue: Out of respect for those of us who live (or lived) there, please notify Mr. James McNew that Moorhead is in Minnesota and not Montana as you indicated, and that it is spelled with only one "e" in order to distinguish it from the far scruffier Moorehead, Kentucky. Nitpicking, to be sure, but it isn't often a band of some small renown sets up in the back room of my favorite college dive bar. Also: Yes, it can be very cold there, but it helps to keep the riff-raff away. Remember: "That which does not kill me makes me stronger."

J.F.  
University City, MO

In your newest issue, the Yo La Tengo tour diary has a slight mistake I thought you might want to know about. It is Moorhead, Minnesota and not Moorehead, Montana (which I don't even think exists) that they played at and which is the sister city of Fargo, ND. I was at the bar that night, although I did not pay to go into the back room to see them cuz I could hear them and didn't really feel like spending my money on them. Since that time though, the place has fixed itself up, and now decent bands play there somewhat regularly, like Jon Spencer this coming Monday. OK, enough of my babble, I just wanted to correct you on the town thing anyway, keep up the good work on your nifty magazine.

Phil  
via e-mail

Wow. Two letters for what was probably just a typo on somebody's part. Dedicated readers—take a bow! —ed.

I notice that a lot of the new release dates end up being wrong. Otherwise, you're great.

Scott  
Lahaina, HI

I have recently gotten hooked on your 'zine, but you guys have to check your release dates better! I am a music buyer for a pretty large store and your dates are notoriously wrong, and my customers think that if it's in print it's right!

Doug  
Hanover, NH

Changes in new release dates after we go to press are pretty much unavoidable. We try to make our listings as up-to-date as possible, but there's nothing to stop a record company from pushing a record's release back a few weeks, or months for that matter (some records show up in Just Out two or three months in a row), between the time when we go to press and when the magazine reaches your sweaty little mitts. —ed.

I don't like the On The CD section as well as before you made it a cut-out. How many readers really are buying a CD jewel box to put your CMJ CD into? I would guess not many—therefore, go back to using the full two pages for the info about the CD artists.

Randy  
St. Joseph, MO

Actually, we have gotten a number of positive responses for the new, cut-out version of the On The CD pages, so we are planning to continue this arrangement. Just so you know, we haven't cut down on how much we write about the bands, just the size of the type and pictures. —ed.

r e s p o n s e

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MCA

# QUICK FIX

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

### JOHN HIATT

Liz Phair  
*Whip-Smart*

Neil Young  
*Sleeps With Angels*

Dinosaur Jr  
*Where You Been*

*The Crossing*  
by Cormac McCarthy

Miles Davis  
*The Blue Note Years*

## MELVINS: Sons Of Witches

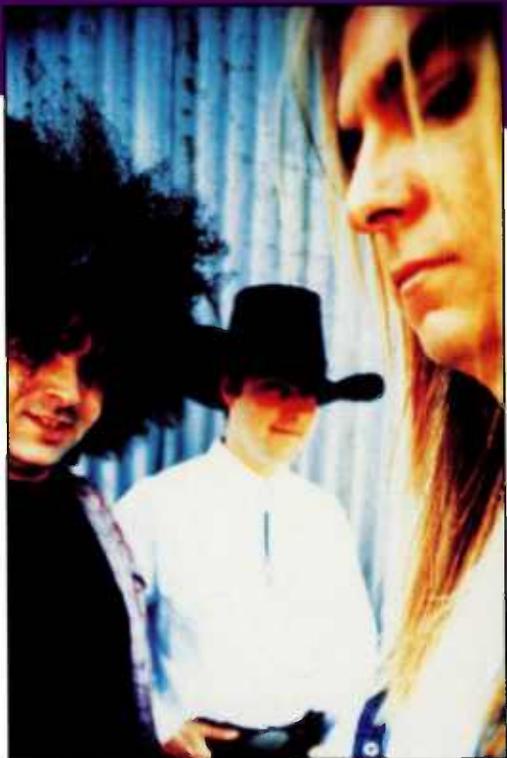


PHOTO BY ANITA LISA

When the Melvins stopped by New York to play their A&R man at Atlantic the material they had come up with for the new album *Stoner Witch*, they brought along two tapes. One, consisting of mastered songs for the record, the other, a deranged, over-distorted mix loaded with bizarre studio effects and absurd noises. After inserting the second cassette into the stereo, drummer Dale Crover hit play, and as a wall of incomprehensible noise phased between the two speakers, a look of nervous confusion crossed the face of their A&R man. "We said, 'Well, what do you think, man?' and he just sort of sat there. And then he said, 'Did you guys do all that stuff on purpose?' We told him we did, and he didn't know what to say. Then we laughed and played him the real thing," says Crover.

The A&R guy's concern was certainly justified. Over their 10-year career, the Melvins have proved to be one of the most perverse, perplexing hard rock bands around, intentionally playing extra-sludgy, dirge-like sets when opening for mainstream bands like Rush and Primus, and sometimes even toning down the volume when performing for hardcore crowds. "Some people have totally wanted to kick our asses for what we do," says Crover gleefully. "When we played for some of the Primus audiences, they reacted really violently. They weren't like, 'Oh, they suck, they're no good.' They'd really get mad and threaten us with bodily harm. I remember this one big gorilla wanted to kick my ass one time because we were playing a heavy metal show, and I threw a drumstick out in the audience and it hit him in the bean. He jumped up onstage and knocked my drumset over. He wanted to kill me."

Such incidents only fuel the band's fire, inspiring them to become even more contrary. A few months ago, as fans eagerly awaited the release of *Stoner Witch*, the Melvins pulled off one of their biggest "fuck-yous" to date by putting out the experimental album *Prick*. Released on Amphetamine Reptile under the name Snivlem to quell the ire of the bigwigs at Atlantic, the disc's 43 minutes of tuneless feedback and samples were caustic, contentious and basically unlistenable, causing even longtime fans to shake their heads in disbelief. "I definitely get a kick out of fucking with people like that sometimes," says vocalist Buzz "King Buzzo" Osborne. "But I think if we hadn't done *Prick*, *Stoner Witch* would have been a far weirder record."

As is, it's still plenty weird. After opening with "Skweetis," a crashing, lumbering noise-fest which, according to Crover, "sounds like it was recorded in Fat Albert's junkyard," the disc grounds itself in a stomping heavy metal framework for a few songs, before blasting into space for a number of eerie, atmospheric cuts and strange, psychedelic freak-outs. At times the schizophrenic nature of *Stoner Witch* makes it seem like the Melvins are trying to get booted from their record label. "No, we like it there," laughs Osborne. "We hear about other labels making bands redo songs, but we can record any old garbage, and it goes out. We have a lot of ground we want to cover musically, but the truth is, we don't care if people get what we're doing or not. We just do our job, and if they don't like it, too bad." —Jon Wiederhorn



## Presenting The "I Am So Into Me" Award

Our first recipient, Gordon "Sting" Sumner. Congratulations, Mr. Sumner. Please... don't get up.

# BLACK SHEEP

RETURNS JUST IN TIME TO PULL THE WOOL FROM  
NON-BELIEVERS' EYES.



## NON-FICTION

FEATURING THEIR NEW FLAVOR ON  
WITHOUT A DOUBT AND  
NORTH SOUTH EAST WEST

# QUICK FIX

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

### GRANT LEE BUFFALO

GRANT LEE PHILLIPS

**Brian Eno**

*Here Come The Warm Jets*

**Alan Lomax**

*Sounds Of The South*

**Mazzy Star**

*So Tonight That I Might See*

**Neil Young**

*Sleeps With Angels*

**Kristen Hersh**

*Hips And Makers*

### JOEY PETERS

**Sonny Sharrock**

*Ask The Ages*

**Neil Young**

*Sleeps With Angels*

*I Claudius and Claudius*

*The God*

by **Robert Graves**

**John Coltrane**

*A Love Supreme*

**Breeders**

*Last Splash*

### PAUL KIMBLE

**Tom Waits**

*Swordfishtrombones*

**Brian Eno**

*Another Green World*

**Scott Walker**

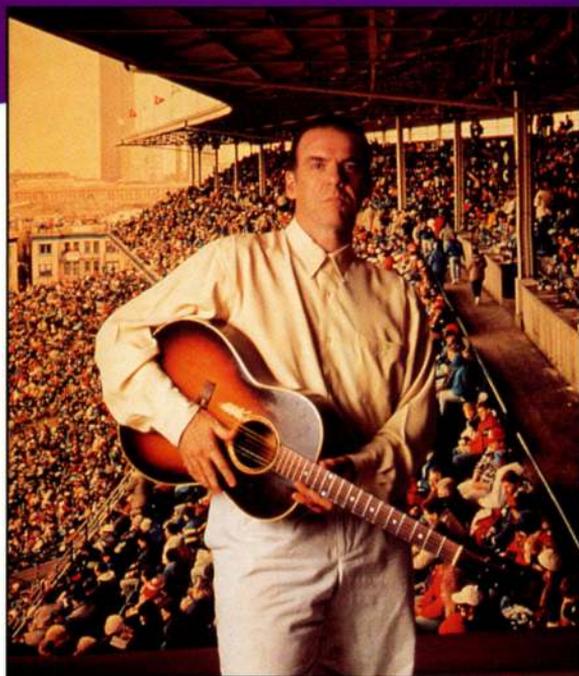
*J*

**Claude Debussy**

*La Infante*

**Maurice Ravel**

*La Mer*



## 50,000 John Hiatt Fans Can't Be Wrong

"It's the aural equivalent of a bunch of guys giving a moon," says John Hiatt describing the sort of trashy rock he and his band the Guilty Dogs laid down on their recent U.S. tour. Some of that moor rock, as well as some of Hiatt's tender ballads, can be heard on the new *Hiatt Comes Alive At Budokan*: (A&M). Perhaps the mooning imagery harks back to a memory of an under-age Hiatt hanging about in Indiana on the boardwalk beneath an open air bar. "I remember standing down on the boardwalk looking up at the butts of the Kingsmen. I remember hearing that bass—you could feel it."

For those who have only read about John Hiatt, and always see the tag "best-kept secret" or "singer-songwriter extraordinaire" after his name, the loose, funky and loud *Budokan* aims to set the



record straight. "When I was coming up the singer/songwriter was really heavy, and, except for Dylan, I never much cared for that. I was more into The Band, Led Zep, Little Feat," says Hiatt. "I always think of the singer/songwriter as that guy from *Animal House*, you know, Mr Sensitive, and then Bluto Blutarsky comes and smashes his guitar. So I'm kinda Blutoing it when I'm live. But then I like to whip the sensitive side

on 'em cause the girls like a fella like that," he adds with a big cackle.

The joke album title, and its equally shameless cover art, are clues that *Budokan* isn't just about documenting one of America's most heralded songwriters at work: It's more about a 42-year-old guy who just happens to be a great songwriter and who hasn't lost the taste for adolescent idiot-rock or putting on a dynamo of a live show. On stage, Hiatt likes to swagger and hustle to the point where his veins seem to burst out of his skin. "I sweat like the proverbial pig," he admits. "I think it's because I always subscribed to that James Brown ethos that when you're performing you're trying to get out of yourself."

After 13 months of life on the road, Hiatt is easing back into the rhythm of home life, making sure his daughters get off to school and keeping an eye on his three dogs. "They like to kill moles and chew 'em up." But don't expect the rural respite to last long. Hiatt claims he's got over 30 new songs, and is eager to get back into the studio and then right back out on the road for the summer of '95. "I'm pretty excited about this new batch of songs. I think I'm gonna record three albums or something, like Prince or Symbol Guy, or whatever his name is."

—Steve Ciabattini

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## NICK DRAKE: Bigger Later

Twenty years after his death, Nick Drake sells more records than he did when he was alive. His mini-cult status has snowballed of late, prompting the release of *Way To Blue: An Introduction To Nick Drake* (Hannibal-Rykodisc), a 16-song summation of Drake's three studio albums plus several cuts from a non-LP collection (the whole of his work can be found on the 4-CD *Fruit Tree* box-set). As mysterious, woebegone and personal as Drake's music is, it never fails to reach any listener affected by the slightest case of melancholia or dream deferred.

After an ongoing bout with depression and severe withdrawal, Drake died in 1974 from an accidental overdose of anti-depressants. Producer and Hannibal Records founder Joe Boyd recalls his last recording session with Drake. "He was in terrible shape, he couldn't sing and play guitar at the same time. He hadn't washed his hair, hadn't slept."

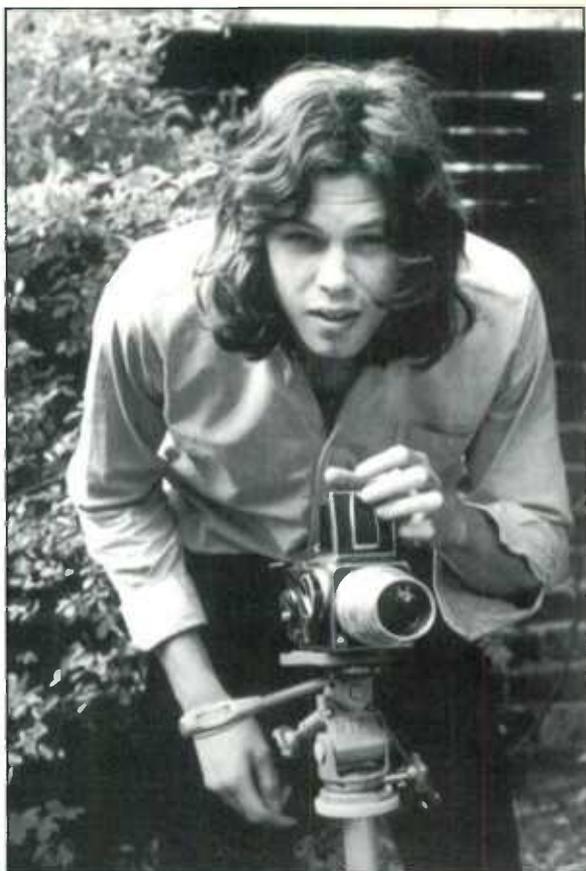
Despite the obvious sad memories of Drake's untimely passing at the age of 26, Boyd recalls his work with Drake with extreme fondness. "Of all the things I produced in my life," he says, "[Drake's] *Five Leaves Left* and *Bryter Layter* are the ones I listen to with the most pleasure." Strong praise from someone who has produced everyone from Fairport Convention to 10,000 Maniacs to R.E.M.

As listeners find solace in Drake's hushed vocals and lyrics of pastoral grace, countless songwriters, including Lou Barlow of Sebadoh and Lucinda Williams, have also found company in Drake's beautiful misery. Both Barlow and Williams have covered Drake's songs on their own records, and the Cure's Robert Smith and American Music Club's Mark Eitzel frequently cite Drake as a major inspiration. Boyd recalls one other notable songwriter who was struck from the first note.

"I was working with John Cale on Nico's *Desertshore* and [Cale] said, 'What else are you working on?' So I played him some Nick Drake and he went nuts. He said 'I gotta work with this guy.' Next thing you know John was in a taxi over to Nick's house."

Aside from having a few close friends, Drake was legendarily shy. He was fond of his solitude, even in crowds, and had the ability to collapse his 6' 3" frame into a dark corner away from everyone else and disappear. He played no more than a dozen club dates to promote his records. "He was not an outgoing person," says Boyd. "But he was very ambitious in his way. What can I say, he tended to wear his overcoat a lot even when he was indoors, he stammered, and he smoked a fair amount of dope, but not pathologically. He was very English and he wasn't an emotional guy in the way that he wore his heart on his sleeve—the intensity was in the lyrics."

—Steve Ciabattini



## Next: Jughead With A Grifters T-Shirt?

Ever since the Beatles popped up in a *Human Torch* story, there's been something slightly creepy about the way pop music turns up in superhero comics. Anybody remember the *Disco Dazzler*? We see (from this panel from *Anima* #5) that comics are still attuned to the fab lingo of those wacky kids of today. Elsewhere in the issue: graffiti on a wall reading "What About Frances Bean?"

# QUICK FIX

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

### CHUCK CLEAVER

ASS PONYS

Spinanes  
Manos

Codeine  
Frigid Stars

American Music Club  
Engine

Uncle Tupelo  
No Depression

Meat Puppets  
!!

## Tape To Tape To Tape

What do you do when you want to make interesting music available to people, but don't want to spend the money it costs to manufacture records or CDs? Dennis Callaci's answer was to start a cassette label, Shrimper, photocopy (and hand-crayon) the covers to the tapes, and duplicate the cassettes themselves the old-fashioned way—one by one, on a home cassette deck. Shrimper quickly gained a reputation for putting out terrific, often deeply weird tapes (by artists including the Mountain Goats, Franklin Bruno, Sentriddoh and Callaci's own projects Refrigerator and Paste), and for selling them very cheaply—most in-print titles are still \$3.00, and label compilation tapes are \$2.00. The label has since branched out into vinyl and CDs, but its prices are low for everything—the *Abridged Perversion* compilation CD has tracks by 34 Shrimper bands, and it's \$6.00 by mail. If you're lucky, your copy will have crayon on the cover too.

Shrimper has inspired a handful of like-minded cassette labels, with similar means of production and similar rock-bottom prices—and often the same bands. Sonic Enemy, run by Peter Hughes of Nothing Painted Blue, has excellent tapes by the Mountain Goats and Hughes' other band DiscothiQ; it also put out the first tape by Beck a couple of years ago. Car In Car Disco Product, run by Joel Huschle of WCKR SPGT, has tapes with strange color-photocopy packaging; go for the ones by Nothing Painted Blue and, yes, the Mountain Goats. (*Silvergate And Dovetail*, pictured here, is a bizarre but mostly very good sampler.) And Slabco may not have any Mountain Goats titles yet (though it's probably only a matter of time), but it does have *Lowrider*, a charming live cassette by Lois that includes a duet with the Spinanes and an *a cappella* take on the Smiths' "Girlfriend In A Coma." There are other good tape labels floating around out there too, though most of them depend on mail-order more than distribution through stores; look for releases on Union Pole, Sing Eunuchs! and the British label Chocolate Monk.

—Douglas Walk

Shrimper, P.O. Box 1837, Upland, CA 91785-1837

Sonic Enemy, 325 W. Green St., Claremont, CA 91711

Slabco, P.O. Box 85510, Seattle, WA 98145-1510

Car In Car Disco Product, Suite 19, 112 North Harvard Ave., Claremont, CA 91711



## Picture Disc of the Month

Here's a tease: the beautiful Butthole Surfers picture disc you see before you is most likely already out of print. In the tradition of Elvis collector plates, Trance Syndicate (drummer King Coffee's label) has vowed, "we aren't making any after Christmas, so get it while you can, brothers and sisters." The 7" features a version of the carol "Good King Wenceslaus" [sic], and a new song on the flip, "The Lord Is A Monkey." The Butts hope that the b-side will become as beloved a Christmas tradition as "Good King Wenceslaus" because it "reflects the true meaning of Christmas—getting wasted, getting depressed and spending money on people you could care less about."

# The Wolfgang Press

FUNKY LITTLE DEMONS



featuring **"GOING SOUTH"**

Produced by Drostan Madden Management: John A. Malm Jr.

©1994 4AD 

# BEST NEW MUSIC

**MASSIVE ATTACK**  
**Protection**  
Virgin



When Massive Attack's *Blue Lines* was released in 1990, it was hailed in the British press, almost universally, as one of the finest releases in nearly a decade. Granted, the British press does this sort of thing almost routinely, but in this case, they were right. *Protection* finds Massive Attack without vocalist Shara Nelson, who left to pursue a solo career, and producer/co-conspirator Booga Bear (Cameron McVey), who decided to devote his time to wife Neneh Cherry's records; it also finds the group abandoning *Blue Lines'* transcendent groove. This is not to say that *Protection* is completely without the spare, dub-oriented soul groove that made the group's debut such a godsend, but that Massive Attack seems more interested in collages than murals these days. The record seems to have swallowed the acid jazz scene whole—in vibe, if not in sound. Aided by the eminently smokey vocals of Tracey Thorn (of Everything But The Girl), it revels in atmosphere. Cocktail-club moods sidle up next to light British reggae rhythms and classic pop melodies, giving the disc simultaneous airs of mystery and familiarity. And the results are often gorgeous, especially when Thorn unspools her warm, rich tone all over the title cut and "Better Things." *Protection* is a step away from *Blue Lines* (something almost meaningless in the U.S., where that record went largely unnoticed), but it's a step in the right direction. —Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jan. 24. First single "Sly."  
**FILE UNDER:** Cool soul.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Bjork, Jah Wobble, Soul II Soul.

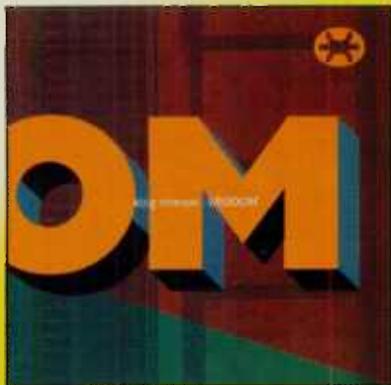
**THE WOLFGANG PRESS**  
**Funky Little Demons**  
4AD



The Wolfgang Press has always been one of the 4AD label's under-examined enigmas. Sticking with an angular, spare, downbeat rock sound through most of the '80s, the group pulled a startling about-face on 1991's *Queer*, transmogrifying itself into a heavily produced, smoothly glib funk band capable of concocting such danceable, sugary treats as "Honey Tree." As one might infer from the title, *Funky Little Demons* continues in the latter vein. Michael Allen's calm baritone is the only point of reference linking the two Wolfgang Presses, except now he croons like Bryan Ferry instead of moaning like Peter Murphy. The lush Moog synthesizer backdrops, the funk guitars, the periodic blasts from the horn section, the quiet jazziness of the slower tracks all scream 1970s, but it's handled in a tasteful, non-kitschy way. Allen's restrained singing adds a note of sophistication, not over-the-top-ness, to both dancey tracks like "11 Years" and more sinister lounge lullabies like "Derek The Confessor." Those eager to relive more sensual and more polyester-clad days will happily welcome this album, and while longtime Wolfgang Press fans (probably already reeling from the Sisters of Mercy becoming a cheese-metal band) may raise an eyebrow at *Funky Little Demons'*... well... funkiness, it's bound to add some color to their music collections. —David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jan. 25. First single and video "Going South."  
**FILE UNDER:** Restrained cool, '70s style.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Roxy Music, Primal Scream.

**KING CRIMSON**  
**VROOOM**  
*Discipline*



"Art rock"—that's Mellotrons and symphony orchestras competing for attention with crooners in sequined capes: the first step on the path of prettified pretentiousness that led to such vile horrors as Styx and Phil Collins. So it's a shame people call Crimson art rock: There's nothing in common but a few odd time signatures (and long, long ago, Greg Lake's soft whimpering). King Crimson has been rocking out and shredding wallpaper at three miles, as its guitarist Robert Fripp puts it, since 1969. He's also known for saying things like "Commitment to an aim by an appropriate structure within a larger, inappropriate structure will give rise to a large, appropriate structure." (The identity of the "inappropriate structure" can be inferred from such later statements as "The music industry sucks.") 1975 saw Fripp leave the scene completely. His cautious reentry has taken the form of a series of three-year campaigns: the "drive to 1981," the "incline to 1984." Each campaign functions as a marketing ploy to subvert the values of the marketplace, as an exploration of musical ideas, and as a "personal discipline." Gradually abandoning the lyrical beauty of his guitar work on earlier masterpieces like *Red*, *Evening Star* and David Bowie's *Heroes*, Fripp began playing quick, mechanical arpeggios in unison with large ensembles. The early-'80s version of King Crimson wove these impossibly speedy, Philip Glass-like sequences into spare, avian instrumentals or let them percolate under haunting guitar-synthesizer lines and Adrian Belew's stentorian melodies. The cerebral precision of these recordings continued to reflect Fripp's touchingly 18th-century belief in the perfectibility of mankind and its ways of making music. The drive-to-1996 lineup (which adds an extra bassist and drummer to the 1984 quartet) has now recorded *VROOOM* in its first week of rehearsals, as "a calling card, rather than a love letter" to its fans. Three songs have set structures and Belew lyrics; the rest are virtuoso improvisations, reminiscent of Crimson's 1974-'75 live material, subtle enough to occupy you for days as you tease out the melodies lurking in the interplay between basses, guitars, sticks and percussion. It sounds like a good hard rock record the first time, rushing past you too fast to catch, and sounds even better the tenth time when the notes start to sort themselves out. Fripp soars, growls and arpeggiates while fellow rock gods Tony Levin, Bill Bruford et al. rule as usual. They can come across with that love letter any time they like.

—Nell Zink

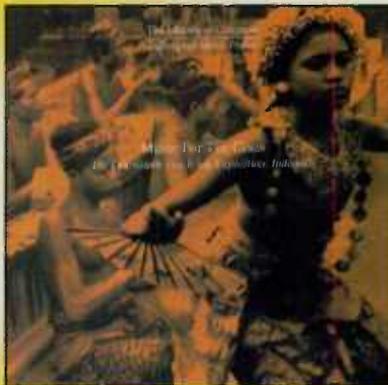
**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 1.

**FILE UNDER:** Instrumental masters of rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Ruins, King Crimson, Elliott Sharp.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
**Music For The Gods:**

**The South Seas Expedition: Indonesia**  
*Hannibal-Rykodisc*



Music is an all-day affair in Indonesia: In the fields, at the altar, selling shrimp chips, there's a gong chime or gamelan melody for every function, even as ensembles perform for tourists in Bali every hour on the hour. *Music For The Gods* is a collection of traditional Indonesian gamelan music made in 1941, a time before the Pepsi cans and tour buses. Gamelan ensembles consist of gong chimes, "xylophones" of bronze, wood, bamboo or iron and drums carved out of logs; they range in size from five to 75 pieces. The music is rooted in a cosmology indebted as much to geometry as to religion, *ramé* (literally "crowded"), which finds meaning and expression in layering. Ensembles repeat and layer a "tree trunk" melody—the *pokok*—by punctuating phrases with gong-chimes, expanding the *pokok* on different metallophones and dropping in and out, all adding "leaves and blossoms" to the tree trunk. This music doesn't build or shake—it shimmers. It is powerfully subtle and gracefully insistent, like Bach left out in the sun too long or a mandala rendered in mirrored flashes of light. "Gambang" is breathtaking, its glassy melody punctuated by ominous thumps on the lowest-pitched wooden drums. One phenomenal piece here—"Kecak," or "Monkey Dance"—is entirely vocal. Performed by a male chorus to accompany ritual trance ceremonies, interlocking chants off only the "cak" and "ah" sounds produce a shimmering, rapid-fire hum. Techno sounds sloppy after this speed-singing exercise. You may not find the sonic palette varied, but the grace, intensity and intelligence are impossible to deny. It can function as background music, but the sonic detail and mathematical arrangements will hypnotize you, given half the chance. One of the most eye-opening releases of the year, suitable for anyone with a good ear and a love of sound.

—Sasha Frere-Jones

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 18.

**FILE UNDER:** Pre-World War II field recordings of world music.

**DATALOG:** Gnawa Music of Morocco, Crash Worship, Philip Glass, *Excursions In Ambience*.

There's a connection between 25-year-old Dionne Farris' philosophy on music and her role as a black female vocalist who's poised enough not to conform to the high-maintenance, fashion-plata ethics of R&B. "I don't think music should be categorized," she says. "It almost makes the people seem like idiots. You can't understand jazz and then go to a rock song? I don't know if it's people, or the music industry, or whomever. They're second-guessing people a lot of the time."

"I'm a kinda 'whatever' person. Even with style and stuff like that. A lot of people ask me what's my style and I'm like 'look, whatever I put on in the morning is my style.' I'm not trying to go out and be a glamour doll all day long," she says emphatically.

