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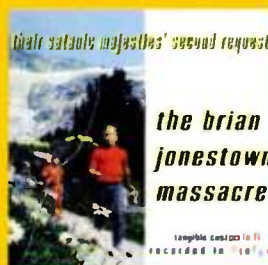
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"Macha"



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"Their Satanic Majesties' Second Request"



The Minders
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FACE OFF

WHICH **SEE/HEAR/NOW: NEW FACES** CONTENDER IS ON YOUR COVER?

In this corner: Hailing from blue-collar Seattle, it's that Insurgent Country Ingenue, Neko Case! And in the other corner, those Glaswegian Grapplers, the new champions of the UK, Travis! Let's get ready to rock 'n' rummmmm-bllllllle!... But, before you unstrap your cummerbund or pile-drive into the CD, keep in mind that our approach to settling the score was more Tao than title fight. We split this month's issues in half and cast two covers to the four winds. (You know, like the I Ching, where you meditate on a question and see what a random toss of the coin tells you?) Red sweater or soap bubbles? All will be answered soon, Grasshopper. But it's time to move on to the rest of the magazine. Neko's toes are starting to prune up.

SEE/HEAR/NOW 24

Our selection of New Faces for the next century (or at least the next few months) features MC Paul Barman droppin' arts & sciences; Taproot, the stone in Fred Durst's shoe; old school/new school hip-hop posse Jurassic 5; and the French puppet regime of Mr. Oizo. Plus Broadcast, Boy Sets Fire, Anti-Pop Consortium, Essex Green, Joseph Arthur and 1.8.7.

ON THE CD 87

Vacuum-sealed for extra freshness: The Cure, Travis, William Orbit, Mr. Oizo, Seely, Day One, Joseph Arthur, Josh Rouse, Bad Livers, Cypress Hill, Full Devil Jacket, Arid, DJ Krush, Evelyn Glennie, Knodel, DJ Food, Essex Green, Lockgroove and Marvin Pontiac.

ON COVER 1: NEKO CASE photographed by Victoria Renard. Hair and make-up by Nico-Lynn Jeffries.

ON COVER 2: TRAVIS photographed by Karen Miller

HERE: MOTOBERRY photographed by Dennis Kleiman.

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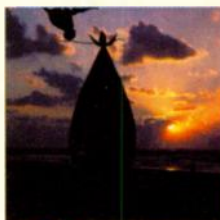
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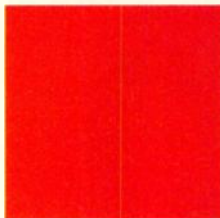
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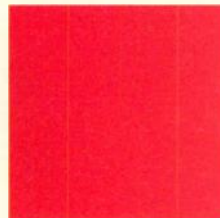
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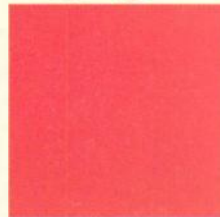
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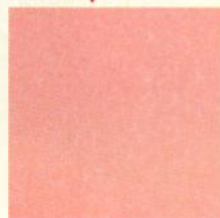
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Yo La Tengo
And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out DBL LP • CD



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Mountains LP • CD



Console
Rocket In The Pocket LP • CD



Quickspace
The Death of Quickspace LP • CD



THERE GOES THE PULITZER

Cheap Trick's Bun E. Carlos is requesting a retraction or correction printed in the *CMJ New Music Monthly* ASAP. [In the December installment of Localzine—about Rockford, Illinois—Mr. Carlos attests to the fine quality of Lino's pizza.] Here is his new quote: "Even though I love the pizza, I haven't been to Lino's in 25 years. I get all my pizzas at Capri on East State Street."

Carla Dragotti, Cheap Trick Int'l.
Brooklyn, NY

Good thing we didn't say "Better Ingredients, Better Pizza" or Pizza Hut would have our ass. —ed.

MEET THE GLADSTONES

First off, I'd like to say, I love you guys. No one can come close in comparison to the music you put out each month! Now I was wondering, why is there not a lot of Canadian content in your mag? Is it because there is no talent in Canada or because you are based in the US? I know every once in a while there are Canadian artists on the CD. But I know for a fact that there are way more up-and-coming bands that never even get the chance. I hope you can clear this up for me. I know us Canadians would be happy to have more home grown bands get the widespread audience that *CMJ New Music Monthly* could give them.

Jason Gladstone
Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Canada

Look, Jason, like I told you at the family reunion: There's a reason why Paul Schaeffer and Neil Young left the Great White North—the beer's great, the comedy's good, but *Pursuit Of Happiness* albums only cut it in the cut-out bin down here. In the February issue, I personally covered Montreal painting collective Heavyweight, but if you're going to keep bugging me about this, you can forget about the SCTV retrospective I was planning on. —Neil Gladstone, Managing Editor.

TORY ANIMUS

If you're looking for signs of passion and activism in rock today (January '00), you're looking in the wrong places. As a liberal living in a conservative region of the country, I can tell you that the energy is on the right-wing side of the musical landscape.

Christian rock has changed not only in popularity but tone over the last few years. Whereas once there was an accurate stereotype of

Christian rock being bland and painfully polite (à la Amy Grant), the sense of frustration conservatives feel has bred a harsher and more aggressive style. Songs depicting revenge fantasies against the "Secular Establishment" and delighting in their upcoming damnation are fairly common now. Even though its values are the polar opposite of the early punk movement, the mood is not dissimilar.

Robert Pollard is right in that good times breed complacency, but in the eyes of fundamentalists, these are awful times, and they're getting worse. Rock music is becoming an increasingly popular avenue for Christians to vent, and it's very common now for churches to have their own electric rock band. I realize that Mr. Azerrad touched on Christian rock very briefly in his article and you did talk to [Living Sacrifice's] Bruce Fitzhugh, but the overall assumption the article seemed to take was that liberalism was the only kind of activism that rock musicians would be inclined to embrace (the list of activist organizations, for example, included only left-wing causes.)

Don't underestimate the capacity for conservative rock to become embraced by the general public. Here at Penn State, DC Talk and Michael W. Smith are just as popular as Korn or Kid Rock. At the same time, churches have become much more hard-line than they used to be—and the attendance of church groups by college kids is way up. Christian rock has almost all the ingredients that you're looking for: music that says something, music whose message is uncontaminated by commercialism, and an audience that is very frustrated with the state of the world. The only thing it lacks is

a trailblazer to break through, but that may be only a matter of time.

It may not be the kind of activism that I or most of the readers of this magazine agree with, but if you want to know where things are happening, it's on the right.

Marie Manuelito [marie_manuelito@hotmail.com]
State College, PA

Old ladies still cross themselves when we walk down the street, but we did cover some bands whose mosh pits Alan Keyes might join in our *The Scene Is Now* story on Christian Metalcore in the February '00 issue. And I believe we mentioned the Rev. Lovejoy in our review of the Simpsons record. —ed.

THIN WHITE MOOK

As an avid reader of *CMJ New Music Monthly*, I would like to make one suggestion: Until the magazine, which is supposed to focus on music, changes its name to *Scott Frampton's Living*, we could really do without seeing his picture in every other issue.

Patricia Callahan
New York, NY

A teaser from the next issue of SFL (as we're calling it around the office): "For that rock 'n' roll weatherman look, try mixing equal amounts pomade and gel and work through damp hair. It's a good thing." Until I can fulfill my dream of running stories such as "How to use promo CDs, jiffy-paks and mail bins to give your office that shabby-chic look," and "Dress like Dieter's accountant," I'll happily fulfill Patricia's request. Here's an excerpt from the debut issue of *CMJ Reader's Lifestyle*, a picture of longtime subscriber Dave Moon. —ed.

Correction: Mary Lou Lord was photographed by Steve Mirachi in our March issue.



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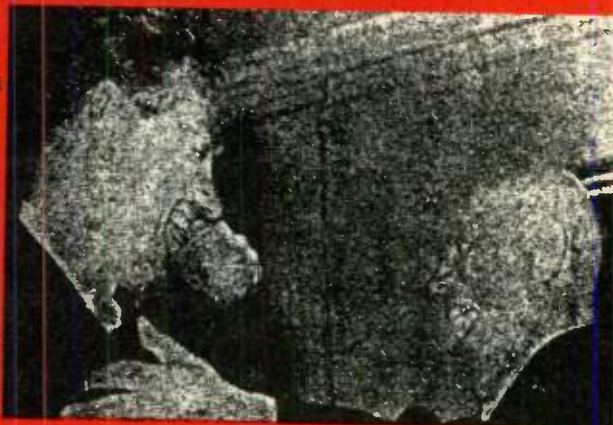
Nostradamus saw it coming 500 years ago. A nation of good-for-nothings, attached to their "computers" like infants by umbilical cords. Doomsday is coming --in stereo!!!!



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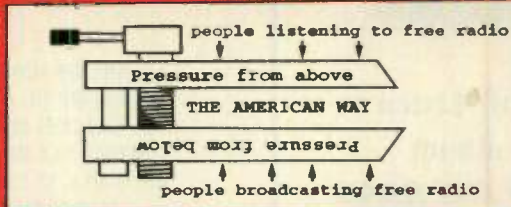
The Sonic Summit of '63

Unnamed sources provided this photo documenting the exchange of "non-terrestrial" technology that surfaced three decades later as Live365.com's purported "streaming audio"



Distortion 2

"Broadcasting my own free radio allows me to express who I really am." Last time we looked at an American dictionary, there was no "I" in team. You should listen to licensed DJ's and regulated broadcasts just like everyone else. And if that means hearing one boy band too many, it's a small price to pay to keep our country great!



Distortixon3

"Live365.com is a place where I can meet like-minded individuals and make new friends." Chatting with other co-dependent enablers [and trained Live365.com operatives] just ensures your own audio addiction. We must rise as one against this pernicious evil. If you won't do it for yourself, at least do it for the children!-



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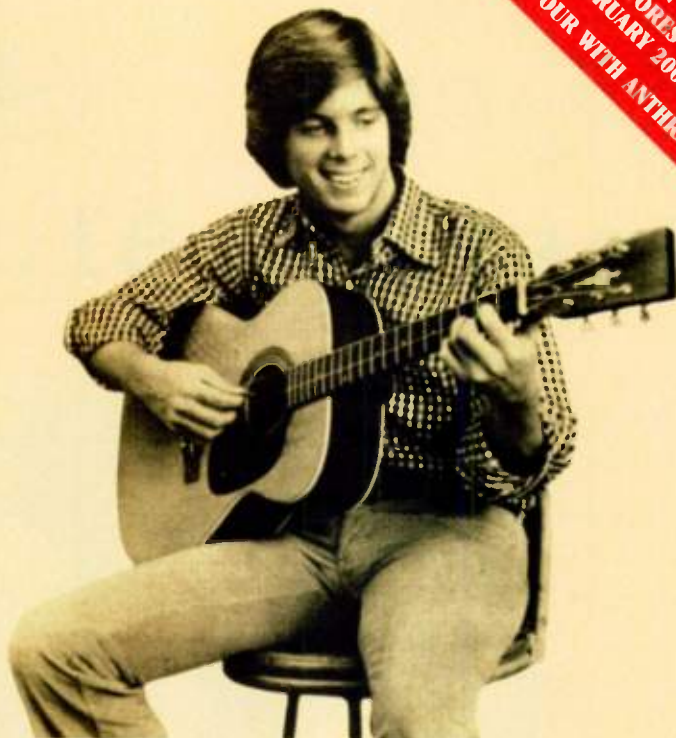
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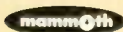
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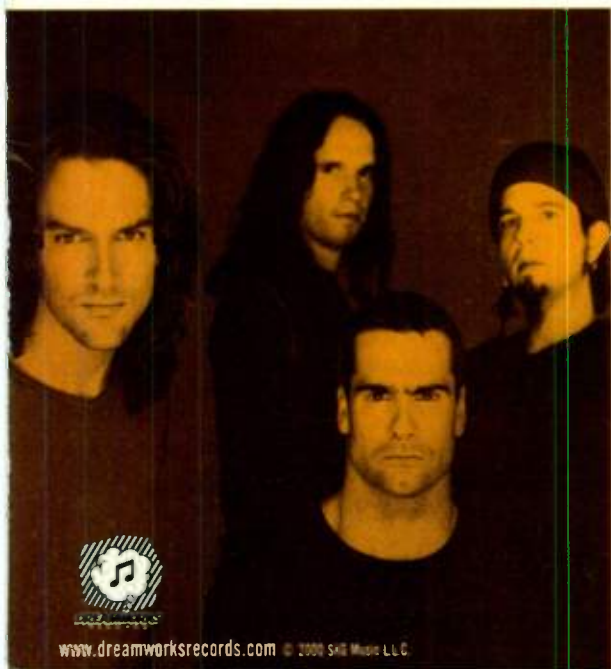


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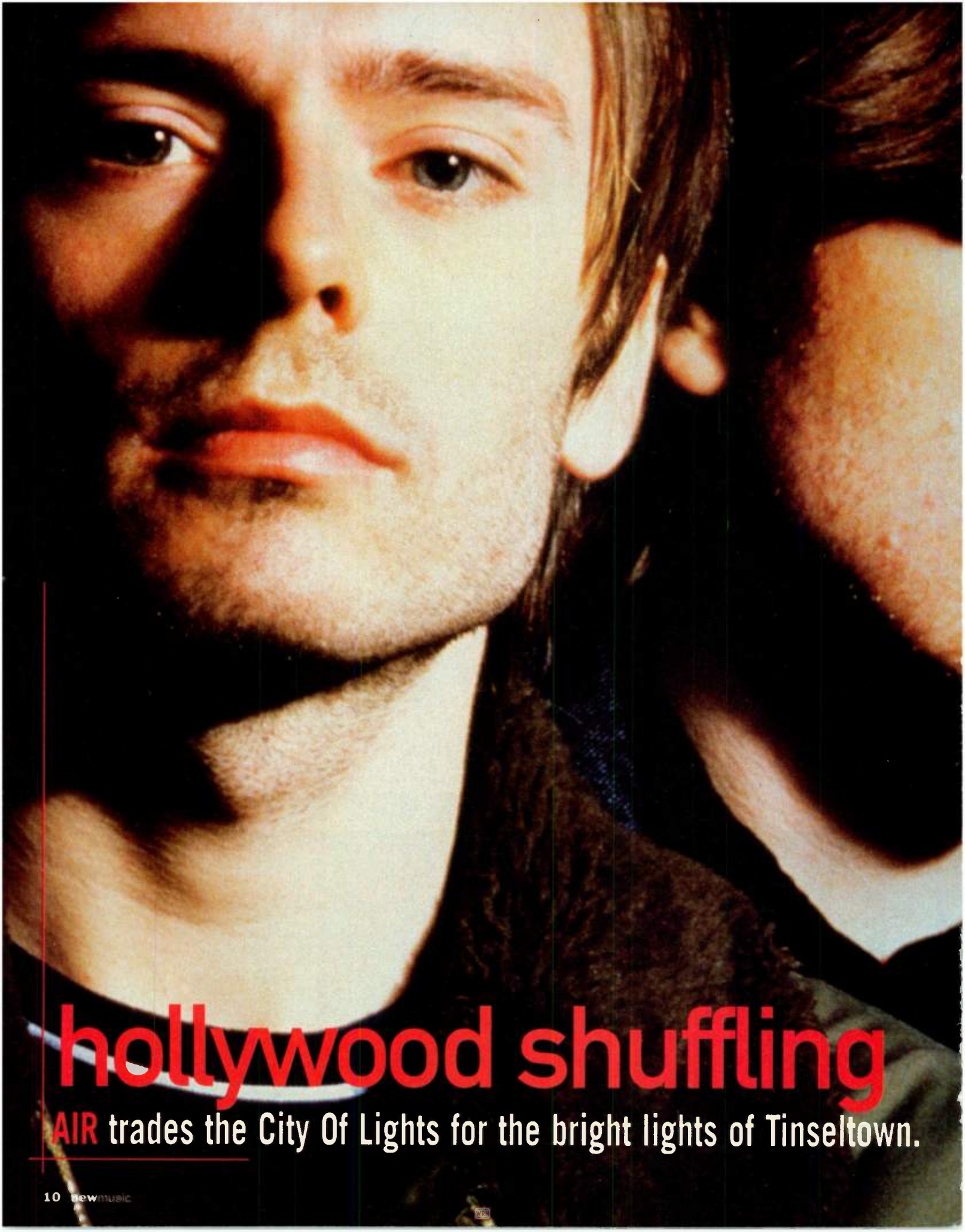


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hollywood shuffling

AIR trades the City Of Lights for the bright lights of Tinseltown.



QuickFix

To further establish cachet, Air released *Premiers Symptomes*, a collection of early singles, then signed on to score the film for a fervent fan, the daughter of Francis Ford Coppola. Introduced to the budding director through ex-Redd Kross drummer Brian Reitzel (who also served as Air's touring drummer), the duo signed on immediately after reading the script. The film, adapted from Jeffrey Eugenides's novel, stars Kirsten Dunst, James Woods and Kathleen Turner.

Air's Dunckel and Godin have had a longstanding cultural and personal interest in film. "Cinema is very important in France," notes Dunckel. "We have a very huge tradition about watching movies, and French film is very rich. But we are fans of American cinema too."

It doesn't hurt if that American cinema is a story about young women. "We liked the story because it was taking place in America with these American girls," he says of *The Virgin Suicides*. "For us, the style of the movie was very elegant but in an American way, and we love that. We love the American landscape. We are big fans of the American trip, you know?"

For *The Virgin Suicides* soundtrack, Air unplugged the Moogs, and using organ, drums, guitar and bass, created a score to fill the film's spooky and tense moments. The soothing and sinister sways recall the sound of Pink Floyd's early-'70s albums, like *Meddle* and *Obscured By Clouds*. The similarity is no coincidence, says Dunckel.

"For us, Pink Floyd is a big influence because we like their artistic approach, we like their spacey sound," he attests, adding that he and Godin admire the band's cult status, something they hope to achieve themselves with Air. "We don't care about making a single and having it played on the radio. We want to do some concept albums and make style-y albums—with a soul."

Dunckel will only speak in vague terms of the nearly finished follow-up to *Moon Safari*, which he and Godin recorded with American friends like Moog Cookbook's Brian Kehew, Screaming Trees' Barrett Martin, and Reitzel. He'll only volunteer a few hints: "It's more mod, more extreme. There are many more lyrics, and some messages. We have big English slogans. We want them to stick in people's minds, to shock them in a way."

It's a solid strategy for Air, whose nonconformity to current musical styles has fueled the band's growing cult popularity. The transition from the sly funk of *Moon Safari* to the throbbing progressive rock of Air's live show and the lulling psychedelia of *The Virgin Suicides* reveals a malleable sensibility, and Dunckel says they hope the more grandiose stance of the forthcoming disc will win new converts—within limits.

"On the one hand, we were very pretentious when we did *Moon Safari*," he says, laughing triumphantly. "We knew it was quite new, and we had a chance to become a huge band. But on the other hand we were conscious that the music market is very hard, and that maybe we will have no success. And so these two different points of view pushed us to be crazy. Now, around the world, we are on the good side of success. We're an underground band, but a big underground band, and that's what we want: To stay little but become big."

NMM

==
"We are big fans of the American trip, you know?"

story: RICHARD MARTIN

The English and American media greeted Air's stylish 1998 debut, *Moon Safari*, as if it'd single-handedly cured France's longstanding inability to produce a commercially viable pop album. Lost amid this grand embrace was a strange fact: Versailles-born Paris residents J.B. Dunckel and Nicolas Godin were hardly the toast of the town at home. Even today, with the highly respectable job of scoring an American movie—Sofia Coppola's directorial debut *The Virgin Suicides*—Air can't get its cinophile countrymen to join their party.

"We would have been more successful if we were English or American," Dunckel says, laughing at this variation on the French paradox. "Our image is bad in France, and that's our fault. We did too many interviews at first. People don't like when suddenly a band is at the top of its success."

Not many music fans outside France could find fault with Air's innovative output, a synthesized blend of lounge-pop and prog rock flourishes that seesaws between retro-chic and sleek futurism. *Moon Safari* nearly saturated American culture, with Levi's sponsoring Air's maiden US tour, Beck remixing the single "Sexy Boy," and coffee shops and fashion boutiques using the disc to increase their hipster quotient.

IN MY ROOM



DJ WALLY

If you like chilled-out beats, you probably know 27-year-old Long Island, New York native **Keef Deste-fano** as DJ Wally, who last year released *Stoned Ranger Rydes Again* (Jungle Sky) (Best New Music, June '99). Drum 'n' bass fans will recognize Deste-fano's other pseudonym, Pish Posh, under which he released last year's LP, *Up Jumps The Boogie*, on the Rawkus imprint Raw Kuts

(which Deste-fano now manages). His next Pish Posh album, *Indoor Storm* should be out this spring. Here, Deste-fano explains what's in his bedroom studio, in addition to his samplers, keyboards and PC.

Eddie Ortega paintings He's a friend of mine. Everytime I come out with a new album, he paints the cover. They're four feet by four feet. Also, a big painting of Jack Nicholson. It's Nick's face, but he's looking through a magnifying glass, so half his face is all weirded out. It's a big-ass painting. When I bring my grandparents in, they just look at it and me kinda weird. I mean, everybody looks at me kinda weird, so...

Sam the ferret He's my pal. He's sable-colored like a Siamese cat. I've had him for five years. I smoke him out everyday. I see him picking crumbs up off the floor. He does this little hop dance when he's stoned. He'll dance around and he kinda chuckles.

Star Wars toys My collection is pretty immense. It's mostly new stuff, from '95 and on, all the figures. I'd play with them if I had the time. But my wife looks at me funny when I bring 'em out.

Studio 54 photographs Original black and white photos taken at Studio 54 in '77 or something. They're of Doctor Buzzard's Original Savannah Band, taken by Bobby Miller. Their first album is one of my favorite records. I met Bobby through a mutual friend, and he was like "I got three guys—you probably haven't heard of them," and I was like "Really?!" They played feel-good sort of jazz, disco. Cab Calloway-style disco

Judy Collins My Judy Collins LP, *Both Sides Now*. It's funny. Trippy-hippy shit. It's good writing and cool music. I like what it represents, overall. Feel good.



PETER SEARCY

Peter Searcy was 15 years old when Squirrel Bait, the Louisville, Kentucky thrash-pop band he fronted in the '80s, burst onto the indie rock scene. Squirrel Bait also birthed the career of David Grubbs, who went on to engineer *Bastro* and then *Gastr Del Sol*. The band also included the founding members of the still-influential *Slint*, *Brian McMahan* and *Britt*

Walford. After starting a few bands himself, including *Big Wheel* and *Starbilly*, Searcy settled on the solo approach: his recent *Could You Please And Thank You* (Time Bomb) features a softer touch than old Squirrel Bait recordings. "Hopefully my fans have grown with me over the years," says Searcy. Here, he describes the living room in his Louisville home, and reveals deep-seated sofa issues.

Antique couch It's very uncomfortable sitting. Not long enough to lie down on, but it's not a loveseat. I'm generally kind of annoyed with it. It's kinda dainty. But my fiancée, who owns the couch, likes it. And there are a lot of compromises that happen in a relationship, especially on the homefront.

Guitar I proudly display my guitar on a stand. The couch is where I do all my songwriting. We've got a bitter relationship, actually. Anyway, the guitar is a Martin D-35, a 1976, kinda beat-up, but in that charming way. I got it this past spring. It was one of my gifts to myself after signing with Time Bomb.

Television I watch a lot of *Iron Chef*, on the Food Network. It's where Japanese chefs compete against each other in a high tech kitchen arena. So it's the iron chef, the superstar chef employed by the show, versus another chef from a famous restaurant. They'll have a common ingredient to use in their food. I'm always excited when it's something like Carp, because I would never eat carp. They'll make carp ice cream, carp tea. It's great late-night beer drinking material.

The soundtrack to *Magnolia* Aimee Mann. She's a great songwriter. The movie was alright, but the soundtrack is amazing. Great production. And her ability to sum up a whole relationship in one sentence. I really like the one that everyone sings in the movie, "Wise Up."

Family artwork My fiancée's artwork is up. And both of our fathers are artists. We pride ourselves on the young-couple-collecting-original-artwork attempt. Her father is a painter, my father is a printmaker—woodcuts—and she does collage and assemblage. Her stuff is very delicate and feminine. It's like the couch. That couch—it's a love-hate thing.

BOOGIE SITES: PORN that will have you raving.

Scott Owens's occupational hazards aren't exactly the kind that can get you disability checks. "A girl I barely knew brought one of her friends to my house and had her disrobe in front of me," recalls Owens sheepishly. The naked woman then inquired if her body was "good enough."

"I was like, 'Here's my phone number. We'll talk about it later. You don't need to do this.'" Undeterred, the naked woman hung out in his living room for the next half hour. "She kept asking if her tits were alright, if her ass looked fine."

That's life lately for Owens, the 22-year-old, Madison, Wisconsin raver-cum-porn maven who started *Raverporn.net*. Looking for a way to sharpen his HTML and photography skills, he decided to mix beats 'n' boobies. For \$5 a month, *Raverporn.net* offers a joke "news" section, member profiles, as well as scads of images of young women donning cute barrettes, tattoos and body piercings—and very little else. "Everyone thinks I'm some big porn company getting models to look like ravers," says Owens. "But I'm not."

Owens, who photographs most of the women himself, started the site six months ago using donated server space and raver friends from the Midwest who were willing to work cheap.

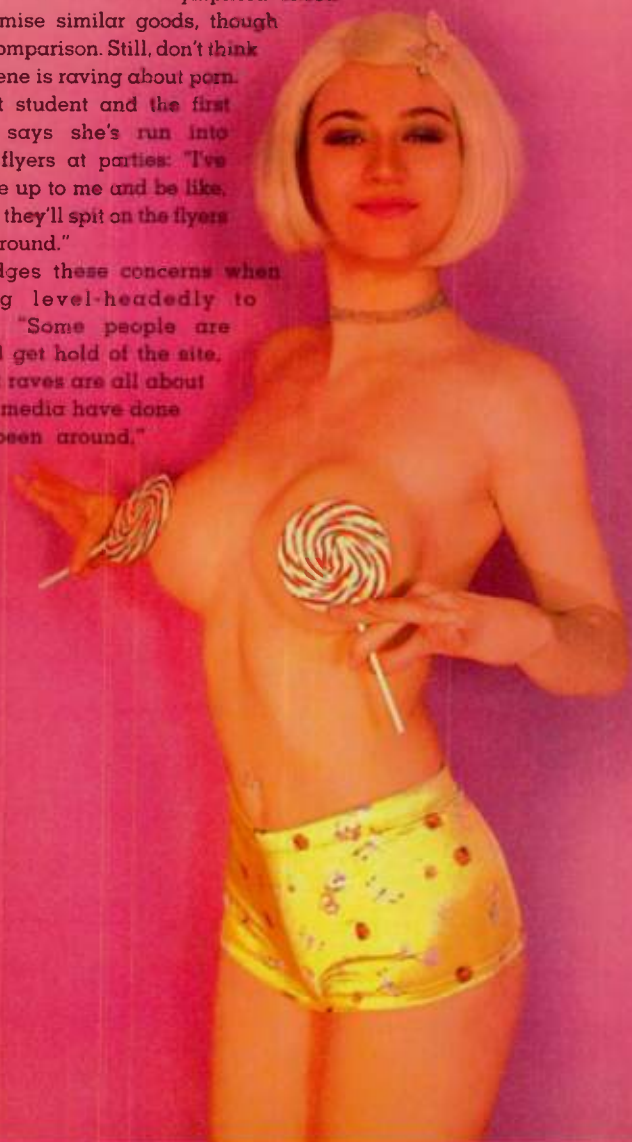
"Almost 90 percent of the people who fill out my [membership] survey have never signed up for a porn site before. It's drawing in a whole different part of society: people who aren't into porn, but want to check it out because it's part of their music culture."

The site reflects the rave scene's open-minded gender politics, not just in the posts on the message board, but also, to an extent, in its visual content. *Raverporn* features a male model—Owens plans to include more—and unlike most airbrushed illicit images, every ingrown hair is on display.

Raverporn.net isn't one-of-a-kind: *Nymphoraver.com* and *Cutevideo.com* promise similar goods, though both currently suffer in comparison. Still, don't think everyone in the party scene is raving about porn. Alexis, a Wisconsin art student and the first *Raverporn.net* model, says she's run into problems handing out flyers at parties: "I've had—mostly girls—come up to me and be like, 'What is this bullshit?' or they'll spit on the flyers and throw them on the ground."

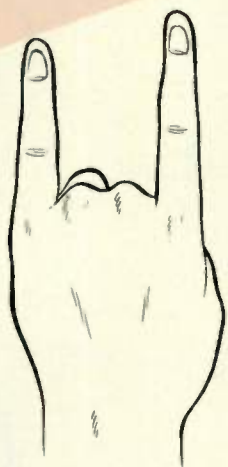
Owens acknowledges these concerns when he can, responding level-headedly to acrimonious e-mails. "Some people are worried the media will get hold of the site, and use it to claim that raves are all about sex and drugs. But the media have done that since rave has been around."

—Bill Ward

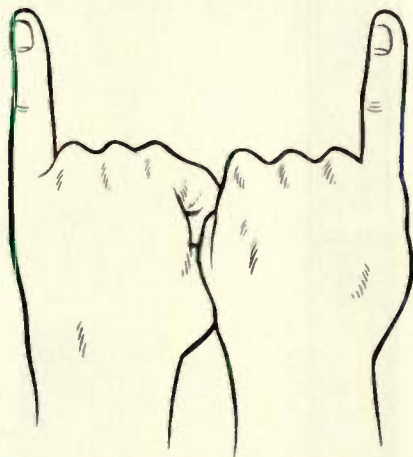


LISTEN TO THE HAND

When you're in a club with a booming sound system, miming a glass is the universal symbol for "I'm going to the bar, need a drink?" But nightlife sign language often extends beyond the need for liquid refreshment. In order to assist club-goers and rock fans in their efforts to gossip and chat—and more importantly, preclude some grad student's thesis on the subject from getting printed in the *Village Voice*—we offer the following guide for children of a lesser rock god.



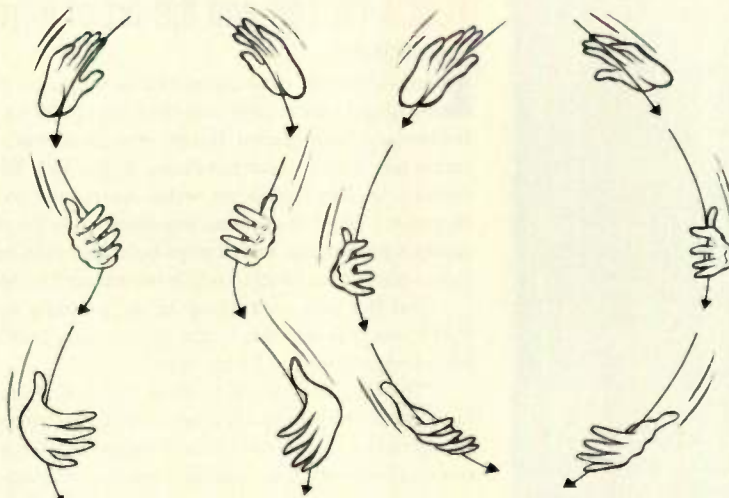
"Rock and effin' roll!"



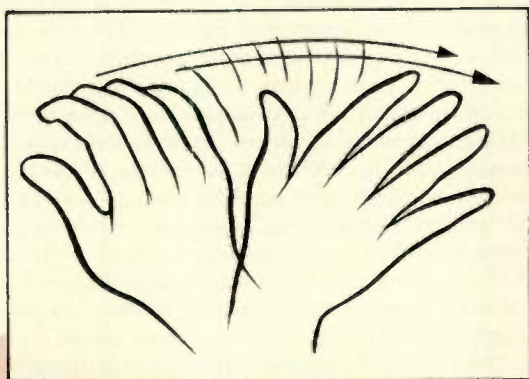
"Too much rock for one hand!"



"Check, please. I just got shot by a member of Puffy's posse."



"I watched VH1's *Behind The Music* on Heart last night."



"DJ."



"I find this band's use of irony to be facile and passe."

LABEL PROFILE:



"The contemporary ear is so used to cookie-cutter music that our releases sometimes put people off," says Richard Nevins, president/CEO of Shanachie Records' Yazoo division. "But for me, the beauty of this music is that it's wild, uninhibited and unschooled." No, the world music buffs at Shanachie haven't gone punk. Yazoo, named for the river in Mississippi, is a 30-year-old imprint (part of Shanachie since 1987) devoted to compiling collections of tracks from scratchy rural American records, mostly from the '20s and '30s. While the audience for these recordings is "a real insiders' crowd," says Nevins, the label had a break-out bestseller with *King Of The Delta Blues*, from proto-blues man Charlie Patton. The rest of the catalog spans square dances, children's songs, old-timey piano—even jug bands. Nevins, who owns many of the recordings the Yazoo discs are culled from, says that rather than diggin' in the crates, collectors in the '60s often canvassed door-to-door. "Just about every family home south of Pennsylvania had some of these records—all it took were the archaeologists digging up the bones." —Dylan Siegler

WEIRD RECORD:

The million man calypso dance? Don't laugh—at least not until you've heard *The Charmer Is Louis Farrakhan: Calypso Favorites 1953-1954* (Bostrox).



You've read correctly: Before Farrakhan became Minister Farrakhan, lightning rod for controversy and leader of the powerful Nation Of Islam, he was Louis Eugene Walcott, a talented and aspiring violinist with a keen interest in the music of the Caribbean.

Gene, as he was known, left college in 1953 to pursue a career as a calypso singer, and *The Charmer* displays his considerable talents. Hear the future leader ponder the transgendered on the booty-shaking "Is She Is, Or Is She Ain't." Listen to him purr and demur—sexily, I dare add—on "Don't Touch Me Nylon." Contemplate the prescience of the instrumental "Trinidad Road March," displaying the one-day minister's violin prowess. No doubt, Harry Belafonte recalls February, 1955 with great relief; Farrakhan found his calling with the Nation Of Islam and his career as a musician ended. —Bill Worde

BUDDHA IN THA HOUSE



TOSCA on Zen and the art of turntable maintenance.

story: ERIC DEMBY

In music circles, most people know the name Suzuki as the method by which toddlers are taught how to play classical violin. But for Tosca—the downtempo duo of Richard Dorfmeister and Rupert Huber who titled their new album *Suzuki* (G-Stone/K7)—the name has different connotations. In the late '60s, Shunryu Suzuki sparked worldwide interest in Zen Buddhism when he moved to San Francisco and wrote *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, a popular introduction to the creed's principles. As evidenced by the album's packaging, which pays homage to the book, Dorfmeister and Huber were doing their share of meditating while recording the release.

But the pair isn't about to get preachy in the chill-out room. "We're not really Buddhists and we don't take it that seriously," admits Dorfmeister, 31, "but we got somehow influenced by his vibe."

The duo does seem to have attained a sort of yin/yang balance on *Suzuki*, with Dorfmeister handling what he calls "the more groove side of things," while Huber adds the recorded voices and oddball samples he's constantly collecting. "He does not DJ, he's not on the dancefloor," Dorfmeister says of Huber. "He just has a more artful approach to things, which is good because it somehow completes the stuff I do."

When Dorfmeister and Huber were high school classmates in early-'80s Vienna they had a band together that mixed Turkish guitar, flute and live poetry.

"The concept was good, I think," Dorfmeister recalls with a laugh, "but the music was not so great." A decade later, the two reunited for a new musical project, Tosca, which is in a sense their original band's opposite: the concept—languid instrumental grooves—may not be revolutionary at this point, but the music is so technically tight and cinematically captivating, it's like aural animation. Whereas *Opera*, their 1996 debut, gained cult status as a sublime distillation of the burgeoning "trip-hop" style, *Suzuki* is guaranteed a higher profile due to Dorfmeister's international fame as half of the revered studio team Kruder & Dorfmeister, whose blunted beats, though similar to Tosca's, are less heavy and more spaced-out. (Work on the long-awaited K&D album hasn't begun yet, but both their schedules have finally been cleared for the project.)

With an electric soul charged by bossa nova rhythms and a tension wrought by cryptic vocal samples and brooding hypnotic textures, *Suzuki* is a beat-head milestone.

"I listen to other people's stuff and see the little details they do to get inspiration technique-wise," explains Dorfmeister, who's trained in classical flute, of his production style. "But from the music itself, I try to get no inspiration. I try to be somehow original, so it's like a desert in front of you, you're not imitating anyone."

A SAINTS HOLIDAY

Saint Etienne's **SARAH CRACKNELL** takes a solo spin.

story: STEVE GDULA photo: PAT GRAHAM

Even if you spent the early '90s decked out in flannel shirts and Doc Martens, chances are good that the groove-heavy confections of British dance-popsters Saint Etienne caught your ear at some point. The band's infectious mix of club beats and a '60s "Swinging London" melodic sensibility was made all the more memorable by Sarah Cracknell's luscious vocal floating through each tune.

Although the band has never gained much more than cult status Stateside, Cracknell has long been a pop star in the UK, where her dewy intonation has been credited with ushering in a British trend of smooth-as-silk, female-fronted acts like Dubstar and Dot Allison's One Dove. The glamorous blonde Cracknell's sense of style also inspired multitudes of feather boas around the necks of her runway-ready fans.

"It's funny," she says of her sophisticated, put-together image. "I don't think of myself that way. I think the way I dress is more shamble-lic and eclectic and thrown-together. It just works."

She's entering new territory with the US release of her solo debut, *Lipslide*. The songs are "quite personal," she explains. "They weren't really appropriate for a Saint Etienne album." Of the album's themes—new, old, unrequited, and dying love—she opts not to get specific or name names. Protecting the innocent, she says.

Originally released in Britain in 1997, Cracknell says the material still feels shiny and new. "I want people to know that this album is more 'the director's cut,'" she says of the US version. "I've changed the album. I've discarded a couple of tracks and I've added some, [and] two tracks are different mixes than the British mixes, so I've reshuffled it to bring it more up to date."

In addition to the new life she breathed into the songs, Cracknell has another reason to be excited about the record's re-release on Instinct Records.

"It didn't get much of an airing [originally] because I had a slight falling out with the record company I was signed to [in London]. They basically sat on the album," she says in exasperation. "They did no promotion, they did nothing. It just dribbled out. I'm really, really pleased [about the re-release] because it seemed such a waste."

For her solo project, Cracknell collaborated with Saint Etienne pal Ian Catt, plus some top talent producers like Stephen Hague (Pet Shop Boys, New Order) and Stephen Lironi (Black Grape). Songs like the house-y "Desert Baby" have the breezy, dance-pop stylings of her Sainthood work, but others, like the lilting acoustic "Oh Boy, The Feeling When You Held My Hand," are distinctly Cracknell's own.

With a new Saint Etienne release set for spring and a tour of the States following on the heels of *Lipslide*, Cracknell's excited about getting more US exposure. Being top of the pops in the UK doesn't guarantee success this side of the Atlantic, however, and when discussing Robbie Williams, Pulp, and other British acts who've tried to break into the US charts, Cracknell suddenly inquires about Williams's American tour: "Did he show his arse?... He normally does that!" She adds up a laughing critique: "It's quite horrible really."





HOOKED ON SYMPHONICS

He's twiddled Madonna's knobs. Now **WILLIAM ORBIT**'s tweaking something even older: classical music.

story: KURT B. REIGHLEY



Plumbing disasters inevitably lead one to question one's mechanical skills. But faced with an unexpected domestic mishap, producer/musician William Orbit begins to consider his place in an apocalyptic society, as well. "You'd need someone to fix drains, someone to make dinner, and someone to fight off marauders. At best, I could sit around the campfire singing songs, and hope for scraps of food." Sure, he won a Grammy award for co-producing Madonna's *Ray Of Light*, but trophies are impractical in unclogging pipes. Still, his magical ability behind the mixing board keeps him in demand with acts like Blur, and most of the troubles he's having these days aren't so hard on the hands.

"I'm having good problems right now, hit records and all that," says Orbit, who divides his time between London and Los Angeles.

Chief among his current problems is reconciling commitments to Madonna's follow-up with promoting his own *Pieces In A Modern Style* (Maverick), which has been battling with Travis for the UK's top chart slot. "A year ago I wouldn't even have imagined being in the Top 100," admits Orbit, "but now I've got my eye on that #1 spot. I have to ring up my friends and say, 'If you're going to buy any record this year, buy my record now!'"

