

NETWORK

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THE NETWORK INTERVIEW: SARAH McLACHLAN



BY STEPHEN HUBBARD

With all due respect to k.d., Jann, Celine, Jane and the rest, Sarah McLachlan is Canada's most notable female artist since Joni Mitchell first emerged on the scene in the late-'60s. Her emotionally intense, highly evocative and decidedly sad songs ring with a purity and truth that links her inextricably with her burgeoning audience — an audience that has steadily grown since her first album, *Touch*, was released in 1988. Remarkably, that first release — which featured the first songs the then-19-year-old singer had ever written — went gold in Canada and paved the way for her ascension to the top ranks of contemporary female singer/songwriters.

1991's *Solace*, driven by increased radio and video play, spawned a raft of popular songs, including "Drawn To The Rhythm," "Into The Fire" and "Path Of Thorns." Relentless touring pushed her from the margins of the Canadian scene towards the mainstream, a posi-

tion that was secured with the release of 1993's hugely popular *Fumbling Towards Ecstasy*. The first album that broke McLachlan in the States, as well as world-wide, *Fumbling* contained such instant classics as "Possession," "Plenty" and "Good Enough," featured a broader palette of sounds and, on "Ice Cream," a new lyrical directness and sense of humour. Appearances on high-profile shows like *Letterman* soon followed and McLachlan's star was on the rise.

McLachlan's decision to stage this year's all-female 35-date Lilith Fair concert tour — featuring a rotating line-up that included Jewel, The Indigo Girls, Shawn Colvin, Tara McLean, Tracy Chapman, Suzanne Vega and McLachlan, among others — has garnered her even more attention. Articles in a variety of major magazines, including a *Time* cover story, trumpeted her strength, intelligence and perseverance in organizing a tour that a lot of veteran promoters scoffed at. McLachlan's revenge

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VOLUME 11 NO.3

Cover Photo: MARK VAN-S

THE PRODIGY'S 'HARD DANCE' REVOLUTION

BY STEPHEN HUBBARD

The conversation starts in a fashion befitting The Prodigy, the leading purveyors of what they like to call "hard dance" music:

Network: How are you?

Leeroy: O.k., a bit tired, actually. I was out last night and I didn't get back til half-ten this morning, so

Network: Well, this will be really low-key, we'll just have a relaxed conversation, nothing too heavy.

Leeroy: (laughing) That's cool.

Some things never change. Almost a decade after the start of

the English rave scene, and some seven years after The Prodigy's Liam Howlett began writing the soundtrack to that scene, Leeroy (Thornhill) — who along with Maxim (Reality), and Keith Flint round-out The Prodigy — still likes to go out and party all night.

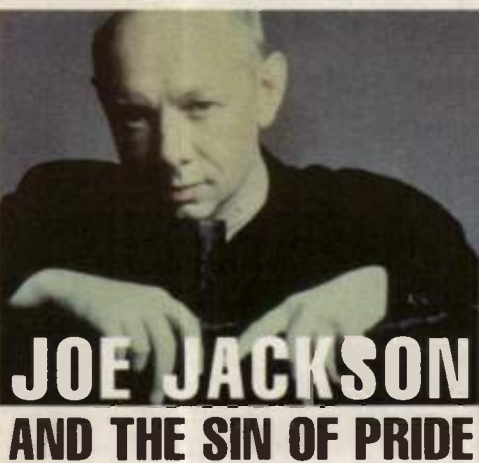
Of course, some things *do* change. The rave scene is long dead, at least in its purest form, what Leeroy calls its "revolutionary" stage. But the music of The Prodigy, that began with the release of a four-track EP, *What Evil Lurks*, in 1991, has never been more popular. Their latest disc, *The Fat of The Land*, fueled

by the hugely popular singles "Firestarter" and "Breathe," instantly shot up the charts around the world upon its release a couple of months ago. Within a couple of weeks it had reached No. 1 on the charts in 22 countries, from the Czech Republic to Portugal; Iceland to Germany; Canada to the U.S., and, of course, the U.K.

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PHOTO: MORTEN LARSEN



JOE JACKSON AND THE SIN OF PRIDE

BY CINDY WAXER

Now if my eyes don't deceive me, there's something going wrong around here. Joe Jackson used to write three-minute pop songs, ponder "Is She

Really Going Out With Him?," and challenge the confines of new wave with eclectic albums such as *Look Sharp* and *I'm The Man*.

But these days, Jackson appears to possess a haughty opinion of his own musical expertise. He scoffs at contemporary rock 'n' roll, refers to himself as a "composer" rather than as a singer/songwriter and posts hand-written musical scores entitled

"Nocturne No. 2" on his web site. Not to mention his latest undertaking, entitled *Heaven & Hell*, a lofty album which confirms that Jackson is all too familiar with the sin of pride.

Continued on Page 6

BLUE RODEO CELEBRATES TEN YEARS IN THE STUDIO WITH 'TREMOLLO'

BY FRED LANGTON

We arrived late, that much I do remember. And in our haste to grab a cab we each downed a full beer and brought another one along with us for the ride. Our destination was Lee's Palace, a smallish club in Toronto's Annex neighbourhood; our enticement, Blue Rodeo, a "new" Toronto group whose live shows were supposed to be as good as their compelling debut album, *Outskirts*. The year was 1987. It was my first Blue Rodeo gig, and though I've seen them many times since, that night — however fuzzy and sepia-toned in

my memory — still stands out.

Since that warm spring night, ten summers have come and gone, and Blue Rodeo's become a fixture on the Canadian music scene, consistently producing gold and platinum albums and playing to loyal, enthusiastic fans from coast to coast. Though unintentional, they're marking the 10th anniversary of their recording career with a new album, *Tremolo*, and a renewed sense of purpose. In fact, not only is *Tremolo* a substantially better and more unified album than their last release, 1995's trippy but spotty *Nowhere To Here*, it's arguably

Continued on Page 14

PHOTO: MARK VAN-S

PHOTO: ALEX VANDOROS

just a simple reminder of what's out there.



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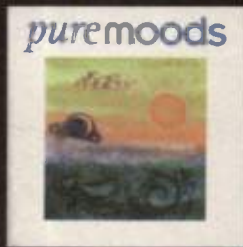
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Solace



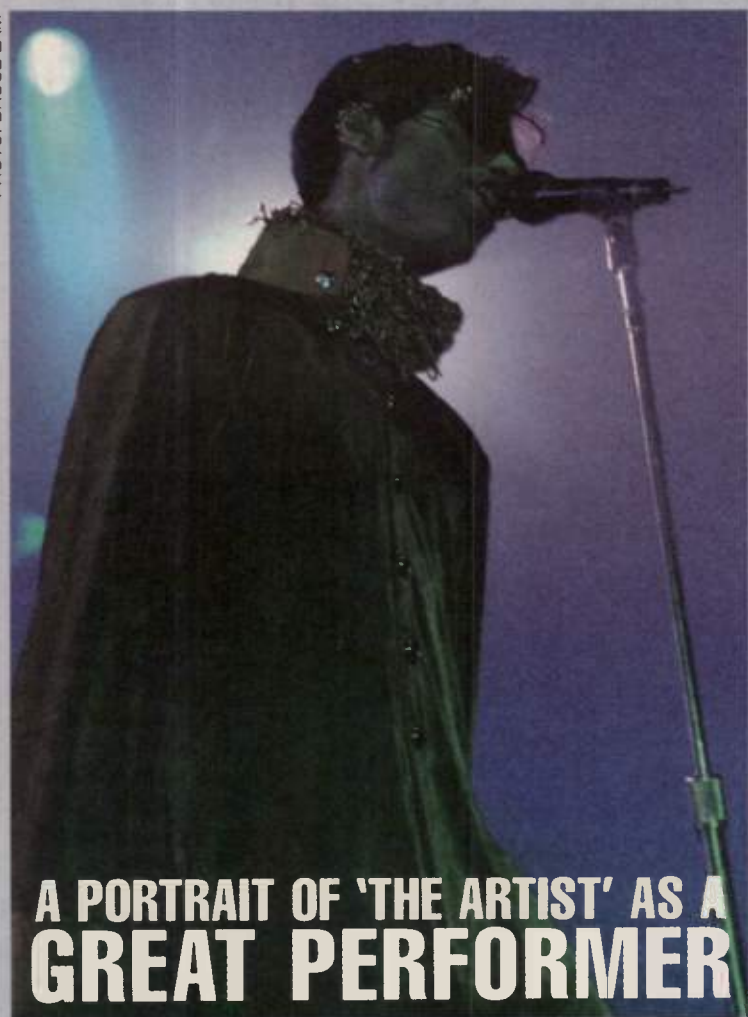
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A PORTRAIT OF 'THE ARTIST' AS A GREAT PERFORMER

The calendar may have said early June, but the sunny skies, warm temps and packed parking lot told the real story:

summer had begun. The occasion was a rare club appearance by The Artist, the latest in a brief flurry of "small"

shows the former Prince of pop was doing before he reportedly embarks on a large tour some time next year.

The venue — Toronto's 2,000-capacity Warehouse — was as packed with anticipation as it was people; after all, how often does the most enigmatic, eclectic pop musician of the 1980's play a small concert hall? Fortunately, The Artist didn't disappoint, working the diverse, capacity crowd (running in age from late-teens to 40-somethings) into a funky lather. Opening with "The Jam Of The Year," from his latest, three-disc opus, *Emancipation*, it was obvious he was intent on steaming up the cavernous hall. Though the two-hour set was sprinkled with hits ("Purple Rain" was an early show highlight; others included "The Most Beautiful Girl In The World," "Sexy MF," and an abbreviated "Raspberry Beret") the majority of the material was drawn from *Emancipation*, which, despite its flaccid sales, wasn't a bad thing. Fact is, it may be his most loose, funky album to date, and the songs he chose to play live reflected his opening words, "we're here to jam," particularly "Groove On" and "Face Down."

Yes, we were jamming. And summer never felt so good.



KING COBB STEELIE'S AMBIENT DUB

As pioneers of mixing ambient rock with dub and other bass-heavy rhythms. Guelph, Ontario's King Cobb Steelie anticipated many of the current trends in music — particularly the integration of alternative and dub — making the release of the group's latest disc, *Junior Relaxer*, right in sync with the times.