The New Jersey native migrated to Atlanta in 1991, where she became a member of Arrested Development's extended family, leaving her vocal signature on the hit "Tennessee." After a year with the group, Dionne followed her heart and parted company with the group to appease her own creative hunger. She explains: "I understood that [Arrested Development] was someone else's dream and this was someone else's goal that they wanted to achieve, and I was just happy to be a part of that. But I really knew that I wanted to have my own dream and reach my own goal."

After departing Arrested Development, Dionne went through a period of self-doubt. But she drew energy from those feelings to discover and assure herself of her gift. "I became very frustrated, my heart started hurting, my head started hurting, my stomach started hurting. This was not good for me—not good for me. I had to leave and make my own way, and when I did, I second-guessed myself."

"I'm skeptical of my talents sometimes," she continues. "A lot of times I'm like, 'Who said I can sing?' I go through some of this stuff sometimes. I'm confident that I can do this, but I'm not 'boasty.'" That confidence led Dionne to record her exquisite debut, *Wild Seed/Wild Flower*, whose title was taken from a science fiction novel by Octavia Butler. The 12 songs bend the rules of urban contemporary music, avoiding categorization and maintaining a homespun, soulful grace. "I think it's a quest for finding the truth, I really do," she says.

# DIONNE FARRIS

by Glen Sansone

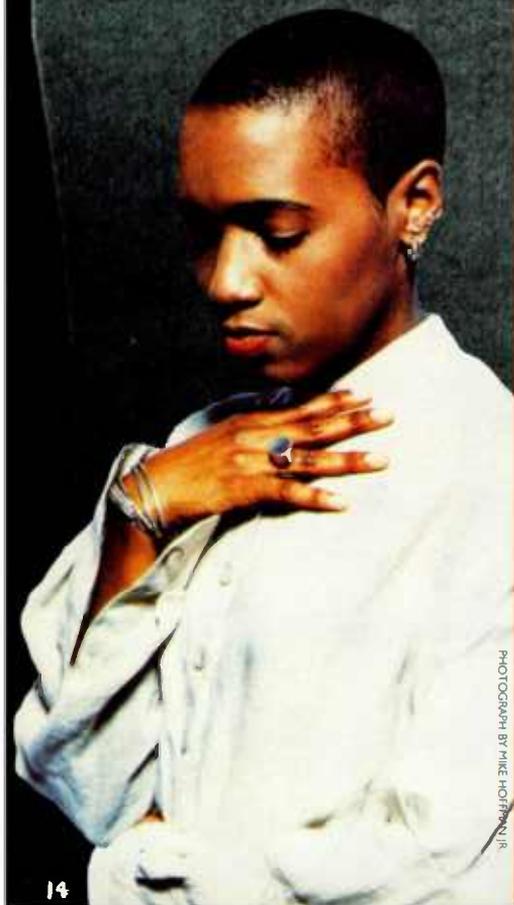
The pan-urban sway of *Wild Seed* (encompassing soul, gospel, rock, blues and hip-hop) is about self-discovery for Farris. It's about using soul music's energy to unlock her own soul, and the results are intrepid and liberating. Dionne comments: "When I first thought about what I really wanted to do and how I wanted to do it, I really wanted to have different types of music a part of my album because that's where I was and where I am in music. I listen to a lot of different kinds of music."

This album is therapeutic for me. I was in a relationship for almost four years, and I was about to get married, and I really didn't know who I was, and I never had a chance to be by myself. So when I was writing these songs, I was totally by myself, and I had a lot of time to listen to myself and talk to myself. And I loved what I heard." The personal tone of the record never strays. One of its most haunting cuts is "Don't Ever Touch Me (Again)," which examines the scars of an abused woman and makes you wonder if this song was inspired by experience. "That's not from a personal standpoint—many people thought it was. But I have family members that this has happened to, and there are people that I don't know that this happens to every day. It's such a sad common thread that goes through our society."

Oddly, Dionne says that her cover of the Beatles' "Blackbird" is the song on her album that best characterizes her life up to this point. The acoustic guitar is played with a bluesy rhythm, while the lyrics describe her life's struggles. "Blackbird," for me, really is like an anthem for this album," she says. "I feel like I'm that blackbird. Being a black woman, that song has so much power to it. It's time for you to get on your own feet. That's what that song means to me. I think I've become much stronger, and I feel much more confident. There were a couple of times when I was doing this music because I liked it. And I said, 'Are people gonna like this shit?' Maybe I'm weird, but a couple of times I said, 'Nobody's gonna like this.'" she adds cynically.

So where does the inspiration come from? Are you diggin' old soul records, I ask? "I don't know," Dionne giggles. "I watch PBS a lot. I watch documentaries and, like, nature stuff on National Geographic. I don't have cable. Little things spark something. I was watching this movie and at the end there was this music that came on, and I was almost crying! I just started singin' something."

In a genre where women artists are coming into their own, as evidenced by Des'ree, Me'shell Ndege'Ocello, Jol and Carleen Anderson, among others, Dionne feels that there is ample room for everyone's voice to be heard, and that they're all bringing soul and R&B to new places. "I don't think that we have to conform and sound alike, because I think that's ridiculous. I think for a long time in this business black women have been seductresses, and just seen as sex symbols, and that's all that they can talk about, and sing about, and look. It was like you went into this booth and you came out and you had a tight dress on. I think it's great that women are taking charge of this music, because it's ours, too, as well as men's."

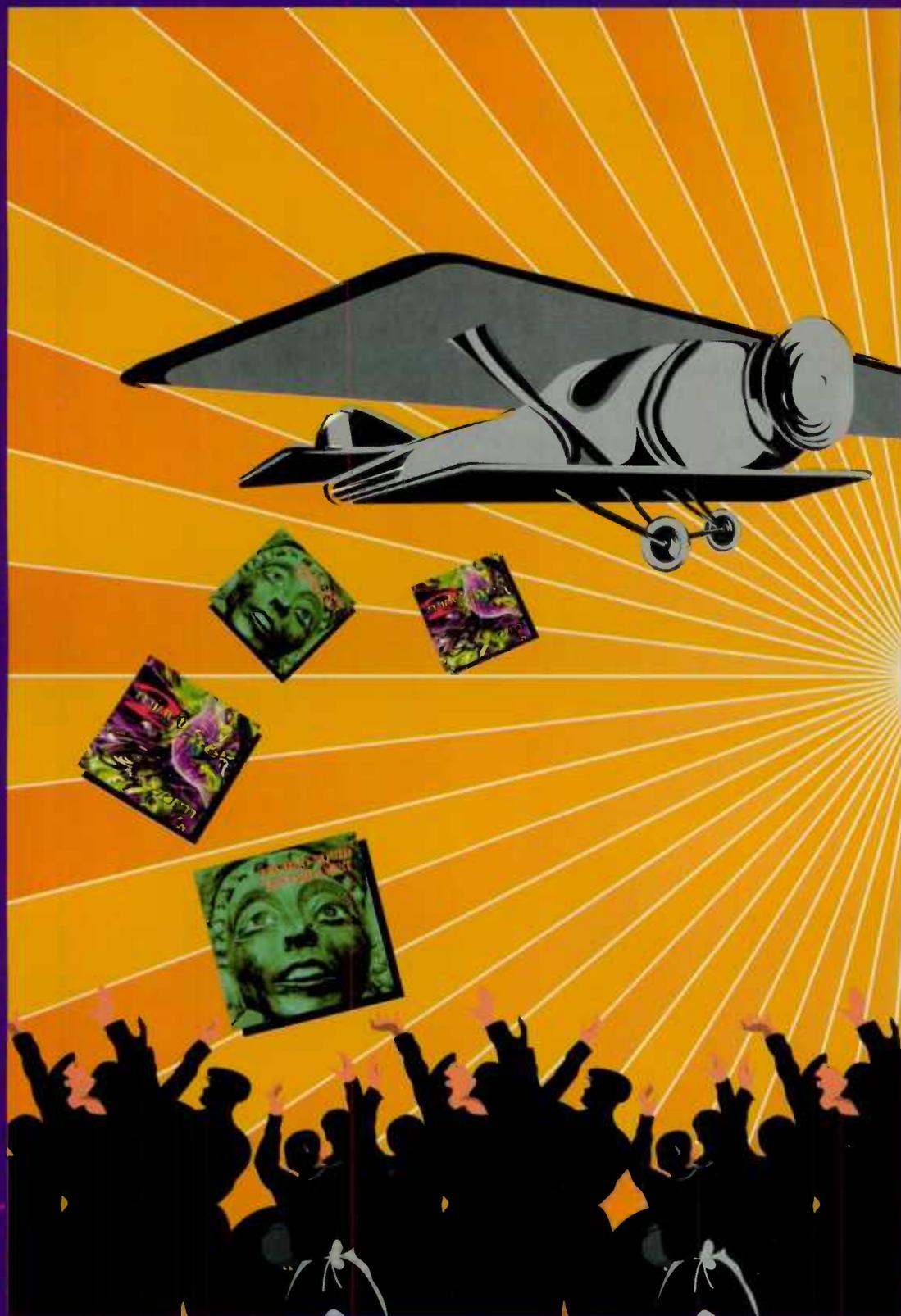


PHOTOGRAPH BY MIKE HOFFMAN/R

2 MINUTES HATE

A U D I O V I S I O N C D

A U D I O V I S I O N C D



3RD RAIL TOUR 95

TECHNO-SQUID EATS PARLIAMENT

NATION-WIDE JANUARY 6TH



PHOTOGRAPH BY COLIN BELL

It's cool and cavelike inside the windowless conference room at American Recordings' Burbank offices. And that's how the pale, quiet Reid brothers, Jim and William, seem to like it. Faced with a sweltering California sun, the pair scuttles like lizards for the spooky chamber and, once inside, immediately appear relaxed in padded, posturepedic office chairs. They're eager to discuss their decade in showbiz as The Jesus and Mary Chain, as well as their stark, mostly-acoustic new disc, *Stoned and Dethroned*. And it's more than just a catchy title, the singing/guitar-slinging siblings say in near-unison—"It's how the band's been feeling lately."

When the duo blasted out of East Kilbride, Scotland, ten years ago with a controversial name and a droning slice of white-noise feedback dubbed *Psychocandy*, critics were stunned. Many were quick to praise the debut for its shock value alone. The Jesus and Mary Chain's live sets only increased the mystique. At an early show in San Francisco, ice-blue crooner Jim Reid performed for a scant 20 minutes, his back to the packed house, while William throttled scuzzy, ear-ringing dissonance from his axe. A New York appearance didn't even last that long. Some folks went home thinking they'd seen the Next Big Thing. Some left wishing they could get their money back.

## THE JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

Then, in 1987, the group did the unthinkable. It released *Darklands*, a gorgeous, acoustic-edged collection of precious pop melodies sans violent feedback. Only the lyrics remained dark. It seemed the Reids didn't want to bash fans over the head with discord at all—they wanted to woo them with hummable hooks and chewable Top-40 arrangements, like their longtime idols, Burt Bacharach and Hal David. Through four more albums the Reids did just that, becoming something like the Righteous Brothers of Doom. But it wasn't until "Sometimes Always," Jim Reid's chiming duet with Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval (who's been dating William for several months), that the band had anything resembling a hit single.

Jim Reid frowns, and daubs at his expense-accounted nachos, one of the few perks the JAMC has received of late. "Sometimes it's kind of discouraging," he sighs, "because we had grand ideas when we started. We thought that if the band was still around ten years later, we'd be like R.E.M. are now—they're huge, everybody knows about them, everybody loves them. But we've been through all kinds of different phases where we've analyzed ourselves to death, and that's a horrible thing to do.

"We've ended up thinking, 'Who the hell cares?' The most important thing is to keep making music that we're quite proud of, music we believe in. And it doesn't matter if we're not playing football stadiums yet."

The Reids speak slowly, deliberately, in pudding-thick Scottish burrs; they take their time considering each thought. Neither possesses any noticeable sense of style. Each is wearing beat-up oxfords, a nondescript shirt and ratty jeans, and Jim, 32, still sports Beatles bangs while William, 35, retains his fluffy, eyelid-scraping poodle cut. "We try to avoid fashion, anything that's representative of a scene," explains Jim. "Fashion comes and goes so quickly, to associate yourself with one means you might go with it."

A spin through the decidedly un-fashionable *Stoned and Dethroned* leaves one wondering along with the Reids why the Jesus and Mary Chain isn't a household word. Like *Darklands*, it's built upon William's acoustic strumming and toe-tapping tambourine rhythms. "Sometimes Always" is a perfect example of the team's deft craftsmanship. It starts slowly, with a chirpy 6-string and Sandoval's offhanded vocal: "I gave you all I had/I gave you good and bad/I gave but you just threw it back." The track steamrollers to a steeple-clanging crescendo, like some vampire take on Sonny And Cher. There's a taste of mortality to it, toned down from the brothers' typically insistent musings on sin, death and life's attendant temptations of the flesh.

But even though *Stoned* contains lyrics about feeling "sick and unholy," its predominant theme is love. On the cut "Till it Shines," the siblings refer to love as a "secret from above... the drug that keeps us true." William closes the disc crooning his ballads "These Days" ("These days I feel immune/To all the sadness and the gloom") and "Feeling Lucky" ("I've got someone who knows me/And she still wants to hold me"). It's a marked change from the way the JAMC was feeling a couple of years ago.

In 1992, the Reids agreed to take their touring combo (which includes bassist Ben Luris and drummer Steve Monti) on the road with Lollapalooza. Big mistake. Accustomed to nighttime gigs, they appeared mid-afternoon on the stadium tour, looking ghostly white under that old nemesis sun and, in William's words, felt "naked in front of 20,000 people. Usually when we play live, there's darkness, films, smoke—we build a mystique. When I came out of Lollapalooza, I felt changed, I felt humiliated, and making another record proved quite exhausting in a lot of ways."

*Stoned and Dethroned* took a tedious year to complete, with the Reids questioning its worth every step of the way. "You do doubt yourself," says William. "I look back on the records we've made, and I know most of them are good, and some of them are

great. But that's from a safe distance. In the process of making a record, it's not always clear how good it is."

*Psychocandy*, he adds, was easiest because "there was nothing to live up to. It was a reaction against the total mediocrity of the music scene ten years ago. And I think if somebody else had made *Psychocandy*, maybe we wouldn't have made it, because we were so fucking lazy. We sat around for years saying we were gonna make a record, we were gonna have a band, because we were so enthusiastic about music and upset about the way things were back then.

"But *Darklands* was a reaction to *Psychocandy*. And at that time, a lot of people thought it was a piece of shit. They said that we'd sold out, because we'd gone for a soft, mellow production. But when people interviewed us around *Psychocandy* and asked us what bands we liked, nobody listened to what we said. When we said we liked Dionne Warwick, they should've believed us."

Now, says William, it's an age thing. "I don't feel 35. But I get fucked up about my age sometimes. The music business makes me feel like I should be 22, and fresh out of the gate. And we don't sell a lot of records, but the people who buy our records probably aren't that casual about buying albums. Frankly," he adds, gulping down the last of his burrito, "if we sold a million records, I don't know what we'd do next."

Brother Jim has a sure-fire solution, and he's shocked it hasn't occurred to William. "We'd spend loads of money!" he cheers, spinning around in his chair. William brings him down to earth.

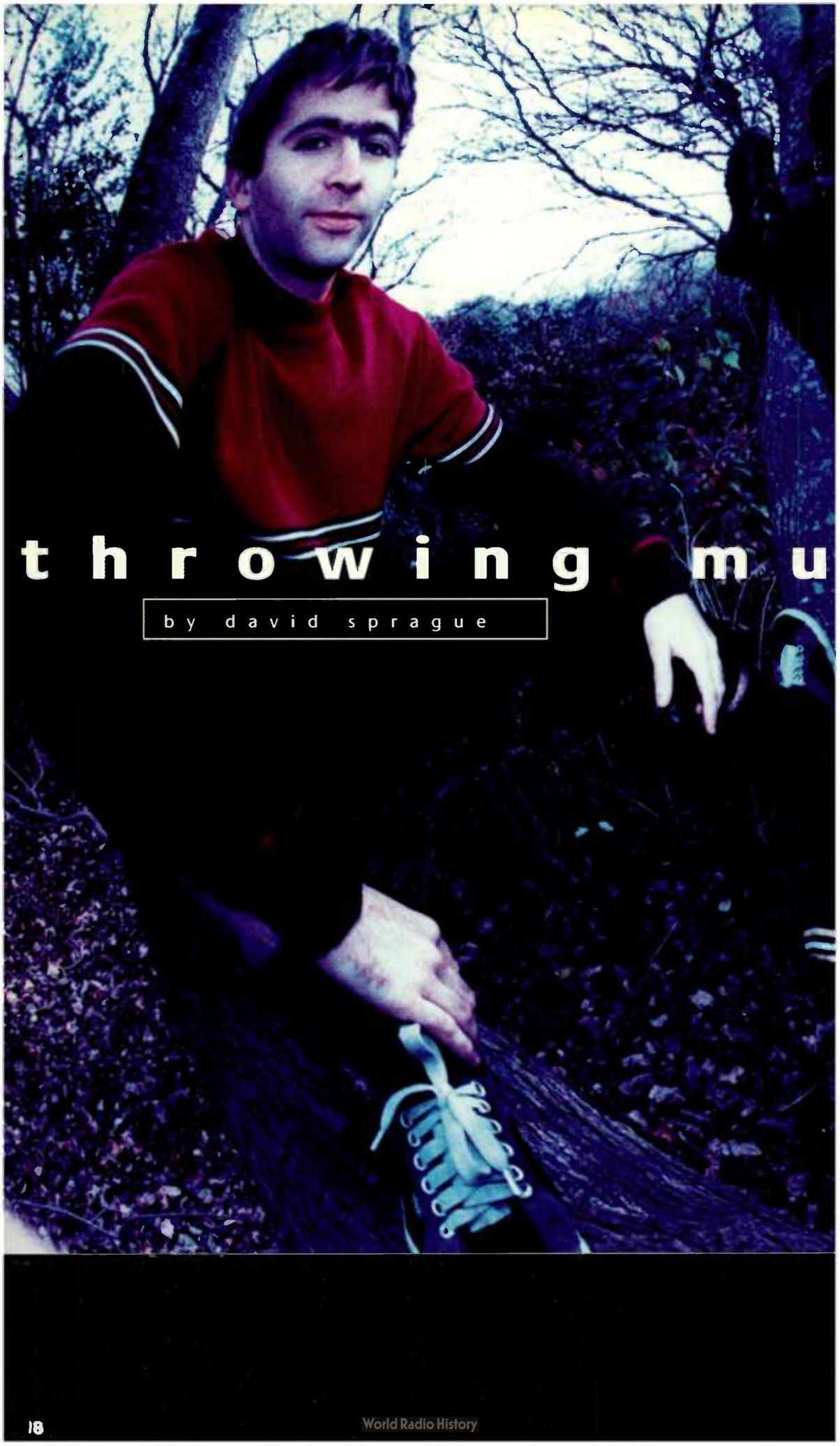
"I think success isn't necessarily a good thing," he counters. "Look at U2. What will they ever do to top Zoo TV? And look what happened to Kurt Cobain. That guy should've been a bus driver. He would've been alive until he was 87."

"We're in the music business—we're not running Sunday schools," sneers Jim. "We're around people that drink too much, take drugs—people that do what we do. A lot of people in our circle have gotten fucked up on alcohol or drugs."

So why haven't the Reids made the English scandal sheets? Jim cackles mischievously. "That's not news. Guys in bands getting drunk and falling over and puking. That's not even remotely scandalous. But in the music business, you can hang out with people who drink too much, and you can indulge yourself a bit because it's not a normal everyday life."

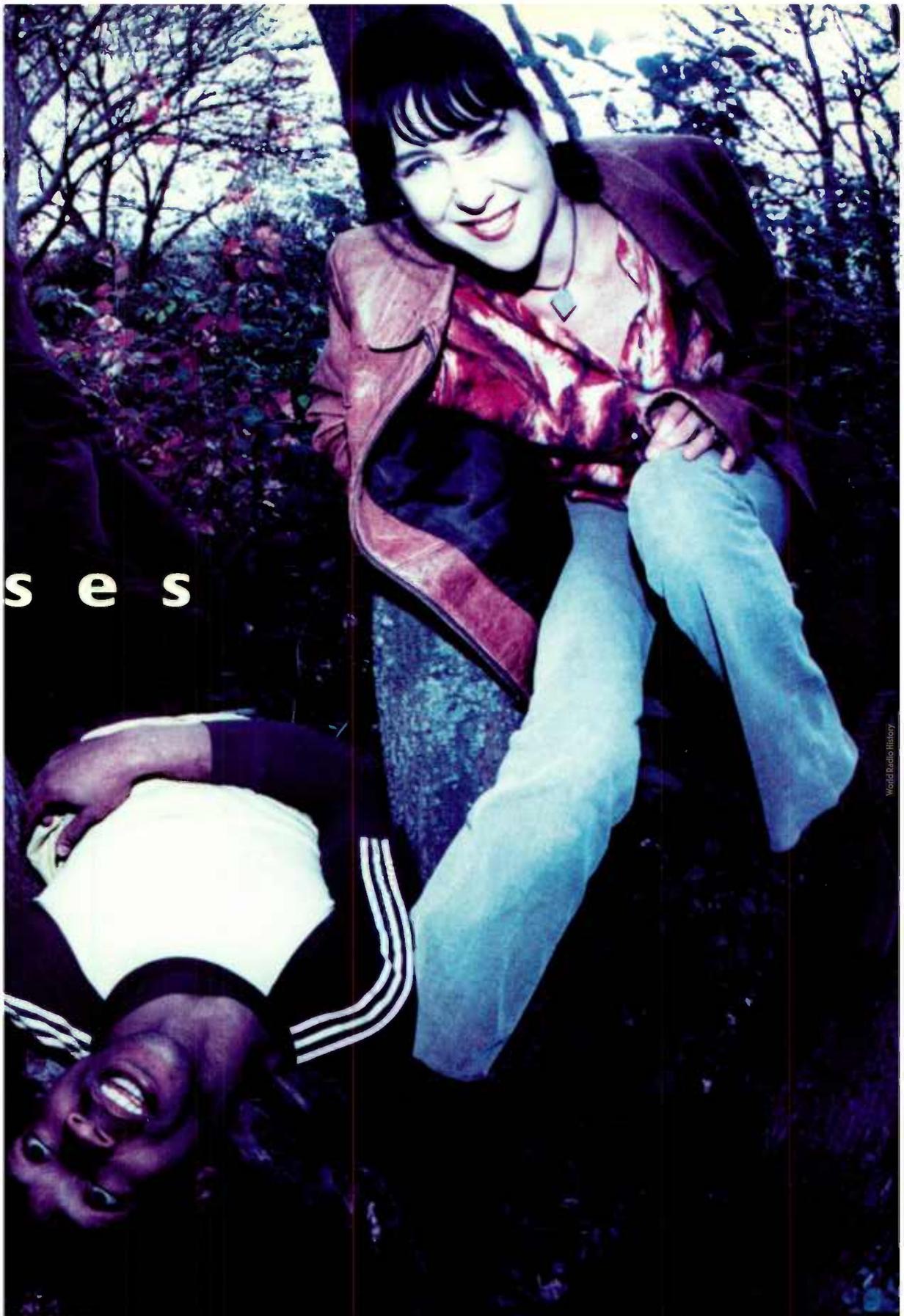
William phrases it more bluntly: "We're still a bunch of dirty bastards, and we still crave sex and lustfulness. But we're, uh, older now."

BY T O M L A N H A M



# t h r o w i n g m u

by david sprague



s e s

Worldwide History

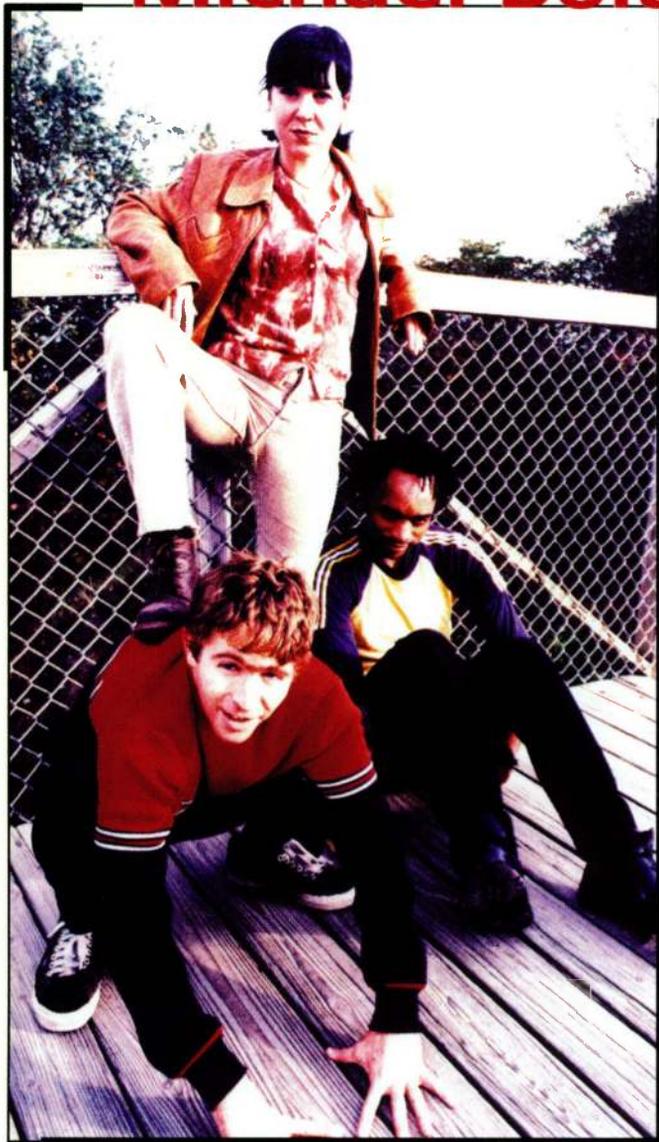
photographs by jill greenberg

Kristin Hersh will be the first to admit that it's a struggle to keep her priorities straight. For more than half her 28 years, the Georgia-born, Rhode Island-raised Hersh has been inseparable from Throwing Muses, the "arty hardcore" (as she laughingly puts it) band she and stepsister Tanya Donnelly put together in order to consummate a typical teenage love affair with rock 'n' roll. But while that ardor is clearly undiminished—"for me, good music still just makes me feel like 'YAY!!'" she beams—her foremost concerns for the past several years have been decidedly more domestic, wrapped up in raising two young sons.

Muses and father of her youngest son, Ryder—can cause some odd chemical reactions when pitted against artistic vision. Still, as borne out by *University*, the soon-to-be-released seventh Muses album, that vision usually wins out in the end. While slightly more approachable than the band's last effort, 1992's *Red Heaven*, the 14-song collection careens across a mighty broad swath of sonic and psychic territory: even the exceedingly hummable single "Bright Yellow Gun" reveals layers of potential subtext.

**"Hits and fame have never**

## Michael Bolton has hits, Satan is



"I've been really poor, to the point that when Dylan [her eight-year-old son] was little, I couldn't pay the rent, and obviously that's not a good thing," she recalls. "But that didn't push me to write a bunch of cute, catchy songs to put food on the table. I'd rather be a waitress. Hits and fame have never been my concern: Michael Bolton has hits, Satan is famous. That's not company I want to be considered in."

Cute and catchy have never been buzzwords in any discussion of Throwing Muses. From their earliest self-released forays (which garnered them enough of a cult following that 4AD tabbed the band as the first US outfit on the label), Hersh's swooping vocals and the pulsating rhythmic attack of drummer David Narcizo (the only other constant in the Muses' oft-fluctuating lineup), the eccentric song structures and avant-sound washes were never less than compelling.

Undoubtedly, the band was denied some claim to normalcy by Kristin's outspoken dialogues regarding her own, sometimes precarious, mental state. The ease with which she depicted her hallucinations—spectres that were sometimes frightening, sometimes benign—was downright eerie, particularly in light of onstage emotional moodswings. Gradually, the darker visions subsided, but those that inspired her to write remained. Actually, to hear Kristin Hersh tell it, the writing process goes on pretty much without her input at all.