Orbit's no stranger to the charts. Since the late '80s, he's been linked to superstars like Sting, Prince, and The Cure as a remixer, while several of his own tunes—like 1994's "Water From A Vine Leaf" (featuring a then-unknown Beth Orton), and Bassomatic's rave classic

"Fascinating Rhythm"—have become club hits. What's surprising about the success of *Pieces* isn't the artist, but the content: 11 chilled-out electronic arrangements of classical works, some by composers born in the 1600s (Vivaldi, Handel), and others by 20th century masters like John Cage. He's even transformed Samuel Barber's *Adagio For Strings* into an unlikely trance anthem, thanks to Ferry Corsten's epic remix (amended to the US album).

Selecting the program posed exciting challenges for the producer, whose knowledge of classical repertoire was limited when he started five years ago. "Sometimes classical pieces get hammered on advertisements and in stores, and become overexposed," he observes. "I wanted to avoid the 'Oh dear, not that again' ones. But I didn't want to make a knitted-brow, hard-to-listen-to record, either. Barber is sailing close to one edge [of that spectrum], and Cage is sailing close to the other."

Despite any seemingly highbrow aspirations, *Pieces In A Modern Style* recalls Orbit's modest *Strange Cargo* instrumental series (I.R.S.) more than *Switched-On Bach* or any of Orbit's own recent production gigs. "Making a pop record is quite technical, while this is relatively low-tech. It's more like a guy working with a box of watercolors, a sheet of paper and a jar of water." He plugged basic melodies into the computer, then let his ear dictate the shape of the arrangements. So no matter how well the disc fares in America, don't expect to see Orbit performing *Pieces* in Carnegie Hall any time soon.

"Could I go into a concert hall, sit at a piano and knock 'em out? Absolutely no way!"

BETTER MUSIC THROUGH SYNTHESIS

Failure's Ken Andrews drops his wall of guitars and turns **ON**.

story: TIM SCANLIN photo: JOE QUINTO

Ken Andrews likes Depeche Mode. A lot. That's no big surprise until you realize that the singer and guitarist was a driving force of the now-defunct alt-rock underdogs Failure, a band known more for ingenious guitar rock than keyboard-driven electro-pop. Yet that's exactly what's on offer with *Shifting Skin* (Epic), the debut from Andrews's new project, On. Recorded almost entirely by Andrews in Los Angeles over the past year and a half, Failure's wall of guitars has been usurped by a completely new edifice constructed of synthesizers and programmed drums.

In the wake of Failure's September '97 demise, Andrews retreated to his gear-filled apartment with only one intention: to write songs. "It'd been so long since we'd finished [the final Failure album]," he remembers. "I just felt compelled to write some music." That music—which reflected considerably more electronic influence than Failure ever did—eventually came to the attention of Epic Records, who signed Andrews in early 1998. The infusion of major label cash meant a change of venue for Andrews, who moved into a house with his collection of synthesizers and samplers: a Digidesign SampleCell, an Access Virus,

an Emulator E4 Sampler, and a Roland JV-2080.

Eschewing the typical musician's fixation with vintage keyboards, Andrews instead morphed his synth's sampled and stock sounds with an array of vintage effects such as the Mutron Phaser and Echoplex. He credits the discovery of this world of new sounds as a primary inspiration for *Shifting Skin*. "It was a cool way for me to have my songwriting pushed in a different direction," he says. "Discovering that my style of songwriting worked with [a synth] was pretty fun."

While the melodic identity he honed in Failure has emerged intact, the new instrumentation lifted Andrews into sunnier terrain, both lyrically and musically. Songs like "Slingshot" and "If I Get To Feel You" are uppity antidotes to Failure's dark explorations of addiction and psychosis. What's more, they're outright danceable.

Given his enthusiasm for electronic pop, it's no surprise that one of Andrews's heroes—Depeche Mode's Martin Gore—recently remixed On's Gary Numan-esque "Soluble Words."

"To me it's kind of like a complete fantasy," Andrews confides, still in awe. "When I heard it I was just like, 'Whoa, that's so cool.'"



LIVING LA VIDA NEGRA

The polyglot spirit of Mano Negra lives on in **SERGEANT GARCIA** and **P18**.



story: JOSH KUN photo: SEAN SCHROFF

By the time trailblazing Franco-Spanish punk politicos Mano Negra split in 1993, its members had already trashed an Argentine TV studio in the name of anarchy, toured Latin American port towns on a cargo freighter, and patented a pissy fusion of rock 'n' roll crunch, Cuban salsa, Algerian rai, hip-hop, and chatty Jamaican ragga. All this without a we-are-the-world-beat cliché in sight. That group's ghost haunts the debuts of French crews Sergeant Garcia and P18, who are spinning the Negra legacy into the 21st century.

"By mixing Latin music with rock and reggae, [Mano Negra] made Latin music hip for young people," says Sergeant Garcia ringleader Bruno Garcia, who was born in Paris and raised in Spain. He comes out of the same French punk scene that birthed Mano Negra and on *Un Poquito Quema'o* (Higher Octave), his tracks bubble with Afro-Cuban party jams and hip-hop rhyme spray into the simmering butterfly bluebeat of Kingston dancehall.

Sergeant Garcia is the result of Garcia's years of dabbling with straight-up punk (Ludwig Von 88), hip-hop (Timide Sans Complex) and dub plate (Bawawa Sound System), as well as a sample-heavy Latin ragga solo experiment that just made him hungrier for the Babylon-baiting group pachanga that erupts on *Quema'o*. "It's mixed culture music," he says. "The music of third world immigrants making their way north. Music travels with people and this is our way of having a good time with it."

P18's *Urban Cuban* (Higher Octave) rocks another sort of transnational travel party. For this one, ex-Mano Negra member and multi-culti sample junkie Tom Darnal hooked up with Cuban trumpet maestro Barbaro Garcia in Havana then spliced the fundamental son ingredients of violin, maracas, guitar and clave over house, jungle, and techno beats with DJ Sree in his Paris studio. It's a stew he calls "electrotropical."

"I didn't go to Cuba looking for son," says Darnal about the smooth, ballad-based music recently re-popularized by the Buena Vista Social Club. "I was just searching for friendship and good musicians and I found that in Barbaro and his family. They brought their own culture, their own knowledge to the project."

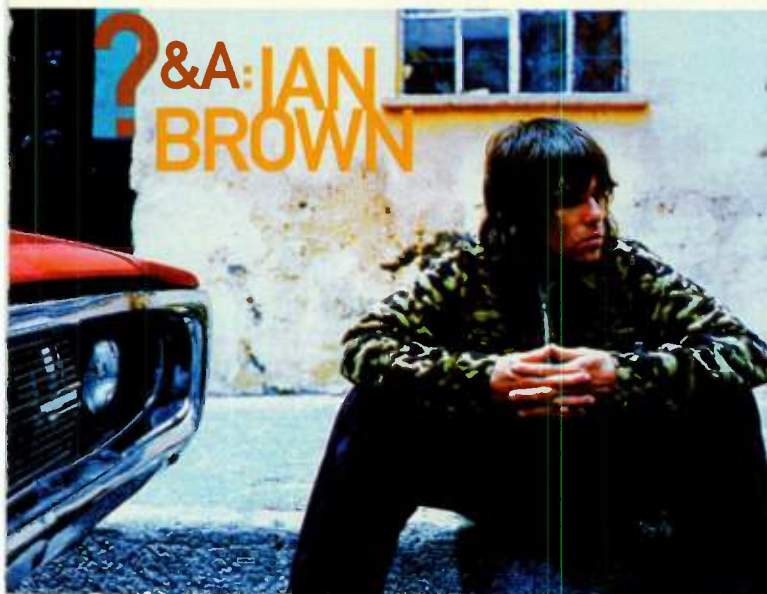
To prep himself for P18's rhythmic culture clash, Darnal took a listening mission to New York, Miami, and cities across Latin America armed with two CD players and a mixing deck. Recalls Darnal, "Every time I was in my hotel room I played around with the new records and imagined ways of appropriating the music. I just listened to them next to each other, discovering new combinations."

Like Mano Negra before them, P18 and Sergeant Garcia don't have to force their cross-cultural conversations. They inhabit Euro-immigrant worlds where sequenced bombas and dubby descargas aren't just organic hand-shakes, they're necessary ones.



AND THE WIND STREAMS JIMI

Last December, the Recording Industry Association Of America, which represents major labels, filed suit against Napster, the company whose software enables users to access the MP3 libraries residing on each others' hard drives. The RIAA claims Napster is "facilitating piracy and trying to build a business on the backs of artists and copyright owners." Shawn Fanning, 19, Napster founder, says he never intended to infringe on anyone's copyright when he created the MP3-swapping technology. "I really like covers of older music, people's personal performances of older songs, like covers of Jimi Hendrix by everyday people who have their own style. That was the issue with all of these Web-based search engines, they had all of that material [MP3s from major label megastars] and it's just not that interesting."



Things were really looking up for Ian Brown a couple of years ago. Since the prickly breakup of The Stone Roses in '95, the former frontman had taught himself to play a symphony's worth of instruments and recorded a spooky, DIY solo disc, *Unfinished Monkey Business*. Then the bad-news typhoon hit. Contract tribulations kept the record on permanent ice in the States. A verbal row with a British Airlines stewardess exploded into an arrest and a serious court trial, where Brown was sentenced to 60-day stay at Manchester's Strangeways Prison. Emerging on Christmas Eve, '98, the undaunted singer cut three new tracks that very night. He completed his punchy comeback *Golden Greats* within weeks. Brown is back, unbowed and even flying British Airways again. **—Tom Lanham**

If there's ever a prison you *don't* want to be sent to, it's gotta be one named "Strangeways."

Yeah. And that was the scene of Britain's biggest-ever prison riot. The funny thing was, I was driven in a prison van, and I could hear on the radio that I was being sent to jail. "Former Stone Roses singer Ian Brown has been sentenced to several months." So that was quite weird, going into the place with that on the radio. And you find yourself just thinking about your loved ones—you're really aware that your loved ones are outside for you.

Were any of the inmates Stone Roses Fans?

Yeah, a good few in there, actually. I was lucky 'cause the kid who was kinda runnin' the wing—this big Somalian kid called Rocky—I'd given him free tickets to a Roses show in '89, and he'd gone and sold the tickets for £200. So this big guy comes over to me in jail and says "Ian Brown, I owe ya one! When I was a kid, you gave me those tickets, so any problems you have, you get any any grief, you come and see me." So I was pretty lucky. So nobody messed with you?

Nobody. Everyone in there just left me alone. And I just kept fit. I did sit-ups—I was up to 500 situps a day when I left. And I was reading a lot—read *The Scramble For Africa*, which I'd always wanted to read. And everyone really looked after me. Other inmates would lend me a radio for the night, or they'd give me an apple or a bag of sugar.

An apple?

Yeah—you get an apple every Saturday, and that's the only fruit you see. A lotta kids swap their apples, 'cause they make their own hooch out of 'em. So the apples are like currency in jail. And the food was like dog food. Uneatable. I turned Muslim in jail—it's the only way you're guaranteed to get food that'll keep you alive, food like rice, lentils, chickpeas.

Was life behind bars why *Golden Greats* sounds so aggressive and bitter, especially in tracks like "Set My Baby Free"?

That came from a letter my girl wrote me in jail—she wrote "Hey, you ugly people—I want you to set my baby free!" And I thought "Hey! I can use that as a lyric!" But the thing I learned inside was, if you've got the wrong address, you can expect to go to jail at some point. Jail is basically full of people from the wrong areas, from the poor side of town. It's just the way the system's set up—there's simply no work, and the country's awash with drugs.

It's been one year since leaving jail. Have you gotten in any trouble since?

Nah. And I've been on [British Airways] since, and they gave me a free bottle of champagne. I've been on twice, and both times the stewardess was like, "Are you Ian Brown? Here's a free bottle of champagne!" And in my mileage update, they asked if I'd like to take part in a winning draw. Ha! The jokers.

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Whose Song Is That, Anyway?

by **Nicholas Waritz II** St. Louis Park, MN

Side 1

Sebastian Cabot
All I Really Want To Do
Lemonheads
Mrs. Robinson
Blondie
Bang A Gong (Get It On)
Smashing Pumpkins
Jackie Blue
Ramones
Out Of Time
The Jam
And Your Bird Can Sing
Lloyd Cole
The Slider
Evil Stig
Crimson And Clover
Madder Rose
The Love You Save
Smashing Pumpkins
Dancing In The Moonlight
Ramones
Needles And Pins
The Jayhawks
Bad Time
The Beat Farmers
Lucille
Dead Kennedys
Rawhide

Side 2

Matthew Sweet
She Said, She Said
Angry Samoans
Time Has Come Today
Agent Orange
Secret Agent Man
Surf Punks
Ballroom Blitz
The Melices
Ready, Steady, Go
Mighty Mighty Bosstones
Lights Out
Living Colour
Burning Of The Midnight Lamp
Red Hot Chili Peppers
Hollywood
George Clinton
Erotic City
Ween
L.M.L.Y.P.
Revolting Cocks
Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?
Nine Inch Nails
Get Down, Make Love
X
Breathless

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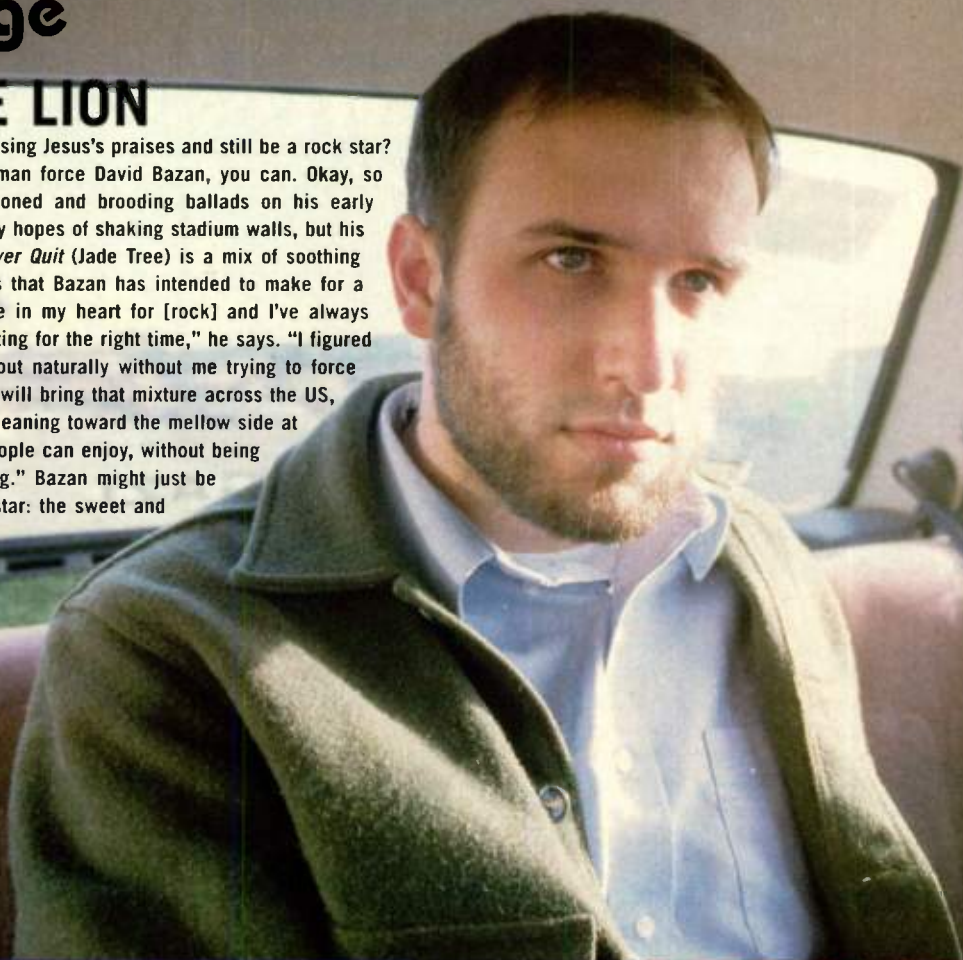
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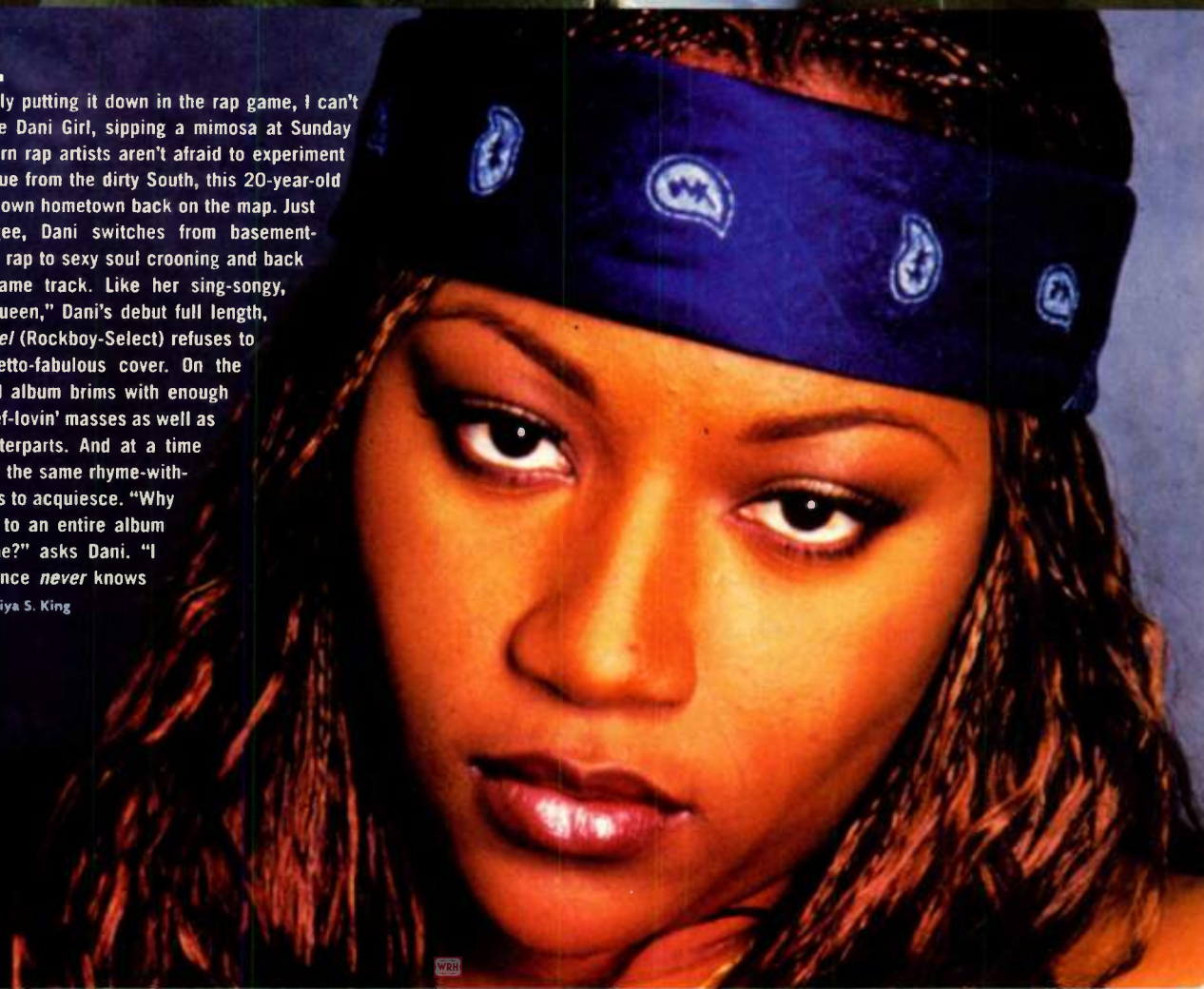
PEDRO THE LION

Can one be a polite family man, sing Jesus's praises and still be a rock star? If you're Pedro The Lion's one-man force David Bazan, you can. Okay, so maybe the delicate, gently crooned and brooding ballads on his early releases weren't written with any hopes of shaking stadium walls, but his second full-length, *Winners Never Quit* (Jade Tree) is a mix of soothing gems and infectious rock songs that Bazan has intended to make for a while. "I've always had a place in my heart for [rock] and I've always listened to it, but I was just waiting for the right time," he says. "I figured sooner or later it would come out naturally without me trying to force something." Pedro's spring tour will bring that mixture across the US, though Bazan says he plans on leaning toward the mellow side at the sit-down venues, "Where people can enjoy, without being distracted by their knees hurting." Bazan might just be inventing a new breed of rock star: the sweet and cuddly kind. **»»Nicole Keiper**



DANI GIRL

"Right now, the South is really putting it down in the rap game, I can't deny that," says Bronx native Dani Girl, sipping a mimosa at Sunday brunch in New York. "Southern rap artists aren't afraid to experiment with their styles." Taking a cue from the dirty South, this 20-year-old diva is determined to put her own hometown back on the map. Just like the famed female Fugee, Dani switches from basement-influenced boom-bap original rap to sexy soul crooning and back again—sometimes on the same track. Like her sing-songy, varied first single, "Ghetto Queen," Dani's debut full length, *Through The Eyes Of A Jezebel* (Rockboy-Select) refuses to be judged by its slick, ghetto-fabulous cover. On the inside, this gritty, unpolished album brims with enough diversity to satisfy the Mos-Def-lovin' masses as well as their more commercial counterparts. And at a time when most rap artists stick to the same rhyme-with-the-beat delivery, Dani refuses to acquiesce. "Why would anyone want to listen to an entire album that sounds exactly the same?" asks Dani. "I have to make sure my audience *never* knows what to expect from me." **»»Aliya S. King**



SUSANA BACA

It's hard to know whether to weep or to dance while listening to Peruvian singer Susana Baca. "Yes, it's inexplicable," she says, laughing. "Many times I feel a lot of sadness or melancholy when singing, but it's mixed with an incredible sense of happiness." Baca's sweet sound has its roots in bitter history: the mountain culture of the Andes mixed with the mystery and strife of the Spanish slave trade. "Those cultures got together because the Andeans were in an impoverished, miserable condition—as were the Africans," says Baca. "With my music I want to show the pride and the power of our culture." For her new Luaka Bop album, *Eco De Sombras* (Echo Of Shadows), Baca invited musical explorers John Medeski, Marc Ribot, and producer Craig Street (Cassandra Wilson) to add cool, bohemian spice to her languid, Afro-Peruvian soul. "In *Eco De Sombras* we explored new sounds—not a new essence—but new sounds," she says. Even if the depths of her music can conjure tears, she maintains perspective: "It's very liberating to let all of that out." >>>Steve Ciabattone





THE CURE ★

Bloodflowers

Fiction-Elektra

OUT:

February 15.

FILE UNDER:

Just like heaven.

R.I.Y.L.:

Disintegration, Pornography, The Head On The Door.

Among the artists who emerged from the UK underground in the late-'70s, Robert Smith couldn't have been high on the list of those expected to enjoy a remarkably long career as a pop star. Short, shy, Camus-reading depressives just don't fit the rock icon profile, especially when they possess a thin, adenoidal warble of a voice. But Smith hasn't merely survived, he's thrived, releasing 20 albums in as many years (and probably chewing through close to that many bandmates in the process). *Bloodflowers* is The Cure's 13th studio album, the second featuring the five-year-strong lineup of Simon Gallup (bass), Perry Bamonte (guitar), Roger O'Donnell (keys), and Jason Cooper (drums), and the only real surprise is how consistently solid and unassumingly inspired it is. Like Neil Young, another bandleader whose guitar playing is every bit as idiosyncratic as his singing, Smith has essentially been writing variations on the same limited number of musical themes for the past decade or so: familiar melodic threads of Cure classics like "Inbetween Days," "Just Like Heaven" and "Fascination Street" are woven into the textured fabric of *Bloodflowers*. The result most resembles a less dense and gloomy *Disintegration*, with its swirling layers of chorused guitars, steady, driving backbeats and contemplative lyrics. In other words, it sounds exactly like a Cure album should, reinforcing the notion that at this point Smith is a genre unto himself. >>> **Matt Ashare**



DEL THA FUNKEE HOMOSAPIEN

Both Sides Of The Brain

Hiero Imperium

OUT:

March 7.

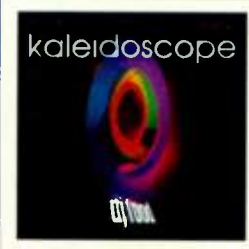
FILE UNDER:

Hooked on Del phonics.

R.I.Y.L.:

Hieroglyphics, Souls Of Mischief.

The most gifted (and most prone-to-coasting) MC in Oakland's Hieroglyphics crew, Del Tha Funkee Homosapien, probably has "Underachieving Cult Rapper" printed on his business cards. That makes *Both Sides Of The Brain* a real surprise—it's the first really great Hiero product in half a decade (diehards swear by the boring comeback album *Del & Co.* hyped over the Web, but whatever). The instrumentals, largely self-produced, are busy and buzzy, juiced with electric-sliding organs and horn-section raspberries; best-rhyme honors go to guest star Casual, for tagging himself "the difference between Hanna Barbera and Hannibal the barbarian." But all of Del's disses crackle, including the ones fired at the "down" white kids who've kept him in PlayStation games all these years. Even the riffs on way-dated subject matter—blazing joints of Bob Marleyish proportions, crackheads—flow out with so much style, you're reminded of all those early-'90s rappers whose novelty-rap records actually sounded novel. (Y'know, like Del Tha Funkee Homosapien.) And while there's something undeniably bittersweet about a rapper whose brand new joints play like forgotten gems, Del remains the kind of microphone crank Ringo Starr would appreciate: a mocker who rocks. >>> **Alex Papademas**



DJ FOOD ★

Kaleidoscope

Ninja Tune

OUT:

April 4.

FILE UNDER:

Turntable jazz.

R.I.Y.L.:

DJ Shadow, Coldcut, Amon Tobin.

The notion of the DJ as postmodern musical pioneer—as opposed to just someone who spins records or the guy at the back of the stage on the wheels of steel in a hip-hop group—had become so widespread by the end of the '90s that it's no surprise to find DJ Food leading off its new album with this territorial nugget from the spoken-sample vault: "There's a whole group of people who are working in this direction in their music, and not much of it is like what we're doing." As members of the Coldcut consortium, Food's Strictly Kev and PC take naturally to the young lion posture; fortunately, the actual goods are not far behind. With *Kaleidoscope*, they go beyond the instrumentals for which they are best known and offer a DJ's response to the lyrics-and-beats scene. Almost every track tries a different method of marrying rhythm and spoken words. Beats punctuate the syllables, or get wedged between syllables, or the syllables become beats themselves. The standout track, "Break," is a perfectly-paced collage of poetry, breaking cue balls and sampled cymbal breaks that land as squarely as Gene Kelly dance steps. Even on the purely instrumental tracks, the members of Food spin as if they were sparring with Mike Tyson—constantly shifting angles, realigning the mix and turning out composed experiments. >>> **Andrea Moed**



**OUT:**

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

Powerbook exotica.

R.I.Y.L.:

Microstoria, Kraftwerk, µ-Ziq.

MOUSE ON MARS

Niun Niggung

Thrill Jockey

Credible electronica albums, with their lengthy tracks and dearth of familiar musical handholds, can be a long trek in the desert for the uninitiated. Not so with *Mouse On Mars*' sixth: the Dusseldorf-based duo of Andi Toma and Jan St. Werner know just how long a given sonic manipulation should go on, and they're far less humorless than many of their ascetic genre-mates. *Niun Niggung* continues in the blurping, cut-up vein of 1997's *Autoditacker*, though more real live musicians are allowed to intrude on MOM's virtual worlds than ever. The MVP in this regard is horn player Harald Ziegler, who supplies both brass arrangements and Euro-improv squiggles on about half of the disc's 13 tracks. (His playing sounds unmanipulated, but who knows?) The opening "Download Sofist" slides from genuinely pretty acoustic picking into microtonal hell, while several goofier pieces suggest that MOM is ready for a second career soundtracking android soft-porn. It's all musically meticulous, though a bit silly, and extended exposure can be annoying. But taken individually, nearly every track has some memorable element, from "Yippie" (cheeseball tech-step) to "Pinwheel Herman" (Viennese musicbox learns to fart). *Niun Niggung* may sound lightweight to those addicted to the hard stuff, but for the rest of us, it's a fine first fix. >>> *Franklin Bruno*

**OUT:**

February 22.

FILE UNDER:

Relentless, reliable punk-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Superchunk, The Promise Ring, The Get Up Kids.

PINEHURST KIDS

Viewmaster

4 Alarm

The current batch of punk-influenced modern rock bands breaks down into two camps: those that watched Nirvana and Green Day rake in millions in the early '90s and decided to take a shot themselves, and those that spent years inviting friends to keg parties in the basements of group houses just to play for an audience. As for the Pinehurst Kids, let's just say they're familiar with the stench of stale beer. Prior to releasing its 1997 debut, *Minnesota Hotel*, the band struggled for attention in the packed Portland music scene, earnestly hawking their melodic and rhythmically taut songs in a town obsessed with more fashionable acts like Sleater-Kinney and Elliott Smith. With this electrifying follow-up, the band suddenly sounds like it's at the forefront of a resurgent rock movement. Credit guitarist and vocalist Joe Davis, an observant narrator who delivers no-nonsense lines in an unshackled voice. He evokes the hallucination-inducing torpor of life on the road (the lithe, furiously paced "Short Bus"), searches forlornly for a departed lover (the meaty mid-tempo lament "Flicker"), and spirals into introspection (the creepingly intense "Nothing No Way"). Yet he's malleable enough to realize that today's rock needs diversity, and Davis leads the Kids guitar-first into a collection of songs that vary in speed without drifting into frivolous ballads or useless experiments. It's honest music, played with soul. >>> *Richard Martin*

**OUT:**

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

R&B poetry.

R.I.Y.L.:

Langston Hughes, Amiri Baraka, The Last Poets.

SEKOU SUNDIATA


Longstoryshort

Righteous Babe

In the annals of black poetry, the word wizards have always had their musical muses. Langston Hughes had Billie Holiday. Amiri Baraka had Bud Powell. And now Sekou Sundiata has Mary J. Blige as both inspiration and (on one track) subject matter. On *Longstoryshort*, the NYC poet's reverential second recording of words and music, Sundiata finesses end-of-the-century R&B poetry that speaks solemn, warm waves of truth to Malcolm, Mandela and the aging of revolution. There are no 12-bar blues poetry formulas here, no syncopated jazz poetry clichés of spritzed improv solos, and no MC rhymes in need of a beat. Sundiata is backed by a full band (including Family Stand belter Sandra St. Victor), and it delivers more-than-satisfactory Curtis Mayfield grooves and hushed Marvin Gaye meltdowns (and at one point, a whispered Cuban son). Sundiata puts a voice to post-soul blackness like a barbershop dramatist with a gift for street corner flow and a degree in ancient ritual. He's not about dazzling you with the tongue-twist or the linguistic trick; he speaks it solid and clear, every verse a prayer, channeling even his most bitter anger into velvet hymns of conviction. On two tracks, Sundiata quotes Malcolm X on revolution: "You wouldn't use that word if you knew what it means. It ain't pretty. It's bloody. It overturns things." And he steps to all his words that way, as receptacles of history bathed in red that just might hold the key to the ushering in of a new day. >>> *Josh Kun*

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In between partying like it's 1999 and cranking the theme to 2001, which new artists will be the soundtrack to our days and nights? High-brow hip-hop, country crooning, meta-post-modern Britpop, a puppet—flip on through and place your bets.

NEW FACES '00

TRAVIS

NEKO CASE

TAPROOT

1.8.7

MC PAUL BARMAN

BOY SETS FIRE

JOSEPH ARTHUR

JURASSIC 5

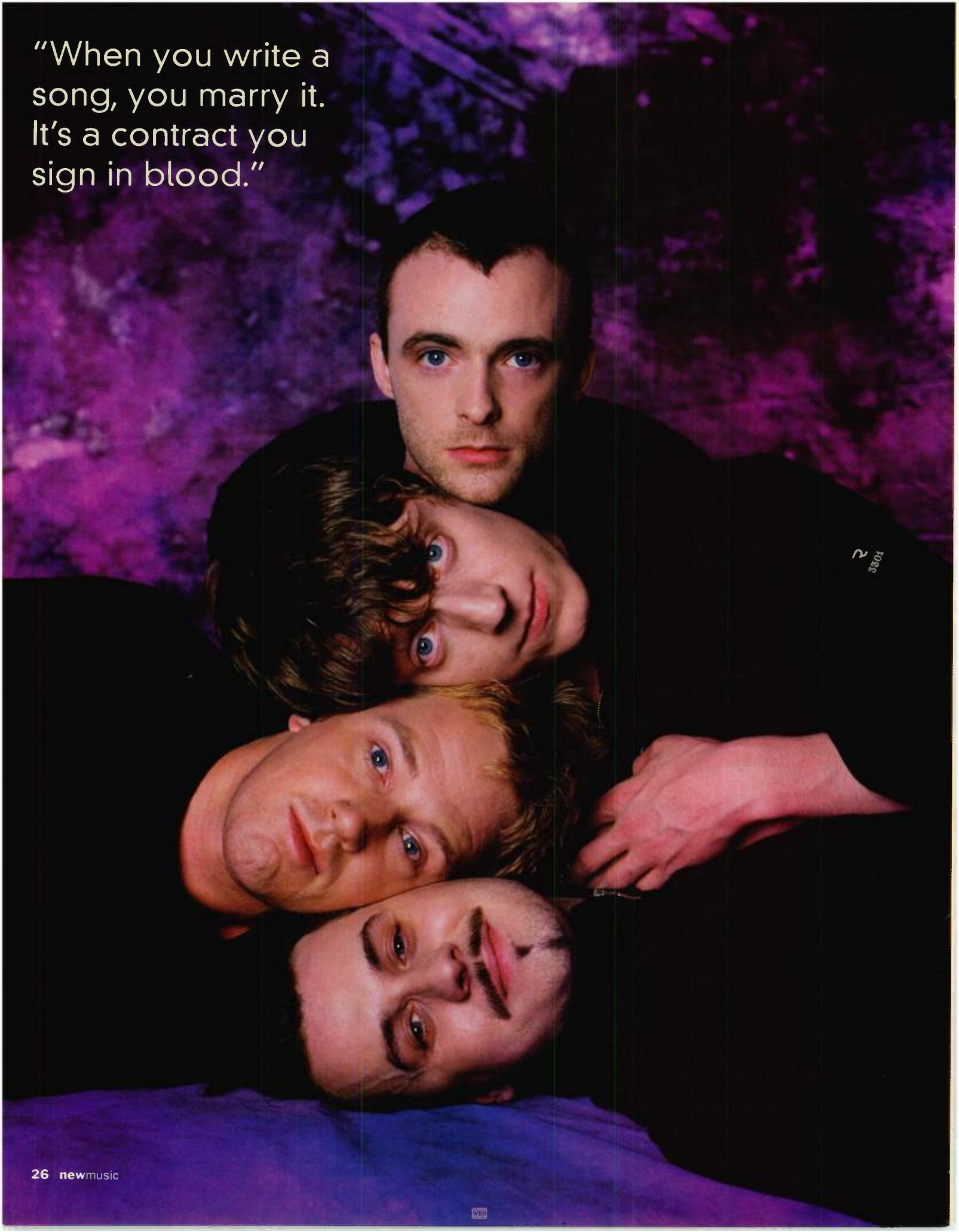
MR. OIZO

ANTI-POP CONSORTIUM

THE ESSEX GREEN

BROADCAST

"When you write a song, you marry it. It's a contract you sign in blood."



2
1082

TRAVIS

SEE
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words: BOB GULLA

photo: KAREN MILLER

A MARRIAGE MADE IN SONG

It started last May, the month Glasgow quartet Travis released its second album, *The Man Who*, in Europe. The band, which first came together in 1996, had recently completed recording sessions at Abbey Road with Radiohead producer Nigel Godrich. Singer-guitarist Fran Healy recalls kicking back, satisfied with the final mix: "We sat in a room together and said, 'Oh, that's good then. The songs are good, the album's good, and it sounds great.'"

Not everyone was so impressed. A few weeks later, the British press gave it poor reviews. "[The material's] OK if you're Billie Holiday or Frank Sinatra. But if you're a bunch of rock blokes from Glasgow, the result isn't tremendous," *NME* decided.

"It was like having a teacher at school tell you your child was a dunce," remembers Healy, "when you know your kid's intelligent. How could they not see? I'm still bamboozled by it."

Despite "shite reviews," the record began selling. Each of its first five singles stuck to the charts, including the epic, cello-lined "Why Does It Always Rain On Me?" and since its May release, the album has not left the UK Top 20. In fact, in an even lovelier dose of poetic justice, many of the rags that took broad swipes at the record upon its release would later go on to vote *The Man Who* "Album Of The Year."

Today, Travis is the proud owner of the best-selling British album of 1999, having sold close to two million copies throughout Europe, and they've only just begun. Still, Healy and the band can't quite believe the ride they've been on.

"When you watch a film like *Superman*," Healy explains, "you suspend your disbelief in order to get through the movie from beginning to end. We're definitely suspending something—our ego, maybe? Reality?—in order to keep doing what we're doing. If we didn't, we'd be full of ourselves, and that's not like us."

The members of Travis—Healy, Dougie Payne (bass), Andy Dunlop (guitar), and Neil Primrose (drums)—know what it means to be humble. It's the emotional state in which they've spent most of their lives. Three members of the band attended art school, excepting erstwhile bartender Primrose, who went to business school. While painting, Healy realized he'd been deriving more satisfaction from finishing songs than canvasses. After a few pints at the Horseshoe Pub, he, Payne, and Primrose formed a band to play those songs; they secured a publishing deal in 1996. An EP arrived soon after and a full-length, *Good Feeling*, followed in 1997. High-profile tours with Oasis and Catatonia fell into place and Travis began erecting a career edifice. But it wasn't until the band released *The Man Who*—a laborious project written and recorded in six months and in as many studios—that they began earning the kind of attention normally reserved for superstar acts.

"We're not uncomfortable with fame and all that," admits Healy, his deep blue eyes hypnotic. "But fame is a result of trying to get our songs out to as many people as possible. As far as I see it, the only reason why we're on a stage at all is so that the guy in the back can see us."

Still, Healy and Travis seem stunned by all the attention even a full year down the road. "I remember sitting in my house the evening after we

played Glastonbury [Festival]," Healy recalls. "Highlights from the show were on TV and they were talking about me. 'Fran Healy this' and 'Fran Healy that.' All of a sudden I was no longer this person. I was a name. By the end of it, I was really freaked out, man."

Those who managed to turn up a copy of *Good Feeling* will discover that the ragged charm of that album has morphed into a Radiohead-like uber-melodicism, led by Healy's soulful vocals and the band's soaring, eggshell-acoustic pop. Along the way, sonic encounters with *Hunky Dory*-era Bowie, Bob Dylan- and Joni Mitchell-style folk, as well as Brian Wilson pop arise regularly, making the new Travis album a perfect bridge between post-Radiohead Britpop and classic rock.

The churning morality tale of "Turn," the subtle, anxiety-ridden "The Fear," the McCartney-esque "As You Are" all prove Healy's an excellent melodicist and lyricist, with a knack for weaving colorful threads of poetry into traditional story songs. "Every day I wake up alone," Healy sings on the heart-hurting adolescent tale, "As You Are." On the rather sly but equally revealing "Slide Show," Healy sings about the way he views life unfolding. "There is no design for life/ There's no devil's haircut in my mind/ There is not a wonderwall, to climb or step around/ But there is a slide show and it's so slow/ Flashing through my mind."

Healy isn't preoccupied with socio-political observation, but prefers delving into intimate human issues, and does so with an empathy that balances the personal and universal.

For Healy, nothing is more important than the song, and he demonstrates a surreal understanding of the artform. "We take pride in what we do, we understand what we do, and what we create is more important than what we are," he says with emphasis. "Lately, I've stumbled on the rather mundane fact that a band needs a song if it's going to be a band. But once a song is out there, it doesn't need a band. It lasts forever. That's where we're coming from. We're just in it for a song. When you write a song, you marry it. It's a contract you sign in blood. When you put a song out there, that contract states that you'll remain faithful to it for as long as it exists. That's what we plan to do."

Following their whirlwind year in Britain, Travis has escorted its "marriage" contract to America. No matter that it's already been a full year since the release of *The Man Who* (Epic), a full year of touring the same songs and carrying a formidable workload. The band understands that it's more a mission than simply something to do.

"They're good songs," Healy states, "and I don't think we'll tire of them. At least at the end of the day I'll know that our songs are going somewhere, doing something."

Case in point: The night preceding our conversation, Travis had just played its second US gig on a brief warm-up tour prior to the domestic release of *The Man Who*. Healy, breathless from the experience, found that even after a nearly two-year absence from Stateside audiences, the songs still hit their mark. "Like I said, we're married to our songs and to take that one step further, the gigs are kinda like sex. Now we're fortunate enough to have sex almost every single day. Sometimes it's a let-down and it's premature ejaculation. But sometimes it's the best sex we've had in our life. We'd like to keep it that way. Wouldn't you?"