"There has only ever been one unwritten creative manifesto in this band, and that is to not be afraid to try anything, and what still excites us to this day is new music," says Kevan Byrne, the band's singer/songwriter/guitarist.

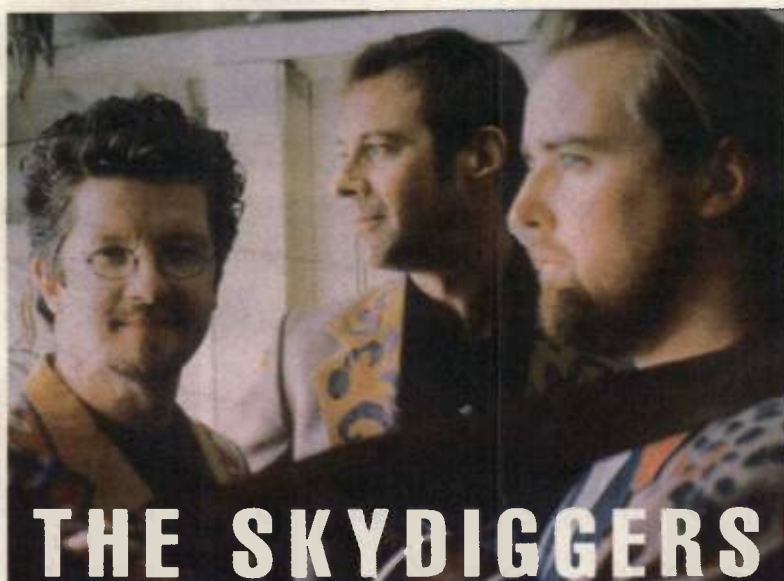
And while Byrne could get excited about the prospect of finally gaining some real exposure (their debut self-titled disc came out in 1993, followed by 1995's *Project Twinkle*) he's taking a more long-term view of things. "I

think probably for us it's going to be a slow process, it's going to take another few records — we're not the kind of band that is instantly marketable, we have to take our time and keep things in perspective," says Byrne.

Those adventurous souls who've tired of hearing yet another three-chord guitar band bashing away, and can't stand another Prodigy knock-off, would do well to check out *Junior Relaxer*, particularly powerful, trippy tracks like "Rational" and "The Power Of Love," in which the band's musical vision meshes like never before.

"I think we've found the balance we always wanted on this record," says Byrne, adding, "it's a heavy record, and it sounds great, but it also manages to capture the energy we have live," he adds.

PHOTO: ANDREA NANNI



THE SKYDIGGERS PUMP UP THEIR MUSICAL MUSCLE

It's not like they've suddenly become Nirvana or anything, but Desmond's *Hip City* — The Skydiggers latest (and fifth) album — shows them flexing their musical muscles as never before. From the first drum loop that starts off the disc (on the title track) to the aggressive, dirty guitar of "The Shape Of Things To Come" and "November In

Ontario," this is an album with a lot of kick to it.

"What we really wanted to do with this album was open ourselves up a little bit more than we had in the past. We consciously said 'let's keep an open mind about everything that happens,' and so we worked in different studios, with different people," says singer Andy Maize.

The result is an energetic collection of songs that reveal a grittier side to the band's melodic roots-rock, featuring Maize's impassioned vocals, Josh Finlayson's slicing guitar work, the duo's fine harmonies and evocative songwriting. The current, pared-down line-up also includes bassist Ronnie von Johnnie, and was augmented for the recording by drummer Gavin Brown and guitarist Paul MacLeod.

As fans of bands ranging from Wilco to Radiohead; The Tragically Hip to Son Volt, "we don't live in a vacuum, we're definitely aware of what's going on and we enjoy a lot of what's happening out there right now, so I guess it's reflected in our music," says Maize, adding, "but still for us whatever serves the song best is the most important factor in our decision-making as musicians and producers." Toward that end, the album *does* contain acoustic guitars and some more traditional Skydiggers songs. As Maize notes, "We're not trying to reinvent ourselves so much as expand our sound."

TARIQ DOESN'T GET ANGRY... HE GETS EVEN

Quebec-born, Calgary-based, singer/songwriter Tariq (pronounced *Tarr-ick*) may write provocative, detailed, intense songs — and is as likely to perform solo on an acoustic guitar as he is with a full band — but the 29-year-old is no sandal-wearing folk singer. In fact, most of the songs on his debut disc, *The Basement Songs*, are performed on electric guitar, and alternate between aggressive rockers ("Not Just A Waiter," "Critic," "Get Lost") and poignant, almost harrowing ballads ("Dear Liza," "I Don't Wanna Be Good," "Basement"), with some pure pop thrown in for good measure ("Crush").

Such variety helps make *The Basement Songs* a diverse record, something that Tariq, as a fan of eclectic music himself, set out to do. "To me it seems very natural to have that flow on a record, so it's a bit of a journey through the whole thing," he says, adding, "I usually like to hear albums from beginning to end, in the order that the songs were put on the record."



PHOTO: GREG GERLA

The product of a strict Muslim upbringing in rural Quebec, pop music was a hidden pleasure for Tariq — a fact that's reflected in the album's closing tirade, "I Don't Wanna Be Good," directed at his restrictive father: "I don't wanna be good, just in case you misunderstood/ I'm trying so hard to be bad, just to get back at you Dad." In fact, much of the album is written in a confessional tone that's deeply revealing. "I definitely draw on what I know and what I see and my own experiences," he says, adding, "but I'm also an observer so I like to sit back and take things in."

HANDICAPPING THE FIELD IN THE C.C.M.A RACE

BY TERRY PASIEKA

There are two diametrically opposed schools of thought on the country music scene heading into the 16th annual Canadian Country Music Association Awards (C.C.M.A.) in Hamilton, Ont. on Sept. 8. There has either been: a) an invasion of Nashville by Canadian country artists or b) an emergence of a bonafide star system for Canadian artists in Canada.

First, Shania Twain, Terri Clark and Paul Brandt — by far the most successful Canadians in the U.S. over the past two years — may be Canadian by birth, but their music has an American stamp all over it.

Second, the status or non-status of a Canadian star in Nashville seems to have some bearing on who will take the trophies home in Canada.

So, from back to front, here is how the field rates in 1997, according to this handicapper.

7/ On The Wane: There is a noticeable downside to the careers of George Fox and Michelle Wright. In Fox's case, it's been the inability of image makeovers to jump-start any interest outside of Canada. For Ms. Wright, *It's Over*, to paraphrase the title of her current CD, which has done well here but is the second straight album to stiff stateside since her 1992 success.

6/ Country: Yes? No?: Territory of the Rankin Family and Blue Rodeo, whose appropriateness in the country format usually fluctuates from single to single.

5/ Lightweight: All fitting the poster boy, poster girl image of 'new country,' but all working on their first album and needing to pay more dues, including Julian Austin, Chris Cummings, Rachel Matkin and Thomas Wade & Wayward.

4/ Dark Horses: Four artists who probably deserve a better fate at the awards. Included here are Ron Hynes and Don Neilson, whose current albums, *Face To The Gale* and *Is It Just Me?* are

their best yet; Joan Kennedy, who should return to the front ranks of female singers; and the ever hard-working Farmer's Daughter.

3/ Nashville Low: Four Canadian superstars caught by the pied piper lure of Nashville: Charlie Major, two years in Music City and a U.S. re-release of *Lucky Man*, but no chart action; Jim Witter and Patricia Conroy, male and female bookends of the same nightmare: nearly two years with a U.S. record deal but still no record; Lisa Brokop, with the deal and the record, but then dropped her manager, was dropped by the label and had her record pulled after three singles, all charting low.

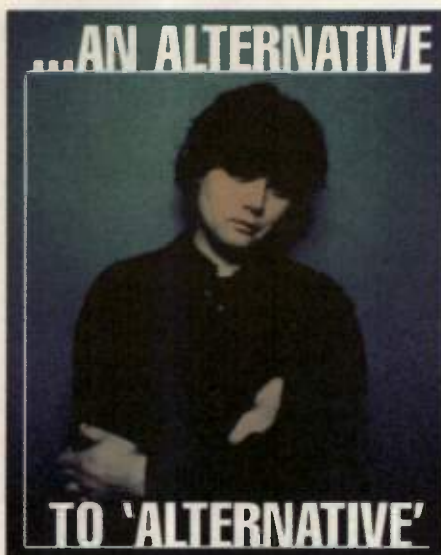
2/ Canada High: The cream of the country in Canada, containing artists who maintain a higher profile on this side of the 49th.

Destined for recognition are Jason McCoy, Duane Steele and Prairie Oyster, whose superb twelve-course masterpiece, *Blue Plate Special* is destined to become a country classic.

1/ Nashville High: Shania, Terri and Paul, winning the lion's share of the awards despite the continual delay of Twain's follow-up and tour; Clark & Brandt slipping on the U.S. charts.

The awards will be broadcast live on CTV.

YOU CAN'T JUDGE HOLLY BY HER PUBLICITY SHOTS (EXCEPT THIS ONE)



nice-guy, anti-hip poster boy of pop music. And while his writing is concise, it is also surprisingly rich and detailed, and unfailingly even-handed. "I like songs that are sort of breezy and just come and go without much fanfare and don't have a big message — those kind of songs always rub me the wrong way — because I don't like to hear people *telling* me stuff in their songs I like to hear people *showing* me stuff through their music," he adds.

But Sexsmith's no musical Luddite. *Other Songs* is more eclectic, and electric, than his 1995 self-titled major label debut release, with tracks like "Average Joe," "Nothing Good" and "Clown In Broad Daylight" displaying a more aggressive side to his gentle folksy strumming. What hasn't changed, however, is the honesty and emotional purity of Sexsmith's writing — qualities that have garnered praise from a gaggle of cool songwriters around the world, including Elvis Costello, Paul McCartney and Gord Downie. Of course, he's calm in the face of such heavyweight praise, saying, "it's hard to say what exactly they like about it; I've talked to Elvis a lot about music, but I don't know, maybe it's a kind of songwriting they haven't heard in a while."

Indeed, and a lot more people got to hear it this summer with Sexsmith on the bill from The Tragically Hip's Another Roadside Attraction tour. Now, if he could just get some radio play ...

Holly McNarland burst onto the scene last year, with her indie *Sour Pie* EP, a scathing, emotionally raw collection of songs about betrayal and disappointment (particularly "Mr. Five Minutes," about a lousy lover), featuring McNarland's dynamic wail of a voice cast against spare acoustic guitar.