"When you're young, you write songs that sound like everyone else's, but one day, I was no longer telling them what to do, they were telling me what to do," she says evenly. "Now I can't stop it, but I never want to look too hard at it. I don't think I have the right to ask where the songs come from—I'm just glad they've chosen me."

The songs that chose to alight in Hersh's consciousness on discs like *The Fat Skier* and *House Tornado* went a long way towards justifying that "arty hardcore" tag, veiled as they were in unnecessarily theatrical vocalizing. But those that were able to get beyond that—and at times, that number wasn't encouragingly large—became acolytes of the most dedicated stripe.

"People said the main problem with our music was that you couldn't ignore it," Hersh grants. "Most music is flirtatious and it leaves. I hope this doesn't sound egotistical, but our music is music you have to sleep with, you have to go all the way with it. I know it's hard to follow and hard to take. Sometimes I have a lot of respect for people for sitting through our shows."

Although those shows were running noticeably more smoothly by the turn of the decade, the Muses' innards were often in knots. First, bassist Leslie Langston abandoned the road in favor of a settled married life. Soon after, Donnelly (who had grown into an attractive foil for her stepsister) tired of playing second fiddle in both Throwing Muses and the Breeders and took off to form Belly after 1991's

For rock's more well-heeled parents, the day-to-day difficulties of such a situation can easily be handled by the help. For the Muses, however, the flow of lucre has yet to match the critical praise that's been showered upon them. As such, when at home, she can be found in the laundry room as often as in the practice room. "Cleaning up after people gives you a great big dose of humility, which I think is really lacking in a lot of people," she says. "I'm not the greatest housewife in the world, but I know what it's like to be up to your neck in shit, and I know how important a job it really is."

She'll freely admit that her domestic situation—one that's grown considerably more stable since she went from being an in-flux single mom to meeting and marrying Billy O'Connell, manager of the



lukewarm *The Real Ramona*. While no hard feelings ever developed—Langston has filled the bass slot at a few of Hersh's solo shows, and Hersh's relationship with Donelly remains strong—Throwing Muses was a band in need of a break, which came when Hersh released her solo debut, *Hips And Makers*, in 1993.

"Usually I hate people who put their name on their music, but I don't think I had a choice," she says. "In my dream world, I would have just mailed [the album] out from my house and not dealt with

been my concern:

famous."

the rest of it. It wasn't done to satisfy my ego: I don't think I have a lot of star quality—usually I'd rather be hiding somewhere than be noticed."

The solo shows that followed saw a more relaxed Hersh bantering easily with her audience and leavening the thought-provoking songs with stories of home life that often embarrassed eight-year-old Dylan. "He's getting his revenge, though," she laughs. "He draws this comic called 'Rockin' Family,' and in it I'm always doing the most non-mom things, like walking up to him and saying 'Hiya, kid, have a cigarette... what's wrong, you don't smoke?'"

Even while promoting *Hips And Makers*—a process that took a full year—Hersh cleared up any false assumptions that Throwing Muses was history. The self-produced *University* was actually recorded (in New Orleans) before the release of that solo set, although many months passed before the band reconvened to mix the album, which made life a bit problematic for Narcizo and new bassist Bernard Georges (a longtime Muses roadie).

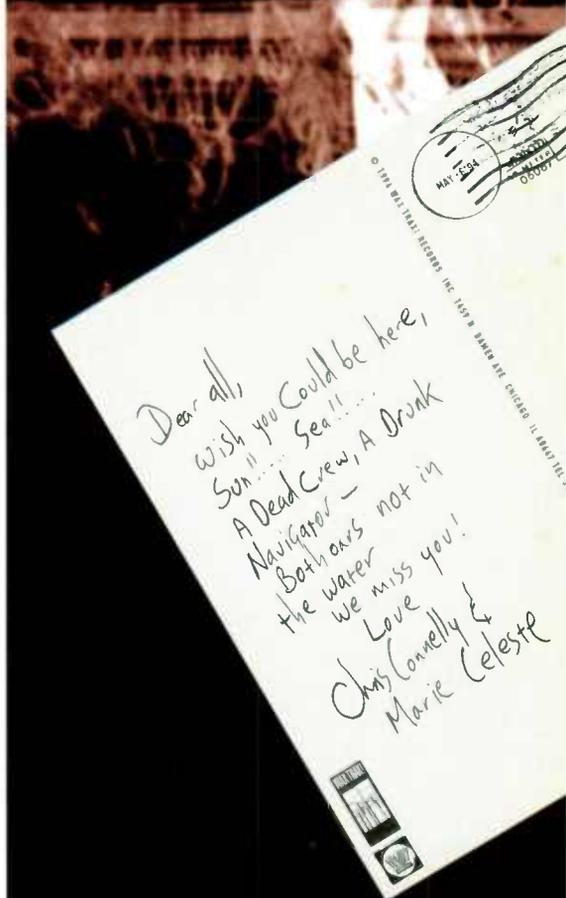
"I've been bidding my time. I got this really tedious job polishing picture frames in a factory so I wouldn't be totally broke," says Narcizo, who stored his idle drums at his parents' house for much of 1994. "And getting back into the swing was kind of hard at first—some of the songs I just couldn't hear any more. But I kind of take for granted how much playing together really means to me—I don't know how I went without it for however many months."

*University* exudes not only a healthy amount of freshness, but a bracingly vivid tone (often missing on their more "produced" sets) in the infectious melodies of songs like "Surf Cowboy" and "Teller." While Hersh admits that even a decade's experience hasn't changed her notion that the recording process itself is "a big lie" whereby "you rip the song apart little by little and pretend you're all in a studio together," she views the current trio lineup (which may be augmented by a cellist come tour-time) as the band's strongest.

"We have the luxury of dynamics that you can only get in a trio," she says. "When you have two guitarists playing, all you can really make is a wall of sound—and if you back off that for a minute, it always sounds like there's something missing."

She pauses, admitting that talking about the music she makes may well be her least favorite thing to do, hesitating to clarify lyric intent, even expressing surprise that so many of *University*'s songs trade in aquatic imagery ("six of them?" she laughs. "I guess that is kind of a lot"). But while she's hardly a nouveau primitive, Kristin Hersh certainly seems to share in certain aspects of outsider philosophy.

"There's not a whole lot of intellect in there. There's plenty of physicality and emotion, which may make the brain work, but the process doesn't begin with the brain," she sighs. "It's hard to care so much about what you do, you know. I envy the people that write bullshit music, people who can play the market, say 'Whaddaya want? Three minutes ten seconds with a country feel? You got it.' Sometimes I think it might be good to just do the job, come home and forget it. But that feeling never lasts."



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# spell

Unlike a number of garage-rock outfits from the Northwest, the members of Spell have no interest in proving how agonizing their upbringings were. "It's kind of in vogue now to be a tortured artist, and I think a lot of our generation talk themselves into that. To me that's all bullshit," says Beckman. "Everyone went through the same thing. Everybody's parents are divorced. Everybody was a latchkey kid and ate shitty TV dinners. But for some reason everybody thinks his troubles are worse than the next guy's—all these people are crying that they were psychologically abused. C'mon, man, who wasn't at some point in their lives? You can either carry it or you can get rid of it, but to make a fashion statement out of depression is asinine."

*Mississippi*, the band's debut, is loud and garagey, pulsing with rumbling rhythms and roaring guitars, but it's also filled with subtle dynamic shifts and crafty vocal harmonies. "Coming up with songs is real natural for us," Beckman says. "They just flow out like so much uncapped fizz. Our influences come from all over the place. Most of it comes from punk rock bands like the Germs and Black Flag, but we definitely like a lot of melody. We just want to release whatever it is in our brains that makes us feel good."

Although Spell is now a full time endeavor, it didn't start out that way. "We'd get together and write and record when Garrett wasn't on the road with the Fluid," says Beckman. "We did that for about two years." Then, when the Fluid called it quits, Shavlik was able to devote himself fully to Spell. "He called me one day and said he had to quit the band, and I thought he was talking about Spell because the Fluid had just released a record and returned from a big tour. I was shocked when he said, 'It's tough after eight years to call it quits.' I couldn't believe it. All of a sudden we had all this time to write and record. It was a dream come true. To have a band that was capable of performing full time was such an elating thing."

As much as Spell is Beckman's dream come true, most of the group's songs deal with serious themes of loss. "Bring The Old Man" is about the death of Shavlik's father and how he and his family dealt with the tragedy, "Hazel Motes" is based on a book by Flannery O'Connor that had a profound effect on Shavlik, "Superstar" is about coming out of a deep depression and realizing that hope still exists even under the most strained circumstances, and "4B" is about a friend of the band's who was dying of cancer. "He had lymphoma and was in the fourth stage, which is totally terminal. But he bounced back," says Shavlik. "They did this amazing bone marrow treatment and he's doing really well now. It just proves that you should never give up hope."

Despite the inevitable garage-rock comparisons the band is likely to receive based on its past musical projects, Beckman insists the group has little affinity for MCS and the Stooges. "We're just not that male. When you listen to the Stooges and MCS, you get this masculine feeling that's really powerful."

"It feels like a gang of thugs are gonna kick your fucking ass," agrees Shavlik. "We don't want to fight anybody. We're wimps. We'll just insult them and then we'll run away."

"Boyd Rice may know Satan, but Satan's lawyer works for us," says Spell drummer/songwriter Garrett Shavlik, referring to a cease and desist order that prevents Rice, a well-known underground industrial artist and practicing Satanist, from using the name Spell.

According to guitarist/vocalist Tim Beckman, Rice moved from San Francisco to the band's hometown of Denver, and was well aware that Spell was working on its debut album *Mississippi* when he put out a project of weirdo '70s covers under the same moniker. "It's obvious that he was fucking with us because Denver's such a small town, and we'd already been around for three years when he came out with his record. He even deejays at a club we played twice."

Spell—Shavlik (ex-Fluid), Beckman (ex-Fluid t-shirt salesman) and Beckman's wife/bassist Chani Floyd (ex-57 Lesbian)—found out about Rice's mischievous deed when they walked into the famous alternative record store Wax Trax and found a bin plugging Rice's release as "the new Spell record." "People kept coming up to us and saying, 'It doesn't sound anything like you guys,' and we'd go, 'that's because it isn't us, it's the Dark Lord himself,'" says Shavlik.

"We've made so many wisecracks about it because that's the only way you can take something like that," says Beckman. "Boyd's on the heavy side, so we'd said things like, 'If he's an embodiment of the dark side, I think the dark side needs to lay off the Twinkies and soda pop. Maybe you take up jogging in the morning, huh, Beelzabubba?'"

"Beelzabubba is more like it," laughs Shavlik.

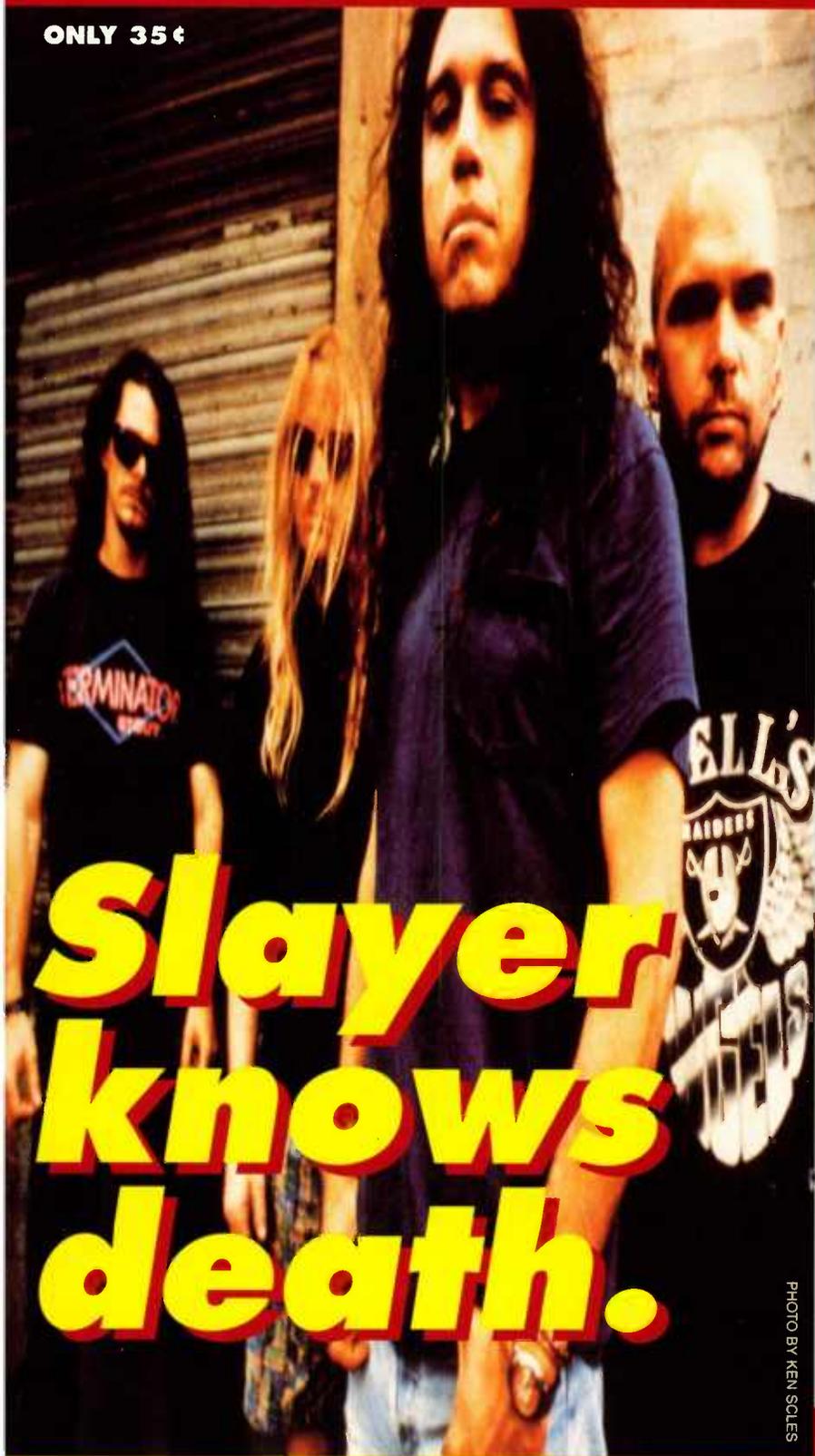
The way Spell has dealt with Rice is indicative of the way it deals with everything. Rather than getting bogged down by frustrations, Spell treats its music as a celebratory outlet, indulging in the sheer thrill of melodic noise. "The really great thing about being in this band is there's no pressure at all to do anything," says Beckman. "I can't tell you the last time we played any of the songs from our album in practice. We rehearse to write, not to go over the set, and if that means we fuck up sometimes when we play live, so what? I think a lot of bands take themselves too seriously, and their music is so rehearsed and choreographed that it's lost spontaneity and edge and passion. C'mon, man, it's rock. You should just get up there and do the best you can with it and have a blast."

BY JON WIEDERHORN

"SOME PEOPLE THINK WE'RE SICK, BUT THOSE PEOPLE WANT TO SEE **O.J.** WALK."

# SLAYER

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**Slayer  
knows  
death.**

PHOTO BY KEN SCLES

The band has **STUDIED** it the way a valedictorian preps for a final exam, **ANALYZED** it like a chemist under a microscope and **EMBRACED** it as though it were a lover.



**Vocalist TOM ARAYA** claims to have even experienced it.

by jon wiederhorn

**"SOMETIMES I'LL LOOK AT REAL DEATH AND IT'LL LOOK FAKE BECAUSE IT'S SO CHEESY"—KERRY KING**

**"I actually did die," he says without a hint of sarcasm.** When I was three years old I drowned. My mother used to wash clothes in a huge galvanized tub, and I was playing with a little car around the edge of it, and it went in, and I went in after it. Half my body was hanging over the edge, and my head was in the water. My dad found me, and I was blue. He pulled me out and resuscitated me, but as far as I'm concerned I was dead."





PHOTO BY KEVIN ESTRADA

system, was even inspired by Rush Limbaugh's television show (his followers call themselves dittoheads). "We agree with Rush about a lot of things. It wouldn't surprise me if that song ended up on his show if he ever heard it," says King. "This country lost its grip a long time ago, and it's getting progressively worse. We should nuke a few major cities and get rid of a lot of liberal politicians, and put someone in [the White House] that's got some nuts. You've got to teach people to take responsibility for their actions. You shoot somebody, you're gonna be killed. You set somebody on fire, you're gonna roast. Eye for an eye. If people were afraid of punishment they wouldn't do half the shit that they do. But they can get away with anything and they know it. Did anybody in the Rodney King beating go to jail? No. Did anybody in the Bobbit case go to jail? No. What about the Menendez brothers? Fuck no. That's what 'Dittohead' is about. With a passive government there's nothing to regret. Everything to gain, and nothing to regret."

From the moment it plugs in, Slayer unleashes a hateful barrage of malevolence. The band doesn't condone murder, but sings about it with such gleeful intensity that it's easy to mistake the group's fervor for bloodlust. However, King claims songs like "213" and "Serenity In Murder" aren't meant as mere bad-karma fantasies. "Our music has nothing to do with celebration. It's more like a wake-up call. If you guys ain't paying attention, this is what's going on around you. I don't give a fuck what you think about it, but this is it. There are a lot of people in this fucked-up world that don't want to know what's going on outside their front door, and I'm like that a lot of ways myself, but there are a lot of things that I have begun to wake up to. I don't want to preach, I just want to make a point. I don't want to sway public opinion or anything, but I want to put things in perspective so our kids can get it. If some people think we're sick and twisted, that's their opinion, but those are also the same people that want to see O.J. walk."

When the members of Slayer used to come onstage brandishing upside-down crosses, they were accused of devil-worship. When they sang about rape and murder, they were called sick, dangerous criminals. Such perceptions have faded with time, but one that hasn't is the belief that the members of Slayer are neo-Nazis, an idea that first surfaced with the song "Angel Of Death."

"The last time we went to Europe, that whole thing got re-fired for some reason, and people just fucking attacked us, and accused us of all this shit," exclaims King. "I was like, 'What the fuck is your problem, man? Half you people don't even know half the fucking generals in World War II and you're fucking bitching at us because we do?' They just turned into these hypocritical liberals, big time. Everybody has become liberal. Those kinds of people piss me off. They just attack you and they think they're all righteous because they can accuse you of what you believe. Fuck, man. What do my beliefs have to do with anything? I didn't say you had to believe it."

"The accusation that we're Nazis to be one of the silliest remarks I've ever heard," Araya says. "I'm fucking Latin, I've got Latin blood in me. I sing 'Angel Of Death,' but that doesn't mean I'm Adolf's baby or nothing. Really, we don't care what you think about us or about what we do or about our music. We're doing what we do and we're living our lives. You should just do the same."



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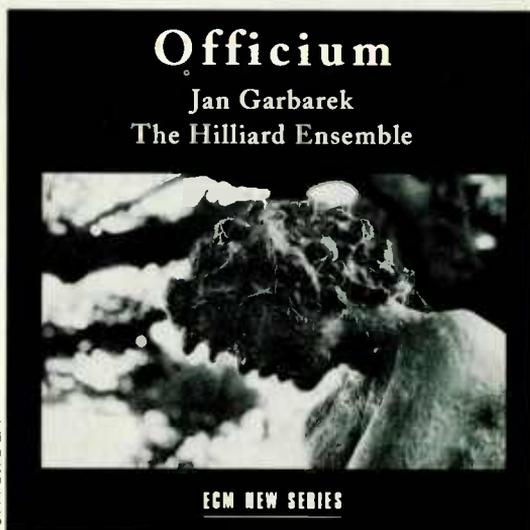
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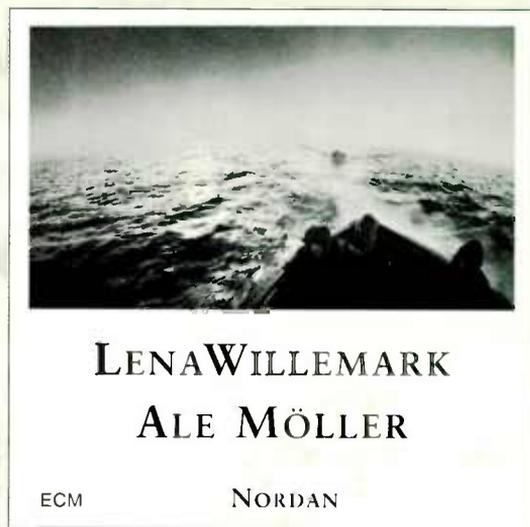


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World Radio History



**BRAND NUBIAN** Brand Nubian *Elektra*

With G-Funk the ruling hip-hop sound, any crew from the Public Enemy era—four long years ago, when rappers could get away with being both militant *and* earnest—is bound to suffer. Brand Nubian were the heroes of that first “new school”; their “Slow Down” and “All For One” chronicled a bleak future and defiantly partied against it. But like PE, Brand Nubian looks pretty tame next to some of the current Long Beach sensations. This doesn’t seem to faze Nubian a bit on its new self-titled album, which rocks hard but still manages to drop a couple of references to Minister Farrakhan. *Brand Nubian* isn’t just a throwdown, however; they mix things up with some down-tempo jams early on, like the opener “Word Is Bond” (the requisite “we’re back and badder than ever” track, but with some clever quips) and the bumpin’-n’-grindin’ “Nubian Jams.” They offer laffs on “Alladat,” a dis to those who get on their nerves (“all these niggas who think they alladat”). They even throw in some tame jazz samples on “Gang Bang,” a treatise on that favorite topic, cops (rap purists are probably yawning, “That’s so ‘92”). The standout is Brand Nubian’s answer to Naughty By Nature’s “Ghetto Bastard,” the dramatic, piano-based “Claimin’ I’m A Criminal,” whose protagonist suffers from a gangsta identity crisis (“You might cry at night when you’re safe and outta sight”). Unfortunately, this album also suffers from an identity crisis: Nubian always was a pretty faceless crew, and *Brand Nubian* finds them hard-pressed to find a style on which to hang their doo-rags. But in these times when no one really knows how long a rap career will last, we can forgive that confusion.

—Chris Molanphy

**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 8.  
**FILE UNDER:** Newly old-school hip-hop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** KMD, Onyx, A Tribe Called Quest.



**BRICK LAYER CAKE** Tragedy-Tragedy *Touch And Go*

Although he’s currently known for his work in Shellac, Todd Trainer’s deadpan songwriting and mechanical drumming are best displayed in his long-time solo project, Brick Layer Cake. His third album, *Tragedy-Tragedy*, offers more accessibility than the first two without compromising BLC’s dour brand of uniqueness. The sound is unusually simple—hoarse stage-whispered vocals set between layers of sustained guitars, most of them repeatedly ringing out gigantic down-stroked chords while another plods off beautiful, sad patterns of single notes. Half of the songs lack Trainer’s painstakingly flawless drumming, a pleasant change from the conventions of beat-driven mainstream rock. But perhaps the most obvious theme to Brick Layer Cake’s music is the (lack of) speed at which it is performed. It’s a wonder that this unyielding down-tempo, paired with Trainer’s bottomless, dry-mouthed voice, manages to sidestep the pitfalls suffered by the likes of Killdozer and the Swans in recent years. Sped up, BLC might bear some resemblance to Beat Happening, with Trainer matching Calvin Johnson on all fronts in the sassiness department. Songs like “Gone Today” and “Precious” are like the Breeders or early Television, with multiple start-stop guitars weaving around an almost danceable drumbeat. In contrast, “Cold Day In Hell” and “Reach Me Now” use melancholy guitar as their only source of rhythm, while the sound of a Midwestern wind haunts Trainer’s icy lyrics. In a way, Todd Trainer is a modern-day Link Wray, and his songs on *Tragedy-Tragedy* may seem as outlandish now as “Jack The Ripper” did in 1963.

—Morgan Andrews

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 24. Also recommended: Trainer’s former band *Breaking Circus*.  
**FILE UNDER:** Acerbic, deliberate laments.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Sonic Youth, Codeine.

**CHARLES BROWN** *These Blues* Gitanes-Verve

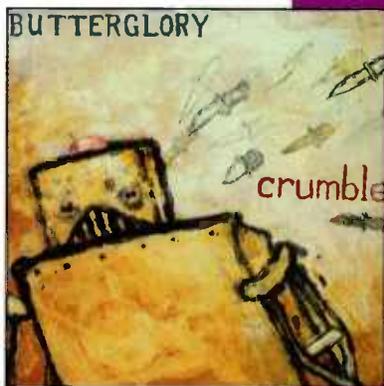
**CHARLES BROWN** *Charles Brown's Cool Christmas Blues* Bullseye Blues

Charles Brown is one of those people who can sit down and record a perfect album in exactly the time it takes to play the songs. It's not that his performances are hackwork or workmanlike—it's just that he gives his all to any given song, and like Ray Charles' or Nat "King" Cole's, his simple and elegant piano blues style is from a blueprint that's built to last. The seasonal *Charles Brown's Cool Christmas Blues* appears to be a contractual-obligation Christmas album, one of those affairs that attempt to rekindle a star's magic by reproducing two of his greatest moments from the past (in this case 1949's "Merry Christmas Baby" and 1961's "Please Come Home For Christmas") and stretching them out to a full album. The nice thing is, it works. It's a tribute to Brown's stature as an American original that he's able to pull it off. For Brown, who covers "Silent Night," it's chestnuts roasting over a slow, blue flame. For fans of Christmas music, it's wonderful stuff—Brown's band lays down a subdued and elegant pocket, while his melancholy persona soaks up every inch of the grooves. With his style and these melodies and players, he could record an album of rugby chants and it'd sound just as soulful. But the real joy for blues and jazz fans is Charles' other new album, *These Blues*. For the last 20 or so years, Charles Brown has been recording for blues producers and blues labels, when his classic stuff—the stuff from the '50s that the newer records are trying to duplicate—was recorded with a jazz sensibility, in a jazz studio setting. *These Blues* finds Brown sitting down at a piano with his regular working band (including guitarist Danny Caron as musical director) and being recorded as a jazz artist would be—sophisticated and poised, with an eye towards serious craftsmanship. It's the difference between jamming the mike inside the piano and putting it in a strategic point in a well-toned room, a point of technical jargon that really does translate into a palpable aesthetic difference. And as a result, *These Blues* is a classy blues album that may well mark the pinnacle of Brown's career, full of style, soul and even a little wisdom of the years, too. —James Lien

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 21 (*These Blues*), Oct. 4 (*Christmas*).

**FILE UNDER:** Melancholy piano blues balladeers.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Nat "King" Cole, Remy Martin.



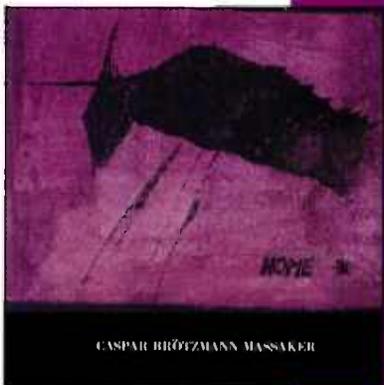
**BUTTERGLORY** *crumble* Merge

Although Butterglory has been wowing critics for a couple of years now with a series of feisty singles and compilation tracks, *crumble* is the band's first full-length outing. And the result is satisfying, fifteen shortish songs with big hearts, clopping cymbals, insistent melodies and clear but loose arrangements. A duo composed of Matt Suggs and Debby Vander Wall, Butterglory has always been mildly, and pleasantly, derivative of other American indie-rock stars: Matt Suggs' voice has J. Mascis' pained drawl, while his guitar rings, chimes, and hacks with Pavementish vigor. While most of the songs retain a warm, boppy feel, there's a bluesy flavor to several, including the excellent "Peasants, Kings." The best tracks on *crumble* feature Debby's flat vocals, wordy and rhyming, not unlike Bellingham, Washington's Crayon. "The Drums Were Lost" sounds like some lost New Zealand band, a well-adjusted cousin to the 3Ds. A few tracks fall short of the overall high standard: "He Left Us Nothing" is listless, like PJ Harvey with zero heft, hump, meanness or sex appeal. But the sum is grand: a solid debut, the perfect soundtrack to autumn. —Michael Vazquez

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 3.