"Make sure people know that I'm a dishwasher, OK? I get so sick of people wanting me to be this glamorous rockabilly girl."



NEKO CASE

SEE
HEAR
NOW

words: KRISTY OJALA

photos: VICTORIA RENARD

COUNTRY DOLL WITH THE DISHPAN HANDS

Some people can make a hangover look almost artful. It's 4:45 on a Wednesday afternoon, and Neko Case has 15 minutes before she's supposed to punch in for her shift as a dishwasher at a lovable watering hole in Seattle's old-town fishing neighborhood. Her luxurious crimson hair is still wet from a late-day shower, and despite the glass of ice water a bartending friend hurriedly places on the table, the typically amicable Case is having trouble forcing even a crooked smile. "Guess what happens when people here stay late after work?" she asks, then sorrowfully answers herself. "We end up closing the place down. I'm very, very sorry for the Mandarin tonics I did last night. But it's very comfortable here. Too comfortable."

The placating—and suffocating—familiarity is part of the reason why this lovable country troubadour is splitting the Silicon Forest for the mean streets of Chicago. Having spent most of her 29 years in the Pacific Northwest, Case is not about to tolerate the upscale bastardization of the place she's been fiercely protective of in her songwriting. She's simply going to flee. "I don't have a fucking choice," she hedges, holding her throbbing head. "I can't afford to live here now. Seattle is really the most fucked-up place; all there is here anymore is money. It's all people who didn't live here in the beginning. My apartment is being torn down to make rich people's housing, because you know, there's such a shortage of it. I no longer feel welcome here."

Regionalist pride is translated into passionate balladry on Case's latest, *Furnace Room Lullaby* (Bloodshot). Her sapphire-tinged vocals lovingly bridge the time between bustling industry and high-tech boom on "Thrice All American" ("I wanna tell you about my hometown/ It's a jewel in the South Puget Sound/ Where the factories churn and the timber's all been cut down"). The lyrics are possibly the nicest thing anyone's ever said about Tacoma, Washington, where the stench of paper mills made Bruce Springsteen so sick during his *Born In The U.S.A.* tour that he swore he'd never return.

Case, a fiery voice in a sea of wannabe hillbillies, tears up the kitchen curtains with her second solo release. She worships the Grand Ole Opry like a teary-eyed grandparent, and the homage is translated in a youthful yet gilded voice. "Porchlight" has whispers of Loretta Lynn, with Kelly Hogan's backing chorus adding haunting touches; "Bought And Sold" is pure, cooing sonic revenge that begs for a cinematic slap in the face, while "Whip The Blankets" takes a dollop of Exene Cervenka and marks one up for the seamstresses in the house.

Lest *Furnace Room Lullaby* be misconstrued as a lovey-dovey alternative country album—especially since Case's label is that "Home Of Insurgent Country," Chicago's Bloodshot Records—Case sets about shredding the cool-to-be-honkytonk stereotype. "I hate that shit," she fumes. She points to a dismal caricature of herself from the *New York Press*, a little cartoon Neko wearing a bikini and cowboy boots and chewing on a wheat stem. "That's so gross. I don't wear cowboy boots, ever. I don't hang out in my underwear. Country is a very poignant and eloquent form of music. I guess that's why people always want to say what my peers and I do is 'alternative country.' It's a cop-out. I'm not retro; I'm not swing. My whole thing is that country music has evolved, along with every other genre. It doesn't have to be cheesy."

The singer's hatred of superficial glitz is largely rooted in her punk

rock past. As a teen, she cherished her gospel records ("'Swing Low, Sweet Chariot' totally changed my life," she beams), but when she got her first drum kit at 18, playing in punk bands filled a void. Too shy to sing aloud, Case stayed behind the drums until joining Vancouver, BC, punk group Maow in 1994. "What was so disenchanting about punk in the '80s, for me, was that I wasn't hearing anything in my voice," she muses, fiddling with her empty water glass. "I liked what I heard, but it wasn't necessarily representative of what I was thinking about." She gets up and leaves the table to punch in for her shift, then returns. "I guess that's actually how I got into country from punk. I was writing songs that didn't fit Maow, so I saved them for myself."

The last three years have seen Case take off with fans of country, so much that it's hard to imagine her well-deep voice fitting any other format. In 1998 she released *The Virginian*, a fireball album of originals and classic country covers, under the encompassing moniker "Neko Case And Her Boyfriends." Her Boyfriends are a rotating cast of

"I'm not retro; I'm not swing. My whole thing is that country music has evolved, along with every other genre. It doesn't have to be cheesy."

studio and touring musicians, most of them friends, all of them admirers; among *Furnace Room Lullaby's* Boyfriends are Hogan, Ron Sexsmith, Brian Connelly of the defunct Shadowy Men On A Shadowy Planet, and Bob Egan, who's played with Freakwater.

Shortly after she put out a split 7" with Whiskeytown for Bloodshot, Case stepped into another project, The Corn Sisters, with longtime friend Carolyn Mark. The duo is a treat to witness; Mark, all radiant black hair and beautiful harmony, uses her self-deprecating charm to get the crowd to sing rhymes about corn on the cob. The Corn Sisters' recent gig opening for Loudon Wainwright III was indeed like stepping back into Case's childhood fantasy of Loretta, Patsy and the Grand Ole Opry. Both wore prim dresses and filled every silence with either gorgeous singing or witty, clean banter. They used shiny black tap shoes as percussion. Just like the good ol' days.

It's dark out, and it's time for Case to get to work. She bundles her hair up in a ponytail holder, and pauses. "I'm not gonna stay in Chicago," she says quietly. "I'll be back someday. There's something really creepy about the forest and the gray that I really enjoy. I want to have a farm here." With that, she disappears into the kitchen. A few minutes later she returns, a grin on her face. "One more thing: Make sure people know that I'm a dishwasher, OK?" she asks. "I get so sick of people wanting me to be this glamorous rockabilly girl. I'm not a pony. I feel so stupid putting on an act; I just want to get across the joy of singing."



TAPROOT

words: KATHERINE TURMAN

photo: SEAN SCHROFF

HARD ROCK'S MOST WANTED

Plenty of young bands would say 'Yes, please' to a guest appearance on their debut album by Limp Bizkit frontman Fred Durst. Ann Arbor, Michigan's Taproot may be so blessed, but the cameo in this case will be in the form of a purportedly nasty phone message the band says Durst left on Taproot singer Steve Richards's answering machine. "Don't fuckin' show up at my show, 'cause if you do, you're gonna get fucked," is, according to Richards's account, just one of the finer moments of the juvenile blast Durst leveled at the foursome, supposedly for signing with someone besides Durst.

The debacle began when Taproot sent a tape to Durst, and the mogul-on-the-make apparently offered to help the fledgling group. "We started hanging out, and he promised us the world," remembers Richards. Eventually, when the world was not forthcoming, Taproot received other interest and signed with Velvet Hammer-Atlantic, a new label formed by the management of fellow loud rockers System Of A Down.

Durst's response to his old buddies' newfound success? To "punish" Taproot by kicking System Of A Down off of the Family Values tour, allege the members of Taproot. Durst apparently had a subsequent change of heart, however, and later took System out on a Limp Bizkit tour, choosing not to censure System Of A Down when it

was Velvet Hammer, System's management and Taproot's label, with whom he took issue. (Limp Bizkit's label and management declined to comment on the situation for this story.)

That drama now behind them, the members of Taproot are ensconced in a Los Angeles studio with producer Ulrich Wild (Deftones, Static-X), beginning work on their debut album. "Lyrically, it's very spiritual and uplifting. Musically, I like to call it heavy alternative," explains Richards of Taproot's *au courant* vibe. Songs like "Again And Again," ultra-heavy and melodic without being rap-metal, and "Smile," an intense, Tool-meets-Live sort of *mélange*, bear out the description.

Aiming for a June release, Taproot's first major tour is already set. The band was handpicked for Ozzfest after Ozzy's wife and manager Sharon Osbourne sent 14-year son Jack to check out the band, and he returned with rave reviews.

Others, too, are raving. Atlantic honcho Craig Kallman proffers a potent prediction: "The spirit of Atlantic's first 50 years started with Led Zeppelin, AC/DC and Stone Temple Pilots. And in the next century, Taproot carries on the Atlantic tradition."

The world of music is getting as ugly as sports; the things people will do for the rookie, the rookie.

1.8.7

SEE
HEAR
NOW

words: SEAN O'NEAL

photo: DIANE COLLINS



DRUM 'N' BASS (NOT) BY THE NUMBERS

If the 20th century American workplace was all about specialization, then American music at the end of the 20th century was all about compartmentalization. In the oft-cubbyholed world of drum 'n' bass, DJ/producer Jordanna, a.k.a. 1.8.7, creates a rainbow coalition of R&B, punk and jungle that can be delightfully soothing or in-yo-face sinister. Her new concept album, *The Cities Collection* (Liquid Sky), applies a similar unifying approach to this nation's urban centers, with tracks titled "New York", "Los Angeles," "San Francisco,"—you get the picture. "Chicago" ripples with sampled soul guitar riffs, jazzy brass and female vocal licks. "Philadelphia," Jordanna's home base, rumbles aggressively, recalling the classic jungle and techno hybrid, tech-step, that once reigned in the city's underground.

"Beneath all of the social politics, everyone is connected in the drum 'n' bass scene," explains Jordanna. "We are all together here, and America is a small part of the world and an even smaller part of the drum 'n' bass scene."

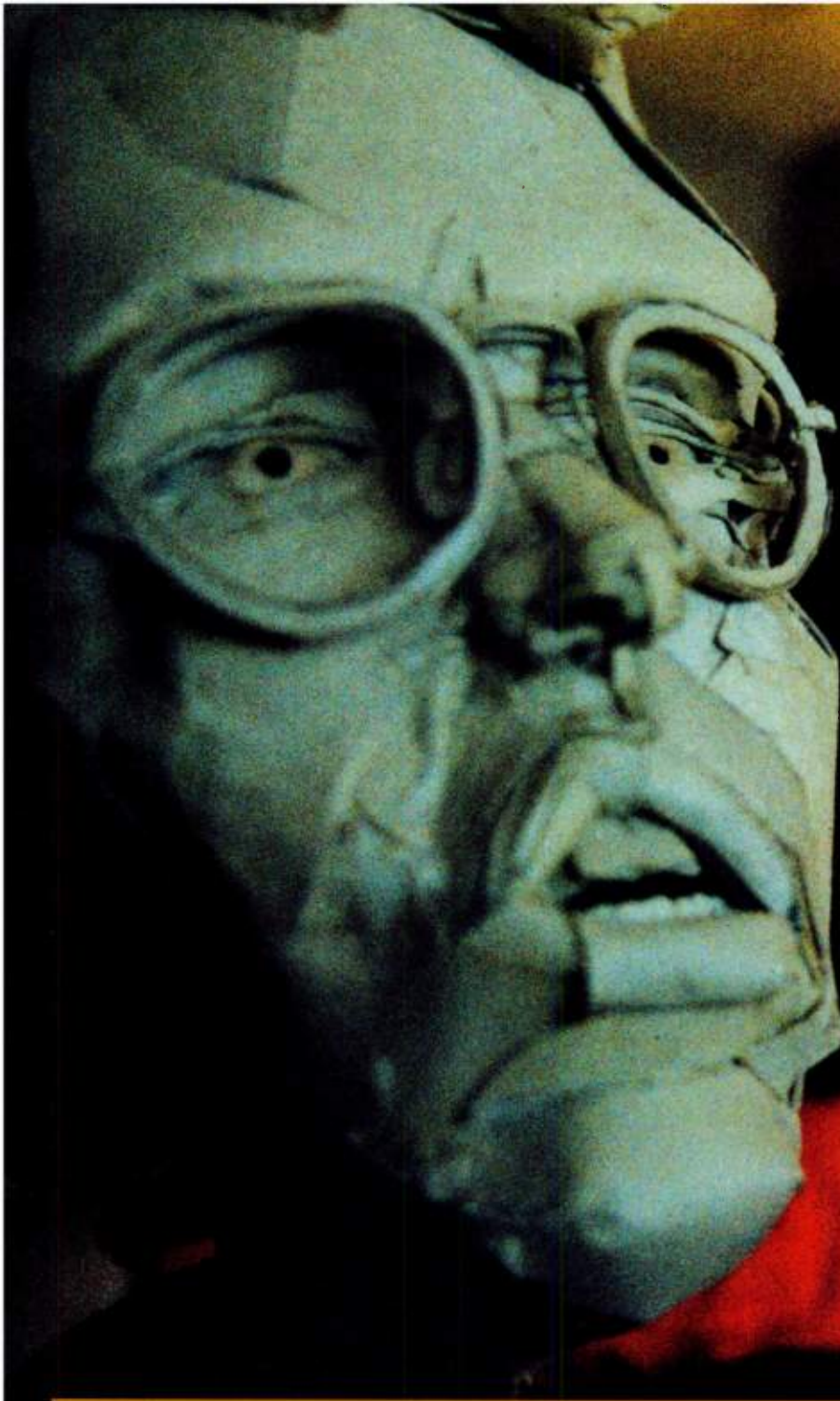
Few people know more about the stress of scene and social

maneuvering than Jordanna. About two years ago, after a bout of depression, she came out as a transsexual, changing her gender and name—from Joe LeSense to Jordanna—along the way.

The Cities Collection is the last release under the 1.8.7 moniker. From now on, Jordanna will release music under her own name. Whether this is another step towards self-actualization, as it might suggest, remains a mystery. Questioned about the change, she displays wariness over the salacious attention her gender realignment has received in the music press, only replying "you should know better."

Her music, however, speaks for itself. With musical loves ranging from Breakbeat Era to Groove Armada and The Roots, she prefers tracks with a live feel, and keeps her music from sounding sterile by using loose and organic sequences and loops.

In the opening track, "Hollywood," a vocal sample intones, "There are things I cannot do/ There are things I will not do." Asked what she will or cannot do, Jordanna replies: "I will not pander to a narrow concept of what should or shouldn't be...and I refuse to let anyone control my life or my destiny."



"I acknowledge the asshole in me that has something in common with the assholes behind something like the *New Yorker*. I thought, 'What if I made rap for *them*?'"

RAPPER IN THE WRY

A Q&A with MC Paul Barman goes something like this: Barman answers, then editorializes, critiquing how his response is going to read in print, then chides himself for over-analyzing because that'll read badly too. (Following a particularly sarcastic remark, he leans into the tape recorder to add: "Rolls his eyes.") He's hyper-articulate and hyper-aware of how he'll be perceived. Barman's genuine, alright: he's eloquently motor-mouthed when the questions interest him, and doesn't bother feigning interest when they don't. In short, he's like every self-conscious, school-despising, media-and-literature-gobbling, culture-sponge New York kid you've ever met (even though he's actually from the New Jersey 'burbs)—and five'll get you ten his high school GPA didn't reflect his sky-high verbal SAT scores.

Paul Barman's an MC. A frequently brilliant one. He's got more rhymes than McSweeney's has footnotes, and if you get that reference,

you'll love Barman's sweetly perverse, Prince Paul-produced debut EP, *It's Very Stimulating* (WordSound). Among *Stimulating's* name-drops: Chuck Close, Susan Faludi, Wallace Shawn, Venn diagrams, and the New York Metropolitan Museum Of Art's Lila Acheson Wallace Wing. On "MC Fibonacci Sequence vs. Interrupting Rapper" (from his "Post-Graduate Work" 7") Barman wants to "sightsee with Mike Leigh." "Writing Sample" mentions six books by illustrator David Macaulay, then Barman steps "off stage calmly, and girls all Cy like Twombly." These rhymes embrace an upper-class/intellectual background most white rappers would do anything to bury; unpacking them should earn you grad-school credits.

Over bagels at a deli down the street from Manhattan's Gotham Book Mart, a bearded and sweated Barman talks motivations.

"In general," he says, "if I reference somebody, it's props."

MC PAUL BARMAN

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words: ALEX PAPPADEMAS

photo: B. ASH

dope-daffy, cred-enhancing beats, *Stimulating* begs the question: Is hip-hop ready for a record this...dorky?

Barman (who expects to do well at first with "people who hate rap") is philosophical. "I acknowledge the asshole in me that has something in common with the assholes behind something like *The New Yorker*. When I made the ["Enter Pan Man"] 7", I thought 'What if I made rap for *them*? I know they love rap, everyone does. So wouldn't it be creepy if some sickening MC came out and...'"

Later on, he asks me not to print the *New Yorker* remark, and tries to clarify the self-deprecating spirit in which it was phrased: "I have to be honest about who I am and where I'm from, but if I have a sense of humor about it, I can go even further than that, and do it for...the liberal-arts bastards."

Dissecting his muse, he explains, "Sometimes, I'll think of a joke that isn't really my sense of humor, like maybe it's a Henny Youngman joke, or maybe it's a Hawd Ganksta Rappuz Wid Gats joke. And if it's funny, you gotta use it. But sometimes, it's funny, and it's *straight* from you, like something you would say to your best friend. And that's the moment when it's really the best. But it's hard to do that all the time."

Paul writes his lyrics in two notebooks. He uses a pocket-sized datebook to record fragments for later use, creating his own ill rhyming dictionary. He reads me a few samples, like "Thomas Aquinas, your mama's vagina", and "I want some silly cut-up with Billy Crudup's butt up." In a bigger notebook, he works on full-fledged songs—he's got notes scribbled in every margin, whole verses inserted with arrows, even lists of nothing but "plot points."

What, you may ask, is a plot point?

"Have you ever read Syd Field? Plot points are where things change."

Field's book *Screenplay* claims the key to good screenwriting is a three-act structure with Pivotal Plot Points at the end of the first two acts. I mention to Paul that a lot of screenwriters can't stand Field's formulas.

"I can learn from things I don't like," he replies. "Like, I'm so obsessed with rap that I will listen to it far beyond the tolerance of my friends. Because even when I hate it, there's reason for it and I can learn from it. I do *not* feel the same way about rock 'n' roll—bad rock 'n' roll makes me want to flee the building."

When I ask Barman if I can take a closer look at his notebook, he demurs and the moment turns out to be a pivotal Plot Point in the interview.

"I sort of showed you what I wanted to show you," he says, and then jokes, "Can't have a reporter biting my rhymes, now, can I?"

He gets up to get some lentil soup, and when he returns for the last 15 minutes of our conversation, his tone's really different. I tell him the best Paul Barman story I got from Prince Paul: Barman met New York rapper Masta Ace at Joe's Pub in downtown Manhattan. Barman greeted his new acquaintance with "Wow—I can't believe I'm meeting Masta Ace...south of Astor Place."

Barman tells me the end of the Masta Ace rhyme—which he's planning to use in a song: "And when I see the psychopath handing out 'Mean People Suck' stickers/ I walk at a faster pace." But he's finished talking about himself. After borrowing my cell phone to send his publicist a voice mail, he says, politely but firmly, "This is over, by the way."

He's already admitted that while he doesn't want this story framed as a "Why Paul Barman hates interviews" piece, dealing with clueless journalists and pushy *Rolling Stone* photographers has been "incredibly up and down. And that's a political answer, because if I were to be honest, I'd say it sucks, but I know how ugly an answer that is. Because, the truth is, it's also been amazingly fun. It's just so overwhelming, and unique, and surreal, and in a sense that was the goal. So whether it's torture or not is actually secondary to whether it's amazing, which is what I wanted."

WILL THE REAL PAUL BARMAN PLEASE THROW DOWN?

Having so many references is just so obnoxious that I try to have a really good reason. Sometimes it's such a good rhyme I can't resist—it's hard to think of words that haven't been rhymed before. So sometimes you scrape the bottom of the barrel and find a bunch of obsequious proper nouns."

Prince Paul signed on to produce *Stimulating* after Barman mailed him a copy of the 7-inch. "When I played it at first," Prince Paul says, "I was like, 'What is this crap?' But then I played it over and over—lyrically, he's really intelligent."

That intelligence takes Barman's songs way beyond parody. His goofy, breathless anti-flow doesn't obscure the fact that as a lyricist, he's no joke. The abortive sex scene on "The Joy Of Your World," where he unwraps a gold-coin condom only to find that it's "chocolate Hanukkah gelt," is like Ice Cube meets Philip Roth. Coupled with Prince Paul's



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BOY SETS FIRE

words: LORNE BEHRMAN

photo: JIM NEWBERRY

EMOCORE ARSONISTS

"We got \$3 a day our first two years of touring, if we were lucky. And if that didn't happen, we were, like, scraping the crap out of our fingernails and eating it," says Boy Sets Fire drummer Matt Krupanksi with a weary chuckle. He's summing up the Delaware-based quintet's resilience to such things as marriage, offspring, a lineup shift, an exploding van and 24-hour drives for shows that paid \$10.

Today the outfit eats better; plays with more established acts (Avail and Snapcase); gets 100 emails a day; draws 400 kids to each of their own shows; and enjoys the distribution and budget benefits of a newly inked deal with Victory Records. Boy Sets Fire's sophomore effort and Victory debut, *After The Eulogy*, is a light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel amalgam of cathartic, chalkboard-screaming hardcore and lachrymose, ethereally textured emocore (often in the same song) that rages against corporate cutthroats and seeks to soothe inner demons.

Effusive takes on social and emotional politics help Boy Sets Fire live up to its name, which was pinched from Mohammed Mrabet's poetry book, *The Boy Who Set The Fire*. Lyrical content ranges from Michael Moore's *Downsize This!*, a book about how greed-fueled layoffs impacted American workers ("When Rhetoric Dies"), to losing friends because you can't make their current coolness cut ("My Life In The Knife Trade"). Considering the band's liner-note exposition and between-song stage banter, guitarist Chad Istvan says: "Lyrics are often written in a poetic form and not fully expanded upon, so an explanation is [necessary]. So many bands that scream never explain why they're so angry."



words: DAVID SIMUTIS

photo: ELLEN STAGG

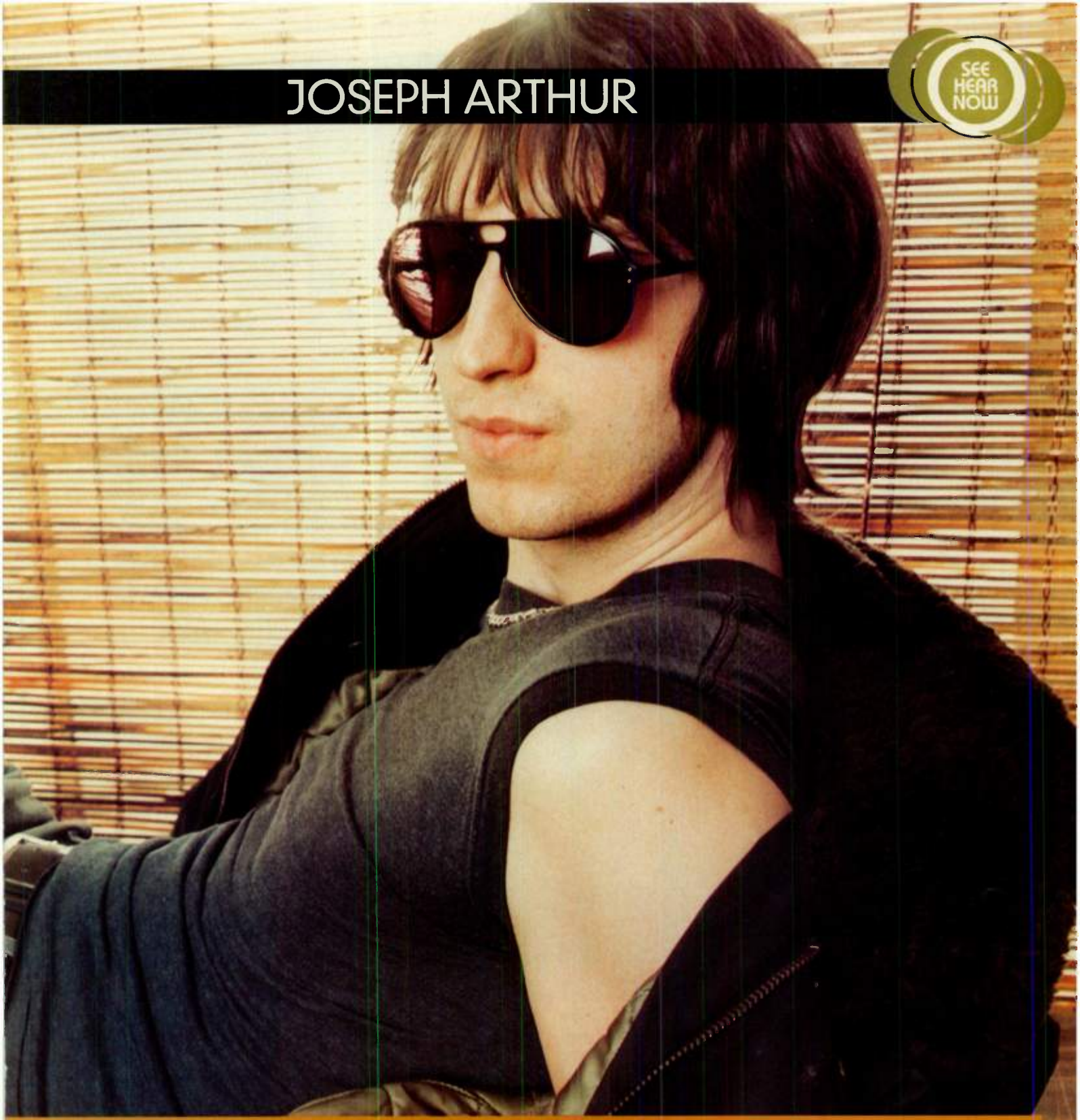
COMPULSIVE ARTIST SYNDROME

Music poetry, paintings—singer/songwriter Joseph Arthur just can't stop creating. The artist's second record, *Come To Where I'm From* (Real World-Virgin), is only part of the picture.

Merging earnest, confessional songwriting with the sort of atmospheric production expected from producer T-Bone Burnett and mixer Tchad Blake, Arthur's album is built around simple acoustic strumming, raspy loops, piano, harmonica and other textured sounds. The songs explore misery and failure through metaphor and keen insight, taking an unflinching look at life's thornier elements, like being weighed down by the

JOSEPH ARTHUR

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past or thwarted by mysteriously disappearing love.

While waiting for the release of his sophomore record, he spent his time writing and illustrating a "children's book for demented adults." Arthur, who's not sure if his project will ever be published, explains: "I just wanted to make a book. It's not going to be a bestseller or anything like that."

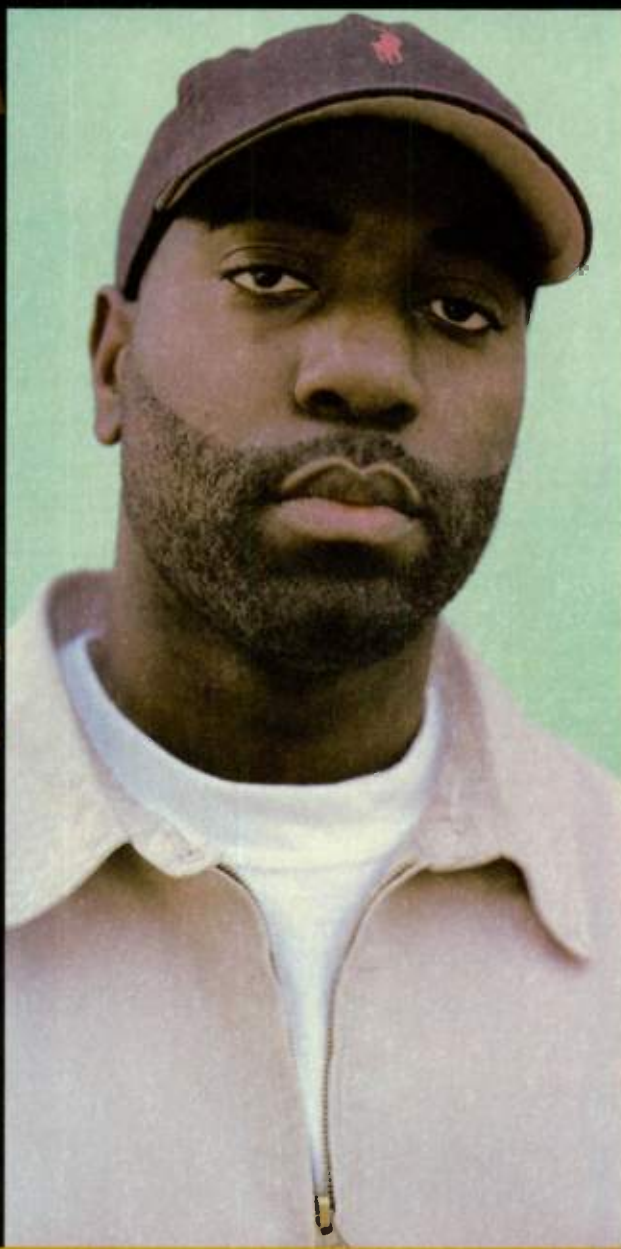
The artist's ragged, copper and silver impressionistic paintings on last year's EP, *Vacancy* (Realworld-Virgin), helped the release garner a Grammy nomination for best album packaging. "I think it's an extension of needing to do something that doesn't have any other

people's eyes on it," says Arthur of his brushwork, "and just doing it for the sake of it." Arthur also painted the dark-hued humanoid figures on the cover of *Come To Where I'm From*.

If you need any further proof of Arthur's unending creative output, he's already written and recorded another album since *Come To Where I'm From*, which will stay shelved for a while. Arthur isn't complaining. "It keeps me slowed down and makes me only put out a little music at a time," he says. "It's not going anywhere; if it's good, then it's still going to be good two years from now."

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JURASSIC 5



THE POSSE STRIKES BACK

While the arrival of the hip-hop new school in the mid-'80s rightly heralded the genre's coming of age, we tend to forget what was left behind. The rise of solitary MC icons brought artists like Rakim and Big Daddy Kane to the fore, but this new fixation erased the collective spirit and entertaining charm of groups like the Cold Crush Brothers and Treacherous Three. Forgotten in all but name, these artists have now been reduced to footnotes in the tome of hip-hop history.

That legacy has never been lost for Los Angeles's Jurassic 5, though. MCs Akil, Chali 2na, Mark 7even and Zaakir, along with DJs Cut Chemist and Numark, came together in 1993 when Los Angeles's Unity Committee and Rebels Of Rhythm crews united. Their name is an homage to the "numbered" crews of yesteryear. Although there are six Jurassic members, "5" honors classic hip-hop crew The Furious 5. Together, J5 resurrected acrobatic old-school vocal agility and harmonized hooks and fitted them with next-school metaphor mechanics and breakbeat science. Colliding past with present, the act's just-released full-length debut, *Quality Control* (Interscope), represents the future.

Numark remembers when the group played with both funk and jazz beats early on. "What I'd do is bring all my equipment to Cut's house and all the guys would come over and we'd just listen to beats," he recalls. "I'd load a beat, Cut would load a beat and the guys would freestyle over them, just having fun and then a jazz beat would slip in there and everybody would be, 'Hmmm.' It just wasn't as powerful, it just wasn't just like, 'Unnnnh!'"

That "unnnnh!" factor is at the heart of the J5's funk-up sound on *Quality Control*, ranging from the raspy riddims of "Contact" with its tense basslines to the heated horn blares on "Great Expectations" and the soulful, summer BBQ vibe of the title track.

"We all work in different directions but we all know what we like about hip-hop," says Cut Chemist about the foundation of J5's tracks. "When we hear an old-school Cold Crush Brothers tape, that's when we all go, 'OK, that's it!' When we come together, we don't necessarily try to recreate the music, but we try to recreate the energy and the vibe."

Underlying the aural time travel is a devotion to funk. In one of the

words: OLIVER WANG

photo: ALIA MALLEY



group's videos, Numark and Cut Chemist drive an ice cream truck (converted to dispense tasty 45s) up to a cluster of children. It's a rich, whimsical metaphor that captures Numark and Cut's role as merchants of grooves and also references the importance of the indie funk 45 in shaping J5's sound. If A Tribe Called Quest taught the world how hip-hop and jazz could find synergy, Numark and Cut Chemist try to provide a similar lesson plan on the dirty, dusted funk jams of the '60s and '70s.

Pulling such a large group together to produce a full-length album presents its share of logistical challenges. Manager Dan Gordon rented an apartment in Hollywood for the express purpose of working on the album—*Quality Control* emerged after 10 months of producing, rhyming and mixing. J5's international fan base has waited nearly seven years for the album. Though the group hasn't been releasing new material every six months like many other rap artists, the members remain confident about their process. "For our debut album, we wanted to come correct—time wasn't really a factor to us," says Mark 7even. "The music has always come first and when it's ready, it's ready."

J5 has long fended off criticisms that its routines are little more than a Vegas revue of hip-hop nostalgia. And it's true, their playful camaraderie and sing-along choruses recall some of best innovations by rap pioneers. But the rappers ground their party atmosphere in complex layers. Deftly jumping in and out of songs with endless reconfigurations, the J5 MCs manage to leave their mark both as an ensemble and individually. "As an MC, there's always competition. And in this group it's like, 'Ooh, he did a hot verse, I got to come with it,'" shares Mark 7even. "All of the [other] MCs are just incredible, so I got to be on my toes to be on the same level." The volatile verses are more than just a bonus for lyric fetishists. The group slaps words down like bouncing beats whether it's the low end boom of Chali 2na's baritone or Akil's verbal drum roll flurries.

Zaakir acknowledges the group is "teaching cats of what they missed as far as not getting the chance to hear the Cold Crush or Treacherous Three." Yet he dismisses the suggestion that their style is cookie-cutter old-school: "We don't have no particular blue print or anything like that. Whatever we do that sounds good, we stick to that."



MR. OIZO

SEE
HEAR
NOW

words: DYLAN SIEGLER

photo: BRENDAN MORAN

HAVE PUPPET. WILL TRAVEL?

Parisian filmmaker Quentin Dupieux never intended to be a puppeteer. He never set out to be a musician, either. But in a twist of career fate no guidance counselor could have predicted, Dupieux—*a.k.a.* Mr. Oizo—is now both.

You may have never heard of Mr. Oizo (*en français*, it's WAH-zo). But you've probably encountered the floppy-limbed puppet he created, Flat Eric. Recent Levi's Sta-Prest jeans ads featured the furry, bright yellow dude grooving out to Mr. Oizo's spartan instrumental hip-hop track "Flat Beat"—Dupieux was not only behind the beats, he was also in the director's chair and, well, all up in the puppet.

In the US, the arty spot prompted some giggles and a few import single sales to curious beattreaks, and Levi's left it at that. But in Europe—especially the UK and Germany—the ad was so hot it became an extended campaign, which bloomed into a full-on Flat Eric frenzy complete with merchandise, fan clubs and multi-million-unit sales for the ad's "Flat Beat" musical backdrop.

Back in Paris, 25-year-old Dupieux watched his puppet and his track reach the top of the pops, cashed a few large checks, and went back to making films starring humans. The obscure five-minute puppet/beats film *M-Seq* that originally caught the attention of Levi's had heretofore been Dupieux's only foray into casting inanimate objects, and frankly, the man was over it. "I had made 15 short films without any puppets," Dupieux says with some residual awe, "and I think what is strange is that after creating a lot of characters and writing a lot of dialogues, I had so much success with this one little idea."

Catapulted out of Paris's 16mm underground, Dupieux learned just what to say to interviewers who addressed him as Eric. He figured out how to deal with the high-volume requests he received for Flat Eric's time. He coped with the sinking feeling he might be a sell-out ("I can buy a car, a house, a pair of sneakers every day, but I'm still not a commercial guy," he reasons). And eventually, he began refusing to pose for press with the puppet at all. "We worked on a way to keep

him alive, but keep me alive also. I still like him—but he's living on his own now," Dupieux says with almost too-sincere consideration for Eric's feelings. "We may do projects with him, but I want people to realize that I'm not just making this puppet. Flat Eric is just one thing." The filmmaker recently inked a movie deal with an American film company that sees Dupieux's unusual art without furry, yellow-colored glasses.

While shifting his persona away from Jim Henson, however, Renaissance man Dupieux would like to keep his newfound rep as a beat-maker. Mr. Oizo's 1999 full-length European debut, *Analog Worms Attack* (on F Communications, which had previously released two Oizo EPs, *#1* and *M-Seq*), predictably won raves from the European press before the continent reached critical mass on all things Flat Eric. Now, Mute America is trying the hip-hop-meets-French-techno effort on nearly virgin American ears. Mr. Oizo's music has always been intended for Dupieux's own films—with extracurricular use a nice by-product—and he's already using five of *Analog's* tracks as scores.

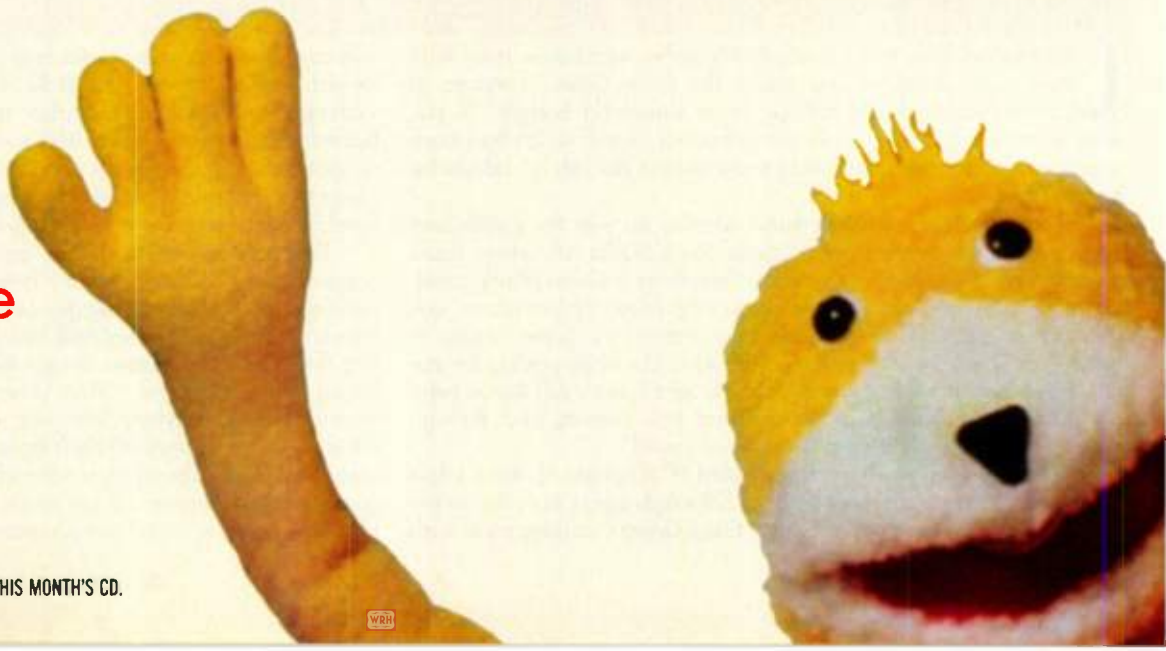
Riddled with vacuum cleaner drones, awash in slightly off-kilter beats, and utterly unafraid of blank space, it's a "hard, dirty album" according to Dupieux, who collaborated on this set with French turntablist DJ Feadz. It's not dark, though—some of Oizo's sounds are so goofy, one of the album's noises originally led him to envision the dancing puppet, and not the other way around.

As far as the European hit "Flat Beat" was concerned, Dupieux says the puppet and the beats are inseparable. "Flat Eric contains the track and the track contains Flat Eric," he philosophizes. "I still think Flat Eric dancing on another track—like a classic dance track—is not the same thing." But considering that Mr. Oizo's earlier EPs languished in obscurity, and Americans likely won't see any more puppet ads, will the new music fly without the dancing furball? "I'm thinking, 'Why not?'" says Dupieux. "Ninety percent of the music I listen to comes from the States, and I'm more inspired by American music than anything else. It would be a great stage of my career if that country could buy it."

"We worked on a way to keep Flat Eric alive, but keep me alive also. I still like him—but he's living on his own now."

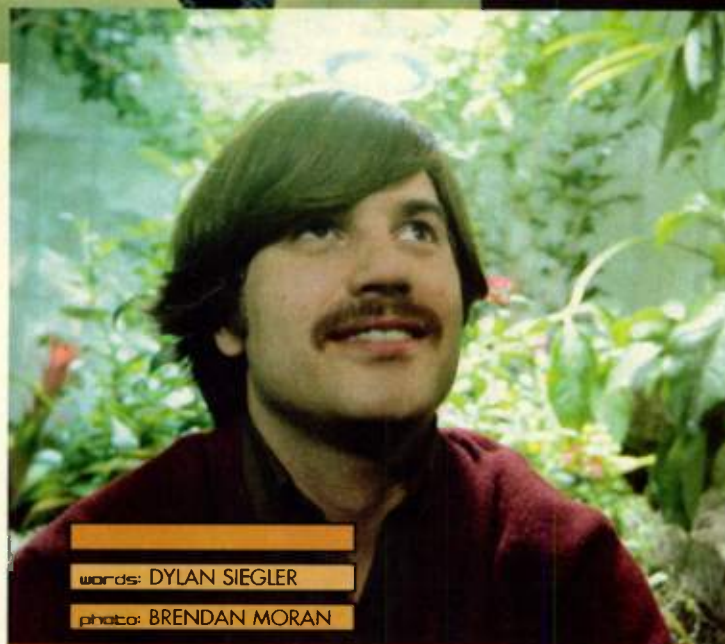


"FLAT BEAT" BY MR. OIZO APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD.



