

# CMJ

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MONTHLY

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BABES IN TOYLAND

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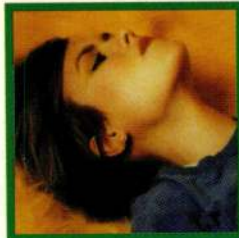
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may 1995

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Lollapalooza has been regaled as the "X" generation's Woodstock and reviled as a cynical cash cow. What do you think of it, and have you had any great/terrible/indifferent experiences there?

Tell us what you think by mail, fax (516-466-7159) or E-mail (cmj@cmjmusic.com).

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

## The Dancing Of Politics

In the March issue, we asked if you thought that music could affect people's opinions about politics. Here's what you said.

I think music can have an effect on the shaping of one's political views. Someone that listens to R.E.M., Pearl Jam or any other politically involved band is likely to at least share their views. Someone as articulate as a Mike Stipe, Henry Rollins or even Madonna can make a good argument. I think the younger you are, the more likely it is that music can shape or change your views.

Personally, I find my views are as liberal as most musicians with the exception of a few. I admire Rollins for his strong views and ability to speak his mind. It has inspired me more than actually influenced me, though. When an artist makes a statement, it's obviously meant to get a reaction. It's up to the individuals to take from it what they want.

By the way... I think the magazine is great. The reviews are well done, especially the RIYL part. And of course the CD makes me the hippest guy on the block. Portishead was featured in your mag how many months before MTV got a hold of it? Keep up the good work.

Jason Sauls  
via e-mail

## Point/Counterpoint

Stop making comparisons. They are not always accurate (i.e. R.I.Y.L.)—get rid of it.

Milan Sheth  
Garden Grove, CA

R.I.Y.L. is 10 times better than a scale or rating system. Great idea!

Andrew Banks  
Smellesly [sic], MA

*It bears repeating, enough that we print it at the bottom of every page of reviews, that "R.I.Y.L." stands for "Recommended If You Like." It's solely a recommendation, not a simple comparison or another way of saying "sounds like." It's just a point of reference that we think serves music fans and consumers better than printing stars, letter grades or a 1-to-10 rating scale.*

## Spread The Word

I read each CMJ from cover to cover, over and over...every month. Everyone that picks up my new copy of CMJ asks for a subscription card. Then they ask to listen to the disc. I say, "Stop buggin' me. Get your own subscription!" And since then, three of my friends have. Do I win a prize or something?

Kevin Pajewsky  
address lost by absent-minded editor

Back in the '60s, Marvel Comics had a series of honorary titles—"P.M.M." (Permanent Marvelite Maximus) and the like—which they conferred on readers who bought more than three Marvel titles a month, introduced a friend to them, had a letter appear in print, and so on. There were also special "No-Prizes" awarded to people who did things above and beyond the call of duty for Marvel, like explaining away apparent continuity errors. They were ornately decorated, oversized envelopes that would arrive in the mail, with big banners saying "Your No-Prize Is Inside!" Of course, the envelopes would be empty. In other words, no, but thank you.

Note: James McNew, who wrote the Yo La Tengo tour diary in the November issue, would like to report that when his band played the town of Moorehead, he knew all along that he was in the state of Minnesota and not Montana, and that we're a bunch of dumbasses for typing the letter "t" instead of the letter "n." Not to worry, James, the person responsible has been taken out behind the offices and shot. On a related note, anyone wishing to intern at CMJ for the summer should contact Donna Rodger at 516-466-6000 ext. 10.

r e s p o n s e

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ENTERTAINMENT



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## Extra! Freedom Brothers Captured In Ween Promotional Vehicle

Scene One: Night. Three A.M., to be exact. This is Independence Hall, birthplace of the American Revolution, and you are there. It's President's Day weekend, and in front of you, being reenacted, is—no, not the signing of the Declaration, but some sort of *Police Academy* sequel. Two men dressed in wool caps and pea coats are trying to make off with a five-foot-tall "chocolate" Liberty Bell. Immediately, three police vehicles and dozens of S.W.A.T. commandos are upon them. It's Gene and Dean. And this is the new Ween video for (what else?) "Freedom of '76."

"They're international freedom fighters," explains director Spike Jonze during a break in the action, "liberating a monument that they feel has been caged for over 200 years. They're doing it for the people. Unfortunately, their plan's gone awry."

"The lyrical content deals so much with Philadelphia," Dean (a.k.a. Mickey Melchionado) explains of the third *Chocolate And Cheese* single, which includes mentions of bacon steaks, Boyz II Men and "a ho on South Street." "We're going to the core of Philadelphia, the capital of American history. We have the biggest landmark in the country by the balls."

"We've always been patriotic," says Gene (a.k.a. Aron Freeman). "Not like the redneck country-western sense, more the colonial sense of patriotism."

"It's a largely anti-British sentiment on my part," Dean adds; "all the history is a 'fuck you' to England."

"So the only thing I could've done was have them steal the Liberty Bell," Spike follows.

"Philadelphia has opened up their arms to the brothers Ween," their Elektra Records publicist enthuses in the nearby freezing darkness. More importantly, perhaps, Elektra has opened its bank account; this obviously full-scale, three-day video production has a budget that not only outstrips previous Ween videos, but also what it cost to make the whole album.

The one condition the Philadelphia Police and the Park Service (who run the historic site) had was that the script not show any police brutality. "Which pretty much blew my whole concept," cracks Deaner, an avid O.J. and Rodney King observer. So they worked another angle. "Philadelphia is such a complex city," rants Gene, "and the fact that we're approaching it head-on... This video is so amazingly deep, so deep that it's going to be like inspiring college term papers..."

After a day of rest, Sunday brings the production to City Hall, where Ween (called The Freedom Brothers here) are quickly convicted, cuffed and thrown into a prison van. It will be about three seconds of video. But because it involves a sea of protesters shouting "Free The Bell Or Go To Hell!" (including Gene's parents, who were real protesters 20 years ago, and many of their New Hope friends) and a gaggle of ersatz reporters (including Jonze's parents), it takes all afternoon to shoot.

"I knew it was all over when Spike called me and said 'I want this to be like "Thriller,"'" says Gene.

"Oh definitely," Jonze says straight-faced. "I just wish we could've incorporated dance moves into it."

Earlier, Jonze and his crew had shot the Weens driving around in a commando van. Later he will shoot them being driven around in a prison van. He will also shoot them rowing (and eating hot dogs) on the river through Fairmont Park with the bell: "The David Lynch dream sequence," Dean explains. Huh? Then again, Jonze is the man who put lipstick on Kim Deal ("Cannonball"), turned Beastie Boy Mike D. into TV dick Alessandro Alegre ("Sabotage"), and brought Weezer back to the ersatz '50s of *Happy Days* ("Buddy Holly"). Is there nothing he can't do?

"It's definitely time to stop fucking around," Dean advises Spike. "You should do all the videos for the next Michael Jackson album. The largest budget ever for a video, make it 3 1/2 hours long. One shot."

One thing's for sure—he won't be doing it in Philadelphia any time soon. Saturday morning, the Park Police found a prop hand grenade accidentally left behind, and despite the fact that it was labeled as a prop, the bomb squad closed down Independence Hall for half the day. Local TV news covered the story, mispronouncing the band's name as "Win." If that sounds like an even better video scenario, well, that's Ween's world for you. Reality always topping fiction. That's the true meaning of *Chocolate And Cheese*. —Eric Gladstone



When

Sebadoh titled its latest

album *Bakesale*, it didn't know

that it'd result in a bake-off. Recently,

on an electronic mail discussion list

devoted to the band, a discussion arose

between a couple of fans who've baked

cookies for Sebadoh on tour. It ended up in

a chocolate-chip-cookie-baking competition

between two fanzine editors: *Spiffy* editor (and

occasional *CMJ* contributor) Katherine Hodges,

whose cookies are pictured here, and *Frantzone*

editor Cindy Frantz, who won. Cookies were

sent to three groups of judges, in Canada,

Boston and Sub Pop's Seattle headquarters.

To subscribe to the Sebadoh-list,

send polite email to: [sebadoh-1-](mailto:sebadoh-1-request@world.std.com)

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# QUICK FIX

## ARTISTS' PERSONAL PICKS in my room

### GEOFF BARROW PORTISHEAD

**A Tribe Called Quest**  
*The Low End Theory*

**Riz Ortolani**  
*Confessions Of A Police Commissioner*

**Isaac Hayes**  
(anything)

**Arthur Brown**  
(anything)

*Dark Empire: Star Wars Trilogy* (book)



## Dream Warriors: The Legacy Continues

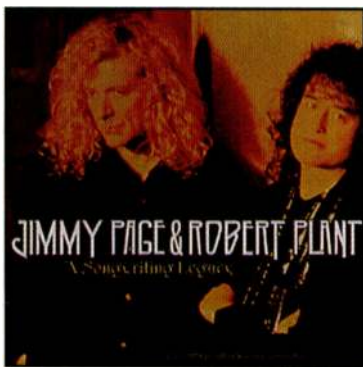
In 1991, the Dream Warriors turned the ears of the hip-hop nation toward a very unlikely place: Toronto, Canada. "We felt that hip-hop didn't go on in Switzerland and those kinds of places," says rapper Capital Q. "It's just the same as New York people thinking there's nothing going on in Toronto. So I can understand when some brothers in New York are like, 'Oh, Toronto? They probably just got snow and hockey.'" King Lu and Capital Q's debut *And Now The Legacy Begins* (Island) was a diverse, almost surreal trip into the duo's mythical world. Listening to the album was like trying to unlock ancient riddles; messages hit you on a subconscious level, their complex imagery paralleled only by that of De La Soul or A Tribe Called Quest.

"It's funny," explains Q. "There really isn't a formula, but it seems to have become a formula with the Dream Warriors: [We're] just being real and reflecting our *inner* based on what the *outer* has done to us." That practice has resurfaced on the group's fine follow-up, and first for Pendulum-EMI Records, *Subliminal Simulation*. Joining the journey this time around are new members Spek and Luv. Both natives of Canada, they joined the group not because it was in need of extra members, but simply because they shared a vision with Lou and Q. Spek explains: "I'm from Montreal. I met them [Lou and Q] at an autograph session and we started vibing because I, like, stole the first album. We started doing tracks together for vibing's sake. It wasn't really a decision, it was more like an evolution." Streamlined with more jazz samples than their first album, the Dream Warriors remain blissfully abstract as ever, while welcoming in Gang Starr's Guru on the be-bopped "I've Lost My Ignorance."

As evidenced on songs like the velvety, jazz-brushed "California Dreamin'" (the album's first single), the Dream Warriors not only expand and ripen their sound on *Subliminal Simulation*, they do it with the added pressure of avoiding the dreadful sophomore slump. "We've been getting some amazing responses on this album. For me personally, I always expect the worst, and then it can only get better," chuckles Q. "If our songs are too thick for somebody, then they need to wake up," he continues. "They need to realize that the world is full of complication. We're not gonna get any shallower because there's somebody out there who doesn't get it."

—Glen Sansone

☎ "CALIFORNIA DREAMIN'" BY DREAM WARRIORS APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



## No Clue

A recently released promotional disc celebrating Robert Plant and Jimmy Page's *No Quarter* tour is subtitled *A Songwriting Legacy*. The disc features ten Zeppelin songs, but what the compilers of this sampler failed to realize is that of these ten songs, only two were entirely written by Plant and Page. The others were penned with the help of the late John Bonham and John Paul Jones (who Plant and Page apparently also think is dead). *A Songwriting Legacy* credits "Whole Lotta Love" to all four Zeppelin members, when in fact Willie Dixon was successful in his litigation concerning the song. At least "When The Levee Breaks" gives a credit to Memphis Minnie (after Plant, Page, Bonham and Jones, of course).



## Promo Items Of The Month Part 1: Feed Me!

Knowing that rock critics cannot survive on promotional t-shirts alone, snacks have become a popular new way to get to a reviewer's heart. Da Lench Mob rotted our teeth with the 100% phat Hershey bar, and Archers Of Loaf threw us a toy surprise (the advance cassette of *Yee Yee*) by way of Cracker Jack. Funny how an incredible sugar rush can affect the way you hear a record.



# ALL

# PUMMEL



Produced by Bill Stevenson & Stephen Egerton

Mixed by Michael Barbiero

Direction: BILL GRAHAM MANAGEMENT

# QUICK FIX

## Purity Of Essence

What do PJ Harvey's bluesy swagger, Stereolab's space-age bachelor pop, Th Faith Healers' throbbing rock 'n' roll, and Seefeel's guitar-based technotronics have in common? They all first reached the public through the London-based independent label Too Pure, which has, after five years in business, finally inked a U.S. deal with another label known for its diversity, Rick Rubin's American Recordings. With a roster eschewing categorization, Too Pure has earned a reputation for discovering some of the most innovative and challenging British bands since its inception in 1990, and also for charting most of its records in the top five on the British indie charts. Label co-owner Richard Roberts recalls that in 1990 his partner "Paul [Cox] had been running his club The White Horse, where he was booking the early shows for Mega City Four, Inspiral Carpets, Lush, who all played their first shows at Paul's club. So he obviously had a good inkling of what was going to happen... Paul was moaning that he'd always wanted to do a live album at the club, and I said, 'No problem, we can do that.' We got together a bank loan...and put out our first record [a live compilation], and also Th Faith Healers' first single. For the next six months, every record that came out was subsidized by the fact that the record before had done quite well."



While the bands cited above have all secured U.S. labels, releases by several others have only been available as pricey imports in specialty shops—until now. American Recordings, known for the Black Crowes, Slayer, Sir Mix-A-Lot and, of course, its long-bearded music mogul Rubin, might not seem the obvious choice, but Too Pure's philosophy coincides with that of American's Mark Geiger, who hitched the deal. A longtime fan of British music ("I was the guy who went bananas over the Bunnyman"), Geiger noticed a growing number of Too Pure releases in his record collection. In a climate that focused heavily on American bands, "they were doing the most radical, innovative stuff," according to Geiger.

Being a music lover, in fact, is what links Geiger to Roberts and Cox most. For Too Pure, "The main criteria for signing a band has been essentially the fact that Paul and I are music fans, and it had to be something that we both really liked," explains Roberts. "That would mean that we're going to be listening and living with these records, and it's much more than how many copies can we sell, which has meant the roster is fairly diversified." In a separate interview an ocean away, Geiger echoed his sentiments almost exactly: "I think Too Pure is a great label for us to be associated with. Like 4AD and other superclassy labels, I think they're a class outfit that cares about the right things, which is really unique artistry, not the commercially-driven, and that's what attracts me to them."

With his American deal, Roberts initially hopes "to get records out there at domestic prices. And to have people that are heavily committed to the future of the label working them, which in consequence should give a new act a chance to break." What that means for Yankee record buyers is an initial reissue program, through which American will release previously import-only albums by Moog popsters Stereolab, avant sound collagists Pram, German electronic wizards Mouse On Mars, gritty urban noise manglers Moonshake, Moonshake-spinoff Laika and London rock trio Minxus. In addition, there'll be a Faith Healers singles compilation and a new Pram album before the end of the year. Laika, the dub- and jazz-influenced group fronted by former Moonshake vocalist/bassist Margaret Fiedler, may also be appearing on Lollapalooza's side stage this year.

—Lydia Anderson



## Tours We'd Like To See

### BOOKMOBILE-OOZA:

The Boo Radleys (from *To Kill A Mockingbird*), The Miss Alans (*A Room With A View*), the Caulfields (*The Catcher In The Rye*), Milo Binder (*Catch-22*), Billy Pilgrim (*Slaughterhouse 5*), Veruca Salt (*Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory*), Uriah Heep (*Hard Times*), Josef K (*The Trial*), Steppenwolf (*Steppenwolf*), and Tom Jones (*Tom Jones*).

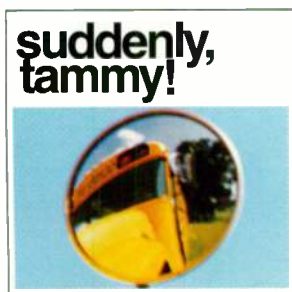


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World Radio History

# QUICK FIX

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

### LISA GERMANO

**Giant Sand**  
Glum

**Pearl Jam**  
Vitalogy

**Victoria Williams**  
Loose

**John Lennon**  
Shaved Fish

*Simple Men and The Unbelievable Truth* by Hal Hartley (films)



## Half-Cocked: Cinema Indie-Rock

"In film school, they tell you to write what you know," says Suki Hawley, who with Michael Galinsky has made the film *Half-Cocked*. It tells the story of five young people, played by Jon Cooke from the band Crain, Cynthia Nelson from Ruby Falls, and Tara Jane O'Neil, Jason Noble and Jeff Mueller, all formerly of Rodan. Their story begins in Louisville, Kentucky, where all five live in the Rocket House, owned by Cooke and until recently a hub of the real-life Louisville scene. O'Neil's character, badgered by her parents and belittled by her aspiring rock-star older brother Otis (played to perfection by ex-Nation Of Ulysses frontman Ian Svenonius), longs for a way out. She and her friends steal a van and begin an ill-planned adventure through the South. Arriving in Chatanooga, TN penniless, the quintet attempts to get a show at a local pub as a band. The gambit works, and even though the newly formed "group," christened Truckstop, doesn't know how to set up its instruments, much less play them, they make enough money to keep going, getting better and meeting fellow travelers like the Grifters.

Neither Hawley nor Galinsky are strangers to the world of indie-rock touring. Galinsky plays bass for Sleepyhead, and has been on tour "a million times," says Hawley, who has toured with Ruby Falls as a roadie and booking agent. The idea for the movie came when Hawley was working on the independent film *Party Girl* in November of 1993. Her duties on the film were greater than she expected, and she decided she might as well make a movie herself. The pair wrote much of the loose script themselves before leaving for Louisville, channelling the actors' voices so effectively that anyone who knows the principals might be surprised to learn that the dialogue was not improvised.

*Half-Cocked* has so far only been shown around New York City, in galleries, lofts and, in one case, an actual theater. Hawley and Galinsky, at press time, were about to trudge off to the Berlin Film Festival, which turned down the film for a screening (as did the other four festivals to which the pair submitted the movie), to try to sell the film to distributors anyway in the outdoor market that brackets the festival.

Keep your fingers crossed. *Half-Cocked* strains against the confines of its low budget, and despite being filmed in three weeks, is neither technically nor artistically amateurish. "We wanted to make a fictional document where people didn't play themselves but played people like themselves," says Hawley. "We thought that it would be interesting to look back ten years from now on a portrait of this thing that happened. Little did we know that six months from then it would document this thing that didn't exist anymore." Indeed, the Rocket House is no more, Rodan and Crain but memories. *Half-Cocked*, however, preserves the Louisville scene's brief moment in time. —Andrew Beaujon

## Promo Items Of The Month Part 2: Crime and Punishment

What should arrive within weeks of each other but a talking RoboCop doll, to promote the new Lita Ford/Joe Walsh soundtrack to the television show, and a nice basket containing a miniature guillotine and a severed doll head, complete with some red paint dabbed around the neck, promoting the "Dear Margaret" single by the Rosemarys. It's always nice to see that righteous violence still has a place in rock 'n' roll.



# KMFDM

## THE NEW ALBUM



**EN  
ESCH**



**SASCHA  
KONIETZKO**



**RAYMOND  
WATTS**



**MARK  
DURANTULA**



**GUNTER  
SCHULZ**



# BEST NEW MUSIC

## BABES IN TOYLAND

### Nemesister

Reprise



Considering the outsized hype this group has received for several years, an album at this point, on the heels of a full-length biography (why the young, still-not-million-selling band deserved it is anyone's guess) fairly screams out for a reviewer to can it, declare the band a sham, and go onto the next new thing. But *Nemesister* makes any coroner's reports premature. Rather than further entrenching themselves in the pseudo-demimonde of the major label "underground," Babes in Toyland recorded in Minneapolis's Amphetamine Reptile studio, taking a step back towards indie-land, though the results are mostly a departure from their past ("So Fucking What," apparently an outtake from that film, is a rare exception). Post-Yoko vocalizing and full-frontal guitars are at a premium here. Replacing them are more secure song structures and melodic singing (by both Kat Bjelland and Lori Barbero) that doesn't bely their familiar power so much as harness and diversify it. Former Bjelland bandmate Courtney Love's Hole is the closest comparison, and frankly, *Nemesister* blows that band's efforts away in its ability to emotionalize without so much narcissism. Other points of reference include Pat Smear's goth-punk band 45 Grave, the constructions of the Blues Explosion, and Sonic Youth without their tune-obscuring aural gauze. If that sounds wildly varied, note that the album even ends with a well-sung *acappella* ballad.

—Eric Gladstone

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 25.

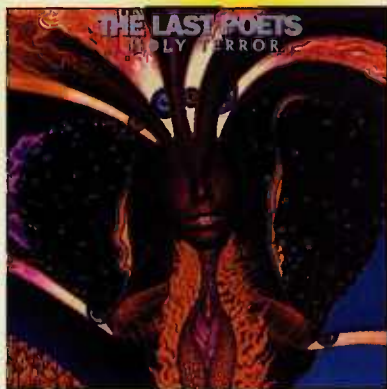
**FILE UNDER:** Melodic girl noise.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Nirvana, Patti Smith, Hole.

## THE LAST POETS

### Holy Terror

Rykodisc



*Holy Terror* is the bomb, the second coming of the Last Poets. It's as good as anything they've recorded in their 25-plus year career, and taken as a whole, it's better than any other single album of theirs. From the opening "Invocation" to the closing "Last Rite," which vows "the shit is on/Daddy's home," this is ingenious, wit-filled wordplay that's as serious as HIV. The grooves are deep, the sentiments are serious. *Holy Terror* exemplifies an organic merger of the African-American spoken word tradition, funk music and contemporary rap with insightful poems such as "Black Rage," "Pelhourinho" (which addresses colonial efforts during slavery to turn Africans into Negroes), and "Funk" (which successfully socially contextualizes funk). But there's more. There's Grandmaster Melle Mel, whose participation illustrates both the unity and the differences between spoken word and rap. *Holy Terror* also employs funk musicians Bernie Worrell and Bootsy Collins (both of whom are P-Funksters), as well as percussionist Aiyb Dieng and producer Bill Laswell on bass. So rather than samples and prerecorded tracks, you get real-time grooves that can react and respond to the poets. Finally, the backing music is intelligently selected and expertly played, ranging from Brazilian rhythms and a brilliant solo organ accompaniment to a reprise of the P-Funk anthem "Give Up The Funk" and a version of Alice Coltrane's "Stopover Bombay." Long live the Last Poets, especially if they keep wrecking maximum effect as they do on *Holy Terror*.