**FILE UNDER:** Playground rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Smog, Pavement.



**CASPAR BRÖTZMANN MASSAKER** *Home* Thirsty Ear

Caspar Brötzmann lists Sonic Youth, Helmet's Page Hamilton, Diamanda Galas and Einstürzende Neubauten among his fans, and it's easy to see why. The guitarist, who uses the sheer power of Marshall amplification for his mastery, doesn't so much play his instrument as attempt to eviscerate it, wrenching sounds from wood and wire in any way possible. His group Massaker puts the "power" in "power trio." Recorded with Neubauten's F.M. Einheit at the helm (Brötzmann and Einheit have also just finished a Christmas album together), *Home* features live-in-the-studio reworkings of earlier Massaker pieces, all of which have grown in their focus and ferocity over time. Despite his pedigree—Last Exit saxophonist Peter Brötzmann is his father—Caspar doesn't use a jazz approach so much as a pretense-free perversion of modern classical music. Creating soundscapes of sometimes infinite proportion, Massaker is like the mutant monster that New York's scum rockers left for dead in the late '80s, only to find now it's stronger than ever and coming to get them. —Eric Gladstone

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jan. 3.

**FILE UNDER:** Loud and proud guitar noise.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Glenn Branca, Sonic Youth, Igor Stravinsky.

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

## CONGO NORVELL

CONGO NORVELL *Music To Remember Him By* Basura

There is a persistent romantic vision of smoke-filled cabarets as places of infinite possibilities, sanctuaries for eccentrics and tortured souls. If there's any indication that this might be true, it's Congo Norvell. The band is named for its two principal members, Sally Norvell, she of the preternatural cleavage, and Kid Congo Powers (Gun Club, Cramps, Bad Seeds), whose partnership "began at the deathbed of a mutual friend." With this melodramatic beginning, Powers set out to form a band of true eccentrics that, by its very nature, would produce truly eccentric music. And *Music To Remember Him By* is that. Norvell's throaty voice and anthemic phrasings seep into every song with enough heartache and melodrama to make Helen Merrill fans weak in the knees. She hits every note like a spurned housewife drunk on cooking sherry and Jackie Suzanne, as Powers' shimmering, spaghetti-Western guitar lines play off drummer Joseph Berardi's (James White & The Blacks, Stan Ridgeway) spare percussion (bongos are a big favorite) and Kristain Hoffman's (Klaus Nomi, Mumps) theatrical keyboard and piano stylings. The majority of *Music To Remember Him By* could be written off as kitschy post-modern coffee house music if it weren't so inherently creepy and compelling. It's all so brilliantly un-rock-like that it has a weird, punk edge to it. Congo Norvell is nothing if not an acquired taste, but a lot of fun just the same.

—Scott Frampton

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 25. Touring through December.

FILE UNDER: Spooky, over-the-top cabaret.

R.I.Y.L.: Nick Cave, Weimar Berlin, pill-addled Judy Garland.

CHRIS CONNELLY *Shipwreck* Wax Trax!-TVT

This is a strange record. Not willfully strange in the way that Chris Connelly's indistro-rock resume, which includes a permanent membership in Revolting Cocks and stints in most of the other AJ Jourgensen burlesque extravaganzas, would suggest—it is something more inherently curious. Connelly always could affect Bowie affectations even better than the middle-aged white duke himself, and here his dramatic, sonorous voice breathes life into everything from hurdy-gurdy folk melodies to the crunching rock you'd expect of a Jourgensen acolyte. Without the usual hyperbolic noise, Connelly's voice seeps into you, lingering like a unwanted stare. The fact that the phrases it plants in your memory ("It's some kind of fur shoe painting/Love me all the whores/broken comfort men's and atmosphere/Oppression that falls/Into haircut steel") sound like tour-bus Gertrude Stein only adds to the effect. With the help of William Tucker, whose own work history runs from the instrumental jazz-punk of Regressive Aid (featuring the future Gone/Rollins Band rhythm section of Andrew Weiss and Simeon Cain) to touring gigs with My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult, *Shipwreck* is assembled like a madperson's *A Quick One*, traipsing through most imaginable rock genres in no logical order. It's a record that will appeal to deep-thinking fans of Connelly's earlier *Whiplash Boychild*, and prove confusing to Ministry minions. And that's probably the point.

—Konrad Vost

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 18.

FILE UNDER: Theatrical folk-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Late '70s David Bowie, The London Suede, The Associates.

CONTAINÉ *I Want It All* Enchanté

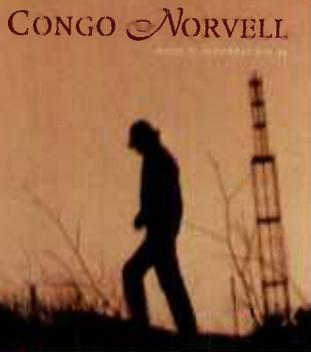
Containé—a duo of Fontaine Toups from Versus and Connie Lovatt from Alkaline—makes its debut with eight light and breezy songs for the lovelorn. Vocals are the group's preeminent feature: Toups has perfected the art of the "oooh," and the two singing together ascend to harmonic heaven. With the emphasis on singing, the music takes a back seat, with tentative guitars seeming to lag behind the rest of the song, and drums that are nearly inaudible even on the few songs where they're used. Versus-style rock dominates "Mean Song," but the remaining seven tracks aren't really rock at all. Simplicity abounds, and the group's lyrics have a haiku-like straightforwardness: "Every time I see you/I just run for cover/You don't hear what you're saying/I wish you'd stop and listen." Though Containé is not afraid to sing angry words, they're never sung angrily; each track is covered with the same sweet glaze. But you can't overlook Containé's talent and tunefulness, and if it's pretty rock you like, *I Want It All* does the job well.

—Megan McCarthy

DATALOG: Release date: Oct. 20.

FILE UNDER: Kind-hearted tunesters.

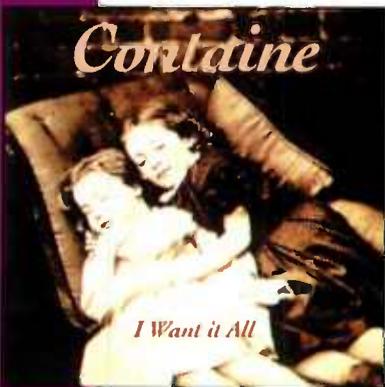
R.I.Y.L.: Lois, Scrawl, Grenadine.



## Chris Connelly



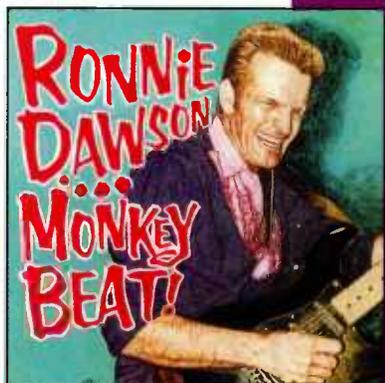
## Containé



"At one point, I thought about using 'My Sharona' for the sodomy rape sequence, because 'My Sharona' has a really good sodomy bear to it." —Director Quentin Tarantino on the music for his movie *Pulp Fiction*.

**RONNIE DAWSON** *Monkey Beat!* No Hit-Crystal Clear Sound

The art of swagger is difficult to define and even harder to master: Few can pull it off, the rest embarrass themselves. But when it comes to rockabilly, that distinction separates the bum with the right haircut, clothes and command of '50s slang from the *real* thing, the merely good from the truly *gone*. An earful of Ronnie Dawson's *Monkey Beat!* proves beyond doubt that Dawson is indeed the real thing. A legend amongst rockabilly collectors due mostly to two sides he cut in the '50s, "Action Packed" and "Rockin' Bones," Dawson came roaring out of retirement a few years back (he's 55 now!) to lay the competition to waste. *Monkey Beat!*'s best moments are a reminder of the way rockabilly, and all rock 'n' roll for that matter, was meant to be: raw, subversive, wild, sexy. Completely free from both the self-consciousness of a budding young greaseball's kowtowing and the typical oldster's boring nostalgia trip, Dawson and his band sound like they're having the time of their lives. Dawson's voice and phrasing clearly owe a debt to Jerry Lee Lewis, but when the raunchy guitar on "Up Jumped The Devil" kicks in, or when Dawson starts to rantin' about "Monkey Beat City," you'll be too busy ballin' the jack to ponder questions of rock lineage and influence. Handsome Dick Manitoba said it best: "Cook it out, baby, Daddy!" —Steve McGuirl



**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 18. CD also contains entire 1988 LP *Still A Lot Of Rhythm*.  
**FILE UNDER:** Ramroddin' Daddy shows the kids how it's done.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Rev. Horton Heat (Dawson covers Heat's "Rockin' Dog"), Hasil Adkins.

**DEUS** *Worst Case Scenario* Island

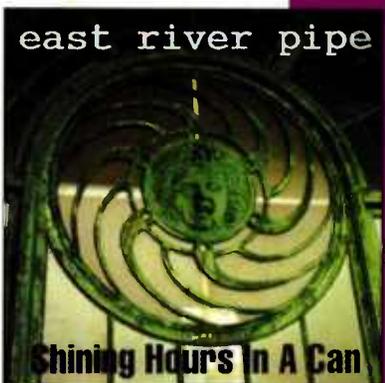
In what seems like a retort to the Sugarcubes' declaration that "Deus does not exist," Belgian band Deus announces its arrival with this intriguing fricassee of tunes. *Worst Case Scenario* tweaks standard rock formula by giving Klaas Janzoon's violin the kind of sonic spotlight treatment usually reserved for a lead guitar (if lead guitars are "axes," are lead violins "bows"?). Deus' bow-grinding mingles nicely with bass, guitar and keyboards on "Suds & Soda" and is the central element of "Via." The band's a multi-talented bunch: Vocalist Tom Barman is a renowned squash player, guitarist Rudy Trove created the impressive cover painting and Julle De Borgher is credited with drums, timpani, maracas and guitar, as well as the cryptic-sounding metalophone and gas heating. While bands with such eclectic potential often end up just sounding loopy, Deus' restraint gives *Worst Case Scenario* a laid-back feel, especially on the cool pace of the title track and "Morticiachair." Sincerity permeates the melodies of "Hotellounge (be the death of me)," the contemplative "Jigsaw You" and the melancholy "Right As Rain." Deus does put on its party hats for "Shake Your Hip" and the goofjazzzy big-band chant of "Divebomb Djingle." The wild-card sensibility and focus on songcraft wafting through *Worst Case Scenario* endures through multiple listens. —Robin Eisgrau



**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 18. First single and video "Suds & Soda."  
 Touring U.S. in March.  
**FILE UNDER:** Bohemian sprawl.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Camper Van Beethoven, Velvet Underground, Soul Coughing.

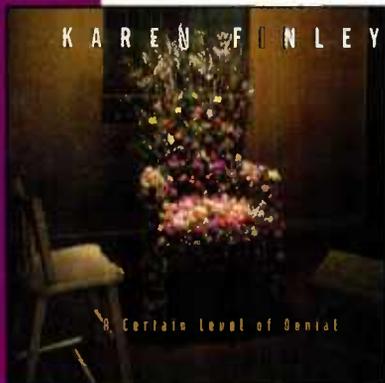
**EAST RIVER PIPE** *Shining Hours In A Can* Ajax

The music of F.M. Cornog, a.k.a. East River Pipe, is born of a soul-baring, lonely spirit. His songs reek of isolation and angst, lyrics sprung from the haze of sleepless nights and foggy sunrises. And, as you might expect of a self-described recluse, his preferred recording technology is the edge-roughening four-track. But the abrasive atonality that would signal deep bitterness is noticeably absent from East River Pipe's sound. Instead, ERP's music-box melodies, amiably groovy '70s riffs and sweetly jangling pop create an almost cheerful blend of melancholy. *Shining Hours In A Can* compiles material from earlier singles and EPs with a bit of new material. For those who missed it the first time around, the opening "Make A Deal With The City" would be as sweet a love song as they come, except that it isn't about love. The peppy strum of "My Life Is Wrong" and "Times Square Go-Go Boy" is James-like, though with an extra layer of emotion, and "When Will Your Friends All Disappear?" is gently sociopathic. Although the songs occasionally stray toward the dizzy melodrama of Goth-rock, ERP's feel and feelings remain real throughout. For those who prefer to drink their bitter cup of alienation with cream and sugar, *Shining Hours in A Can* is the perfect brew. —Megan McCarthy



**DATALOG:** Release date: Aug. 30.  
**FILE UNDER:** Gentle, heart-tugging pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** The Byrds, Nick Drake, Smog.

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


**KAREN FINLEY** *A Certain Level Of Denial* Rykodisc

You may remember Finley as the performance artist who used to smear chocolate "shit" all over herself and shove yams up her yin yang in some statement of... well, uh, I don't quite recall. Within the first thirty seconds of this lengthy monologue, I'm reminded. Finley's spoken performance attacks the AIDS crisis and people's willing passivity, takes on the media and public that condone male accosters over their female victims, then moves onto universal health care, before returning to AIDS, the social impotence of females, and once again, AIDS. "We're going to feminize this planet," Finley announces in "It's My Body," an apt summing-up of all her myriad eruptions that would save us a lot of time if it were a single.

Strangely, though titles like "Unfair & Unjust," "Lost Hope" and "Act Of Conscience" correctly hint at Finley's card-catalog of liberal complaint, she accosts trendy East Village/Soho types, and professes to "hate protected liberalism." Where else does she expect to find her audience? When "He's Going Home" disses Midwest locales and the macho stereotypes that she imagines there, her accents slant towards the unconvincing and condescending, and her reactions to the media are at least as stereotypical and one dimensional as she believes theirs to be.

Regrettably, neither Finley's status as a target of pro-censorship conservatives nor the Lincoln Center board that commissioned this work guarantees her work's validity. Unlike Diamanda Galas, she seems to bring no human dimension to the AIDS crisis, perhaps because her willingness to harangue wins out over a creative spark. Even if you're sympathetic to her points, you're not likely to be either enlightened or inspired by this rant.

—Eric Gladstone

**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 1.

**FILE UNDER:** Performance art.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Lydia Lunch, Maggie Estep.

**ROBERT FORSTER** *I Had A New York Girlfriend* Beggars Banquet

A silly rock critic once whined that the two boy singers in Australia's late Go-Betweens, Robert Forster and Grant McLennan, had interchangeable voices. *Rubbish*. Listen to the two singers' post-GBs solo work (each is on his third solo LP) and it's clear they're about as identical as espresso and Sanka. McLennan is serious, sentimental, and sensitive where Forster is sometimes spooky/dark, sometimes clever/wacky. By recording only covers on *I Had A New York Girlfriend*, in simple-sparse arrangements, the deep-voiced Forster has made a record remarkably different from his brilliant solo LP, *Danger In The Past*, on which he formed a stellar recording partnership with ex-Birthday Party/Bad Seed Mick Harvey. The self-produced *Girlfriend* is so breezy and laid-back, it seems as if he and a bunch of pals (including Harvey on (mostly) bass and Warren Ellis of the Dirty 3 on violin) just had a blast some weekend pumping out these starry-eyed beauties with frightening ease.

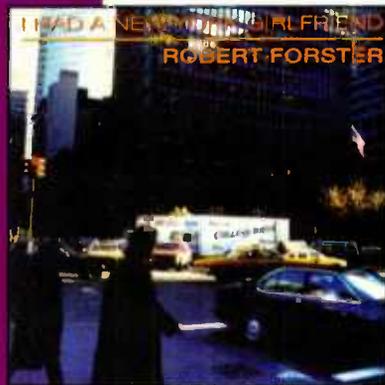
Forster waltzes down country music's open road with these 12 covers, singing with trademark tears-in-his-Foster's-oil-can melancholy and an occasional wink. Most recognizable are Martha and the Muffins' "Echo Beach," Grant Hart's supercatchy "2541," and "Alone," a power-ballad-era Heart song penned by '80s hitmakers Kelly and Steinberg. But Forster fills his new cowboy boots most successfully on lesser-known tracks such as the mesmerizing "Bird" and "Look Out Here Comes Tomorrow" (with delightful hand claps). *Girlfriend* should ensure that this celebration of his favorite songwriters (Guy Clark, Bob Dylan, Neil Diamond, Keith Richards, and more) will snag Forster an unlimited credit card from the Bank Of Country Music.

—Gail O'Hara

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Down Under country jukebox.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Shawn Colvin, mellower Nick Cave, Lyle Lovett.



"UNDERSTATED MASTERY OF METAPHOR" MY ASS: A press release for Kittywinder's "Wishing Well"/"Narrow Canal" 7" begins, "So, do you know Blake's concept of Innocence and Experience? Both elements interact subtly with an understated mastery of metaphor and allusion... Such are the qualities of a snowflakes' [sic] uniqueness before melting," *only to end with the following lyric from "Narrow Canal":* "The problem lies in the juxtaposition of our two respective anatomies. There's just no way you're gonna fit that big thing in there. My narrow canal, your boat is too big for my narrow canal."

**CHARLES GAYLE WITH SUNNY MURRAY & WILLIAM PARKER** *Kingdom Come* Knitting Factory Works

The classical pianist Glenn Gould was known for occasionally humming along with the piece he was playing (you can hear it on a few of his records). Multi-instrumentalist Charles Gayle does the same thing on his piano pieces on *Kingdom Come*, except he's not really humming the tune—more like speaking in tongues. Gayle, who's best known as a saxophonist (he plays sax on most of the album), has turned free jazz into a direct expression of Christian devotion. This is not inspirational music, it's inspired music, unchained by rhythm or melody or chords (though most of these pieces have some kind of superstructure), and Gayle sometimes seems like less the player than the instrument. In bassist Sunny Murray and drummer William Parker, he's found a pair of backing musicians who can almost keep up with his ranting tone-runs, which is the best one could hope for; they even add a barrelling structure to the live tornado "Lord Lord." But from the opening piano solo "Seven Days," it's clear that Gayle's off on his own thing, rapturously shredding on whatever instrument he's playing. —Karen Eliot

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 29.

**FILE UNDER:** Christian free jazz.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Very late Coltrane, Cecil Taylor.

**GO-GO'S** *Return To The Valley Of The Go-Go's* I.R.S.

It's easy to dismiss the Go-Go's as something of a New Wave embarrassment, especially if you've looked at any of their early press photos lately. But there's no denying that they broke serious ground as the first all female-powered Top Ten band; without them, we probably wouldn't have Liz Phair or L7, or plenty of others. And even a cursory listen to this two-disc compilation, put together more as a fan package than as a hits retread, shows how well their tracks stand the test of time against so many of their peers'.

This is not just all nostalgia—though I remember well the radio show where they introduced the instrumental "Surfing And Spying" (documented here), and *Beauty And The Beat* tracks like "How Much More" and "Skidmarks On My Heart" take me back to the first high school dances where I wasn't picked on for being a 'New Waver.' Before those cuts is a priceless chunk of early stuff, including a pre-Josie Cotton version of "Johnny, Are You Queer?" and live tapes from L.A.'s Masque Club that show them as deserving little sisters to the Germs and X.

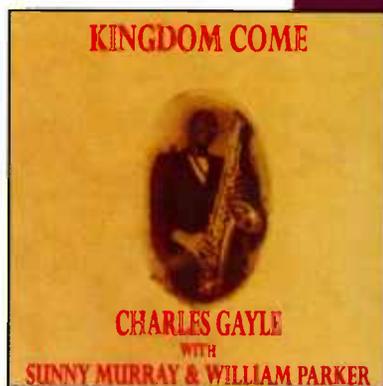
After slabs of *Beauty* and *Vacation*, and plenty of b-sides, they return to stage recordings towards the end, including "We Don't Get Along" (showing that they kept their early energy, if only in rationed doses), "Can't Stop The World" (in which singer Belinda Carlisle's loss of voice functions as a metaphor, perhaps, for the band's demise) and "Mercenary," offering a maturity that, unfortunately, few fans stuck around to appreciate.

The last three tracks, a reunion session with Velocity Girl producer John Porter, intimate how they've learned from some of their followers. Carlisle's voice is more willingly harsh than she ever let it be in their original studio stuff, and if the sentiments in "Good Girl" and "Beautiful" are as banal as ever, well, they're even better reflected by their natural maturation. What's more, the comp's closer "The Whole World Lost Its Head" is as hard a punk-pop anthem as they ever bopped out. —Eric Gladstone

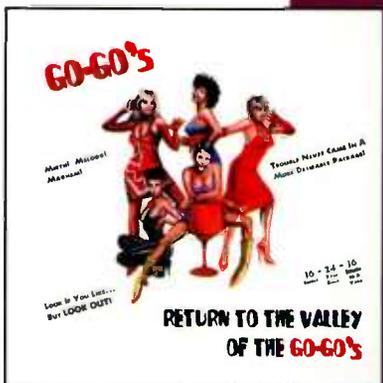
**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 18. Touring through December.

**FILE UNDER:** She-bop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Velocity Girl, Shonen Knife.



**AND YOU THOUGHT JUST HIS MUSIC WAS CHOKED WITH CLICHES:** "She's just a rocker, man... just a rock 'n' roll chick"  
—Bryan Adams' evaluation of the career of Tina Turner



**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Hey Drag City* *Drag City*

Some compilations have an organizing theme (documenting a scene, paying tribute to a particular songwriter or band); others are samplers put together to promote other records. Then there are label compilations, like *Hey Drag City*, which are a fairly new breed: The aesthetic they reflect most is less that of any performer or place than that of their compilers. In this case, it's a pretty wonderful aesthetic, that of Dan Koretzky, who started the Drag City label about five years ago. It's impossible to define a "Drag City sound," except that most of his bands play rock-derived strains of music that don't really have names, and don't really sound like one another at all. A few well-known Drag City regulars and alumni make half-hearted appearances on the album, including Royal Trux, Red Krayola and Pavement (as well as the latter's weirder sister group, Silver Jews). Stronger tracks come from less familiar groups, especially Fruitcake (a plush, sugary descendent of the legendary Drunks With Guns), Mantis (who've been broken up for years but still regularly have releases on Drag City) and Smog (the utterly creepy "Your Face," a sincere paean to fake orgasms). Best of all are the Palace Brothers' "For the Mekons et al.," a sort of stylistic kickback for their earlier cover of the Mekons-written "Horses," and the kicking "New Triton" by Desert Storm—Koretzky's own band, who have clearly been listening to a lot of Pavement, Red Krayola and Royal Trux. —Karen Eliot

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Indie-rock driving tapes.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Royal Trux, *Soluble Fish*, free-form radio.

**LIDA HUSIK/BEAUMONT HANNANT** *Evening At The Grange* *Astralwerks-Caroline*

This postmodern sugarplum of an EP has singer/songwriter Husik teaming up with ambient technoid Hannant for a sound that's like a choir of ghosts in the machine. Husik fugues and harmonizes with herself throughout, warbling as prettily (and at times as incomprehensibly) as a Cocteau Twin. Meanwhile, back at the ranch, Hannant is busy at his keyboards, punctuating every song with buzzes, blips, and other percolating flourishes. Evocative, chanted lyrics bubble up occasionally, as on "Now I'm Older, Silver Girl." As Husik ends a phrase musing "what a lovely way to guide me to my rest," a synth-cello sounds a dolorous minor riff and one feels a little too close to her gothic fantasy. "Gregory Peck" sounds like sleeptalking, with Husik murmuring incongruous phrases linked by the logic of a dream. Hannant's accompaniment is surprisingly minimal, usually limited to a simple keyboard or percussion riff, with pops and whooshes thrown in as the downbeats require. Only on "Starburst 7" does he rev it up to a full-fledged groove, and even then, the beats are as spare as a whisper. *Evening At The Grange* is a bit too subtle for its own good, but pretty enough to be appealing. —Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 18. Full-length Lida Husik album and tour in February.

**FILE UNDER:** Bubblegum goth.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Cocteau Twins, Cranes.

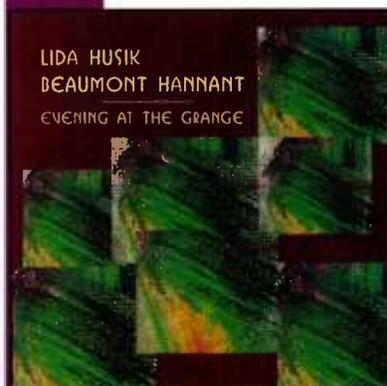
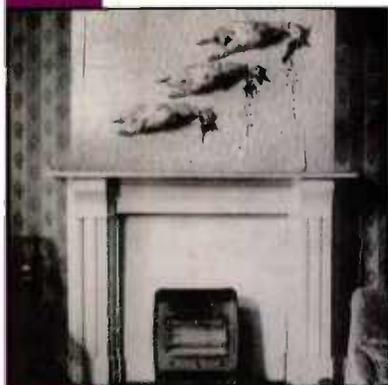
**ICE CUBE** *Bootlegs & B-Sides* *Priority*

Is it a filler album? Of course. Is it offensive? Sure, but complaining about being offended by Ice Cube is like complaining that the ocean is too wet. Do you want a copy? Well, that depends. If you don't own any Ice Cube records and want to get just one, go for this one (unless you can snare a copy of the explosive EP *Kill At Will*). If you already have an Ice Cube record, you don't need *Bootlegs*, a peculiar mix of Cube's greatest hits and weakest shit. Six of its 13 tracks are single remixes of tracks from Cube's last couple of albums, and generally superior to the earlier versions, especially "Check Yo Self," which throws in Das EFX on the chorus and puts the whole thing over the still-killer backing track from "The Message." There's a bunch of Cube's distinctive crime-does-not-pay narratives—any excuse to hear "What Can I Do?" again is a good one, but "24 With An L" is pretty redundant, especially in its very similar context. (And "It Was A Good Day" and "When I Get To Heaven" are both essential Ice Cube, but putting them two songs apart is just a mistake.) Then there's plenty of reasons to regret that English includes the words "twitch," "rich" and "switch," though the callow boast "2 N The Morning" is still awfully bracing. Finally, there's a pointless "megamix," an early-'80s album-padding trick that ought to be abandoned post-haste. This is where you've been, Cube—now where're you going? —Karen Eliot

**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 22. First single and video "What Can I Do?"

**FILE UNDER:** Gangsta treadmills.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Dr. Dre, Domino.



**JESSAMINE** *Jessamine Kranky*

Jessamine's self-titled debut long-player is a well-conceived, disjointed world, its textured noise inviting a journey through its multi-layered soundscapes. With deep roots in mid-'80s English space rock, the band concocts droning, dark melodies. While the line between hypnotic and monotonous may be fine, Jessamine puts enough variation between its steady rhythm lines to maintain a listener's keen interest through all 50-plus minutes of the album. Standouts include the gorgeous "Cellophane," whose swirling male-female vocals and tiny hook make for absolutely gripping listening, and "Don't You Know That?," a throw-everything-in-the-pot experiment that remarkably maintains a sense of direction. Recalling the earlier days of Pink Floyd, the band covers huge expanses without ever seeming to leave its starting point, avoiding the frustration that usually accompanies frenetic noise indulgences. A stunningly well-rounded debut. —Bryan McNamara

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 24.  
**FILE UNDER:** Lulling, lo-fi ambience.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Loop, Th' Faith Healers, Spacemen 3.