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THE ESSEX GREEN



HEIRS TO THE PAISLEY THRONE

Like hipsters who build miraculously stylin' wardrobes from thrift store finds, Brooklyn pop group The Essex Green manages its Carnaby-meets-Haight esthetic on a shoestring budget. "If you were to put a big briefcase of cash in front of us and watch how each one of us reacts, none of us would know what to do with it," admits the band's Chris Ziter.

The quintet did, however, know what to do with the exceptional vintage equipment at Hartford, Connecticut's Studio 45, where Essex recorded initial sessions for its debut, *Everything Is Green* (Kindercore). Cash concerns won out in the end, and the primarily live album was finished at sister band The Ladybug Transistor's home studio in Brooklyn. "There are things we just couldn't do while paying for our time—like learn how to use the tuner," laughs Essex's Jeff Baron (who also plays in Ladybug), "let alone spend time running mics through filters or flipping reels over to get a weird sound."

Just like on the band's recent self-titled EP (Elephant 6), those subtle psychedelic touches are what sets the full-length apart from the recent onslaught of '60s twee popsters. The Essex Green's arrangements froth

with coy harmonies, clean guitar lines and floating flute. But look past the foppish outfits—they're not Belle & Sebastian wannabes; Essex's subliminally subversive production textures (like the aforementioned flipped reels, eerie mic effects and inventive percussion) undercut its pop romanticism. Ziter says the band gets its summer-of-love feel by "subverting the sound of anything new-sounding or digital, changing a horribly 'clean' sound into something with character and depth."

The band's esthetic—even considering its tolerance for the occasional piece of digital gear—is well-suited to Elephant 6, the artsy, analog-happy Athens, Georgia psych-rock label known for Olivia Tremor Control and Neutral Milk Hotel. The E6 hook-up, along with the fact that The Essex Green swaps members and shares studios and stages with Saturnine, Silver Jews, Tower Recordings, and the aforementioned Ladybug Transistor, won't hurt the band's exposure, either. But the members still don't figure they'll ever see that briefcase of cash. Says Ziter, "You reach a point where you say, 'Fuck this, I'm never going to make money off my music.'" So, he deadpans, "Our next release is going to be a hip-hop record."

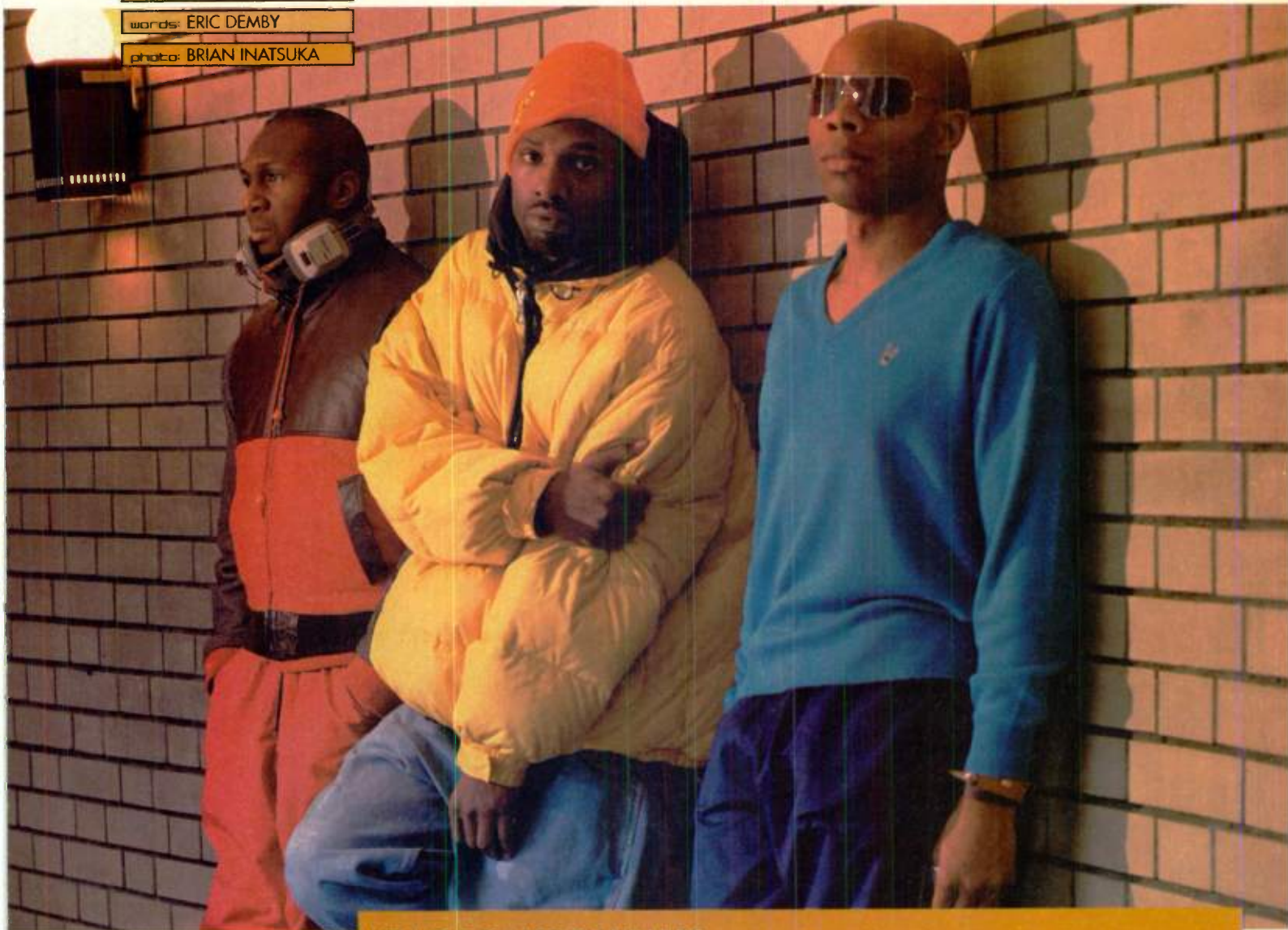


ANTI-POP CONSORTIUM

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words: ERIC DEMBY

photo: BRIAN INATSUKA



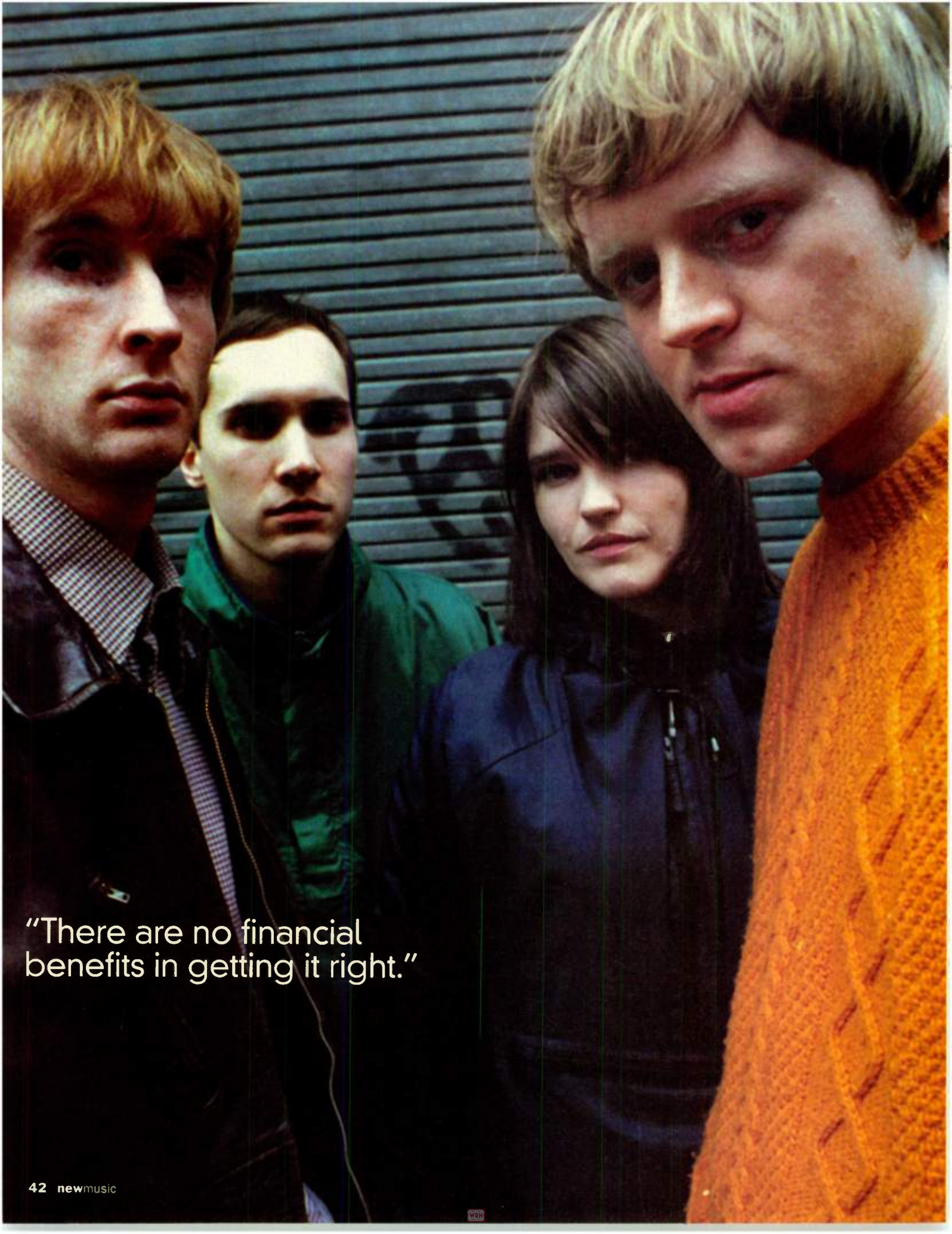
HIP-HOP'S MERCY KILLERS

"Being too dependent on other people's music is dead. It's time to do some original shit."

New York's Anti-Pop Consortium has been on a mission to kill hip-hop since 1996. And the trio's recently released debut album, *The Tragic Epilogue* (75Ark), may be the smoking gun. Inhabiting the fringe of Kool Keith and Prince Paul, Anti-Pop's members—Beans, Priest and M. Sayyid—create a maze of homegrown abstract beats and subtly dazzling verbal puzzles. "It's a eulogy to the end of hip-hop," says Beans of *The Tragic Epilogue*. "If [an art form] stands at the point of stasis, you kind of have to kill it to start over."

Anti-Pop's distinctive approach (with no gangsta shit, just mind-blowing individual rhythmic and lyrical styles) has been evident since the act's '97 debut single "Disorientation," (Anti-Pop Recordings) and was confirmed last year with *The Isolationist* (Jazz Fudge) a collaboration with the UK's DJ Vadim. Having bopped around New York's subterranean beat scene for a few years (they recently released a 10" on Black Hoodz), time has finally caught up with the group's futuristic sonic vision: lo-fi programmed beats, deep bass vibrations and no samples. "Being too dependent on other people's music is dead," Beans says. "It's time to do some original shit."

Production-wise, whether it's Priest's distinguished, detailed constructions, Beans's erratic Dada attack or M. Sayyid's sci-fi electro (all created under the guidance of studio guru Earl Blaze), each track on *Epilogue* is augmented with rhymes that are more like surreal prose poems than straightforward couplets. Priest begins "Rinseflow" with the monotone mantra: "Shark-infested water/ Message in a bottle/ No man is an island/ Individual visual MC—me, I love life." As the wobbly synth melody continues, it becomes evident that this is a heartfelt notion delivered in a manner hip-hop has never seen—or rather, didn't see coming. Because that's the bullet that gets you.



"There are no financial
benefits in getting it right."

words: KIERAN WYATT

photo: PAUL CHANTRELL

CINEMATIC FOR THE PEOPLE

Choked by the fruits of the car industry that helped make it great, Birmingham, England, is a gritty urban eyesore encircled by monstrous freeways. Situated in the middle of the country, it's the UK's answer to Detroit. Though this British motor city has produced a handful of quality acts (Black Sabbath, Ocean Colour Scene and, er, Judas Priest) it has but a fraction of the cultural resonance of Manchester, Bristol or Liverpool.

That situation, however, has given Broadcast time to refine its sound, a bedeviling mix of affected guitars, edgy drones, out-there samples and disembodied voices. The members have puttered away outside the glare of the media spotlight, waiting for their moment to shine.

"When you're making music in, say, Manchester, you get affected by scenes," says Broadcast bassist James Cargill. "You get caught up in a great wash of bands. It can be easy to be part of an established genre because half your work's done for you."

The challenge for Broadcast has been to be unique, says Cargill, a goal the quintet has aspired to since 1996 with the release of its first single, "Accidentals." With follow-up singles, "Living Room" and "The Book Lovers" (collected on their Warp debut, *Work And Non Work*), Broadcast evoked spy soundtracks, jazzy psychedelia and '60s garage, all topped off with a '90s abstract electronic twist. The band befuddled reviewers trying to get a handle on the sound, who referred to Portishead, John Barry, Stereolab and even groovy *Austin Powers*-style space age bachelor pad music.

It was Broadcast's very refusal to be pigeonholed that excited critics and punters alike, ensuring both healthy sales and glowing recommendations in British magazine hype charts around the middle of 1997. But since then, Broadcast has been mysteriously quiet, a few festival appearances excepted, upping anticipation for its proper debut album.

The Noise Made By People (Sire-Warp/London), has been over two years in the making and was, by the band's own admission, a somewhat tension-fraught process. The producer's position resembled an ejector seat as studio hands came and went with alarming frequency, unable to commit to tape the group's singular sonic vision. "We had a very clear idea of what we wanted, but engineers have these stock ways of producing sounds and we just weren't into that," explains vocalist and lyricist Trish Keenan. "We realized we had to find our own path and that the really great moments can come when you've been struggling for ages on something totally different."

It was an expensive and lengthy process. "There are no financial benefits in getting it right," Keenan deadpans. Still, the band was committed to its musical ideals, setting up its own studio and self-producing the album. The result is an opus that rolls toward you like the boulder at the start of *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*—enveloping, all-consuming. "Come On Let's Go" and "City In Progress" could quite possibly have figured on the last Saint Etienne album, if it had been produced by Jean-Jacque Perry. "Until Then" busts out with an Ennio Morricone-style guitar twang, while "Tower Of Our Tuning" sets a spindling acoustic riff adrift in a mesmeric synth wash. And over these

kinetic soundscapes, Keenan articulates about the searches—for emotion, soul, inspiration—that take place in one's life.

"You don't really think about it as you go along but you do go back to certain familiar themes," she says of her writing. "In 'Echo's Answer,' I looked at my parents' hang-ups and how they're supposed to affect [me]. And I looked at how these hang-ups are passed down through the generations, how we have this in-built memory of our ancestors."

The bandmembers—Cargill, Keenan, Tim Felton (guitar), Roj Stevens (keyboards) and Keith York (drums)—have known each other on and off for years as part of a social scene that took in Sonic Boom gigs and Birmingham's psychedelic garage club nights. Like a host of musicians before them, they've all migrated to Birmingham's "bohemian" neighborhood, Moseley, coincidentally also the city's techno/ambient haven.

After signing briefly to Stereolab's Duophonic imprint, Broadcast has come to roost on the roster of one of England's premier independent electronic music labels, Warp. It's a label that's become a byword for quality in an increasingly commercialized terrain. Canadian techno pioneer Richie "Plastikman" Hawtin, twisted drill & bass merchant Squarepusher and illbient-techno guru Aphex Twin have all called Warp home over the years. Yet Broadcast is hardly what you'd call an archetypal "electronic" outfit. They play guitars. They have a real drummer. Someone even sings. They're hardly big beats and fries to go.

"The benefits of recording for Warp are that Rob [Mitchell] and Steve [Beckett, the label's founders] are just so great to get along with," offers Cargill. "The label has a strong identity but at the same time [Warp] acts like Autechre and Plaid are open to that whole bands/live thing. They have respect for what we do."

That relationship—and the freedom it provides—is key for Broadcast, as the group is in some ways moving against the general current of electronic music. Whereas groups like the Chemical Brothers, Faithless and the Prodigy have shifted to a more "live" direction, with the emphasis on fully molded songs, Broadcast is cutting loose with both *The Noise Made By People* and follow-up material, developing a sound that is less structured and more freeform. The band has just recorded a second session for the UK's hugely influential John Peel radio show (which should get a commercial release later this year) and two further EPs, due out this Spring. Stevens says it's enabling the band to avoid the creative rut that thwarts many groups and to stand out from the hordes of would-be indie guitar heroes.

"We just felt this is the way our music's going anyway," he says. "We've never had a specific way of working. A track could begin from a sample, a riff, a vocal. We think the kind of music we've ended up making is very evocative, especially of films or segments of films. And the reverse process applies—you watch a film and start thinking about the sort of music that would suit it. By loosening up and getting everyone more involved in the creative process, being part of Broadcast becomes a lot more enjoyable. It's taken a long time, but we wouldn't have it any other way."



8 BOLD SOULS

Last Option

Thrill Jockey

There are more ways to carry on the tradition—especially the Ellington tradition—than with the note-perfect renditions offered by Wynton Marsalis and company. The 15-year-old Chicago octet 8 Bold Souls, led by reedman and composer Edward Wilkerson, Jr., goes after early Ellington as well as the New Orleans brass band tradition with a low-end sound anchored by tuba, and with driving parade and shuffle beats. But Ellington's also there in the affecting voicings for brass and reeds and in the constant play with form. The opening "Odyssey" is a 12-minute wonder. A

clarinet dances over a loose waltz rhythm, followed by a solo cello that drifts into "European" dissonance. On the cello's last, fading note, the horns enter on an arpeggiated chord—low brass, then middle, and finally high reeds, a sunburst that delivers the tune into walking straight time with a muted trumpet. Every piece here tells a story. There's a heavy tuba 2/4 beat and some klezmer clarinet on the title cut. "Pachinko" gets off on a fast Kurt Weill-like circus figure, and "Brown Town" pits sections against each other in fast-swirling counterlines. *Last Option*—like the best of Chicago's AACM avant-garde scene—looks back while marching forward. »» Jon Garelick

OUT:

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

Ellington's influence: the other side.

R.I.Y.L.:

Duke Ellington small groups, Henry Threadgill Sextett, Muihal Richard Abrams.



SUSANA BACA

Eco De Sombras

Luaka Bop

The diva of Afro-Peruvian music has made a career of reviving and reinventing all-but-forgotten Peruvian songs and fusing them with native Indian and Spanish sounds to create a new local genre. Her powerful voice has soared ever since David Byrne introduced her to the world, and *Eco De Sombras* is no exception. Producer Craig Street fills out Baca's small group with avant guitarist Mark Ribot, who adds much in the way of texture with his whistling slide notes and chords that bend and chime, and bassist Greg Cohen. But Street believes that "the voice is the song," so it's Baca's rich,

sensuous vocal that takes center stage on track after track. Her ballads smolder, and her up-tempo numbers are striking for their depth, not their frothiness. She favors a gentle lyricism, often melancholy but never merely sentimental. And her grooves are elastic, hesitating with feline coyness and ever threatening to change shape while nylon string guitar, wooden box percussion, and bass alone etch complex rhythmic beds. In the middle of the disc's standout, "Valentin," Baca steps back to allow the arrangement to blossom with hand-clapping, shouts of joy, and luscious classical guitar picking, raising the energy level until the star of this show returns and that serenely powerful vocal once again takes control. »» Banning Eyre

OUT:

February 29.

FILE UNDER:

Afro-Peruvian excursions.

R.I.Y.L.:

The Soul Of Black Peru, The Buena Vista Social Club, Cesaria Evora.



BEACHWOOD SPARKS

Beachwood Sparks

Sub Pop

OUT:

March 21.

FILE UNDER:

Alt-country, Cali division.

R.I.Y.L.:

Flying Burrito Brothers, The Byrds, Rain Parade, Ladybug Transistor.

different outlet with Beachwood Sparks, a band which exists on a small corner of the alt-country map and makes a sun-dappled strain of roots-pop that sounds like it could've been an offshoot of Los Angeles's early-'80s paisley underground. There's plenty going on beneath the relaxed veneer of the group's pleasantly twangy debut. Mellow organ runs and pedal steel intertwine with guitars that alternate between jangle and rock. The result is an extremely laid-back set of songs that are sometimes shot through with garage-y pep but that just as often bring to mind The Grateful Dead. Gunst's high-pitched, low-key vocals are pleasant enough but don't approach the soulful depths of Parsons; if he possessed a bit more tonal range, he might be able to give these resolutely retro songs more in the way of individual personalities. »» Lydia Vanderloo



TRACY BONHAM

Down Here

Island

OUT:

April 18.

FILE UNDER:

Post-grunge Lilith fare.

R.I.Y.L.:

Fiona Apple, Alanis Morissette, Liz Phair.

ballads. She still has a knack for absurdist wordplay, odd-but-lovely melodies, and crunchy guitar noise. The modal harmonies and eerie strings display Bonham's classical training and suggest she's been listening to a lot of Arabic music (or Van Dyke Parks). Yet for all her inventiveness, the shrill I-am-woman kiss-offs of "Behind Every Woman" and "Jumping Bean" are not that fresh or clever, and they clash with the un-sisterly "Fake It" (a slam of women who've had plastic surgery). Still, the closer, "Give Us Something To Feel," reinforces the notion that Bonham is a performer of sincere, if unfocused, emotion, and that's always in fashion. »» Gary Susman

Eons ago, around 1994, it was cool to be a guitar-playing, slightly off-kilter rock chick from around Boston, like Tanya Donnelly, Juliana Hatfield or Kristin Hersh. Tracy Bonham came to that party well after most of the other girls had gone home, with 1996's *The Burdens Of Being Upright*, featuring the well-regarded (but with its grungy dynamic shifts, instantly dated) "Mother Mother." A couple years after the now-defunct Lilith Fair made gentler feminist plights fashionable, Bonham's sophomore release finds her mixing wry (if strident) girl-power anthems with yearning

BOSS HOG

White Out

In The Red

Mr. and Mrs. Jon Spencer retain Tore Johansson of Sweden's Cardigans to produce their first post-major-label Boss Hog disc, and end up with one track, "Get It While You Wait," that frames the voice of singer/wife Cristina Martinez in lightly technotified modern-rock bubblegum that wouldn't sound out of place on the next Garbage disc. It's the closest thing to a pop song that Spencer's ever attempted, and it confirms the suspicion that Spencer saves his best licks for his wife. *White Out* reeks of commercial potential, but given the JSBX's Ivy League-ish opaque faux-ambition, it's precisely Spencer's attempt

to make a star out of Martinez that remains Boss Hog's most believable affectation. That said, *White Out* fails to eclipse the raw-powered, self-titled disc the band recorded for Geffen in 1995, shooting less for a Lower East Side punk take on Ike & Tina than for an even savvier version of the rubber-soled party band Spencer hinted at on the Blues Explosion's *Orange*. And as that it's pretty good: Hammond organ jump-starts the titular gospel shout, and Cameo-like digi-funk infuses "Chocolate." Much of the rest of the disc bears the imprint of Johansson and Gang Of Four's Andy Gill, who adds lots of drum machines but at least manages to strip the band back to basics without neutering it. **>>> Carly Carioli**

BUSYTOBY

It's Good To Be Alive

Parasol

Joe Ziemba and Amanda Lyons are in the Midwest power pop band Wolfie, but they're also deeply in love; in fact, they're engaged to be married. Rather than inflict songs about their impending nuptial bliss on their unsuspecting bandmates, the couple fired up the side project, Busytoby. With *It's Good To Be Alive*, they've recorded a brazenly upbeat collection of songs that rivals any Elephant 6 band in its embrace of sheer celebratory pop. Given our society's dizzying divorce rates and generally skeptical view of marriage, it's unusual that Ziemba and Lyons, both in their early 20s, maintain such a positive

attitude. Imagining themselves looking back on their lives at age 60, they envision a world of breezy bicycle rides, afternoons reading at home on the couch, and phone calls from happy relatives. The accompanying music's hardly bleak: Ziemba and Lyons's vocals intermingle, as twinkling pianos and peppy drum beats underscore the satisfied tone of songs like "House On A Hill"—an ode to homeownership—and "Dear Momma And Poppa." If this shiny, happy message sounds oppressive, well, it is; indie connoisseurs should consult Sonic Youth or Yo La Tengo for edgier appreciations of marital union. Still, the earnest musical path Busytoby takes on its way to the American matrimonial dream does have some clever curves in it, and a semi-psychedelic melodic sheen to smooth the ride. **>>> Richard Martin**

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Caravana Cubana: Late Night Sessions

Rhino

Among the cornucopia of Cuban recordings that has appeared since the Buena Vista Social Club phenomenon, only a few have prominently featured the same grace notes from a previous era that so startled and enchanted Ry Cooder in Havana and made his project a huge success at home. This isn't one of them. Instead, that combination of vigorous optimism, romantic languor and refined decorum waits like faded perfume through this modern session of Latin jazz and roots experiments—a reunion of Los Angeles- and Miami-based exiled

musicians with old comrades and new disciples flown out from back home. The occasion is a memorial for a radio DJ who honored traditional Cuban music for years before it became the Next Big Thing. Vocalist and percussionist José Caridad "Perico" Hernández composed and arranged most of the tracks, but the featured stars range from bassist Al McKibbon, who backed up Dizzy Gillespie in the '50s, to pianist Jesús "Chucho" Valdés, who formed the seminal Cuban pop-salsa combo Irakere in the '70s. The vocals and melodies are fairly standard, but the combo playing is amazing—check out the lovely horn chart on "Chucho Carabali," the dazzling percussion on "Angá Y Jimmy." If this is late night music, expect the neighbors to either call the cops or crash the party. **>>> Franklin Soultis**

NEKO CASE & HER BOYFRIENDS

Furnace Room Lullaby

Bloodshot

Three years ago, Neko Case stepped out from behind the drum kit of the Vancouver girly-punk-pop trio Maow and recorded *The Virginian*, a blast of swaggering country inspired by her Virginia childhood and fueled by the punk fire of her Seattle-Tacoma adolescence. The follow-up, *Furnace Room Lullaby*, finds the same rootsy balance between torchy ballads and twangy, butt-kicking rockers, only here Case wields her huge voice with much more confidence and precision, infusing her delivery with hiccups, teardrops, and even in the face of heartache, sass. While her debut was

rounded out by several cover tunes, *Furnace Room* sticks to originals written by Case and her "Boyfriends," who amount to an impressive guest list of roots- and pop-rockers, including singer/songwriter Ron Sexsmith, Wilco/Freakwater sideman Bob Egan, and soulful siren Kelly Hogan. Some in the loose-knit group stick around to cleverly echo the sentiments of various songs with their instruments: crash 'n' burn punkabilly wildman Evan Johns's guitar sounds like a finger pointing in the face of the transgressors in "Mood To Burn Bridges," in which an angry Case tells off her gossipy neighbors ("They're so happy now that I've done wrong/I'm surprised they don't come up and thank me"). *Furnace Room* may be a collaborative effort, but Case sings like she's ready for her own close-up at the Grand Ole Opry. **>>> Meredith Ochs**



OUT:

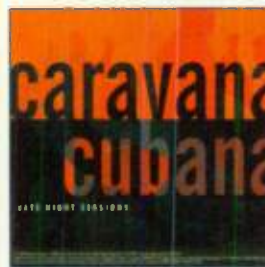
February 14.

FILE UNDER:

Barbecue soul.

R.I.Y.L.:

Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Beck, Garbage.



OUT:

January 18.

FILE UNDER:

Contemporary casual Cuba.

R.I.Y.L.:

Jesús "Chucho" Valdés, Al McKibbon, Buena Vista Social Club.



OUT:

January 18.

FILE UNDER:

Matrimonial indie-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Bis, Of Montreal, Guv'ner.



OUT:

February 22.

FILE UNDER:

Country-politan sass.

R.I.Y.L.:

Kelly Willis, Loretta Lynn, Kelly Hogan.



OUT:

January 18.

FILE UNDER:

Appalachian lifts for the liquored-up.

R.I.Y.L.:

Tom Waits, Archers Of Loaf, Barry Black, Mekons.

CROOKED FINGERS

Crooked Fingers

Warm

A tough man's gotta see some tough times to make a tender song. And in the case of Eric Bachmann, having a few stiff drinks along the way doesn't hurt, either. Crooked Fingers, Bachmann's first band since Archers Of Loaf, mixes the drunken hues of the Archers palette with the colorful orchestrations of his other project, Barry Black. There's nothing here as raucous as the former, or as playful as the latter, but *Crooked Fingers* is a milepost Bachmann couldn't have reached without those earlier incarnations. Haunting, beautiful songs like "Juliette" show the ex-Archer isn't

mellowing, he's maturing. "The Man Who Died Of Nothing At All" has some of Bachmann's most wry lyrics ever, buoyed by some salty pub music. Rather than ranting or whining, Bachmann lets his disenchantment come through in vivid, soulful reflections. Like Tom Waits's gnarled pipes, Bachmann's roughed-up voice gets more seasoned with age, and it's never been more effective. Astroman Brian Causey lends Bachmann a hand, as do Joe Banks and Anne Marie Ruljancich, whose string embellishments are indispensable. Rustic production values give *Crooked Fingers* a suitably unrefined sound that suits the material. And the results are more like the first welcome glow of a warm buzz than the foggy last regret of the morning after. >>> **Steve Gdula**



OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Brit-pop meets synth-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

The Rentals, Weezer, Gay Dad.

CUPCAKES

Cupcakes

DreamWorks

Some albums are made for love, some for money, but it's hard to know which the four Chicago-based musicians (who have backed the likes of Filter and Smashing Pumpkins) now doing business as Cupcakes had in mind on their debut. The overcompressed guitars and high-in-the-mix vocals (courtesy of Smiths/Blur producer Stephen Street) bespeak high commercial hopes, but the whole is thankfully free of the dude-'tude that marks what actually gets played on the radio these days. "Exaggerator" and "Vidiots," two glam anthems featuring colorful synth lines and some delicately

McCartney-esque harmonic shifts, are strong out of the gate. But these are oases in the desert: later tracks ("Future Girls," "Space Age Boy") are hookless wonders, and although several members sing (one sounds like Freddie Mercury minus camp), no strong personality emerges. There are also several forays into sub-Pulsars lyrical territory, the nadir being "Black Helicopters," which assembles conspiracy-theory buzzwords ("mind control and bar codes," "trust no one") to no discernible end. Beyond the first two tracks, the best moments from Cupcakes come when the members scrape off the frosting: "Deep Space Bossa" is pleasant Casio-Latin, and the relatively unadorned closing ballad "No Regrets" finds the act sounding something like an actual band, a rarity on this mostly faceless (and sometimes aimless) disc. >>> **Franklin Bruno**

THIS SLY QUARTET CRAFTS COSMOPOLITAN POP-TRONICA MAKING PULSING TECHNO GROOVES SOUND COSMICALLY SOULFUL

- DETAILS ICD PICK OF THE MONTH

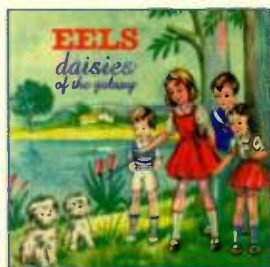
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EELS

Daisies Of The Galaxy

DreamWorks

This is either the most sophisticated children's record or most childlike adult-alternative record of the year. After mining the open wound of family tragedy on 1998's *Electro-Shock Blues*, Eels (a.k.a. E, a.k.a. Mr. E, a.k.a. Mark Oliver Everett) curls up in a fetal position and takes comfort in childhood memories. That's apt, given that E has long sounded like a grunge Schroeder, conducting a toy orchestra in his basement. (This time out, E's ensemble includes eminent instrumentalists Grant Lee Phillips of Grant Lee Buffalo and R.E.M.'s Peter Buck). Not that these early

memories are free of loneliness and terror; E's vision of childhood is Blakean, full of both little lambs (and birds and flowers) and burning tigers (and lice and spiders). But there are also moments of heartbreaking beauty, gently underlined by the homespun awkwardness of E's yearning lyrics, plinkety-plink arrangements, hoarse falsetto, and anxious harmonies. Listeners may scoff at his deadpan whimsy (a no-no in our jaded, ironic age) or ache for a soul-cleansing blast of honest guitar. But for a guy who can pen a tune as flawless as "Jeannie's Diary" (his loveliest and most poignant since "Novocaine For The Soul"), much can be forgiven. *** Gary Susman

OUT:

March 14.

FILE UNDER:

Blake babies.

R.I.Y.L.:

Hayden, Beck, Weezer.



FEATHERMERCHANTS

Feathermerchants

Innocent 12th Street-Rykodisc

Two female singers, two guitars, a bouzouki player, and a cameo by Moroccan gnawa singer Hassan Hakmoun; an unusual mix for a pop band and one that could yield some interesting results. Unfortunately, the band's debut doesn't sound any more exotic than the straight-and-narrow folk pop of 10,000 Maniacs. You can't blame songwriter Pete Veru for thinking that some bouzouki shadings and Middle-Eastern-tinged melodies would bring depth and definition to the band's otherwise wispy tunes. And to the extent that as a self-

released album *Feathermerchants* did well enough at college radio to catch the attention of Rykodisc, who opted to re-release it, he was right. But the world music touches never become much more than a novelty, and not a very exciting or compelling novelty at that. If the band had a rhythm section as Fleetwood Mac-adocious as the Cranberries did, that might make a measurable difference. If you could tell singers Erin O'Hara and Alison Winston apart, that wouldn't hurt either. In fact, if Feathermerchants had just one singer as funny and shameless as Cranberry Dolores O'Riordan, they might be able to do away with the bouzouki altogether and reinvent themselves as America's answer to the Sundays. Maybe next time. *** Kevin John

OUT:

February 1.

FILE UNDER:

Natafemerchants.

R.I.Y.L.:

Cowboy Junkies, Dead Can Dance, 10,000 Maniacs.

industrial ~~rock~~ pussypunk

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GIANT SAND

Chore Of Enchantment Thrill Jockey

After 15 years spent perfecting his expressive alienation, Howe Gelb, the enigmatic heart and soul of Giant Sand, doesn't seem to have any new moves to offer. But the old ones are still pretty good. As usual, he often sounds like he's muttering to himself, using wordplay to allude to an elusive mood, with the meaning lodged in the delivery—that gravelly and surprisingly tuneful phrasing that devolves into a sinisterly intense whisper smoothly carries the listener over many a bumpy lyric. You may not know what he means, but you're sure that he means it. This latest outing

finds him in a mostly lo-fi—or maybe it's low-budget—mode, just another crazy coot holed up with a few sympatico friends, mainly John Convertino on drums, Joe Burns on bass and perennial guest star Juliana Hatfield on supporting vocals. Highlights include the retro-funk jazz fusion of "Temptation Of Egg," a cool tune typically upturned by a blast of hideous guitar; the nearly hip-hop horror show of "Wolfy" (Gelb is nothing if not eclectic); and the balls-to-the-wall sonic scrape of "Satellite," which effectively shatters the disc's contemplative mood. This is caviar for his fans, an hour of undiluted Gelb-a-tude, suggestively obscure songs tweaked by a humorously disjointed series of musical digressions. »» Richard C. Walls

OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Crazy like a fox.

R.I.Y.L.:

Dinosaur Jr., Neil Young, Buffalo Tom.



JIMMIE DALE GILMORE

One Endless Night Windcharger-Rounder

With his long hair and craggy face, his maverick history and courtly disposition, his classic tune sense and odd mystical metaphors, Jimmie Dale Gilmore has long been the Willie Nelson of an alt-country universe he helped invent. His first album in four years clinches the comparison by paralleling two of his Austin neighbor's many career turns: the points where Nelson changed from an extraordinary country-politan songwriter into a unique pop-country interpreter, and from a dependable company man into an entrepreneurial free spirit. As befits Gilmore's more modest career, his

OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Texas troubadour.

R.I.Y.L.:

Willie Nelson, Butch Hancock, Townes Van Zandt.

changes are more cumulative than quantum. This release inaugurates his own Windcharger label, but he was never more than a fringe artist at Elektra anyway. Likewise, his songwriting credits are down to two numbers, but with ringers from kindred spirits like Butch Hancock, Jesse Winchester and Townes Van Zandt, his authorial voice remains intact. Still, just as Nelson's abandonment of songwriting allowed him to explore a natural stylistic range bigger than Texas, so this album reconnects Gilmore to his disparate buried roots, from straight rock 'n' roll ("Ramblin' Man") to old-fashioned country waltz ("Goodbye Missoula"), while also encouraging new shoots (a Garcia/Hunter tune and a stunning "Mack The Knife"). Added bonus—no duet with Enrique Iglesias! »» Franklin Soules

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HAMELL ON TRIAL

Choochtown

Such-A-Punch

OUT:

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

Rant 'n' role.

R.I.Y.L.:

Lou Reed, Henry Rollins, wordcore.

Somewhere in the grey area between poetry and punk lies Hamell On Trial. Calling Ed Hamell a thrash folkie or a ballistic troubadour might serve to describe the high spirited attacks he makes on his acoustic guitar, but it doesn't clearly articulate the precise nature of his art. Is he a performance poet? A storyteller? Maybe his art is an entirely new thing—a cousin to call-in radio called "talk rock." In it, he bashes out miniature epics about small town losers, guys on the make and women whose appetite for good times is either exceedingly low or dangerously high.

Choochtown, a return to homemade recording after two LPs for Mercury, captures the manic energy of Hamell's live act—the frantic speed of his guitar strumming, his lo- or no-fi accompaniments and the harrowing descriptions of his characters' fucked-up lives. As a poet of the mundane, Hamell defies the posturing of rock lyrics with authentic looks at the washed up denizens of *Choochtown*. He dishes out these soliloquies over catchy guitar lines, but it's the narrative that takes precedence. "Long Drive" is a short film noir about a private detective searching for an elusive poisoner. "Judy" recounts the exploits of a rehab queen. It may not be everyone's idea of literature, but it is artful. **»» Lois Maffeo**



THE HOLLISTERS

Sweet Inspiration

HighTone

OUT:

February 15.

FILE UNDER:

Hicktopia.

R.I.Y.L.:

Dale Watson, Ronnie Dawson, The Derailers.

Texas music is a glorious mutt, drawing from many roots genres: country, blues, border rock, rockabilly, swing, etc. Houston's Hollisters continue in this grand tradition on *Sweet Inspiration*, but they also look toward the Bakersfield, California sound of Buck Owens And His Buckaroos and Merle Haggard, as well as early Sun Studios recordings, especially Johnny Cash. Singer/guitarist Mike Barfield's bruising baritone is reminiscent of Cash's, and just like on their debut, *The Land Of Rhythm And Pleasure*, *Sweet Inspiration* resonates with the distinct guitar rhythm that Cash and his guitarist,

Luther Perkins, perfected more than 40 years ago. But this is no tribute band—the Hollisters are an American original. *Sweet Inspiration* opens with "Fishin' Man," a rousing, fiddle-driven two-step with a Buckaroos-style bridge, heats up with the rockabilly sizzle of "Love Rustler" and swaps boogie woogie piano (provided by Earl P. Ball, a former sideman of both Cash and Owens) with Telecaster burn on "Tonkin'." The album also offers a couple of chugging big rig- and train-inspired songs, and winds down with a Mexicali-guitar-tinged murder ballad (about a girl who turns up in a shallow grave clutching a dozen roses), but the overall effect of *Sweet Inspiration* is that of a Lonestar State dance hall pouring out of your stereo speakers. **»» Meredith Ochs**



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INTERNAL/EXTERNAL

Featuring...

K

Trainspotters may recognize Internal/External ringleader Paul Schuster from his first lieutenant duties with Kathleen Hanna's bedroom techno-pop foray Julie Ruin or from his stint as keyboardist in Olympia's garage-punk band Some Velvet Sidewalk. Here, he provides the musical backing (keys, drum programming), while a dozen or so friends from the Portland/Olympia axis contribute words, voices, and the occasional instrumental embellishment (i.e. Calvin Johnson's melodica, Carrie Brownstein's guitar). Though similar to Stephin Merritt's multi-vocalist 6ths project, *In/Ex* gives its guests

OUT:

February 8.