—Kalamu ya Salaam

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 18.

**FILE UNDER:** The word and the funk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Public Enemy, Parliament-Funkadelic, Stolen Moments: Red Hot + Cool.

**KMFDM**

**Nihil**

Wax Trax!-TVT



Right from the start of *Nihil*, you're caught up in the rush of killer hooks, machine gun rhythms, relentless bass lines, and KMFDM leader Sascha's menacing growls. Not as jokey as Ministry, not as scary as Skinny Puppy, KMFDM's best work has the precision and penetration of a diamond-bit drill. This is a superb album that takes no prisoners from beginning to end. It starts out like gangbusters with three nearly flawless cuts, "Ultra," "Juke Joint Jezebel," and "Flesh," slows down a bit with "Disobedience" and "Revolution" and then cranks it back up at the end. "Disobedience," in particular, is a real standout, about as close to a ballad as these guys will ever get. Still, there's a curious irony about KMFDM. Listening to the female chorus singing "Do what you can, what you want, what you must, don't give up your trust," on "Trust," one detects a certain cynical detachment that's reminiscent of Steely Dan, funnily enough. While the lyrics are all about fighting for idealism, reading between the lines, it's easy to see that the battle's already been lost. Once you've figured that out, the only thing to do is crank this album up to 11: that's what nihilism is all about.

—Heidi MacDonald

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 4.

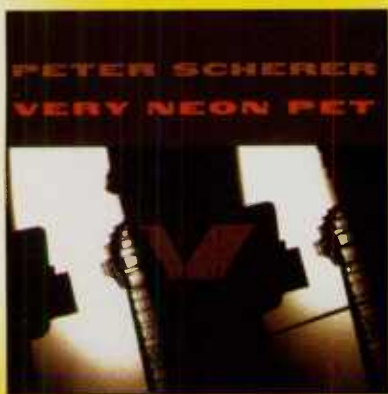
**FILE UNDER:** Essential industrial noise.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Ministry, Nine Inch Nails.

**PETER SCHERER**

**Very Neon Pet**

Metro Blue-Capitol



You probably don't know Peter Scherer's name, but you've probably heard him in one context or another. If you keep your radio dial tuned to the left, you've heard his cerebral world-pop duo, Ambitious Lovers, on college stations; if it's more to the right, you've heard the weird sounds he added to Cameo's "Word Up." He's also worked with composers like Terry Riley and Gyorgy Ligety. *Very Neon Pet* is his first solo record, a stab at—and through the heart of—instrumental electronic dance. As you might expect, it's rarely what you'd expect. In a sense, it's almost ambient: The bass is so low it can be felt more than heard, and everything is muted, restrained, rounded off. But it's "ambient" in the sense that it seeps into and fills your surroundings, not in the usual air-pudding sense. Listen closely, and it's like seeing the riot of life beneath the surface of a rippling pond. Every moment is hyperactively full of events—insectoid rhythms that skitter across the mix and then disappear, great whooshing storms of atonal noise, guitar and violin and whatever-that-was solos that veer in and out of sync with everything else. Scherer is using the rubbernecking tactics of the deepest, weirdest, most jarring dub to make something that isn't dub, or jarring, or even too weird to lie back and relax to. There's no name for the kind of music he's making—yet.

—Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 23. First single: "Nerve Type No."

**FILE UNDER:** Psychopathic instrumentals.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Tackhead, The Orb, listening to two radios at once.

**BAD BRAINS**

**God Of Love**

Maverick



Time was when critics decried the fact that none of the great original punk bands, like the Bad Brains, never got played on anything but college radio. Now all bets are off in the post-Green Day world, and everyone acts as if worlds have collided. In fact, on *God Of Love*, they have. The Bad Brains, who are often credited with inventing hardcore punk with the "Pay To Cum" single more than 15 years ago, have reemerged in a pop music climate that's much more appropriate for them, with their rasta-punk intact, and on Madonna's record label no less. The record is split almost evenly between heavy-footed, explosive guitar crunch and raw-nerved roots reggae, but the two styles, and worlds, clash on almost every song. The opening cut, "Cool Mountaineers," throttles the life out of present-day hard rock, but owes its disorienting time signatures to dub, while "Longtime" could be a Jamaican pop radio hit if it weren't for the mortar-shell percussion. Joining the two is H.R.'s alternately sweetly reedy and throaty wail. Hearing his voice cut clean through the band's torrents of sound still sends chills. Improbably, with *God Of Love*, the band steps right back into the stride it hit with 1986's massive *I Against I*. After almost every band you know has copped to being influenced by the Bad Brains, it's amazing how fresh this all sounds.

—Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9. Watch for a tour with Beastie Boys.

**FILE UNDER:** Rastafarian punk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Faith No More, the Beastie Boys' punk stuff, Rollins Band.



**“I haven’t got a record player,” Jason Kaye confesses, with a snicker.**

Huh? Is it possible that the leader of England’s Jamiroquai, whose young vocal and songwriting talents intimate an intense knowledge and understanding of early ’70’s jazz, funk and soul fusion, doesn’t collect records?

“I take music as it comes,” Jay explains after a bit. “I haven’t got a mass of records. There’s tunes I’ve listened to 20 times but I don’t know who it is, because I’m not a train spotter. It’s not like I’ve got to know the name and number and where it was recorded and the year. That’s great, if you’re a record collector or a DJ. But I’m not. I wanna make music. I don’t want to be the guy watching, I want to be on the stage.”

With his mother a jazz singer, Jay grew up around musicians, so he explains his habit. “I was around live music all the time. And from there it was just walking around going ‘blimp bibi be bimp,’ you know, having no Walkman, that’s how it started. That’s my forte: almost picturing music, having a feel for each instrument, emulating that sound and hearing it in my head... And I can sing.”

Sing he can, and he has definitely done something with it. Jamiroquai’s debut album came out little more than a year ago, and sold over one and a half million copies worldwide. A disproportionate few of that number were in the US—ironic, considering that *Emergency On Planet Earth*’s strong environmental themes and musical threads were more relevant here than anywhere. Before dealing with that, though, Kaye had to worry about how to follow up.

“It was difficult to know what to fucking write about,” he admits, taking off his hat (not the infamous buffalo horns, but a sherpa cap). “I mean, obviously you spend so much time immersed in one thing, four years’ ideas, and it’s successful, and hey ho presto! they want another one, and you’re sitting in hotel rooms ordering room service, what are you going to fucking write about? I mean, I ain’t out on the streets starving, I’m not out stopping some man hooking a fucking killer whale, harpooning a fucking seal. I’m a bit fucked over, really. And I’m thinking, ‘what

are you left to write about except yourself? The first one was so fucking strong [ironically] that it’s hard conceptually to match.”

“Everybody in this band knows my stance,” he continues, “which is that I could forget this country. As fast as people go we gotta make it in America, we’ve got to break it, if we don’t make it in America, we’re no one.” As fast as that, I got a number one in Japan, selling records in England, France, Scandinavia, Europe.”

Still, he namechecks American jazz-funk notables Johnny Hammond, Donald Byrd, Herbie Hancock, Pleasure. And then there’s Stevie Wonder. “This started off with [writers] asking me ‘Who do you like?’ ‘I like Stevie Wonder.’ He’s not an influence, but I feel akin to how he sings a song, that’s how I’d like to sing a song. Nothing more. Next minute, people are saying ‘So you think you sound like Stevie Wonder?’ I never said that. I’m sure he’s heard of us, and he probably thinks I’m some jumped-up little white shitbag

trying to steal his music. I don’t want to copy him or be him. Go down to Rio De Janeiro, see how many tunes are like ba-da-bada-ba bap bap bada. It’s just plain Latin scatting.”

“Classic things take time,” says Jay, getting back to the new record. “It’s not like ‘this is really good, I like it first time.’ That’ll bore you shitless in days. It’s not the same as the first one, and there’s no reason it should be, but I wondered if people would understand. ‘Hey, we’re signed for fucking eight albums, bloody hell, it’s one album, it’s one bit of music.’ If it ain’t quite what everybody thought it was, then so what?”

Jamiroquai’s new album is *The Return Of The Space Cowboy* (Sony Soho Square).



by Eric Gladstone



*Drift*

# FLOTSAM AND JETSAM

I come to you for guidance  
I come to you for help  
You just see a bright idea  
to benefit yourself  
You KNOW that there's no risk  
Nothing you should dread  
on to your deception  
his view of ~~work~~ "smoked out"  
"destructive signs"  
I realize what you're "empty air"  
me to pull out all the stops  
MCA

new album  
ten tracks  
including

Turn on To AMP - MCA On Line: [http://www.mca.com/mca\\_records](http://www.mca.com/mca_records)  
World Radio History



# GUIDED BY VOICES

## EXTRATERRESTRIAL

BY DAVID SPRAGUE

**If you had to pick one rock performer to explain the art of songwriting to an alien culture, it would have to be Guided By Voices majordomo Robert Pollard.**

Pollard is practically a one-man Brill Building; the few hundred songs he and his band have strewn across nine albums and a sizeable passel of singles and EPs are but a drop in the bucket of a two-decade back catalog of tunes that often sound like the result of a Bizarro World jam session uniting Cheap Trick, Wire and the Incredible String Band.

But even when they last less than ten seconds (as they occasionally do) and sound as if they're recorded from a cassette deck plugged into the cigarette lighter of a car parked next door (as they usually do), Guided By Voices' songs are rarely anything short of perfect pop—which Pollard freely admits is the desired end product.

"A song doesn't have to repeat itself to sound like a pop song," he says. "It can go from point A to point Z without retracing any of its steps. But unless you have a good melody, it's just experimental nonsense, which I don't think we ever stoop to. Sometimes, we like to fuck with people, but not in a pretentious way."

*Alien Lanes*, the sextet's just-released ninth album, is unsullied by pretense, despite the, shall we say, mercurial lyrical bent that permeates songs like "My Valuable Hunting Knife," "Always Crush Me" and "Blimps Go 90." With 28 songs and fragments jimmied into its grooves, the album certainly has plenty to offer for those craving unabashed excess, particularly since the band's next release (tentatively scheduled for October, and even more tentatively titled *The Flying Party Is Here*) will be its first *bona fide* studio recording.

"I wanted to get a double-album's worth of songs onto one album, basically," is Pollard's reasoning for the expanse of *Alien Lanes*. "There's as little space between songs as possible and there are so many lyrics that we needed a gatefold vinyl sleeve to fit them all. It might be too much, or so some people have told me, but it sure as hell was fun."

He applies that last adjective to the band's recently completed stint in Memphis's Easley Studios, where *The Flying Party Is Here* was recorded under the scrutiny of both Steve Albini ("a really nice guy with definite opinions," Pollard laughs) and Breeder Kim Deal, the spouse of new bassist Jim Greer, whose closet includes skeletons as varied as rock criticism and Rude Buddha. The 24-track console—a far cry from the days when eight-track recording was a high-tech maneuver—still gives Pollard pause.

taking the band further from its (relatively) conventional eccentro-pop origins. As recently as three years ago, the singer bemoaned his vinyl surplus—one that was thinned when Scat Records' Robert Griffin began hawking copies through his now-defunct mail-order house and all but swept away when Scat issued *Vampire On Titus*, the first widely available GBV release.

"We used to throw parties and smash up all those older things, which I guess was a bad idea," says the singer, who only this year quit his much-discussed day job as Dayton's most rocking fourth-grade teacher. "I've still got four or five copies of each, and every week, it seems like we get letters from people who want to pay me like 50 bucks for them."

Rather than mine the black market, Pollard reluctantly agreed to make the band's back catalog available as a box set, even though certain stretches (like *Sandwich*, which he dismisses as "an attempt to make a huge power-pop record for less than a thousand dollars") are painful for him to listen to. While the band's sound has changed markedly over the years—an early R.E.M. fixation gave way to a rediscovery of the arena-rock grandeur Pollard dreamed of as the lead '70s metal band—the singer's stream-of-conscious lyrics remain as befuddling as any in pop.

"The titles always come first for me," he admits. "That's what I was doing when you called, going through this notebook of titles and trying to see if I could come up with anything from there. When I get stuck, I just go for a drive; having everything flying by me at high speed is very inspiring."

While Pollard admits that GBV's elevation from spare-time hobby to retirement-fund replenisher has had some effect on his writing ("I used my time much better when I had so little of it," he says), he doesn't forecast many changes in the band's near future, save maybe one:

"We'd really like to get a beer sponsorship," he chuckles. "We had the people from Rolling Rock at one show, and kept talking from the stage about how much we all liked it, but they never came back to say anything. Now that I think about it, Rolling Rock foams up too much if you move around... but any other brewery that wants to talk, I'm available."

"I really like what we did down there, but I don't think I can take this massive dose of high-tech shit all at once," he says. "We redid a few things on four-track just to mess things up a little. It's really hard to get things like vocals to sound right in a big studio."

By now, the tale of Guided By Voices' ten-year overnight success story has been told often enough to merit a patch—sewn alongside the one depicting Iggy popping the top on his first jar of peanut butter—on the crazy-quilt of rock history. Still, it's hard not to marvel at the stunningly air-tight vacuum GBV stayed in for most of its existence, especially in light of the over-developed prying abilities of a music business that seldom allows a band to pass its fifth gig—much less its fifth album—without promises of pie (*à la mode*, of course) in the sky.

"At first, recording was just a hobby for us," says Pollard. "The only reason we had for wanting to do [the 1986 mini-LP *Forever Since Breakfast*] in the first place was that this other local band, the Highwaymen, had one out and we thought we could do it too. We didn't know the first thing about recording, though, and when we finished it, all the local feedback we got was really negative. That probably contributed a lot to our lack of confidence."

It obviously didn't stop them from doing it again... and again. By the time most folks heard the name Guided By Voices for the first time, Pollard's basement was stacked high with crates containing copies of five more albums, each

ANGST

photography by Michael Lavine

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"I don't want to do things the same way" is a

# Juliana Hatfield

BY AARON CLOW

motto of sorts for Hatfield.

Last summer Juliana Hatfield played a free concert in New York's Central Park. Heavy rains carried by forceful gusts swept across the stage, showering the covered-up amps and instruments. When the rain subsided, her band finally made it on stage—with a new drummer and a new set of songs, except for "My Sister," "Supermodel" and a solo encore of "Nirvana" to appease a front row of mud-covered moshers. If the waterlogged crowd was upset that day at the lack of material from Hatfield's first two albums, it certainly didn't show.

"I'm hoping that the audience will totally like the new record and they'll be into that because I really can't see myself playing much off the last record," Hatfield says. "I don't think people will mind—I think they'll like the new record better than the last one. I hope I don't piss people off. The older songs just seem out of date to me, like they don't represent what I want to do anymore."

Hatfield hasn't always been so comfortable with change. Following her 1991 departure from Boston's renowned Blake Babies and the subsequent release of her first solo album, *Hey Babe*, she found herself in emotional turmoil. She said in interviews that she hoped she wouldn't hit bottom; that she was consumed with worry that she might not ever have the security of a band again. But she tried to manufacture that stability with the 1993 formation of the Juliana Hatfield Three. The group included longtime friend and bassist Dean Fisher (who also plays on her newest, *Only Everything*) and drummer Todd Phillips, formerly of Bullet Lavalta, who had made an appearance on *Hey Babe*. Juliana's resolve was demonstrated at a gig in Sweden where promoters had mistakenly put "Juliana Hatfield" on the promo posters. She stopped mid-show to proudly announce that "someone messed up on the posters outside. It says we are 'Juliana Hatfield,' but we're actually *The Juliana Hatfield Three*. So someone fucked up."

Today, Juliana Hatfield—now minus the "Three" again—appears relaxed and infinitely amicable, if slightly distracted.

She's got a carefully, tightly folded paper gum wrapper in front of her and is playfully but intently knocking it back and forth across the glass table with a ballpoint pen. *Only Everything* has been finished since before Christmas; the only thing left to do now is the task of assembling a band for her upcoming tour.

She seems relieved and confident as she mentions freedom in many contexts—and, oddly enough, she's particularly happy that she isn't locked into any long-term associations. "It's just a touring thing. Well, who knows. Maybe it'll work out so great that we won't want to leave each other. But I'm kind of liking the freedom to change—yeah, I like that."

When questioned about the departure of Phillips, she will volunteer only that "we kind of decided that we didn't want to play together anymore because of differences in... different philosophies." But the recommencing of her soft, breathy mumble suggest there might be some more to the story. There's no doubt, however, that she's been uncomfortable with being the center of attention in a trio, and she's ready to let loose and have more fun on stage. When she hits the road this summer, it will be with an additional guitarist and a keyboard player.

"You know what it is?" she offers, ceasing her game of bat-and-toss with the wrapper. "Three-pieces don't sound good on TV, and I know we're going to be playing on TV a lot this year." She looks up, reconsidering her position when I chuckle a bit. "That's not the reason," she laughs—"but no, I'm just sick of being a trio. I want more shit to be happening on stage. In the trio I had to do as much as I could, basically because we had to make it sound full enough." Is there any particular television performance she's been unhappy with? "Lots of them." At the suggestion that no television mixing engineer is going to let her jagged sound hit the airwaves unscathed, she replies "I know, but if you have more stuff happening, it's harder to fuck it up." She looks back down to the table while continuing, "But that's not the reason. I just really want not to be in a trio anymore because I've done it, you know? I don't want to do things the same way. I've been in trios since the Blake Babies."

"I don't want to do things the same way" is a motto of sorts for Hatfield. Her need to keep moving is clear on her newest release, *Only Everything*. It's immediately different than its predecessors—wider in lyrical vision, wider in musical scope and more thoughtfully produced. The vast differences in sound, song to song, make the cold, homogeneous tones of *Become What You Are* sound like some kind of one-off, bony-edged musical experiment. Part of the change of sound can be credited to Juliana herself taking a more active part in the production duties this time around (she shares a credit with her longtime producers/engineers Sean Slade and Paul Q. Kolderie). "I'm kind of retarded when it comes to technology, but I know what I like, what I want about sound. But it's hard for me to know how to make those sounds happen." She grows more enthusiastic when I note that this album sounds a lot more like her live shows. "That's really good to hear, because we wanted it to be more like that. The live stuff is just, like, more exciting than the record sometimes. Sean and Paul really helped a lot with that—getting good guitar sounds and getting more what I would really play in concert."

The new tracks will whip up live audiences, whether they were written with that intention or not. There are more powerful four-chord rockers on this album than on all of Hatfield's previous albums combined. But coinciding with the arrival of more memorable choruses is the appearance that with each successive album she is beginning to shroud herself in her lyrics more, or at the very least is becoming more reluctant to share every inner doubt with her audience. *Hey Babe* drew critical praise not only for its musical originality, but for its lyrical nakedness—its confessions of a confused adolescent trying to find her way in the world. 1993's *Become What You Are* followed up on that personal approach with wonderful tracks like "Little Pieces" ("On and on it goes/Nobody knows/My heart's on fire but my blood is frozen"). But Hatfield also drew criticism for songs like "For The Birds," a strained metaphor comparing a dying baby bird

to a relationship. On *Only Everything*, though, for every slowly churning moment of introspection like that of "You Blues" ("Scared of a future that comes from the past/When I think back I see that this could never last") there's a flat-out pop-rocker like "Universal Heartbeat," with its simple but anchored hook ("A heart/A heart that hurts is/A heart/A heart that hurts is/A heart...").

Is she aware of the change of direction? "Partly. It's partly conscious, yeah. Because I just want people to leave me alone," she coyly muses, smiling. "Like, people just focus too much on... people make too much about lyrics, or they made

"Leave me out of the debate, please."

I just don't want to know."

too much of themselves." She pauses for a moment to consider which. "I just wanted to show that I'm not that person that they thought I was and I think of other things. There's more to it than what's on my albums. It's also more of trying to expand and learn and do other things—experiment with creativity."

Of course, there's a common injustice in the way women are held more accountable for their lyrics. If a man appears vulnerable, it's a show of sensitivity; if a woman appears vulnerable, it's likely that only her vulnerability will be perceived. And that's linked to the press's distinction between "women in rock" and musicians in rock. Hatfield reacts: "Yeah, just leave me out of it. Leave me out of the debate, please. I just don't want to know." She gets very quiet as she considers her position. "Just, sometimes I just get so depressed when I think that I can't just, like, be a rocker 'cause I'll always be a woman in rock. Sometimes I wish I was a boy 'cause then I'd just be a musician, you know?"

She speaks with frustration of the definitive, simplistic labels that an audience places on artists out of a desire to feel that it knows them.

"That's the dilemma that we're in, like, as humans. You can do that—think you know someone through his or her art, but people should realize that you can't really—that a person's art doesn't sum up the person at all. It's never going to be a whole person. You could have 50 years of a person's work, but then when you meet the person, you see something new. Like just the way the person talks or moves or walks—or something like a character flaw—or something that you will not have seen in the art. [Art is] pieces of a person and pieces of the unconscious that the art can't even explain. And it's, like, God and other stuff—outside influences. Sure, it's a lot of the person who's making the art, but art can never represent the whole person because it's all too complicated and fucked up."

But isn't it ultimately a no-win situation? If the artist is creating out of a need to be known but the art will never completely express the person, isn't the goal ultimately unattainable? "No... no, you win. You express little chunks, big chunks. You can express a lot. I'm just saying that, sure, art works. But I don't know myself—I don't even know who I am, so how can anyone else possibly understand everything about me when I don't even understand myself?" So you can only know what you're thinking about at a particular moment? Juliana Hatfield laughs. "Sometimes I don't even know about that!"

A masterful, righteously insane in the brain debut album -NME

# SENSOR

**STACKED UP**  
THE NEW ALBUM

Don't forget  
your safety belt

Produced by Haggis



ATLAS

ultimate.

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# underground LOVERS

*below the surface  
is a dark and  
intoxicating place*

***dream it down***  
the new album

*produced by david chesworth,  
robert goodge, wayne connolly,  
glenn bennie and vincent giarrusso*



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World Radio History

photographs by Pauline St. Denis

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## Mardi Gras is still weeks away, but New Orleans doesn't care.