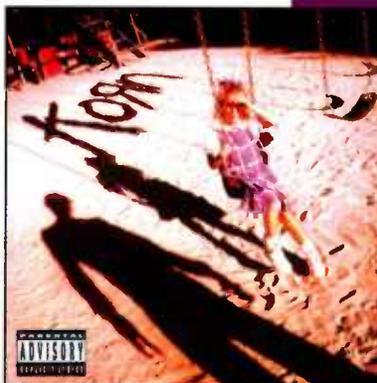


**KORN** *Korn Epic*

This self-titled hunk of Korn is a playground bully of a record. It's an idea that has more to do with the record's blunt muscularity and songs based around who is calling whom "pussy" or "faget" [sic] than with the cover photo of a small girl covering in a schoolyard swing. Korn takes the contrived rage of contemporary metal and reduces it down to a few pre-teen epithets and sublime bursts of guitar noise. And it's a deliciously effective mix. Without having to trot out the Dungeons And Dragons imagery or half-baked socio-political commentary to achieve a healthy sense of menace, Korn proves itself to be smarter than most. After all, what's more immediately frightening, the leather-winged, hoary host of Hell or the big kid that made you eat gravel for your lunch money? Exactly. And it's the tangible, perfectly senseless eruptions of anger that make the Korn's gleaming chunks of exquisite noise, often sounding like Pantera by way of Shellac, so effective. The band also spaces its crunch with bagpipes and other moments of musical weirdness. Occasionally, Korn takes more than a minute to build into a song, or stops halfway through to ponder some recording studio flotsam (like a misplaced hip-hop sample), as if to further prove that it can fuck with you at will.

—Konrad Vost

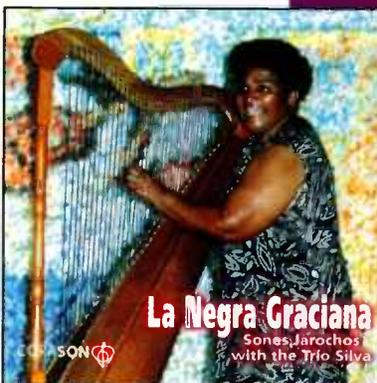
**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 11. First single "Clown."  
**FILE UNDER:** Industro-metal wedge.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Pantera, Pro-Pain, Only Living Witness.



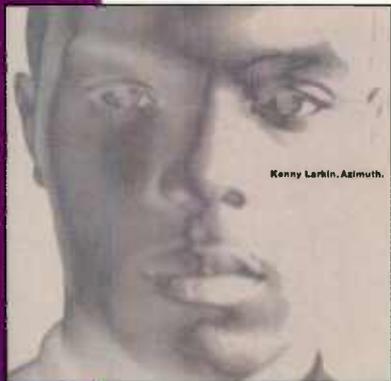
**LA NEGRA GRACIANA WITH THE TRIO SILVA** *Sones Jarochos Corason-Rounder*

The harp, parodied and maligned for decades in American movies and TV, has come into its own in the world music boom. Celtic, African and European artists have brought it into the light of popular folk, experimental pop and serious new music. But it's always been there, and Graciana Silva has been playing her harp and singing her songs in Mexico for almost 50 years. Joined by her brothers on *jarana* (guitar), voices and a second harp, La Negra Graciana has been travelling around Mexico for decades, earning her livelihood with her music. This is the modern folk music of the country, the *sones jarochos* that are the familiar turf of the hotel mariachi band. But the trio's music bypasses silliness and heads straight for the heart in unadorned acoustic frenzy. Their vitality is summed up in their music, a flurry of plucked notes and raucous vocal exchanges. Their passion for the musical life is summed up in this quote from La Negra herself: "When I don't play, I don't feel well." If you like the acoustic excursions of Los Lobos, then this is real food for your soul. —Cliff Furnal

**DATALOG:** Release date: Sep. 20.  
**FILE UNDER:** Mexican folk.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Acoustic Los Lobos, mariachi.



"There was no fucking way I was growing a goatee! I want to provide an alternative to alternative music." —Aging hair-rock avatar David Coverdale on the 1994 reincarnation of his band, Whitesnake.

Kenny Larkin, *Azimuth*.**KENNY LARKIN** *Azimuth* Warp/Wax Trax!-TVT

Just a few listens, and *Azimuth* becomes the ideal utopian soundtrack, an essential addition to any techno collection. An absolute godsend for the fan of prolific Detroit-based producer Kenny Larkin, *Azimuth* is a brilliantly produced epic that combines Larkin's smoothly executed techno/house sensibilities with a relaxed, sentimental edge.

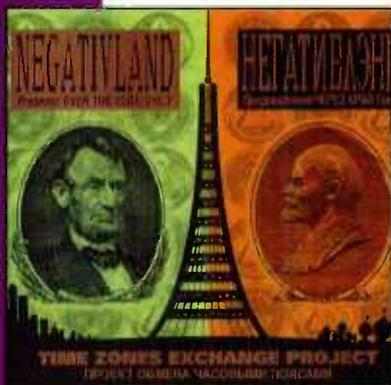
Starting with the warm, introductory "Hello" (where the listener is greeted by mysterious computer voices), the journey shows off Larkin's electronic musicianship in every imaginable style. He's obviously influenced by the forefathers of experimental jazz; bass-funk samples and lush strings combine with serious breaks to form "Azimuth." The disc ends with the blissful ambience of "My Travels," the perfect audio description of this veteran's path from his earliest recordings on +8 to the more recent Transmat material (Dark Comedy) and everywhere inbetween. Other standouts include the acid chaos of "Wires" and the swirling electro-house simplicity of "Track."

—Reade White

**DATALOG:** Release date: Sep. 13.**FILE UNDER:** Techno.**R.I.Y.L.:** Juan Atkins, Robert Armani.**MOTHER MAY I** *Mother May I* Columbia

Somewhere between *Let It Be* and Paul Westerberg's sobriety, the Replacements became an indieland franchise, simultaneously giving inspiration to and setting impossibly high standards for all of its kind to follow. Hence bands like Mother May I, who despite an impressively broad power-pop palate, cannot help but fall under the Replacements' ample shadow. This is not to disparage Mother May I's tuneful bouts of self-deprecation and bitterness—far from it. Songs like "Teenage Jesus," "Birthday Wish," "Dick And Jane" and "Basterd" [sic] are enough to warm the hearts of self-loathing, too-smart-for-their-own-good fans of impudent pop everywhere. The band's layered harmonies and finely touselled melodies—more studied than the 'Mats' feckless abandon—willingly recall the British pop of Bram Tchaikovsky and the Records. Adding to these sounds for sore ears are Damon Hennessey's quibbles-and-bitch lyrics, which when not baring his own inadequacies, make the opening cut's title, "Poison Dart," applicable throughout the set. Mother May I's power pop, with an emphasis on the latter, breaks no new ground here, but its hindsight is 20/20.

—Sue Pine

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jan. 10.**FILE UNDER:** Sweet and sour pop.**R.I.Y.L.:** Posies, Weezer, Gin Blossoms, Best Kissers In The World.**NEGATIVLAND** *Time Zones Exchange Project: Over The Edge Vol. 7* Seeland

Negativland will likely go down in the history books for its provocative combination of studio work and media pranks (getting axe murders blamed on its music, arousing the wrath of the U2 financial octopus), but at the deranged core of their multimedia empire lies *Over The Edge*, its weekly live free-form radio show on the Bay Area's KPFA. *Time Zones Exchange Project* is several months' highlights from this perplexing mix of storytelling, found sound, pop-culture samples and call-in listener participation. Listeners expecting anything resembling music over the course of the 2-CD set will be put off; the majority of Disc 1 is simply ersatz investigative reports about shadowy trillionaire C.E. Friday's efforts to capitalize on the fall of the Soviet Union. Disc 2 is much more engrossing; it's a "simulcast" of a Russian infomercial for Friday's products, depicting a hilarious collision between the ultimately-similar worlds of advertising and socialist realism. (The real gem of the collection, however, is the 28-page CD booklet, brimming with faked newspaper articles and altered photos.) 140 minutes of this meandering is a bit much to take in one sitting, but if one can treat the album less as a concept and more as a cut-up paranoid narrative *a la* Burroughs or Pynchon (imagine *The Crying Of Lot 49* as a Book-On-Tape), it will go down much easier.

—David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 20.**FILE UNDER:** Multimedia-terrorist bricolage.**R.I.Y.L.:** The Church of the Sub-Genius, channel surfing, *The Illuminatus Trilogy*, Firesign Theater.

**NIRVANA MTV Unplugged In New York DGC**

It's alternately a blessing and a curse that every *MTV Unplugged* record is indelibly tied to the powerful visual image of the television program. Particularly in the days of shock after Kurt Cobain's death, rock fans saw this special again and again, and can vividly recall the poignant images throughout: the stage of flowers and warm lighting, bassist Krist Novoselic looking gangly yet oddly comfortable playing his accordion, the revealing grimaces on Kurt's face as his abused but still-tilting voice carried his songs. The important difference between *MTV Unplugged In New York* and its numerous Unplugged peers is that it doesn't need the classy MTV visual as its crutch. This acoustic recording is just as revealing and meaningful on its own, giving the forlorn, depressed quality of these songs the opportunity to peek out from under the anger of their punk electric versions. The self-conscious woe of "Dumb" and the down-and-out "All Apologies" are moving moments of Kurt's damning himself with his own words, and the memorable hooks of every song are as rock-solid in this setting as they are with their usual visceral roar. Engaging covers of songs by the Vaselines, Bowie, and their "favorite performer" Leadbelly, as well as a trio of Meat Puppets songs (performed with members of the band) are warmly and respectfully delivered, and the Nirvana songs come from all points in their career. For fans as well as the curious, *MTV Unplugged In New York* is a must.

—Cheryl Botchick

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 29. Video for "About A Girl."

**FILE UNDER:** Nirvana.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Nirvana.

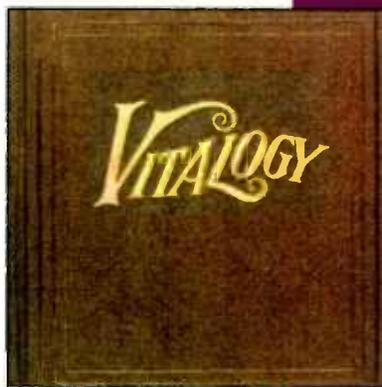
**PEARL JAM Vitalogy Epic**

Pearl Jam, I'm sure, would like nothing more than to just release records like any other rock band, but anything it does is an event. Indeed, it should be noted, in the interests of disclosure, that this review is based not on the customary repeated listenings that an advance tape affords, but a special listening session conducted at the Sony Studios, where a few dozen journalists were grouped in a cordoned-off portion of the Nirvana "Unplugged" site to hear the record blasted out of refrigerator-sized studio monitors. If anything, the odd setting only underscored what makes Pearl Jam so powerful. Thick, muscular basslines reverberated off the concrete floor as Eddie Vedder's scratchy, ardent wail instantly cut through the natural cynicism that listening to a new release with a catered piece of herbed goat cheese focaccia in your hand engenders. It's Vedder's ability to convey this feeling of having his soul cleaved open by the events around him that makes *Vitalogy*, and all of Pearl Jam's records, remarkable. When the record strays into experimental sound collages and metronomic rhythms that never seem to take off, the band seems cold, distant; the musicianship may be such that the band can pull off this sort of studio noodling, but it doesn't draw you in. In songs like the ode to 45s, "Spin The Black Circle," Vedder struggles to constrain his bluesy keen within punk phrasings as the band rips through a furious rhythm. At moments like these, *Vitalogy* reveals Pearl Jam to be simply an exceptionally talented rock band, and as much as that points to the band's brilliance, it also accounts for its paroxysms of ordinariness. At times, it becomes obvious that this is a record made only a few months after the last—some of these songs are still unformed, not fully realized. Still, there are enough of those moments where Vedder's clenched crooning is given full play and somber semi-acoustic songs unfurl into something sweeping and transcendent that this record feels like manna from Seattle. And as much as *Vitalogy* gives hints that there's a masterpiece yet to come from Pearl Jam, that's all you can really ask. —Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Release date: Dec. 6 (vinyl: Dec. 22). First single "Spin The Black Circle."

**FILE UNDER:** Pearl Jam.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Pearl Jam.



Why Pearl Jam named their album after an old book Jeff Ament found: "The foregoing article on self abuse should be in the hands of every young person as the means of saving many bright intellectuals from becoming stupid or imbeciles or lunatics or from filling premature graves and be worth to them more than Astor's millions." —from the book *Vitalogy*.


**PET SHOP BOYS** *Disco 2* EMI

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *House Of Love* Drive-VRG

In any reasonably large city, you can walk a few blocks and find somebody selling dance mix tapes. They're usually cheaply copied cassettes with their titles photocopied on Astrobrite paper, a medium for local DJs to show off their prowess at mixing one fleetingly popular dance track into another. The idea is to reproduce at home the sensation of dazed dry-humping under the influence of questionable Ecstasy. You'd think that somebody would have caught on before now that there'd be a market for dance mix CDs, but no. There've been "60 minutes of continuous music" discs and records for years, but they're usually three minutes apiece of pop hits with quick crossfades. Suddenly, though, there's a handful of DJ-centered mix CD's popping up, complete with glorious vinyl surface noise. Pet Shop Boys' *Disco 2* (mixed by Danny Rampling, though it only says that on the inside) is the highest-profile, and *House Of Love* (on which the only names on the front cover are the mixers, Mr. Koolade and Steve Loria) is one of the most interesting.

Pet Shop Boys have always made like they were a disco band with a taste for pop crossover, which isn't quite true. They make pop records, first and foremost, and keep their ears to the dancefloor second. That means that their beats are always following fashion, rather than leading it. But it also means that their production is deep and immaculate—the more you turn it up, the more you'll hear. They're also British and smart, which means they've got a very dry sense of humor. In their case, the joke is making disco that's completely sexless: genitals airbrushed out, everything flawless, overwrought and antiseptic. This is great in small doses (like last year's Social Realist take on "Go West"), but the hour-long flow of PSB mixes and dubs on *Disco 2* (a quickie to promote the "Absolutely Fabulous" single; the first *Disco* was discrete extended mixes of early hits) is almost too smooth and clean to bear. You may move your hips, but you won't feel the urge to grind them into anything.

*House Of Love*, on the other hand, is the real deal: messy, crackly and totally hot. Mr. Koolade's mix (which occupies the first and better half of the disc) goes for records that concentrate on fragments—there's no songs to be found here, just bits of vocals and little synthesizer riffs zooming into one another in an order that makes sense on a grand scale. It's all climax here, from the bassline in D.J. EFX's "Groove To Me" that resolves itself every two seconds to the heart-fluttering Annie Lennox sample that graces Kenny "Dope" Gonzalez' "Axis-Dancin'." When we get six minutes of Sandra Williams' decontextualized yowl of "uuhh, give it to me give it to me" followed by what sounds like an even more decontextualized Sade gasping "so good, so deep," it's aimed considerably below the neck, but it's an incredibly effective example of the mixer's art. —Douglass Wolk

**DATALOG:** Release date: Sep. 20 (Pet Shop Boys), Oct. 25 (*House Of Love*).

**FILE UNDER:** Dancefloor to go.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Deee-Lite, Moby, *Dance Party USA*.

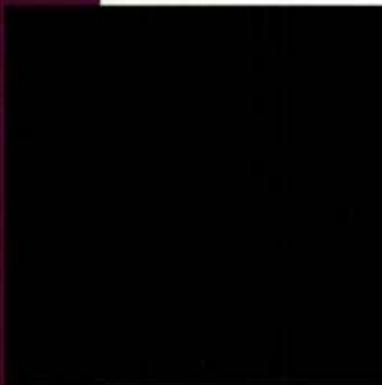
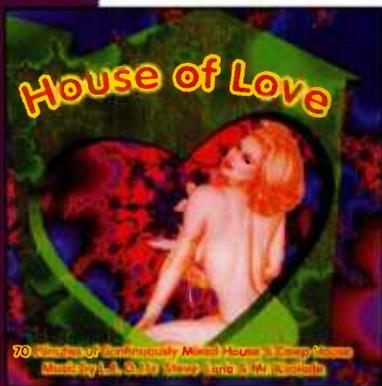
**PRINCE** *The Black Album* Warner Bros.

In December, 1987, the-artist-then-known-as-Prince was poised to unleash what many deemed his baddest, blackest album ever. A week before its release, the man had a "dark night of the soul" and scrapped it, claiming in his usual cryptic way that he had allowed his "dark side to create something evil," and, should the Almighty beckon, he wouldn't want it to be his last statement to the world. (And you think you've got problems?) Instead, he threw himself into the decidedly more optimistic *Lovesexy*, and *The Black Album* went on to become one of the most famous (and frequently bootlegged) unreleased albums of all time. Seven years later, for commercial, contractual musical or numerological reasons, the man has decided to let *The Black Album* fly (although reportedly it will only be available until the end of January, 1995). True to hype, the album is plenty nasty: Song topics include a soft-porn paean to Cindy Crawford ("Cindy C."), an extremely shortsighted dis of rap as a musical form ("Dead On It"), and the murder of an unfaithful wife (the brilliant and brutally funky "Bob George"—a staple of the *Lovesexy* live set and probably the most twisted track he's ever done). The only breath of air comes on the patchouli-drenched ballad "When 2 R In Love," which appears unaltered from the *Lovesexy* version. Although Prince performed most of the songs by himself, the album marks the vinyl debut of his ace *Sign 'O' The Times* touring band, with drummer Sheila E. and bassist Levi Seacer Jr. contributing some gutbustin' licks to "Le Grind" and the instrumental "2 Nigs United 4 West Compton." *The Black Album* isn't a holy grail for the casual fan—half of the eight tracks are either filler or much too long—but for lovers of Prince's late-'80s work, it's a chip from the chocolate fireball. (Note: Because this was deemed a "security release," this review is based on a copy of one of the aforementioned bootlegs.) —\*@#%!

**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 22.

**FILE UNDER:** Hardcore funk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Prince, Funkadelic, Ice Cube.



**RADIAL SPANGLE** *Syrup Macrame* *Beggars Banquet*

Imagine a guitar-rock continuum—at one end, Sepultura; at the other, the Grateful Dead. Speed metal reprises piano lessons: when the rehearsals are tight enough, they hold a recital. Those loose, lazy hippies, on the other hand, can improvise indefinitely from a repertory of time-honored phrases just like the ancient bards. So although the continuum runs from hard-wired compulsiveness to sleepy stupefaction, both ends are occupied by competent musicians. Now imagine millions of young people under intense peer pressure to be rock stars (even MTV, locus of rock's cults of personality, refers to "your band")—some call it the "indie-rock explosion." Its musical forms can be easily deduced. For these novices, single-note improvisation is out of the question (high risk of playing in wrong key), as is speed (too difficult). The songs on *Syrup Macrame*, slow and simple, form the great bulge at the continuum's center. Breathy voices sing pure notes (the easiest way to sing) while "noisy" guitars play distorted barre chords (the easiest way to play guitar). The drums hearken back to Moe Tucker with *1-and-2-and* straightforwardness. Turn it up, and it's grunge; turn it down, and it's love rock. Like Radial Spangle's last record (*Ice Cream Headache*), this one sits squarely on the fence. The love/grunge formula is twisted by creepy themes—pedophilia, masturbation, heavy snow—from the male vocalist (it's hard to tell what the female vocalist has in mind—something about the need to keep her legs crossed), and there are interesting guitar and vocal effects along with some banjo solos. Only three songs out of ten crank up the guitars to grunge level. If ambient music is wallpaper, this is a comforter: plenty soft, but you'd rather not know where the feathers came from.

—Nell Zink

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Alternately knowing and naive wimp rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Portastatic, Galaxie 500, Thinking Fellers Union Local 282.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Rebirth Of Cool, Vol. 2* *4th & B'way*

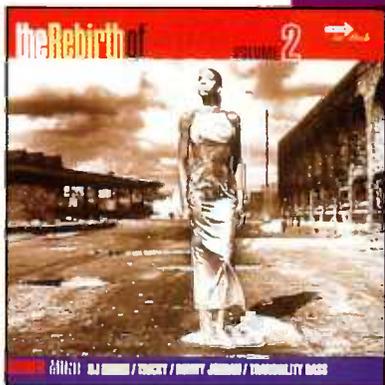
On a series of albums conceived as a marriage of hip hop and jazz along the lines of Guru's *Jazzmatazz*, 4th & B'way's *Rebirth Of Cool* project strives to recapture the musical vision that inspired Miles Davis' 1949 cool jazz masterpiece *Birth Of The Cool*. And the jazz instrumentalists, vocalists and rappers recruited for the project have generally succeeded in doing just that. This second outing draws from bebop, cool jazz, fusion, hip hop, funk and reggae to produce a well-rounded and cohesive listening experience that twists and turns in a number of interesting directions. On "My Favorite Things," guitarist Ronny Jordan uses the melody from the classic *Sound Of Music* song as a launching pad for nimble improvisation over an uptempo hip hop beat and bassline, while on Palmskin Productions' "Spock With A Beard," energized saxophone solos explode on a frantic hip-hop rhythm laced with samples from an old *Star Trek* episode. DJ Crush's "Just Wanna Touch Her" is a bubbling instrumental reggae track punctuated by jazzy guitar and horn riffs, and "Crazy" by Outside and "World Mutation" by Tone Productions feature laid-back rappers philosophizing atop funky jazz tracks. There are some weak links in the album's musical chain, but in general, this *Rebirth* maintains the tradition of jazz innovation.

—Philippe Wamba

**DATALOG:** Release date: Sep. 27.

**FILE UNDER:** Great tastes that go great together.

**R.I.Y.L.:** US3, Red Hot + Cool, Branford Marsalis.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Respect To Studio One* *Heartbeat*

Jamaican producer and record guru Sir Coxsone Dodd is to reggae what George Clinton and James Brown are to hip-hop, and more. As chief of the legendary Studio One recording studio and label, Coxsone supervised the production of some of reggae's greatest classics in the '60s and '70s, providing the musical bedrock for all that was to follow and supplying contemporary dancehall with many of its most popular riddims. *Respect To Studio One* is a compilation of the label's greatest reggae and ska hits. The double CD is a virtual timeline of early reggae history, chronicling the shift from ska to rocksteady to reggae with pivotal songs like "Simmer Down" (a Wailers track back from when Bob had an Afro and wore a suit) and "Chicken Scratch" (a Lee Perry ska classic that foreshadowed his later experiments with dub). It takes us through the deejay era with the toasting twins Michigan and Smiley on "Nice Up The Dance" and the Lone Ranger on "Natty Dread On The Go," and we hear the hints of what dancehall was to become on classic tracks like "Armageddon Time" by Willie Williams, one of the best "sound clash" songs ever made. It includes blockbusters like Horace Andy's "Skylarking," a song still cherished in tiny rickety domino bars in rural Jamaica, as well as lesser-known favorites like "Have Mercy Mr. Percy" by The Termites. *Respect To Studio One* is a must-buy for any serious collector of reggae music, and an enjoyable introduction to the genre and its early years for a novice.

—Philippe Wamba



**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 18.

**FILE UNDER:** Reggae on the town.

**R.I.Y.L.:** *Tougher Than Tough, The Harder They Come* soundtrack.

do you want more?!?!?!?

THE  
ROOTSTHE ROOTS *Do You Want More!?! Geffen*

Hip-hop, a genre of canned beats and laboratory samples, has broken out of its test-tube origins to explore the worlds of live jazz and funk. On the Brand New Heavies' 1992 breakthrough *Heavy Rhyme Experience*, guest rapper Grand Puba heralded the dawn of a new hip-hop era with the memorable declaration, "The bass player's real and the drummer's real." Philly-based rap-jazz ensemble the Roots continue this move from laid to played grooves on their debut offering, *Do You Want More!?!*, a mellow new recording that cockily celebrates its lack of synthesized sound. Inventively backed by bassist Hub, drummer B.R.O. THE R.?, and guest instrumentalists Steve Coleman on sax, Rufus Harley on jazz bagpipes (!), and Rozell the human beatbox, rappers Malik B. and Black Thought spin rapid rhymes of self-aggrandizement over original bass-heavy jazz compositions guaranteed to set heads nodding. Unfortunately, save for on "The Unlocking," a chillingly graphic poem about gang rape recited by guest vocalist Ursula Rucker, the Roots' lyrics are predictably empty, and are barely rescued by the distractions provided by the band. Nonetheless, the group shines on funky tracks like "I Remain Calm," a laid-back groove with an addictive bassline, and on more haunting offerings such as "Swept Away," a breathy hip-hop neo-ballad, to firmly establish themselves as daring and highly capable pioneers of the new live hip-hop. The bass player's real, the drummer's real, and the jazz bag-pipe player's real, too. —Philippe Wamba

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Live hip-hop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** A Tribe Called Quest, Stetsasonic.

THE SCHRAMMS *Little Apocalypse East Side Digital*

Though he may be best known for his stint with Yo La Tengo, Dave Schramm is a powerful songwriter in his own right. With his band the Schramms, he creates captivating, open songs, soundtracks to sunny days and broken hearts. When Schramm sings "You don't like most people and you don't love me" on "Home," he avoids irony in favor of plaintive inquisition. Schramm's twangy voice and George Usher's glistening Hammond organ add beauty and depth to each song. *Little Apocalypse* is equally suited for long country back-road drives and for background music at the family barbecue. In the tradition of Gram Parsons, the band combines elements of country and rock 'n' roll, remaining true to the integrity of both. And even if "country music" has had a great deal of its meaning distilled away, the Schramms borrow its realism and honesty to revisit what makes back-porch music so gratifying: vibrant songs about love, loss and other heartbreaks. —Bryan MacNamara

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 4.

**FILE UNDER:** Country-flavored, rootsy rock 'n' roll.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Uncle Tupelo, the Bottle Rockets, Freedy Johnston.

SHADY *World Beggars Banquet*

Former Mercury Rev singer David Baker's latest endeavor furthers his exploration of otherworldly pop music. It was said after last year's *Boces* that maybe the Rev had backed itself into a corner of being too weird for its own good. Baker's subsequent departure gives credence to the notion that the band was cramping his style. *World*, by contrast, finds Baker traversing a variety of styles, from radio-friendly pop to country. He also parades out an all-star cast of guests, including members of the Boo Radleys, St. Johnny, Seam, and Th' Faith Healers. The resulting amalgamation revolves around deconstructing conventional song structures with a variety of found songs and tongue-in-cheek wit. Baker uses his quirky charisma to guide each song down an uncharted path. "Narcotic Candy" juxtaposes a simple guitar line with oppressive running water noises before bursting into an uneven, disorienting pop melody. The frantic last track "Are You Okay?" is a reaffirmation that Baker can still throw together countless sounds and elements and come up with something ultimately interesting and listenable. —Bryan MacNamara

**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 8.

**FILE UNDER:** Interplanetary pop music.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Mercury Rev, Robyn Hitchcock, Bongwater.

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

**SIUXSIE & THE BANSHEES** *The Rapture* Geffen

The first important thing to bear in mind about Siouxsie & The Banshees is that they're a singles band, not an album band. People don't remember *Join Hands* or *Tinderbox* or *Superstition*—they remember "Spellbound" and "Peek-A-Boo" and "Kiss Them For Me," which is why the essential Siouxsie albums are the thrill-packed singles compilations *Once Upon A Time* and *Twice Upon A Time*. The second thing is that the band is subject to the law of diminishing returns, which is why *Once* is five years' worth of singles and *Twice* took 12 more years. And, in fact, for most of *The Rapture*, Siouxsie and the group sound like they're just doing their job, which is a very bad sign. There are no obvious hits, just a lot of pattering goth-lite rhythms that would have sounded fine a decade ago but don't hold up now. The third thing is that a band still doesn't survive for 19 years (the Banshees' first appearance was at a punk festival in 1976) without having something unique and powerful at its core. Siouxsie Sioux's voice is still the exquisite instrument it's always been, and though her *Rapture* producer John Cale isn't much in evidence on this album, he and the band do give her one tremendous opportunity to stretch out: the 11-minute title track, levitated by keyboards that recall the gut-twisting harmonium on Nico's Cale-produced *The Marble Index*. "The Rapture" is the most adventurous thing Siouxsie's done in years, though the album's otherwise not so hot. The best strategy is to hope she continues to follow her strengths, and hold out for *Thrice Upon A Time*.

—Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jan. 17. First single "O Baby."