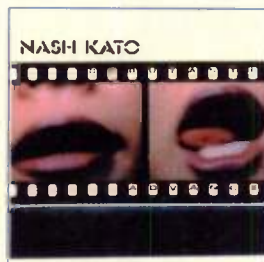
FILE UNDER:

Indie-rock sampler; the Northwest scene.

R.I.Y.L.:

The 6ths, Julie Ruin, Dub Narcotic Sound System.

quite a bit more creative latitude. Consequently, *Featuring...* plays more like a Pacific Northwest sampler than a cohesive album, with a few absolute gems buried among mediocre efforts (Kicking Giant's Tae Won Yu takes a lousy turn on vocals and Some Velvet Sidewalk's Al Larsen isn't much better) and near misses. On the positive side, Lois Maffeo takes a nifty diva turn on the smooth white soul confection "Hope," and "Stepping Up To The Mic" finds Kathleen Hanna riding a Tracey Thorn sample into hip-hoppish Julie Ruin territory. In fact, the best tracks here come from the women (including spoken wordstress Sue P. Fox), which either reinforces the notion that the Northwest is a *grrrl*'s paradise or simply indicates that Schuster's better at collaborating with the fairer sex. » Glen Savady



NASH KATO

Debutante

Loosegroove

OUT:

April 4

FILE UNDER:

Shtuck in the '70s via the '90s

R.I.Y.L.:

Urge Overkill, The Sweet, Cheap Trick

Even back in the days when the band was playing crappy clubs, Urge Overkill always dressed and acted like the world-famous rock stars the members imagined themselves to be. So it was cool karma—and maybe even divine justice—when Quentin Tarantino tapped the Chicago trio's kitschy cover of Neil Diamond's "Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon" for his *Pulp Fiction* soundtrack and gave the band a shot at reaching beyond the underground with their flashy brand of '70s glam-boogie and cocktail cool. But despite releasing several discs that each held their share of trashy cartoon kicks—

notably 1992's *Stull* EP and '93's *Saturation*—and scoring a minor alt-rock hit with *Saturation*'s "Sister Havana," UO broke up before they could break through. *Debutante*, the solo debut from UO singer/guitarist Nash Kato, relies on the same combination of ultra-suave hooks and cheesy riff-rock delivered lounge-in-cheekily. Only Kato's junk-culture kitsch appeal has, well, lost a lot of its novelty over time. There are a few minor gems here: the Cheap Trick-ish "Zoey Suicide" is a caffeinated call-to-arms; "Blue Wallpaper" is a satisfying slab of Crazy Horse-style ragged glory; and "Born In The Eighties" finds a bemused Kato delivering zingers like "Fax the hippies we've arrived." Ultimately, though, *Debutante*'s songs are old hat from a guy whose once-hip fashion sense is a little too out of date. » Jonathan Perry

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OUT:

February 22.

FILE UNDER:

Master turntablist.

R.I.Y.L.:

DJ Shadow, Invisibl Skratch Piklz, Coldcut.

KID KOALA

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome Ninja Tune

When the world started going turntable crazy a couple of years ago, Kid Koala's *Scratchcratchratchatch* mix tape was the homegrown masterpiece that everybody heard about but few actually heard. Its oddball originality and endearing audio-dork sense of humor immediately set it apart from the stylus-scratching pack, with Koala fiddling with Mandarin language instructional records and the *Peanuts* Halloween special—he turned Charlie Brown whining “I got a rock” into a trick-and-treat breakbeat motto. *Carpal*, his wide-release debut, works the same playful terrain of unexpected juxtaposition, quirky

crate digging, and nimbler-than-thou vinyl wreckage, but is way more obvious about it. Which isn't to say Koala still won't floor you. For every rushed stinker like “Drunk Trumpet”—Koala dragging, spinning, and skipping cocktail jazz records—he comes up with “Nerdball,” where a line from *Revenge Of The Nerds* is cut up into a hiccuping signal of scrambled vocables that slides into bebop drum fills and video game body blows. On “Temple Of Gloom,” we meet a sound effects man who makes mud sound “like a bag of grits falling off a car” and on two “Barhopper” episodes (cut with his jazz band Bullfrog), Koala builds first dates out of film dialogue and how-to-pick-up-girls records. *Carpal* may buckle a bit under the full-length pressure, but who else in scratchland can make you body-move to the sound of a chicken squawking? **»» Josh Kun**



OUT:

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

New Celtic.

R.I.Y.L.:

Ashley MacIsaac, Talitha Mackenzie, Martyn Bennett.

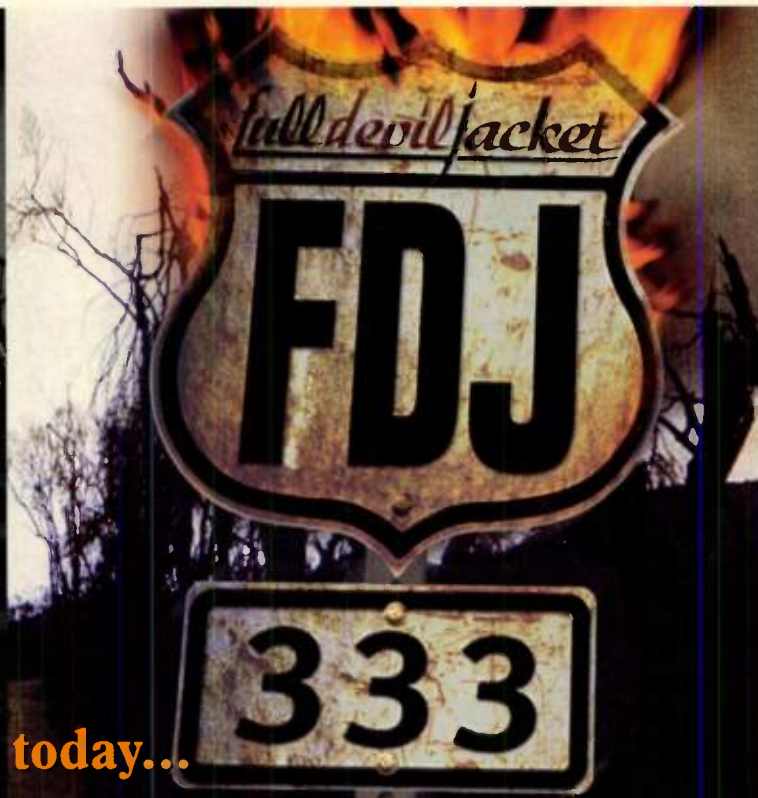
MARY JANE LAMOND

Làn Dùil

Wicklow

Mary Jane Lamond got her start as the singer and step-dancer in Ashley MacIsaac's folk ensemble, but as a solo artist she hasn't been afraid to update the music of her native Cape Breton, a Scottish cultural outpost on Canada's East coast. On *Suas e!*, her ambitious 1997 debut, programmed rhythm tracks—including one built from a sample of a spinning wheel—supported a traditional mix of acoustic guitar, fiddle and voice. And this time out, though she's still singing traditional songs in Gaelic, Lamond takes on new pan-cultural challenges, underpinning the Celtic

melody of “Mo Gille Mòr Foghain'each” with sampled tablas and outfitting 19th-century “mouth music” (the work songs Scots women used to sing while spinning cloth) with some very club-friendly grooves. Celtic music has long been a forum friendlier to instrumental virtuosos than to the subtleties of the human voice. It's Lamond's singing, however—clear, confident and joyfully timeless—that's the focal point of *Làn Dùil*. She even performs one mouth music song, “A Mhòrag's Na Horo Gheallaidh,” a cappella, as it would have been a hundred years ago. Lamond's willingness to embrace the present while remaining grounded in the past helps transcend the New Age blandness synonymous with so much modern Celtoid music, and that gives *Làn Dùil* its heart and resonance. **»» Chris Nickson**



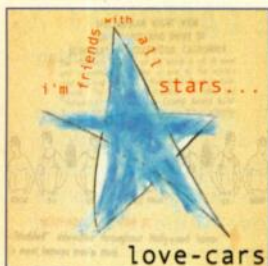
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And you try to let go
Of all the dirty things you did today...**

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LOVE-CARS

I'm Friends With All Stars No Alternative

Like Semisonic's Dan Wilson, Love-cars singer James Diers has an invitingly affable voice that gives even the prickliest of sentiments a polished, radio-ready sheen. For a band that is as ambitious (and given to writing tunes that routinely clock in around six or seven minutes) as this Minneapolis foursome, that streak of accessibility is probably a good thing. Furthermore, Love-cars' sophomore outing ably balances the band's penchant for expansive instrumental interplay and darkly dramatic hues ("Now We're Even") with more straightforward pop hooks ("Man Of The Month"). The band's lyrics

range from dealing with the tangled emotional yearning of adolescence ("Stammer"; "Call Me Sometime, Best Friends Forever"), with Diers undercutting tension with tenderness and vice versa, to getting a little worked up about pop-star packaging. The album opener, "24," finds Diers delivering this succinct little salvo: "Elevator anthems are all the rage/ They have no scent I can detect/ But they seep out of each airwave." As if that weren't enough to submarine the band's chances of ever being introduced by Casey Kasem, the track unravels at a snail's pace that suggests what would happen if the Red House Painters dropped a few downers with 764-Hero and let the tape roll. Now that's guerrilla radio. »» Jonathan Perry

OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Pop with attitude.

R.I.Y.L.:

Semisonic, 764-Hero, Superdrag.



TARA MACLEAN

Passenger

Capitol

Already familiar to her target audience of young women (thanks to Lilith Fair appearances), Canadian newcomer Tara MacLean possesses a fresh, unsentimental voice that's pretty enough to sell, as well. *Passenger* is her second album—her first for a major label—and at its best, it highlights the cool, detached side of MacLean's folkly persona, offering the same brand of offhand hooks that Aimee Mann has made her trademark. MacLean's clear grasp of the art of songcraft and her fine, clear vocal technique is balanced with a knack for penning memorable choruses and a

OUT:

February 29.

FILE UNDER:

Post-Lilith pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Aimee Mann, Sarah McLachlan, Jewel.

tender, breathy delivery that makes an emotional connection (particularly on the single "If I Fall," first featured on the *Teaching Mrs. Tingle* soundtrack). Her warm voice tends toward melancholy—note the Edith Piaf-style delivery of "La Tempete"—but the simple electronic backing creates a nice counterpoint, mitigating the melodrama. That strategy is also effective on "Poor Boy," where guitar and sax add rhythmic interest to the repeated refrain. Although her label seems intent on stressing the singer/songwriter's Jewel-like origins—the childhood in a log cabin on Prince Edward Island, for example—and the somewhat political lyrics (notably in "Jericho"), what makes this disc work is the beauty of the somewhat skewed melodies, and simple settings that allow MacLean's voice to deliver the goods. »» Clee Simon

THE COMP PILE (Our guide to compilation CDs)



TITLE: Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K.2 (Restless)

Songs For The Prom (Veronica)

Om Lounge 3 (Om)

Choice Cuts (Milan-BMG)

Pirate Fuckin Radio 100 (Hip-Hop Slam)

Third World Cop (Palm Pictures)

CONCEPT: The comic-book-turned-movie *Heavy Metal* (heavy-metal.net) has a sequel—this is its soundtrack.

A lame excuse to compile 14 unknown tracks by unknown bands.

Third in a series of chill-out house music comps.

Scores from horror films.

The highlights of five years (100 shows) of Bay Area hip-hop pirate radio station.

Dancehall and ragamuffin hip-hop soundtrack to a film based on Jamaican ghetto life.

TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC: You've thought, "If only the second stage at Ozzfest could be harder."

"Indie" means more to you than "quality."

You know the after-party can be the best part of a night out.

You think *The Shining* is a knee-slapper.

You like hip-hop for the beats and rhymes, not the celebrities and Cristal.

You've had ackee and saltfish for breakfast.

NAMES TO DROP: Queens Of The Stone Age, Monster Magnet, System Of A Down

Drop them all. Right out of your musical vocabulary.

Fila Brazillia, King Kooba, Kevin Yost

John Carpenter, *Carrie*, *Scream*

Kool Keith, Invisibl Skratch Piklz, Eddie Def

Marley Brothers, Sly & Robbie, Beenie Man

SUMS IT UP: "Immortally Insane" (Pantera)

"Why" (BohB)

"Mackzen And Relaxin" (Pimp Rekker)

"The Dead Zone" (from the movie of the same name)

"Keep It Real... Represent" (Kool Keith & Kut Masta Kurt)

"Dungle Boogie (BUD'da mix)" (Beenie Man featuring Sly & Robbie)

VERDICT: Heavy as hell, this disc makes up for the soundtrack—Sammy Hagar, Don Felder, Journey—to the first movie. Don Felder?

Sometimes bands are unknown for a reason. Get this puppy off like a prom dress after a half-dozen Midori sours.

Melodies for the mind and bass for the butt; good comp, but it would have been better as a continuous mix.

"Honey, where are the Depends? I'm going to listen to *Choice Cuts* again."

A comp that mixes humor with raw hip-hop talent; a must for any underground hip-hop head.

Not a bad representation of Funky Kingston, but not great either.

MR. OIZO ★
Analog Worms Attack

Mute

Mr. Oizo had a massive pan-European hit last year with "Flat Beat," a cheery, galumphing techno instrumental featured in a series of TV ads starring Flat Eric, the puppet creation of Oizo's real-life identity Quentin Dupieux. The track is tacked onto the end of his first full length, *Analog Worms Attack*, more as bait than anything else. Dupieux's already distancing himself from his hit, and while the new tracks retain a sense of humor (song title: "Last Night A DJ Killed My Dog"), nothing else here is quite as gleeful. The real stylistic hallmark of Mr. Oizo, it seems, is the

woozy, bristly analog-synth tone that underscored "Flat Beat"; his favorite effect is a disconcertingly biological-sounding analog riff with a bunch of samples tipped in around it and looped endlessly. That can be fun, especially when Dupieux and turntable collaborator DJ Feadz root around in the vinyl bins for crisply truncated bits of old funk guitar and pour surface noise over them like sauce. Still, virtually all of these tracks make their small points in their first 30 seconds, then don't go anywhere else. The formula pays off when Oizo strays from it a little, as with the frenetic scratching and ultra-heavy growl of "No Day Massacre" and the goofy bit of hip-hop scatology that opens "Flat 55," but he's already sounding like a one-hit wonder. »»» Douglas Wolk

LEONA NAESS
Comatised

Outpost-MCA

With her sweet, breathy vocals and intimately confessional lyrics, 24-year-old singer/songwriter Leona Naess is the latest by-product of the post-Lilith Fair ideal—in this case, an uneasy mix of naïve sexual strength and cloying self-doubt. On *Comatised*'s opening track, she introduces herself as "Wide-eyed and stupid/I'm waitin' for the arrows of cupid" over an airy bed of acoustic guitar strums and programmed drum clicks. And that's the likeable Naess in a nutshell: blindly hopeful and proud of it, giddy in anticipation of a new crush. On the album's title track she basks in her own

aliveness while reminiscing about "a love that never should've died," her delirium echoed by the song's softly swinging rhythm and gentle string washes. The album's downfall is its more obvious attempts at commercial pop wallop. The alt-guitar-charged "Anything," in particular, reeks of misguided heavy-handedness on the part of producers Tommy D (Catatonia) and Scott Litt (R.E.M., Liz Phair), who trade in Naess's alluring vulnerability for forced teenybopper panache. By the time she admits that "All I want is/ The world's approval" about halfway through *Comatised*, it's already become quite obvious: she has the talent to realize her own vision, but neither the confidence or experience yet to consistently demand it. »»» Colin Helms

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Grammy Winner
EVELYN GLENNIE
percussionist

Shadow Behind The Iron Sun



Pro.ounced profoundly deaf since the age of 12, Evelyn Glennie is well known for her unique percussive talent - she has collaborated with artists from Björk and The King's Singers, to Nana Vasconcelos and Japanese drummer Kodô.

In *Shadow Behind the Iron Sun*, Evelyn Glennie fuses acoustic instruments - marimbas, tam-tams, car exhaust pipes, children's toys - with synthesizers and samplers to create everything from aggressive drum 'n' bass beats to serene ambient soundscapes.

"She's very unique, she's definitely a very strong and proud woman. We sat in front of each other and improvised and came up with *My Spine*." -BJÖRK

Check out her track "Battle Cry" on this month's CMJ sampler



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reviews



PAN * AMERICAN

360 Business/360 Bypass **Kranky**

OUT:

February 14.

FILE UNDER:

Shapely drone with an undertow.

R.I.Y.L.:

Low, Tortoise, edgier Björk.

The second album Labradford's Mark Nelson has made as Pan * American moves as slowly as a record can, crawling through its six tracks, each of which clings tightly to a simple drone and ultra deep beat, in an hour. He's got a phenomenal command of bass and texture—any of these pieces will fill up the room it's played in, throbbing not-quite-mechanically and pushing outward against the walls. The basic tracks could make a great chill-out dub album, especially heard in the dark. But Nelson fills the disc with surprises great and small, elevating *360 Business/360*

Bypass from a cool exercise in low end theory to an engrossing, addictive work of sustained vision. After 12 minutes of purring pulse, the voice of Low's Mimi Parker glides into the mix, drifts around like a fever vision, then evaporates again; later, Rob Mazurek's cornet makes a few unexpected appearances, shooting off sparks into the translucent perfection of the grooves. And if you give the album the volume it rattles your door to demand, tendrils of instrumental detail and swarms of percussion make their presence felt, almost articulated but buried between Nelson's dub quilts. *360's* not for short attention spans, or maybe it is: it seems to freeze time cryogenically, and the silence at its end is like an awakening into a changed world.

»» Douglas Wolk



THE LEGENDARY MARVIN PONTIAC

Greatest Hits

Strange And Beautiful

Marvin Pontiac—a half-Malian, half-Jewish experimental pop musician of the '60s—is a figment of John Lurie's rich imagination. But Lurie fleshes out his hallucination with wit and style on this collection of 14 imagined, oddly catchy "greatest hits." Pontiac's story is darkly humorous. Teenage years in Mali give him a feel for hypnotic, pentatonic grooves which he combines with blues harmonica, crunchy electric guitars, and tuned wooden percussion instruments during his episodic career spanning the '50s and '60s. His 1952 hit "I'm A Doggy" introduces the collection with a slow blues featuring Pontiac's relaxed, silky baritone—more inclined to talk than sing—and wailing harp blowing. Pontiac can get funky, as he shows on "Now I'm Happy," and "Bring Me Rocks," but he's more apt to settle into a trance vamp and overlay it with quirky tales about "tiny little farmers" and things in the ceiling keeping poor Marvin awake at night. Rubin, a character who "loses his way" in one dreamy track, points the way for Pontiac, who lapses into madness and dies tragically, leaving behind this small collection of remarkable tracks. Shades of Frank Zappa, Captain Beefheart, Randy Newman, Brazil's Tom Zé, and Nigeria's Fela Kuti fit Pontiac's renegade sensibility. This is as great a relic of '60s pop as it

never was. »» Banning Eyre



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JOSH ROUSE

Home

Slow River-Rykodisc

Any pop songwriter worth his collection of worn-out Elvis Costello and Replacements CDs knows the power of the subdominant major seventh chord. With its ache for resolution into the safety and security of the tonic home chord, it's an ideal device for expressing yearning and unfulfilled longing. It's also a device Josh Rouse uses on every last song on his second album, *Home*. Though the arrangements draw upon a rich and varied palette (mixing and matching Rouse's acoustic strumming, drums, bass, cello, violin, and Wurlitzer organ), the similar chord progressions and tempi

(some gentle, midtempo rockers, some ballads) cause the tracks to blend into a single sonic mayonnaise, spread atop Rouse's light-wry lyrics. The effect is pleasant, trancelike, and disposable, though some of the more distinctive tunes ("Laughter," "100m Backstroke") may eventually burrow into your memory. Rouse's vocal style seems inspired by Billy Bragg and Freedy Johnston, though the Nebraska native curiously emulates the former's accent and the latter's confidence, instead of the other way around. There's no denying that Rouse is a smart pop craftsman, and any one of his tunes is certainly catchy, engaging, and plaintive on its own. Of course, that and \$3.98 will buy you a Marshall Crenshaw cut-out. >>> Gary Susman

OUT:

March 14.

FILE UNDER:

Earnest pop craftsmanship.

R.I.Y.L.:

Marshall Crenshaw, Billy Bragg, Freedy Johnston.



PETER SEARCY

Could You Please And Thank You

Time Bomb

This confident, radio-ready power-pop album comes from an unexpected source. Peter Searcy got his start more than a decade ago as the vocalist in Squirrel Bait, a passionate teenage punk outfit that was as fiery and melodic as Hüsker Dü. After they broke up, some of Searcy's bandmates went on to more experimental outfits, including Slint, Bastro and Gastr Del Sol. Searcy, whose throaty, emotion-drenched vocals had defined the band's sound, made some average-sounding rock records with Big Wheel and Starbilly. Now, after a six-

year hiatus, he's back with an album that bears both his name and his soul. It's neither as groundbreaking nor as super-charged as Squirrel Bait, but it is a well-crafted disc on which Searcy revisits themes of love, loss, and loneliness. "You're not satisfied, but who is?.../ You're broken in the most beautiful ways," Searcy sings on the downbeat ballad "Broken." That voice—angst-ridden yet resigned—is what makes this disc of predictably produced modern rock numbers like "Losing Light Fast" and "Bored" special. "I'm living like today's gonna be the last day on earth," he sings on the disc's closer, and sounds as if he means it. >>> Lydia Vanderloo

OUT:

February 22.

FILE UNDER:

Scruffy, confessional power pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Goo Goo Dolls, Matthew Sweet, Smitherens.

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-MIXER

red ink

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SEELY Winter Birds

Koch

On its first album, *Parentha See*, Atlanta's Seely deployed enough Stereolab-style strum-and-drone to score a deal with England's Too Pure label. (Tortoise's John McEntire was commissioned to re-record the album and it was rereleased as *Julie Only*.) With *Winter Birds*, Seely definitely hasn't outgrown its Stereolab fixation—the multi-layered melodic fabric of "Alias Grace," for instance, would suit any respectable space age bachelor pad. But overall, this is a much more diverse collection of songs with an airier, less claustrophobic feel than *Julie Only* and its follow-up *Seconds*, and a number of

OUT:

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

Stereolab/rat experiment.

R.I.Y.L.:

Stereolab, Tortoise, *Monse On Mars*, American Analog Set.

more percussive avant-explorations that bring to mind the post-rock of Tortoise and U2. *Winter Birds* also brings the boy/girl vocals of Steven Satterfield and Joy Waters closer to the surface, allowing lyrics to play a more significant role than the band had ever been inclined to before. The Satterfield-sung line "Why am I alone?" and a fluttering sax loop help render the otherwise-ethereal "El Cajon" as unsettling rather than just soothing. Elsewhere, the mellow tones of a Fender Rhodes piano pairs nicely with the warm bass undercurrent and shoegazer guitar filigree of "Alias Grace" and "Vivian Girls," adding yet another new element to the Seely sound. And the Rhodes brings a melancholy edge to bear on "Sandy," a jazzy ballad that is Waters's ode to her lost dog. » Steve Gdula

RYUICHI SAKAMOTO

BTTB
Cinemage
Sony Classical

Japan's Ryuichi Sakamoto has produced a staggering catalog over the past 25 years. His band Yellow Magic Orchestra once ranked as Kraftwerk's only true contemporaries in electronic pop. Since the Orchestra's demise, Sakamoto has scored more than a dozen feature films and released a string of solo albums, often playing ringmaster to all-star casts including Iggy Pop, Youssou N'Dour, Brian Wilson and Arto Lindsay. More recently, the classically trained composer met the new challenges of writing a symphony and an opera. When held up against these accomplishments, Sakamoto's latest releases—*BTTB* consists of solo piano works, while *Cinemage* presents new orchestral suites based on material that originally accompanied visual spectacles—fail to make much of an impression. *BTTB* kicks off with "Energy Flow," a playful yet pensive bonbon that topped the Japanese charts, the first solo

OUT:

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

East meets West.

R.I.Y.L.:

Satie, Robert Haigh, Debussy, Bernard Herrmann, John Adams.

piano track to achieve such a feat. (Apparently the Land Of The Rising Sun passed over "Music Box Dancer" and "Nadia's Theme.") Reminiscent of French impressionism, these impeccably rendered vignettes lack the harmonic surprises and melodic pull that distinguished Satie and Ravel's similar miniatures; only a precious few ("Intermezzo") hint at the vibrant character underpinning Debussy's landmark *Preludes*. Too often, the results recall the pastoral fare of Windham Hill acts like Mark Isham and George Winston. The disc's highlights—the percussive "Prelude"; a cover of YMO's "Tong Poo"—deliver too little, too late. *Cinemage* opens with yet another version of Sakamoto's enduring "Forbidden Colours" (from *Merry Christmas*, Mr. Lawrence), sung once more by David Sylvian, but minus the edge that distinguished the 1983 original. The specter of Debussy hangs over the award-winning *The Last Emperor*, as swelling strings evoke the waters of *La Mer*, while excerpts from *Little Buddha* and *Wuthering Heights* employ the same palette to lesser effect (though the latter dabbles in screeching dissonance à la Hitchcock alumnus Bernard Herrmann). The last two tracks fare better. The murky "Replica" (from 1984's *Illustrated Musical Encyclopaedia*) wrestles successfully with all the orchestra's voices (including a creepy marimba), while the Olympic theme "El Mar Mediterrani" intertwines rippling piano, jarring brass fanfares, and minimalist strings with contributions from DJ Spooky and guitarist David Torn. » Kurt B. Reighley



RYUICHI SAKAMOTO

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SUMACK

Now Hear This

V2



OUT:

March 21.

FILE UNDER:

junkrock.

R.I.Y.L.:

Beck, Beastie Boys, Cake.

In the 1970s, the peaceful, easy-feeling music of The Eagles and their Los Angeles pals settled over the airwaves like a narcotic smog. No wonder we got punk. In the '80s, Guns 'N Roses was the band that made democracy safe for Angeleno hair-metal. In the '90s, it was the Los Angeles frat-boy funk rock of the Red Hot Chili Peppers. Today, the Los Angeles trendsetter is Beck, though the musicians who emulate him seem to get only his enervated delivery and deliberately slack funk while missing his inexhaustible sense of play and fun.

So it is with Sumack, a Los Angeles

fivesome who call their style of music "junkrock," a self-deprecating term that's not nearly as funny or ironic as they seem to think. They're talking about the lo-fi scavenger aesthetic that echoes faintly from the Beastie Boys through Mr. Hansen down to Sumack's own oddly immaculate blend of samples, cheap electric and scrappy acoustic instruments, well-groomed vocal harmonies, extremely dry non sequitur lyrics, and the resigned nasality of singers Daniel Bernath and Mark McAdam. Still, given their torpor, they've apparently gone full circle back to The Eagles. If Beck is a shot of espresso at 3am, Sumack is a decaf latte on the way to soccer practice. *** Gary Susman

TREMBLING BLUE STARS

Broken By Whispers

Sub Pop

It is, perhaps, the capping irony in Sub Pop's history that the label that made its fortune championing "heaviness" has released a record by Bob Wratten, a chap who spent the '90s leading high twee-factor outfits The Field Mice and Northern Picture Library. But sometimes there's nothing so heavy as a sigh. As a stalwart of Great Britain's syrupy Sarah Records scene, Wratten has a reputation for making music so fragile and slight that pillow-biters the world over feel someone has set their tragic daydreams to bittersweet starlight pop. Wratten's m.o. remains much the same with his new

band, Trembling Blue Stars: The grounding elements of *Broken By Whispers* are listless acoustic guitar chords and wistful vocals, though on many songs the view opens up to grand, Cocteau Twins-style sound vistas and moments of Roddy Frame-ish strummery. At the heart of the album lies Wratten's failed romantic relationship with former bandmate Annemari Davies. That she provides additional vocals on several heartsick songs only adds immediacy to the tension and misery, particularly when the two former lovers duet on the wince-inducing "Sometimes I Still Feel The Bruise." The soul-baring lyrics may seem excessively confessional to the uninitiated, but pinning his heart to his sleeve is business as usual for Wratten. Sometimes there's nothing so heavy as a sigh. *** Lois Maffeo



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THE UNBAND

Retarder

TVT

The Unband missed the boat when Nirvana came along and rid the radio waves of hair metal, but dammit, this band has continued to make a dockside ruckus for 10 years (though this is its debut for TVT). These Northhampton, Massachusetts-based hair urchins write low-riding, street-toughened, Stonesy rock anthems that share as much with glam scams like Faster Pussycat and Poison as they do with cock-rockers like Motörhead and AC/DC. Now, The Unband isn't the band of wounded romantics the hairspray-and-eyeliner sect were, not with song titles like

"Cocaine Whore" and "Crack Soundtrack," but the act does share the swagger-and-sing-along policy of the '80s. You can contort your face belting out "Geez Louise," "Rock Hard" and "The Jilt" or if you prefer, knock your back out of whack dancing along to their elastic grooves. Like Motörhead, The Unband knows the secret to making the music go bang with a trio: as long as the guitar stays out of the way, the rhythm section can flex a lot of muscle and do most of the heavy lifting. And like AC/DC, The Unband is wise enough to sprinkle its blues-based, booze-basted ribbons of notes thriftily but memorably. In other words, they have taste, which is an odd thing to say about a band with an album named *Retarder*. ... Lorne Behrman

OUT:

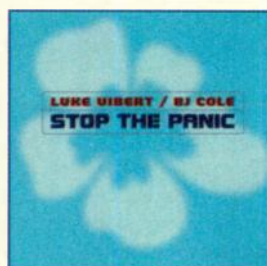
February 15.

FILE UNDER:

Jack, crack, and rock 'n' roll.

R.I.Y.L.:

AC/DC, Motörhead, Supersuckers, Buckcherry.



LUKE VIBERT/BJ COLE

Stop The Panic

Astralwerks

OUT:

January 25.

FILE UNDER:

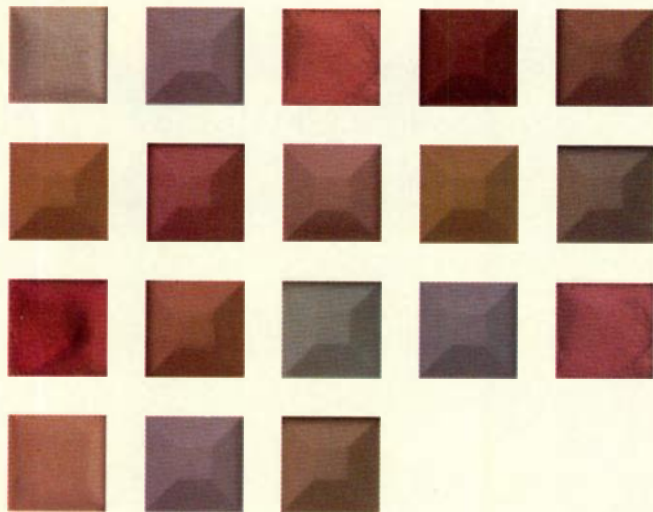
Blips, bleeps and steel guitar.

R.I.Y.L.:

Squarepusher, Speedy West, p-Ziq.

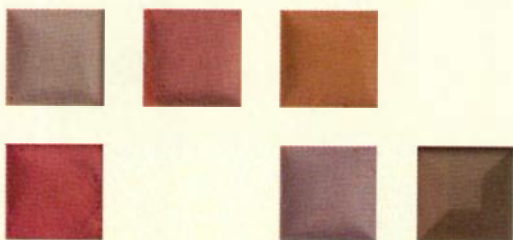
One thing non-musicians tend to forget about musicians is that they like to play together, and they don't tend to worry too much about differences between idioms. So young electronic guy Luke Vibert's collaboration with veteran steel guitar session dude BJ Cole isn't nearly as weird as it may appear: Vibert's more interested in melody than a lot of his techno contemporaries, and he treats Cole's playing as the equivalent of a particularly useful module for his sampler. But the other thing musicians like to do when they get together is jam

at greater length than non-participants need to hear, and a lot of the tracks on *Stop The Panic* go on and on and on. The results are never less than pleasant, but they're entirely insubstantial. Cole doesn't take the lead often enough—"Fly Hawaii," a pastiche of Hawaiian slack-key guitar saddled with a new-jack beat and whizzing sound effects, is a rare exception—so most of these compositions are Vibert testing out every kind of kitsch he can come up with: lite drum 'n' bass, pitty-pats over Chinese restaurant music, goofy fusion, synthetic hoedown. Vibert's pretty clearly saving his best grooves for his solo work, and indulging in stylistic tourism rather than figuring out new uses for the steel guitar's note-bending swoops. ... Douglas Wolk



Trembling Blue Stars

broken by whispers featuring Robert Wristen of Northern Picture Library and The Field Mice



SPCD 504
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VIOLENT FEMMES

Freak Magnet

Beyond

OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Same-as-it-ever-was folk-punk.

R.I.Y.L.:

John Hughes movies, Blink 182.

When a band sticks around to milk the success of its debut album for as long as Violent Femmes has—two decades—it's hard not to take a cynical view of that band's new efforts. In the case of the Femmes, the Milwaukee trio whose 1982 self-titled *Slash* release distilled adolescent angst into semi-acoustic post-punk classics like "Blister In The Sun," that cynicism is only heightened by the fact that the band is coming off a back-to-basics tour where it essentially re-recorded the familiar hits from that debut for the live album *Viva Wisconsin*. That said, Femmes leader Gordon Gano has

spent years branching out into gospel both with and without the band. And, for all the mediocre filler on the five discs the band has come out with since the debut, each has had at least a song or two that radiated its original oddball charm. *Freak Magnet* revives the Femmes quirky folk-punk with relish. From the opener "Hollywood Is High," Gano's familiar adenoidal whine sails blithely over the thumping hollow sound of Brian Ritchie's bass with an almost Ramones-like exuberance. "Sleepwalkin'" throws out the line "Someone suck me" with teenage glee, while the requisite uptempo gospel number counsels "Rejoice And Be Happy." The Femmes may no longer be as profound as they once were, but at least they are still willing to share their good feelings. ... Clea Simon

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reviews



VARIOUS ARTISTS The Voices Of Urban Renewal Guidance

Mutabaruka on the selling short of the black word: "Dis poem will not be amongst great literary works, will not be recited by culture enthusiasts. It will not be quoted by politicians or men of religion." Originally released in 1982, the reggae bard's words reflect a history of misunderstood (and largely ignored) redemption through verse that is at the core of Afro-diasporic expressivity. To his pleasure, one would hope, his proclamations do endure on this aptly titled compilation. Here, Mutabaruka's "Dis Poem" is given a loving house

OUT:

March 24.

FILE UNDER:

Afro-centric spoken word, with music.

R.I.Y.L.:

Mos Def, Mutabaruka, Chuck D.

retouching by Body & Soul maestro Joe Claussell, who incorporates Latin rhythms, flutes and horns to explosive effect. Claussell also turns Chuck Perkins's "Jazz Funeral" into a downtempo dancefloor mover, swaying along with the funeral-going protagonist. Elsewhere, Rahzel recreates the melancholy of Nas's "One Love" on the Oliver Grimbail love ballad "Missile Girl" while both Mos Def ("All Praise Due") and the Chicago underground duo Primeridian ("Musical Mirages") find soul in Allah. *The Voices Of Urban Renewal* takes word and sound and distills them to purpose and motivation, leaving a sonic signature that can only be termed love. Perhaps Ursula Rucker puts it best, on her epic poem of love and conquest "Circe": "Sirens have nothing on my song/ My song is ageless. And perfect." *** *Jon Caramanica*



THE WICKED FARLEYS Make It It

Big Top

Take the nervous energy of contemporary emo-core, filter out the power chords and overt anthems, add dimly-recalled early-'90s stylistic twists, garnish with noise, and you've got the Wicked Farleys. "Love Squats" and "Feathered" could be the missing link between Unrest's hardcore and pop periods, while the brittle interplay of "Trying Shoes On" and "Bonus Bonus" recall the long-gone likes of Erectus Monotone or The Laurels. These similarities probably aren't deliberate; at this date, it's hard to wedge 'are-they-pop?' melodic fragments into a guitar band format without sounding like

OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Indie-rock by any other name.

R.I.Y.L.:

The Van Pelt, Modest Mouse, The Dismemberment Plan.

somebody. *Make It It* is more tuneful than the band's prior EP, though their math-rock roots show in Ken Bernard's drumming: "Find Shit Break Shit!" rings several changes on one 5/4 riff, and the otherwise straightforward "Dig The Ring" interrupts itself early on for a post-Rodan instrumental excursion. But what lifts this disc above the pack isn't sonic oomph (some songs lack a convincing bottom end); it's Michael Brodeur's lyrics and vocals. The former are squarely in The Promise Ring's pun-on-sleeve style ("I'm a master seed sower/ I'm a palsied sewer"), while the latter express an innocent longing that contrasts oddly with the music's complexity. At one point, he advises his fellow Farleys to "Play like you've got something to save," but he sounds more like he's got something to lose. *** *Franklin Bruno*



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

In 1998, two Iranian house music producers hailing from Washington DC, Ali "Dubfire" Shirazinia and Sharam Tayebi, released their first album of original productions under the name

DEEP DISH. *Junk Science* garnered a fair amount of attention, particularly for "Future Of The Future (Stay Gold)," the duo's soulful collaboration with Everything But The Girl's Tracey Thorn and Ben Watt. While the disc brought Deep Dish to the attention of a wider audience, the eclectic offering fell short of showcasing what really makes the act stand apart from other dance artists.

The duo excels at producing and picking tracks that match the soulful hues of house with the atmospheric refrains of trance and the grimy undercurrents of techno. Combining these elements with a formidable flair has made the act's Yoshitoshi imprint an underground favorite and has made Shirazinia and Tayebi's DJ appearances from Los Angeles to London standing-room-only events.

Enter their DJ mix, **Yoshiesque** (Yoshitoshi-React). On the decks, Deep Dish embraces house music in all of its progressive forms, and *Yoshiesque* follows suit, making the transition from uplifting garage to driving tech-house to atmospheric trance in the course of the two-disc set. While remixes of Underworld ("Jumbo"), Lo-Fidelity Allstars ("Many Tentacles Pimping On The Keys"), N'Dea Davenport ("Oh Mother Earth") and even Culture Club ("Do You Really Want To Hurt Me"—no joke) are some of the disc's peak points, the true standouts of this 31-track venture

come from Deep Dish's own production and self-remix work. Check the boys' hi-energy overhaul of their own "Mohammed Is Jesus" (from *Junk Science*) and recent gems from their Yoshitoshi catalog, especially Brother Brown's serene "Under The Water," Smoke's grinding "Metro" and Morel's gritty "True (The Faggot Is You)"... As UK drum 'n' bass fell into complacency in the early-to-mid '90s, **DJ DARA** left his hometown of Dublin, Ireland for the greener grass of New York City, where the hyperactive breakbeat sound was just beginning to find its audience. Dara met with enthusiasm for his fast and furious brand of d'n'b during his residencies at two of Manhattan's most popular weekly events, Jungle Nation and Konkrete Jungle. Fast-forward several years, and Dara is known and respected in every American city with a healthy jungle scene as one of the most prolific and forward-thinking jockeys in the US.