But despite the impact of the EP — she got signed as a result of it — for her major label debut album, *Stuff*, the 22-year-old McNarland decided to augment her folkie arrangements with a full band, resulting in a disc that swings between moody ballads and full-out rockers. "It's not really a big thing to me; if a song sounds good, it can be done on an acoustic or an electric — but for me it's more interesting to use an electric right now," she explains.

In conversation the Vancouver-via-Winnipeg singer is warm, funny, and very animated — qualities that aren't projected through the anguished image that is presented to the public through her promotional material.

"Yeah, all the pictures of me, in magazines or newspapers, are really really serious and I guess the record company wants to market me that way, but that's not how I am," she explains, with a chuckle, "I mean, I happen to write serious songs — although not *all* of them are serious — but the thing is, I'm such a fun-loving person, I have so much fun *all*



the time. I'm not the fucked-up, depressed psycho-chick people seem to think I am. In fact, right now I'm having the time of my life."

But, hell, a little pain goes a long way. Her first single,

"Numb," has been garnering radio play for a couple of months now — people seem to respond to her brazen, in-your-face intensity. "If I get a response, whatever it is, then I guess I've done something right," she adds.

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PHOTOS BY BRUCE LAM

BLUES TRAVELER'S CANUCK CONNECTION

BY WILLIAM PEYTON

Talking to John Popper is a rare treat. Not only is the singer/songwriter/harmonica player for New Jersey's Blues Traveler (which also features drummer Brendan Hill, bassist Bob Sheehan and guitarist Chan Kinchla) a nice guy with a wicked sense of humour, he's also remarkably well-informed about Canada, its people, its geography and, hell, even its politics. The launching pad for our discussion is *Straight On Till Morning* — the band's new album — and specifically, the song "Canadian Rose."

The fictionalized tale of a love affair between Popper and a woman from Burlington, Ontario, "Canadian Rose" is notable for its irresistible pop melody, fine lyric and sing-a-long chorus: "... And she would call me her ugly American, and I would call her my Canadian flower/ And I don't think that we'll ever get there again, we had such power/ And she would call me her ugly American, and I'll remember my Canadian Rose/ Especially when the fall comes to Burlington, we were in so close."

"That song's the first fiction I've ever written, but it's based on several different experiences I've had; I had a little thing with a girl from Canada once and I also had a thing involving Burlington, so I combined them into a story that didn't exist," explains Popper.

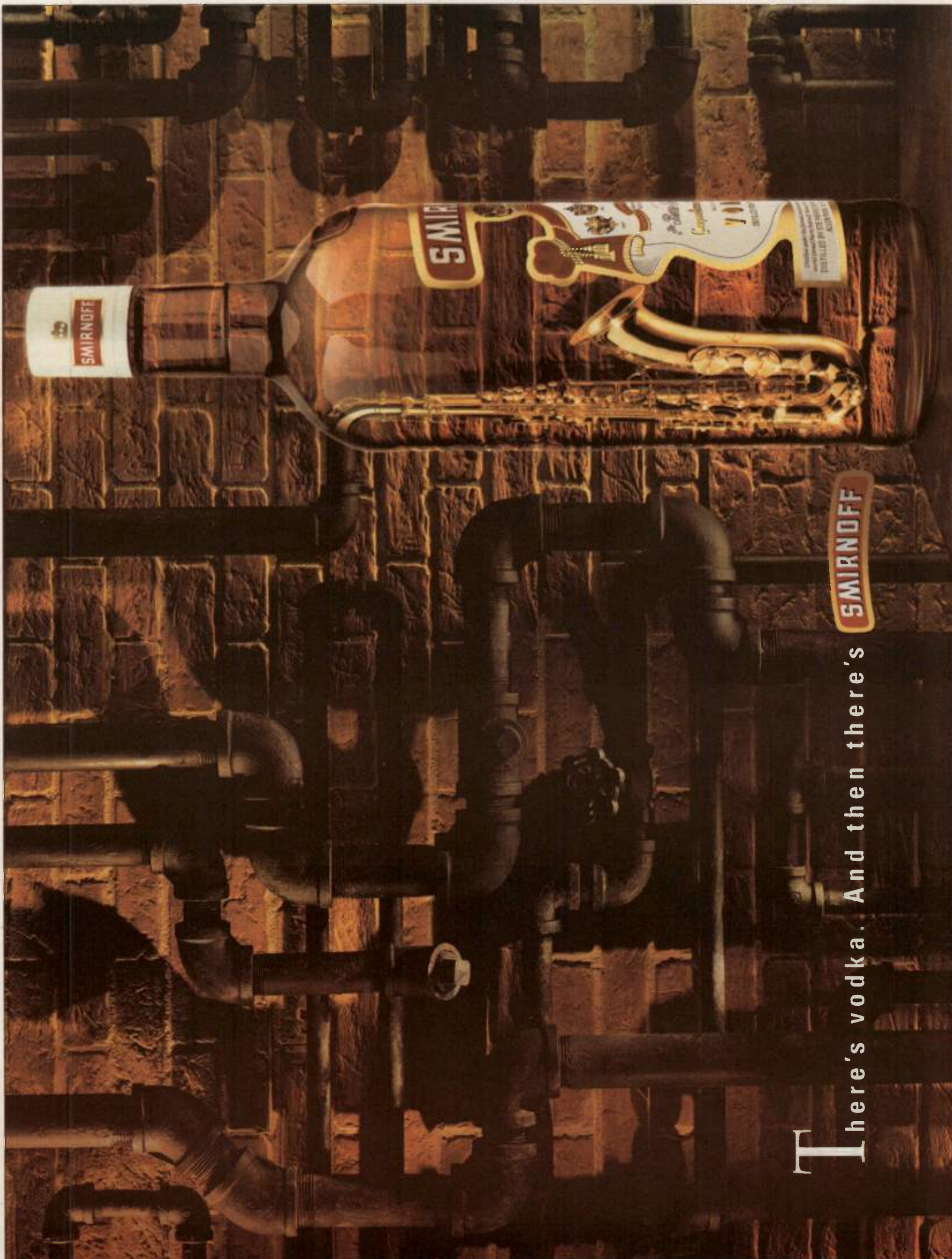
At one point in the song it becomes obvious the object of the protagonist's desire has moved to Vancouver, and to hear Popper discuss the reasons for her relocation is to realize that, unlike so many Americans, he's actually spent some time *thinking* about his northern neighbours. "Well, it's funny, my bass player (Bob Sheehan) said, 'why can't you have her moving to Ottawa or maybe Montréal, that would be logical,' but I decided, well, she wanted to go west. You know, when you're an American if you think of moving you think of California, well in Canada you think of Vancouver," he says. When he's informed of how many people actually *do* move from central Canada to the coast, he laughs and says, "I think there's definitely a Western and Eastern Canada vibe — even if you talk in terms of Toronto and Vancouver there's a huge difference, it's like New York and California down here."

Perhaps most refreshing is Popper's self-deprecating sense of humour; he's one American who's not afraid to poke fun at himself. As he slyly notes, "what's cool about you guys is that you're keeping a lot of the wilderness wilderness and I think it's going to be one of the last patches of

wilderness left; we're pretty much cooking everything up down here — what you have to worry about is when we burn it all and start, let's say, 'emigrating' to Canada, with that unguarded border," he says with a wicked laugh, adding, "don't take any shit from us Yanks."

Beyond "Canadian Rose," there's much to like on *Straight On Till Morning*, which, unlike some of their earlier releases, features a wider palette of sounds, from the pure pop of "Rose," "Most Precarious" and "Felicia" to the string-drenched balladry of "Yours" and the gospel-tinged

"Make My Way." Of course, the band hasn't abandoned the bluesy jams it's known for, but this time out Popper and Co. wanted to push the boundaries of their sound. "I don't think it was really a conscious thing, but I think you've really got to try and represent where your songwriting is as honestly as you can and we call those catchy songs 'BT Lite,' but the fact is, they're also a real part of our writing structure and because we do have several styles we write in we like to mix things up for each album," he says.



There's vodka. And then there's

DISCOGRAPHY

- 1990 Blues Traveler (A & M)
- 1991 Travelers & Thieves (A & M)
- 1993 Save His Soul (A & M)
- 1994 four (A & M)
- 1996 Live From The Fall (2-CD, A & M)
- 1997 Straight On Till Morning (A & M)

PHOTO: FRANK OCKENFELS III

JOE JACKSON
AND THE SIN OF PRIDE
Continued from Page 1

Released by Sony Classical, *Heaven & Hell* combines the elements of pop and classical music to provide an epic interpretation of the Seven Deadly Sins: Gluttony, Lust, Avarice, Sloth, Anger, Envy and Pride. "I'm not claiming to have written the last word for all time on the Seven Deadly Sins. I'm not claiming to be a sociologist or a theologian or a philosopher or any of those things. It's just the personal viewpoint of an artist," says Jackson.

Personifying each sin are lengthy compositions which feature Jackson's obscure lyrics, the teasing vocals of Suzanne Vega in the song "Angel" (Lust), the operatic musings of Dawn Upshaw in "Tuzla" (Avarice), the somniferous whisperings of Crash Test Dummies' Brad Roberts in "Passacaglia/A Bud And A Slice" (Sloth), the pixieish laments of Jane Siberry in "The Bridge" (Envy) and the primitive stylings of Jared Crawford in "Right" (Anger) who played plastic buckets in the middle of Times Square during rush hour. "This album was more fun to make than anything I've done in years, partly because of getting all those people involved and just their enthusiasm for it was incredibly inspiring," he explains, as if referring to the cast of *Les Miserables*, rather than

musical collaborators. Yet, despite the album's layers of contemporary lyrics, string instruments and complex characters, *Heaven & Hell* is every bit as



scholastic as it is theatrical. Although he denies drawing any inspiration from Brad Pitt's performance in the horror flick *Seven*, Jackson spent two years extensively researching the literature and iconography of Sin

before developing his own interpretation. "The more you look into (the Seven Deadly Sins), the more you realize that it's a pretty timeless theme. You know, I think we all have all seven inside us," he confesses.