**FILE UNDER:** Long-in-the-tooth Goths.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Sisters Of Mercy, the Creatures.

**SPOKEPOKER** *Spokepoker* Ham

Prediction: This time next year, every mealy-mouthed, Weezer-dressed alternative rock nabob will be slobbering over their spreadsheets to sign SF siren Val Stadler and her lonesome outfit Spokepoker. Just remember, you heard it here first. This tattooed, heavily-pierced blues goddess is more than just another MTV pretty face—she's got the raspy, cage-rattling vocals of Janis Joplin, and a snarling roadhouse confidence that's so seasoned it's scary. *Spokepoker* may only sport six songs, but it gives you a great handle on Stadler's writing, which skewers traditional R&B riffs with creative, off-kilter phrasings and pregnant, emotive pauses. In fact, the chorus of "Elations" undergoes so many tortuous turns, takes so long to reach, there's a weird feeling of satisfaction you get when she finally murmurs "When will I be going/When am I going home." And Stadler's not afraid to lyrically toy with her outrageous appearance: "Got a white trash angel/How she watches over me," she rumbles in "White Trash Angel," sounding more like she's grabbed a demon by its pointed tail and can't let go. But that's half the attraction here. This girl is possessed, driven. By hook or by crook, she'll be in your face in no time flat.

—Tom Lanham

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 25. Touring the West Coast in January.

**FILE UNDER:** Blues belters.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Mazzy Star, the Pretenders, Shawn Colvin.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Tulare Dust: A Songwriters' Tribute To Merle Haggard* Hightone

Of all the country music compilations released in 1994, *Tulare Dust* is, without a doubt, the best. In fact, it's one of the finest country records released so far in the '90s, an affirmation of the remarkable songwriting prowess of Merle Haggard. More than any songwriter since Hank Williams, Sr., Haggard's songs have embodied the true spirit of country music, exploring a vast range of topics from road songs to social and political commentary to drinking songs to love ballads, with a broad palate of styles including blues, folk, swing and honky-tonk. The fact that co-producers Tom Russell and Dave Alvin were able to gather such a remarkable lineup of today's cutting-edge country and pop artists (including Dwight Yoakam, Iris Dement, Joe Ely, Lucinda Williams, Robert Earl Keen, Marshall Crenshaw, Rosie Flores, Peter Case and Billy Joe Shaver) for *Tulare Dust* is testimony to the range of the 1994 Country Music Hall Of Fame inductee's influence. While some of the tunes covered here may not be among Haggard's best known, we can only wish all country records were this loaded with passionate performances and spirited tunefulness.

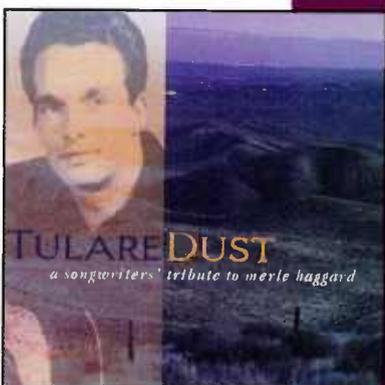
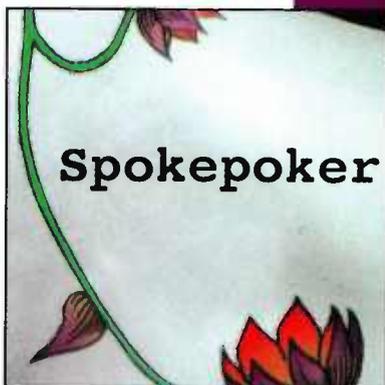
—Jim Caligiuri

**DATALOG:** Release date: Nov. 8.

**FILE UNDER:** Country tributes.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Merle Haggard.

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





## Urban Species

**URBAN SPECIES** Listen *Talkin Loud/Payday-London*

Giles Peterson's British label Talkin Loud has built its reputation on groovy singles that added new words to the dance/soul vocabulary. Full Talkin Loud releases by groups like Young Disciples and now, Urban Species, continue to broaden the definition of the new black music from the UK. You may call Urban Species the new bright star in the nebulously-defined galaxy known as acid jazz, but it's just as shortsighted to call this outfit an Acid Jazz group as it is to call David Bowie a pop singer. A trio augmented by various guests, Urban Species doesn't just give gratuitous props to jazz and soul legends, it looks ahead, splicing genes old and new to create a confident debut thick with chops, foresight and knowledge of self. The band's laid-back approach juggles reggae, flute-laden jazz, R&B jams, rap and more as if it were an innate skill. Adding to that ease is rapper Mintos, who is easily one of the most palatable wordsmiths around, drawing his listeners in with honey-sweet delivery rather than harsh boasting. Two tracks into *Listen*, you've already realized the band's precious value. —Steve Ciabattoni

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 12. First single and video "Listen," with MC Solaar.  
**FILE UNDER:** Souladelic Urbanicus.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** US 3, Neneh Cherry, Dream Warriors.

**VERUCA SALT** American Thighs *Minty Fresh-DGC*

Woman-led bands will continue to be labeled as such as long as bands like Veruca Salt exist. The group plies the girlyband trade like cynical superstars on the full-length debut, *American Thighs*. The turgid guitars and airy vocals, matched with Louise Post and Nina Gordon's chirpy Kim Deal-derived vocals, will be instantly familiar to fans of the Breeders, but those fans will enjoy none of *Last Splash's* rich textures or bold variety. Rarely has a band so little deserved its hype—it's not that Veruca Salt is awful, but that the band is so shockingly ordinary. The group needs to improve in two ways before it can become a contender. First, it needs to write some stronger songs: "Seether" and "Victoria" are about the best, but they're both hopelessly derivative. And speaking of derivative, Veruca Salt tries to pass off many a lyrical idea as its own: it steals the lines "Bend me, shape me/Any way that you want me" without recontextualizing them in any interesting way. The second thing it needs to do is find some better production. The potential is there—the twin-guitar attack and catchy backing vocals of "All Hail Me" show good instincts—but too many songs blend together, one turgid sludgifest sliding into the next. —Chris Molanphy

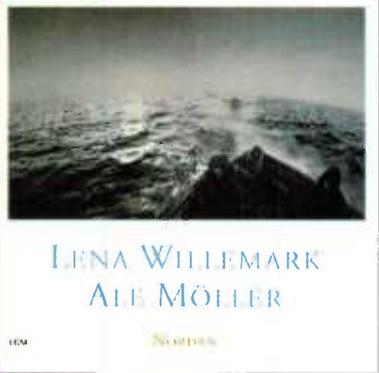
**DATALOG:** Release date: Sep. 27. First single "Seether."  
**FILE UNDER:** Girlybands.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Breeders, Juliana Hatfield, Belly.

**LENA WILLEMAR/ALE MOLLER** Nordan *ECM*

Vocalist and fiddler Lena Willemark learned about the folk tradition growing up in rural Sweden (the early cattle-calls in her musical experience weren't for musicians, but for cattle). She met multi-instrumentalist Ale Moller a decade ago, and they've been working together ever since. On *Nordan*, the two reach back to medieval Scandinavia for their material, and collaborate with a handful of folk and jazz musicians, though the jazz side of the album mostly consists of a few tasteful saxophone solos and Palle Danielsson's spare, architecturally elegant bass playing. Mostly, though, Moller's arrangements let Willemark's voice ring out in ripples, with folk instruments (like mandola and shawm) punctuating it with an occasional tone. There's lots of space on *Nordan* (which is named after Sweden's north wind); there's rarely a note played when letting the previous note reverberate will do just as well. And though the songs' content is sometimes eye-opening ("Knut Hauling" is about "a shepherd who made the King jealous by having no less than 407 young girls in his bed at the same time"), Willemark sings everything with consummate beauty and precision. A soothing, airy album. —Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Release date: Oct. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Scandinavian jazz-folk.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Chant, early Steeleye Span, *Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares*.

VERUCA SALT  
AMERICAN THIGHS



LENA WILLEMAR  
ALE MOLLER

"I was buying new boots with a friend and an extremely beautiful young woman was helping us and my friend told her I had written the song and her whole attitude toward me changed. I realized that probably wouldn't have happened if I had just read her a poem." —College professor Wyn Cooper, whose poem "Fun" was used as the basis for Sheryl Crow's "All I Wanna Do."

# FLASH

ROOTS • REISSUES • RETRO

by James Lien

With Christmas comes, inevitably, **Boxing Day**—the day when everybody goes to the record store to buy box sets with their gift certificates. Here's a roundup of some of this year's crop of best-ofs, career overviews and cold-blooded back-catalogue exploitation.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS: The R&B Box: 30 Years Of Rhythm & Blues (Rhino)**

Discs: 6  
Total Time: Over 6 hours  
Total Tracks: 108  
Previously Unreleased Tracks: 0  
List Price: \$74.98  
Cost Per Track: 69¢

One of the most ambitious box sets ever put together, *The R&B Box* covers the history and evolution of the genre from Louis Jordan & His Tympani Five's 1943 hit "Five Guys Named Moe" to the Spinners' 1972 hit "I'll Be Around," with, well, a whole lot of hits inbetween. The collection emphasizes breadth over depth—a lot of it will probably be familiar to you, but it's also all great (really great), and putting these songs in a historical context makes them more meaningful (suddenly, "Bo Diddley" sounds like a bolt from the blue). And unless you're an R&B expert, you'll discover a plenty of wonderful things that are new to you, especially on the amazing first disc.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS BlackBox (Wax Trax-TVT)**

Discs: 3  
Total Time: 219:00  
Total Tracks: 41  
Previously Unreleased Tracks: 1  
List Price: \$69.98  
Cost Per Track: \$1.70

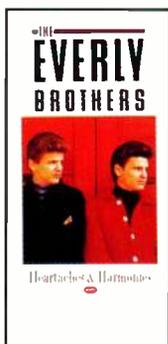
Wax Trax! was one of the labels that virtually invented industrial techno. For the most dedicated fans, the limited edition version of this set of rare 12" tracks comes in an ultra-hip metal box, with extra stickers and freebies, wrapped in recording tape and fishnet mesh. The regulation issue package isn't quite so lavish, but contains the same music.



**KING CRIMSON The First Three (EG-Caroline)**

Discs: 3  
Total Time: 127:48  
Total Tracks: 18  
Previously Unreleased Tracks: 0  
List Price: \$44.98  
Cost Per Track: \$2.50

Exact versions of King Crimson's first three albums, painstakingly remastered with great personal and financial exertion by Robert Fripp, presented on three neat "picture CDs"—the cover artwork is printed on the discs themselves, including Barry Godber's wonderful cover painting for *In The Court Of The Crimson King*.



**EVERLY BROTHERS (Rhino)**

Discs: 4  
Total Time: NA  
Previously Unreleased Tracks: 8  
List Price: \$59.98  
Total Tracks: 102  
Cost Per Track: 58¢

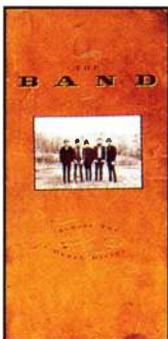
Throughout their glory years, the Everly Brothers' music was pure, wonderful and simply great, providing a bridge between the worlds of pop and rock 'n' roll. But listen to them now and you'll hear even more: you'll understand how much people like the Beatles, Byrds and Big Star were influenced by them, and how they affected the landscape of music in a way that still resonates today, from R.E.M. to Elvis Costello to the Proclaimers.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS The Sun Records Collection (Rhino)**

Discs: 3  
Total Time: 188:00  
Total Tracks: 74  
Previously Unreleased Tracks: 0  
List Price: \$49.98  
Cost Per Track: 67¢

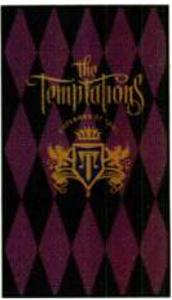
Personally, this writer prefers the over-the-top, gorge-to-the-gills completist approach of maniacal, overseas labels like Bear Family and Document. In fact, Bear Family plans to release every Sun single ever in its own six-volume box set series. But as it stands here, this box is a fine historic overview of Sun Records, including, get this, the first time ever that Elvis Presley's Sun tracks have appeared on a compilation with other artists. Which is history in the making, we guess.



**THE BAND Across The Great Divide (Capitol)**

Discs: 3  
Total Time: 216:36  
Total Tracks: 56  
Previously Unreleased Tracks: 8  
List Price: \$49.98  
Cost Per Track: 89¢

More than just a rehash of familiar ground, *Across The Great Divide* works well both as a primer for newcomers and as a serious exhumation of rare material for devout fans. If you have never heard The Band, this set is a fine introduction to the group, while it preserves the integrity of classic albums like *Music From Big Pink* so they'll still seem significant if you want to pick them up later. And for the grizzled veteran fan, the third disc of rarities and previously unreleased material provides unique insight into The Band and the magic it created.

**TEMPTATIONS Emperors Of Soul (Motown)**

Discs: 5  
 Total Time: 219:39  
 Total Tracks: 110  
 Previously Unreleased Tracks: 10 tracks (4 new recordings)  
 List Price: \$69.98  
 Cost Per Track: 64¢

The Temptations were one of the staples of the legendary Motown Records roster. The last disc is admittedly a little thin, but disc 3 is the killer, spanning their funkier years, 1968-72. The lavish box also features many rare early singles which, although they don't qualify as "previously unreleased," have nonetheless never been reissued in any form since the original 45 rpm releases in the early '60s.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS The Casablanca Story (Chronicles-Mercury)**

Discs: 4  
 Total Time: 308:35  
 Total Tracks: 47  
 Previously Unreleased Tracks: none purely unreleased, but most on CD for the first time, and many in full-length 12" versions unavailable since the original release  
 List Price: \$44.98  
 Cost Per Track: 96¢

In the high-flying '70s, the Casablanca label was home to Donna Summer, Kiss, Cher, the Village People and Lipps, Inc., and this small box takes you to Funkytown, reliving the disco era in all its sequined, tight-fitting, feather-boarded, platform-heeled glory. Does not include Kiss' "I Was Made For Lovin' You," reportedly due to permission denied by the band.

**ALLEN GINSBERG Holy Soul Jelly Roll (Rhino)**

Discs: 4  
 Total Time: 304:12  
 Total Tracks: 52  
 Previously Unreleased Tracks: 28  
 List Price: \$49.98  
 Cost Per Track: 96¢

Produced in part by Hal Willner, this box set chronicles the works of legendary beat poet Allen Ginsberg, including unreleased recordings from his private collection, and spotlighting his many collaborations with musicians throughout the years. The sound quality is a little uneven, but even those parts that sound pretty ragged have a kind of *audio verite* quality about them that makes them worth hearing. The booklet is among the finest ever produced for any box set.

**VARIOUS MONKS Eternal Chant (Atlantic)**

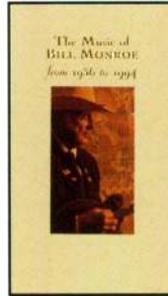
Discs: 3  
 Total Time: 160:58  
 Total Chants: 71  
 Previously Unreleased Chants: 0  
 List Price: \$39.98  
 Cost Per Chant: 56¢

The exact problem with the original *Chant* CD was that it was only one disc; if you loved the music, you'd still only scratched the surface. Well, this box set represents the Ultimate Option for fans of monastic sounds—over two and a half hours of Gregorian chants, recorded in Europe from the late '40s to the present. *Eternal Chant* is laudable for including full Latin and English translations of the texts, and a whole disc of Christmas and Advent music. Also, disc three is particularly intriguing, as it presents a monk's-eye view of a day in the life, tracing "a monk's daily musical journey, from three a.m. until after the evening supper," showing how chants are used as a part of his religious lifestyle.

**U ROY Three From The Frontline (Front Line-Caroline)**

Discs: 3  
 Total Time: 153:30  
 Total Tracks: 46  
 Previously Unreleased Tracks: 0  
 List Price: \$44.98  
 Cost Per Track: 97¢

These three CDs are basically U Roy's groundbreaking reggae albums recorded for Virgin UK in the mid-'70s. U Roy was one of reggae's first "toasters" to rap on top of a prerecorded beat—he was rapping years before anyone in the States picked up a mic to make hip-hop. Interesting point: one disc claims in the credits, "All tracks by U Roy, except \* by Ewart Beckford." Ewart Beckford is U Roy's real name. Hmm...

**BILL MONROE (MCA)**

Discs: 4  
 Total Time: 260:00  
 Total Tracks: 98  
 Previously Unreleased Tracks: 6  
 List Price: \$49.98  
 Cost Per Track: 51¢

Bill Monroe is the father of modern bluegrass. In fact, his lifetime of titanic contributions to American music place him on a par with Hank Williams Sr., Miles Davis, George Jones, James Brown and Louis Armstrong. Even if you've never felt a hankering for hillbilly bluegrass, this wonderful box set will make a fine introduction, while for longtime fans, it will be welcomed as the crowning gem of a diehard bluegrass boy or girl's collection.

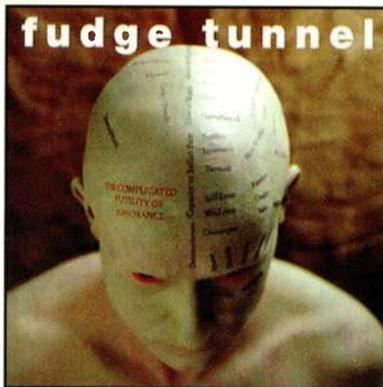
**JOE HENDERSON The Milestone Years (Milestone-Fantasy)**

Discs: 8  
 Total Time: 586:09  
 Total Tracks: 82  
 Previously Unreleased Tracks: 4  
 List Price: \$124.99  
 Cost Per Track: \$1.52

During the fifteen years that saxophone giant Joe Henderson recorded for Milestone records, he laid down a wide variety of material ranging from straight-ahead bop to wildly psychedelic, Afro-jazz freakouts: the full range of his work is well-represented by this imposing box of his complete recorded works for the label. Previous "everything he ever did on tape" volumes from Fantasy chronicling the careers of Sonny Rollins, Thelonious Monk and John Coltrane were sensational, completist affairs, and so's this one.

**OTHERS**

In addition to those outlined above, The Right Stuff label is readying a multi-CD box set of singles from the legendary Memphis-based soul label Hi Records, featuring tracks from Al Green, Ann Peebles, Willie Mitchell, Otis Clay, O.V. Wright and others, which should be one of the most amazing soul sets since the first *Complete Stax/Volt Soul Singles* box set (it'll be out in late January). Speaking of Stax, while that first volume (through Rhino-Atlantic) remains a tasty gift idea for any season, the third installment in the series (through Fantasy) should be out by the time you read this, chronicling the soul powerhouse label up through the mid-'70s. As unbelievable as it seems, Virgin has released a box set of Monty Python albums. And EMI is readying multi-CD sets telling *The Aladdin Records Story* and *The Minit Records Story*, with overviews of two of the golden labels of the '50s R&B era. Also this holiday season, MCA is releasing a limited-edition version of The Who's *30 Years Of Maximum R&B*, featuring the four-CD box, a 2-hour video of live clips and interviews and a bonus T-shirt. Finally, Columbia is readying a special—and almost ludicrously ornate—gift-edition box of their Aerosmith catalog, which features a bonus EP of rarities.



# METAL

by jon wiederhorn

## fudge tunnel

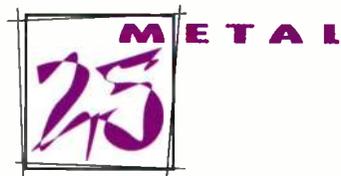
*the complicated futility of ignorance*

Earache

Once a coveted component of Columbia's distribution deal with Earache, Fudge Tunnel has been discarded by its adoptive parents for crapping on the rug, and has returned to its former home to frolic amongst the rest of the boisterous scum the label cultivates like bacteria on a petri dish. Despite (or perhaps because of) the traumatic separation with Columbia, *The Complicated Futility Of Ignorance* is Fudge Tunnel's most caustic, hostile album to date—a brutal, mid-paced riff-athon that sounds alternately like death metal at half-speed and industrial music without the samples and drum machines. Most of the songs are centered around simple, distortion-suffused rhythms that ooze and throb like an infected wound. Unlike the many metal bands that thrive on high, ear-shattering guitar sounds, Fudge Tunnel treats all instruments as percussive devices, manipulating pedals and strings to unleash an array of short, clipped chords and low, malignant tones. And instead of crafting a solid wall of noise, the band builds intensity on songs like "Six Eight," "Backed Down" and "Find Your Fortune" by holding back, allowing the potential energy to mount to the point of meltdown, before erupting in a conflagration of chaos.

### IN THE NOOSE

**METALLICA** has recently filed a lawsuit in San Francisco Superior Court that, if the band wins, would end its long-term contract with Elektra. Under a contract signed in 1984, Metallica agreed to record seven records for Elektra. Although the group has only released five albums for the label in 10 years, it is challenging its contract by referring to a state law under the California Labor Code that states that California workers are free from personal-services contracts after seven years. Before deciding to sue, the band attempted to renegotiate its contract to receive a larger share of profits and partial ownership of its master recordings. Although an agreement was reached with Elektra's former chairman Robert Krasnow, it was reportedly revoked by the Warner Music Group (which owns Elektra) after Krasnow resigned last July. If the case is brought to trial, it could set a new precedent for any California artists who have been under contract for over seven years... At the invitation of Neil Young, **MINISTRY** members Al Jourgensen and Paul Barker performed two 20-minute acoustic sets at the Shoreline Amphitheater in San Francisco on October 1 and 2 as part of the Bridge School Festival, which also featured Pearl Jam, Mazzy Star, Indigo Girls, Tom Petty and Neil Young and Crazy Horse. (The Bridge School aims to educate children with severe speech and physical impairments by using alternative teaching methods.) Ministry played one new song, "Paisley," from the band's upcoming album, tentatively due early next year. The group also performed "Lay Lady Lay" by Bob Dylan, "Friend Of The Devil" by the Grateful Dead and Ten Years After's "Then They Come"... Southern hard-rock band **PRIDE & GLORY** was forced to cancel two weeks of dates in Japan recently after guitarist Zakk Wylde cracked a rib and fractured the twelfth thoracic vertebra of his spine when he slipped leaping onstage and landed on the corner of a stage monitor. Wylde is expected to make a complete recovery... **JACKYL** singer and human publicity machine Jesse James Dupree gashed open his hand with his trademark chainsaw while the band was performing the song "Headed For Destruction" during a recent gig to celebrate the first anniversary of the Hard Rock Cafe Miami. At the end of the set, Dupree, bleeding profusely from a wound that later required 15 stitches, used the chainsaw to carve the club's anniversary cake. And in Nashville Tennessee, a billboard promoting the band's new album *Push Comes To Shove* had to be censored less than 24 hours after it was erected because the Nashville Department of Transportation was flooded with complaints about the picture, which depicted Dupree's bare buttocks hanging out of his trap-door pants. The sign was censored a second time after three Nashville City Council Representatives found the picture, which still depicted a small amount of flesh, offensive.



- 1 **SLAYER** • Divine Intervention (American)
- 2 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Nativity In Black: A Tribute To Black Sabbath (Columbia)
- 3 **CORROSION OF CONFORMITY** • Deliverance (Columbia)
- 4 **DANZIG** • 4 (American)
- 5 **TESTAMENT** • Low (Atlantic)
- 6 **OBITUARY** • World Demise (Roadrunner)
- 7 **MACHINE HEAD** • Burn My Eyes (Roadrunner)
- 8 **SICK OF IT ALL** • Scratch The Surface (EastWest America)
- 9 **PRO-PAIN** • The Truth Hurts (Energy)
- 10 **KORN** • Korn (Immortal-Epic)
- 11 **DREAM THEATER** • Awake (EastWest America)
- 12 **MEGADETH** • Youthanasia (Capitol)
- 13 **BODY COUNT** • Born Dead (Virgin)
- 14 **KERBDOG** • Kerbdog (Mercury)
- 15 **MONSTER YDODOO MACHINE** • Suffersystem (D-Tribe-RCA)
- 16 **BAD RELIGION** • Stranger Than Fiction (Atlantic)
- 17 **QUEENSRYCHE** • Promised Land (EMI)
- 18 **GODFLESH** • Selfless (Earache-Columbia)
- 19 **WIDOWMAKER** • Stand By For Pain (CMC International)
- 20 **DOWNSET** • downset. (Mercury)
- 21 **OVERKILL** • W.F.O. (Atlantic)
- 22 **BIOHAZARD** • State Of The World Address (Warner Bros.)
- 23 **SAVATAGE** • Handful Of Rain (Atlantic)
- 24 **BILE** • Suckpump (Energy)
- 25 **MELVINS** • Stoner Witch (Atlantic)

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

# SINGLES

by douglas wolk



"star"  
Rough Trade (UK)

# lida husik & beaumont hannant

With this single, apparently, the venerable British label Rough Trade breathes its last. The label grew out of a record shop in London (which is still around); in the late '70s, it started putting out singles and, eventually, albums. Rough Trade was notable for its consistent eclecticism and quality, and its devotion to singles as a recorded form. Geoff Travis, who ran it, virtually defined the British post-punk sound, putting out records by Wire, Television Personalities, Robert Wyatt, Swell Maps, Scritti Politti, Delta 5 and more. Later on, Rough Trade had its biggest success with the best singles band of the '80s, the Smiths. But even they couldn't keep the label afloat when several dodgy ventures didn't work out. Rough Trade folded briefly, then resurfaced with a single-of-the-month club (which featured releases by Mercury Rev, Ultramarine, and others both famous and worthy of fame) and a few other releases (by bands like Disco Inferno and The Sea And Cake); here's hoping it comes back again.

Another first-rate pairing of songwriting and technology is "Missing," the new single from **EVERYTHING BUT THE GIRL** (Atlantic). EBTG has always had a cool, mellow vibe going on; the 12" pairs a torch song and techno-inflected backing tracks by a handful of producers. Neither the song nor the grooves are all that hot on their own, but in combination they're great—the kind of heartfelt but not histrionic dancefloor simmer that's been too rare since, say, Lisa Stansfield's heyday a few years ago. The best mix is Todd Terry's "Lite Mix," which is mostly beatless—just a couple of synths and a choppy sample of acoustic guitar billowing under Tracy Thorn's gorgeous vocal...

**DAWSON's** *Small Eared Rank Outsider Earth Summit EP* (Gruff Wit-Project A-Bomb) is actually just a 7" with two songs ("Whistle Shunt Symmetry" and "Infamous Toughies, Infinite Toffees"), but—as you may have guessed by now—the band will take any opportunity it can get to cram in a few more words. The thick-accented Glasgow, Scotland quartet batters and skitters through these long, super-fast songs, turning everything it can find into a device to squeeze a few more beats out of: voice as rhythm, guitar as rhythm, bass as rhythm, drums as lots and lots of rhythm. The group's known for doing 20-minute live sets (its U.S. tour just ended) where it plays everything four times as fast as this. Ever seen a drumstick melt?...

This particular single has a track apiece from New York singer/songwriter Lida Husik's *Evening At The Grange* collaboration with British techno keyboardist/producer Beaumont Hannant (available domestically on Astralwerks-Caroline), and from her forthcoming solo album. The catch is that they're different versions of the same song: "Star" and "Starburst 7." You wouldn't think that Husik's dreamy guitar musings and Hannant's rigid beats would get along well, but they flow into each other sweetly and gracefully—both versions seem like they're the "original."

The debut single by Knoxville, Tennessee's **SUPERDRAG**, "Senorita" (Darla), is an unexpected delight. It starts off sounding like lo-fi garage bashing—good, but nothing spectacular—and then the melody line hits, and it takes off into orbit. These three songs have amazing pop tunes in the teenage heart-tugger tradition of early Beatles and Teenage Fanclub; when the harmonies kick in, they'll make you giddy. And the bubbling broken-amp noise they're soaked in just makes them richer and meatier...

Another band with the pop + noise = fun equation going on is **THE SUMMER HITS**, whose "Groovier Drugs" (Small-Fi-Volvolo) disguises its singer's weedy, Anglophilic voice under a ton of overdubbed, hissing guitars (with another one coming into the mix every few seconds) and, finally, an organ. Eventually, it gets so loud that the distortion threatens to blow the needle off the record. It's great. "California Summer," which follows it (it's a one-sided single) is a little out of tune and a little out of control and the band *just doesn't care*—a commendable attitude...