Morphine is in town to play a series of gigs warming up for extensive touring in support of its third album, *Yes* (Rykodisc), and the band seems ready to enjoy some of the surreal nightlife opportunities that Mardi Gras can offer. The album's title is a bit surprising: For a band known for its gloomy, bass-driven sound and Mark Sandman's post-Bukowskian lyrical bent, *Yes* is a very optimistic word, and there are a couple of lyrics on the album that could maybe even be called unambiguously positive. But Sandman still doesn't smile very much, except in a wicked sort of way, so Morphine remains very much the same band. "Get in your go-cart and go, little sister," he sings coolly on the album's title track. It's a mean kiss-off, but you also can't help but laugh along with it.

Mark Sandman looks like he's at home on the timeworn streets of downtown New Orleans. His laconic, Tom Waits-like face could equally belong to a hard-times derelict or to a wealthy, depraved young aristocrat. "I've been around a little bit," he smiles, answering the questions about his years living in Boston and his geographic background.

Morphine have just finished making a video for "Super Sex." "We just did a lot of filming for it in New York last weekend," Sandman remarks. He turns to the rest of the group. "Oh, by the way, I got a message from Don, he says all the footage came out really good, except for the belly dancing. He said that was a little dark." *Belly dancing?* "Yeahhhh," Mark purrs sensuously. "I can say things with my stomach that you never dreamed of."

In truth, Sandman listens to lots of Arabic music, and launches into an in-depth conversation about Turkish and Egyptian music. Whatever's going on inside his head that makes him play an eerie-sounding two-stringed bass with a slide, it's more than meets the eye. "That kind of stuff excites me, that kind of dancing. I listen to a lot of it, actually."

Now that unorthodox bands like Portishead and Soul Coughing have garnered commercial success, does Sandman wonder whether Morphine, the band with the two-string bass, no guitars and a saxophonist who often plays two instruments at once, will likewise find a new and bigger audience eager for something different? Actually, Mark doesn't even think of the band in those terms: "On paper it's weird, I think on paper it sounds strange, but it really doesn't. I'm not sure if you'd listen to Morphine, you'd right away say that there's no guitars. It's not that obvious."

Dana Colley's saxophones provide a lot of the grit that guitars usually bring to a band. "Dana's learned how to get some really good sustain out of his sax," Mark notes. "He's got a circular-breathing thing, he can hold out those long power chords on the sax that way. Infinitely."





by James Lien

# Morphine

Morphine has found itself playing larger venues as more and more people gradually discover the band. How does its rumbling, growling bass and raucous sexy power-chords go over with a larger crowd? "I think musically you can also paint with a broader brush," says drummer Billy Conway about playing a bigger show. "You see these drummers hitting everything as hard as they can for forty-five minutes, and I don't usually play like that," the reserved Minnesota native continues. "I realized that trying to be more subtle in front of 50,000 people..." He concludes the thought with a shrug of futility.

"We're probably going to play Red Rocks, in Colorado, which is this huge natural amphitheater. We just got offered the Wang Center in Boston. And that would be the kickoff for this whole national tour." Mark smiles, staring for a moment at the air in space above the opposite end of the table. "It's exciting, yeah, terrifying."

Actually, Mark sounds bored. One definitely gets the impression that for Mark Sandman the real show happens offstage, in the dark corners of dim smoky bars in all the cities he wanders through. "I got the whiskey, babe/I got the cigarettes," the protagonist sings luridly in "Super Sex," trying to lure the babes over to his end of the bar.

When he's not playing saxophone, Dana keeps a journal of the band's exploits. Needless to say, with a band like Morphine, it's not your average tour diary. "Dana takes photos from every stage at the end of the show," Billy explains.

"It's like a blank book. I've kind of kept a log of the band, where we were at, what we're doing. What we had to eat and stuff. I put the photos in and then write about the show."

"It's really fun to look at and read," says Mark.

"It helps to have some kind of ritual to keep sanity when you're on the road," Phil, the band's soundman, chimes in.

"I like waking up alive," Mark says. "That's a favorite ritual of mine."

"You like to go out on the town," Phil replies to Mark.

"Mark likes to be with his people," Dana says knowingly.

"They're your people," he says to Dana. "The people. *La Gente*."

Morphine is one of the rare bands that's passionately interested in how its records sound as records; they're not just writing songs or playing instruments, they're using both to create moods. "We try not to be formulaic, and we try and make the music fit the words," Sandman continues. "Use silence and space as part of your instruments. Part of it's the instruments that we have to work with so that's the way it sounds, and also the personalities that are involved musically. Partly because it's so naked."

"We have a great affinity for like those Muddy Waters or Howlin' Wolf records where they're really simple, but the sound is *terrifying*," Billy explains. "It's not loud, it's not bombastic, it's not produced, it's just a vibe, you pick up on a vibe."

Morphine's music is the sum of three people's contributions, and Billy Conway shows how the band is made of three different but similar individuals who each bring elements to the sound. Though the band's songs are steeped in some kind of Leonard Cohen/Raymond Chandler/Charles Bukowski vision of the seedy underbelly of Americana, Billy is equally comfortable discussing philosophy, biology, Brazilian music, or how different the two ends of the Mississippi river are from each other. He's from Minnesota originally, closer to the other end of the river from where he is now. Most nights, he wears a furry fez onstage with the band, which makes a striking silhouette against the red and orange lighting of Morphine's stage appearance. "I like it," he says of the odd hat. "It keeps my head together."

After a late night out seeing bands, their friends drop the members of Morphine off back at their hotel. But instead of heading up to their room, at 3:30 in the morning the three of them turn from the hotel door and head off again into the New Orleans night. Mark leads the way, and Billy and Dana follow him through the empty streets, heading off towards some dim blinking neon in the distance.





When Jason Pierce is excited, he actually manages to raise his voice above the whisper he uses in regular conversation. Painfully few things seem to spur the Godfather of Inertia-Rock to (relative) verbosity, but inform him that just a few blocks' stroll could allow him to visit LaMonte Young's "Dream House" installation or rifle through a trove of vintage John Coltrane sides, and he becomes positively effusive.

"That's music that affects people spinally," Spiritualized's frontman says with unabashed admiration. "Sure, there are elements of intellect, but at the core, my favorite music, like Coltrane, like the Beach Boys, like Sam Cooke, is all soul music. That's what I consider this to be."

Naysayers might scoff at Pierce's seemingly unlikely analogues for *Pure Phase*, his band's just-released second album, but close scrutiny reveals him to be not all that far off the mark. It's got elements of trance, but the band never resorts to the cartoonish "you are getting sleepy..." tricks so prevalent in the *nouvelle ambience*. "That's because I don't really consider it ambient music," Pierce says, toying with his brandy. "Yes, I want to create a mood, but I expect it to be more than just an accessory."

Early on in Pierce's career, the mood he seemed bent on creating was one just this side of comatose, judging by the oft-stated "taking drugs to make music to take drugs to" aesthetic of Spacemen 3. Although he and Pete "Sonic Boom" Kember—with whom he

formed the trio in the mid-'80s—seemed to be cut from the same sheet of blotter paper, the Spacemen dissolved acrimoniously by 1989, reuniting for the somewhat disappointing *Recurring* album in 1991.

In the interim, Pierce had already launched Spiritualized with a single featuring a spangled, mildly distorted cover of the Troggs' bubblegum classic "Anyway That You Want Me," taking tentative steps toward building the group's now-trademark wall of sound. "I was listening to Beach Boys records, and I was just fascinated by how much [Brian Wilson] was able to get out of such primitive equipment," says Pierce. "People talk about us as if we were incredibly dependent on technology, but we're not. We use very simple things: old synthesizers, real strings. We just apply them with a bit more thought, it seems. People get into patterns that they're completely unable to break."

Spiritualized's slot on the Rollercoaster tour—on which it was allotted less than 30 minutes by the dry-ice queens of Curve and the Jesus And Mary Chain—proved that the whole was considerably more than the sum of those "simple" parts. Rather than run through a set in standard fashion, the band built a forcefully rising suite, matched to a stark light show, that brought on sensory overload similar to (if gentler than) My Bloody Valentine's shows of yore. The effect is addictive enough to make you believe the (apparently ephemeral) rumor that the band's name had been permanently augmented with the phrase Electric Mainline, as per the sleeve of the new disc.

"That story was the effort of an over-zealous press person in England," says Pierce. "On one hand, the band was called Spiritualized Lazer Guided Melodies when we did that record and could well be called Spiritualized Electric Mainline now, but those are just phases to the whole."

The new album does mark, so to speak, a new phase in the band's career. Less rhythmic than its predecessors, it finds Pierce and keyboardist/programmer Kate Radley exploring a particularly non-centered approach to song structure. Whether ping-ponging a single note back and forth between speakers (as on the title track) or mining the trademark opiate-blues swoon ("Medication," "Feel Like Goin' Home"), the group never fully allows the ether to evaporate.

"It's minimalist, but I'd like to think it's done without the preciousness of a lot of the people who play minimal music," Pierce explains. "I hate the notion of telling someone that the reason they don't like what you do is because they don't understand it, and that seems to be the operative attitude there."

"There's not a lot of melody involved in what we're doing: It doesn't rely on normal musical ideas like middle eights or bridges or choruses," he admits. "*Pure Phase* is as minimal as you can get: it's essentially a single tone from beginning to end. We wanted to boil it down to the idea of one person playing one note beautifully."



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**ALL** *Pummel* Interscope-Atlantic

Through their band's eight-year history, the power-pop masters of All have been plagued by lead singer difficulties. In its original incarnation, All had the same members as the iconic Descendents, except for a new singer to replace the grad-school-bound Milo. Now on its third singer and eighth full-length (its first on a major label), All continues to deliver emotionally charged, energetic punk records. Thankfully, the songs on *Pummel* still incorporate the elements that have made previous All records appealing: impassioned vocal lines (because each of All's singers has sounded essentially the same), fevered guitar solos and upbeat chord crunches. "Not Easy," with its heart-rending lyrics and passionate delivery, proves that despite the fact that this is only vocalist Chad Price's second album with the band, he has mastered the required angst-element of All's emo-core. Guitarist Stephen Egerton is equally adept at communicating high tension, delivering every note with an unmatched sense of urgency. In addition, the band's rhythm section (boasting drummer/Black Flag alumnus Bill Stevenson) gives both fast and slow songs impressive power. Despite some structural similarity among the 15 songs on *Pummel*, the band's ability to maintain a firm hold on well-crafted power-pop proves that the years have been kind to it. —*Jenny Eliscu*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 11. First single "Million Bucks."  
**FILE UNDER:** Power-pop-punk.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Descendents, Down By Law, Bad Religion.

**FONTELLA BASS** *No Ways Tired* American Explorer-Nonesuch

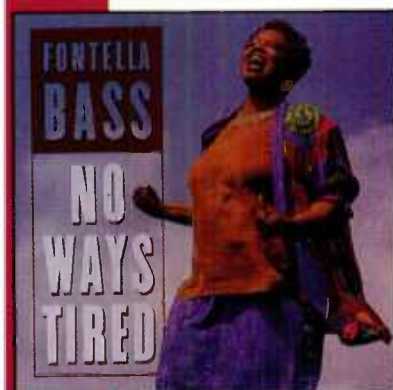
"I'm so glad I found out just in time—about my God, my freedom, and this place that I call home," Fontella Bass proclaims. The woman who in the '60s sang "Rescue Me" has indeed been saved, and she's all the better for it. True to her R&B lineage, however, Bass locates the populist heart in a music many find unapproachably overwrought. Like a diva, Bass places herself at center stage in all the songs; that is truly Good News, because it means she doesn't rely too much on call-and-response with her ample backing choir, an affectation that turns many a gospel record into a tedious recital. She also keeps the whoops and melismata to a minimum, her voice having aged into an Aretha-like howl that doesn't need adornment. On "Everlasting Arms" and "You Don't Know What The Lord Told Me," Bass makes a beeline for the chorus with a pop singer's instinct and a faithful woman's verve. Her choices of material aren't surprising, but they are rewarding—after hearing Bass's jazzy reading of "What The World Needs Now," you'll wonder why no one did it that way in the first place. Yes, Bass knows bombast too; the point of gospel is to bear witness, after all. But her praises to the Almighty bespeak devotion, not dilettantism. Don't call it a comeback. Call it a rebirth. —*Chris Molanphy*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 1.  
**FILE UNDER:** Gospel.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** New Voices of Freedom, Aretha Franklin, Sounds of Blackness.

**BODECO** *Calling All Dogs* Safe House

In a world that often seems to be getting tamer and tamer, Bodeco is a beast of a band. Its earlier cassettes and previous album *Hair Skin N' Hide* were trashy artifacts of a culture that had clearly lost its moral compass, and their live shows often devolved into legendary displays of blue-collar debauchery and mayhem, among the worst ever witnessed in its hometown of Louisville, Kentucky. On the band's second album, it's sharpened its sound and learned how to play, and that's what makes this album so scary. This is music built from the scrap heap of Americana, pieced together from junked fragments of everything imaginable—a Link Wray tailfin, a fender from Booker T. & the MGs, the hubcaps from the Cramps' hearse, and the superbad engine from whatever unruly '70s car ZZ Top rode around in before they traded down for the Eliminator. As it stands, Bodeco comes off like a bumpkin version of Jon Spencer who'd never been exposed to the bright lights and sophistication of the city, or like the Butthole Surfers substituting Lux Interior for Gibby Hayes. This is a brilliant monument to the culture that brought you Shoney's Big Boys, *Signal 30*, and Elvis figurines. Why do you think they call it white trash, anyway? Call it what you will—Bodeco is vying for the title of king of rock's compost heap. —*James Lien*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 26.  
**FILE UNDER:** White trash rockabilly demolition crew.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Cramps, Mule, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion.



**BOUKMAN EKSPERYANS** *Libete (Pran Pou Pran'l)* *Mango*

Sadly, the best-known thing about of Boukman Eksperyans is the duress under which it makes its mesmerizing and deeply populist music in its native Haiti and, more recently, in exile. Recorded in Kingston, Jamaica, *Libete (Pran Pou Pran'l)*, which translates as *Freedom (Let's Take It)*, is dedicated to the band's bass player and drummer, Michel Melthon Lynch, who died of meningitis because the U.S. embargo on Haiti prevented him from getting the medication he needed. Rather than a dirge, Boukman has made an album of carnival anthems—its strategy, couching lyrics like "A mafia is sucking our blood with no mercy" in call-and-response dynamics and simple, persistent grooves, will be familiar to reggae listeners. Collectively, the songs express Boukman's pantheistic liberation theology. While the leadoff track, "Legba," is an African-toned entreaty to a Vodou spirit, "Zilie"'s lighter-than-air female vocals invoke the Virgin Mary. Pop pluralism complements religious pluralism on tracks like "Rara (Ti Celia)," as Boukman mixes traditional "roots music" rhythms and Miami Vice guitar stylings. The result is bound to draw fans and revolutionaries alike.

—Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** Haitian protest anthems.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Peter Gabriel, Bob Marley.



**BRACKET** *4 Wheel Vibe* *Caroline*

*4 Wheel Vibe* is 16 young, loud and angsty songs all played at a sugar-rush pace. What separates this band from the vast majority of the other bands on the receiving end of the new-punk hype is that Bracket has songs and, most importantly, a singer to sing them. Tucked underneath the pixy-stick tempos and the just-barely-post-adolescent mayhem are solid melodies that surpass all but a few of the band's West Coast punk influences. Even when you don't want the songs to work, they do. "Happy To Be Sad," for example, could easily go down in the Generation X cliché phrasebook if it weren't for the four-star tune that kicks the chorus around your head for days, making the idea somehow seem profound. It doesn't hurt that singer Marty's everyguy phrasings, cribbed from the Descendents' Milo and, mostly, Social D's Mike Ness, reveal surprisingly strong and fluid vocals. Sometimes it's almost scary how much he sounds like a young Ness, the one we all knew and loved before he discovered hair pomade in the joint. As much as it's a high point, there's more to separate Bracket from its punky ilk than Marty's ability and willingness to bend notes between syllables. More than anything, Bracket's songs are distinct, both from each other and from any other band that also happens to sound very '95.

—Scott Frampton

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 16. Produced by Don Fleming.  
**FILE UNDER:** Punk-pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Green Day, early Social Distortion, All, Buzzcocks.

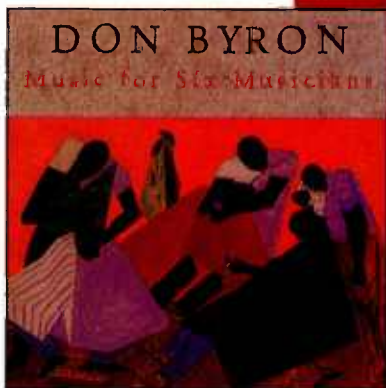


**DON BYRON** *Music For Six Musicians* *Nonesuch*

You want to know where jazz is headed, check out Don Byron. On this album, recorded with his Latin-jazz sextet, Byron succeeds not only because he's an intelligent and insightful composer, but also because his band (Graham Haynes, cornet; Edsel Gomez, piano; Kenny Davis, electric bass; Ben Wittman, drums; and Jerry Gonzalez, conga) is emotionally in tune. Anchored by Gonzalez, Byron's compositions are grounded in authentic and specific Latin rhythms, not random 6/8 backgrounds for soloists whose understanding of Latin music goes as far as two Santana records and having once heard Mongo Santamaria in concert. Byron has a warm, woody tone that is never brittle. Like a post-Coltrane saxophonist, Byron is able to coax a broad variety of timbres and textures out of the notoriously recalcitrant clarinet. Witness his unaccompanied interpretation of "La Estrellita," on which he combines fluid phrasing with airy low notes to produce an absolute gem of a solo. With titles such as "(The press made) Rodney King (responsible for the LA riots)" and "SEX/WORK (Clarence/Anita)," it's impossible to ignore Byron's social concerns. While other artists are recycling compositions and styles from bygone eras, Don Byron is imaginatively adapting and extending traditional elements into something new and relevant—and that has always been a major strength of progressive jazz.

—Kalamu ya Salaam

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 8. Byron has also recorded an entire album of Mickey Katz's Klezmer music.  
**FILE UNDER:** Cutting-edge Latin jazz.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Charlie Haden, John Coltrane, Steve Turre.



**BACK-HANDED COMPLIMENT OF THE MONTH:** "In this age of female recording artists, it's wonderful working with an artist so unique as a writer and singer."  
 —Producer/Engineer Ed Cherney, on working with Jann Arden

**THE CARL STALLING PROJECT Volume 2 Warner Bros.**

When the first volume of Carl Stalling's music came out a few years ago, it was the centerpiece of a reappraisal for a largely overlooked musical form: animation soundtracks. The orchestrator for the golden era of Warner Brothers cartoons, Stalling was a master, synthesizing jazz timing, classical motifs and typical feature soundtrack orchestrations in small, deeply effective packages that bordered on pastiche but somehow evoked dignity in a slapstick world. They formed an important link between the blatantly emotional silent film scores and the later feature soundtracks of Elmer Bernstein, Ennio Morricone, etc. Stalling owed obvious (and credited) debts to the anarchic jazz of Raymond Scott—who has since received his own long-overdue reappraisal—but also influenced many musicians in late-'60s jazz, acid and psych. All right, enough of the lecture: Stalling's music is fun, too. Unfortunately, this second disc (which, like the first, fits as much music as it can on a single CD) comes off as a sequel. Whereas the essential CSP #1 contained snippets of many familiar themes along with session outtakes that provided engaging insight into the creative process, Volume 2 is mostly finished tracks from less ubiquitous (and more thematic) works. It's not so much a classy novelty as a background listening experience. Still, for collectors of soundtracks or cartoon jazz aficionados, it's not to be missed.

—Eric Gladstone

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 28.**FILE UNDER:** Cartoon jazz symphonies.**R.I.Y.L.:** John Zorn, Foetus (Steroid Maximus), Spike Jones, Raymond Scott.**CHARLES BROWN SUPERSTAR Days Of Our Drive/Sweet Piece Of Ass WIN**

Like Napoleon, Charles Brown Superstar comes from nowhere to conquer the world. On a pair of 1994 EPs, the band rode high out of Los Angeles like a grunge version of German prog-electronic experimentalists Neu! (or a new wave version of scum-rock terrorists Drunks With Guns). They also showed themselves to be capable songwriters (unlike, say, Neu! or Drunks With Guns). Nearly all of their early songs rock hard with an almost glib intelligence—the cover of Gary Numan's "Cars" actually manages to improve on the original. They're all included on *Days Of Our Drive/Sweet Piece Of Ass*, the band's debut double-album. CBS has a good thing going on: It's a synth-pop noise band abrasive enough to bring the walls tumbling down, but sweet and hooky enough to bring split-faced grins to to all but the most jaded listener. On the anthemic "Slut Rock" and "Kansas," especially, Benett Rogers' reed-thin little-girl voice, weak but interesting, bespeaks its own corruption: "Wasted in the sun/with my blue bonnet on." *DOOD/SPOA* is slightly disappointing as a whole, after those brilliant EPs; many of the tracks new to this release are unvaried or hookless, as well as pointlessly long. Still, despite the downer bits, Charles Brown Superstar is still one choice piece of ass.

—Michael Vazquez

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 1 (vinyl), Apr. 1 (CD).**FILE UNDER:** Low-fi new wave dancemusik.**R.I.Y.L.:** Kraftwerk, Gary Numan/Tubeway Army, Of Cabbages And Kings.**TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY TTD's Vibrator Work**

Not that we're normally prudish types, but it looks like someone's been studying Prince's lyrics or has delved a bit too deeply into Madonna's *Sex* book: The first two songs on TTD's fourth album are called "Vibrator" and "Supermodel Sandwich." But anyone who's been paying attention knows that Terr Darby's technique is to lead off his albums with some fucked-up shit before settling into the loose, commercial soul-funk that he does best. The opening burst this time is sex and rock, with knife-edged guitars and some moments of feedback-drenched, near-Cream psychedelized riffage. From there, he eases into ballads ("Still Holding On To You") and easier grooves, occasionally throwing in a surprise or two (like the Bulgarian Voices sampled on "Read My Lips") or listing seriously to port before steadying the boat. While his, er, poetic ability can occasionally make for some intriguing lyrics ("A tangerine girl with tambourine eyes... chamomile smile"), it also lapses into the polysyllabic prattle that too often has overshadowed his undeniable talent. Likewise, his jazzy meanderings stumble into pretentious kack, but he generally keeps reign on his id, musically if not lyrically. That said, his gorgeous, soaring voice is in top form, and although *Vibrator* is flawed, it's a compelling album that shows our boy reaching the peak of his powers.