Nevertheless, Jackson did encounter some difficulty in succinctly capturing the nature of Avarice. "I could relate to Lust. I could relate to Anger, no problem. But greed I had a hard time with. I'm just not really motivated by money or material success," he explains. For this reason, Jackson opted to express Avarice in terms of profiteering in war-torn Bosnia through

the abstract voices of conscience, forgetfulness, cynicism and greed. As for expressing Anger, Jackson adopted an approach reminiscent of his early years as an iconoclastic singer/songwriter emerging from

Britain's New Wave movement. In a stream-of-consciousness rant, "Right" pits lyrics such as "Fuck this bullshit," against an explosion of heavy drum beats. "Years ago, when I did my first album, people called me an angry young man and I thought that was hilarious at the time because it conjured up this image of this guy

Pride. After all, undertakings such as *Heaven & Hell* seem a tad highbrow when Jackson's pop anthems can still be heard in dance clubs on '80s revival nights. But the graduate of London's Royal Academy of Music remains unapologetic for tackling works that suggest an inflated opinion of his own musi-

"I could relate to Lust. I could relate to Anger, no problem. But greed I had a hard time with."

who is angry all the time, like when cleaning his teeth, he's furious," laughs Jackson.

But whether *Heaven & Hell* is autobiographical or an objective study of Sin, its compositions differ greatly from Jackson's trademark early hit singles like "Sunday Papers," "I'm The Man," "Is She Really Going Out With Him" and "One More Time," circa 1979. In fact, Jackson's later works include *Will Power*, a collection of instrumental pieces, *Jumpin' Jive*, an album of '40s swing hits and eight film scores including Francis Ford Coppola's *Tucker — The Man And His Dream*. "I am a composer. Singer/songwriter, I don't think really fits, if you look at what I'm doing," he insists.

Yet it is this somewhat elitist attitude that has prompted many critics and fans alike to accuse Jackson of committing the Sin of

cal abilities. Besides, Jackson says, "I can't say absolutely for sure that I have not been guilty of hubris, or the Sin of Pride. All I know is that I try my best not to be. But someone looking at it through different eyes sees it in a different way,"

| SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY | |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1979 | Look Sharp; I'm The Man (A & M) |
| 1980 | Beat Crazy (A & M) |
| 1981 | Jumpin' Jive (A & M) |
| 1982 | Day And Night (A & M) |
| 1984 | Body and Soul (A & M) |
| 1986 | Big World; Live (A & M) |
| 1989 | Blaze Of Glory (A & M) |
| 1990 | Best Of (A & M) |
| 1993 | Laughter & Lust (Virgin) |
| 1997 | Heaven And Hell (Sony) |

DISCOVERY

NEW RELEASES

Note: To read review, see page number beside each entry

MUSIC

| Artist | Title | Label | Page # | Artist | Title | Label | Page # |
|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|--------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| 10,000 Maniacs | Love Among The Ruins | Universal | 18 | McCartney, Paul | Flaming Pie | EMI | 20 |
| Austin, Julian | What My Heart Already Knows | BMG | 22 | Mexico70 | Imperial Comet Hour | Red Ant/St. Clair | 20 |
| Austin, Sherrie | Words | BMG | 22 | Minipops | Love With Fabio | IHL | 20 |
| B Girls | Who Says Girls Can't Rock | Outside | 21 | Molloy, Matt | Shadows On Stone | Caroline/Page | 22 |
| Backsliders | Throwing Rocks At The Moon | Attic | 21 | Morgan, Carlos | Feelin' Alright | Universal | 20 |
| Bern, Dan | Dan Bern | Sony | 18 | Morgonn | What We See | Indie | 22 |
| Black, Clint | Nothin' But The Tailights | BMG | 22 | Morrissey | Maladjusted | PGS | 18 |
| Bon Jovi, Jon | Destination Anywhere | PGS | 18 | Muffs | Happy Birthday To Me | Warner | 20 |
| Brad | Interiors | Sony | 18 | My Dear Heretic | Haute Anxiety | Indie | 20 |
| Brand New Heavies | Shelter | Delicious Vinyl | 18 | My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult | A Crime For All Seasons | St. Clair | 20 |
| Breits, The | The Breits | Alert | 21 | Neil, Ben | Triptycal | Antilles | 22 |
| Camus | Sin Of The Father | Warner | 18 | O'Connell, Maura | Wandering Home | Ryko/Denon | 18 |
| Cats And Dogs | Cats And Dogs | Indie | 18 | Oasis | Be Here Now | Sony | 18 |
| Cetera, Peter | A Collection | PGS | 18 | Ono, Yoko | Re-issues | Ryko/Denon | 22 |
| Cherkassky, Shura | Rachmaninov | London | 22 | Pineforest Crunch | Make Believe | PGS | 20 |
| Chown, Chris | Stompin' Grounds | Speakeasy | 21 | Plasticene | Plasticene | Universal | 19 |
| Cicadas | The Cicadas | Warner | 19 | Pond | Rock Collection | Sony | 20 |
| Cub | Mauler | Augogo | 19 | Powderfinger | Double Allergic | PGS | 21 |
| Curse, The | Teenage Meat | Outside | 21 | Radiohead | O.K. Computer | EMI | 18 |
| Cyrus, Billy Ray | Cover To Cover | PGS | 22 | Radish | Restraining Bolt | PGS | 21 |
| Davis, Miles | Kind Of Blue | Sony | 22 | Scud Mountain Boys | The Early Year | Sup Pop | 21 |
| DiFranco, Ani | Living In Clip | Righteous Babe | 18 | Seahorses | Do It Yourself | Universal | 19 |
| Dishrags | Love Hate | Outside | 21 | Slaughter | Revolution | CMC/BMG | 20 |
| Drop Kick Me Jesus | Drop Kick Me Jesus | Neptune | 20 | Slaves On Dope | One Good Turn ... | Just A Minute! | 20 |
| Dub War | Pain | Warache | 18 | Smash Mouth | Fush Yu Mang | Universal | 19 |
| Dube, Lucky | Taxman | Gallo/Shanachie | 20 | Snot | Get Some | Universal | 18 |
| Eachdraidh | Culloden Field | Indie | 22 | Sons Of The Desert | Whatever Comes First | Sony | 22 |
| Earth, Wind & Fire | In The Name Of Love | BeatFactory | 21 | Southworth, John | Mars Pennsylvania | A & M | 21 |
| Echo/Bunneymen | Evergreen | PGS | 19 | Spiritualized | Ladies And Gentlemen | BMG | 19 |
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| ELO II | One Night, Live | BMG | 18 | Tesh, John | Avalon | PGS | 18 |
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| Fleetwood Mac | The Dance | Warner | 19 | Various Artists | Deep Purple Tribute | Derock | 21 |
| G3 | Live | Sony | 20 | Various Artists | Latinio! Latino! | Putumayo/Koch | 22 |
| Hammond, Beres | Getting Stronger | Heartbeat/Denon | 20 | Various Artists | Pure Energy 4 | SPG/Quality | 18 |
| Harem Scarem | Karma Cleansing | Warner | 18 | Various Artists | Word From The Range | Glenbow | 22 |
| Heavy D | Waterbed Hev | Universal | 21 | Vaughan, Stevie Ray | Live At Carnegie Hall | Sony | 18 |
| Hooverphonic | A New Stereophonic ... | Sony | 19 | Volodos, Arcadi | Piano Transcriptions | Sony | 22 |
| Houston, Chris | Evil Twang | Supremomo | 20 | Weller, Paul | Heavy Soul | Island | 21 |
| Jackson, D.D. | Paired Down ... | Justin Time | 22 | West End Girls | Best Of | Dexter | 21 |
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| James, Colin | National Steel | Warner | 21 | World Party | Egyptology | EMI | 21 |
| Jensen, Ingrid | Here On Earth | Justin Time | 22 | | | | |
| Jensen, Jane | Comic Book Whore | Universal | 18 | | | | |
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| K's Choice | Paradise In Me | Sony | 20 | | | | |
| Labelle, Patti | Flame | Universal | 21 | | | | |
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| Malope, Rebecca | Free At Last | EMI | 22 | | | | |
| Mansun | Attack Of The Grey Lantern | Sony | 18 | | | | |
| Marley, Ziggy | Fallen Is Babylon | Warner | 20 | | | | |
| Mayall, John | Blues For The Lost Days | BMG | 18 | | | | |

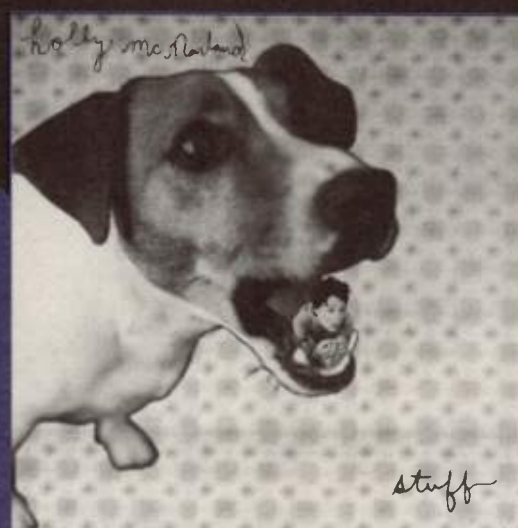
HOME VIDEO

| Title | Distributor | Page # |
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| First Wives Club | Paramount | 22 |
| Jagged Little Pill Live | Warner | 22 |
| Kids In The Hall Brain Candy | Paramount | 22 |
| Liar, Liar | Universal | 22 |