The Montreal band Pest recorded a nifty debut single last year (on Harriet); it's changed its name to **PEST 5000** and released an equally nifty follow-up double-7" EP, *Patti Christ Superstar*, on its own Derivative label. The two men and two women of the band each get a lead vocal this time. The lyrics are still smart, mature and funny, the guitars still chime and plink (and feed back a little), and the violin is still the secret ingredient...

Calvin Johnson's **DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM** project has made its first misstep with "Booty Run" (K). The tinny, insubstantial A-side is pretty much what people fear K records sound like, and the dub version on the flip, while it's interesting in theory, doesn't get nearly as wild as it would have to to salvage the song...

The **MUKILTEO FAIRIES' Special Rites** (Kill Rock Stars) is one of the strangest records of the month—sort of a metal-inflected old-school hardcore single (six barre-chord-happy songs in four and a half minutes) with queer-rage lyrics spat out in a weird high grunting rasp. And have I mentioned the drawings of demons, cauldrons, and the like that are all over the package? It's messy and almost amateurish, but the band's fury is genuine, and real emotion in music is worth taking where you can get it.



by tim haslett

# various artists various artists

speed limit: 140 bpm vol. 5

Moonshine Music

drum and bass selection vol. 1 and 2

Breakdown

The most promising and energetic dance music being made in the West right now is "jungle," a distinctly black British music that is gaining an enormous audience in this country. (The first proto-jungle record might be "Narra Mine" by Genaside II from 1990, with its galloping reggae bass pulse, rapid toasting, and flailing percussion.) Jungle is a variation on breakbeat, which incorporates sped-up drum breaks from funk records and old-school hip-hop loops. Many of breakbeat and jungle's practitioners are former hip-hop DJs, weaned on hip-hop as well as '70s break classics by the Skullsnaps, Jimmy Castor, James Brown, et al. By looping high-velocity drum attacks around a smorgasboard of samples, breakbeat was born. The music really lost its edge as it became a hyper-maniac, shrill, piano-dominated cartoon music, almost a self-parody. What we see emerging on these two compilations is the return of breakbeat to its more organic textures, in the form of jungle. Jungle, then, is a synthesis of hip-hop and dancehall, with echoes of dub and roots reggae. It has emerged from a specifically British context, where long-standing affinities with Jamaican and African-American culture have resulted in this hybrid. The two tracks by M-Beat on the *Drum And Bass Selection* compilations encapsulate the unremitting physical momentum and invention that make jungle such a compelling art form. The compilation makes available a plethora of jungle tracks, many of which have still not found their way across the Atlantic as singles. (Jungle, like dancehall, is a genre in which upwards of a hundred singles are released every month.) The fifth volume of *Speed Limit: 140 BPM* sees the series becoming more attractive to the hardcore junglist, and the label will be releasing the first domestic all-jungle compilation in the coming months. Jungle was once considered a fringe genre, even by British purist reggae DJs. That those DJs are now working jungle tracks into their sets makes it clear that it's a dance music whose influence and creativity are only now being understood.

## DETROIT IS BURNING

When the young **KENNY LARKIN** first released singles in 1990 on the then-fledgling +8 label, techno enthusiasts were made aware of a formidable talent. With his first full-length effort, *Azimuth*, Larkin has established himself as an electronic dance artists of the first order. In many ways, he's the stylistic heir apparent to the pioneering work of Juan Atkins, Derrick May and Carl Craig—it's no surprise that he thanks them in the liner notes. Like the "Detroit Three" before him, Larkin has the ability to build sonic landscapes of immense sweep and grandeur and imbue them with a sensibility that is at once ecstatic and contemplative. *Azimuth* is a manifesto for the multiplicity of directions in which techno is heading—that Larkin is capable of presaging the music's future makes this collection of tracks all the more compelling. His ability to steer electronics away from the distant, glacial priorities of ambient music toward a living, breathing, percussively charged dance music is exemplary. If you are familiar with the fine *Artificial Intelligence* techno series from Wax Trax!/TVT, you should be advised that this is, without doubt, the series' most satisfying moment.

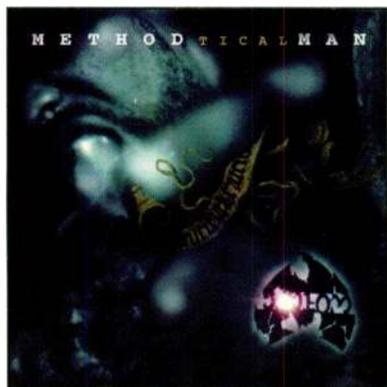


- 1 ORBITAL • Snivilisation (frrr-London)
- 2 SPACETIME CONTINUUM • Sea Biscuit (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 3 HIGHER INTELLIGENCE AGENCY • Colourform (Waveform)
- 4 LORDS OF ACID • Voodoo-U (WHITE LABELS/Antler Subway-American)
- 5 VARIOUS ARTISTS • United State Of Ambience (Moonshine)
- 6 MOBY • "Feeling So Real" (5") (Elektra)
- 7 FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY • Millennium (Roadrunner)
- 8 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Concept In Dance (XL-Moonshine)
- 9 FIERCE RULING DIVA • Revolt Of The Perver (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 10 KILLING JOKE • Pandemonium (Big Life-Zoc)
- 11 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Psychotrance (Moonshin)
- 12 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Artificial Intelligence II (Warp/Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 13 GLOBAL COMMUNICATION • 76:14 (Dedicated)
- 14 PETER FRIENDS • Emotional Travelogue (sm:e)
- 15 UNDERWORLD • Dubnobasswithmyheadmar (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 16 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Urbmix: Flammable Liqu (Planet Earth)
- 17 KENNY LARKIN • Azimuth (Warp/Wax Trax!-TV)
- 18 AMBUSH • The Ambush (Planet Earth)
- 19 HEAVENLY MUSIC CORPORATION • Consciousness III (Silent)
- 20 ORB • Pomme Fritz (Island Red-Island)
- 21 FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON • Lifeforms (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 22 DEEE-LITE • Dewdrops In The Garden (Elektra)
- 23 AIR LIQUIDE • The Increased Difficulty Of Concentration (sm:e)
- 24 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Analog Heaven (Sonic)
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Death Rave 2010 (21st Circuitry)

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

# HIP-HOP

by glen sansone



t i c a l  
Def Jam/RAL-Polygram

## method man

From the opening title cut ("tical" is street slang for marijuana), you're not quite sure where you've landed. You hear sounds that aren't discernibly hip-hop. You begin to feel the bass creep up on you, with sub-woofers straining, as the sounds and voice of Wu-Tang

Clan's Method Man intertwine and begin to swirl around in a hypnotic concoction of gripping street lore

and aural corruption. On cuts like "Bring The Pain" (a sage ghetto anthem) and "What The

Blood Clot," Method Man raps with distressing intensity, unveiling a lyrical darkness that

stems from the frustrations of a shattered community searching for leadership.

Fellow Clan member Prince Rakeem (a.k.a. RZA)—who also doubles as a member

of the Gravediggaz—adds sludgy, loop-infested tracks (like "P.L.O. Style") that

are conceived with more weight and muscle than speed and precision. The

hardcore ballad "All I Need" amazingly shrouds a sample of Marvin Gaye and

Tammy Terrell's "You're All I Need To Get By" behind an oozing wall of beats.

Fans of Wu-Tang will also be treated to a handful of clips from rare martial arts

movies scattered around the album (we hear the Clan has an extensive

collection), which gives this release the stamp of Wu-Tang authenticity.

### BONUS BEATS

What happens when you take an unquenchable P-Funk prejudice (check out the *Maggot Brain* imitation on the cover) and breed it with rugged East Coast funk—the lazy kind courtesy of Erick Sermon—then season it with blunt-burning by the pound and erratic vocal growls? Well, you'll have something like the second album from New York's **REDMAN** *Dare Iz A Darkside* (Def Jam/RAL-Polygram). Rappers have recently been creating a darkside (e.g. Gravediggaz, Flatlinerz) filled with B-horror-film imagery. Redman (a.k.a. Reggie Noble), crazy off the chronic, takes you to his darkside on "Journee Throo Da Darkside." Although much of the production refuses to wander to unfamiliar settings, Redman's linking of words and phrases develop into complex and rhythmically superior designs. Best simile on the album: "If rap was B-ball, I'd have assists like James Worthy"... While most know **DOCTOR DRE** and **ED LOVER** (formerly of No Face) as the affable hosts of *Yo! MTV Raps*, few remember Dre's old group Original Concept, who created the underground hit "Knowledge Me"/"Can You Feel It" in 1986, and released one album, *Straight From The Basement Of Kooley High*, for Def Jam in 1988. Long Islanders Dre and Ed Lover (whose Big Bank Hank delivery wears thin by "East Coast Sound"), along with a handful of guest rappers, snicker and actually rap their way through **Back Up Off Me** (Relativity), a record that's purely about having fun, lampooning, and rapping for the simple fun of hearing themselves on tape. But pleasant surprises by marquee names like Erick Sermon, Notorious B.I.G. ("Who's The Man"), King Just and Lords Of The Underground, along with producers Marley Marl and Mark The 45 King, help turn this into a potent, head-nodding experience... Although it's been kicking around for a while, spend your last few bucks (hey, you can go without dinner for a few days) on the soundtrack to *Murder Was The Case* (Death Row/Interscope-Atlantic) which is a short film based on Snoop Doggy Dogg's single of the same name. The reunification of Dr. Dre and Ice Cube on "Natural Born Killaz" is worth the price tag alone... The sophomore outing by Newark, New Jersey's **LORDS OF THE UNDERGROUND** called **Keepers Of The Funk** (Pendulum-EMI) fine-tunes the trio's gold-selling formula of chunky, hip-hop funk with accessible, stiff-lipped rapping that rarely goes overboard... Following the dance/funk of his successful, acid-tongued single "Why Is It) Funk Dat" (you may have seen Beavis And Butt-head shouting its refrain), **SAGAT** has released a full album called **My Poem Is...The World According To Sagat** (Maxi). It's a commentary-filled, sometimes poetic blending of dance, hip-hop and jazz loops (like "Universal Time Code") that's a refreshing alternative to gat blasts and chest beating.



- 1 **CRAIG MACK** • Project: Funk Da World (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 2 **DIGABLE PLANETS** • Blowout Comb (Pendulum-EMI)
- 3 **NOTORIOUS B.I.G.** • Ready To Die (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 4 **PETE ROCK & C.L. SMOOTH** • The Main Ingredient (Elektra)
- 5 **BLACK SHEEP** • "Without A Doubt" (12") (Mercury)
- 6 **KEITH MURRAY** • "The Most Beautifullest Thing In This World (12") (Jive)
- 7 **COMMON SENSE** • Resurrection (Relativity)
- 8 **BRAND NUBIAN** • "Word Is Bond" (12") (Elektra)
- 9 **NAS** • Illmatic (Columbia)
- 10 **LORDS OF THE UNDERGROUND** • "Tic Toc" (12") (Pendulum-EMI)
- 11 **GRAVEDIGGAZ** • 6 Feet Deep (Gee Street-Island)
- 12 **ILL AL SKRATCH** • Creep Wit' Me (Mercury)
- 13 **CHANNEL LIVE** • "Mad Izm" (12") (Capitol)
- 14 **PUBLIC ENEMY** • Muse Sick-N-Hour Mess Age (Def Jam/RAL-Island)
- 15 **ARTIFACTS** • "Wrong Side Of Da Tracks" (12") (Big Beat)
- 16 **JERU THE DAMAJA** • The Sun Rises In The East (PayDay/frr-ILS)
- 17 **ORGANIZED KONFUSION** • Stress (The Extinction Agenda) (Hollywood BASIC)
- 18 **ROOTS** • Do You Want More!!! (DGC)
- 19 **GANG STARR** • Hard To Earn (Chrysalis-EMI)
- 20 **BOOGIEMONSTERS** • Riders Of The Storm: The Underwater Album (Pendulum-EMI)
- 21 **BLACK MOON** • Enta Da Stage (Wreck-Nervous)
- 22 **FU SCHNICKENS** • "Breakdown" (12") (Jive)
- 23 **SOUNDTRACK** • Fresh: Music Inspired By The Film (Loud-RCA)
- 24 **BEASTIE BOYS** • Ill Communication (Grand Royal-Capitol)
- 25 **O.C.** • Word...Life (Wild Pitch-EMI)

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

# on the verge

## UP-AND-COMING ARTISTS

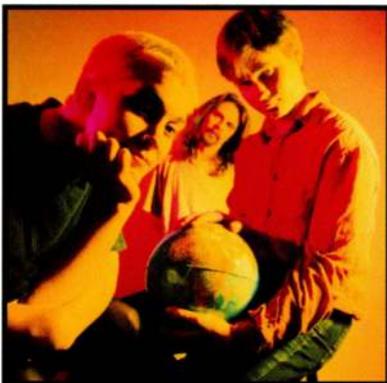
compiled by Lydia Anderson

### laika

When the British dub-rock group Moonshake split into two parts last year, singer/songwriter Margaret Fiedler and deeper-than-hell bass player John Frenett joined Moonshake producer Guy Fixsen in the new band Laika, named after the first dog in space. The group produces some of the most human, organic electronic music around, built on a base of home-recorded samples (Fiedler and Fixsen are accomplished remixers) but filled in with vibraphone, marimbas and Fiedler's spooky, sensual lyrics and voice.

Turn Laika's debut album, *Silver Apples Of The Moon* (Too Pure (UK)), down, and it's a sustained, low-key groove; turn it up, and it's a holographic sphere of sound, with fragmentary samples shimmering everywhere.

—Douglas Wolk



### caterpillar

Caterpillar's story certainly isn't a typical indie-rockers-make-good tale. The Philadelphia-based quartet hasn't worked with a famous producer or recorded an album for an ultra-hip label—in fact, the four can barely find time around their day jobs to tour. But what they have done is released an impressive debut record, *A Thousand Million Micronauts*, on hometown label Compulsiv while remaining a bunch of cynical, music-loving regular joes (drummer Jack McInerney DJs at a local college radio station). Sporting song titles like "My Buddy Ballantine" and "Pale Jam," "...Micronauts" has its share of insider snickering, but with loads of offhanded guitar hooks and general melodic ingenuity, Caterpillar proves much more than a novelty outfit. Look for a the band's newest 7" single on Deadbeat Records, as well a live track on Simple Machines' upcoming *Working Holiday* collection.

—Colin Helms



### richard davies

After his band the Moles recorded a brilliant debut LP called *Untune The Sky* with a spin-cycle approach to Beach Boys-esque pop, songwriter Richard Davies left his native Australia for the potentially more welcoming shores of England and then America. Regrouping with new members in early '94, Davies recorded another Moles LP called *Instinct* (Flydaddy), an equally diverse album relying less on Davies' compact hooks and more on his rich imagination and experimental nature. His newest project is Cardinal (pictured here), a collaboration with music grad student Eric Matthews.

Matthews brings even more spacious, intricate arrangements to the group's self-titled debut (Flydaddy), which although drenched in warm, retro-sounding production, rife with strings, horns and piano, escapes sounding cheesy through its sheer brilliance. (LA)

PHOTO BY CHARLES PETERSON



### technical jed

"We just want to be as big as The Clash," Technical Jed guitarist/singer Clancy Fraher reveals. That may be a lofty goal, considering *Southern States* (spinART) is the band's first album, but several singles and compilation appearances have earned the Richmond, Virginia, quartet a sizable regional following, including Cracker's David Lowery, who produced some of the album's tracks. Drawing on a variety of influences, the Jed cranks out pop tunes that are alternately spacey and dense. With equal emphasis on crafted songwriting and biting guitar hooks, the band maintains a sense of style and flair. While the group isn't as bent on massive success as it might have you believe, the Technical Jed has the tools to be well on its way.

—Bryan McNamara

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD

# Digital Audio Broadcasting, pt. 2: The Future of Community Radio

by Wes Schuyngera

tech

**As Digital Audio Broadcasting (DAB) is implemented in the coming years, one of the issues that will have to be addressed is the effect of this new technology on community and campus radio. As both local and commercial interests (like wide-coverage and satellite broadcasters) vie for this new digital space, will non-profit, public-interest broadcasters be shut out? Or will DAB technology and licensing allow both parties to live in harmony on the bandwidth?**

In Canada, where the introduction of DAB is being aggressively sought, community and campus radio are participating in a task force addressing the issue of this alternative to FM and AM broadcasting. (DAB transmission, discussed here last month, is reputed to have CD-like clarity, little or no interference, and an overall lowered operating cost than FM or AM.) They have voiced concerns relating to the financing of DAB, licensing procedure, access to digital transmitters, and potential audience loss due to the new digital 'intelligent' tuners.

"The main concern is new technology," says Lucie Gagnon, who represents Canadian campus and community radio on the Task Force on the Introduction of Digital Radio. "We're very worried that we won't be able to keep up with commercial and public broadcasters as digital radio emerges."

The problem, Gagnon notes, is that much of the equipment used by community radio is either bought or donated second-hand. Therefore, community radio is unlikely to fully enter the digital world until after the first generation of DAB equipment. By that time, many listeners who have already purchased digital receivers may no longer be listening to the FM and AM bands.

Licensing is an important issue here too. During the analog-to-digital conversion period, local broadcasters may not be able to afford simulcasting costs and will therefore be applying for L-Band operating licenses well after other stations have been licensed. (This is an issue that is more marked in Canada than it is in the U.S. Americans are still deciding if they even want to use the L-Band frequency under digital transmission—many broadcasters in the U.S. are hoping for a system where FM transmission is continually simulcast in digital and analog, thereby maintaining existing market shares.)

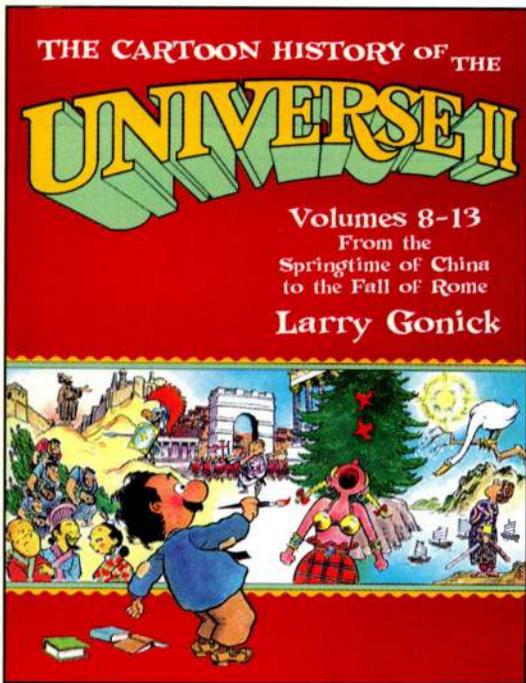
Digital broadcasting is unique in that multiple stations, each broadcasting at the same signal strength and clarity, can share a single transmitter. In this respect, with DAB, all stations conceivably would enter into a 'level playing field,' which would have the potential of de-ghettoizing community and campus radio. However, this egalitarianism does not sit well with commercial broadcasters. In both the U.S. and Canada, there is a powerful lobby to preserve the present system, in which bigger (commercial) stations have more access to the market. "The big question here is: Who is going to own these transmitters? If they are going to be owned by commercial radio, how can we be sure that we are going to be given access?" Gagnon asks.

While everyone agrees that the implementation of DAB is just over the horizon, no one is exactly sure of what its final form will be. Many things have to be worked out. While in Canada and Europe things are moving right along, in the U.S. the debate is only beginning, especially at the level of local radio.

David Lepage, Vice President of the National Federation of Community Broadcasters, says "It's very difficult to respond [to what is going to happen with digital radio]—rather than putting ourselves in a reactive mode, we've tried as an organization to put our membership into a planning mode."

Whether community programming is broadcast digitally or not misses the point, according to Lepage. The crucial notion is that local interest broadcasting, in whatever form it takes, should continue to exist, so the goal of community radio should not be to sow the seeds of fear about DAB, but to continue the planning and execution of community broadcasts. The bottom line is that there will always be a market for "effective local programming," he maintains. "If you're important to the local community, regardless of the cost, the community will support the transition."

**With DAB, all stations conceivably would enter into a "level playing field," which would have the potential of de-ghettoizing community and campus radio.**



**THE CARTOON HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSE II**  
by Larry Gonick  
(Main Street Books-Doubleday)

For well over 10 years, cartoonist Larry Gonick has been working on his *Cartoon History Of The Universe* project. Nine individual issues of the comic were published, covering the period from the Big Bang to around 270 B.C.; the first seven were collected in a book a few years ago. The comic has disappeared, but Gonick's work goes on. This second volume goes "from the springtime of China to the fall of Rome," covering roughly 2000 years in 300 pages. Gonick plays everything for yuks—there's at least a giggle on almost every page, and a bunch of belly-laughs—but he's also historically accurate, and a meticulous researcher (the annotated bibliography at the back lists 67 books). And his distinctive cartooning style, redolent of underground comics of the early '70s (he used to work with Gilbert Shelton, of *Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers* fame), keeps the hundreds of characters straight. Gonick delineates the twisty paths of history adeptly, digressing every so often to discuss the evolution of currency or to describe an important philosopher's world view. The book is a delight to read, and it'll tip you off to things you never knew but will want to find out more about.

—Douglas Wolk

# mixed media

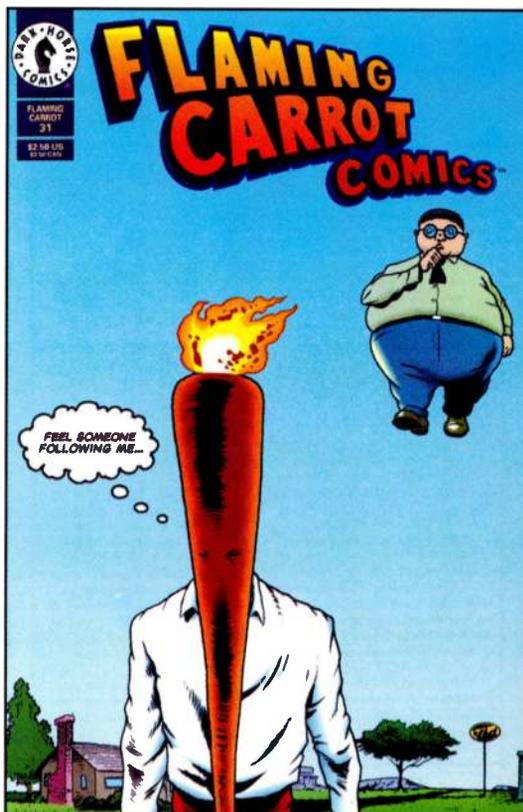
compiled by dawn sutter

## FLAMING CARROT COMICS

by Bob Burden (Dark Horse)

The long-running experiment in superhero Dadaism *Flaming Carrot Comics* has been appearing less and less often lately (the newest issue, #31, is the first in over a year), but that just makes it more of a treat. There's not much of a concept—a guy with a huge flaming carrot for a head goes around fighting crime and being strange—but cartoonist Bob Burden pulls it off by making everything perfectly deadpan, even conservative-looking (his layouts recall superhero comics of the '40s), while his plots hinge on things like Shakespeare's plays having been written by Buddy Hackett. #31 teams the Carrot up with Herbie Popnecker, a pudgy, lollipop-sucking hero who had a cult-favorite comic of his own back in the '60s ("you want I should bop you with this here lollipop?"). The ridiculous anachronisms and mock-epic scale of the old *Herbie* series fit nicely with Burden's poker-faced silliness, as when Herbie tries to use a time-traveling grandfather clock but finds it "will only take him as far back as the disco age." —Douglas Wolk

funnies





**MAMMA ROMA**  
(Milestone Films)

In the early sixties there was a backlash against the idealism of postwar Italy, a reaction which was expressed in many artistic forms including film. Among those filmmakers that addressed the problems of anti-fascist Italy were greats like Bernardo Bertolucci, Michelangelo Antonioni, Ermanno Olmi and Pier Pasolini. Pasolini's *Mamma Roma* is a classic example of the dark pessimism of the neo-realist movement.

The film opens with the marriage of Mamma Roma's pimp to a young country girl, a celebration for Mamma Ro', who has consequently been freed from her life of prostitution. With her newfound freedom, she takes her son, Ettore, and moves to Rome to start a new life for them both. However, her dreams of a new life are short-lived: Mamma's pimp returns and forces her back into her old way of life and Ettore becomes aware of his mother's profession.

The intense tragedy of Pasolini's film echoes that of Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* and Bertolucci's *The Conformist*. The film even stars actress Anna Magnani, known for her roles in *Rome, Open City* and Cocteau's *The Human Voice*. Though it was originally released in Italy in 1962, legal problems and its questionable "moral" content that kept it from being released in other countries. This is the first time the film has been released in the U.S. (it was previously only shown here once, at a tribute to Pasolini at the Museum Of Modern Art in 1990). *Mamma Roma* not only makes a strong political statement, it marks a turning point in the history of Italian cinema. (DS)



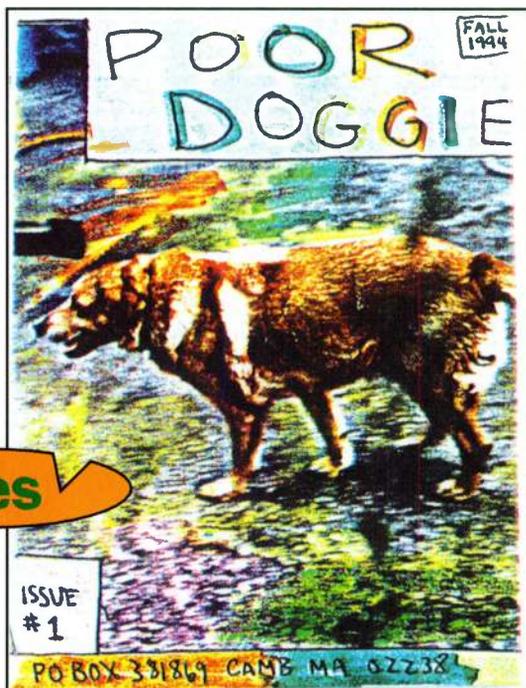
## HEAVENLY CREATURES

(Miramax Films)

Talk about your stylistic departures. Any gorehound worth his salt knows the work of New Zealand horror director Peter Jackson by stake-pierced heart, especially his over-the-top *Dead/Alive* finale, wherein a lawnmower-wielding hero frapps hundreds of hungry zombies into a big blood-soaked pile of limbs. It's great drive-in style entertainment, heavy on the black humor and cheesy special effects. It won't, however, prepare you for Jackson's latest venture, the straightforward recreation of events leading up to a famous Kiwi crime, in which two teenage girls bludgeon one of their mothers to death for not understanding their special (and vaguely homoerotic) friendship. The ghastly crime is almost incidental, something Jackson tacks on at the end of the picture to justify its creepy buildup (which is often reminiscent of Cronenberg's tension-packed *Dead Ringers*). Why pretty heiress Juliet Hulme buddied up with the frumpy, emotionally and physically scarred Pauline Parker, and how the pair created a fantasy no-adults-allowed world, is what *Heavenly Creatures* attempts to explain, in Jackson's trademark rising action as well as elaborate "daydream" sequences featuring an army of clay creatures led by a *Third Man*-era mud Orson Welles. The effects, of course, are Jackson's specialty, but he shows an amazing discipline in toning down the threat to a hushed but persistent pulse.

Jackson and co-writer Frances Walsh went to elaborate lengths to perfect this kid's-eye view of clumsy, interfering adults. A good deal of the script came straight from Parker's diary, which meticulously documented her descent into the murderous vortex. Melanie Lynskey nicely embodies Parker's transformation from overlooked homely to overwrought homicidal, and Kate Winslet as Hulme is fey, flippant and fetching, a young woman clearly relishing the power she has over her sycophantic partner. Jackson's great triumph here is that the murder, when it finally happens, feels strangely logical, as if the whole thing were pre-ordained. And that's real horror.