The buzz surrounding the 63" dreadlocked jockey continues with **From Here To There** (Moonshine), the latest documentation of his crazed energy and superior deck skills. The disc hits like a freight train with the first taut drum break and only gathers momentum, driving with the unrestrained fury of recent cuts from artists such as John B. ("Prowler"), Kenny Ken ("Project One"), DJ Hype ("The Big 3-Oh") and Dara himself ("Duplicity"). Grating techno squalor and tinny tech-step rhythms comprise the majority of this 63-minute journey into the dark side of the jungle, but Dara's unflinching fingers blend and balance each cut perfectly, providing a surprisingly smooth ride over the most



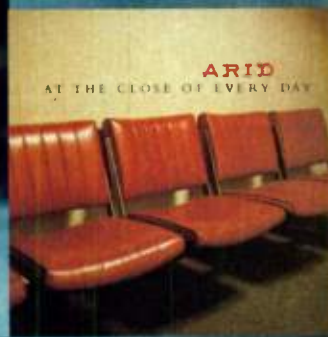
ARID AT THE CLOSE OF EVERY DAY



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— *Le Soir* (Belgium)



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Produced by Dave Anderson

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JOHN CAGE LIVES

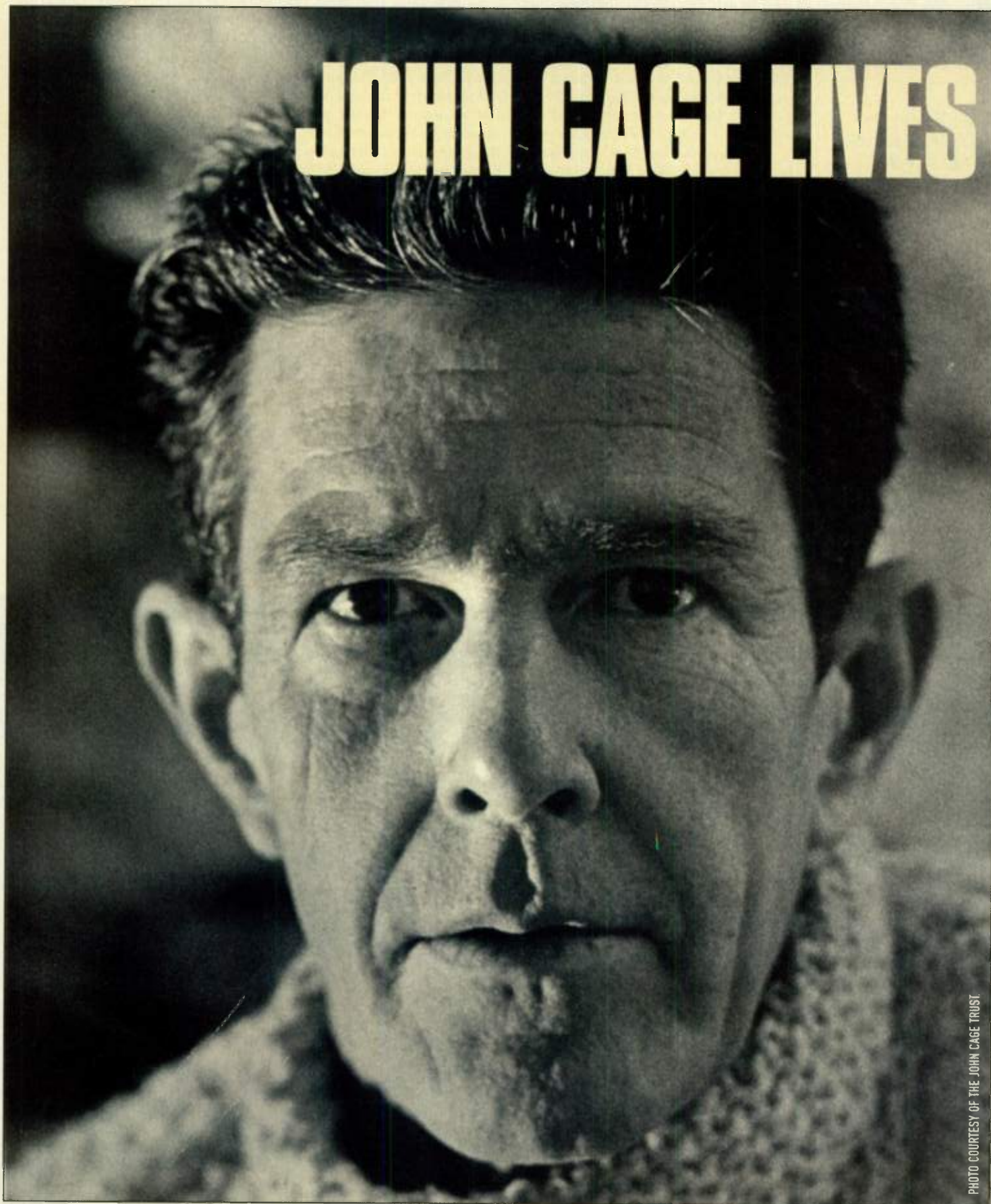


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE JOHN CAGE TRUST

Uncovering the legacy of America's most important experimental composer in Sonic Youth and DJ booths.

STORY: KURT B. REIGHLEY

"I have nothing to say, and I am saying it, and that is poetry." —John Cage

The most innovative composer of the 20th century secured his place in history with a work that didn't require the performer to play a single note. At the premiere of John Cage's 4' 33" (1952), David Tudor stepped on stage, set a score upon the piano...then did nothing, closing the lid and departing after the duration allotted in the title. This revolutionary composition—inspired in part by the all-white paintings of Robert Rauschenberg—revealed that what was noted on the page as "silent" didn't preclude a multitude of sounds (in this case, the ambient noises of the audience), striking a delicate but resounding blow to the era's constrictive classical practices. The impact is felt as strongly as ever today, in the work of such artists as Sonic Youth, Jim O'Rourke, Beck, and even Madonna colleague William Orbit. "The only picture I've got on my walls is a huge portrait of Mr. Cage having a big puff out of his cigarette," admits longtime Cage devotee Jack Dangers of Meat Beat Manifesto.

Born in 1912, Cage started life in California, traveled throughout Western Europe, and eventually settled in New York City. His mother was a socialite, and his father an inventor. In 1989, the younger Cage wrote that his father told him, "if someone says 'can't,' that shows you what to do." His diverse interests included architecture, painting, and mycology (the study of fungi), yet it was his achievement as a composer and a prolific, engaging writer that altered the course of American culture. When Cage passed away in 1992, he left behind a legacy that continues to cast a long shadow, even though many of his once-shocking innovations are now so thoroughly assimilated into musical practice they seem commonplace.

Cage's instructors included Arnold Schoenberg (a proponent of the rigors of 12-tone serialism), but by the late 1930s his works began exhibiting the mischievous spirit that became his stock-in-trade. The 1938 score *Bacchanale*, for prepared piano, diagrammed the meticulous insertion of washers, bolts and weather-stripping between the instrument's strings. Around the same time he also became enamoured of Zen Buddhism, the tenets of which informed his work throughout the remainder of his life (though he eschewed sitting meditation in favor of work and watering his 200-odd plants). As he noted towards the close of his days, "My work became an exploration of non-intention."

The *Imaginary Landscape* series, initiated in the late '30s, supports this claim, integrating non-musical instruments such as radios, over which the performer can exercise only a limited degree of control. *Imaginary Landscape No. 1* (1939, featured on *Early Modulations: Vintage Volts*, recently released by Caipirinha) used two turntables with primitive pitch control to generate spontaneous content more than 35 years before the birth of hip-hop. Every detail of *Music Of Changes* (1951) was randomly determined by tosses of the *I Ching*. In his 1937 article *The Future Of Music: Credo*, Cage proposed using unimaginable timbres, generated by electronics, as the culmination of his fascination with various kinds of noise; by 1958 he'd realized that vision with his magnetic tape creation *Fontana Mix*.

Pivotal artists including Yoko Ono, David Bowie, Brian Eno, and Cabaret Voltaire picked up on his ideas; when he staged the US premiere of French eccentric Erik Satie's 14-hour *Vexations* in the early '60s, a young, pre-Velvet Underground John Cale was among the pianists enlisted. Yet Cage expressed dislike for both rock and jazz (he found the former boring, especially rhythmically), and despite an even-tempered demeanor, didn't shy from expressing strong, controversial criticisms.

Guitarist Thurston Moore recalls, "I performed in Glenn Branca's

ensemble at New Music America in 1980. We did this crashing, monolithic guitar piece, with Glenn conducting in his savage, histrionic way, and Cage was completely put off by it. He did an interview the next day, and said he wasn't sure about Branca's music, because he was witnessing an element of fascism he would like to eradicate from the world of music-making. Glenn was incensed, absolutely freaked-out, because Cage was king, and Glenn respected him completely, and all of a sudden he was alluding to Glenn as a fascist."

"My favorite music is the music I haven't yet heard. I don't hear the music I write; I write in order to hear the music I haven't yet heard." —John Cage

Cage's influence today is so pervasive that 2000 finds him only one degree of separation from Madonna. On his recent *Pieces In A Modern Style*, William Orbit (co-producer of *Ray Of Light*) includes a chilled-out take on the contemplative 1948 piano vignette *In A Landscape*. "John Cage was a fascinating individual," enthuses Orbit. He admits his selection is relatively conventional, given the catalog. "So much of his music is tied up with ideas and outlook, and I wanted to do something that works without that. Even *In A Landscape* I haven't done in its entirety. There was only one phrase I was able to make sense of, so I just looped and repeated that." And yet, Orbit's loose interpretation unwittingly gives a nod to Cage's opposition to the sanctity of masterpieces, as embodied in 1969's *Cheap Imitation*, Cage's rewrite (a "subtraction," he called it) of Satie's *Socrate*.

Moore, however, knew exactly what he was doing when two of Cage's final works, *Six and Four* (6), were slated for inclusion on Sonic Youth's *Goodbye 20th Century*. He'd already played them under the direction of Takehisa Kosugi, who assumed Cage's responsibilities as music director for choreographer Merce Cunningham—Cage's favorite foil—after Cage stepped down from the post. Like many of Cage's clock-based pieces, in *Six and Four* (6) certain aspects of the performance (time limits, dynamics) are clearly spelled out in his instructions, while other major elements (instrumentation, notes played) are largely left to the musicians' discretion.

"People can bring what they do best to it," expounds Moore. "It frees the musician to do whatever he wants within a musical structure that's very thought-out. [*Six*] is one of the most liberating compositions I've come across. It was an easy piece to learn, but it wasn't about it being easy or hard, it transcends that. Anybody can play this. Yet there is a certain restraint to it that guarantees it to have this elegant quality. It's all about listening, and group interplay, and your own sense of dynamics. It was the musicians making the music, as opposed to being primarily about the composer."

Dangers's attachment to Cage runs so deep that whenever he finds the original recording of *Fontana Mix* (featured on the highly collectible Turnabout LP *Electronic Music*) on vinyl, he snatches it up, and passes the platter along. "I gave that record to Alex Paterson [a.k.a. The Orb] recently. And Josh Davis—DJ Shadow—had never heard it, so I gave him a copy, too. I've got two more here just waiting for anyone who comes by and hasn't heard it."

The Meat Beat Manifesto maestro cites Cage's use of indeterminacy as a recurring source of inspiration. "A lot of the whole DJ/turntable thing, the way you find a sound if you're scratching on the fly, is chance. I like to have the hard disk running while I've got beats going, and then just get any record—I close my eyes, go to the record collection, and pull out any record—and throw it on the decks, and go through it with the needle until something connects. That's a page right out of Cage's book."

NMM

1	BECK	Midnite Vultures	Geffen-Interscope
2	ANI DIFRANCO	To The Teeth	Righteous Babe
3	FOO FIGHTERS	There Is Nothing Left To Lose	Roswell-RCA
4	JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS	Rock Art And The X-Ray Style	Hellcat-Epithaph
5	SUICIDE MACHINES	The Suicide Machines	Hollywood
6	KID LOCO	Presents Jesus Life For Children...	Atlantic
7	RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE	The Battle Of Los Angeles	Epic
8	GORKY'S ZYGOTIC MYNCI	Spanish Dance Troupe	Mantra-Beggars Banquet
9	SISTER SONNY	Lovesongs	Jetset
10	MATTHEW SWEET	In Reverse	Volcano
11	TAKAKO MINEKAWA	Fun 9	Emperor Norton
12	SHEILA NICHOLLS	Brief Strop	Essex Girl-Hollywood
13	MOS DEF	Black On Both Sides	Rawkus
14	GOLDIE	INcredible Sound Of Drum 'N' Bass Ovum	Ruffhouse-Columbia
15	JIM O ROURKE	Halfway To A Threeway (EP)	Drag City
16	LUNA	The Days Of Our Nights	Jericho-Sire
17	HANDSOME BOY MODELING SCHOOL	So... How's Your Girl?	Tommy Boy
18	VIOLENT FEMMES	Freak Magnet	Beyond
19	LE TIGRE	Le Tigre	Mr. Lady
20	CHARLATANS UK	Us And Us Only	MCA
21	SAVES THE DAY	Through Being Cool	Equal Vision
22	MOGWAI	EP+2	Matador
23	PRIMUS	Antipop	Interscope
24	RUSTIC OVERTONES	Volume Up (EP)	Arista
25	LLAMA FARMERS	Dead Letter Chorus	Beggars Banquet
26	MAKE-UP	Save Yourself	K
27	DISMEMBERMENT PLAN	Emergency & I	DeSoto
28	ZOOBOMBS	Let It Bomb	Emperor Norton
29	KRUST	Coded Language	Talkin' Loud-Mercury
30	BEASTIE BOYS	The Sounds Of Science (sampler)	Grand Royal-Capitol
31	BABY NAMBOOS	Ancoats 2 Zambia	Palm Pictures
32	BAUHAUS	Gotham	Metropolis
33	SPACE RAIDERS	Don't Be Daft	Medicine
34	HIGH LLAMAS	Snowbug	V2
35	KORN	Issues	Epic
36	ZAP MAMA	A Ma Zone	Luaka Bop
37	RX BANDOIS	Halfway Between Here And There	Drive-Thru-MCA
38	SNAPCASE	Designs For Automotion	Victory
39	FONDA	The Invisible Girl	Top Quality
40	SALLY TIMMS	Cowboy Sally's Twilight Laments...	Bloodshot
41	INCUBUS	Make Yourself	Immortal-Epic
42	WHIPPERSNAPPER	The Long Walk	Lobster
43	STEREOLAB	Cobra And Phases Group Play...	Elektra-EEG
44	TOM JONES	Reload	Gut
45	THE CLASH	Live From Here To Eternity	Epic
46	FIONA APPLE	When The Pawn...	Clean Slate-Epic
47	KITTIE	Spit	Artemis
48	BEN HARPER AND THE INNOCENT CRIMINALS	Burn To Shine	Virgin
49	MODEST MOUSE	Building Nothing Out Of Something Up	Some
50	ERRORTYPE:11	Amplified To Rock	Nothing-Interscope
51	NINE INCH NAILS	The Fragile	Nothing-Interscope
52	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Knitting On The Roof	Knitting Factory
53	ALEX GOPHER	You My Baby & I	V2
54	SHIVAREE	I Oughtta Give You A Shot In...	Capitol
55	SCOUT	It Seemed Like A Good Idea At...	Mod
56	SQUAREPUSHER	Selection Sixteen	Nothing-Interscope
57	KOESTER	Oh! Turpentine	Pitch-A-Tent
58	WEAKERTHANS	Fallow	Sub City
59	SONIC YOUTH	Goodbye 20th Century	SYR-Smells Like
60	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Moonshine Over America '99	Moonshine
61	PURPLE IVY SHADOWS	White Electric	Kravis
62	MAGNETIC FIELDS	69 Love Songs Vols. 1-3	Merge
63	JOHN LINNELL	State Songs	Zoe-Boulder
64	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Everything Is Nice	Matador
65	STONE TEMPLE PILOTS	No. 4	Atlantic
66	RAKIM	The Master	Universal
67	COBRA KILLER	Cobra Killer	Digital Hardcore
68	STAR GHOST DOG	Underdrive (EP)	Catapult
69	HI-STANDARD	Making The Road	Fat Wreck Chords
70	GOMEZ	Liquid Skin	Virgin
71	311	Soundsystem	Capricorn
72	COBRA VERDE	Nightlife	Motel
73	SHAPESHIFTER	Oplate Sea	Pinch Hit
74	BOB MARLEY	Chant Down Babylon	Tuff Gong-Island
75	FOLK IMPLOSION	One Part Lullaby	Interscope



#1 BECK MIDNITE VULTURES Geffen-Interscope

FIVE YEARS AGO

1. THROWING MUSES

UNIVERSITY (SIRE-REPMUSE)

2. STONE ROSES

SECOND COMING (Geffen)

3. BETTIE SERVEERT

LAMPREY (MATADOR)

4. BUSH

SIXTEEN STONE (TRAUMA-INTERSCOPE)

5. WOLFGANG PRESS

FUNKY LITTLE DEMONS (4AD-WARNER BROS.)

TEN YEARS AGO

1. MINISTRY

THE MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING ... (SIRE-WARNER BROS.)

2. ELEVENTH DREAM DAY

BEEET (ATLANTIC)

3. PETER MURPHY

DEEP (BEGGARS BANQUET-RCA)

4. JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

AUTOMATIC (WARNER BROS.)

5. CREATURES

BOOMERANG (Geffen)



Chart data culled from CMJ New Music, the weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 30 most played releases that week. Into cover page? Got some to show us? Send photos to Bill Werde at CMJ (billwerde@cmj.com).

TOP 25

- 1 KITTIE
Spit In Artemis
- 2 SNAPCASE
Designs For Automation victory
- 3 DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN
Calculating Infinity RELAPSE
- 4 SLIPKNOT
Slipknot ROADRUNNER
- 5 DANZIG 6:66
Satan's Child EVILIVE-E-MAGINE
- 6 CANNIBAL CORPSE
Bloodthirst METAL BLADE
- 7 KORN
Issues IMMORTAL-EPIC
- 8 INDECISION
Release The Cure MCA
- 9 CONTROL DENIED
The Fragile Art Of Existence NUCLEAR BLAST
- 10 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
The Battle Of Los Angeles EPIC
- 11 ANTHRAX
Return Of The Killer A's (The Best Of) BEYOND
- 12 DEADLIGHTS
The Deadlights QED-ELEKTRA
- 13 SODOM
Code Red PHOENIX
- 14 TYPE O NEGATIVE
World Coming Down ROADRUNNER
- 15 ROLLINS BAND
"Illumination" (CD5) DREAMWORKS
- 16 SATYRICON
Rebel Extravaganza NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
- 17 DREAM THEATER
Scenes From A Memory EASTWEST-ELEKTRA
- 18 METALLICA
S&M ELEKTRA
- 19 COLEPITZ
Colepitz WONDERPUS
- 20 CRAZY TOWN
The Gift Of Game COLUMBIA
- 21 BOTCH
We Are The Romans HYDRAMEAD
- 22 BAL-SAGOTH
The Power Cosmic NUCLEAR BLAST
- 23 GRADE
Under The Radar VICTORY
- 24 VARIOUS ARTISTS
WCW Mayhem: The Music TOMMY BOY
- 25 COALESCENCE
0:12 Revolution In Just Listening RELAPSE



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

>>>Being a sludge king is not necessarily a death sentence.



To wit: ex-Earth/Melvins bassist Joe Preston continues to confuse, obstinately clobbering the senses on his latest, *EP (Kill Rock Stars)*, under the name *Throne*. Preston is a proud Olympia, Washington original, and the rumbling purr of his strings succumbs to no temptation of habit—this music is pressed from brain stem to vinyl in a weird and difficult transmutation of bestial and alien impulses. Slow as a walrus war, "Obolus" is majestic, cute and frightening, a frozen cathedral of doom metal vexed by The Residents, Kraftwerk, and whatever storytelling muse drives Mortii to play. Preston's double-tracked vocals suggest an intimidating chorus of agreement, or maybe the schizophrenic ravings of a power-mad sultan. Of course, the growing cult of Throne fans knows and loves all of this, so why not just bewilder their expectations by adding the heartfelt Spanish ballad "Django"? This is an eccentric and brave project, charting an intimate map that will guide many imitators in the decade ahead.

>>>The gory Necrophagia continues spouting forth sickly disharmonies, glassy-eyed guitar leads, and torturous vocals on *Black Blood Vomitorium* (Red Stream). Bandleader Killjoy directs his cohorts through inspired basement metal with crystalline production. It's crudely confrontational, and you can hear every glistening red drop of sociopathy. This excellent rebirth of a seminal death metal act anticipates the upcoming debut of Eibon, a black metal supergroup uniting Killjoy with fellow Necrophagia (and Pantera) member Phil Anselmo, with Mayhem's Maniac, Darkthrone's Fenriz and Satyricon's Satyr... Around 1985, British thrash pioneers Raven came to America, signed to Atlantic, and entered a 10-year void of commercial hell and dashed expectations. At the beginning, Raven was essentially a boogie



band which reacted to the miserable Thatcher-era British economy with frenetic energy and uplifting power anthems. *Raw Tracks* (Metal Blade) tells the story with demo songs and soundboard tapes that reward patient Raven lunatics and demonstrate how the crazed trio influenced Metallica and Slayer... Proving that Poland can make better metal than it can folk hymns, Euro-thrash and neo-Nazi ditties, the big-sounding Nomad delivers a mountain of melodramatic death metal on *The Devilish Whirl* (Vox Mortis). Nomad's dual vocalists, chunky riffing and tasteful guitar harmonies more than adequately outclass those countless poofier



NEWS



METALLICA

"I was pretty disappointed that the film was artistically a big hit, and got great ratings, but the kids are still rotting in jail." So says Bruce Sinofsky, who co-directed *Paradise Lost: The Child Murders At Robin Hood Hills*. Preparing for *Revelations*, the sequel to the eerie HBO documentary, Sinofsky and partner Joe Berlinger again relied on help from the members of Metallica (who donated 12 songs to the soundtrack), and uncovered a phenomenal Internet-based network of grassroots activists. The film, which deals with the demonization of teen metalheads in West Memphis, Arkansas, premieres this spring on HBO and is expected to see theatrical release over the summer. In the meantime, Berlinger tackles a foe nearly as evasive and spooky as the Arkansas Supreme Court—he's directing the sequel to *The Blair Witch Project*.

>>>Jorg Burger is Cologne's most inventive—and unsung—



PICK!

make that quite clear: they are architecture's spatial ideas converted into tightly wound dance floor entertainment. He takes electronic minimalism's severe, unforgiving body music techniques that shake the listener like a rag doll and turns them upside down, eschewing the often-overbearing seriousness of the genre. The Modernist's ability to hone saw-tooth percussion and accent it with staccato, chordal punctuation is on display here, and it is a sound that should not be overlooked.

hero of electronic music, having recorded more than 100 tracks under various pseudonyms (Bionaut and Pentax are two) over the past seven years. With his brother, fellow Cologne resident Wolfgang Voigt (a.k.a. Mike Ink) he recorded the Burger/Ink record *Las Vegas*, released in the US in 1998. His new full-length, *The Modernist Explosion* (Matador), recorded under the sometime pseudonym **The Modernist**, is his most shamelessly accessible dance floor record to date. Nevertheless, he doesn't let go of innovation and experimentation. It is that rare electronic record that sounds just as perfectly executed at illegal volumes on the club floor as on a pair of headphones. Unlike the spate of recent electronic records either recorded in unusual architectural sites or grounded in the design of specific buildings, Burger doesn't reify architecture. Instead, he plays with it and parodies it, from the gorgeous Russian Constructivist cover artwork right down to the bare grooves. The album's two gems, "Architainment" and "Mrs. New Deal,"



MOUSE ON MARS

previously explored. This is music for the "post-electronica" generation... Speaking of miniturism, ever since Finnish producer **Vladislav Delay** first released a fine, ultra-minimalist EP on the tiny Finnish label Huume in 1997, interest in his music has grown considerably. From tiny splinters of vocals and synth chords, he builds towering sound sculptures that exercise a pleasantly unbearable restraint. After two recent EPs for small German labels, his first full-length, *Entain*, is now available on the Mille Plateaux imprint. Delay's music is a genre unto itself. Taking the glacial severity of fellow Fins Pan Sonic as a stepping-off point for long meditations on what is hidden between the groove (each track is more than 20 minutes), the tiny cracks are where he can drop in and survey the surroundings before returning to mixing board. It's as if he's a scientist studying the ceaseless movement of the tiny insect world, picking up barely audible sounds, enlarging then attenuating them. Throughout the six tracks here, which draw heavily on roots dub influences as well as laptop minimalists such as Ryoji Ikeda and Pita, Delay creates an atmosphere thick with clicks, glitches, and metallic intrusions that surface as faintly melodic, incandescent sound fragments. *Entain* represents a new generation of electronic music. Forthcoming full-length records for a number of other labels will only solidify Delay's reputation.

>>>Miniatrist is perhaps the only word to accurately describe the latest work of Cologne's highly regarded **Mouse On Mars**. *Niun Niggung* is Mouse On Mars's most accessible and melodic record thus far. Previous releases placed the group within the constellation of avant-electronic musicians whose music had no place on the dancefloor. And while the act still makes highly experimental music, many of the tracks on this album will bring new attention from those in search of the elusive perfect groove. "Gogonal" and "Boosc" are sundered by helicopter blade percussion, propelled by a power-surge bassline hum and warbled 4/4 kick drums nearly buried in tonal blips. The use of the echo chamber pushes the track into dub territory, an area the group had not



TOP 25

- 1 KRUST
Coded Language TALKIN' LOUD-MERCURY
- 2 BABY NAMBOOS
Ancoats 2 Zambia PALM PICTURES
- 3 GOLDIE
INCredible Sound Of... DUMKATHOUSE-COLUMBIA
- 4 DAVE RALPH
Tranceport II KINETIC
- 5 ANDREA PARKER
Kiss My Arp MC WAR-BIGDARS BANQUET
- 6 SQUAREPUSHER
Selection Sixteen NOTHING-INTERSCOPE
- 7 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Moonshine Over America '99 MOONSHINE
- 8 RICHIE HAWTIN
Decks, EPX & 909 M. MUSIKOVAMUTE-MUTE
- 9 APHRODITE
Aphrodite Bee STREET-V2
- 10 ALEX GOPHER
You My Baby & I SOLID-V2
- 11 KID LOCO
Presents Jesus Life For Children... ATLANTIC
- 12 VARIOUS ARTISTS ESL
Presents Easy Tempo EIGHTEENTH STREET LOUNGE
- 13 SASHA
Xpander (EP) DECONSTRUCTION-ULTRA
- 14 VARIOUS ARTISTS
DJ Kicks: Kid Loco STUDIO KT
- 15 BIO-TEK
Punishment For Decadence DOPPLER EFFECT
- 16 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Exoskeleton 2 POSSESSIVE RUNFOLD
- 17 TAKAKO MINEKAWA
Fun 9 EMPEROR MORTON
- 18 DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID
Subliminal Minded The E.P. OUTPOST-BARNBONE
- 19 JOHN DIGWEED
Bedrock ULTRA
- 20 SPACE RAIDERS
Don't Be Daft MEDICINE
- 21 VARIOUS ARTISTS
The New Latinaires 2 UBQUITY
- 22 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Two Revolutions GOOD LOOKING
- 23 PEACE ORCHESTRA
Peace Orchestra 2-STONE-STUDIO KT
- 24 COVENANT
Euro (EP) METROPOLIS
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS
Shot 99 A DIFFERENT DRUM



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

TOP 25

- 1 JAY-Z FEAT. BEANIE SIGEL & AMIL
Do It Again... ROC-A-FELLA DEF JAM
- 2 COMMON
"Doooin'" MCA
- 3 RAKIM
"When I Be On The Mic" UNIVERSAL
- 4 MOS DEF "Ms. Fat Booty"
Rawkus
- 5 MISSIN' LINX
"What It Is" STIMULATED-LOUD
- 6 Q-TIP
"Breathe And Stop" ARISTA
- 7 KARDINAL OFFISHAL
"Husslin'" FIGURE IV
- 8 MR. LIF
"Farmhand" GRAND ROYAL
- 9 NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
"Dead Wrong" BAD BOY-ARISTA
- 10 DMX
"What's My Name" DEF JAM
- 11 NAS
"Nastradamus" ILL WILL-COLUMBIA
- 12 DR. DRE FEAT. EMINEM
"Forgot About Dre" INTERSCOPE
- 13 HANDSOME BOY MODELING SCHOOL
"Magnetizing" TOMMY BOY
- 14 DA BRAT
"That's What I'm Lookin' For" COLUMBIA
- 15 DR. DRE FEAT. SNOOP DOGG
"Still D.R.E." AFTERMATH-INTERSCOPE
- 16 FUNKMASTER FLEX & BIG KAP
The Tunnel (LP) DEF JAM
- 17 TASH
"Night Fall" LOUD
- 18 EASTSIDAZ FEAT. SNOOP DOGG
"G'd Up" TVT
- 19 GRAND AGENT
"Mingling" CZAR CASKET
- 20 RAEKWON
"Live From NY" LOUD
- 21 KELIS
"Caught Out There" VIRGIN
- 22 THE LOX
"Wild Out" RUFF RYDERS-INTERSCOPE
- 23 KILLAH PRIEST
"View From Masada" MCA
- 24 MR. LEN FEAT. JUGGAKNOTS
"This Morning" MATADOR
- 25 MEDINA GREEN
"IC" TOMMY BOY

4



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

>>>Initially a very limited release, the **Eargasms:**



COMPANY FLOW

own, but one practically essential to any thinking-person's hip-hop collection. Anyone who wants to know how close together next-level hip-hop and the spoken word/poetry slam world are need look no further.

>>>Of all the non-playa talent that has sprung from the West Coast in the past decade, Del Tha Funkee Homosapien and his Hieroglyphics crew are still the godfathers of all those skilled slang slingers out there. And now Del has come at us with probably the best record of his career, *Both Sides Of The Brain* (Hiero Imperium). While Del rocks his confident, instantly recognizable style all over self-produced cuts like "If You Must," "Skull & Crossbones," "Time Is Too Expensive" and "Soopa Feen," his guests push his talents to an even higher level: specifically El-P on "Offspring," Casual on "Jaw Gymnastics" and Prince Paul on "Signature Slogans"... Fans of Ninja Tune's DJ Kid Koala and supergroup DJ Food will be very glad to hear that both have new full-lengths out. But if you're expecting heavy cut-and-scratch epics and wax-bending exercises, you may be in for a surprise. Of course Koala's *Carpal Tunnel Syndrome* and Food's *Kaleidoscope* are rooted in the fact that both music-making entities are



KID KOALA

vinyl junkies at their core, but both explore far more experimental, non-scratch-based scenarios than you might expect from such accomplished live DJs. These are two very mature, calmly paced and fascinating albums, showing a possible new direction in the Ninja Tune esthetic... Only a crew as enigmatic, deep and twisted as New York's Anti-Pop Consortium would name its debut album "Tragic Epilogue" (75Ark). All the music on the act's opening salvo onto the national rap scene is produced by members of the group, and the hypnotic power of stuttered beats and fuzzed-out space blips, bleeps and sound washes are a perfect foil for the way-out lyrics that all three vocalists spit. Sometimes fast ("3 Digit Wiz"), usually slower ("Nude Paper," "Sllab," "What Am I?"), Anti-Pop never sounds like something you've heard before. Highly, highly recommended.



NEWZ



LOS MARIJUANOS

Aside from issuing the Anti-Pop debut, the new 75Ark label has lots of interesting future plans, including a reissue of the *Dr. Octagon* album and new wares from *Dan The Automator*, the X-Ecutioners' *Mista Sinista*, and rapper Encore, in addition to a future trio project entitled *Deltron 2000*, with The Automator, Kid Koala and Del. Check them out at www.75ark.com... For a slice of Chicago's underground, stop by Gramophone Records, www.gramophone-records.com, and www.wickedentertainment.com, home to the Wicked label and talent like *E.C. IIIa* and *Los Marijuanos*... Also on the internet tip, don't sleep on Davey D's definitive Hip Hop Newsletter and site, online (with subscription info) at www.daveyd.com... And Atomic Pop, current home to major label expatriates *Public Enemy* and *Ice T*, has now added Philly's RuffLife (owned by Chris Schwartz, ex- of Schoolly D Records and, more recently, of Ruffhouse) and Los Angeles's always-interesting Goodvibe imprint to its roster: check them out at www.atomicpop.com.

MARCH 6

EMPEROR PENGUIN Mysterious Pony *My Pal God*.
THE LAPSE Heaven Ain't Happenin' *Southern*.
LIKE A TIM Red And Blue Boxing *Rephlex*.
LOS INFERNOS Rock N Roll Nightmare *Alternative Tentacles*.
MASHED POTATOES Up And Over *Munster*.
PAUL NEWMAN Machine Is Not Broken *My Pal God*.
NOAM CHOMSKY Case Studies In Hypocrisy: US Human Rights Policy *Alternative Tentacles*.
THE ROOKS Wishing Well *Munster*.
SLIPPER Invisible Movies *Rephlex*.
STUDIO MCs DJ Kicks *Studio K7*.
DWIGHT TWILEY Between The Cracks Volume 1 *Munster*.
HOWARD ZINN Heroes And Martyrs: Emma Goldman, Sacco & Vanzetti *Alternative Tentacles*.

MARCH 7

IAN ANDERSON The Secret Language Of Birds *Fuel 2000*.
ANGIE APARO The American *Arista*.
BAUHAUS Gotham DVD *Metropolis*.
THE BEATSTREAKS Launched *Epitaph*.
BELLE AND SEBASTIAN Lazy Line Painter Jane *Matador*.
—Box set of their three previously import-only CD-EPs: Dog On Wheels, Lazy Line Painter Jane, and 369 Seconds Of Light.
SHEEBA BLACK Check Your Style *Artemis*.
BLACK ROB Life Story *Arista*.
—Guest appearances from Puff Daddy and Jennifer Lopez.
THE BLOWTOPS Menacing Sinstress *Estrus*.
BRADFORD RCA.
ROBERT BRADLEY RCA.
CAM'RON Sports, Drugs & Entertainment *Entertainment-Epic*.
CINNAMON Vertigo *March*.
CHICK COREA My Spanish Heart *Verve*.
—Reissue.
CROWBAR Equilibrium *Spitfire*.
THE CULT Ceremony; Electric; Love; Sonid Temple; The Cult *Beggars Banquet*.
—Reissues.
CUPCAKES Cupcakes *DreamWorks*.
DELTA 72 000 *Touch And Go*.
—Features Neil and Jennifer of Royal Trux.
DEL THA FUNKEE HOMOSAPIEN The Brain *Hiero-Imperium*.
DIARY OF DREAMS One of Eighteen *Metropolis*.
DIRTY THREE Whatever You Love, You Are *Touch & Go*.
DJ CLUE Island.
DJ ICEY Under The Sun *FFRR-London*.
DISTURBED The Sickness *Giant-Reprise*.
THE DWARVES Come Clean *Epitaph*.
ENUFF Z'NUFF 1985; Live; Seven; PeachFuzz; Tweaked *Spitfire*.
—Nelson, Enuff Z'Nuff, New York, 1989. I still haven't recovered.
F.A.T.E. Warner Bros.
FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM Total Fuckin' Blowout *Estrus*.
CEVIN FISHER Underground 2000 *Razor & Tie*.
FLASHPOINT On The Verge *Atomic Pop*.
THE FOR CARNATION Standard *Touch & Go*.
—Features former Sliint member Brian McMahon.
BILL FRISSELL Ghost Town *Nonesuch*.
FULL DEVIL JACKET Full Devil Jacket *Island-Def Jam*.
GIANT SAND Chore Of Enchantment *Thrill Jockey*.
JIMMY DALE GILMORE One Endless Night *Windcharger*.
THE GIMMICKS Honeymoon's Over *Estrus*.
GREAT BIG SEA Turn *Sire*.
GUIDED BY VOICES Hold On Hope *TVT*.
—10-song EP with unreleased tracks and rarities.
WHITNEY HOUSTON Greatest Hits *Arista*.
IGGY AND THE STOOGES Double Danger *Bomp!*
ISOTOPE 217 EP *Thrill Jockey*.
AL JARREAU Tomorrow, Today *GRP*.
JUNGLE BROTHERS VIP V2.
—Produced by The Propellerheads' Alex Gifford.

PATRICK LEONARD Rivers *Rounder*.
MARK LIZOTTE Soul Lost Companion *Mammoth*.
LOVE-CARS I'm Friends With All Stars *No Alternative*.
M2M Shades Of Purple *Atlantic*.
—They're young. They're Norwegian. They're not black metal. Wheee!
MACHINES OF LOVING GRACE *Mammoth*.
MEKONS Journey To The End Of Night *Quarterstick*.
THE MONKEY Sugar Man *Estrus*.
MR. LEN What The Fuck *Matador*.
—12".
MRS. FUN The Best Of Mrs. Fun *Daemon*.
NERF HERDER How To Meet Girls *Honest Don's*.
NIACIN Deep *Magna Carta*.
—Billy Sheehan of Mr. Big's new project, with Toto's Steve Lukather guesting. Cuz Toto fucking rules.
NIGHT & DAY Night & Day *Jive*.
NIGHTMARES ON WAX Remix EP *Matador*.
—DJ Food, Rae & Christian, Paul Nice, and others revisiting the recent Carboot Soul album.
NOOGIE Noogie *Trauma*.
N'SYNC No Strings Attached *Jive*.
—They are so hot! Dylan's fave is Justin. She doodles his name all over the office walls.
PAPAS FRITAS Buildings And Grounds *Minty Fresh*.
JULIUS PAPP Go Deep Volume 2 *Razor & Tie*.
—Previously released tracks and a new single.
LOU REED Reprise.
SAVATH & SAVALAS Savath & Savalas *Hefty*.
SIBA Brooklyn Breakbeats *Instinct*.
—Drum loops, fx and basslines from the man behind the Get Open project.
SNAKE RIVER CONSPIRACY Reprise.
CLEM SNIDE Your Favorite Music *Sire*.
SOUNDTRACK The Music Of Disney *Var Se Sarabande*.
—Dude, if you get really fucked up and listen to this, it's sick.
STRANGEFOLK A Great Long While *Mammoth*.
MARY TIMONY Mountains *Matador*.
—Solo record from the voice behind Helium.
TOWN AND COUNTRY EP *Thrill Jockey*.
TREMBLING BLUE STARS Broken By Whispers *Sub Pop*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Teen People *Teen*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Tektoniks *Om*.
—Combines electronic music producers and turntablists. Some of the artists teaming include Propellerheads and DJ Craze, Freestylers and DJ Z-Trip, Ming & FS and J-Rocc, Protek and the Scratch Pervers, Meat Beat Manifesto and the Herbaliser, Mocean Worker and DJ Eddie Def and more.
VIOLENT FEMMES Freak Magnet *Beyond*.
DINAH WASHINGTON What A Diff'rence A Day Makes *Verve*.
—Reissue.
THE WICKED FARLEYS Make It It *Big Top*.

MARCH 14

PAULA ABDUL The Best Of Paula Abdul *Virgin*.
ARID ARID *Columbia*.
PATO BANTON Life Is A Miracle *Hollywood*.
TRACY BONHAM Island.
BLUES CLUES A Play Date With Blue *Rhino*.
—All tracks produced by the RZA, including "You Won't Think I'm So Cute When I Bite Your Face Off."
BOSSON Capitol.
THE BREAKDOWNS This Gun Don't Care *Kill Rock Stars*.
—7".
JOHNNY CASH Love, Death, God; Love Songs; Murder *Legacy*.
—Reissues.
RAY CHARLES The Very Best Of Ray Charles Volume 1 *Rhino*.
CRACKER Garage D'or *Virgin*.
EELS Daisy Of The Galaxy *DreamWorks*.
EMERSON, LAKE & PALMER The Very Best Of *Rhino*.
GUY DAVIS Butt Naked Free *Red House*.
LAMA GYURME & JEAN-PHILIPPE RYKIEL Rain Of Blessings *Real World*.
KIM AND REGGIE HARRIS Rock Of Ages *Red House*.

THE HARVEST MINISTERS The Embezzling Kisses *March*.

—4-song EP.
ELMORE JAMES Blues Masters: The Very Best Of Elmore James *Rhino*.
J-LIVE London.
KLEENEX GIRL WONDER Tendency Right Foot Forward *March*.
—4-song CD single.
LITTLE WILLIE G. Make Up For The Lost Time *Rhino*.
LIQUID SOUL Here's The Deal *Shanachie*.
LYNYRD SKYNYRD All-Time Greatest Hits *Chronicles*.
LOIS MAFFEO & BRENDAN CANTY The Union Themes *Kill Rock Stars*.
—Canty drums in Fugazi.
MAN SCOUTS OF AMERICA Crash Course *R.A.F.R.*
PAT MARTINO Givin' Away The Store 3 *32 Jazz*.
—Part of a "Best Of" series of compilations from 32.
CHARLES MINGUS East Coasting *Rhino*.
IAN MOORE And All The Colors *Koch*.
LEONA NAESS Comatized *MCA*.
OFF THE RECORD Remember When *Tooth And Nail*.
PEDRO THE LION Winners Never Quit *Jade Tree*.
PHANTOM SURFERS XXX Party Lookout!
—Starring Rudy Ray Moore, a.k.a. Dolomite/The Avenging Disco Godfather. His Kung Fu mastery is as undeniable as his ability to rock the mic.
THE POSIES Alive Before The Iceberg *Badman-Houston Party*.
—The first official Posies live CD, this was recorded in Barcelona, Spain and features songs from throughout their career. Ken Stringfellow wrote exclusive liner notes for the release as well.
LOU RAWLS Anthology *The Right Stuff*.
JOSH ROUSE Home *Slow River-Rykodisc*.
SAMMIE Capitol.
JOE SATRIANI Engines Of Creation *Epic*.
SCARFACE Last Of A Dying Breed *Virgin*.
WOODY SHAW Givin' Away The Store 2 *32 Jazz*.
SPACE GHOST Brak Presents The Brak Hour *Starring Brak Rhino*.
—If you can resist the cartoon-y goodness that is Space Ghost, you can't be human.
SONNY STITT Givin' Away The Store *32 Jazz*.
CAT STEVENS Greatest Hits *Chronicles*.
—Features one unreleased track, "Grandson."
SUNSHINE Velvet Suicide *Big Wheel Recreation*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Machine Soul: An Odyssey Into Electronic Dance Music *Rhino*.
—Two CDs with tracks from Kraftwerk, Throbbing Gristle, Prodigy, Depeche Mode and others. I don't wanna sound like a queer or nothin', but I think Depeche Mode is a sweet band. Name that quote (nicolek@cmj.com) and win a picture of Rick Springfield.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Take Me Home *Badman*.
—Tribute to John Denver featuring Will Oldham, Low, Tarnation, The Innocence Mission, Sunshine Club, Red House Painters and others. Marilyn Manson's cover of "Thank God I'm a Country Boy" was unfortunately rejected.
VERBOW 550.
ZOPPI Suspended *MCA*.