—Jem Aswad

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 2.**FILE UNDER:** Ambitious soul-funk.**R.I.Y.L.:** Prince, Seal.

**DIE CHEERLEADER** *Son Of Filth* Human Pitbull-London

When Henry Rollins signed Die Cheerleader to his new imprint Human Pitbull, he probably saw in them a band molded in his own image. The group is tough, raw, and visceral, maybe even tattooed. The band's lead vocalist Sam Ireland sings from deep within her soul, the way Rollins does, and she has an absolutely atomic voice. Guitarist Rita Blazcyca sounds like a fiery cross between Tony Iommi and Greg Ginn. And *Son Of Filth*, the band's full-length debut, does a fine job harnessing the power of Die Cheerleader. The noise here has the feel of punk, but the grooves of heavy '70s guitar rock. Ireland has a strong rhythm and blues influence and loads of sheer tuneful power, and her vocals pave the way for some great interplay with Blazcyca. Imagine Grace Slick fronting the MC5. They even cover, or rather appropriate, the Airplane's classic "Somebody To Love," though they call it "Washington DC" and tangle it up with ferocious rock passion. Together since 1991, Die Cheerleader shows considerable seasoning and creative focus on *Son Of Filth*, the kind of focus you just don't get with younger bands. A few cuts lag when ideas get a little skinny ("Pigskin Parade," "Choke Cherry,") but leave it to Ireland to scream/sing us out of our (very brief) ennui. Let it rock. —Bob Gulla

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 4.

**FILE UNDER:** Gut-busting power rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** MC5, Babes In Toyland, Echobelly.



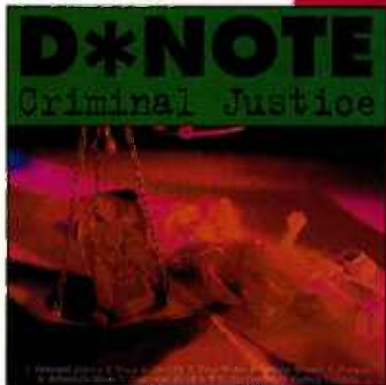
**D\*NOTE** *Criminal Justice* TVT

Acid jazz is getting fatigued. Jungle is rousing trend-aficionados to its rhythm revolution. So what is the state of new music, in an era of constant dynamic and transient attention spans? Britain's D\*Note must have the answer. Its second album, *Criminal Justice*, manages to grasp the best of both worlds by advancing an amalgam of acid jazz and jungle. The group had its origins with the venerated London progressive jazz label, Dorado, and takes a leaf off of its family tree by incorporating the subtle and silken vocals of Pamela Anderson (sister to Dorado artist Jhelisa and cousin to Carleen). All four of her tracks resonate a rich warmth of essence. The dancehall vocals of MC Navigator and Roni Size are less interesting, but only because they fit closer into the standard jungle blueprint. Nevertheless, group founder Matt Wienevski's intense political lyrics evoke vibes of unity and passion. *Criminal Justice*—named after an infamous U.K. bill—reverberates with elements of just about every genre, including whispers of acid house, experimental jazz, soul, modern classical, ambient and the aforementioned jungle. If the '90s are about diversity of resources, this is truly contemporary music. —Shana Ting Lipton

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 21.

**FILE UNDER:** jungle jazz.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Neneh Cherry, Malcolm McLaren, Global Communication.



**HALF JAPANESE** *Greatest Hits* Safe House

It's been said that to listen—really listen—to Half Japanese records requires a rare intestinal fortitude. This initially seems a hard statement to fathom. Composed of ultimate punk naif Jad Fair and a rotating cast over the past 17 years, the band has made music that is tuneless and warped, but never unlistenable. But after a prolonged listen, such as that afforded by Half Jap's new 2-CD *Greatest Hits*, one begins to see the point. It's not the instrumental ineptitude that's oppressive; it's precisely the triumph of enthusiasm over skill in Half Jap's first lineup of Jad and his brother David that made their formation such a major punk moment, one that bands like Beat Happening spent years trying to recapture. In any case, the band learned to play its instruments fairly early in its career. Rather, the reason these records are such a trial is that the sheer undiluted feeling in the songs is... well, it's embarrassing. Most of the 68 tracks on this collection have Jad wallowing in one or both of the world's two most intestinally trying emotions, true love and mortal fear. The monster songs, sadly underrepresented here, show off his ability to terrify and be terrified all at once. But the love songs are the best. The Spinanes' Rebecca Gates trills about how "Jad Fair Drives Women Wild," but it's safe to assume that women drove him wild first. "Calling All Girls," the first in a series of slings and Cupid's arrows at the opposite sex, is lovely, brutish and short, with Jad and David screaming out the names of girls they'd like to summon to their house over jumpy, pawed guitars. "This Could Be The Night," an equally desperate ballad from the other end of the band's history, may be more tunefully rendered and more subtle, and hell, the verses even rhyme, but to call it better would be to deny the whole point of Jad's songs, which is never to let aesthetics get in the way of the mythic things he wants to sing about. It's made him, and Half Japanese, kind of mythic things themselves. —Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 6. Includes six previously unreleased tracks.

**FILE UNDER:** Punk primitivism.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Beat Happening, Daniel Johnston, The Shaggs.





# VIRGIN NATURE SERIES



# #3

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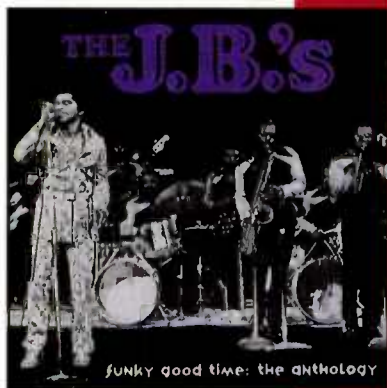
**GRAHAM HAYNES** *The Griot's Footsteps* *Antilles*

This is the jazz fusion record that Miles Davis always wanted to make, and could have made after *Filles De Kilimanjaro* if he had followed the funk back into West Africa instead of chasing rock into England. Graham Haynes is a cornet player and the son of drummer Roy Haynes. Recorded in Paris, the exile capital of West African music, this set is the organic creolization of African-oriented jazz with East Asian accents. No single element is new, but the combination is fresh, and all of the playing has an element of unplanned discovery about it—it's joyous and experimental, yet grounded in traditional approaches. Haynes' tart cornet is the chief solo instrument, but so much of this is trance-based that at any given moment it seems that everybody is soloing over syncopated melodic fragments that drift in and out of focus on the long cuts. ("Enlightenment" is seconds shy of a half-hour, and the title selection runs just under a quarter hour.) What is really fusion about this stuff is the way electronic keyboards are programmed to sound like balaphons (traditional African wooden xylophones) and koras (21-string West African harps). There are four keyboards employed and only two horns; four string instruments (guitar, bass, sitar and tanpura) and a battery of three percussionists. The whole album practically begs to be choreographed. Get it and hear what fusion could have become if only Africa had not been excised from the dialogue. —*Kalamu ya Salaam*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Jan. 24.

**FILE UNDER:** Afrocentric fusion.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Maleem Mahmoud Ghania and Pharoah Sanders' *The Trance Of Seven Colors*, Randy Weston.

**THE J.B.'S** *Funky Good Time: The Anthology* *Chronicles-Polydor*

If you've ever heard a rap record, you've heard at least a sample of the J.B.'s—James Brown's backing band from the early '70s, and a hitmaking powerhouse in their own right, the hardest, tightest, funkier band ever. They had politics ("Damn Right I Am Somebody"), they had near-psychedelic grooves ("Gimme Some More"), they had #1 hits recorded in one take ("Doin' It To Death," where you can hear James yelling out what the next chord should be), they had silly song titles ("Keep On Bumpin' Before You Give Out Of Gas"). Nearly everything they released was out for six weeks 20 years ago and never again, and has been frantically sought after by funk connoisseurs ever since. So this two-disc, 30-track compilation of singles and album tracks, recorded under nine different names, is a godsend: Every track is great. The hits are slow, hard and totally joyous; the flops sound like they only missed because they were so far ahead of their time; and even the topical stuff ("Rockin' Funky Watergate," "You Can Have Watergate But Gimme Some Bucks And I'll Be Straight"—it should be noted that JB endorsed Nixon for President) doesn't sound dated. Then there's four tracks from the *Damn Right I Am Somebody* album, maybe the most adventurous pure-funk record ever, including the epic "I'm Payin' Taxes, What Am I Buyin'," which ends in a sort of orchestral scat-singing acappella section. Of course, the Godfather looms large over virtually every track (check out his drop-the-bomb drumming on a stinging cover of Herbie Hancock's "Watermelon Man"). But the whole band is the star here—this is some of the finest ensemble playing you'll ever throb your hips to. —*Douglas Wolk*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 1. Also newly available: reissues of three early-'70s James Brown albums, *Hell*, *Get On The Good Foot* and *Reality*.

**FILE UNDER:** Funk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** James Brown, Parliament-Funkadelic, Public Enemy.

"Maceo's 'Future Shock (Dance Your Pants Off)' was born as 'Let's Go To The Discotheque And Dance Your Ass Off.' When the Godfather had second thoughts about persuading conservative radio programmers that ass was a 'safe' word, he went into the studio and obscured the track with whistles, sound effects and additional vocals. By the time he and Bob Both were finished, 'ass' was 'pants' and the record sounded nothing like it had before. Despite Brown's best intentions, most asses were closer to pants than radio ever got to this record." —from the liner notes of the J.B.'s' *Funky Good Time: The Anthology*

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**LAIKA AND THE COSMONAUTS** *The Amazing Colossal Band* *Upstart*

Finding four people in Finland with a common interest in surf must have been quite a task, but persistence paid off. Laika And The Cosmonauts' second album sounds and feels like vintage instrumental surf, from the prominent organ right down to guitarist Mikko Lankinen's hippy shake reverb. This isn't some lame bar band who happened to get good at mimicry. LATC are a pack of crack professionals, most of whom are known in Finland as prominent session players. On *The Amazing Colossal Band*, that professionalism shines like a warm California sun. Throughout, the playing is precise, clean and thankfully devoid of the raunchy chords many of today's quasi-surf bands inject into their material. The band rarely relies on the genre's myriad clichés to make a sonic point. Sweet balladry ("The Downwinders"), bluesy shuffle ("The Avengers") and tricky twang guitar heroics ("Cafe Equator") all make cameos. So what if a few cuts sound like they should be heard over the PA at a rollerdrome?

—Bob Gullo

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 7.

**FILE UNDER:** Scandinavian surf music.

**R.I.Y.L:** The Ventures, Dick Dale, the Revels.



**MAIDS OF GRAVITY** *Maid of Gravity* *Vernon Yard*

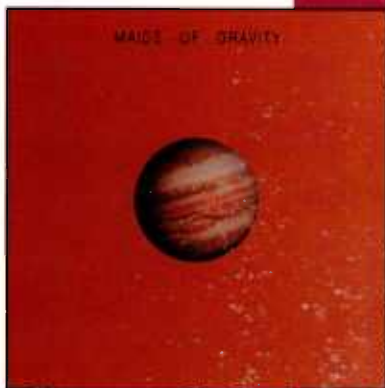
The opening chords of their debut tell most of the story for Maids of Gravity: laid-back, hazy grooves forming the groundwork for the band's extensive dictionary of guitar tricks. Fronted by former Medicine members Ed Ruscha and Jim Putnam, the Maids maintain that band's affection for melodic guitar hooks, but approach them with more dreamy subtlety than chainsaw sonics. The mixed bag of half-speed-pop works best when the band plays off dynamics: "A Sad One," for example, starts off with a simple drone, builds into a thundering chorus and, just when it's ready to soar to its conclusion, drops back to its original, somber tone. "Alright" begins with a poppy, Unrest-like jangle before dropping off into a subdued ballad; the sweet "Windows" cuts off its billowing wall of sound with periodic staccato breaks, halting the mood to check if you're snoozing. If the album has a shortcoming, it's that the Maids don't go out of their way to be challenging, which leads to some dull spots. Overall, however, *Maid of Gravity* is a satisfying journey through understated soundscapes.

—Bryon McNamara

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 21.

**FILE UNDER:** Slackjawed melodies.

**R.I.Y.L:** Velo-Deluxe, Pond, Swervedriver.



"Congratulations! You've just

purchased our worst album."

— Elvis Costello, from the liner

notes for the Rykodisc reissue

of *Goodbye Cruel World*.

**CHRIS MARS** *Tenterhooks* *Bar/None*

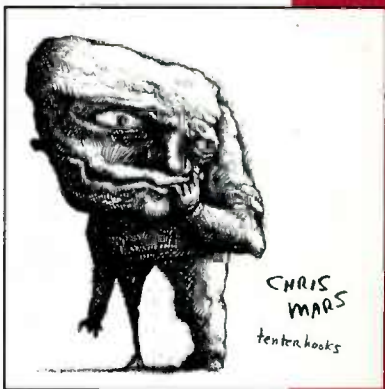
It's a wholly unpleasant prospect facing the struggle between sentiment and exploitation in reviewing the first ex-Replacements release since the death of former band member Bob Stinson. Of course, Mars finished this record before the tragedy; still, there is the search for hints in such new songs as "Cadaver Dogs," and irony that once again, one of Mars' former bandmates would take the spotlight away from him. Like most drummers, Mars' efforts are largely overlooked; judging by his two underrated solo records thus far (on which he plays the majority of the instruments), it appears that he contributed more to his previous group than is generally considered. Mars has an engaging, raspy-melodic voice that recalls both Ray Davies and Dennis Wilson, and a knack for pop songcraft that lives up to those likenesses. His last release *75% Less Fat* was, in essence, the great Kinks album which that band had failed to produce itself in the last 15 years. *Tenterhooks*, which rose out of a new label deal that gave him his own in-house digital studio, sounds both slicker and more experimental. With his roots obviously in '60s pop, it's difficult to avoid comparisons to the gorgeous grandiosities of Brian Wilson and Phil Spector, though much of this is thoroughly modern, from power-grunge to synthesizers to string arrangements. Such far-flung ambitions usually result in both successes and failures, and this is no exception (the introductory "White Patty Rap" is particularly off-putting), but most of *Tenterhooks* is immediately rewarding but uncompromising pop—a rare treat.

—Eric Gladstone

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Atomic power-pop.

**R.I.Y.L:** Kinks, Lemonheads.



**MINXUS** *Pabulum* *Too Pure-American*

At first nothing about Minxus appears all that out of the ordinary: It's a London-based rock trio comprised of two men and one woman, the amazingly-named She Rocola, who plays bass and splits vocal duties with guitarist Gavin Pearce. But several listens to this rugged, winding road of a debut LP reveal that Minxus shares little else with the current crop of familiar rockers. Unlike so many new bands, Minxus doesn't borrow directly from any of its contemporaries—there are no Nirvana-ish lurches, Breeders-like vocal swoons and rubbery bass lines, or discordant Sonic Youth-inspired guitar washes. Instead, there are a million and one riffs pounded out by Pearce and Rocola, building to a brisk undertow that'll leave you wobbling in the knees. Rocola's feline vocals sing pretty doo-doo-dooos when it's called for, but can just as easily lurch into angry moans, all in the space of just a couple bars; Pearce's vocals, meanwhile, are mostly heavily distorted—not as hard to latch onto, but not as interesting either. While *Pabulum* isn't necessarily as innovative or challenging as some of the Too Pure label's finest moments (Stereolab, Moonshake, Pram), its skewed take on rock threw me for a dizzying loop, which was an awfully pleasant surprise. —Lydia Anderson

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 11.**FILE UNDER:** Biting, sinuous rock.**R.I.Y.L.:** PJ Harvey, Moonshake, Patti Smith.**PETER MURPHY** *Cascade* *Atlantic*

Rock critics who divide history into pre-Nirvana and post-Nirvana conveniently forget that an earlier brand of "alternative" became a pop juggernaut years before *Nevermind*. Recall, if you will, the Dave Kendall Years, when MTV's *120 Minutes* was hosted by a smug twerp with a cockney accent, introducing frothy pop by slick U.K. money machines. Occasionally Kendall would show Sonic Youth or Bob Mould out of deference, but the superstars of "Postmodern MTV" were guys like Peter Murphy, who sang "Cuts You Up" like the whole world hinged on his gothic musings. Funny thing is, on *Cascade*, the former Bauhaus singer—still pallid, still sounding like Iggy Pop—seems awfully American. Like, say, Live, Murphy conjures irresistible guitar-based melodies ("The Scarlet Thing In You," "Mirror To My Woman's Mind") whose energy masks the fact that the lyrics work better as syllable-filler (what exactly is "Huvola," anyway?) than discourses. Trying to forge an alliance with the rave crowd, Murphy attempts staccato tecnopop on "Sails Wave Goodbye," but by the chorus he's reverted to airy rushes of music that make him sound like Sarah McLachlan. If Murphy wanted to go Brit circa 1995, he'd switch to bratty glam rock à la Oasis or Suede; luckily, he's not about to try anything that silly. Bottom line: *Cascade* is the sort of stuff MTV used to play after midnight five years ago—groovy, inoffensive, unfashionable and kinda stupid. As guilty pleasures go, you could do a lot worse. —Chris Molanphy

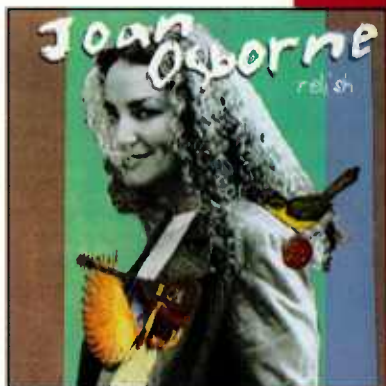
**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 11. First single "The Scarlet Thing In You."**FILE UNDER:** Earnest U.K. alternapop.**R.I.Y.L.:** Siouxsie and the Banshees, Lightning Seeds, Luka Bloom.**THE ORB** *Orbus Terrarum* *Island*

Over its earlier albums, The Orb's music has been getting increasingly abstract—from "Little Fluffy Clouds"' near-pop structure to "Assassin" and "Pomme Fritz," which barely had anything recognizable as hooks. With *Orbus Terrarum*—the third "proper" Orb album, or eighth if you count live quickies, remix compilations and last year's "little album"—it's become completely abstract, achieving the sonic equivalent of the "flatness" that art critic Clement Greenberg looked for in painting. As with visual art, this approach has a certain ideological purity that's attractive, but it also means that it's less pleasurable to actually experience as art. "Valley" and "Plateau" both appeared on last year's live album, and are recognizable here not by their rhythms (they don't really have any) or chord structures (none to be found) or by note-patterns (will-o'-the-wisps, at best), but by their... well... textures. The duo hasn't simplified or prettified what it does—it may have even complicated it, and there are terrifying passages, like the brainstorm at the end of "Montagne D'Or." But you can't grasp how these pieces work by thinking about them. You just have to let them work on your subconscious, or space out and count the layers. —Douglas Wolk

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 4.**FILE UNDER:** Conceptual techno.**R.I.Y.L.:** Terry Riley, Autechre, late Art Of Noise.

**JOAN OSBORNE** *Relish* Mercury

Joan Osborne was born in Kentucky, but she now lives in Manhattan where she doesn't have to do more than roll out of bed to find inspiration for her songs about spirits both broken and blessed. She's definitely more fond of those broken spirits; *Relish* seems to have been written exclusively for people who sleep only in motels or who are recovering from a hangover, a nasty breakup or both. Her music itself sounds like a nasty three-way romance between folk, gospel and barroom blues, with her lusty voice tackling all three genres without a hitch. At times she sings beyond the emotional range of her songs; most of the tracks are about livin' hard and lovin' hard, but Osborne sings them like they're the deepest things anyone has ever written about. For the most part, though, Osborne keeps you fixed: Her songs are little powderkegs that do more than mimic the blues and soul she's obviously so fond of. "Right Hand Man," sounds like Joan ripping off the Stones ripping off the blues, but Osborne's fire is real even if her songs feature the occasional dated cliché (am I the only one creeped out by singers calling their lovers "Daddy" or "Mama"?). But Osborne's talent hardly makes any of these quibbling points worth it. In the end, she gives her all, singing and writing with a vision beyond the ordinary limits of rock. —Steve Ciabattoni



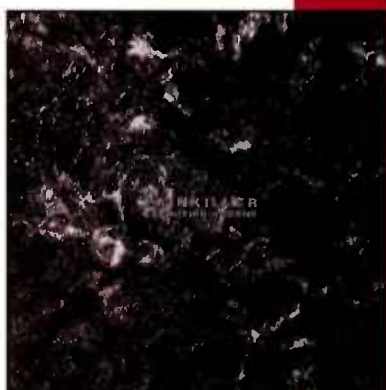
**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 7. Osborne has released an LP and an EP on her own Womanly Hips label.

**FILE UNDER:** Earnest rock and soul.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Bonnie Raitt, Counting Crows, Janis Joplin.