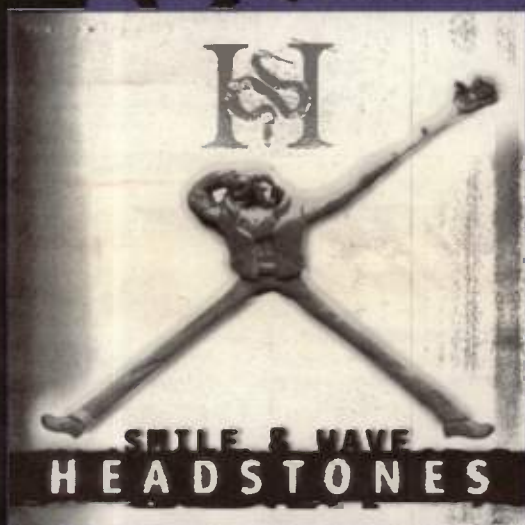
SAM'S Is CANADIAN



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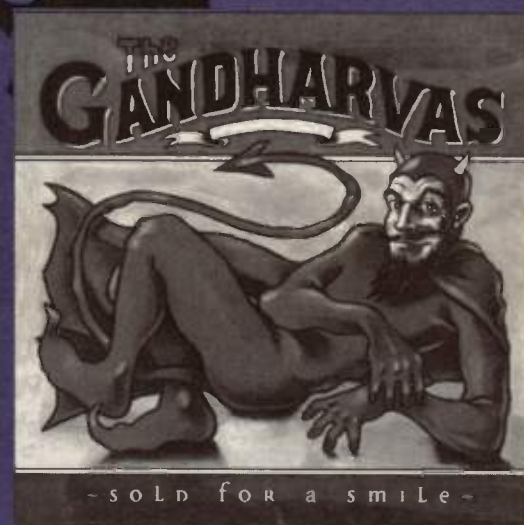


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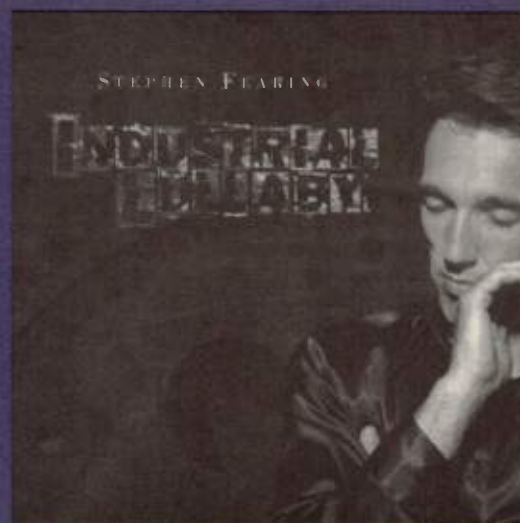
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Sam's the Record Man®

CANADA'S LARGEST AND BEST KNOWN RECORD STORE

JASON MCCOY PLAYING FOR KEEPS ON AND OFF THE RECORD

PHOTO: GLEN ROSE



BY TERRY PASIEKA

Heading into the 16th annual Canadian Country Music Association Awards show (Sept. 8 in Hamilton) there is a definite changing of the guard feeling that pervades the Canadian country music scene. Players who used to be keepers are no longer in the running;

some probably only for this year, others, perhaps, forever.

One artist who shouldn't have to worry is Jason McCoy.

The soon-to-be 27-year-old from Minesing, Ont (just north of Barrie) knows that a good portion of his strongest competition won't be in the running for awards, so he is approaching this year's CCMA's with a subdued optimism, realizing that while he can't control

who wins, he feels he deserves to be part of the inevitable trophy transition in '97. However, he tries to put it all in perspective, saying, "awards can be a measure of success, especially if they are fan voted (i.e. entertainer of the year), because it is the fans that buy the records, phone radio request lines and come to concerts."

Regardless of what happens at the CCMA's in Hamilton, McCoy hopes the fans and industry see something else in him. "I don't know how many people understand how privileged I feel to be making country music for a living. I respect this opportunity more than anything else," he enthuses. Still, the ego in all of us rises to the surface when he grins and says, "But I would be blown away if I could win a CCMA!"

Sitting in the sun at an outdoor bistro, the youthful singer/songwriter looks younger than his 27 years, and his credentials belie his age. It began, guitar-in-hand by age seven; continued with his first authentic song, "The Greatest Time Of All," penned at age 12 and reached its first peak when he released an independent album of ten original compositions, produced by legendary Canadian tunesmith Ray Griff, just prior to his 18th birthday. He had singles, his own band and went on a Canadian tour all while still a teenager, but it was nearly five years before he was in the recording studio again. What happened? Says McCoy, succinctly, "I grew up." Translated: he had his first reality check.

In 1994 he recorded an EP, which yielded three more singles,

and the first evidence of heavy radio airplay.

Then came his 1995 self-titled debut album and five more singles, three of them going all the way to No. 1. He won the 1996 RPM Big Country Outstanding New Country Artist award and collected a host of other nominations.

His latest disc, *Playin' For Keeps*, came out earlier this summer and it's a more self-assured McCoy that's found on the album's 12 tracks.

"You know, I think the title really fits where I am right now as a person and as a musician. Everyone in the industry looks at a second album in a different way, it is just assumed that there has to be an improvement. I'd like to think of it more as a maturing process — your music evolves as you do," he explains.

One thing that comes with a successful debut album is the preoccupation record execs have with the hit potential of the next record. Are you picking the ten or 12 best songs? Are there too many album cuts and not enough potential singles?

McCoy says he and producer Scott Baggett had to be careful not to get caught up too much in worrying about such scenarios, "because we wanted the album

to represent all that is the Jason McCoy sound," but they also had to pay some attention to what the boys upstairs were saying, "because they pay the freight."

When the subject of doing a cover song on *Playin' For Keeps* came up, something he had never done on either his indie or debut releases, it was a company VP who waxed enthusiastic about one of his all-time favourite songs that McCoy was including regularly in his show: "Doin' It Right," a raver from the late '70s. Being his first cover tune already made it stand out; enlisting the services of harmonica player extraordinaire, Delbert McClinton, to play on it made it really special. McCoy still shakes his head in disbelief at his good fortune in getting McClinton. "We just called up his manager, he agreed, came in and got totally into the song in, like, no time, did his part with a minimum of fuss, and that was it. He was so professional," he recalls.

DISCOGRAPHY

- 1995 Jason McCoy (Universal)
- 1997 *Playin' For Keeps* (Universal)

LISTEN TO IT HERE

LEANN RIMES, *BLUE*



JULIAN AUSTIN, *WHAT MY HEART ALREADY KNOWS*



KENNY CHESNEY, *ME AND YOU*



VANESSA MAE, *CHINA GIRL*



ECONOLINE CRUSH, *THE DEVIL YOU KNOW*



DELERIUM, *KARMA*



KELITA, *LUCKY ONES*



STEPHANIE BEAUMONT, *LOVE AND DREAMS*



LEAHY, *LEAHY*



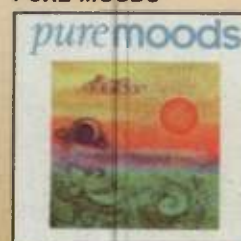
DAYNA MANNING, *VOLUME ONE*



VARIOUS ARTISTS, *ESCAPES II*



VARIOUS ARTISTS, *PURE MOODS*



JOHN McDERMOTT, *WHEN I GROW TOO OLD TO DREAM*



THE MUTTON BIRDS, *ENVY OF ANGELS*



DUANE STEELE, *THIS IS THE LIFE*



PAUL McCARTNEY, *FLAMING PIE*



SUNDANCE CAFÉ, *SUNDANCE CAFÉ*



VARIOUS ARTISTS, *COUNTRY MUSIC TELEVISION*



SARAH McLACHLAN, *SURFACING*



THOMAS WADE & WAYWARD, *THOMAS WADE & WAYWARD*



TARIQ, *THE BASEMENT SONGS*



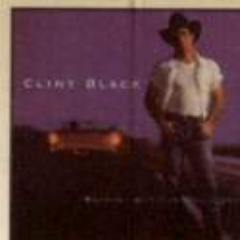
LORI YATES, *UNTOGETHER*



TOM COCHRANE, *SONGS OF A CIRCLING SPIRIT*



CLINT BLACK, *NOTHIN' BUT THE TAILLIGHTS*



LISTENING POSTS IN *SamTheRecordMan* NATIONWIDE

LATE-SUMMER MOVIES OFFER CURE FOR BLOCKBUSTER HANGOVER

BY D. A. WITHERS

Blockbuster season may be receding but there are still plenty of big-name flicks coming out with big-name stars, including *Cop Land*, an intense police drama starring Sly Stallone, Robert De Niro, Harvey Keitel, Ray Liotta and Janeane Garofalo.

Stallone stars as a small-town sheriff in a New Jersey community populated by a number of New York City police officers and their families. When a criminal investigation points toward his hometown he is forced to choose to between upholding the law and going after his cop buddies.

One of the most interesting sci-fi movies to come along in a while is *Event Horizon*, a futuristic tale set in 2046, starring Laurence Fishburne, Sam Neill, Kathleen Quinlan and Joely Richardson. The story revolves around a rescue mission to salvage the Event Horizon spaceship, which went missing seven years earlier. As the crew search the missing ship they make some terrifying discoveries. Shot entirely on soundstages in the U.K., it is said to be one of the largest productions ever to be filmed in Britain.

On the comedy front, there's *A Smile Like Yours*, starring Greg

Kinnear and Lauren Holly as a young married couple who struggle to maintain their careers while raising a family. Others in the cast include Joan Cusack, as Holly's business partner, Jay Thomas, as Kinnear's best friend, as well as Jill Hennessy and Christopher McDonald.

Money Talks is the story of a con artist who is vaulted from obscurity to celebrity overnight when he is wrongly accused of killing police officers during a prison break. All of a sudden he is wanted — dead or alive — by just about everyone, and his only hope is the help of a sleazy TV reporter. The cast includes Charlie Sheen, Chris Tucker, Heather Locklear and Paul Sorvino.

Now here's a cast for you: Kevin Kline, Joan Cusack (she's a busy woman), Matt Dillon, Debbie Reynolds, Wilford Brimley, Bob Newhart and Tom Selleck star in *In And Out*, a comedy about a popular high school teacher (Kline) whose world is turned upside down when his sexuality is questioned on the eve of his wedding.