MARCH 21

ADULT RODEO TXXXAs *Shimmy-Disc*.
BEACHWOOD SPARKS Beachwood Sparks *Sub Pop*.
BROADCAST The Noise Made By People *Warp-Sire-London*.
RICK BROWN & BONEY JAMES Warner Bros.
BUZZCOCKS Time's Up; Spiral Scratch *Mute*.
—Reissues.
CAT POWER The Covers Record *Matador*.
—Accompanying herself on only sparse piano and guitar, Chan Marshall covers songs by Michael Hurley, Dylan, the Stones, Moby Grape, Nina Simone and more (including herself).
CONSOLE Rocket in The Pocket *Matador*.
COUNTRY JOE & THE FISH Vanguard Sessions: Best Of The Vanguard Years *Vanguard*.
ENSIGN Indecision.
—Reissues of singles.
THE FLASHING LIGHTS Where The Change Is *spinART*.

—Led by Matt Murphy, formerly of the Super Friendz, featuring two previously unreleased bonus tracks.
GAMEFACE/ERRORTYPE:ELEVEN What's Up Bro? *Revelation*.
—Split CD-EP.
JACKPOT Weightless *Future Farmer Recordings*.
GERALD LEVERT G Elektra.
MAD LION Reprise.
LYLE MAYS Warner Bros.
PAUL OAKENFOLD London.
ODETTA Vanguard Sessions *Vanguard*.
ONE MINUTE SILENCE V2.
PANTERA Based On A True Story *Elektra*.
PURACANE Things We Should Leave Alone *Ubiquity*.
—Debut album of "breakbeat ballads and electronic torch songs," also features a cover of Jane's Addiction's "Summertime Rolls."
QUICKSPACE The Death Of Quickspace *Matador*.
RECOIL Liquid *Mute*.
RHEA'S OBSESSION Between Earth And Sky *Metropolis*.
ROWDY RAHZ Warner Bros.
SASHA Reprise.
THE SHININ' The Director's Cut *K*.
—CD-EP.
PATTI SMITH Gung Ho *Arista*.
SNUFF Numb Nuts *Fat Wreck Chords*.
SPRING HEEL JACK Treader *Thirsty Ear*.
SUMACK Now Hear This *V2*.
TAKE 6 Reprise.
BIG MAMA THORNTON Vanguard Sessions: Best Of The Vanguard Years *Vanguard*.
TRAGEDY KHADAFI Gee Street.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Exotic Guitars, Sonic Lounge *Vanguard*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS No Categories, Volume 3 *Ubiquity*.
—Tracks from Cut Chemist & Mumbles, Nobody and others.
PAP0 VAZQUEZ At The Point Volume 2 *CuBop*.
—Trombonist, composer and arranger Vazquez blends jazz with Latin and Afro-Caribbean influences.
VISION Watching The World Burn *Epitaph*.
WEEN White Pepper *Elektra*.
YOLI Warner Bros.
YOUTH EDITION Anything Is Possible *MCA*.
THE YOUNG AMERICANS Qwest-Warner Bros.

MARCH 28

LIFTER PULLER Fiestas & Fiascos *Self Starter Foundation*.
OVUCA King Stacey *Rephlex*.
—CD single/12".
BOGDAN RACZYNSKI Thinking Of You *Rephlex*.
STRATFORD MERCENARIES Sense Of Solitude *Southern*.
ALKALINE TRIO Maybe I'll Catch Fire *Asian Man*.
AP2 Suspension Of Disbelief *Tooth And Nail*.
AQUA Aquarius *MCA*.
BENDER Jehovah's Hittist *TVT*.
CAPPADONNA RZA-Epic.
COMMON Like Water For Chocolate *MCA*.
DO OR DIE Virgin.
THE EXPLOSION The Explosion *Jade Tree*.
—CD single.
SUE FOX Enhanced CD *Kill Rock Stars*.
FRANKIE MACHINE One *Mammoth*.
GET HUSTLE Kill Rock Stars.
MIKE E Master Plan *Capitol*.
OUTHUD 1st Single Of The New Millennium *Kill Rock Stars*.
—7".
DIETRICH SCHOENMANN Shadowgraphs *Instinct*.
SHAGGY The Best Of Shaggy *Virgin*.
TRANS AM Sometimes You Can Get What You Want *Thrill Jockey*.
—Singles compilation.
US CRUSH Us Crush *Virgin*.
VARIOUS ARTISTS After Hours Volume Six *Instinct*.
—Electronica and jazz from Yoshiro Hanno/Mick Karn, Shantel, Adham Shaikh and Tim Floyd, and others.
WITNESS UK MCA.
TYFU Spinfinity *Mammoth*.

photos: DENNIS KLEIMAN
stylist: RODNEY E. HALL

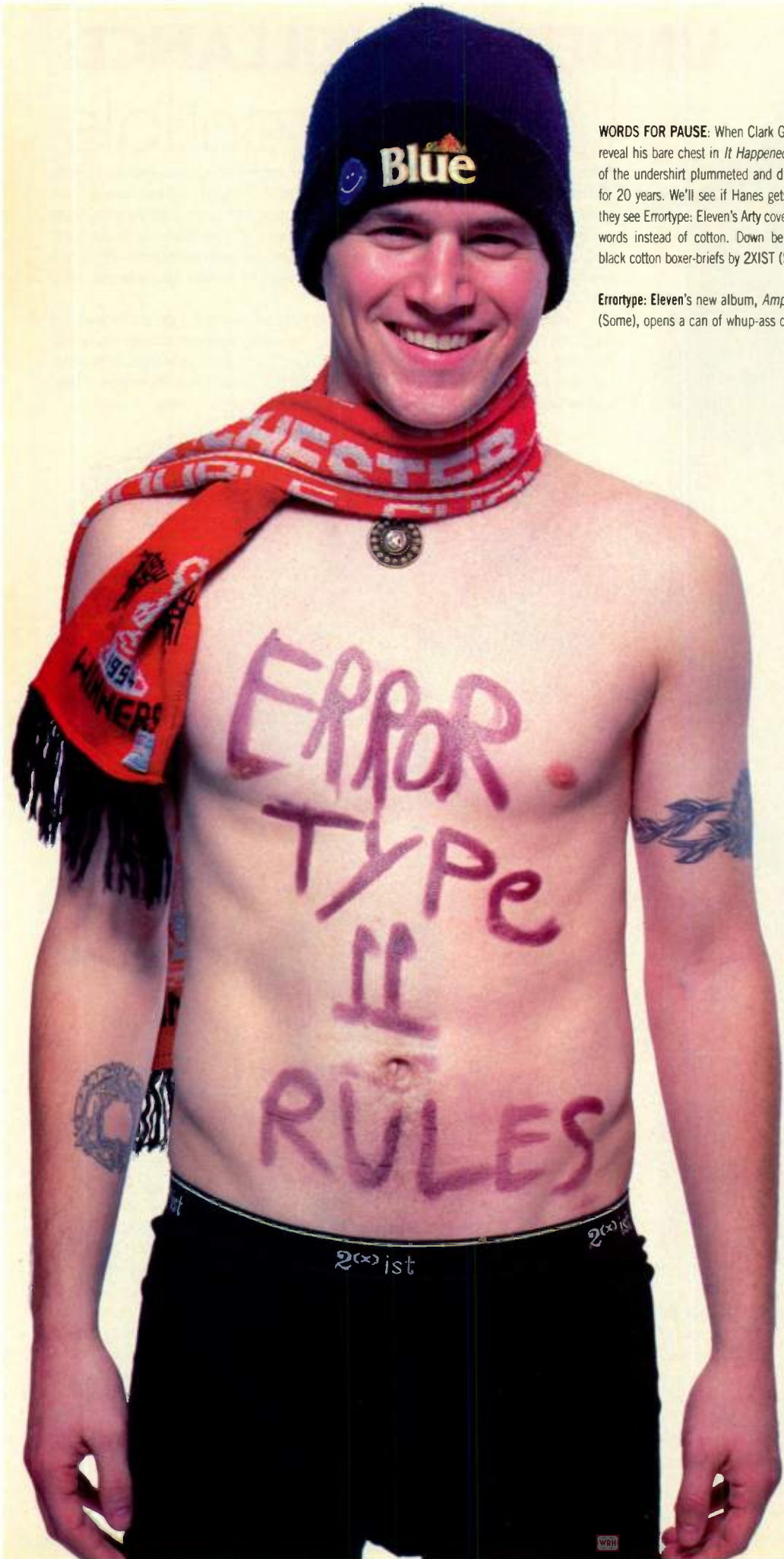
UNDER SURVEILLANCE: bare essentials

They say the eyes are the window to the soul, but let's face it, when you see someone's underwear you *really* know them. For most of us, the unnerving moment you first see a stranger "drop trou" happens in the locker room or at camp. At that point, almost all the boys are working the Christmas tighty-whiteys (except for the English transfer student in the light blue bikini briefs—didn't the fashionista officers at the immigration department tell him about life in America?), so brands don't really matter, and the girls haven't moved on from those lavender-flowered cotton numbers. But regardless of gender, if you've got skid marks, forget about getting picked for kickball.

When we sent out the call for musicians willing to model underwear in the pages of *CMJ New Music Monthly*, the magazine received plenty of hems and haws, but no one responded more succinctly than Chicago musician-about-town Archer Prewitt: "Trust me when I say to you, *no one* wants to see an emaciated old rocker that they've never heard of in his underwear." So, we'd like to give a special thanks to the members of *Seely*, *Error*type: *Eleven*, *Mindless Self Indulgence*, *Motorbaby* and *Tara MacLean*, who let it (almost) all hang out.

IN BLOOM: Bloomers got their name from Amelia Bloomer, who designed the garment for ladies to wear while bicycling. Tara MacLean's Alice Roi bloomers have "I Love NY" printed on the back (hold the page up to the light). Her Conchi silk chiffon zebra print scarf (\$200) and Roberto Cavalli fuchsia reptile print silk shirt (\$300) would make Rod Stewart mauve with envy.

GO LONG: Underwear ads were typically sketches, until 1938 when Jockey bent the unwritten rules of good taste by placing their "cellophane wedding" ad. In it, models were wrapped from neck to ankle in cellophane, perfectly displaying their underwear. *Error*type: *Eleven*'s Arty Shepherd doesn't need plastic wrap to work the Medalist long johns his mom bought for him. (She won't say how much they cost, but "They were a bargain!") He maintains warm thoughts with the "Hawaiian Sunset" leather cuff by Young And Devine (\$75).



WORDS FOR PAUSE: When Clark Gable undressed to reveal his bare chest in *It Happened One Night*, sales of the undershirt plummeted and didn't bounce back for 20 years. We'll see if Hanes gets concerned when they see Errortype: Eleven's Arty covering his torso with words instead of cotton. Down below, he's sporting black cotton boxer-briefs by 2XIST (\$28).

Errortype: Eleven's new album, *Amplified To Rock (Some)*, opens a can of whup-ass on emo.



THE FRILL OF VICTORY: Women's panties weren't developed until the mid-1800s, and at first they came in two pieces, one for each leg. Tara MacLean keeps it together in Alice Roi one-of-a-kind crepe bloomers with rhinestone buttons, DKNY black lycra cami (\$38) and Passionbait black silk chiffon robe (\$200).

Tara MacLean mixes Lilith fare with simmering beats on her major label debut, *Passenger* (Capitol).

ALL YOU NEED: Contrary to popular opinion, Madonna wasn't the first historical figure to wear underwear as an outer garment—Marie Antoinette beat her to it by a couple of centuries. Motorbaby's Sharon Middledorf shows that if you've got the right accessories, you can still make a strong statement with a streamlined outfit. Here, she keeps it simple with an Undergirl "Panty Brutality" cami and panty set (\$35).

Motorbaby's Sharon Middledorf is currently working on songs with producer Tony Visconti and Go-Go Kathy Valentine. She plans to release a new album soon.

SKIVVIES AND BONES: The first American patent for a bra was awarded in 1914 to New York debutante Mary Phelps Jacobs, who, while getting ready for a dance one night, replaced her corset with two handkerchiefs and a pink ribbon. Likewise, the members of Mindless Self Indulgence show that you don't need to spend a lot of money to make a distinctive fashion statement. Here they accent their bones with items from the Kathy Ireland Designs for Kmart line (bargains vary from town to town).

Mindless Self Indulgence's new album, *Frankenstein Girls Will Seem Strangely Sexy* (Elektra), is like Pee Wee Herman-meets-maniac punk in a beat-freakin' Cuisinart.



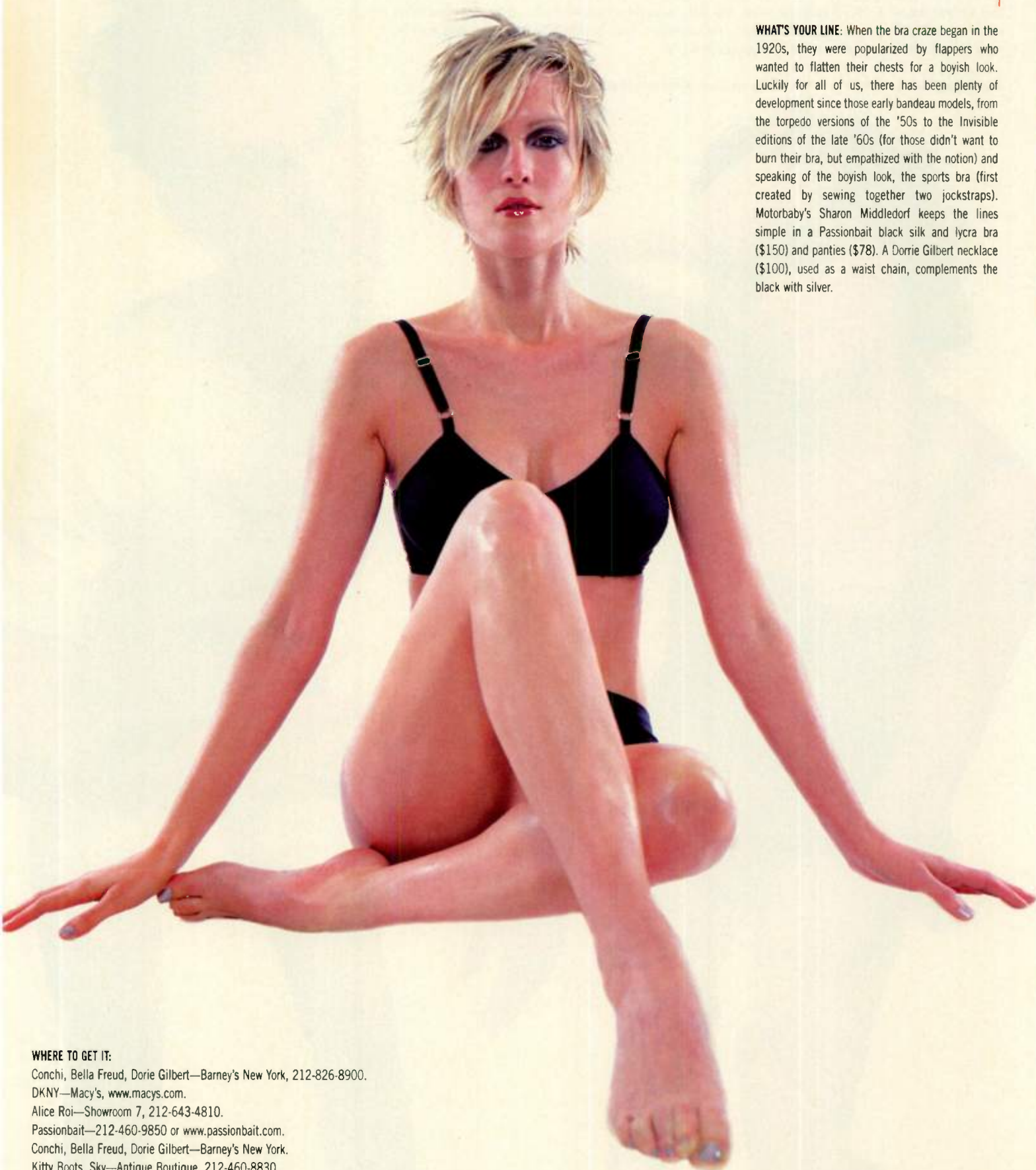




TIME FOR T: When Marlon Brando rocked a tight tee to full effect in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, T-shirt sales soared. The members of Seely also wear it well. From left to right, Eric sports a black cotton tank top 2XIST (\$20) and Undergirl "Giant" Boxers (\$17). Lori keeps it '80s in a Kitty Boots slashed cotton tee (\$120) and Passionbait "crack" brief (\$78). Joy's a tad more ancient Rome in an Alice Roi mauve chiffon asymmetrical peplum top and Sky gold gladiator boots (\$350). Steven, a.k.a. the fantastic elastic machine, has a krush groove going in a Bella Freud graffiti cotton T-shirt (\$225) and a Young And Devine lightning bolt cuff (\$100).

Atlanta's **Seely** has just released a wonderfully dreamy new album, *Winter Birds* (Koch). ★





WHAT'S YOUR LINE: When the bra craze began in the 1920s, they were popularized by flappers who wanted to flatten their chests for a boyish look. Luckily for all of us, there has been plenty of development since those early bandeau models, from the torpedo versions of the '50s to the Invisible editions of the late '60s (for those didn't want to burn their bra, but empathized with the notion) and speaking of the boyish look, the sports bra (first created by sewing together two jockstraps). Motorbaby's Sharon Middledorf keeps the lines simple in a Passionbait black silk and lycra bra (\$150) and panties (\$78). A Dorrie Gilbert necklace (\$100), used as a waist chain, complements the black with silver.

WHERE TO GET IT:

Conchi, Bella Freud, Dorie Gilbert—Barney's New York, 212-826-8900.

DKNY—Macy's, www.macys.com.

Alice Roi—Showroom 7, 212-643-4810.

Passionbait—212-460-9850 or www.passionbait.com.

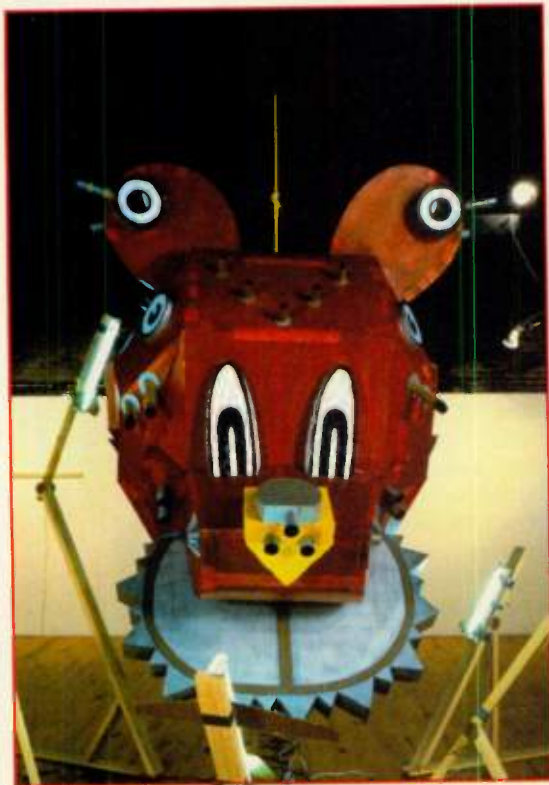
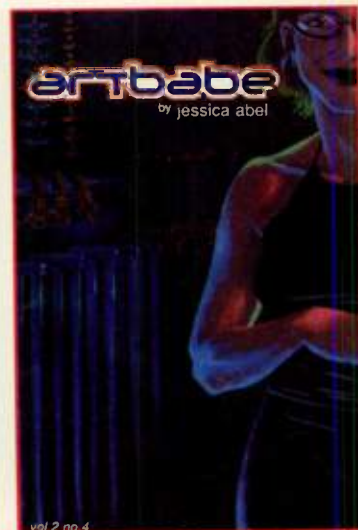
Conchi, Bella Freud, Dorie Gilbert—Barney's New York.

Kitty Boots, Sky—Antique Boutique, 212-460-8830.

2XIST, Undergirl—Urban Outfitters, www.urbn.com.

ARTBABES UNITED

Don't be misled by the title of Jessica Abel's comic, *Artbabe*. Just because one of the protagonists works in a gallery and the subject of painting occasionally arises, this illustrated narrative isn't about dissecting the great works of the Renaissance or making a name for yourself in the back-stabbing world of contemporary art. These frames feature a group of post-collegiate Chicagoans muddling through pointless temp jobs, confusing relationships and frustrating dates. Imagine *Seinfeld* plus *Thirtysomething*, minus about ten years. Now all of the angst of the past four issues can be found in the collection *Mirror, Window* (Fantagraphics, \$12.95). With sitcoms suffering these days, it won't be long before someone turns *Artbabe* into Must See TV.



THE ART OF TOYS

If you ask Reed Anderson what kind of paintings he makes, he'll say American landscapes. Yet his palette boasts plenty more than just purple mountains and amber waves of grain. Space Invaders, Betty Boop cartoons, candy wrappers and Kinder eggs all factor into his scenic imagery. "Warner Brothers cartoons are no different than any other fine art," figures the Brooklyn-based 30-year-old. His colored pencil drawings and watercolor paintings may look like an exquisite corpse created by Walt Disney, but they often deal with themes like cannibalizing your past to create a new life or taking too many pills to get to sleep. As a teenager, Anderson was roped in by photorealistic paintings and *Heavy Metal* comics, but spry and surreal visions flow from his fingertips these days. In April, the trained artist will exhibit at Philadelphia's Space 1026 (215-574-7630). To gaze at or purchase one of his works (which will run you between \$350 to \$600), stop by New York's Clementine Gallery (212-243-5937). Unfortunately, Anderson's impressive oversized cardboard sculptures (or as he deems them, "adolescent dreams of grandeur") are destroyed after every show. If the price is right, though, perhaps something can be arranged.

MUSIC TO THE EYE

Pop quiz: the first day in a new dorm room, what do you do? Answer: Chuh?! Go down to the quad and buy that \$5 Monet print, Porche poster or ancient world map to keep that sterile white cube from looking too much like a sanitarium. At least, that's what you would have done before now. Interior-design minded collegiates who want to go that extra mile to impress cute studymates and RAs can pick up a couple of Gekko flat speakers with a front grill print such as Van Gogh's *Starry Night*, Monet's *Bassin Aux Nymphaes* or even pulp fiction cover reproduction such as *An Earth Man On Venus*. This crankable, two-inch thick wall hanging will run you \$199 for the 11-inch by 14-inch model or \$299 for the 18-inch by 24-inch, which means Mummy and Pop-Pop will have to pad your college trust fund just a wee bit. (For more information, call 877-22-GEKKO.)



PUNCH AND MOODY

Tony Oursler's mannequins spew bile and ooze woe, shouting lines such as "Don't look at me. You're the one who needs help" and "Oh no! No, not that! Oh God! Noooo! Stop!" As their personalities deteriorate and flare, the viewer is prodded into empathy or revulsion. Employing a combination of low-tech video, folksy sculpture and neurotic humor, these installation pieces ponder what America's multimedia overdose does to our collective consciousness. If you want to get a hit of Oursler, check out his traveling mid-career retrospective "Introjection"—at the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (April 2 to July 30) and the Des Moines Art Center (November 11 through January 21)—or pick up the show catalog published by D.A.P. (\$35), where Oursler reveals his early disgust and fascination with television.



STILL SPRINTING: RUN LOLA RUN DIRECTOR TOM TYKWER WRESTLES WITH DESTINY.

Tom Tykwer knows that US audiences have high hopes for his next film. Last year, the German filmmaker unleashed *Run Lola Run*, a wildly inventive thriller that had the exhilarating, freewheeling atmosphere of a big-screen video game. The \$2 million film grossed a healthy \$7 million in the United States, and found its way onto many year-end top-10 lists.

"Now everybody expects, maybe, *Lola Runs Again*," says the 35-year-old Tykwer with a laugh. "There is that expectation that you have to top things somehow. However, if this doesn't happen, you still have something new to discover."

Indeed, there's plenty to get your attention in *Winter Sleepers*, a moody exploration of destiny and the role it plays in the lives of four young adults. "When we get into our 30s, there's a time when we recognize that somehow it feels as if the fun part is over. That brings a strange depression into our lives," he says. "This was something that I have experienced. It's a very personal subject that I wanted to examine." As in *Run Lola Run*—where the heroine had 20 minutes to find 100,000 deutsche marks to save her boyfriend's life—Tykwer built *Winter Sleepers* around a screwy set of circumstances.

Set in a village nestled in the German Alps, the main characters eventually discover that their destinies are intertwined in some unexpected ways. It begins when a drunken man gets behind the wheel of a stolen car, a sure sign of trouble ahead. *Winter Sleepers* is far more traditional than *Lola*, with an engaging array of characters, such as Rene, who suffers from short-term memory loss. The character takes photographs to help reconstruct his days. ("Lola was not the film where you could develop characters for the long-term," Tykwer says. "She was always in such a hurry.")

For the record, *Winter Sleepers* actually debuted in Germany in 1997, a year before *Run Lola Run*. *Lola*'s international renown, and the \$14-million haul that made it Germany's highest-grossing film of the year, gave its director the clout to release *Winter Sleepers* overseas. "It brought people to recognize that there are good German movies, which are different, interesting and entertaining," says Tykwer. The director is currently editing his fourth full-length feature, *The Princess And The Warrior*, a contemporary love story starring Franka "Lola" Potente. "Lola was so incredibly successful. It was like a gift. The only thing I can do is build on that." **—John Elsasser**

BLACK AND WHITE

(Screen Gems)

First of all, size up this cast: Robert Downey, Jr., Brooke Shields, Ben Stiller, Bijou Phillips, Elijah Wood, Marla Maples, Method Man, Claudia Schiffer, Mike Tyson (playing Mike Tyson), New York Knicks guard Allan Houston, Wu-Tang's Power and Raekwon. This



eclectic group of personalities is reason alone to see *Black And White*, a freeform comedic examination of rich, white Manhattan teens who are into hip-hop culture. While the film is hardly groundbreaking or amazing, you'll probably enjoy watching these non-actors try to act. To add realism, writer/director James Toback (*Two Girls And A Guy*) lets his players improvise 40 percent of their lines. Wonder if it was Tyson's idea to forestall an overly amorous Robert Downey with the line, "I don't know anything about this white fag shit." **—J.E.**

ME MYSELF I

(Sony Pictures Classic)

Successful journalist Pamela Drury (Rachel Griffiths) has just turned 30 and, despite being an otherwise career-minded woman, still wonders what would have happened if she had married her boyfriend 13 years ago. Thanks to a cinematic cross between *Sliding Doors* and *Freaky Friday*, she's able to find out. Pamela quite literally runs into her doppelganger—a happily married version of herself (with three kids) who said yes to Mr. Right. And before Pamela knows it, the twin disappears, taking with her all traces of Pamela's real life and leaving her to contend with grocery shopping, carpooling, butt-wiping and using a diaphragm in routine marital sex. You can practically hear the springs shooting out of her biological clock. Griffiths is great, as is the refreshing script from debut director Pip Karmel, the Oscar-nominated editor of *Shine*. **—Jon Popick**

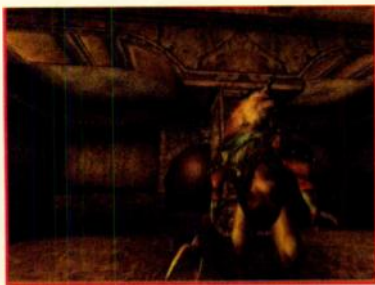


GOAT ON FIRE AND SMILING FISH

(Stratosphere Entertainment)

Billed as this year's *The Brothers McMullen* (is that a warning?), this romantic comedy traces the trials and tribulations of two brothers living together in Los Angeles and struggling with this crazy little thing called love. Chris, 28, is an uptight accountant whose girlfriend weeps whenever they make whoopee (A bad sign, indeed). His bro, 20-year-old Tony, is a struggling actor who can't commit to just one woman. Stereotypes aside, *Goat On Fire And Smiling Fish* is a modest, engaging affair that's easy to take. Conceived by and starring real-life brothers Steven and Derick Martini, these unknown actors are likable in an everyday-kind-of-people way. And, of course, they actually look like brothers. **—J.E.**





THE WHEEL OF TIME

(GT Interactive) PC

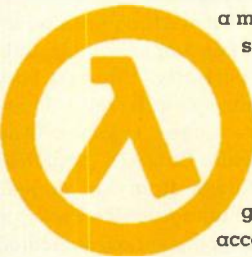
Wheel Of Time, a computerized "prequel" to Robert Jordan's best-selling fantasy novel series of the same name, contains the most realistic baroque architecture ever rendered in real-time. In bringing Jordan's mystic, eerie worlds to life, not only has developer Legend Entertainment pushed the Unreal engine to its limit and raised the bar in level design, but it is once again crash-testing gamers' hardware. You'll need a behemoth of a system if you want to turn up the detail levels and fully immerse yourself in WOT's dazzling localities. As Elayna, a member of the order of the Aes Sedai sisterhood, you must recover an ancient "seal" stolen from its resting place in your faction's White Tower. Using a host of smaller artifacts, you'll strategically cast offensive and defensive spells to help you overcome obstacles and defeat enemies along the way. Even as you try to find the stolen seal, other factions are vying to find it and three other seals in an attempt to control the power known as the "Dark One." Although the narrative is intriguing, the gameplay can be linear and restrictive, with your only sense of freedom materializing as a stroll through the game's lush, rolling hillsides, medieval ruins and majestic castles.



HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE

(Sierra) PC

It's not often that a mission pack adds as much to an original title as does *Half-Life: Opposing Force*. While most add-on packs are usually more of the same, *Half-Life: OF* cleverly reworks the entire concept of the original first-person shooter and allows the player to relive the days following the now-infamous apocalyptic accident from the viewpoint of a military officer assigned to disaster containment. The end result is akin to playing two different characters in



a movie whose paths occasionally cross, with this sequel nicely fleshing out details of the original. When you hear the radio announcement to "forget about Freeman," 'or instance, you might remember playing as Gordon Freeman, original *Half Life* protagonist. New non-player characters have been added in this round as well, including soldiers, medics and engineers who will help you take out bad guys, heal yourself or your squad, and assist you in gaining access to sealed areas.



PLANESCAPE: TORMENT

(Interplay) PC

This advanced *Dungeons And Dragons* series for the PC just keeps getting better. The latest entry in the officially licensed product line, *Planescape: Torment*, owes much of its excellence to developer Black Isle Studios' extensive reworking of the engine formerly used in *Baldur's Gate*. Not only has Black Isle lent *Planescape: Torment* a much-improved, more intuitive feel, but a lowered, top-down viewpoint that's much closer to the action as well. You begin the game as an amnesiac



immortal character covered with scars who awakens in a mortuary. Exploring the lands beyond the mortuary becomes an exploration of self, and that's part of *Planescape: Torment's* true appeal. Your interaction with the world takes place largely through dialogue prompts, and the wide array of choices add much to the game's flexibility. Unlike most other RPG's, you don't get to choose character classes or races at the beginning of the game, so how you deal with situations and interact with other characters will determine how your character develops. *Planescape: Torment's* characterizations are exemplary as well, and further draw the player into the game. Your first party member, for instance, is a wisecracking

skull named Morte. Not only will he—it?—help you figure out how to get started in the game, but he can pack a wallop of a punch, or, er, something...let's say he has a serious head-butt. With its enhanced interface, wide-open universe and sharp sense of humor, *Planescape: Torment* sets a higher standard, offering plenty to both the beginner and veteran role-playing gamer.

OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL

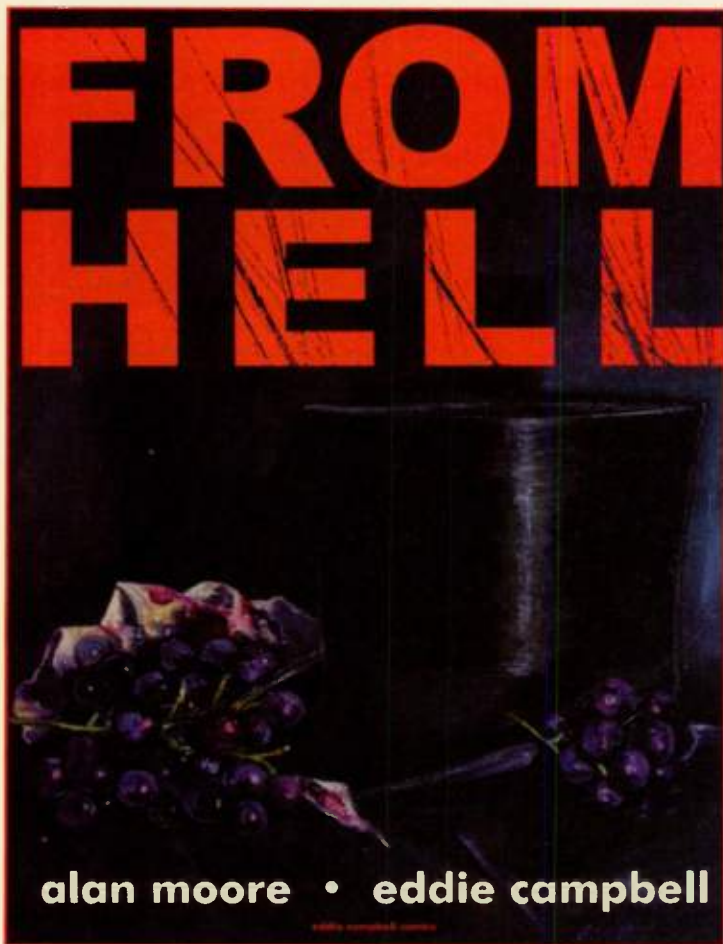
(Eidos) PC

Much ado has been made of the technological achievements of *Omikron*, particularly regarding the realistic movements of its inhabitants and their startlingly authentic lip-synched speech. It's really quite a phenomenal thing to see, but there's more to be found within *Omikron's* epic universe than technological gimmickry. At its best, *Omikron* is a darkly-lit, *Blade Runner*-inspired traditional third-person



action/adventure game. At its worst, it's an over-ambitious mess as the game segues between different genres for different missions. First it's a third-person game, then it's a first-person game, then it's a hand-to-hand combat game. You'll inevitably not only find this genre-hopping a little distracting and confusing, but the lack of accuracy in the game's fighting sequences in particular will leave you extremely frustrated. But David Bowie's soundtrack is excellent, and you even get to see him singing in the local bar. *Omikron* is visually dazzling and its storyline captivating, but it bites off more than it can chew.



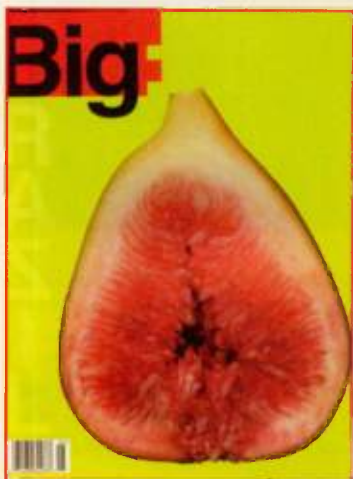


A HELLISH HISTORY

Eddie Campbell and Alan Moore's **From Hell** is one of the greatest English-language comics, but it's always been hard to find in its entirety before now. Originally serialized over a 10-year period, it's finally been collected into a single book by Eddie Campbell Comics (available through www.topshelfcomix.com).

The story is a massive, incredibly carefully researched historical fantasy that uses the Jack The Ripper crimes as its starting point, and then spirals away from them into a vivisection of Victorian England, the origins of misogyny and the way the human imagination can impose order, for good or bad, on history and the future. Moore's story (recently

optioned for a movie) encompasses the secrets of London's city planning and architecture, Masonic rituals, an appearance by "The Elephant Man" John Merrick, 19th century medical culture, and a long-rumored conspiracy involving the Royal Family. But it's Campbell's artwork that kicks *From Hell* into high gear: its woodcut-like roughness and police-blotter sketches unobtrusively build into a devastating narrative flow. As a bonus, the book includes 42 pages of Moore's notes on where exactly he picked up the thousands of facts that make up the argument



of his story, and "Dance Of The Gull Catchers," a short history of Ripperology by way of quantum mechanics.

If there's a successor to Robert Crumb's niche in comics, it's probably Dave Cooper, who combines Crumb's tear-the-lid-off-the-id psychosexual overspill with his own startling passion for representing imperfect, organic shapes perfectly, through both meticulous detail and loopy caricatures, often together. (And like Crumb, Cooper's banished straight lines from his pages.)

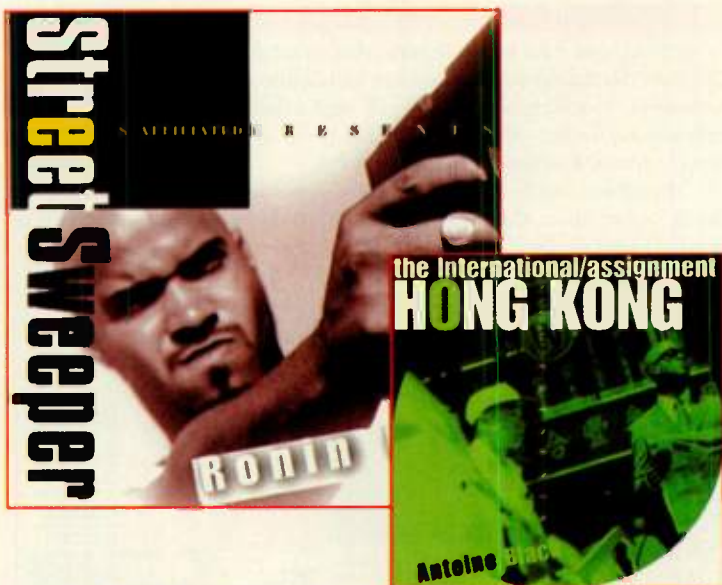
Weasel (Fantagraphics Books) is his first ongoing series, dedicated to whatever spills out of his psyche. In the case of its first issue, there's an extended story about an artist getting the hots for his homely model, four pages of an encyclopedia in a fake language with drawings of weird, globular things, some sketchbook pages, a cartoony piece that switches focus as fast as a garbled nightmare, and a guest story by Patrick McEown that involves lots of sex and violence and very little sense. It's not all successful, but the flood of ideas and Cooper's craftsmanship are marvelous.



There are some magazines that exist almost solely to be art-objects, and **Big** (61 E. 8th St. Ste.#167, New York, NY, 10003) is one of them. Its 25th issue is devoted to Brazil, which means that it features design-work involving photos of things related to Brazil. The cover image of a fig split in half against a fluorescent green background is disappointing—a little too obviously sexual, a little too close to *Colors'* aesthetic—but inside, it's beautiful, with Marcelo Jünemann's design direction varying dramatically to serve each piece. Images from Rio de Janeiro appear as scratched-up rotogravures in the middle of "souvenir" plates; the "fashion" section is a series of blocky, surreal paintings by Geléia da Rocinha that nonetheless spotlight the clothes. This is the functional side of radical design, and it's easy to imagine some of its ideas seeping into the mainstream in a few years.

For an example of this trickle-down effect, see **NV** (118 E. 25th St., Ste. LL, New York, NY 10010), a relatively new black business magazine. It's nothing special in the content department—the fourth issue includes a guide to creating scannable resums, an article on the Y2K bug, and a piece suggesting that day trading is a bad idea—but the magazine itself is beautiful to look at. More to the point, its huge blank spaces, deliberately blurred photographs, font trickery and unglamorous images (like one of a CEO looking away with her hands to her mouth) are the sort of thing that only design magazines were doing 10 years ago; now they're a natural part of what new magazines look like, even when being "cutting-edge" isn't the point.





BOOKS FOR THE DEF: CAN GANGSTA FLOW LIVE AS PROSE?

"Hip-hop to me has always been about great storytelling," contends Marc Gerald, co-owner of the new [S]Affiliated pulp fiction publishing imprint. "People always say that the hip-hop audience isn't a reading audience. But in my mind they're the most lyrical of all." To remedy this seeming gap, Gerald has partnered with Wesley Snipes to birth the series, comprising six short novels of crime and intrigue penned by music journalists and urban fiction writers.