**PAINKILLER** *Execution Ground* Subharmonic

Within 30 seconds of my putting this album on, all of my cats were hiding under the bed, an honor usually reserved only for the vacuum cleaner. Ah yes, the fourth and latest installment in the Painkiller saga lives up to all expectations. For the uninitiated, Painkiller is avant-saxist John Zorn, ex-Napalm Death/current Scorn drummer Mick Harris, and legendary workaholic bassist/producer Bill Laswell, who's worked with everyone from Funkadelic to Motorhead to Afrika Bambaata to Laurie Anderson to Herbie Hancock to Hassan Hakmoun, as well as running at least five different labels. Given its members' crazed schedules, Painkiller generally records once a year, and its albums are pretty much art-as-it-happens. Veering between psychotic free-jazz and subharmonic rumble, Harris's avalanche of drums, Laswell's seismic bass and Zorn's elephant-stampede sax obliterate all in their path as samples shoot overhead like mortar fire; the only vocals are grunts and screams. *Execution Ground* also includes a 40-minute disc of powerfully disturbing ambient mixes that often sound not unlike the soundtrack to *The Shining*, and are guaranteed to cause epileptic seizures in any chill-out room unfortunate enough to put it on. Don't say we didn't warn ya... —Jem Aswad



**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 18.

**FILE UNDER:** Ambient noisecore.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Material, God, Massacre.

**PAVEMENT** *Wowie Zowie* Matador

It's a little hard to muster a fresh ear for Pavement these days, what with college radio turning into the Valley Of The Pavement Clones and the slightly disappointing eclecticism of last year's *Crooked Rain*. *Crooked Rain*. It'd be a shame not to listen, though, as Steven Malkmus and his band of aging slackers are poised to release what could well be one of the year's best records. *Wowie Zowie* is boldly irregular, but it's a solid and ambitious offering. Singer/genius Malkmus continues to mine a rich lyrical vein as the tender but slightly dada poet of suburbia. "Rattled By The Rush," a sterling alternapop song with the perfectly ambiguous refrain "drowning for your thirst," features the offhandedly touching lyric "caught my dad cryin'." "Grounded," a ballad for a doctor on the verge of a breakdown, is again filtered through the lens of fatherhood: "Boys are dying on me." The little countrified touches are fewer here than on *Crooked Rain* (though still too many), but the other examples of generic adventurism are ridiculous in the good sense: "Serpentine Pad," a quick, clipped sludge-glam rocker, marries Goo-era Sonic Youth and the New York Dolls, while "Flux = RAD!" is music to cruise to, like Nirvana crossed with the Raybeats. A few of Malkmus' mannerisms are unpleasant on first listen (the album opens with Malkmus declaiming a mock-sad song in a voice halfway between David Bowie and Katherine Hepburn), but it's nothing that can't be smoothed over by repeated listening. And like most everything the band has cobbled together over the last seven years, *Wowie Zowie* deserves to be heard again and again. —Michael Vazquez



**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 11. First single "Rattled By The Rush."

**FILE UNDER:** John Cheever Rock Explosion.

**R.I.Y.L.:** David Bowie, Wedding Present, Velvet Underground.

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

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Pay It All Back Vol. 5* On-U Sound-Restless

On the surface, the fifth volume of On-U Sound's *Pay It All Back* series might be labeled a crossover compilation. Opposing camps discover common ground, as elements of experimental alternative, reggae dub and new electronica unite under one statement. Yet this album is about exploration, not classification. British dub producer and avant-garde alternative visionary Adrian Sherwood is the mastermind behind its inception. *Pay It All Back Vol. 5* amasses Sherwood's musical cohorts, including Little Annie and Tackhead's Gary Clail. The tracks here range from the wistful, earthly love ballad of Bim Sherman's "Can I Be Free (From Crying)" to the ominous technological combat of Mark Stewart's "Digital Justice" dub. Little Annie's blase but commanding sing-speaking on "I Drop Your Name" makes one wonder when she'll actually say "I might like you better if we slept together"; a similar '80s sensibility is echoed in its garage-like back-up vocals and synth-pop arrangement. Although electronic music fans may find it murky at times, others will appreciate *Pay It All Back Vol. 5* for its bold eclecticism. —Shana Ting Lipton

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 14.

**FILE UNDER:** Distorted alternative dub.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Gary Clail, Mark Stewart, African Head Charge.

**RADIOHEAD** *The Bends* Capitol

Three guitars, a driving rhythm section and keyboards, all fronted by a whiny English bloke on vocals. That's the Radiohead setup, and believe it or not, it works spectacularly well. Following up on its hit "Creep" from a few years ago, Radiohead's sophomore effort ups the ante, delivering renewed vigor in the form of a happier-sounding guitar assault. Shimmering piano notes and echoing drums immediately pull you into the lead-off track "Planet Telex," as the guitars unleash a wall of fuzz-enhanced bliss. Vocalist Thom Yorke's delivery is less deadpan and more passionate than before, giving the tracks a sense of smoldering urgency. The title track is a brilliant piece of raging guitar-driven pop, while "Fake Plastic Trees" opts for a subdued acoustic entrance, beginning with subtle nods to John Denver before cascading into an intense swirl of guitar, keyboards and drums. The band specializes in sonic juxtaposition, creating safe, lilting melodies awash in warmth, before drowning them in a wall of blister-crunch guitar and chaotic rhythmic interplay right before your ears. "You Do It To Me" is the group's guitar-infested magnum opus, releasing a barrage of wail, grind and blitz. *The Bends*, with its intoxicating metallic edginess, bits of slashing psychedelia and calming interludes of acoustic ambience, unveils the perfect power-pop aesthetic. —Spence D.

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 4. First single "My Iron Lung."

**FILE UNDER:** Fuzzy British pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The London Suede, The Verve, early U2.

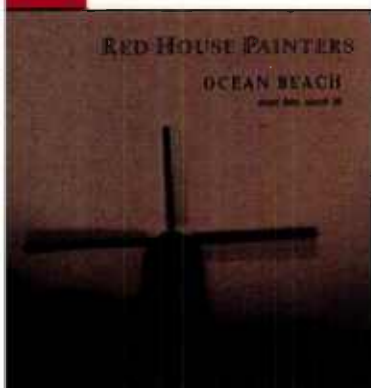
**RED HOUSE PAINTERS** *Ocean Beach* 4AD-Warner Bros.

Listening to San Francisco's Red House Painters for the first time can be an overwhelming experience: Deeply personal, delicate and sad-eyed, the band's languid stretches of sound immediately envelop the listener in moody, pastoral landscapes. Fans of the band find this music immensely beautiful; cynics may be put off by its poetic romanticism. *Ocean Beach*, the band's fourth album, is—if it's possible—even more soul-baring and fragile than previous records. Opening with the folksy, instrumental pastels of "Cabezon," the album relies on singer Mark Kozelek's warm voice and vivid lyricism to evoke a kind of timeless despair over the band's careful ebb-and-flow of sparse instrumentation. While the electric, comparatively forceful tones on "San Geronimo" recall the intricate song-structuring of the band's last album, the majority of tunes here are reduced to Kozelek and his acoustic guitar. These wistful—okay, let's just say it—magnificently depressing pieces are like seeing Kozelek's forlorn emotional frame stripped to skin and bone. It's a startling sight, but a kind that we are all inevitably confronted by. —Colin Helms

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 28.

**FILE UNDER:** Poignant, tranquil folk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** American Music Club, Nick Drake, early Leonard Cohen.



"To underline his ongoing friction with Warner Bros. Records, ☿ has still not removed the word 'SLAVE' that's written on his face."

—from a press release

**THE SEA AND CAKE** Nassau *Thrill Jockey*

The Sea and Cake is a Chicago-based outfit that springs from the scene surrounding that city's Idful Studios, and features members (or ex-members) of Shrimp Boat, the Coctails, Tortoise, Gastr Del Sol and Bastro. As guitarist/vocalist Sam Prekop and bassist Eric Claridge are the ex-Boaters, it's not surprising that TSAC's sound isn't worlds away from that of Shrimp Boat (if you're one of the handful of people who've ever heard that extremely under-recognized band). Slightly livelier than the band's self-titled debut, *Nassau's* subtle, loosely shuffling grooves are not unlike the vibe of Yo La Tengo or early Feelies, although with a stronger R&B influence (mostly in the rhythms) than either of those outfits. The band's warm, gently-strummed guitars, rambling tempos and calm vocals make for an album with nary an angry-sounding moment in it, but there's much more going on beneath the surface than first meets the ear. Like a subtle painting (an obligatory reference, since three members are visual artists), the songs reveal more intricacies with each listen, although the significance of the directionless instrumental "A Man Who Never Sees A Pretty Girl That He Doesn't Love Her A Little" is still pretty lost on me. "Mellow" might be a dirty word these days, but *Nassau* is just perfect for those kinds of moods.

—Jem Aswad

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 20.

**FILE UNDER:** Subtle groove-rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Yo La Tengo, Feelies, Coctails.



**KENDRA SMITH** Five Ways Of Disappearing 4AD

Considering that Kendra Smith is best known for her central role in Opal, comparisons to former bandmate David Roback's Mazzy Star seem unavoidable. So here goes: Smith may be even more reclusive and less productive than Roback (she plans no tour for this album, nor many interviews), but she's less of an obscurist. Her velvety-melodic voice is more instantly appealing than that of Mazzy's Hope Sandoval, even without Sandoval's bewitching naiveté. Though she's equally blessed with psychedelic folk's most elegiac qualities, it's apparent that Smith was the less morose half of Opal, more tied, for example, to the spirits of Velvet Underground (see "Temporarily Lucy" and "Space: Unadorned") and the Doors (see "Drunken Boat") among others. Here, she builds on 1992's *Guild Of Temporal Adventurers* EP with a sound frequently based around the antique-store pump organ which inspired her return to music after Opal split. While her tunes progress in many directions from there, clearly the destinations Kendra Smith's music seeks are those within. It's worth the trip.

—Eric Gladstone

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9.

**FILE UNDER:** Harmonic convergence.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Opal, My Bloody Valentine, Velvet Underground with Nico.



**SPIRITUALIZED** Pure Phase *Dedicated*

This is exactly the kind of album you would put on to liven up a party—if your idea of a party involved taking narcotics and getting better acquainted with the intricacies of your carpet. *Pure Phase* doesn't push forward in the least; rather, it hangs lazily in the air, slowly rotating and twinkling in rainbow hues. Out of a gentle wash of keyboards and drone loops, quiet guitar pulses arise, only occasionally giving way to arching crescendos of guitar tumult and horns which drift away hazily. Jason Pierce's vocals, though they appear infrequently, seem beamed in via satellite time-delay through a cloud of marshmallow fluff. Pierce started his career as the guitarist of the Spacemen 3, the seminal late-'80s UK psychedelic ambient/drone rock band that left fans nodding with approval. *Spiritualized* was supposed to be the more experimental heir to that band, but if anything, on 1992's *Lazer Guided Melodies*, it proved to be more accessible than its minimalist predecessor. *Pure Phase* plumbs that same vein, adding immaculate layers of sound and even coming up with a few moderately anthemic melodies ("Medication," "Lay Back In The Sun"). The gospel element was always a presence lurking in the background of Spacemen 3's work, and it moves even closer to the forefront on *Pure Phase*, especially on "These Blues." Thankfully, it isn't motivated by pseudo-soulfulness (as with, say, Primal Scream). Rather, Pierce seems genuinely motivated in his pursuit of some sort of Godhead. Whether that Godhead is religious, narcotic, sexual, or simply musical is unclear; what is clear is that *Spiritualized* transports its listener damn close to it.

—David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 28.

**FILE UNDER:** Ambient guitar bliss.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Spacemen 3, Verve, Velvet Underground.





**SOUNDTRACK** *Tank Girl* Elektra

If being able to start a riot qualifies one as a riot grrrrl, cult comic character Tank Girl must be a charter member. No surprise, then, that the *Tank Girl* movie soundtrack is chock full of tough girls, both in the lyrics and behind the mike. Viewed as a contest, there are definite champions and also-rans. The breathy little girl singers of Veruca Salt and Belly fare not so well—even Tanya Donelly comes off as a lightweight next to the growling and wailing of L7 and Hole. The latter is represented by the previously unreleased “Drown Soda,” a typically baleful outing from Courtney Love, who also served as executive producer for the soundtrack. In the male division, Mark Mothersbaugh remakes “Girl U Want” and manages to sound grungy in a few spots, but he’s no match for *Tank Girl* co-star Ice-T, who sets the macho standard with “Big Gun.” On a normal day, Joan Jett could wipe the floor with either of them, but here she settles for a cute Cole Porter remake. But the standout is Bjork’s driving “Army Of Me.” Even though her vocal range qualifies her to be another wispy-voiced waif, Bjork’s savage yowling is not for the faint of heart. If any one is the real Tank Girl here, it’s her. And she even has a funny hairdo. (P.S.: Portishead completists should note that the cut here is already available on *Dummy*.)

—Heidi MacDonald

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 28. In the movie, Ice-T plays a kangaroo.**FILE UNDER:** Women of alt-rock.**R.I.Y.L.:** Bjork, Hole, The Crow soundtrack.**TOWA TEI** *Future Listening* Elektra

If the idea of a woman singing a samba in Japanese accompanied by a sitar floats your boat, *Future Listening* is a whole regatta. “I want to relax,” goes the opening line of this groovy futuro-retro dance album, and listeners should have no problem doing just that. Put together by Deee-Lite’s DJ Towa Tei, this is relentlessly chipper music, the kind of giddy, goofy, multi-cultural mix of the last half-century’s tunes that’s ready for the year 2000. Influences from odd-numbered decades include ’50s Latin rhythms, ’70s disco bass lines and ’90s techno beats; the sitars are from the ’60s, and the ’80s supply the sequins. The best cuts are the uptempo opening “I Want To Relax, Please!” and the nutty “Son Of Bambi (Walk Tuff),” which features some cool Asian-accented rapping. More spacey are the New Age musings of “Meditation” and “Dubnova (Part 1&2)” which tend to drift off a bit. But as the repeated sample “Perky life, I’ve been told, all that glitters,” shows, dada is alive and well on this album. As we perch on the edge of a new millennium, Towa Tei presents a somewhat unlikely but very agreeable futuristic vision—one that George Orwell never could have imagined in a million years.

—Heidi MacDonald

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 25.**FILE UNDER:** Space age hippie music.**R.I.Y.L.:** Deee-Lite, Pizzicato Five, Esquivel.**THESE ANIMAL MEN** (*Come On, Join*) The High Society Vernon Yard

Self-identified with the London-based New Wave Of New Wave bands, a British media-creation one year back, These Animal Men are perhaps the duller of the lot. It’s a pity, too: The band’s first single, which crossed the Atlantic 18 months ago, was a pleasantly blatant Jam re-tread, with seemingly earnest lyrics about “twentysomethings in the streets” and a mod-fun sensibility. Alas, These Animal Men have evolved into a sort of sanitized glam-punk outfit. Most of the songs on (*Come On, Join*) *The High Society* are incredibly weak readings of generic songs from the early-’70s leather and mascara crowd. A couple of the songs are less bad (“You’re Always Right,” “Flawed Is Beautiful”), though still hardly pleasing; the maddeningly flat production doesn’t help (the drum sound is atrocious). These Animal Men are, obviously, derivative, but they somehow manage to be derivative without being evocative, without conjuring any positive associations. Plenty of bands play the reference game and produce compelling music—scene-mates Blur and Elastica are, if anything, more derivative, but they borrow from Wire, Gary Numan, Paul Weller, Magazine, XTC, and dozens of other greats, and wield considerable pop instincts, as well. These Animal Men’s problem is that they can’t write songs; their importance, finally, is to remind us why Blur is a great band.

—Michael Vazquez

**DATALOG:** Release date: May 9.**FILE UNDER:** New wave guitar-rock.**R.I.Y.L.:** S\*M\*A\*S\*H, Urge Overkill, Snuff.

“Yesterday II, The Sequel” was recorded at Hyatt Studios on a 4-Track in less than two hours from start to finish for a grand total of \$68.00, including tape. The actual breakdown is as follows: \$13.00 for each of two hours time, one ADAT rental at \$20.00, one ADAT tape at \$12.00 and one DAT tape at \$10.00; all tax was included.”

—from the back of Butt Trumpet’s “Primitive Enema” single.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Threadwaxing Space Live: The Presidential Compilation '93-'94* Zero Hour

"Lo-fi video," says Robert Pollard of Guided By Voices before kicking off the live version of "I Am A Scientist" that appears on this compilation. The inclusion of this mumbled phrase on the CD appears to be totally arbitrary, except, perhaps, as a summation. For two years, Threadwaxing Space served as the visible kingdom of lo-fi in New York City, the venue where critical darlings from far-flung lands held court. There were particularly memorable shows by Gate, Guided By Voices, War Comet (aka Pavement side project Silver Jews), and the now-defunct Shorty, as well as New Yorkers like Blonde Redhead and Azalia Snail. All of these bands and more are featured here, performing both known and previously unreleased songs in an assortment that is unusually consistent for a comp compilation. What makes the selections so great is that each song seems to find its own level, either gingerly unwinding like Snail's "St. Nowhere" with its trumpet and kalimba, or breathless, dirty, and over in a minute, like the GBV track. Included intermittently are bits of spoken word, such as Slim Moon's multi-regional free-association "Chinchilla." Even the clearly unintentional little hoots and squeals of feedback have been left in, and call it an unabashed bid at "that 'live' feel," but it sounds all right together. —Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 4. Also includes tracks by Saturnine 60, Guv'ner, The Sea And Cake, Timothy Leary, Pony, Slant 6, Giant Sand and DQE.

**FILE UNDER:** Warm, fuzzy innovation.

**R.I.Y.L:** Any of the bands included.

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Till The Night Is Gone: A Tribute To Doc Pomus* Forward-Rhino

Nobody wants to sound like a miserable old codger, but *Till The Night Is Gone* makes it mighty hard to resist blurring the mantra of the rock 'n' roll oldster: "They just can't make records like they used to." Doc Pomus penned a whole buncha songs that, when placed in the capable hands of the Coasters, Drifters, Ray Charles, Elvis Presley and others, were transformed into a remarkable series of hits in the '50s and '60s. For *Till The Night Is Gone*, a lot of big names came out to pay tribute to the late Doc, but although it's well-intentioned, it repeatedly misses the mark. A far more fitting tribute would have been to assemble the original recordings by the original artists. Pomus wrote deceptively simple songs that placed emotion and feel first, but many of the performances here are so soulless and pedestrian that what we're left with is a comfy salute to pop craftsmanship, or even worse, nostalgia. Lou Reed doing "This Magic Moment" sparsely backed by a rockabilly-ish guitar is cute and weird, but it totally lacks the drama that the swirling, bombastic production and Ben E. King's voice brought in the Drifters' version. And to say that The Band's stiff version of "Young Blood" compares unfavorably to the sleaziness and mischief of the Coasters' flawless original is misleading; to say it pales next to the version performed by Johnny Fish and The Fins on *Happy Days* places it in better perspective. The one truly great moment on the record (Irma Thomas, Solomon Burke and Bob Dylan provide some satisfactory moments, as well) is the last: Aaron Neville's "Save The Last Dance For Me." Neville's wistful voice perfectly captures the vulnerability of the tune's plea, and show us what it's really about. —Steve McGuirl

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 28. Other artists included: Los Lobos, Shawn Colvin, Brian Wilson, B.B. King, John Hiatt.

**FILE UNDER:** Tribute records.

**R.I.Y.L:** The artists above.

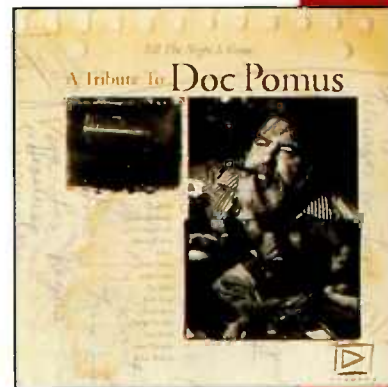
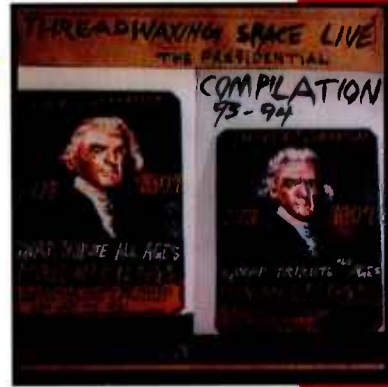
**TRICKY** *Maxinquaye* 4th & B'way-Island

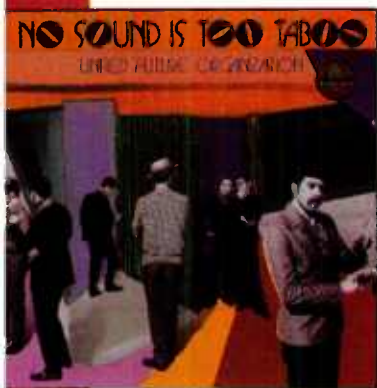
As a co-writer and performer on Massive Attack's gorgeous 1991 album *Blue Lines*, Tricky dazzled with his languid vocal delivery in a heavy Bristol accent atop the smooth sexual groove of tracks like "Daydreaming." As a soloist, Tricky has perfected his art, stretching hip-hop in several directions beyond its outer limits while maintaining an underlying sensuality. Whether that means contorting beats and melodies towards a blues, ambient dub or guitar-rock perspective is left up to each individual track, but the whole of *Maxinquaye* straddles the fine line between insanity and delirium. The appearance of 18-year-old Martina as featured vocalist alongside Tricky himself is a delight—her delivery is sexy and provocative in its innocence. On a cover of Public Enemy's "Black Steel In The Hour Of Chaos," she represents the message with a desperate urgency—worlds apart from Chuck D's, but just as powerful. Following the recent successes of his mates and neighbors Portishead and Massive Attack, Tricky provides further proof that there must be something extraordinary in the water in Bristol. —Tamara Palmer

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 18. First single "Aftermath."

**FILE UNDER:** Trip-hop.

**R.I.Y.L:** Massive Attack, Portishead, Soul II Soul.




**UNITED FUTURE ORGANIZATION** *No Sound Is Too Taboo* *Talkin' Loud-Verve*

It was Jimi Hendrix who once asked rhetorically in the midst of one of his high-flying, stoned-out, psychedelic jams, "Can you ever hear surf music again?" And the answer in 1995 is, yes, and we can hear bossa nova, soul, Latin jazz, ambient, and rare groove, too, and just about every other kind of music under the sun—preferably all at once, which is where a band like United Future Organization enters the picture. *No Sound Is Too Taboo* is the second American release for Japan's premier genre-busting trip hop funk bossa-nova cool-jazz combo. The band's music is a glimpse of what lies beyond the other side of acid jazz and hip-hop, a cool and easy blend of stylized beats, hip-pocket grooves and sampled shadings culled from unusual sources like '60s Brazilian bossa nova, vintage lovers' reggae and cool jazz LPs. What's most striking about UFO is how its sense of sampling—what to sample and when to do it—is so totally unfettered by limitations or self-restraint, it's as if some force is compelling the band members on a joyful odyssey. And when you consider that most practitioners simply use the sampler to spool up a three- or four-second loop of some old George Clinton track, you realize how dull and unimaginative most hip-hop and acid jazz really seems next to the vibrancy of UFO's dazzling aural creations. Brilliantly crafted, daringly executed, *No Sound Is Too Taboo* is a reminder of the sheer wonderfulness of music, which, like its counterpart, language, revels in finding ways to use old parts to say something new. —James Lien

**DATALOG:** Released domestically Mar. 7; the band also provided the title track to the *Stolen Moments: Red Hot + Cool AIDS* benefit compilation.

**FILE UNDER:** Trip hop psychedelic bossa nova jazz funk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Pizzicato Five, '60s movie soundtracks, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Deee-Lite's first album.