Kull The Conqueror

One of the late-summer-early-fall releases that should prove to be a hoot for fans of warrior films is *Kull The Conqueror*, starring Kevin Sorbo, star of the wildly successful *Hercules* TV series. Billed as an "epic fantasy adventure," the film is based on the Robert E. Howard pulp fiction hero of the '30s, that inspired the

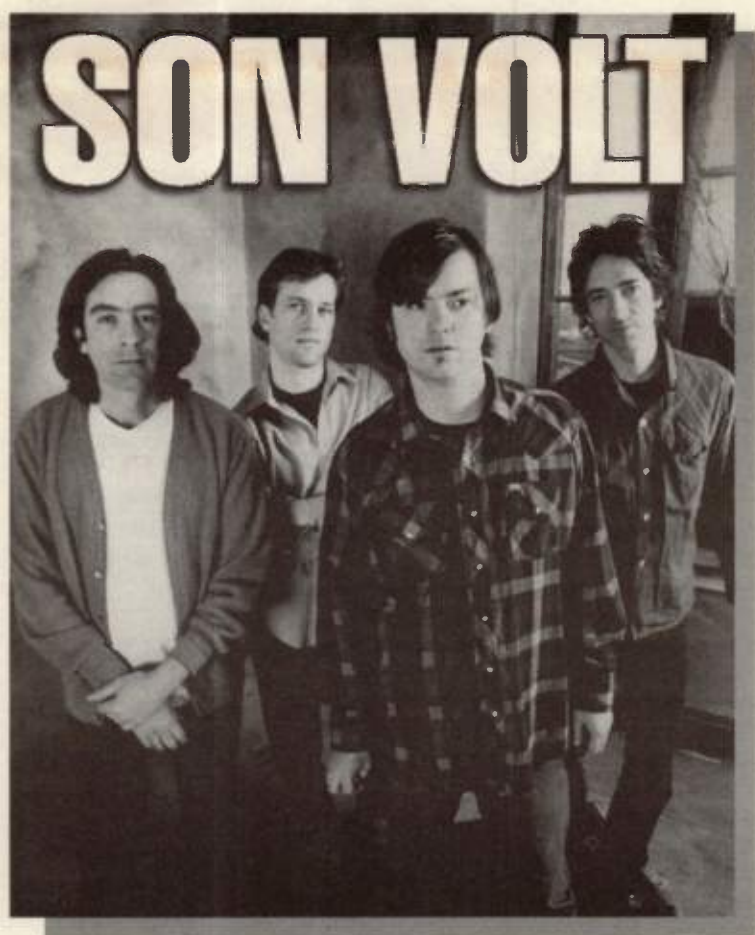
Marvel Comics character of the '70s. Kull also stars Tia Carrere, Karina Lombard and Thomas Ian Griffith.

On a more sober note is *Virus*, a "techno-thriller" starring Donald Sutherland and Jamie Lee Curtis that tells the story of the crew of an American tugboat that is saved from a typhoon by a

Russian research vessel on a top secret mission. But once on the ship they start to realize that something's terribly wrong: there's an alien presence aboard, apparently with a taste for humans.

A variation on the virus theme comes in the form of *Mimic*, a sci-fi thriller starring Mira Sorvino and Jeremy Northam about nature striking back. Following the eradication of a killer infectious disease in New York two years earlier, via genetic engineering, the city is being threatened by a strange mutation that, effectively, turns the hunter into the hunted.

Meanwhile, *The End Of Violence*, Wim Wenders' latest film, is an examination of the ways in which people are thrown together, torn apart and have their lives forever changed by violence. This L.A.-based drama, starring Bill Pullman, Andie MacDowell and Gabriel Byrne, traces the lives of a Hollywood producer and his wife, a detective, a software designer and a stuntwoman as they intersect and are torn apart by a sudden, violent twist of fate. ☹



SON VOLT

REVEALS TRUE COUNTRY HEART

intensity. "I've always found it more immediate, especially the recording process, you know. It was more honest. And there's a certain quality about the best country music that cuts through to the heart of the matter," he says, adding, "and the pedal steel is a very evocative instrument."

And so is Farrar's writing. The songs on *Straightaways* are like guide maps to all the wind-swept towns — both real and imagined — that lay at the end of the highway, in an America as troubled as it is grand. "A lot of the writing

reflects the period I was in and the band was in, which was mostly doing a lot of shows — and you know, life on the road is life really intensified, kind of like life times ten," says Farrar.

The band's (comprised of multi-instrumentalist Dave Boquist, bassist/backing vocalist Jim Boquist and drummer Mike Heidorn) rough-edged melodies may be what a lot of Son Volt's fans respond to, but Farrar's writing is also highly evocative. Phrases like "railroad dreams," "familiar, deserted byways," "passing under barren skies" and many others conjure up all sorts of rich images, both reassuring and disturbing.

"Well, I don't feel like a troubadour or anything, but travelling

has become a way of life for me — I've been doing it for at least seven years, I guess, so it's one thing I do know about so I tend to write about it," he explains.

Ah, yes, his background. It was bound to come up. Farrar and Heidorn were part of Uncle

"Well, alternative has gone mainstream and it seems to me that by embracing piercings, tattoos and all that stuff that used to be so underground, it has spelled its own demise."

- Jay Farrar

age deal, you know." Although Son Volt and its peers are riding a wave of renewed interest in country-tinged rock, they haven't exactly invented a better mouse trap. So why is this kind of music becoming popular again? Is it the need to find

some simplicity in an increasingly complex world? End of millennium bullshit? Or simply a random thing? "Well, there have always been bands that have incorporated a traditional approach to what they do and incorporated elements of country, folk and blues, but

at different times people respond to those things," he says, "I just think it's cyclical."

And while Farrar doesn't pretend to be particularly interested in the machinations of popular culture, he does find it strange how the "alternative" scene has sort of imploded. "Well, alternative has gone mainstream and it seems to me that by embracing piercings, tattoos and all that stuff that used to be so underground, it has spelled its own demise." ☹

DISCOGRAPHY

1995 *Trace* (Warner)

1997 *Straightaways* (Warner)

BY FRED LANGTON

Jay Farrar is much like the songs he writes for his band, Son Volt: Quietly intense, warm and intelligent. He's also a huge fan of country music, a fact that's obvious to anyone who's listened to Son Volt's gripping new album, *Straightaways*.

"Well part of it is that I grew up in an environment where traditional country music was always being played — my Dad played guitar and he would sing Hank Williams songs and Jimmie Rogers songs all the time" he explains.

Son Volt's sound is defined by the blending of pop and rock textures with quiet acoustic guitar, plaintive pedal steel and other instruments used in country music, including fiddle, banjo and lap steel. And while Farrar became interested in rock as he grew up, he's found himself drifting back to his country roots.

"Initially I had more of an interest in rock but gradually I just sort of came back to it, and I continue to seek out old blues and country music because there's a lot available on CD now," he adds.

For Farrar, the joy of listening to country music is its emotional

IF IT SOUNDS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE... IT MUST BE A RECORD CLUB

BY KELVIN CHAN

Psst! Hey buddy, want some free CDs? I'll let you have "10 CDs for the price of 1!" or maybe you can get even get "11 CDs or cassettes free!" Right now! All you have to do is join the club.

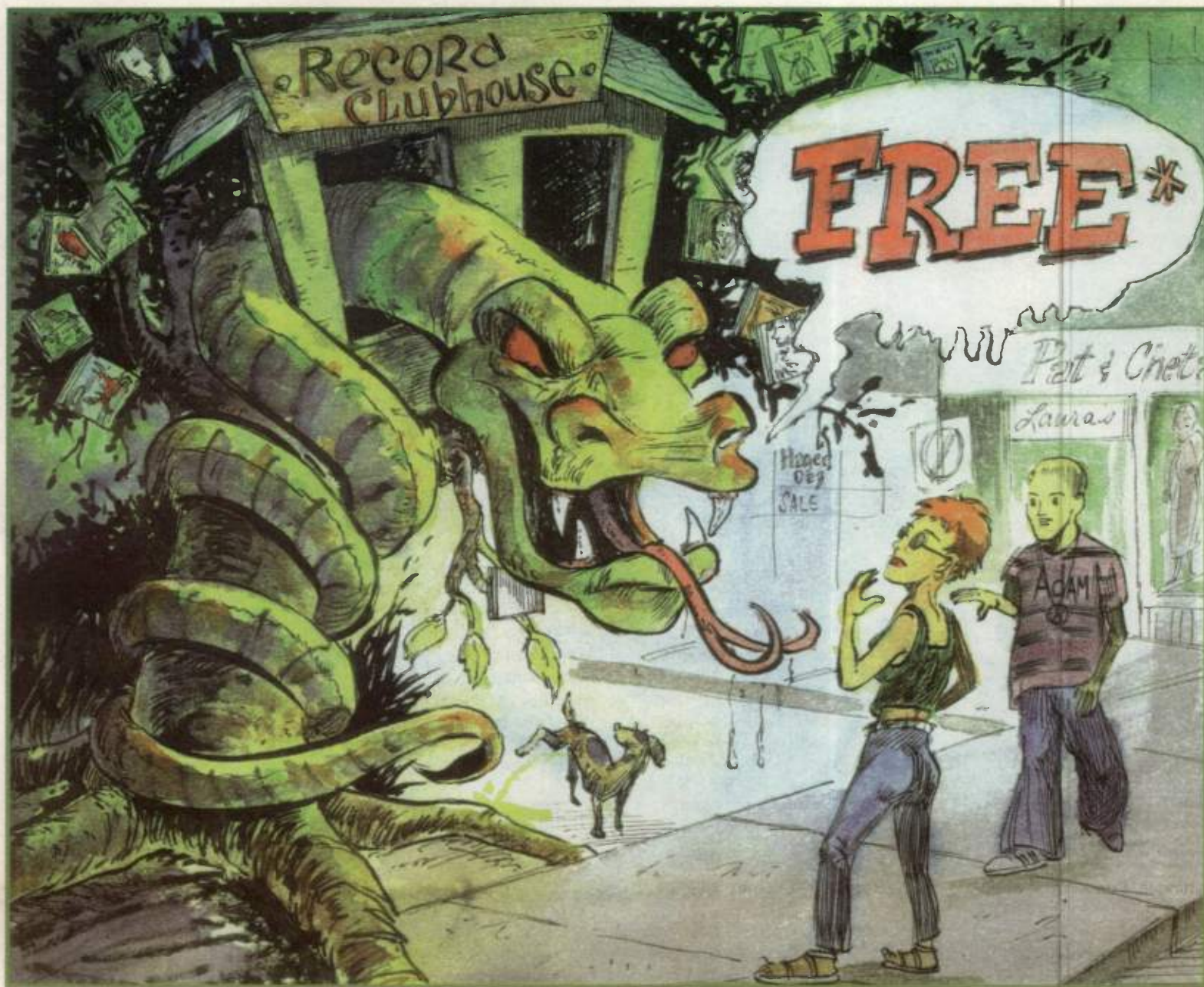
If you're a frequent music buyer, you've undoubtedly been tempted by such seemingly amazing deals on CDs from music clubs, which seem to be cheap alternatives to shopping in record stores. But are they? Before you mail in your order form for your free discs, read on, because joining a music club may not be the bargain it appears to be.