Formerly the director of the Old School Books imprint of W.W. Norton, where he reissued long lost titles from authors like Chester Himes and Clarence Cooper, Gerald saw limitations in how the publishing industry viewed urban readers and marketed to them. "They weren't interested in alternate retail strategies back then," says Gerald. "They were only concerned with the bookstores." Yet being closer to the hip-hop community, he knew alternate outlets, namely urban record and clothing shops, could be potent outlets. For [S]Affiliated, he's working exclusively within those arenas. Furthermore, he's sweetening the pie via a deal with Def Jam Records to include CD samplers of the label's artists along with each title.

"Take Jay-Z. In my mind, *Reasonable Doubt* is the soundtrack for our entire series," Gerald remarks. Indeed, the illicit life and times of Shawn Carter (the album version, at least) do seem to trickle through in the series's first title, Ronin Ro's *Street Sweeper*. Jacob Usher, the book's protagonist, is a professional hitman who reconsiders his game after being assigned to kill a young girl who witnessed one of his murders. "In traditional fiction," Ro argues, "these are the characters who get slapped around, who die halfway through. But with this genre of books, you get to see the hero that has been traditionally denied to the black audience by the mainstream media—wily, trigger-happy, intelligent people who have morals but don't always abide by them."

As you might expect, the series takes obvious cues from the wordsmiths of the blaxplotation era—Iceberg Slim and Donald Goines among them—yet locates itself very much in the present; the characters hobnob with rappers, sport Versace, sip Moët—in other words, live jiggy. Farcical? Sure, a bit. But Gerald sees greater good in the indulgence: "Everyone agrees that this audience needs to be reading, but sometimes you've just got to give people characters that are cool. Otherwise, they won't pick up the book." **—Jon Caramanica**

TAKE THE CANNOLI: STORIES FROM THE NEW WORLD

By Sarah Vowell (Simon & Schuster)

Starting with her father's obsessive gun collecting and ending with her professional makeover as a goth-for-a-day, Sarah Vowell, a columnist for *Salon* online magazine and an NPR radio commentator, sardonically dishes out her observations in a collection of her essays on America in *Take The Cannoli*. From Frank Sinatra ("the original punk") to Don Corleone ("God the Father"), to learning to drive at age 28, she delves into "Rock 'n' Roll Fantasy Camp" where she's tutored by an aging rocker's B-list, including members of Foreigner and the keyboardist who played on *Frampton Comes Alive!* She also shares her love story that ended tragically over nixed mix tapes—he sent her Aphex Twin ("field recordings of amplified ant farms") and she sent him Blondie ("corny pop tunes"). *Take The Cannoli* is a quirky collection, replete with the standard post-collegiate angst. Like NPR's other young star, David Sedaris, Sarah Vowell's visions may be dark, but not that dark. More like a frothy latte for our times. **—Kristin Keith**



PERIOD

By Dennis Cooper (Grove Press)

Dennis Cooper's never been one to shy away from the macabre, but that's all he seems to have left in his fifth novel. The largely incoherent *Period* opens in a wilderness inhabited by meth-snorting queer punks and a house which may be haunted by two ghostly boys. The ghost boys, and in fact every character in the book, may or may not be the same person, may or may not be killed by their favorite Satanic rock band and may or may not be the subject of a cult classic book called, you guessed it, *Period*. As the boys of *Period* become more and more fluid—dying in one chapter, alive in the next, somebody else altogether in a third—the book's narrative only becomes more opaque. The mutilation, cruelty and murder Cooper describes seems intended to turn on or repulse, but when it's all connected to unclear characters within an inscrutable narrative, it's just plain boring. **—Harry Thomas**

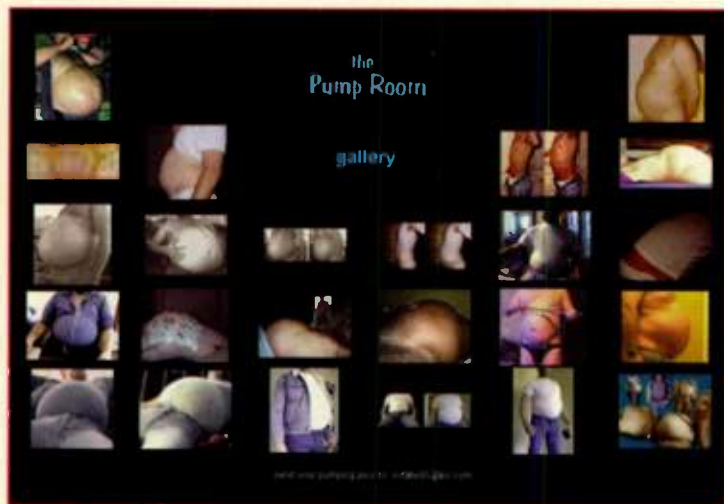


OPEN SKY: SONNY ROLLINS AND HIS WORLD OF IMPROVISATION

By Eric Nisenson (St. Martin's Press)

Open Sky is not a biography of Sonny Rollins so much as an appreciative study of his career; Eric Nisenson's book celebrates the tenor saxophonist's sui generis style. His wary collaborator in this project is Rollins himself, who somewhat reluctantly consented to the author's interviews. Fortunately, Nisenson accords ample space to Rollins's reflections; they are the highlight of the book. Elsewhere, the narrative occasionally falls prey to oversimplification—for instance, Nisenson's claim that bebop "conveys a tragic view of life," which contrasts with Lester Young and Roy Eldridge's hypothesis that jazz is "music of boundless optimism." Despite such problems, there are enough insights and illuminations in *Open Sky* to make it an interesting companion to Rollins's oeuvre. **—Nate Chinen**





DIGGING UP SITES

With its spotlights swinging toward the newest, hottest, most up-to-date sites, the Web sometimes seems like a continuously renewed, sparkling city of the future. Nothing of the kind: the joint is built on a gigantic mound of abandoned and discarded HTML code, which is rising so high it threatens to overrun its main byways. Steve

Baldwin's project, **Ghost Sites** (www.disobey.com/ghostsites), is all about forgotten, moldering pages whose stuck-in-the-past perspective is especially curious now; they're rated on a scale from one to five ghosts (five means "site is stuffed, embalmed, and ready for Internet museum"). Some of its featured sites are 86'd corporate projects, like grease.com, which has had the same forlorn photos of Clorox products on a single page for five

years; others are smaller and more surreal, like countdown9199.com, which advertises a "new business model" that was supposed to kick off September 1 of last year but makes no indication of what it is or how to find out; still others are just ridiculous, like RockCity.net, which Ghost Sites credits with "the artful identification of tech support with hallucinogenic drugs."

Of course, paper-based communications leave behind even more of a trail—and sometimes its authors or subjects would rather have it vanish.

Enter **The Smoking Gun** (www.thesmokinggun.com), devoted to preserving eyebrow-raising primary evidence. There's no analysis here, no gathering together of ideas into big conspiracies, just scanned-in documents that speak for themselves: Monica Lewinsky's resumé, Groucho Marx's 10-page FBI file, psychiatric reports on Mike Tyson, Parker Stevenson's affidavit demanding child support from Kirstie Alley, a heavily redacted 1967 CIA report on using trained cats for

something, and a lot more. There's also a section called "Backed Into A Coroner," featuring autopsy reports and death certificates from various Kennedys, Sid Vicious, Malcolm X and other famous types. It's all ridiculously banal—that's kind of the point—but also fascinating, as much cultural keepsake as dirty laundry.

If you're a really mean-spirited web-surfer, though, you can't do much better than **Cruel Site Of The Day** (www.cruel.com), a comprehensive and regularly updated guide to deeply weird sites. (How deep does the weirdness go? Well, the home page's intro paragraph includes a link to a fan site for Abe Vigoda, who played Fish on *Barney Miller*. It's scary enough that there exist Abe Vigoda

fans.) In a few cases, the cruelty lies with the people reading the page, as with a religious letter by one Sister Wood comparing glory falling on a revival meeting with God pouring butter on His perfect popcorn; some, though, are asking for it, like **The Pump Room** (members.aol.com/inflate98/pumproom.htm), dedicated to men who like to inflate their bellies with pumps. For the most part, Cruel Site spreads the word about pages that are meant to be snickered at, and the payoff—for instance, **Crack Aficionado** (www.thethirdrail.com/crack), modeled after a rather better-known magazine—is worth the occasional uneasy giggles.

The Chicago site **Supersphere.com** archives RealVideo versions of short films by some first-rate underground filmmakers. (There's a lot of stuff there, but try starting with Jeff Krulik's infamous "Heavy Metal Parking Lot," a hysterical documentary of a tailgate party outside a 1986 Judas Priest show.) Supersphere's also got excerpts from some good print zines, links to Internet radio stations, and attitudinal movie reviews ("No thumbs, we are not monkeys. No stars, we are not astronauts")—a piece on the most overrated movies of 1999 names and quotes the specific critical judgements it's debunking, which is a nice touch. The most fun part of the site, though, is the "Club" section: RealVideo performances, mostly recorded in Chicago, by close to a hundred bands, including an unusual improv appearance by The Ex and sets by Fugazi, Kool Keith, Ruins, the Danielson Famile and Dishes.

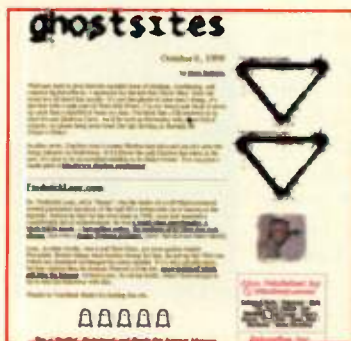
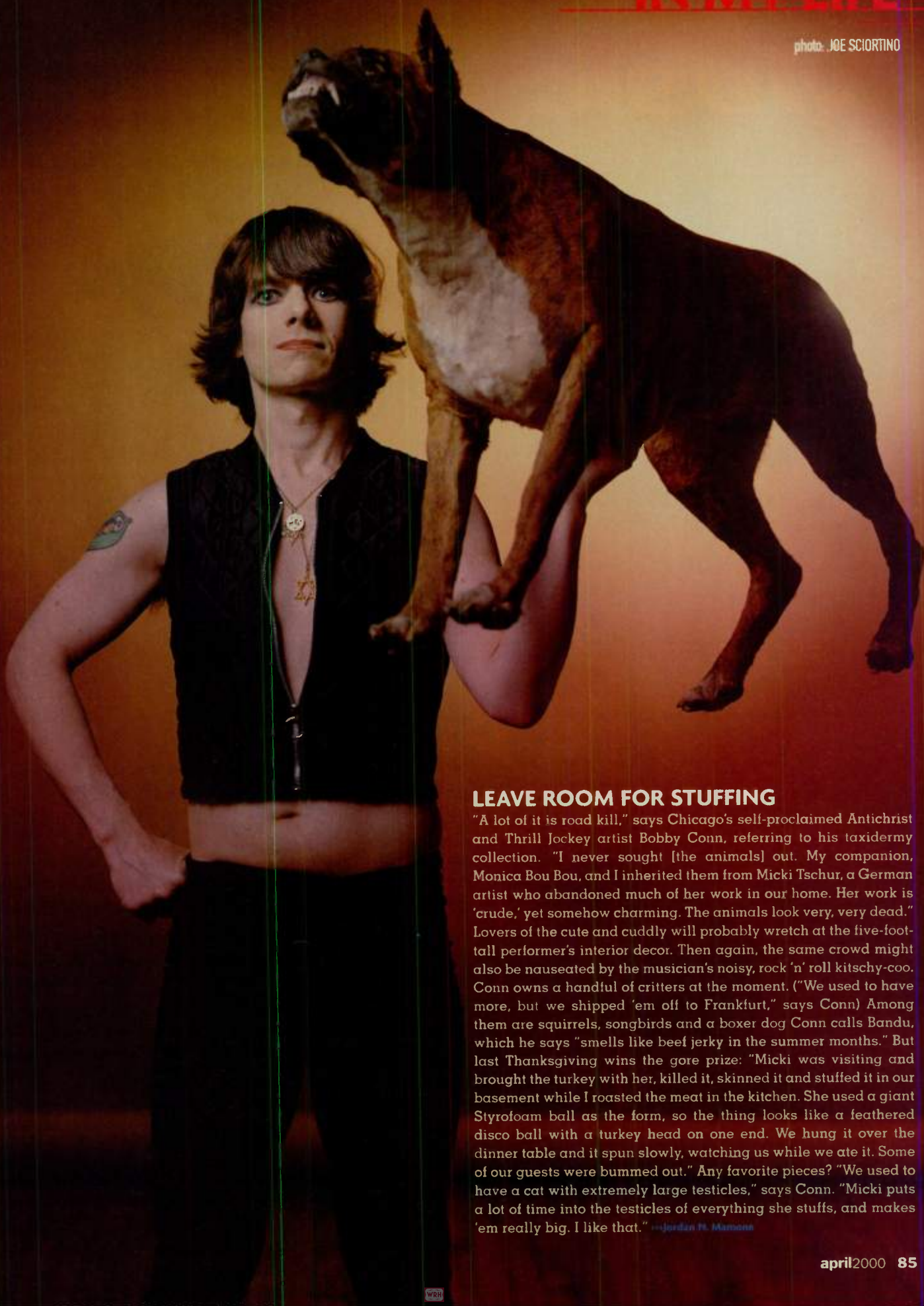


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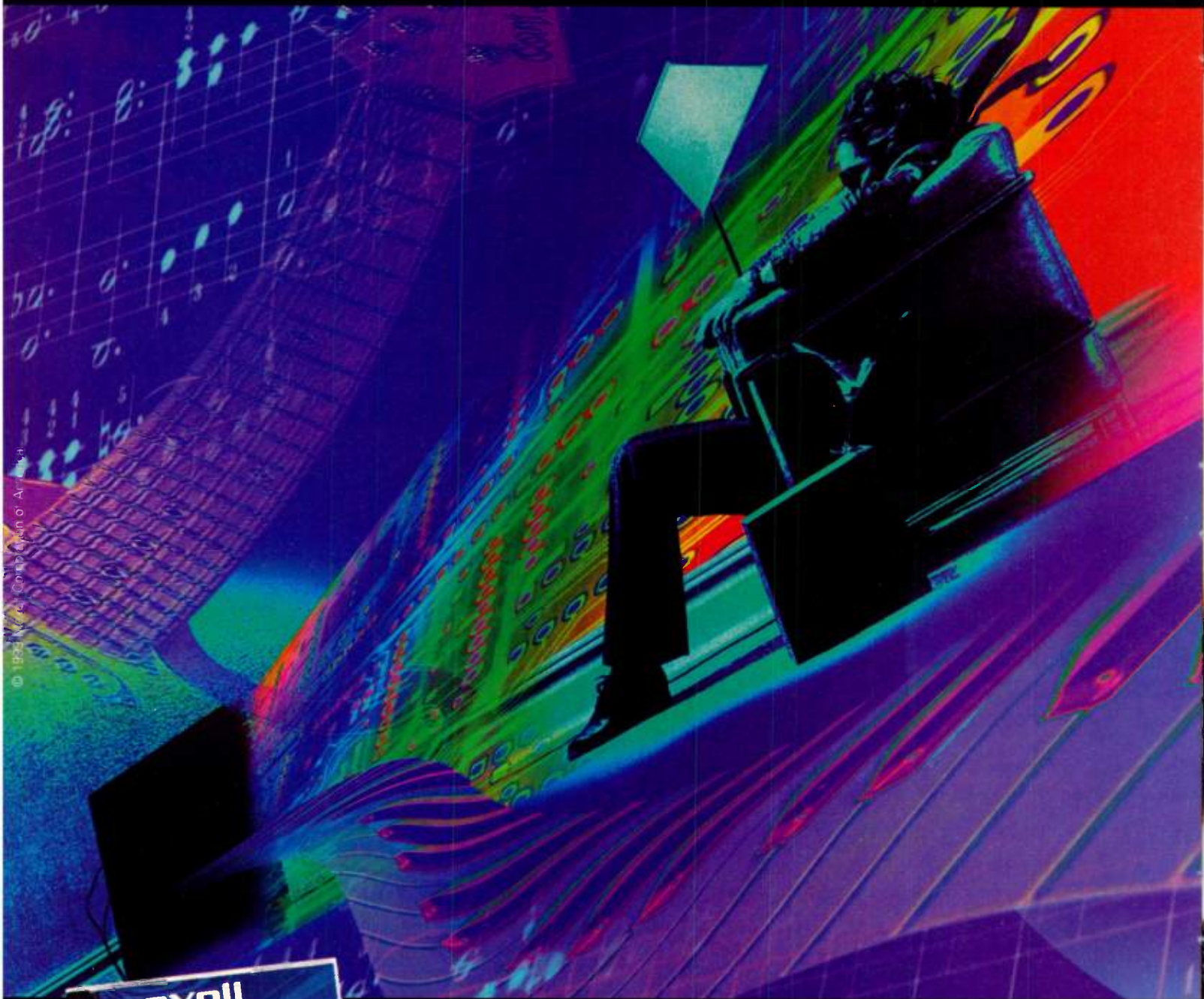


LEAVE ROOM FOR STUFFING

"A lot of it is road kill," says Chicago's self-proclaimed Antichrist and Thrill Jockey artist Bobby Conn, referring to his taxidermy collection. "I never sought [the animals] out. My companion, Monica Bou Bou, and I inherited them from Micki Tschur, a German artist who abandoned much of her work in our home. Her work is 'crude,' yet somehow charming. The animals look very, very dead." Lovers of the cute and cuddly will probably wretch at the five-foot-tall performer's interior decor. Then again, the same crowd might also be nauseated by the musician's noisy, rock 'n' roll kitschy-coo. Conn owns a handful of critters at the moment. ("We used to have more, but we shipped 'em off to Frankfurt," says Conn) Among them are squirrels, songbirds and a boxer dog Conn calls Bandu, which he says "smells like beef jerky in the summer months." But last Thanksgiving wins the gore prize: "Micki was visiting and brought the turkey with her, killed it, skinned it and stuffed it in our basement while I roasted the meat in the kitchen. She used a giant Styrofoam ball as the form, so the thing looks like a feathered disco ball with a turkey head on one end. We hung it over the dinner table and it spun slowly, watching us while we ate it. Some of our guests were bummed out." Any favorite pieces? "We used to have a cat with extremely large testicles," says Conn. "Micki puts a lot of time into the testicles of everything she stuffs, and makes 'em really big. I like that." —Jordan P. Maron

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DJ FOOD



ESSEX GREEN



FULL DEVIL JACKE



BAD LIVERS

15 Putting what **KUNDEL** does into words is a pretty weighty endeavor, so it's probably best to go to the source. "It's a startling look at things to come. A bold, frightening journey into the future while encompassing all things before. All forms of music intersecting," says singer/bassist/keyboardist Dan Burt. "Dark visions of the future, riding the endless groove of emotion. Passionate and dispassionate. An eternal struggle reflected in the never-ending boat. Eternal and ephemeral, the mind blowing saga of the first journey into the new millennium." Yes, 'Huh?' is the appropriate response. "Do It" from *The White Hole* (Spongebath) might explain it better.

16 Ninja Tune supergroup **DJ FOOD**, including the duo *Colicud* and a seemingly endless army of Ninja Tune all-stars, has been making music since 1990's *Jazz Brakes*, a pair of records meant to be used as dancefloor tools by other DJs. Food then went on to make albums for *Trappist*; the act's new set, *Kaleidoscope*, includes the best post-style track, "The Aging Young Rebel (Featuring Kan Nardine)." Explains Food collaborator *Strictly Rex*: "The boy in the story is the Aging Young Rebel. He wants to be different, whilst staying the same, and to do this in this day and age, he has to do something drastic. You can't stay the same and be different, so, through the promise of the song, he gets first one foot, then the other, cut off." (See Hip-Hop p. 67, Best New Music p. 22.)

17 Members of Brooklyn-based pop quintet **THE ESSEX GREEN** have been playing together since members Jeff Baron, Chris Ziter and Mike Barrett first formed Guppyboy at the University of Vermont almost a decade ago. Before landing in New York, the band lived in Chicago, but "we had to leave," says Ziter. "Our house was possessed, and then one of our friends went crazy and shaved his face using honey instead of shaving cream," he shares. "Mrs. Bean" comes from the band's '60s-inspired 1999 debut, *Everything Is Green* (Kindercore). (See New Faces p. 40.)

18 "People always ask us, 'Do you guys have musical telepathy?'" **LOCKGROVE**'s singer/guitarist Ryan Rex told the *Boston Phoenix* of the reaction to his drummer—and twin brother—Martin. "We kind of do. He's the one I don't have to say anything to. We don't even say anything to each other at the end of the show. I don't have to say anything to him because I know he rocked—I know he was with me the whole time." The debut full-length from this Boston-based "honest rock band," *Sleeping On The Elephant Fog* (Kraze) features "Bullet With Your Name On It."

19 **MARVIN PONTIAC** wouldn't record for a label unless the owner came to his home and mowed his lawn. He was once arrested for riding a bicycle through the streets of Slidell, Louisiana naked, and he spent the last seven years of his life trying desperately to contact aliens who had abducted him. He was also considered a musical genius by many, including painter Jackson Pollock. Almost 23 years after he was hit by a bus and killed, *Strange And Beautiful Music* has, with a wink and a nudge, released his *Greatest Hits*, a compilation of tracks Pontiac released, like "Runnin' Round," and two unreleased songs. (See Reviews p. 54.)

CMJ NEW MUSIC

ISSUE 80 APRIL 2000

1 Scottish rockers **TRAVIS** really are big in Europe. Their second full-length, *The Man Who* (Epitaph)—home of "Why Does It Always Rain On Me?"—was released overseas last year, selling close to two million copies throughout Europe and becoming the best-selling British album of 1999. The band is more interested in the songs than the sales, though. "So many bands are like painters, standing in front of their paintings saying, 'Look at me, I did this,'" says bassist Dougie Payne. "We don't want to play that game," adds singer Fran Healy. "When we all disappear, this music will still be here." (See New Faces p. 26.)



TRAVIS

2 **THE CURE** has made 20 albums in as many years—and Robert Smith intended *Bloodflowers* (Elektra), which contains "Maybe Someday," to be the finale. "I think it's apparent in the lyrics that when I wrote it, I intended it to be the last Cure album," he told *CMJ New Music Report*. But Smith is changing his tune. "Since we've done it, I feel totally different about it," he says. "I feel really good about the group." (See Best New Music p. 22.)



THE CURE

3 **WILLIAM ORBIT** offers his take on classical music on *Pieces In A Modern Style* (Maverick), which features "Barber's Adagio For Strings (Fanny Costen Remix)." Orbit says he was originally reluctant to have the already-reworked pieces remixed. "Although it may sound like I play fast and loose with these compositions, actually every note has to tell the story, and if it's done wrong, it's like, 'Ouch!' for me," he says. "But I listened to Fanny's music, and obviously he'd got it right. He took liberties with the time structure and put a slammin' great beat in it, but he got inside that piece of music." (See Quick Fix p. 16.)

4 Filmmaker, puppet-creator, beat-breaker, money-maker: Paris-based Quentin Dupieux can do just about anything, especially now that he's swimming in royalties from that Levi's TV commercial featuring his puppet, Flat Eric, and the two million "Flat Beat" singles the ad helped his alter ego, MR. OIZO, sell in Europe. "It's opened a lot of doors," admits Dupieux, whose debut album, *Analogue Worms Attack* is out on Mute. "Now that people know I'm a director, companies call me from the States with feature film offers. That's much more important to me than the money." (See New Faces p. 38.)

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CYPRESS HILL



DJ KRUSH



EVELYN GLENNIE



DAY ONE



JOSEPH ARTHUR



JOSH ROUSE

- 5 "There's this joke that if you play a country record backwards, you'll get your job back, your wife back, your dog back. That's how this record is for me," says SEELY's bassist and vocalist Joy Waters of their new full-length, *Winter Birds* (Koch). "If I could play it backwards, I'd have my dog back, and my dad back, and my husband back. A lot of the songs are about loss for me." *Birds*, which houses "El Cajon," is the Atlanta band's fourth album, and the first since 1997's *Seconds*. (See Reviews p. 56, Fashion p. 71.)
- 6 "We've both got different musical backgrounds," DAY ONE rapper Phelim Byrne told *Resonance* of his partner, multi-instrumentalist Donnie Hardwide, "but there are a lot of similarities between music that people don't see." The two halves of the Bristol duo are definitely from different worlds, Byrne having spent his early years on hip-hop while Hardwide studied classical piano. The resulting mixture (on their Melankolic-Astralwerks debut, *Ordinary Man*—home of "In Your Life") was harder to name than create. "With a name, you can almost set targets," Byrne says, "but we wanted the name to be universal. Day One didn't give an impression of a certain genre of music."
- 7 JOSEPH ARTHUR not only fills the singer/songwriter, guitarist, harmonica player and programmer roles in his one-man band, but his sculptures and paintings cover the packaging of his newest, *Come To Where I'm From* (Real World). "I don't feel at all constrained to one art form," he told *Black Book* magazine recently. "I do all I do for the sake of doing something interesting." All that doing apparently wears him out though—he's opened shows by saying things like, "I look better than I feel, and I don't look that good." For an idea of how he sounds, check out "Chemical." (See New Faces p. 35.)
- 8 Though Nebraskan singer-songwriter JOSH ROUSE has been spending the past few years in Nashville, he's called his sophomore effort *Home* (Slow River-Rykko)—from which "Directions" is taken—for a reason. "I think these songs definitely have a sense of settling down and making a life for yourself," he says. "All these songs were pretty much written on the couch. It's not a go-out-and-party record; it's something you put on at home and cook a good meal to. We cooked a lot when I was doing this record." (See Reviews p. 55.)
- 9 "All my new shit is sample-based really," says the BAD LIVERS' Danny Barnes. "I have a sequencer, a sampler, and a hard disc recorder—all synched." No, that isn't all that unusual, except that Barnes is a banjo player, and the Bad Livers is an acoustic bluegrass band. He says of the band's newest, *Blind And Mood* (Sugar Hill), "It has a lot of punk rock elements to it. I was trying to explore music that Mark [Rubin, bass] and I have in common besides bluegrass. We both totally flipped out on punk rock." Check out "Fist Magnet" and meet...Electropunkgrass?

- 10 "It's straight up hip-hop, real cool danceable shit," says CYPRESS HILL's San Dog of the trio's latest, *Skull & Bones* (Columbia), which features "(Rock) Superstar." "We've discovered how to make our music sound undeniably Cypress, but we've taken it to new levels as far as the music itself, how we come lyrically and what we talk about." On this, the act's fifth studio record, frontman B-Real adds that the members have learned to play well with others, too. "We're doing stuff together more in the studio," B says. "We're a little more open to one another's ideas." (See Quick Fix p. 14, January '00 issue.)
- 11 Though Jackson, Tennessee's FULL DEVIL JACKET was discovered by the same guy who gave us Guns 'N' Fucks' Roses, it's not likely that a "Paradise City: Part Two" will be forthcoming from FDI anytime soon. "I've been all over America, and everyone out there is a slave to their own life," says vocalist Josh Brown. "If there's one thing I'd like to do with my music, it's to free somebody else from the chains that society has put on their minds. That's part of our mission." Their self-titled debut (Island-Def Jam) houses "Now You Know."
- 12 Jasper Steverlinck, singer in Belgium's ARID, often hears his voice compared to the sweeping tenor of Jeff Buckley. "A comparison which is not at all unfounded," he says. "But there's also a lot of soul in it. I love Al Green and Marvin Gaye. Fantastic music with a lot of depth from which I can learn a lot." He also names some fairly, well, unconventional influences. "I'm really into castrato vocals," he says. "The soundtrack of the movie *Farinelli* is just fabulous." "Believer" comes from Arid's debut, *Little Things Of Venom* (Double T-Columbia).
- 13 Well-known at home, Tokyo's DJ KRUSH has been perfecting his click-clacky turntable beats ever since he first saw *Wild Style* 15 years ago. "Coffee Talk/Wild Drums (CMJ Edit)" comes from his upcoming effort, *CODE4109* (Red Ink), a live DJ mix which follows on the heels of last year's chilled-out opus, *Kakusei*. While the Japanese hip-hop scene has long been derivative of America and Europe, Krush says, "Right now we try to make something unique—a Japanese hip-hop."
- 14 British solo percussionist EVELYN GLENNIE has released a dozen albums, continually collaborates with Björk and has received a slew of awards including a Grammy in 1998 for work on a CBS documentary—in spite of the fact that she's considered "profoundly deaf." She doesn't find her hearing a particularly important topic of conversation though. "If you want to know about deafness, you should interview an audiologist," she says. "My specialty is music." Her latest release, *Shadow Behind The Iron Sun* (RCA-Red Seal) includes "Battle Cry."

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IN THE PLACE TO BE: TAMAR'S LOUNGE

"The city's tense combination of East and West, old and new, is precisely what makes it the ideal Israeli music hotbed."

Visitors to Israel usually don't miss the holy sights of Jerusalem or Eilat's Red Sea beaches. But when tourists stop in cosmopolitan Tel Aviv, it's easier to overlook what may be the city's best trait: its music.

In this country of contrasts, Tel Aviv fits right in. Neon hamburger joint signs compete with lo-fi Arabic sweet stands; girls wearing almost nothing head to the beach next to orthodox women in long sleeves and hats. The city's tense combination of East and West, old and new, is precisely what makes it the ideal Israeli music hotbed. History here is wherever you look—and tomorrow is never too clear.

While in the States it might sound crazy, Israel's army-run radio station, **Galatz** (at 92.3 and 96.9 FM), has traditionally been the most progressive in the nation. While criticized recently for losing its experimental edge, the station is the closest thing Israel has to college radio in the US, since all kids ages 18-21 come through the army at some point and bring new musical ideas. British rock like, The Smiths and Joy Division—and Israeli bands that sound like them but sang in Hebrew—enjoyed huge popularity on Galatz and throughout Tel Aviv in the late '80s, and influenced Israeli pop taste tremendously.

A little less than 20 years ago, one small street began to establish itself as the city's youth stronghold and arguably the center of its pop culture. Sheinkin Street began with one art gallery, **Tat-Rama** (now defunct), and one record store, **The Third Ear** (still the city's best used record spot, at 21 Sheinkin). Soon, musicians and artists moved in, and the gentrification of Sheinkin replaced nearby Allenby Street's outdated nightclubs with hip bars and concert venues. As world economics made importing music easier (though still expensive), new record stores like **Super Zeus** (in Dizzengof Center), and **Zlil** (a small chain with a large store in Ramat-Aviv Mall) popped up.

Terrorist strikes in Tel Aviv and the assassination of prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995 shook the country and its music scene. Perhaps searching for solace in its grooves, more young people turned to electronic music, and straight-up rock began to hibernate. The electronic music scene grew exponentially, and trance (perhaps the ultimate comfort music) became its leading force.

Within the rock scene, artists began to consider their Israeli context. Acts like **Ehud Banai**, **Tipex**, **The Mind Church**, **Ethnix** and **The Celebrations**, and even the growing trance scene, began to emphasize

the city's unique East-meets-West vibe. Ethnic Arabic instruments like the darbuka and uzo, which are connected to the sounds of old Israeli and Arabic music, saw some use in a pop context, and recent Israeli history and politics made it into the lyrics. Alternately, electronic musicians have broken the language barrier by eliminating the words altogether, and Tel Aviv electronic scenesters **Aeyal Barkan** and **Astral Projection** have been successful outside of Israel.

Tel Aviv is a wonderful place to hear and make music, even though the latter demands some effort. At six million, Israel has fewer inhabitants than New York City, and Tel Aviv has only about 500,000. That small-city atmosphere has its benefits and detriments; if your act is good, you will reach everyone. But then, as local artists are quick to point out, everyone isn't that many.

If you want to join in, head to Sheinkin and Allenby first to check out some local rock. On the tiny second floor of **Freeland** (Najara St. near the corner of Allenby), young musicians jam and perform. **Barbie** (40 Salame St., 6816757, named after a mental institution and not the doll), recently moved to Tel Aviv's industrial area, and is the main stage for small bands and developing artists. **Tmuna Theatre** (8 Shonzino St., 5629462), is a recently-opened performance space meant to substitute for the now-defunct **Logus**, which had an important place in the music scene in the last decade. Classic rock concerts still take place in the '60s theater **Tzavta** (30 Eben-Gvirol St., 6950156), which was the home of the talented Myumana drumming and dancing group (think *Stomp*), which moved out of Tel Aviv to Jaffa last summer. **The Camelot** (16 Shalom Alaychem St., 6202323) is the place to go for good jazz and world music, as well as for small acoustic rock concerts.

Tel Aviv is a late night city. You can get stuck in traffic at 3 am on Allenby Street, and most parties won't start before 1 am. To get to the best trance parties you'll need some connections, as most raves take place outside of Tel Aviv's city limits, in open spaces in the Yehuda desert or in northern forests. But within the city, check out the jungle and drum 'n' bass at **Dynamo Devash** (meaning "dynamo honey," at 59 Abarbanel St.), a small club that dedicates Wednesday evenings to experimental music and takes part in experimental video festivals. The Dynamo is where you go to listen to music, not always to dance, and to soak up the artistic, futuristic atmosphere. Like many other clubs in Tel Aviv, the Dynamo hosts DJs from around the world on a regular basis. DJ Chantal from France is one of the club's favorites.

For house music, try the madly popular **Allenby 58** (located, not surprisingly, at 58 Allenby St.), which has been hot for a long time. DJ Choopy plays warm house to an enthusiastic crowd, while in the downstairs bar the music will change according to the party, from '80s to chill-out. For a fancier crowd (and for the popular DJ Ella Gutman) try the **Ku-Millennium Club** (117 Salame St.), with its beautiful setting and its always-popping house.

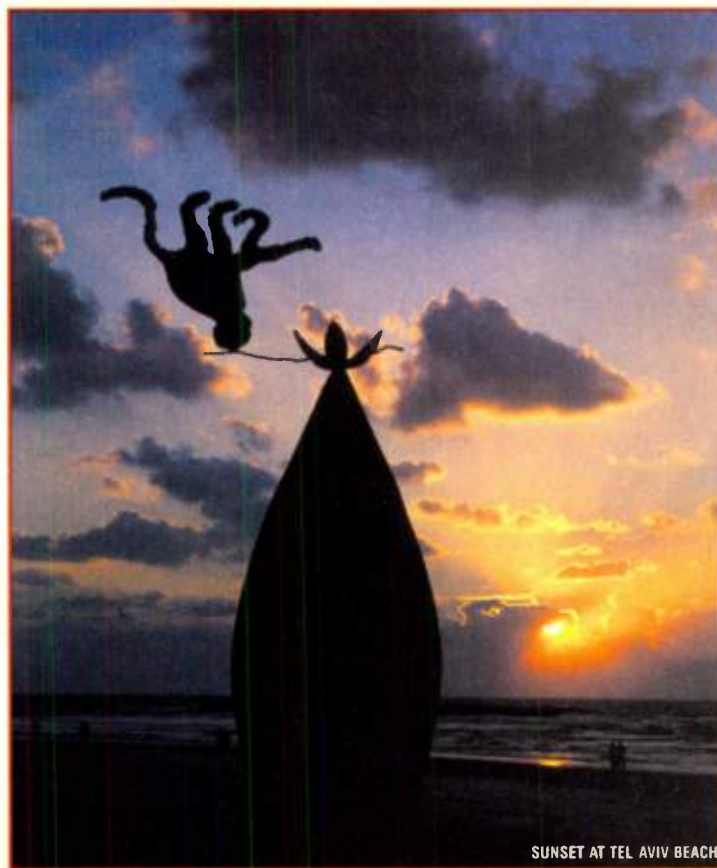
The Fetish (15 Rambam St., in Nachalat Binyamin) is a small dance bar, originally opened by and for Russian immigrants, which is poised to become one of Tel Aviv's coolest places. The music varies from French house and disco to happy house, and the crowd is always very interesting and very drunk. **Tamar's Lounge** (111 Allenby St., 5605670), currently the place to be in Tel Aviv (though those definitions change very quickly), is a renovated theatre. Find easy listening in the small lounge area and house in the big ballroom. The **Electric Cave**, which opened recently in the underground parking area of the Dizzengof shopping center, is where electronic music, video shows and other artsy business takes place.

Among the hundreds of restaurants in Tel Aviv, some are nightlife institutions: **Stefan Brown** (99 Allenby St., 5604725) is a good restaurant during the day and a packed bar late at night. **Ali Oli** (2 Berner St., 5281378), a very good (and very expensive) tapas bar, is a popular stop before going clubbing closeby on Allenby Street. Two other good options for mingling are **Doxa** (11 Montifury St.) and **Abarxess** (40 Lilenblum St., 5104435). And for a classic Sheinkin meal, try the fabulous **Orna And Ella** (33 Sheinkin St., 6204753). Simple cooking, homey feeling and once-in-a-lifetime sweet potato pancakes.

Israeli music journalist Vardit Gross can't get enough of her country's latest trend: chocolate with Pop-Rocks. Within Israel, all phone numbers take the 03 prefix. Outside the country, dial 011-972-3, then the number.



DIGGIN' IN THE CRATES



SUNSET AT TEL AVIV BEACH



ROCKIN' IN THE OLD WORLD

Pat Benatar

STORY: SARA SHERR ILLUSTRATION: NICHOLAS MEOLA



Pat was a lover among fighters. When she had to fight, she used her multi-octave range to fend off heartbreakers, dream-makers, love-takers, don't you mess around, no-no-no!

In junior high, records still mean something to you and you alone. They have the power to make you forget how funny-looking and weird you really are, or how funny-looking and weird everyone else is.

Conveniently, just about everyone was funny-looking and weird when I started junior high in the '80s, at the dawn of MTV. New wave had just found its way into suburban living rooms, making earrings and eyeliner okay for guys and short haircuts okay for girls. It had nothing in common with invisible, forbidden punk rock. It simply meant that we all had more haircuts, personalities and colors of tights to choose from than ever before. Even if you happened to be a teenage brace-face, you could still dress up in either gender's costume while you figured out who you were.

These choices were so confusing—that is, until I found Pat Benatar. I could tell from the start that Pat wasn't a new waver at all. For one thing, she was trained in opera and really sang instead of hiccuping or yelling. And although she had short hair and wore the *de rigueur* spandex, I was sure that underneath, the star born Pat Andrzejewski could be just another Northeast Philly girl like me, riding the bus and shopping at the Woodhaven Mall. Like me, she was just another girl with small hair and big dreams.

If love was a battlefield (and I didn't know then—I was only in junior high), Pat was a lover among fighters. When she had to fight, she used her multi-octave range to fend off heartbreakers, dream-makers, love-takers, don't you mess around, no-no-no! In fact, Pat was really at her best in combat. Treat me right! Open your eyes, maybe you'll see the light! You better run, you better hide! Hit me with your best shot, fire away! Those songs were like adventures for me and my friends. We'd sit in our rooms and study the lyrics sheets and try to sing like her, hold those notes for as long as we could, the way boys tried to play guitar with Eddie Van Halen or drum along with Rush's Neil Peart. We've all heard that girls lose their self-esteem at a certain age, and these songs were all I had. Pat Benatar's videos—stuck in between Wham!, Cyndi Lauper and Culture Club—hinted that I could stand up and sing anywhere and people would listen.

Pat could sing her way out of anything. In the "Shadows Of The Night" video, she's a blue eye-shadowed World War II pilot—baby, take her hand, it'll be alright. Surrender all your dreams to her tonight. They'll come true in the air.

In "Love Is A Battlefield," Pat's a small town teenage runaway-turned-hooker with a heart of gold. She and the other ragamuffin ladies of the night stage a mutiny against their evil pimp with a drink in his face and a dance stolen from the "Beat It" video. We are young! We are strong! No one can tell us we're wrong! And after the revolution's been televised, Pat wistfully waves to her friends and dances off into the sunset.

Pat's "Invincible" was the only redeeming quality of the 1985 teensploitation flick *The Legend Of Billie Jean*, with Helen Slater (and her brother Christian) on the lam from a lecherous shopkeeper. We can't afford to be innocent, Pat urges them. There is no sacrifice! It's a do-or-die situation! We will be invincible! To ensure invincibility, Helen Slater's character cuts her hair like Joan Of Arc. But I knew that, like me and the girl with Pat's haircut in *Fast Times At Ridgemont High*, she just was trying to be like Pat Benatar. Weren't we all, a little bit?

After Pat Benatar made room on MTV for the far-more-calculated Madonna and her younger Madonnabes, the rest of the freaks and geeks vanished too, and so did I in a way. Small-haired girls with big dreams, like Pat and me, gave in to perms. Because after all, these were just promises in the dark. In the end, she knew we all had to belong.

Sara Sherr's *Crimes Of Passion* include writing for Philadelphia City Paper.

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