**VERSUS** *Dead Leaves* *TeenBeat*

Like hyper-charged lullabies, Versus's songs leave the listener suspended somewhere between anxiety and serenity. The ten songs on *Dead Leaves* brim with beautiful melodies, and are often intensely, achingly soulful. The New York City trio's sophomore full-length is actually a collection of a number of songs it had recorded on its early demo tapes, some of which ended up as singles. Because of their stylistic diversity, however, these songs often feel more mature and accomplished than last year's *The Stars Are Insane*. While *Dead Leaves* offers the same kind of intense, upbeat pop we've come to expect from Versus, it's also less predictable structurally and more aggressive vocally than *Stars*. The ferocity with which Versus tackles its songs and the energy of its guitar assaults are the record's greatest strengths. The interplay between Fontaine Toups and Richard Baluyut's vocals is as captivating as ever: Toups's bittersweet croon floats soothingly, while Baluyut's impassioned wail attacks your senses. "Astronaut" lurches with guitar-fueled intensity; "Crazy" is delicate and drifting. With lyrics measuring high on the angst-scale ("I am nothing/Please forgive me..."), Versus knows that sad songs say so much. —Jenny Eliscu

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 11.

**FILE UNDER:** Aggressive indie-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Butterglory, Hazel, Small Factory.

**VIEUX DIOP** *Vieux Diop (Via Jo)* *Worldly-Triloka*

Former Youssou N'Dour sideman Vieux Diop ("Old Joe") may pick a kora or a dusunguni, but his West African folk music sounds better suited for Windham Hill Records than Smithsonian Folkways. Padded by saxophones and fretless bass in a Connecticut recording studio, Diop's life-affirming music loses its edge. It remains beautiful, but a little bland. Diop's scratchy voice flows to all the intricacies of a mix of traditional and self-penned material. He has a naturally soothing manner, compounded by a torrent of acoustic guitar, ambient keyboard, and perfect-sounding drums. They run over Diop even when he tries to yell. Diop and crew break through the oppressive tranquility on the nine-minute "Farabi," rolling through a succession of dance cycles with momentum and color. Sensational Senegalese singer Baaba Maal has leapt to and fro over the border between African identity and international pop hegemony, striking a balance that sounds sophisticated to Western ears without forsaking traditional chanting, polyrhythms and instrumentation. Vieux Diop can almost make the same claims, though his slick presentation subtracts from otherwise invigorating percussive and vocal elements. Sooner or later, the African equivalent of punk rock will need to come down the pike. —Jan Christe

**DATALOG:** Release date: Feb. 7.

**FILE UNDER:** Aerodynamic African folk.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Baaba Maal, Paul Simon, Youssou N'Dour.



"King Lu Iof the Dream Warriors] is The Philosopher, who studies life and reality, pursues wisdom and creates his own system through theories and the nature of things." —from a press release

**VOCAL SAMPLING** *Una Forma Mas Elektra*

This Cuban sextet's debut might easily pass for straightforward Latin pop, were it not for one novel distinction: the claves, maracas, bass and all the other sounds heard on this album are created with unassisted, unprocessed voices. Yes, Vocal Sampling is an acappella group, i.e. a bunch of music nerds male-bonding through soaring strains of close harmony. They even have a debut single, "Montuno Sampling," in which they sing about how the group got started and its quest for fame—just like Boyz II Men. Vocal Sampling's saving grace is that they reject dippy new-jack love songs in favor of merengue and salsa numbers that make the most of their percussion-emulation skills. "Que Bueno Baila Usted," with its percolating "drums," shouts and freestyling, is a great example of acappella's rarely realized party potential. "Congo Yambumba" is rich with precision and technique. On "Una Forma Mas," the group's proclaimed anthem (sort of like a "signature song," only with *feeling*), they even manage to mimic a steel drum. While they rarely resist the temptation to break out the big brassy chords, these blasts of harmony are always set within arrangements so catchy and rhythmically taut that you'll probably be too busy shaking your booty to notice the briefly cresting cheeze factor.

—Andrea Moed

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 14.  
**FILE UNDER:** Acappella acrobatics.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Zap Mama, the Bobs.

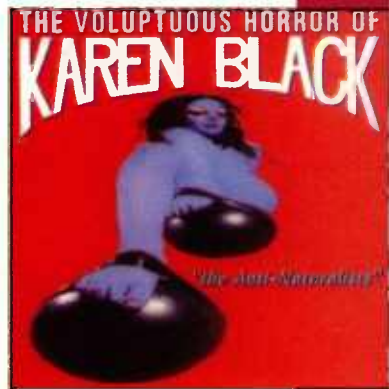


**THE VOLUPTUOUS HORROR OF KAREN BLACK** *The Anti-Naturalists Triple X*

The Voluptuous Horror Of Karen Black is, first and foremost, a visual act. Looking like rejects from the casting call for a low-budget '50s horror flick (or perhaps spare members of the Cramps), and toting around an ungodly assortment of props, the band elevates camp appeal to a whole new level. And eye-popping frontwoman Kembra Pfahler has to be seen to be believed. All that having been said, the Voluptuous Horror Of Karen Black is secondmost an aural act, playing snarling, but ultimately fairly generic, punk rock. Guitarist Samoa wields sharp power chords, while the rhythm section kicks along at a bristling tempo, but the melodies are distressingly familiar, and Pfahler's singsong sneer is almost a distraction. The lyrics are clever and often biting, but lyrics alone really can't sustain the album. Like fellow novelty thrashers Gwar, the Voluptuous Horror of Karen Black is worth savoring, on stage, simply as a rock 'n' roll spectacle taken to its irrational extreme—but it's not exactly the kind of thing you'd want to take home with you after the show.

—David Jarman

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** Novelty acts.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Gwar, Sex Pistols, Green Jelly.



**YO LA TENGO** *Electr-O-Pura Matador*

You never know quite what to expect from this protean band. Yo La Tengo doesn't have a stock sound, and there's no such thing as a prototypical YLT song. Still, the band's consistency comes from the intensity and earnestness it brings to its records, regardless of the variance in vision. Most of the songs on *Electr-O-Pura* are dreamy but purposeful, with lulling gushes of guitar and organ. Ira Kaplan's vocals come off as lackadaisical narration, like Lloyd Cole in a somber moment, sometimes backed by cooing oohs from drummer Georgia Hubley, or persistent bah-bah-bahs from bassist James McNew. Though a few tracks slide together into numbing oblivion, *Electr-O-Pura* also has plenty of arresting moments, with a wrangling guitar rearing its head now and again to shatter the moodiness. There are a few glittering gems here as well, most notably "(Straight Down To The) Bitter End", where Georgia's forcefully gentle voice emerges from a swath of space-melody to charm the snaky guitar. *Electr-O-Pura*'s delicate buds and full-bloomed flowers make for a pretty record, but YLT has also planted a few noisy interludes of No Wave chaos, jarring but welcome distractions. Regardless of where your tastes lie, every style that Yo La Tengo tries on fits well, and *Electr-O-Pura* is a pleasant and purifying listening experience.

—Megan McCarthy

**DATALOG:** Release date: Apr. 25.  
**FILE UNDER:** Rock 'n' roll.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Spacemen 3, Madder Rose, Velvet Underground.



"This guy thought I was his wife, and he sent a note backstage in San Diego saying: 'don't worry, everything's going to be okay, I'm gonna take care of you.' I wrote him and said: 'Look, I have your address and I will pay to have somebody hurt you. Don't think I fucking won't.' He never wrote back to me. Anyone threatens me, I'll threaten them right back. I'll have them hurt. I don't give a shit. I will go to jail."

—Belly's Tanya Donelly, from an interview in British magazine Vox

# FLASHBACK

ROOTS • REISSUES • RETRO

by James Llen

If you remember the '60s, you obviously weren't there," they say. That's part of why record companies have begun releasing and rereleasing archival live recordings from some of the heaviest names of the '60s—just to help people remember what they lived through. And even for those of us who weren't even born yet, it's still some pretty awesome music. This month, Flashback guides you through three of the recent live album reissues that have made waves.



## JIMI HENDRIX Band Of Gypsies (Capitol)

"We'd like to welcome back some old friends with new names, the Band Of Gypsies," says the announcer introducing Jimi Hendrix's new band in 1969. Even as he speaks, Hendrix has already started playing the first song of the concert that became this milestone live album, rereleased to coincide (somewhat vaguely) with its 25th anniversary. If you're into Hendrix the monumental guitarist, it may well be his best single recording. In many ways, this is as heavy as Hendrix ever got; teaming him up with Army ass buddy Billy Cox and drummer Buddy Miles (who also provides wailing vocals), the Band Of Gypsies was a positive juggernaut. It's been claimed that Hendrix formed the group in reaction to pressure from activists who wanted him to embrace the Black Power movement and reach out to a black audience, a notion which Buddy Miles has since refuted. But even just on musical terms, it's still somewhat true: While the Experience was characterized by over-the-top instrumentalism—Noel Redding's lead bass and Mitch Mitchell's flamboyant jazz-inflected drumming—the Band Of Gypsies represented a more down-to-earth concept of music, with Miles and Cox locking into a pocket for Hendrix to soar over, and a sound that's actually far closer to the funk and soul roots of Jimi's output. "Machine Gun" is not just about Vietnam, but also about Chicago and Milwaukee and civil rights unrest. Both musically and conceptually, it's just about as powerful as music can get, one of the definitive performances of Hendrix's short life. Still, as with the Who, one has to wonder what happened to the other two CDs' worth of live Band Of Gypsies material that has crept onto bootlegs over the years, and whether consumers will have to pay even more for more of this historic music at some point in the future.



## THE BAND Live At Watkins Glen (Capitol)

Though they clothed themselves in working-class garb and the agrarian mystique of bygone rural North America, the Band were not mere workmanlike musicians, as the serious intensity of the newly released *Live At Watkins Glen* attests. Reticent and withdrawn, they were very serious about bringing their music before the public eye, and prided themselves on delivering performances that lived up to their gargantuan cult status with the '60s generation. Sharing the bill with the Grateful Dead and the Allman Brothers (now there's a set we'd like to hear), the Band took to the stage at the Watkins Glen festival in front of an estimated 600,000, a crowd larger than Woodstock (the Band declined to play the famous fest four years earlier, even though it took place only a few minutes from their houses). A half-hour into the set, a torrential downpour opened up—you can hear the thunder and the crowd moaning during Garth Hudson's "Too Wet to Work." It's also poignant to hear Dylan's "I Shall Be Released" as only the third song in the set, when it was just another song in the Band's repertoire—this was before *The Last Waltz*, before it became an anthem, and well before Richard Manuel's tragic death. If you're drawn to the Band's unique blend of laid-back earnestness, down-home charm and serious artistry, then this straight-up and sturdy live set presents the Band that you'll remember the most fondly.

## THE WHO Live At Leeds (MCA)

The Who's *Live At Leeds* has long been infamous as the live album labeled with the warning "Crackling noises OK—Do not correct"—the band simply played too loud and too furiously for recording equipment of the time to handle the volume, and parts of the album feature strange crackling and distortion noise that sounds like cables frying and circuits overheating. Now, one of the best Who



records, not to mention one of the greatest live LPs of all time, has been rereleased and expanded with extra

tracks from the original concert, and original packaging that's been missing since the first edition in '70 (included are reproductions of angry letters from promoters and music stores regarding the band's practice of smashing equipment that they hadn't yet had a chance to pay for.) Those of you who already bought the shabby CD version that's been on the market for years are no doubt kicking yourselves and cursing the record company, but for those who never got around to it or held out in hope of something more, it's a monumental release. This was when the Who were simply the most awesome live band on the planet—Roger Daltrey with his fringe vest and tambourine, John Entwistle all in black, a spacey and spiritual Pete Townshend leaping wildly in his white jumpsuit and Doc Martens, and Keith Moon just being Keith Moon behind the drum kit. It's positively electric. Two or three times, Townshend scrapes his pick down the neck of his guitar, and it's not a hack rock cliché, it's fucking awesome move that galvanizes the song. The only drag is the lack of extra material from *Tommy* itself, which was in fact the bulk of that evening's concert. Hearing the rock opera in its full-on live Who version circa '69 is a totally different experience from the studio album. It's a curious omission, to be sure, but there's still hope yet for diehard Who fanatics: apparently plans are being laid to release a definitive live version of *Tommy*, possibly even as part of a multi-disc box set chronicling the live Who through the years.



tad

infrared riding hood

EastWest

METAL

by vlad

It ain't over till the fat man sings, as Tad returns on his/their fourth label in as many years. One of the

last bands from the Sub Pop starting lineup (Nirvana opened for them on several tours)

that hasn't either become a superstar or vanished, Tad's seventh long-ish player

finds the band doing what it's always done, but better than before. The

band has parted company with guitarist Gary Thorenson and reverted

to a trio, but that hasn't hurt it a jot, as fist-sized riffs and crushing

rhythms buttress frontman Tad Doyle's butcher-gone-berserk

vocals. Likewise, the group has infused melodic elements into its

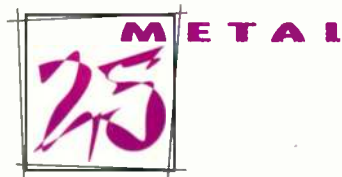
sound better than ever before, making that all-important Top 40

crossover more likely than ever (gag). Strong as this album is, Tad is always

in its best element live, so catch 'em when they pillage the country this spring.

## RIFFS

The second outing from Kansas City's bruising **SEASON TO RISK**, *In A Perfect World* (Red Decibel-Columbia), finds them moving forward and backward at the same time. The group has grown musically and technically, adding some industrial elements and beefing up the production, but they've also taken their obsession with the Jesus Lizard to tribute-band proportions. Although there are plenty of moments where STR sounds nothing like the mighty reptilians, others are lifted shamelessly from *Goat* or *Liar*: nails-on-a-blackboard guitar, chest-imploding rhythms, and unintelligible vocals bearing only a passing acquaintance with melody—at times, you find yourself waiting for the muffled sounds of the singer throwing up. While the energy and musicianship are present in spades, STR needs to stand in its own light just a bit more... The ultra-incestuous Seattle rock royalty has thrown up dozens of dude-I've-got-three-weeks-off-let's-form-a-side-project outings in the past five years. The latest, **MAD SEASON**, includes Alice In Chains vocalist Layne Staley, Pearl Jam guitarist Mike McReady and Screaming Trees drummer Barrett Martin (and, on two songs, Trees vocalist Mark Lanegan). Considering the busy schedules of its members, it's not surprising that *Above* (Columbia) sounds pretty offhanded and might have made a better EP (seven-minute instrumentals are seldom a good idea under any circumstances). The album is not without its moments—"Artificial Red" and "Lifeless Dead" (as opposed to the lively dead?) in particular—but often it just kinda plods along between ballads and medium-tempo rockers. Layne and Lanegan turn in some inspired vocalizing, but this just whets my appetite for the long-overdue albums from their day-job bands... It's sad but kind of inevitable that Holland's **URBAN DANCE SQUAD**—who have been honing a riff-rap groove since 1987—will now probably catch a fair bit of flack for sounding like Rage Against The Machine (which hadn't even formed when UDS's blistering debut, *Mental Floss For The Globe*, was released). The new *Persona Non Grata* (Virgin) is far more stripped-down and rock-oriented than the Squad's previous albums (they've apparently parted company with their full-time DJ), and they're writing better songs than their earlier records even suggested. Singer/shouter Rude Boy's lyrics occasionally fall a little short, but he's got a powerful voice, and hell, how easy can it be to rap in your second language?



- 1 KORN • Korn (Immortal-Epic)
- 2 MEGADETH • Youthanasia (Capitol)
- 3 SLAYER • Divine Intervention (American)
- 4 CORROSION OF CONFORMITY • Deliverance (Columbia)
- 5 SICK OF IT ALL • Scratch The Surface (EastWest America)
- 6 QUICKSAND • Manic Compression (Island)
- 7 TREE • Plant A Tree Or Die (CherryDisc)
- 8 SOUNDTRACK • Tales From The Crypt Presents: Demon Knight (Atlantic)
- 9 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Nativity In Black: A Tribute To Black Sabbath (Columbia)
- 10 OVERDOSE • Progress Of Decadence (Futuri)
- 11 GRIP INC. • Power Of Inner Strength (Metal Blade)
- 12 BOLT THROWER • ...For Victory (Earache)
- 13 MACHINE HEAD • Burn My Eyes (Roadrunner)
- 14 REIGN • Embrace (Mausoleum)
- 15 MONSTER YOODOO MACHINE • Suffersystem (D-Tribe-RCA)
- 16 SEX, LOVE & MONEY • Era (EP) (Rockworld-So)
- 17 GODFLESH • Selfless (Earache-Columbia)
- 18 MERCYFUL FATE • Time (Metal Blade-Priori)
- 19 PITCH SHIFTER VS. BIOHAZARD... • The Ren War (EP) (Earache)
- 20 MELVINS • Stoner Witch (Atlantic)
- 21 L.A. GUNS • Vicious Circle (Polydor-A&M)
- 22 BRUTAL TRUTH • Need To Control (Earache)
- 23 TESTAMENT • Low (Atlantic)
- 24 SOLITUDE AETURNUS • Through The Darkest Hour (Pavement Music)
- 25 MARY BEATS JANE • Mary Beats Jane (Geffen)

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

# SINGLES

by douglas wolk

orange raja, blood royal (EP)

alt

The out-of-nowhere mindblower of the month is a self-titled 7" by **OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL** (Elephant 6). Over five songs (one of which, "California Demise," is split into two parts, one on each side), the band shows off an impressive and wide-ranging merger of hyper-produced '60s psychedelia and home-recording DIY creativity. They throw in horns, organ, multi-tracked harmonies, Beatles-y backwards guitar, acid-fried forwards guitar, sound effects—the works—then bounce the mix down so many times that it turns into a big dreamy multi-colored pool. Bonus points for the lead singer's vocal resemblance to the young George Harrison. Extra bonus points for super-good songwriting (especially "Fireplace," which makes the most of a rather messy drum sound).

The final single by Toronto's **GOOD HORSEY** (Shrimper/18 Wheeler/Baby Huey) does a lot of very different things well. Its four songs include a post-Joy Division magnet's-coil of tension ("The Last Customer"), a ragged free-rock improvisation with a predefined head ("Monkey Steals The Peach"), an instrumental for trumpet, wah-wah guitar and very fast drums ("Theme From 'Intrusion'"), and a nakedly emotional, personal song with a vocal that nearly turns into primal screaming ("Eleventy"). They'll be missed.

Also in the last-bow category is a posthumous single by Chicago's instrumental ensemble **5IVE STYLE**, "Kiki's Cookout" (Sub Pop), which returns funk to its lo-fi roots (okay, you can at least pretend you had lo-fi roots while this is playing). The A-side has a lead guitar sound like Memphis legend Steve Cropper's essence manifesting itself over a transistor radio, and a melodica solo at the end that's lifted in from some Augustus Pablo record but joins the party anyway. "Hot Box!," on the B-side, is even better, bone-dry, lurky and scratchy, and bursting with speed and density.

The self-explanatory *Gay Pride 7"* compilation (Rugger Bugger) has tracks from six very different bands, from SPDFGH's acoustic pop to Doom's grindcore. It's pretty uneven, but it's got its moments, notably Mambo Taxi's super-energetic (and also self-explanatory) Brett From Suede (It's About Time You Got Laid) By A Man." Fat Tyler's "Wet, Wet, Wet (The Fucking Bed)"—a hardcore misstep on "Love Is All Around"—is probably much funnier in England, where Wet Wet Wet's version of that Troggs classic was a hit for four stultifying months, but it's still worth a giggle here.

The *raison d'être* of **JACK O'FIRE** is reinterpreting unlikely songs (from hot-rod instrumentals to hardcore) as ferocious, hyper-distorted deep blues. On its new single on In The Red, the band sets its sights on the Fall's manic "Container Drivers" and the U-Men's "A Year And A Day." The Fall song fares a little better, in part because it was kind of a blues to begin with—as Jack O'Fire's version makes clear, it's got a plain old twelve-bar progression behind it. Watch out: Tim Kerr's slide guitar goes so wild that it may seem like your turntable's malfunctioning, but the record really does sound like that.

**MILY'S SASSY LIME**—a group of three young, 'zine-minded Californian women, whose name should be read backwards for best effect—takes its debut with the six-song *Summer Vacation* EP (Christmas). They rely on their natural charm to get over (some of the playing is really awkward), but that charm's abundant. And their songs are always good, if a little blunt ("You are such a dumb dork/Dumb dork!"). "Pineapple Boys Need Not Apply," in particular, shows a promising pop sensibility, with a simple but excellent melody and a great little noise-guitar bit.

THE MOUNTAIN GOATS AND ALASTAIR GALBRAITH



ORANGE RAJA, BLOOD ROYAL

## the mountain goats and alastair galbraith

Californian home-recording weirdo John Darnielle (of the Mountain Goats) is *sui generis*, an incredibly prolific songwriter with a bizarre aesthetic that's nonetheless very easy to like. Alastair Galbraith is his New Zealand counterpart only as far as the strange home-recording thing goes; instead of Darnielle's crabbed, undeniably catchy pop songs, Galbraith goes in for cryptic tone-poems where far more is hidden than revealed. Unsurprisingly, Darnielle dominates these four songs (recorded on a 4-track and mailed to Galbraith for overdubs), all of which he wrote and sang. It'd be easy to say there's too much of him and too little of Galbraith, except that that's not really true—the New Zealander limits himself to adding violin, harmonica and a little bit of singing and guitar, but anything more than his subtle accents would get in the way of the songs. And they're among the best Mountain Goats songs ever—Darnielle's heart is on his sleeve, where it belongs. "Raja Vocative" is an amazingly moving snapshot of long-distance abstract jealousy, and "Hatha Hill," just over a minute long, is a mysterious, erotic and creepy approximation of Galbraith's songwriting style.