Right from the start, Trevor Augustyn, 21, had difficulty choosing his 11 free discs. He "found it extremely hard to find 11 CDs I really wanted" and ended up picking some CDs he didn't really want just to fill out his order. Basically, he felt "forced to get something I didn't want" just because he needed to fill up his 11 selections.

Most people who join music clubs, be it BMG or Columbia House, usually end up complaining about the limited selection of music available. This selection became even more limited in late 1995, when four record companies decided not to allow music clubs to distribute their products anymore. That's the reason CDs on the Universal (formerly MCA), Geffen, Virgin and Disney labels now come with stickers stating that they are "not available through record clubs." Universal said at the time that they were pulling out of clubs in support of record stores, who complain that record clubs have an unfair advantage because they pay lower licensing and royalty fees. What this means is that you won't find anything by Sloan, The Smashing Pumpkins, The Tragically Hip or Beck in Columbia House's catalogue anytime soon.

The first mail-order club, Columbia House, started up 42 years ago in Indiana. It was originally aimed at rural residents who couldn't get to music stores to buy the latest pop releases. Today, Columbia House, which is jointly owned by Sony Music and Time Warner Music, reportedly has one million members in Canada while BMG Music Service is estimated to have around 300,000 Canadian members.

Of course, you must be wondering how clubs are able to give away 10 or more free CDs as an incentive to join. First, unlike record stores, which buy their product from the record labels, music clubs buy the licensing rights to the titles themselves and manufacture the CDs or tapes in their own factories. By manufacturing massive volumes, clubs are able to produce the titles for pennies. Clubs also pay artists a reduced royalty rate for full-price club sales, and pay no royalties for CDs that are given away for free. Finally, clubs have lower



overhead compared to the stores. These factors allow clubs to have their free give-aways. In the end, the packaging may be slightly different but sound quality is said to be identical (although that claim is disputed by some in the retail music industry).

You should also be aware of the hidden costs before joining a club, which may make that free give-away offer seem not so cheap after all. For example, after joining Columbia House and getting 11 "free" CDs, members are required to buy at least five more CDs at regular club prices in the next three years. But when you take into account the fact that regular club prices start at around \$18.99, plus three dollars for shipping and handling — and don't forget the tax — the price of buying one CD comes to around \$24 or \$25. Hardly a bargain. You are allowed to buy the next disc at a discount, but it doesn't count towards your contractual obligation, so what's the point?

Then there is the dreaded negative-option card you'll have to deal with every month as a club member. Unless you send this card back every month to let BMG or Columbia House know you don't want the selection-of-the-month, you'll have to pay for it when it arrives in your mailbox. This is what turned Augustyn off the BMG Music Service.

"I had to waste a stamp to tell them I didn't want the CD (each month). This went on for four or

five months. Each time I informed them I didn't want the CD, but two of the five months I ended up receiving them anyway. After seven or eight months I got fed up," he recalls. Then the club started sending him letters telling him that "I owed them money (for the two selections-of-the-month he unwillingly received) and if I didn't send money, they would inform a collection agency that could in turn affect my credit rating," he says. Augustyn, for his part, wrote them back and told them he wasn't impressed with the club and felt they misrepresented themselves and sent back the CDs in question. Eight weeks later, BMG finally let him out of the club.

Columbia House is also notorious for resorting to such loan-shark tactics to get their money. If you haven't bought the required number of CDs by the end of your three-year time limit, you're still going to pay. Basically, "they want their money NOW and I have to end up getting 3 CDs no matter what," says one Columbia House member whose three years were up last January. He still has to buy three more CDs to fulfill his membership obligations. Columbia House ended up sending him a \$60 bill for the remaining CDs, and when paid, he received three certificates redeemable for three CDs within six months.

Record companies also gripe about clubs but for a different reason. They are concerned

about the way clubs depreciate the value of music. One of the reasons Universal cited when it pulled out of its club agreements in 1995 was that clubs' free introductory give-aways "devalue the product in the eyes of the consumer."

Al Mair, president of Attic Records, Canada's largest independent record label, agrees. "I wish they weren't as aggressive in their advertising, particularly the 11 for a dollar offers or whatever the advertisement may be, because I think that it reduces the value of music in the consumer's eyes." Mair, one of the few people in the music industry willing to talk about the relationship between music clubs and record labels, also pointed out another way clubs help diminish music. "I am also aware of scams," he says, "particularly by university students, who are joining record clubs to get their free CDs before they return home and return the bill with 'address unknown.' A lot of the product ends up in used record stores which wasn't paid for."

Tim Bourgette, of Primal Scream, a used record store in downtown Toronto, backs up this contention by saying "CDs are liquid cash. It's essentially another currency. I think people, especially students, bring them in a lot at the end of the school season and liquidate their CDs to help pay back their student loan money." He adds that while he does see a lot of

Columbia House stock, he doesn't know if there is widespread fraud going on.

In spite of all the criticism music clubs receive, business seems to be thriving. In 1991, one in 10 recordings was bought through the mail, while last year that number was one in five. And recently, Columbia House launched a new marketing ploy in the U.S. aimed at the younger music buyer. It's a new club called CDHQ, and its ads are filled with splashy graphics and ironic-sounding slogans such as "Hurry, hurry, for no particular reason!" designed to attract the so-called "Generation-X" crowd. CDHQ's selection is also geared to the younger teen and college-age crowd, the age group that tends to stay away from music clubs and shop in stores. Alterna-rock favourites such as Soul Coughing, Marilyn Manson and Local H are among the many bands CDHQ features.

So what are the lessons to be learned from this? Before you decide to join a club, ask yourself a few questions. Do they have a wide enough selection for your tastes? Are you ready to wait up to two weeks for your CDs to arrive in the mail? Are you willing to deal with the selection-of-the-month card each month? And, of course, did you remember to read the fine print? It's easy to be seduced by promises of free CDs, but in this case, membership definitely does not have its rewards.

Sarah McLachlan

Continued from Page 1

came through not only staging Lilith Fair but also seeing virtually every date (at venues holding between 9,000 and 35,000 people) sell out, making it the most successful tour of the summer.

Her latest album, the darkly affecting *Surfacing*, is a gorgeous collection of 10 songs made up almost entirely of stark ballads, featuring McLachlan's angelic vocals, heart-wrenching lyrics and lush melodies.

Network: Recently I read on the Net that you described *Surfacing* as a "good, ole' fashioned depressing record," and that "my idea of a depressing record is something that brings me joy." That seems contradictory, what did you mean by it?

Sarah McLachlan: Well, everything that comes out of my mouth is a contradiction (*laughing*) it seems, but I have a very hard time differentiating pain and pleasure, in the sense that they are so hand-in-hand; I can tell the difference between the two but I know that I need both of them, to understand each of them. I was in some terrible places emotionally a couple of years ago and even in the depths of this, right when I was in the middle of this hell I could always think this is so good, I need this hell because I'm going to grow so much from this, so I don't know if it's a contradiction but I can see both sides of it.

Network: Well, that relates to how a lot of people — and I'm sure a lot of your fans — enjoy sitting in a dark room when they're depressed or broken-hearted listening to music that makes them feel worse. It's somehow a pleasurable thing, in a strange way.

SM: I think we need to mourn, as a society, as a people. There's so much denial in our culture of feelings, and one of the things I love most about music is how it creates such a sense of empathy. You can listen to a record and hear something in the words or the music that resonates so strongly in your life so that you think my God that person knows exactly what I'm going through, and it makes it easier somehow. It's like what religion used to offer; that faith that you're not alone, you know, there's something else. Somebody else gets it and they're on the same quest as you are, and there's such a great empathy in that.

Network: Given that eight of the ten songs on *Surfacing* are ballads, what determines a song's arrangement for you; for instance why weren't more of the songs on the album like "Sweet Surrender?" Is it simply the mood you're trying to convey?

SM: Yeah, the song generally dictates that, the energy of the song. I tend to instinctually follow that and not try and think too much about it, although, curiously, "Sweet Surrender" started off as a very slow ballad and it was too much, it was too fucking depressing (*laughing*), you know, we had to try and lift it somehow, so thus it became a lot more

uptempo. I had someone tell me the other day that they thought "Sweet Surrender" was kind of a happy song, and I thought, "good God, did you listen to the lyrics?" (*laughing*).

Network: Playing *Touch* (1988) for the first time in a while recently I was intrigued to recall how mature-sounding an album it was, and you were only 19 when you recorded it. Do you think there's a thread that runs through your music, something that's pushed it forward from the very beginning?

SM: I think it's my search for answers, I guess. Or some sort of understanding. For me every record is very cathartic and therapeutic to make and writing is always a process of discovery for me; of trying to solve a problem or trying to get closer to my own truth. I can look back at *Touch* and, you know, I cringe ever so slightly at some of the lyrics but at the same time I love that because I was 19 when I wrote it and I'm still proud because I didn't know what the hell I was doing because I'd never written a song before and I can listen to the lyrics and realize I was trying really hard to be serious which is funny because the older I get the less I care about being serious, like I'm finally giving myself permission not to be serious, almost. I don't care what anybody thinks anymore, but you know, when you're 19 everybody expects you to fail, to make a silly, trite record and I really

Cocteau Twins.

Network: Well, you had played in a new wave band in Halifax, right?

SM: Yeah.

Network: I realized the other day that it's been about decade since you began working on your first album. What images or thoughts come to mind when you look back at the last ten years?

industry the more I realize how lucky I've been to be with a company like Nettwerk, who gave me basically a hundred per cent creative control when I had no idea what I was doing, and the time and space to allow that growth. When I signed up with Arista (in the U.S.) for *Solace* (1991) there was six months of tension because they're a major label and they sign artists who

worked out great.

Network: Looking back again at the last decade, what are your opinions of a) the music industry and b) the music that's come out of Canada during that time?

SM: Well, those are such massive questions (*laughing*).

Network: (*laughing*) Sorry, I shouldn't do those "a" and "b" things, I should take it one step at a time ...