—Tom Lanham



## POOR DOGGIE

(P.O. Box 381869, Cambridge, MA 02238)

The focus of fanzines is becoming more and more specific. *Poor Doggie* demonstrates the point: It's stories about pet dogs and their demise, as well as where folks were when Rover kicked the bucket. There is even an interview with a one-time pet cemetery employee. Perhaps the fanzine is meant to be therapeutic, but in a warped way, its limited and dark subject matter is, well, a bit amusing. (DS)

# TOP 75

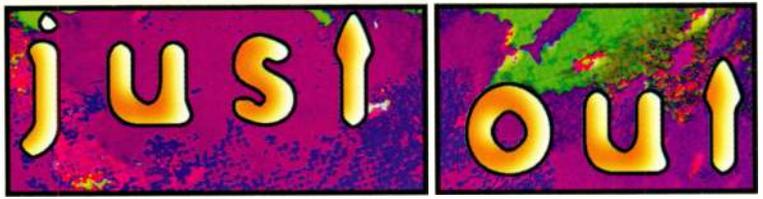
ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY



LIZ PHAIR

ARTIST	ALBUM TITLE	LABEL
1 LIZ PHAIR	Whip-Smart	Matador-Atlantic
2 R.E.M.	Monster	Warner Bros.
3 SUGAR	File Under: Easy Listening	Rykodisc
4 SEBADOH	Bakesale	Sub Pop
5 SMASHING PUMPKINS	Pisces Iscariot	Virgin
6 MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES	Question The Answers	Mercury
7 WEDDING PRESENT	Watusi	Island
8 WEEN	Chocolate And Cheese	Elektra
9 DINOSAUR JR	Without A Sound	Sire-Reprise
10 BAD RELIGION	Stranger Than Fiction	Atlantic
11 CRANBERRIES	No Need To Argue	Island
12 JESUS & MARY CHAIN	Stoned & Dethroned	American
13 LUSCIOUS JACKSON	Natural Ingredients	Grand Royal-Capitol
14 JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION	Orange	Matador
15 COP SHOOT COP	Release	Interscope
16 AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB	San Francisco	Reprise
17 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS	John Henry	Elektra
18 THINKING FELLERS UNION LOCAL 282	Strangers From The Universe	Matador
19 VERUCA SALT	American Thighs	Minty Fresh
20 GRANT LEE BUFFALO	Mighty Joe Moon	Slash-Reprise
21 CRAMPS	Flamejob	Medicine/Giant-WB
22 MAGNAPOP	Hot Boxing	Priority
23 VARIOUS ARTISTS	If I Were A Carpenter	A&M
24 CRANES	Loved	Dedicated-Arista
25 SKY CRIES MARY	This Timeless Turning	World Domination
26 SOUL COUGHING	Ruby Vroom	Slash-WB
27 BLUES TRAVELER	Four	A&M
28 TOADIES	Rubberneck	Interscope
29 WEEZER	Weezer	DGC
30 POP WILL EAT ITSELF	Dos Dedos Mis Amigos	Nothing-Interscope
31 GIRLS AGAINST BOYS	Cruise Yourself	Touch And Go
32 OASIS	Definitely Maybe	Epic
33 BEASTIE BOYS	Ill Communication	Grand Royal-Capitol
34 ERIC'S TRIP	Forever Again	Sub Pop
35 ARCHERS OF LOAF	Archers Of Loaf Vs. The Greatest Of All Time (EP)	Alias
36 SHUDDER TO THINK	Pony Express Record	Epic
37 DAVE MATTHEWS BAND	Under The Table And Dreaming	RCA
38 WOOL	Box Set	London
39 GREEN DAY	Dookie	Reprise
40 CONSOLIDATED	Business Of Punishment	London
41 SOUNDTRACK	Pulp Fiction	MCA
42 SAMIAM	Clumsy	Atlantic
43 SINEAD O'CONNOR	Universal Mother	Chrysalis-EMI
44 PALE SAINTS	Slow Buildings	4AD-Reprise
45 KILL CREEK	St. Valentine's Garage	Mammoth
46 ECHOBELLY	Everyone's Got One	Faue-Rhythm King
47 LYLE LOVETT	I Love Everybody	Curb-MCA
48 STEREO LAB	Mars Audiac Quintet	Elektra
49 LOVE AND ROCKETS	Hot Trip To Heaven	American
50 HOODOO GURUS	Crank	Zoo
51 L7	Hungry For Stink	Slash-Reprise
52 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Rock Stars Kill	Kill Rock Stars
53 SMALL	Chin Music	Alias
54 JAMES	Wah Wah	Fontana-Mercury
55 REVEREND HORTON HEAT	Liquor In The Front	Sub Pop-Interscope
56 BUILT TO SPILL	There's Nothing Wrong With Love	Up
57 VARIOUS ARTISTS	Jabberjaw: Good To The Last Drop	Mammoth
58 MELVINS	Stoner Witch	Atlantic
59 LOVE SPIT LOVE	Love Spit Love	Imago
60 THE CULT	The Cult	Sire-Reprise
61 LIVE	Throwing Copper	Radioactive
62 POSTER CHILDREN	Just Like You (EP)	Sire-Reprise
63 KILLING JOKE	Pandemonium	Big Life-Zoo
64 FATIMA MANSIONS	Lost In The Former West	Radioactive
65 SKANKIN' PICKLE	Sing Along With	Dill
66 RUSTED ROOT	When I Woke	Mercury
67 FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY	Millennium	Roadrunner
68 NIRVANA	MTV Unplugged In New York	DGC
69 WIDESPREAD PANIC	Ain't Life Grand	Capricorn
70 COWS	Orphan's Tragedy	Amphetamine Reptile
71 BUTTERGLORY	Crumble	Merge
72 STONE TEMPLE PILOTS	Purple	Atlantic
73 JEFF BUCKLEY	Grace	Columbia
74 SOUP DRAGONS	Hydrophonic	Raw TV-Mercury
75 NOFX	Punk In Drublic	Epitaph

Chart data culled from *CMJ New Music Report's* weekly Top 150 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 35 most played releases that week.



NEW RELEASES  
DECEMBER - JANUARY

## DECEMBER

19

- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Totally Dazed And Confused (Medicine)  
**MICHAEL MARTIN MURPHY** America's Horse (Warner Western)  
**GOOD RATS** Birth Comes To Us All (reissue) (Fireball)  
**MICHAEL JACKSON** HIStory (2-CD greatest hits, with new tracks) (Epic)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Chess Rhythm & Roll (4-CD box) (MCA)  
**ARETHA FRANKLIN** Aretha In Paris; Hey Now Hey-The Other Side of The Sky; Let Me In Your Life (reissues) (Rhino)  
**WILLIE SIMS** Story Yeller (New Alliance)  
**LISA FREEMAN** Rough Roads (New Alliance)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Internal Journal Volume 2 (New Alliance)

20

- VARIOUS ARTISTS** It's Now Or Never (Elvis Presley Tribute) (Island)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** The First Ten Years: Def Jam Classics (Def Jam)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Interview With A Vampire Soundtrack (Geffen)

3

- VARIOUS ARTISTS** This Is Fort Apache (MCA)  
**WATER** Nipple (MCA)  
**CASPAR BROTZMANN MASSAKER** Home (Thirsty Ear)

10

- VARIOUS ARTISTS** History Of Ambient III (Virgin)  
**DOG FACED HERMANS** Bump And Swing (live) (Alternative Tentacles)  
**LOVE 666** American Revolution (Amphetamine Reptile)  
**VERSUS** Dead Leaves (TeenBeat)  
**CATH CARROLL** Breathe For Me (TeenBeat)  
**MOTHER MAY I** Mother May I (Columbia)  
**JOE HENRY** Shuffletown; Murder Of Crows (reissues) (Mammoth)

17

- SHOXSIE & THE BANSHEES** The Rapture (DGC)  
**PSYCHIC WARRIORS OV GAIA** The John Peel Sessions (Kk)  
**LEONARD COHEN** Songs Of Love And Hate; New Skin For The Old Ceremony; Various Positions (reissues) (Columbia)  
**CORROSION OF CONFORMITY** Blind (reissue of 1991 LP with new tracks) (Columbia)  
**STONE ROSES** Second Coming (DGC)  
**THE ROOTS** Do You Want More?? (DGC)  
**SPEAKING CANARIES** Songs For The Terrestrially Challenged (Scat)  
**UNCLE SLAM** When God Dies (Restless)  
**YOU AM I** Sound As Ever (Ra)  
**LOIS** (K)  
**THREE MILE PILOT** Chief Assassin To The Sinister (DGC)  
**KING TEE** (Uptown-MCA)  
**HORACE BROWN** Taste Your Love (Uptown-MCA)  
**SOUL FOR REAL** Candy Rain (Uptown-MCA)  
**POND** (Sub Pop)  
**EXTREME** Waiting For The Punchline (A&M)  
**STR8-G** Shadow Of A G (A&M)  
**ZUMPANO** Look What The Rookie Did (Sub Pop)  
**CLUSTER** One Hour (Gyroscope)  
**STEVE HACKETT** Blues With A Feeling (Herald-Caroline)  
**BOREDOMS** Chocolate Synthesizer (Reprise)  
**BOB NEWHART** The Button-Down Mind Of Bob Newhart (Warner Archives)  
**DON RICKLES** Hello Dummy (Warner Archives)  
**STEVE MARTIN** Let's Get Small (Warner Archives)  
**GILA RADNER** Live From New York (Warner Archives)  
**BILL COSBY** Is A Very Funny Fellow, Right? (Warner Archives)

## JANUARY

24

- SONIC YOUTH** Made In U.S.A. (soundtrack) (Rhino)  
**WILLIAM S. BURROUGHS** Call Me Burroughs (Rhino)  
**ROBYN HITCHCOCK** Black Snake Diamond Role; Groovy Decay; I Often Dream Of Trains (reissues) (Rhino)  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Ranking & Skanking: The Best Of Punky Reggae (Rhino)  
**KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION** Cowboys & Aliens (A&M)  
**THE CRUEL SEA** The Honeymoon Is Over (A&M)  
**BONE THUGS 'N HARMONY** (Ruthless-Relativity)  
**SWANS** The Great Annihilator (Invisible)  
**LAUGHING HYENAS** Hard Times (Touch & Go)  
**THE WOLFGANG PRESS** Funky Little Demons (4AD-Warner Bros.)  
**CORNERSHOP** Hold On It Hurts (Merge)  
**MAGNETIC FIELDS** The Wayward Bus/Distant Plastic Trees (reissue of first 2 albums on 1 CD) (Merge)

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\_\_\_\_\_

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

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PLEASE CIRCLE YOUR RATING FOR EACH TRACK

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

<input type="checkbox"/>	1. RADIOHEAD	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	2. CHRIS CONNELLY	5	4	3	2	1
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<input type="checkbox"/>	10. KORN	5	4	3	2	1
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<input type="checkbox"/>	16. CARDINAL	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	17. CONTAINÉ	5	4	3	2	1
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1. Are you...?

Male  Female

2. How old are you?

under 18  35-44  
 18-24  45+  
 25-34  What's it to you?

3. Where did you buy this magazine?

subscription  newsstand  
 record store  bookstore  
 other \_\_\_\_\_

4. How many CDs do you buy per month?

0-2  6-10  
 3-5  more than 10

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

Store \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

6. What radio station(s) do you usually listen to?

Call Letters \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

# ON TOUR

## THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

Irving Plaza, New York, NY  
October 31, 1994

"This is an educational song!" John Flansburgh yells, and an audience full of costumed geeks goes wild. It's Halloween, the final night of They Might Be Giants' four-night run at New York's Irving Plaza, and a lot of the people in the room have clearly come every night. That's not as obsessive as it might sound, since the band's been doing a different show every night. It's still kind of obsessive, though.

They Might Be Giants is just starting to come out of a difficult phase in its evolution. It started out as a duo of weedy-voiced singer/guitarist Flansburgh and weedier-voiced singer/multi-instrumentalist John Linnell; most of its songs are intimate and clever, lots of subtle musical jokes and lyrics that demand close attention. Now the group is playing with a rhythm section and a horn section, in front of audiences of thousands, and the challenge is to make the material get over on a grand scale. The problem is that the audiences are mostly painfully stupid (drunken fratboys hollering along with the songs and trying to mosh to "Birdhouse In Your Soul"—a song about a *nightlight*, for God's sake). And the painfully smart John and John have to find a way to entertain them without either pandering to them or smirking at them. On its first tour as a full band, in 1993, TMBG too often lapsed into arena-rock hell—covering Edgar Winter's "Frankenstein" (complete with endless drum solo), pulling out the horn section at every opportunity whether it was called for or not. The excesses are toned down now, though there are still too many solos.

More to the point, the Giants have learned to make excesses work for them, by treating them with the silliness they deserve. The centerpiece of tonight's performance is an army of 50 acoustic guitarists, most of them in Halloween costumes, playing America's two-chord classic "Horse With No Name." It's a dorky idea, but it's still pretty hilarious in practice. "Istanbul (Not Constantinople)" turns into a ridiculous ultra-slow ghostly howl ("Noooo... you... can't... go... baaaack..."). The thematically inevitable "Dig My Grave" rips like a cousin to the Sonics' "Strychnine." And the lengthy final encore, "Spy," turns into a strange and very funny free-jazz routine, with Linnell frantically waving his arms to "conduct" the band and the shouting audience.

Then there's the geek factor. Sometimes the group's embrace of the pocket-protector set is endearing, but sometimes it's just irritating (if "Particle Man" is the best song ever written about subatomic physics, "Meet James Ensor" is the worst ever written about twentieth-century painting). And it's a pity that that's what most of the band's audience has latched onto about them, since some of their strongest lyric writing isn't geeky at all: "Unrelated Thing," one of the highlights of tonight's set, is a bitterly funny number about dissolving relationships, and Linnell's explanation of "Destination Moon" ("It's about being really, really sick when you think you're not") suddenly makes it coherent and chilling. Most often, though, the Giants' straddling of the fine line between genius and stupid ends up on the right side. Just watch out for pogoers with thick glasses.

—Douglas Wolk



### REVEREND HORTON HEAT

December 17 San Francisco, CA  
28 Oklahoma City, OK  
30 Tulsa, OK  
January 14 Staline, NV

### AMERICAN MUSIC CLUB

December 17 Atlanta, GA  
19 St. Louis, MO  
20 Lawrence, KS

### EX-IDOLS/U.K. SUBS

December 19 Tucson, AZ  
20 Phoenix, AZ  
21 Riverside, CA  
22 San Diego, CA  
23 Hollywood, CA  
27 Santa Barbara, CA  
28 San Jose, CA  
30 Berkeley, CA  
January 3 Seattle, WA  
7 Omaha, NE

All dates subject to change

### ON TOUR IN JANUARY

Cows (West Coast)	Rugburns
Slayer	Further
Danzig	Catherine
Luscious Jackson	God Bullies
Sepultura	Farside
Versus	NoFX
Velo-Deluxe	Babe The Blue Ox
Moe Tucker	(South and
Mercy Rule	East Coast)
Vulgar Boatmen	House Of Large Siz
Steel Wool	(Midwest)

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# Localzine

by Katherine Yeske  
photographs by Jeff Siate

## ATLANTA, GA



There's a curious, edgy vibe here. Atlanta prides itself on being a glittering oasis in the conservative Bible Belt. But the fact that some Northerners burned it down to the red Georgia clay a while back still rattles many an Atlantan—in other words, the Old South hasn't been forgotten.

Modern and sprawling, Atlanta emerged from the ashes in a totally nonsensical fashion. Buy a really good city road map when you visit. If you think I'm kidding, wait till you encounter countless one-way streets that change names four times in as many blocks—and the more than 70 streets bearing the word "Peachtree" in their name. (But don't feel bad; many Atlantans still get intimidated by a particularly snarled stretch of the freeway known affectionately as "Spaghetti Junction.") Fortunately, Southern hospitality is no myth, so you'll find help easily.

Reflecting this haphazard environment, there's no homogenous "Atlanta sound." Our success stories (so far) include such varied artists as Arrested Development, Collective Soul, Indigo Girls, Kris Kross, Jackyl, TLC—even RuPaul launched his (her?) career here. A remarkably close-knit folk scene surrounds the Indigo Girls, but really, most musicians are relatively venom-free toward each other here. It's one of the more nurturing, supportive musical environments around.

## CLUBS

**The Masquerade** (695 North Ave. NE)—THE club in town, this foreboding complex contains three separate sections: Heaven (where well known local/national acts perform), Hell (a cavernous dance space) and Purgatory (bar, pool tables, outdoor patio). Newcomers, make this your first stop.

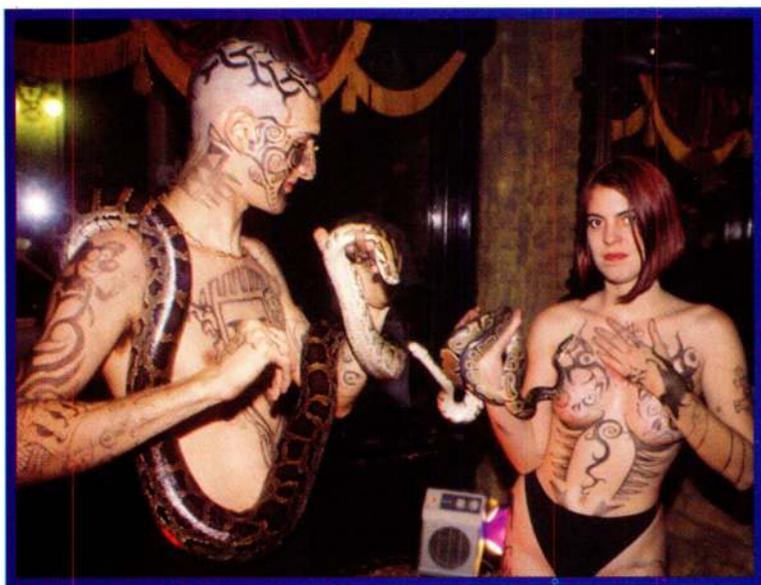
**The Point** (420 Moreland Ave.)—Rowdy and crowded, The Point lies smack in the center of Little Five Points, Atlanta's vibrant arty area. If you drink as much as everyone else patronizing this place, you're likely to have a grand old time.

**Fox Theatre** (660 Peachtree St. NE)—This classy venue hosts everything from Broadway musicals to Pearl Jam. The illuminated ceiling looks like the night sky dotted with stars (which actually move), so you get a planetarium show along with the main attraction.

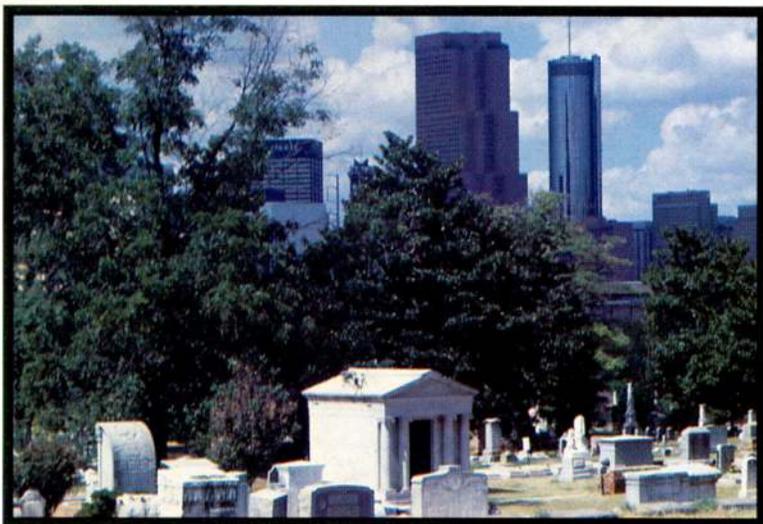
**Velvet** (69 Park Pt. NE)—Supposedly, U2 once called from their jet before landing in town, asking if Velvet was open that night. Then they checked out the club's swank VIP room before checking into their hotel. Very glitzy, very "see-and-be-seen."

**Nocturnia** (688 Spring St.)—And you thought Goth was dead. Dig up your black clothes and white-face and come have a spooky fling with other creatures of the night. The club is small, and the crowd is friendlier than most big-city Goths, so expect an intimate evening dancing to the likes of Sisters Of Mercy and Nosferatu. (Open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.)

Other options include Variety Playhouse, Cotton Club (where Rollins Band, Ride, and others have played incredible shows), Midtown Music Hall, and the Roxy (a larger, (inter)national acts-oriented theater).



PATRONS AT VELVET



**ELABORATE CRYPTS AND STATUES, AND MARGARET MITCHELL'S GRAVE, MAKE OAKLAND CEMETERY A FAVORITE HAUNT**

## RADIO

Two stations monopolize alternative/college airwaves: **99X** (WNNX 99.7 FM) and **WRAS** (88.5 FM). 99X, a commercial alternative station, has enjoyed phenomenal success since it began broadcasting three years ago. Much of this popularity is due to the decidedly skewed DJs. Will Pedarvis, a Prozac-popping curiosity, hosts "On the Edge" weeknights—"surreal" doesn't begin to describe his show. Jeff Clark's more experimental "Fear of Music" show (Sundays, 10 p.m. to 1 a.m.) showcases B-sides and rarities. And Yvonne Monet's Saturday evening "Beat Factory" is a techno/dance club free-for-all.

WRAS-FM, Georgia State University's amazing station, broadcasts at 100,000 watts—the power isn't wasted, either. This station takes its duties seriously: No amateur college pranks are allowed, and the quality is better than that of most commercial stations. Truly cutting edge, with an ever-shifting programming schedule.

## HANGOUTS

Atlanta's mild climate permits outside recreation virtually year-round, so most hot spots feature outdoor patios. If you're feeling adventurous, you can hike in the gorgeous North Georgia Mountains. Civil War buffs can explore regional battlegrounds, and Antebellum South aficionados can tour countless restored plantations near town. Head to Stone Mountain Park (just east of the city) for an incredible laser show under the stars, an old-time train ride—or take a tram to the top of the rock for a breathtaking view of Atlanta's skyline.

Cafes are Atlantans' current hangout of choice. There are several good ones: **Cafe Diem** (642 N. Highland Ave. NE); **Caffiends** (3095 Peachtree Rd. NE); **Sweet Stuff: A Dessert Cafe** (3102 Roswell Rd. NE); and **Cafe Intermezzo** (there are two; the most popular is at 1845 Peachtree Rd. NE). **Oxford Bookstore** also has a popular coffee shop, and local acoustic performers often drop by to play.

If you're not into cafes, check out these restaurants instead: the ever-cool **Fellini's Pizza** (several locations—the most popular is in Little Five Points), the **Majestic** (open 24 hours, this is the epitome of the "greasy spoon" diner), **Bridgetown Grill** (two locations—the best Jamaican and Cuban food in Atlanta), and **Mellow Mushroom** (a pizza/sandwich specialties place with several locations throughout the metro area).

Little Five Points is Atlanta's version of Greenwich Village. Full of small, eclectic boutiques, hair/body piercing salons, record stores and restaurants, it bustles around the clock (although caution should be used after dark—it's not the safest area of town). Definitely the best place around for people-watching.



## STUFF

Many Atlanta record stores deserve a visit: **Fantasyland** (2839 Peachtree Rd. NE), **Criminal Records** (1101 Euclid Ave. NE), **Wuxtry** (2096 N. Decatur Rd.), and **Wax N Facts** (432 Moreland Ave. NE). Vintage clothes lovers should check out **Junkman's Daughter** and **Stefan's**, both in Little Five Points.

As we get ready to host the '96 Summer Olympics, Atlanta is one of America's fastest-growing cities, and there's good reason for that. Friendly residents, a wonderful climate (no, summers aren't that bad), and a hyperactive entertainment scene makes Atlanta more than just the Gateway to the South—it is the South, complete with all the good and bad traits that make this region so interesting. Y'all come down and see us, y'hear? (Sorry—I couldn't resist throwing that in!)

# SONS OF ELVIS

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"Formaldehyde"

and

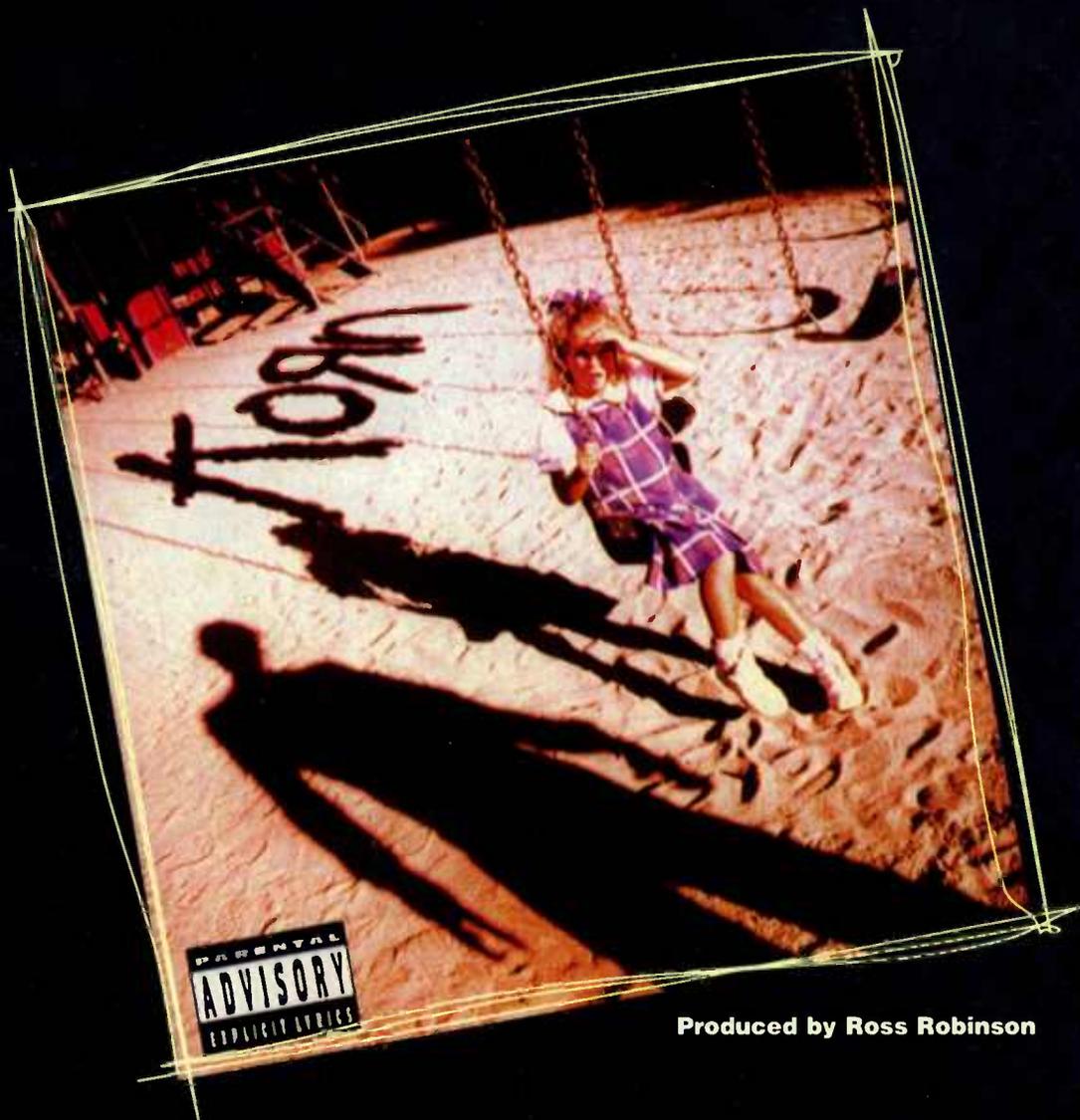
"Soaking In It"



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# time to vent



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