# DANCE

by tim haslett

## various artists

drum and bass selection, vol. 3

Suburban Base-Moonshine

Suburban Base Records, based in the suburban London town of Romford, is an important site for creative activity in the jungle and breakbeat worlds. Now Moonshine in L.A. has inked a long overdue licensing deal for domestic release of Suburban Base material, long inaccessible due to steep import prices. That the first is part of the series of endlessly elastic *Drum And Bass Selection* compilations is good news indeed. The substantive difference between the original UK release and the domestic one is that the latter is continuously mixed by respected breaks DJ, DJ Hype, whose way around a pair of turntables is legendary. Here, he whips together a firestorm with the 19 tracks, never allowing the compilation to relinquish any of its considerable energies. Jungle producers have long displayed an affinity for mid-'80s U.S. cut-and-scratch-era hip-hop, and Hype's manic scratching techniques here are a tribute to the electrifying moments in the music of such turntable visionaries as Grandmixer D.ST. and DJ Cash Money. The racing "BooYaa!" by Amazon II is included here, as well as tracks by Russ DeTox, DJ Rap, Krome And Time, and a host of inventive jungle producers from a dozen UK labels. Many of the tracks on this collection never materialized on U.S. shores as singles, and that certainly adds to the appeal of the record. If you're exploring the jungle terrain for the first time, this will be a wonderful shock to the system.

### ELSEWHERE

After being injured in a shooting incident, one of techno's most ingenious figures, **KENNY LARKIN**, has resurfaced with his magnum opus, the *Metaphor* album (R&S). Larkin's penchant for dramatic musical soundscapes is evident throughout his varied corpus, but with this album his artistic vision is fully realized. Those familiar with techno's history will recognize this record essentially as the album Derrick May (*Rhythm Is Rhythm*) never made, and that is not meant to discredit Larkin's achievement in any way. Larkin is the stylistic heir apparent to May's electronic explorations, which transformed the stark Teutonic music of Kraftwerk into something altogether more ecstatic and contemplative. For Larkin, the reductive definition of techno as noisy, abrasive and too fast will not do. In his hands, techno is an expansive music, whose vast contours can be at once concave and convex, embodying multiple feelings and moods. The LP's standout is "Nocturnal," a glistening minor-key threnody supported by a forceful rhythmic drive, truly a classic of the techno genre. If you are at all interested in seeing the direction in which techno is heading, you should not overlook this record... There are enough tired disco-sampling records around right now to drive the most tolerant listener to drink. **DJ SNEAK**'s *Polyester* EP (Henry St.-Sub Urban) is not among them. Anyone can throw a disco loop over a monotonous drum program; Sneak is more interested in sampling as a distinct art form. On this brilliant EP, he borrows from Lonnie Liston Smith's "Expansions" and Diana Ross's "The Boss" to electrifying effect, putting those disco anthems in a house context so as to wholly reinvigorate the originals. This is stunning stuff... The inimitable **DJ PIERRE** has returned to vinyl with one of his moodiest records to date. "Project: Blast" by Photon Inc. (Strictly Rhythm) is a dense, gravelly affair with a characteristically muffled kick-drum filtered through a bassline deeper than the mid-Atlantic. The most compelling moments here are found on the "Whistle Blast Mix," an unusually serene affair for the likes of Pierre. This mix has a sinuous bassline acting as a counterpoint to a rounded synth whistle which has a softness not often heard in Pierre's music. This is clearly the first stage of a new turn in this venerable producer's career.



- 1 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Trance Atlantic (Trance Atlantic/Worldsend-Volume (UK))
- 2 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Trip Hop Test Part One (Moonshine)
- 3 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Ibiza Afterhours (Moonshine)
- 4 PLASTIKMAN • Musik (NovaMute)
- 5 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Law Of The Jungle (Moonshine)
- 6 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Secret Life Of Trance 2: The Next Frontier (Planet Earth)
- 7 AUTECHRE • Amber (Warp/Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 8 PRODIGY • Music For The Jilted Generation (XL-Mute)
- 9 DIE WARZAU • Engine (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 10 TRACI LORDS • 1,000 Fires (Radioactive)
- 11 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Logic Trance Vol. 2 (Logic)
- 12 MASSIVE ATTACK • Protection (Circa-Virgin)
- 13 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Recycle Or Die (Planet Earth)
- 14 LORDS OF ACID • Voodoo-U (WHITE LBL/Anlier Subway-American)
- 15 VARIOUS ARTISTS • From Here To Tranquillity Vol.4 (Silent)
- 16 µ-ZIQ • Vs. The Auteurs (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 17 PORTISHEAD • Dummy (Go! Discs-London)
- 18 CLUBZONE • "Hands Up" (12") (Logic)
- 19 HUMAN MESH DANCE • Mindflower (Instinct)
- 20 KMFDM VS. PIG • Sin Sex & Salvation (EP) (Wax Trax!-TVT)
- 21 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Synoptics (Reflective)
- 22 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Trance Europe Express (Volume (UK))
- 23 N-JOI • Earthquake EP (deConstruction (UK))
- 24 777 • System 7.3: Fire + Water (Astralwerks-Caroline)
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS • Enchantments (Cleopatra)

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



# HIP-HOP

by glen sansone



station identification  
Capitol

## channel live

If your tastes favor the empty-calorie lyrics of MCs like Lords Of The Underground or Keith Murray, but you still appreciate the commanding dialect of an artist such as O.C., then New Jersey's Channel Live has made a gratifying debut well worth tuning on. The duo of Tuffy and Hakim has earned a strong foothold in the

hip-hop underground following the success of its first single "Mad Izm," on which group founder KRS-One makes a cameo (KRS can also be heard on "Homicide Ride"). Living up to all the hype and fanfare, Channel Live are as agile as gymnasts on the opening title cut, instantly developing a distinct identity. The duo doesn't rest on simply being gifted rappers; Tuffy and Hakim delve deep, articulating a keen social awareness not often found in new groups. "What (Cause & Effect)" condemns the overuse of the words "bitch" and "nigga" in rap, while on "Down Goes The Devil," the group's hotheaded and vengeful delivery strikes back at oppressors of many types. As defined by the Organized Konfusion-sounding "Who U Represent," the production on *Station* benefits from bizarre samples of bite-sized jazz loops and unconnected noise scraps that add depth and flavor to the finished product.

### BONUS BEATS

When Toronto's **DREAM WARRIORS** descended upon the hip-hop nation like a raging nor'easter, King Lu and Q's influential *And Now The Legacy Begins* created a heap of excitement and envy with artistically daring cuts like "My Definition Of A Boombastic Jazz Style," garnering the same critical reaction as De La Soul and Arrested Development's debuts. While the group is not likely to surpass its fascinating debut, that's no reason to dismiss its jazzier follow-up, *Subliminal Simulation* (Pendulum-EMI). Even though the group has doubled in size with the addition of Spek and Luv, it still negotiates a heady, often spiritual terrain, enlightening and offering hidden lessons along the way. "I've Lost My Ignorance" (featuring Gang Starr's Guru) is a jazz-textured song about seeking knowledge and opening the mind, while "Break The Stereo" attempts to raise hip-hop above tired stereotyping. No sophomore slump here... Since 1993, the Oakland/San Francisco hip-hop scene has had two distinct identities. Though it's long been known for artists like Too \$hort and Ant Banks, as well as newer faces like E-40, a fresh crop of artists like Souls Of Mischievous and Del The Funkyhomosapien have developed into the area's other face. The **B.U.M.S** are made up of the lyrically gifted voices of D-Wyze and E-Vocalist. Their *Brothas Unda Madness: Lyfe And Tyme* (Priority), comes after paying their dues as part of KMEL's *Wake Up Show*. The first single, "Elevation (Free My Mind)," features a string-filled R&B backdrop and pointed lyrics which warn listeners of the shady side of the record business, sounding like they're coming from experience. Best of all, the group emphasizes vintage soul and R&B (it opts for Smokey Robinson over P-Funk) along with jazz-spiced jeep beats, effortlessly fusing them together into an inviting, universal sound. The overall feeling is loose and informal, while the raps cover everything from head-nodding street science ("Let The Music Take Your Mind") to vain and insipid babble ("Six Figures And Up")... After two gold albums (*Quik Is The Name* and *Way 2 Fonky*) Compton's **DJ QUIK** rolls back into town sporting his Rev. Al Sharpton-esque hairstyles and his smooth-as-glass, live ghetto funk. Ironically (and misleadingly), Quik's not a DJ; in fact, you're not going to find one on his third opus, *Safe + Sound* (Profile). His ruthless gangster bravado and downright raunchy lyrical content ("Diggin' U Out" and "Somethin' 4 Tha Mood") has always overshadowed his near-genius production talent. This self-produced album is rooted in the post-disco funk sounds of groups like the Dazz Band, Zapp and Cameo, and while more and more West Coast rap groups use live players these days, DJ Quik has been masterfully utilizing this option for years. While peers like Snoop Doggy Dogg and Dr. Dre have found the formula to cross over to multi-platinum success, Quik remains an artist whose star would burn brighter if he would downplay the sexist bullshit. Word out.



- 1 **ROOTS** • Do You Want More!!!!!! (DGC)
- 2 **METHOO MAN** • Tical (Def Jam/RAL-Island)
- 3 **CHANNEL LIVE** • Station Identification (Capitol)
- 4 **NOTORIOUS B.I.G.** • Ready To Oie (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 5 **OL' DIRTY BASTARD** • "Brooklyn Zoo" (12") (Elektra)
- 6 **KEITH MURRAY** • The Most Beautifullest Thing In This World (Jive)
- 7 **REDMAN** • Dare Iz A Darkside (RAL-Island)
- 8 **DIGABLE PLANETS** • Blowout Comb (Pendulum-EMI)
- 9 **VARIOUS ARTISTS** • Loud 95: Nudder Budders (EP) (Loud-RCA)
- 10 **THA ALKAHOLIKS** • "Daaam!" (12") (Loud-RCA)
- 11 **GROUP HOME** • "Supa Star" (12") (Payday/frr-Island)
- 12 **COMMON SENSE** • Resurrection (Relativity)
- 13 **BDGIEMONSTERS** • Riders Of The Storm: The Underwater Album (Pendulum-EMI)
- 14 **CRAIG MACK** • Project: Funk Da World (Bad Boy-Arista)
- 15 **SOUNDTRACK** • Street Fighter (Priority)
- 16 **LORDS OF THE UNDERGROUND** • Keepers Of The Funk (Pendulum-EMI)
- 17 **BLACK SHEEP** • Non-Fiction (Mercury)
- 18 **PETE ROCK & C.L. SMODTH** • The Main Ingredient (Elektra)
- 19 **MARY J. BLIGE** • My Life (Uptown-MCA)
- 20 **SHDWBIZ & A.G.** • "Next Level" (12") (Payday/frr-London)
- 21 **THE NONCE** • World Ultimate (Wild West-American)
- 22 **BRAND NUBIAN** • Everything Is Everything (Elektra)
- 23 **BRANDY** • Brandy (Atlantic)
- 24 **SMIF-N-WESSUN** • Dah Shinin' (Wreck-Nervous)
- 25 **BROWNSTONE** • From The Bottom Up (MJJ Music-Epic)

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

## garden variety

Delivering the kind of chunky dissonance that made Minneapolis a mecca, Garden Variety could well be the band to put Long Island on the guitar-rock map. The trio's self-titled debut LP (Gern Blandsten) exemplifies the group's strong song-style, offering an appealing combination of Superchunk-like hook-laden energy with noisier beats, squeals and cries (*à la* Drive Like Jehu). Though a second full-length is still in the planning stages, the band recently released three split singles with Dahlia Seed (Mint Tone), Hell No (Reservoir) and Chune (Cargo). —Jenny Eliscu



will have you singing along despite the language barrier. (LA)



## μ-ziq

μ-Ziq (say it "mu-zique") is the working moniker of 22-year-old Londoner Michael Paradinas. Recording in his bedroom studio, armed with an array of sonic generators, modulators and filters (and *no* samplers), he has produced some of the most startlingly different "techno" heard in the past couple years. 1993's *Tango 'N Vectif* was a 90-plus-minute double-LP characterized by immense distortion and playful wit. Last year's *Bluff Limbo* (two LPs, 1000 made, forget it) tempered the assault with breathless melodies and sophisticated rhythmic workouts reminiscent of New Orleans' seminal *Meters*. μ-Ziq's newest venture (and first U.S. release), *Vs. The Auteurs* (Astralwerks-Caroline), finds Paradinas re-constructing and reassembling select tracks from the Auteurs' second album, *Now I'm A Cowboy*. Far from the numbing barrage of dance remixes we've grown accustomed to, *Vs.* is very much a μ-Ziq project, the Auteurs' raw material virtually unrecognizable; three versions of "Lenny Valentino" are rendered entirely distinct through the magic of μ-Ziq. Expect more joyous shenanigans in the near future.

—Jeff Gibson



## softies

Singer/guitarist Rose Melberg, formerly of the sensational indie-rock band Tiger Trap, has taken her songwriting and singing talents with her to a new duo called the Softies. On their debut single (*Slumberland*), there are no drums or bass to get in the way, just four sweet, jangly guitar pop songs about love and its demise. The delicate voices of the two women twist playfully around each other in perfect pop melodies, with accompaniment strummed out on guitars. K Records has just released another Softies single and will release the duo's debut LP later this year; between those two records, *Slumberland* will release a 10" EP.

—Dawn Sutter

ARTIST FEATURED ON THIS MONTH'S CD

# Negativland's Tenets of Free Appropriation

teach

With current technology making it possible to make immediate, perfect copies of words, images and sound and recombine them in previously impossible ways, the time may have come to rethink the idea of copyright and "fair use." The following "Tenets Of Free Appropriation" come from *Fair Use: The Story Of The Letter U And The Numeral 2*, a new 288-page book and 72-minute CD self-published by the band Negativland, which chronicles its four-year battle over its release of a single called "U2." **Reproduction of this essay is strongly encouraged.**

- Free appropriation is inevitable when a population bombarded with electronic media meets the hardware that encourages them to capture it.
- As artists, our work involves displacing and displaying bites of publicly available, publicly influential material because it peppers our personal environment and affects our consciousness. In our society, the media which surrounds us is as available, and as valid a subject for art, as nature itself.
- Our appropriations are multiple and fragmentary in nature; they do not include whole works.
- Our work is an authentic and original "whole," being much more than the sum of its samples. This is not a form of "bootlegging" intending to profit from the commercial potential of the subjects appropriated. The law must come to terms with distinguishing the difference between economic intent and artistic intent.
- There is no demonstrable negative effect on the market value of the original works from which we appropriate, or the cultural status or incomes of the artists who made the original works. Referencing a work in a fragmentary way is at least as likely to have a positive effect on these areas of concern.
- The urge to make one thing out of other things is an entirely traditional, socially healthy, and artistically valid impulse which has only recently been criminalized in order to force private tolls on the practice (or prohibit it to escape embarrassment). These now all-encompassing private locks on mass media have led to a mass culture that is almost completely "professional," formularized, and practically immune to any form of bottom-up, direct-reference criticism it doesn't approve of.
- The courts' often-espoused principle that "if it's done for profit, it can't be fair use" represents a thoughtless and carelessly misguided prejudice against the struggle of new art to survive. Making media—any media—is expensive. It requires substantial up-front investments in time and manufactured goods to create, duplicate, and distribute anything. The courts' easy reliance on a not-for-profit standard for fair use ignores the reality that artists, no matter what they choose to do, need to support themselves and their work with a return on their investment just like everyone else. The currently applied "non-profit only" standard simply assures that only the independently wealthy may dabble in fair use. If society values the challenging and reforming aspects of critical, fair use works that bubble up from independent, grassroots thinking, the law should not condone the smothering of such works by disallowing their economic survival in our "free" marketplace.
- We believe that artistic freedom for all is more important to the health of society than the supplemental and extraneous incomes derived from private copyright tariffs which create a cultural climate of art control and Art Police. No matter how valid the original intent of our copyright laws may have been, they are now clearly being subverted when they are used to censor resented works, to suppress the public need to reuse and reshape information, and to garner purely opportunistic incomes from any public use of previously released cultural material which is, in fact, already publicly available to everyone. The U.S. Constitution clearly shows that the original intent of copyright law was to promote a public good, not a private one. No one should be allowed to claim a private control over the creative process itself. This struggle is essentially one of art against business, and ultimately about which one must make way for the other.





## THE BASKETBALL DIARIES

(New Line)

As a teenager in the '60s, Jim Carroll amassed an amazing diary of his days as a basketball star/heroin addict/hoodlum. Bringing his degenerate speedball prose to the screen is a sticky problem—the narrator's voice is also the crux of the work. Director Scott Kalvert does his best, and by taking obvious liberties with the book for conventional dramatic purposes (like setting it in the '90s), he's made a pretty digestible film. While the film is less exotic than Carroll's text, it's still pretty surreal and creepy on its own. Like *Dead Poets Society* or *The Outsiders*, the film is centered on a group of restless adolescents, but the comparison ends there. Don't search for any heartwarming scenes in *The Basketball Diaries*; aside from the hysterical and cartoonish performance by Lorraine Bracco as Carroll's mother, this is gritty, effective filmmaking. (Hell, even Marky Mark is good!) As the young Carroll, Leonardo DiCaprio turns in one of the most daring and involving performances by any actor in the last few years. The film's cuddly themes of shooting up, homosexual prostitution, vomiting and the like allow DiCaprio to flex muscles that older, more established actors rarely use. Yes, the book's a better bet, but DiCaprio personifies Carroll's cocky poet/dreamer spirit so beautifully, it's well worth seeing after you've put the book down. —Steve Ciabattani

# mixed media

compiled by dawn sutter

## CRUMB

(Sony Pictures Classic)

Robert Crumb is not a pretty man. His life is based on cowardice; his work is his one way to release all the negative energy in his soul. Nonetheless, in the '60s, Crumb became a major voice of the counterculture. His comics, including *Mr. Natural*, *Fritz The Cat* and many others, have held up to the scrutiny of the generations that followed. Museums have shown retrospectives of his work. His drawing *Keep On Truckin'* adorns coffee mugs and mud-flaps all over the country. Director Terry Zwigoff, a 25-year friend of Crumb's, has made a feature-length documentary about the man, his art and his brothers. The film exposes many sides of Crumb, and is, in itself, a work of art.

We see how Crumb is a product of his family as his brothers share their equally empty views of life with us. Unfortunately, they're not as well equipped to deal with a world that they see as being against them. One lives with his mother, and the other lives in a San Francisco welfare hotel, where he displays paintings that will take your breath away. (Crumb also has two sisters who refused to be interviewed for the film.)

Crumb and the movie about him make us look at what we don't like in ourselves—the internal sexism, racism, and fear in all of us. The artist will show it to you and make you laugh. The film will show it to you and make you queasy. —Leslie Smith



## INSTANT PIANO!

(Dark Horse)

Kyle Baker made a big splash a few years ago with his sidesplitting graphic novel *Why I Hate Saturn*; since then, he's done a few cartoons for magazines, the ill-fated *Break The Chain* one-shot (a music-and-comics collaboration with KRS-One), and not much else. *Instant Piano!* marks his return to a regular comics series. It's actually an anthology, with four other regular artists: Evan Dorkin (of *Milk & Cheese*—*Dairy Products Gone Bad!* infamy), Stephen deStefano (whose *Mazing Man* was a cult favorite a decade ago), animator Robbie Busch, and Mark Badger (whose painterly, computer-manipulated greyscale art and serious stories make a nice contrast to the others' goofiness). The series feels casual and familial, like the early issues of *Mad* or *Zap*. There are shared in-jokes popping up all over ("Eat Lekvar" is a favorite). Highlights of *Instant Piano* so far include selections from Baker's forthcoming state-of-the-generation graphic novel *You Are Here*, Dorkin's "Bring Me The Head Of Boba Fett" (in which two geeks have a trash-talking science-fiction trivia showdown), and deStefano's scabrous and already legendary joke at the expense of Jeff Smith's *Bane* (which can't be reproduced in a family magazine). There's also a companion Hypercard stack, *Interactive Piano*, that can be downloaded from America Online; it's definitely worth a look.

—Douglas Wolk



## CHICKFACTOR

245 E. 19th St. #12T  
New York, NY 10003 \$3

Since its 1992 debut, *Chickfactor* has grown into a 'zine force to be reckoned with. It measures super-high on the smile seismograph. Each issue includes interviews with editors Gail and Pam's indie-rock faves, as well as fun pieces like "My First Concert" and "Dream Gig" polls where you can learn about all the intimate details of your favorite pop-icon's life. Keep your eyes peeled for the new Issue #8 ("Le Huitieme Issue"), which includes chats with Superchunk, Heartworms, Cibo Matto, Chisel, Ira & Georgia of Yo La Tengo, and their bandmate James McNew (also of Dump). In addition, there's the surefire hysterics inducer "Jukebox Jury" with Stephen Merritt (of the Magnetic Fields and the 6ths), whose caustic one-liners are a must-read, and Shawn Belschwender's scathing, hilarious cartoons on *Details* sex columnist Anka Radakovich and "Pavement Boy." —Jenny Elisuc



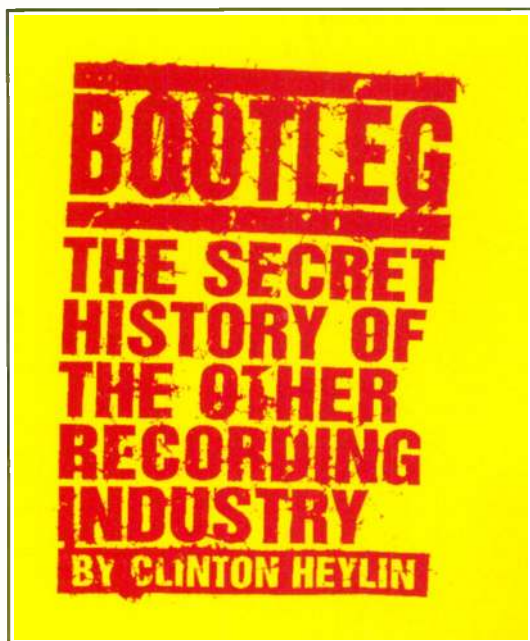
## BOOTLEG: THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE OTHER RECORDING INDUSTRY

by Clinton Heylin  
(St. Martin's Press)

Rock bootlegging has played a great role in shaping the music industry as we know it. Bootlegs have inspired everything from creative packaging and lo-fi production to an entire rethinking of attitude in the business: an appreciation for outtakes, vintage tracks in their original states, and thorough compendiums. Clinton Heylin's weighty, well-researched, entertaining and ostensibly authoritative tome is long overdue. Starting in Shakespeare's time, Heylin divides his book between the history of artistic bootlegging (as in the legit world, rock followed jazz, soundtracks and opera to the phonograph) and the history of laws that tried to stop it. Though they were allegedly to protect artists, more often, in Heylin's analysis, these laws have been written to protect those contracted to profit from the artist (so-called "neighboring rights"): lawyers, publishers and music-biz "suits."

Rock bootlegging started with Dylan in the late '60s, when the singer made a career change fans didn't like and shelved songs they wanted to hear. *Great White Wonder* was born, and waves of Stones, Beatles, Presley and Zeppelin followed soon after—promoted by *Rolling Stone*'s anti-establishment attitude (this was a long time ago) and freeform FM radio. Heylin documents the classic Smokin' Pig and Trademark Of Quality labels, and the people behind them (amazingly, most of the legendary bootlegs have come from only a few sources), arguing that bootlegs have significantly added to some artists' careers. Springsteen, in particular, owes a lot of his early appreciation to the buzzspreading of bootleggers, and many essential '77 punk and new wave documents were also unauthorized. The point is continually made that most bootleggers are fans who produce small numbers and see little profit. Then again, the book has its profiteers and success stories (Virgin's Richard Branson was once caught selling bootlegs by the boatload)—as well as true tales from the FBI files.—Eric Gladstone

## reads



# TOP 75

ALTERNATIVE RADIO AIRPLAY



THROWING MUSES

| ARTIST | ALBUM TITLE             | LABEL                                |
|--------|-------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1      | THROWING MUSES          | University                           |
| 2      | BETTIE SERVEERT         | Lamprey                              |
| 3      | STONE ROSES             | Second Coming                        |
| 4      | BELLY                   | King                                 |
| 5      | PRICK                   | Prick                                |
| 6      | PJ HARVEY               | To Bring You My Love                 |
| 7      | QUICKSAND               | Manic Compression                    |
| 8      | WOLFGANG PRESS          | Funky Little Demons                  |
| 9      | BUSH                    | Sixteen Stone                        |
| 10     | LOW POP SUICIDE         | The Death Of Excellence              |
| 11     | POND                    | The Practice Of Joy Before Death     |
| 12     | PORTISHEAD              | Dummy                                |
| 13     | ASS PONYS               | Electric Rock Music                  |
| 14     | LOIS                    | Bet The Sky                          |
| 15     | KITCHENS OF DISTINCTION | Cowboys And Aliens                   |
| 16     | FOSSIL                  | Fossil                               |
| 17     | POSTER CHILDREN         | Junior Citizen                       |
| 18     | JAYHAWKS                | Tomorrow The Green Grass             |
| 19     | SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES | The Rapture                          |
| 20     | MARY LOU LORD           | Mary Lou Lord (EP)                   |
| 21     | THE THE                 | Hanky Panky                          |
| 22     | DINK                    | Dink                                 |
| 23     | TEAM DRESCH             | Personal Best                        |
| 24     | IVY                     | Realistic                            |
| 25     | LOVE BATTERY            | Straight Freak Ticket                |
| 26     | ROYAL TRUX              | Thank You                            |
| 27     | WAX                     | 13 Unlucky Numbers                   |
| 28     | CERTAIN DISTANT SUNS    | Happy On The Inside                  |
| 29     | MASSIVE ATTACK          | Protection                           |
| 30     | CUB                     | Come Out Come Out                    |
| 31     | BETTER THAN EZRA        | Deluxe                               |
| 32     | VERUCA SALT             | American Thighs                      |
| 33     | CAKE                    | Motorcade Of Generosity              |
| 34     | SEBADOH                 | Bakesale/Rebound (EP)                |
| 35     | BIM SKALA BIM           | Eyes & Ears                          |
| 36     | PEARL JAM               | Vitalogy                             |
| 37     | SIMPLE MINDS            | Good News From The Next World        |
| 38     | BRAINIAC                | Bonsai Superstar                     |
| 39     | TRENCHMOUTH             | Trenchmouth Vs. The Light Of The Sun |
| 40     | 18TH DYE                | Done                                 |
| 41     | HAZEL                   | Are You Going To Eat That            |
| 42     | SOUNDTRACK              | Jerky Boys                           |
| 43     | DAVE MATTHEWS BAND      | Under The Table And Dreaming         |
| 44     | LIZ PHAIR               | Whip-Smart                           |
| 45     | HHEAD                   | Jerk                                 |
| 46     | R.E.M.                  | Monster                              |
| 47     | SOUNDTRACK              | Higher Learning                      |
| 48     | MECCA NORMAL            | Sitting On Snaps                     |
| 49     | SOUL COUGHING           | Ruby Vroom                           |
| 50     | ZUMPANO                 | Look What The Rookie Did             |
| 51     | LIVE                    | Throwing Copper                      |
| 52     | MILK CULT               | Burn Or Bury                         |
| 53     | TIMBUK 3                | A Hundred Lovers                     |
| 54     | LITTLE AXE              | The Wolf That House Built            |
| 55     | SONS OF ELVIS           | Glodean                              |
| 56     | CRANES                  | Loved                                |
| 57     | NIRVANA                 | MTV Unplugged In New York            |
| 58     | ALEX CHILTON            | A Man Called Destruction             |
| 59     | HUGGY BEAR              | Weaponry Listens To Love             |
| 60     | CATHERINE               | Sorry                                |
| 61     | FREE KITTEN             | "Nice Ass"                           |
| 62     | POLARA                  | Polara                               |
| 63     | CRANBERRIES             | No Need To Argue                     |
| 64     | MIKE WATT               | Ball-Hog Or Tugboat?                 |
| 65     | NEW BOMB TURKS          | Information Highway Revisited        |
| 66     | OASIS                   | Definitely Maybe                     |
| 67     | PRESCOTT CURLYWOLF      | Dang                                 |
| 68     | EVERCLEAR               | World Of Noise                       |
| 69     | WALLY PLEASANT          | Houses Of The Holy Moly              |
| 70     | H.P. ZINKER             | Mountains Of Madness                 |
| 71     | CHIEFTAINS              | The Long Black Veil                  |
| 72     | VARIOUS ARTISTS         | This Is Fort Apache                  |
| 73     | KMFDM VS. PIG           | Sin Sex & Salvation (EP)             |
| 74     | ECHOBELLY               | Everyone's Got One                   |
| 75     | DICKIES                 | Idjit Savant                         |

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.



**CRANBERRIES**

- May**
- 2 Rochester, NY
  - 3 Syracuse, NY
  - 8 Bethlehem, PA
  - 10 Springfield, MA
  - 11 Burlington, VT
  - 13 Boston, MA
  - 14 Providence, RI



**SONIC YOUTH/R.E.M.**

- May**
- 5 Phoenix, AZ
  - 6 Las Vegas, NV
  - 7 San Diego, CA
  - 9-10 Inglewood, CA
  - 12-13 Anaheim, CA
  - 14 Devore, CA
  - 16-17 Mountain View, CA
  - 19 Portland, OR
  - 21 George, WA
  - 24 Salt Lake City, UT
  - 25-26 Englewood, CO
  - 27-28 Bonner Springs, KS
  - 30 Minneapolis, MN

These bands should be on the road late April-May (tour dates were not available at press time):

- Spiritualized
- Adam Ant
- Luscious Jackson
- Roots
- Beastie Boys
- Black Crowes
- Chieftains
- Chokebore
- Cows
- Day Of Reckoning
- Dick Dale
- Hole
- Killdozer
- Mudhoney

All dates are subject to change.



**NEW RELEASES APRIL - MAY 1995**

**APRIL 18**

- GEORGE JONES** George Jones Sings The Hits Of His Country Cousins (Razor & Tie)
- GEORGE JONES** Homecoming In Heaven (Razor & Tie)
- HOME IX** (Relativity)
- FLOP** World Of Today (Frontier)
- NAPALM DEATH** From Enslavement (Earache)
- MOTOR HOMES** "Sweet Valentine" (7") (Dirt)
- PEE** Counting Down The Train (March)
- HOLIDAY** Essential Holiday (March)
- STONE LOVE** Live (November)
- LAB REPORT** Terminal (Invisible)
- DENISON/KIMBALL TRIO** Soul Machine (Skin Graft)

**APRIL 25**

- THURSTON MOORE** Feminist Religious (DGC)
- DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM** Industrial Breakdown EP (K)
- ROMANIA** (TeenBeat)
- LOS MAURAUDERS** Every Song We Fuckin' Know (TeenBeat)
- POOH STICKS** Optimistic Fool (Seed)
- BEOWULF** 2 Cents (Restless)
- ALPHA BLONDY** Dieu (World Pacific)
- CHARLIE HAYDEN** Gitane (Dreyfus Jazz)

**APRIL 28**

- MORNING GLORIES** Fully Loaded (Headhunter-Cargo)

**MAY 9**

- MEKONS** Untitled (1/4 Stick)
- EAST RIVER PIPE** Poor Fricky (Merge)
- MAD SCENE** Sealight (Merge)
- KENDRA SMITH** Five Ways Of Disappearing (4AD)
- BATTERY ACID** My Wish (DGC)
- HAMI** The Funky Descendent (Capitol)
- MASTA ACE** Sittin' On Chrome (Capitol)
- MILKBONE** Da' Milkrate (Capitol)
- LOW** Long Division (Vernon Yard)
- THESE ANIMAL MEN** (Come On, Join) The High Society (Vernon Yard)
- BAD BRAINS** God Of Love (Warner Bros.)
- BOREDOMS** Chocolate Synthesizer (Warner Bros.)
- ELVIS COSTELLO** Kojac Variety (Warner Bros.)
- FILTER** Short Bus (Warner Bros.)
- CHRIS ISAAK** TBA (Giant-WB)
- LETTERS TO CLEO** TBA (Warner Bros.)
- MOONSHAKE** The Sound Your Eyes Can Follow (Too Pure-American)
- MORBID ANGEL** TBA (Warner Bros.)

**MAY 16**

- ESQUIVEL** Music From A Sparkling Planet (Bar/None)
- GANG OF FOUR** Solid Gold/Another Day, Another Dollar (reissue) (Infinite Zero-American)

**MAY 22**

- RACHELS** Handwriting (1/4 Stick)
- FREAKWATER** Feels Like The Third Time (reissue) (Thrill Jockey)
- THE SEA AND CAKE** The Sea And Cake (reissue) (Thrill Jockey)
- TORTOISE** Tortoise (reissue) (Thrill Jockey)

**MAY 23**

- THOMAS JEFFERSON SLAVE APARTMENTS** (Onion-American)
- BIVOUCAC** Bivouac (DGC)
- TEENAGE FANCLUB** Grand Prix (DGC)
- JASPER AND THE PRODIGAL SUNS** Everything Is Everything (DGC)
- ASSERTED PHLAVORS** On The Down Low (Warner Bros.)
- ESQUIVEL** More Of Other Worlds, Other Sounds (reissue) (Warner Bros.)
- LORDZ OF BROOKLYN** All In The Family (Warner Bros.)

**MAY 26**

- UNCLE JOE'S BIG OL' DRIVER** Chick Rock (Headhunter-Cargo)

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

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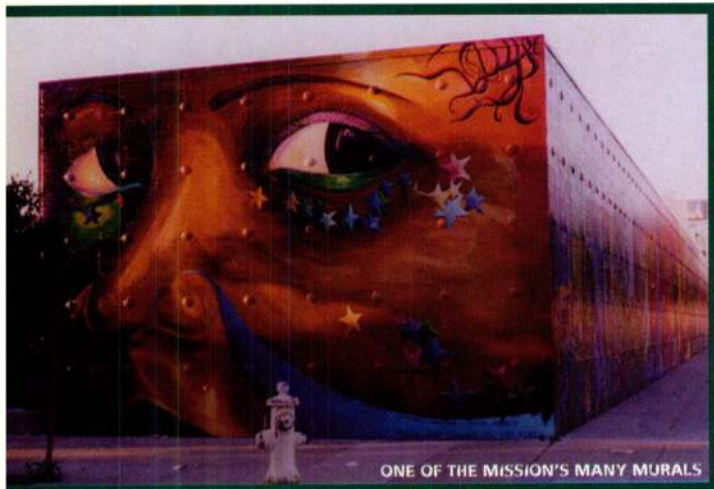
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# Localzine

By Rachel Szego

## SAN FRANCISCO'S PUNK MISSION

"Nobody's actually from San Francisco!" quips a character in Armistead Maupin's *Tales Of The City*. Two decades haven't changed this aspect of the city. Throughout the year, but especially in the summer, San Francisco experiences an influx of travelers from around the world. Residents either have to learn when to run the other way or develop a standard repertoire of information to impart to short- and long-term visitors. Here's mine.



ONE OF THE MISSION'S MANY MURALS

"Punk," of course, is everywhere these days, and San Francisco, as one of the punk rock meccas (though its scene is distinctly different from that of the East Bay, home of Green Day and Rancid), is being preyed upon for its wares. The Bay Area boasts a history of punk organizations, including labels, distributors, zines and bands. There's been an emphasis here on developing and establishing a self-sufficient, do-it-yourself community, in many cases as volunteer-run, not-for-profit collectives. This history, coupled with adverse reactions to the recent Seattle craze, makes a lot of punks around here nervous and defensive of publicizing their territory. [So much so that some members of the community contacted for this piece wished to have their names and comments omitted—ed.]

## PLACES TO HANG

One of my friends says that "San Francisco is full of places to do nothing." Nothing to do, that is. You can sit on the beach and watch the waves, or you can go to a museum and see everything. With so much going on in the Bay Area, it's very easy to become overwhelmed and burn out once you've been here for a while. San Francisco is well-equipped with cafes, record and book stores (some famous, like **City Lights**, a beatnik landmark with about the best selection of poetry you'll find anywhere), movie theaters, parks and people-watching spots to aid you in achieving no goal.

## TRANSPORTATION

The city's excellent public transportation includes a subway (the BART), electronic rail cars that go both above and underground (the MUNI), and regular buses. (Oh, yeah, and the cable cars for tourists). A lot of people ride bikes around, but make sure you invest in a lock. The city is small enough, however, that plenty of places can be seen by just walking around.

## THE HAIGHT

The Haight is divided into the Upper Haight, the more commercial area near Golden Gate Park, and the Lower Haight, which is a bit rougher. The Haight includes people who think it's 1969, ultra-hip fashion victims, skate kids and MTV punks. Instant cool: Piercings, tattoos, hair-dye, clothes and music can be bought there. There are several music stores of interest, and at the tip of Haight Street is the **Red Vic** movie theater.

## SHOWS

Of course, the first thing you'll want to know is what bands are playing and where. One of the raddest things in the Bay Area is *The List*, a comprehensive guide to upcoming live, radio and television shows and their locations. It's printed and made available weekly throughout the Bay Area. You can get it by sending a long SASE to: *The List*, P.O. Box 2451, Richmond, CA 94802 or via email to: [the-list-request@violet.berkeley.edu](mailto:the-list-request@violet.berkeley.edu).

A few places in particular are worth looking at. **Kommotion** holds a lot of interesting benefits, covering a wide range of music and often incorporating other forms of entertainment such as spoken word, art displays, and the like. **The Purple Onion** has lots of garage and surf music; it's way '60s retro. And **Bottom Of The Hill** hosts a lot of good bands, including the SF Noise-Pop Festival. Its crowds are generally very hip.



RED VIC MOVIE HOUSE: GOOD MOVIES, A CHOICE OF NON-MOVIE-THEATER SEATING (INCLUDING LOVE SEATS!), AND NUTRITIONAL YEAST FOR YOUR POPCORN

# THE MISSION

The Mission is a predominantly Latino neighborhood slowly being taken over by white hipsters. It hasn't reached the status of the Haight, but is increasingly becoming an after-hours and weekend hangout. Blocked from the ocean by Twin Peaks (i.e. Big Hills), the Mission is purported by its residents to have the nicest weather in the city—more sun, less wind. The murals painted on many Mission buildings also attract people. There are walking tours available, but I suggest a D.I.Y. approach, stopping at the **Women's Building** (on 18th Street, between Valencia and Guerrero), a church on lower 24th Street, the wall surrounding a playground at 19th and Harrison, and the community garden at 20th and Capp. In wandering around these areas, you should notice a lot of other interesting things (hopefully including some of the "Aztlán" graffiti that has sprung up in opposition to Proposition 187).

There are also many record and book stores, cafes and restaurants throughout the Mission. A few to check out:

**Old Wives' Tales** bookstore (on Valencia near 21st Street), run collectively by women and selling only women's books.

**The Bearded Lady Cafe** (on 14th Street between Valencia and Guerrero): a lesbian-run and -owned cafe with a small courtyard in the back.

**New Dawn** (on 16th Street between Valencia and Guerrero), the hippest weekend dining spot in the Mission. Very cheap; music ranging from Air Supply to Black Sabbath; lots of stuff to look at. Two rules: 1) *Always* tip significantly, and 2) for veggie homefries get a half order to share between at least two very hungry people (only \$4!)—seriously.

**Maya Restaurant** (16th and Guerrero). Yummy, large, cheap burritos—vegan ones available too!

**El Castillito** restaurant (17th and Mission). Same as above, but with half an avocado included, and guacamole with your complimentary chips

And don't forget the **Roxie** movie theater (on 16th Street between Valencia and Guerrero).



AQUARIUS RECORDS—A CUTE HOUSE IN NOE VALLEY

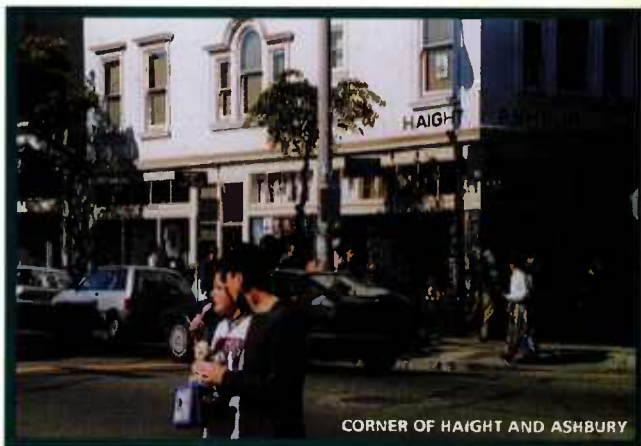


## OTHER GOOD PLACES

**Lucky Creation** and **Kow Loon** restaurants in Chinatown offer yummy and cheap veggie treats (you *have* to try one of Kow Loon's sesame balls). Also check out **Green Apple Books**, **Aquarius Records** in Noe Valley and **Neurotic Records** in SOMA.

## RULES TO KEEP IN MIND

- 1) Never eat a burrito outside the Mission. You won't find one tastier or cheaper.
- 2) If you're buying used clothes, consider the fact that it's probably costing you as much as you would pay for new ones.
- 3) Wear layers! It gets cold at night even in the summer. (This isn't Southern California!)



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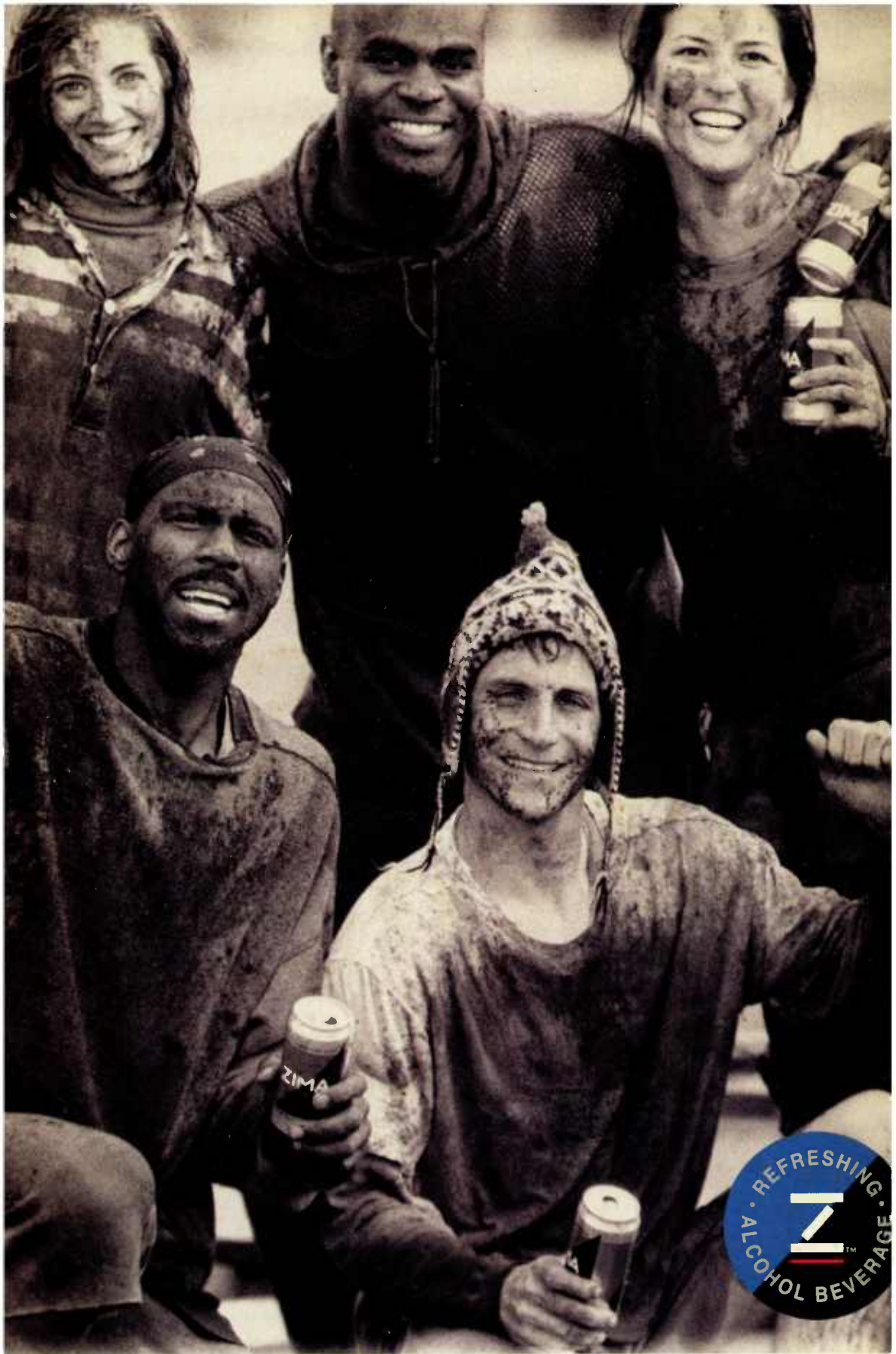
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