SM: Well, in terms of the industry there's been a colossal change for women over the last ten years. Curiously enough, in 1987, when Sinéad O'Connor released her first album and Tracy Chapman released her debut album, those two records became huge and were very much anomalies in

the industry because before there had kind of been no place for that kind of music and they really opened up a lot of doors which definitely helped me, but obviously the radio battle is still on, although it's a little easier now, especially in the States where they have triple A. Before, there was no real place for me

"There's so much denial in our culture of feelings, and one of the things I love most about music is how it creates such a sense of empathy. You can listen to a record and hear something in the words or the music that resonates so strongly in your life so that you think my God that person knows exactly what I'm going through, and it makes it easier somehow."

wanted to do something that was substantial — I'd set high standards for myself, my idols were people like Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush.

Network: It's interesting that both of those artists you mention played progressive music

SM: Yeah, I was listening to Bauhaus, and Gabriel, and The

SM: More than anything, I feel a great sense of pride and accomplishment, like I've really done a lot in ten years and achieved a lot of success — success not just being monetary or that I've sold a lot of records, but that I've really been able to maintain my idea of integrity in this career. The longer I'm in the

write singles and I didn't do that so there was a period of about six months of really, really hard work trying to learn a new kind of communication with them and then, basically, *Solace* came out and it did alright and with *Fumbling* (1994) we begged them to let us write it the way we wanted to and they did and it



PHOTO: MARK VAN-S



on radio — most of my success came through touring and video play and really good press. There were pockets who played me, like a station in Toronto (CFNY) and stations here and there as well as college radio and the CBC, bless their hearts, was a huge supporter.

Network: What about the music of the last ten years, do you think that musically and creatively things have been

improving in Canada?

SM: Definitely, I think that's true. One thing about my career that I'm very happy about is that I became successful in Canada first; America didn't know me at all. I found so many Canadian acts had to go to the States to get recognition and Canadian radio used to be pathetic (*laughing*) for the longest time that way, only playing stuff that had made it big in the States first, and I was really lucky because that sort of thing didn't happen to me.

Network: Well, there can be such politics in the music industry

SM: Oh yeah, it's been so ridiculous because there's been such a competition between women artists, you know, "oh we have only one spot open on the radio for our token female

this week, who's it gonna be." When Tori (Amos) and I released records at the same time — her second and my third (1993) — it was a war between me and her on all the American radio stations. They'd say: "we added Tori this week so we can't add you," you know, they couldn't play two females back to back on the radio. How dare you marginalize us like this! Tori and I have sat and had a giggle about the whole thing because it's got nothing to do with us (*laughing*).

Network: And it's got nothing to do with the fans who would be thrilled to hear both of you

SM: But I think that's the nice thing about how things have changed for the better; radio, at least in the States, has finally opened up and is finally listening to their fans, and I totally agree with you that the public wants that.

Network: Yes, and in your case, I think you're much appreciated by young women because you seem to articulate things they care about and things that they never used to get to hear

SM: Yeah, and things that twenty years ago we wouldn't have been *allowed* to say as women, our voice and our ideas have been suppressed for centuries; it's so nice and so empowering to finally have a voice that people are respecting and listening to and I think that's a great thing to show young women, too, and that's why I'm so excited about Lilith Fair, because I hardly had any female role models growing up and it's so good to show young women, and young men — we're not up on stage wanting to chop your dicks off, we're up here trying to tell you how we feel and to also to try and tell you that we care about how you feel.

Network: I was amazed to read that one of the catalysts for Lilith Fair was a promoter telling you a couple of years ago that it wasn't a good idea for you to have a female opening act, because people wouldn't accept it

SM: (*laughing*) Well, yeah, that helped fuel Lilith Fair, for sure. That was Paula Cole, and of course, we put her on the bill and sold out every single show and it was a huge success and all the audiences *loved* that we put two women on the same bill. It goes to show you that it's the industry living by these stupid old rules that didn't apply to our society anymore but were too blind to even recognize how ridiculous the words that were coming out of their mouth were. Once again, that is the industry being insulting toward the public, aiming at the lowest common denominator — I think most people when they listen to a song don't notice or care whether it's being sung by a male or female, they just think it's a great song.

Network: I have to ask you about (producer/collaborator) Pierre Marchand because it seems that the two of you have a very strong creative relationship. What makes it so special?

SM: There's a huge amount of trust and respect between us; musically and personally, we've been through so much together. We've worked really hard for months and months at a time and we've gone into all sorts of each other's dark places together (*laughing*) and there's just a great trust. It's great to be able

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to work with someone you trust so much and we're on the same wavelength on almost every level — there's this weird connection we've got (*laughing*).

Network: I was interested in the song "Angels" because I'd heard that it was inspired by an article you read on heroin use in rock music and I wondered what it is about that lifestyle that leads so many musicians down that path?

SM: Well, that was definitely the initial inspiration for it but very quickly it became obvious that it was really about me — I've never done heroin but when I read the article I just immediately went to that place on the road being so lost and so fucked up by everybody's preconceived notions and getting tied up in all that stuff as opposed to remaining strong in your centre, which, by the end of being on the road last time I wasn't near, so I really empathize with that point of view, of feeling so lost and thinking, give me some distraction give me anything to take me out of this place that I'm in right now. It's so easy to get sucked into people's misconceptions about you because you've got so much stuff projected onto you all day long and all night long. I remember going out on stage and doing a show and hating it, and hating myself, thought it was a terrible show, thought I let everybody down and later people would come up to me and have exactly the same reactions as when I thought I'd done a fantastic show and I'm thinking, "what the fuck's wrong with you? Can't you see how fucked up I am? How can you like me when I hate myself, when I hate what I just did? Are You blind?" (*laughing*) And that's terribly unfair because, of course, that's just my shit. And I'm a real perfectionist too. I have this friend who's a singer, too, and one time I came off stage crying one night and she said "Sarah, your shitty show is most everybody else's 90 per cent," but my problem is I want to be at 99.9% all the time (*laughing*).

Network: Tell me about the contradiction between your happy life (as it appears from the outside) and the dark songs you write? I don't think a lot of people understand how those two things can co-exist?

SM: I think we all have many sides to us and I strive to be very happy and that's something I work at and I think because I've gone to those dark places I can be happier. So many people say "how can you write such a depressing album when you're so in love and happy," and I don't think I could have gone to those places if I hadn't had that unconditional love and support behind me, because it got really ugly for awhile (*laughing*).

Network: What was the cause of it?

SM: Oh nothing I want to get into (*laughing*), but basically my life fell apart, a lot of really bizarre things happened and I lost myself and I just started doing things that weren't me anymore, then I just realized it and said to myself: "who am I, what did I just do that for?" And of course I was in complete denial about everything so I just became this monster — God forbid you open up a little tiny peephole, the rage that would come out was just unbelievable.

Network: Could you envision recording an album that was entirely upbeat, like some of the

dance remixes that have been done of your songs?

SM: No, I like slow music. I like slow, sensual, relaxing music. Music that takes you some place, you know? And soothes you. When I listen to music I like to be soothed, not agitated (*laughing*), and you know, I've gotten some flack in the industry for not putting harder bands on the Lilith Fair bill, but the fact is, I asked a lot of harder bands but they said no.

Network: But there is a power in that kind of music, you know, someone on an acoustic guitar or piano

SM: Yeah, definitely.

Network: What do you consider to be your first instrument, guitar or piano?

SM: My voice. I think it's my strongest instrument, too, although it can also be my

and you're doing Letterman or something, how cool it is for your fans back home who've followed you from the beginning to see you accepted in other places; that there's a real sense of pride on the part of your Canadian fans?

SM: Well, yeah. I'm really proud to be Canadian but I have a hard time with the border thing, but thank God it's there, because the American government's fucked, but we're not far

behind. People are people though, and I'm finding that you can go in Canada and find the most heinous racist, rednecks

"For me every record is very cathartic and therapeutic to make and writing is always a process of discovery for me; of trying to solve a problem or trying to get closer to my own truth."


weakest because it goes out, although not so much lately.

Network: I'm wondering if you realize when things get hectic

and you can go to the American south and find the exact same thing, they just happen to be less polite about it, you know? People are people, they're all pretty much the same wherever you go — there are nice people and there are assholes. And fortunately, I tend to meet more of the nice people. 🌎

DISCOGRAPHY

- 1988 Touch (Nettwerk)
- 1991 Solace (Nettwerk)
- 1993 Fumbling Towards Ecstasy (Nettwerk)
- 1994 The Freedom Sessions (Nettwerk)
- 1996 Rarities, B-sides And Other Stuff (Nettwerk)
- 1997 Surfacing (Nettwerk)



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BLUE RODEO

Continued from Page 1



among the best three albums they've ever made. And while they never know what each trip into the studio will bring, Jim Cuddy (singer/guitarist and co-founder) says their return to a stronger, more focused album is natural part of their creative cycle.

"If you look back at our history you'll find that we tend to follow a really focused record with one where the elements are kind of out of sync and they're operating, sometimes, on their own without the same support and that's more experimental and it expresses something different — and that's necessary," explains Cuddy.

For Cuddy and Co. (singer/guitarist Greg Keelor, bassist Bazil Donovan, drummer Glen Milchem, keyboardist James Gray and lap and pedal steel guitarist Kim Deschamps) making music is something of a mystery; they don't

control it so much as they acquiesce to it. "That's what seems to happen with us, we know that there are elements in this band that when they all work together things are really clear, and this record is a very clear, harmonious album — it brought everybody together in a way that we hadn't been musically in a while and it was very easy to make."

And apparently fun, as well. "We have this thing where after we've taken a break when we return to the room to play nobody ever goes to their own instrument, so at some point you decide to make it work that way; hey we know Greg's not going to get off the drums so let's sing a song with him, and then you do it and it turns out o.k. so you say 'let's try one,' and it kind of evolves from there," says Donovan, with a laugh.

Of course, change is pretty well the only constant in Blue Rodeo. Since their powerful debut, *Outskirts*, which deftly mixed elements of rock, country, blues and pop, they've altered their sound a number of times (with Donovan, Keelor and Cuddy being the constants), making forays into psychedelia, pure folk, lilting country, and aggressive, even funky rock. The diverse nature of their sound isn't really surprising, given the vast number of Canadian bands (from Spirit Of The West to Jane Siberry to The Hip, among others) who've built strong followings despite — or, perhaps, *because* of — their eclectic approach to their music.

One of the noticeable changes on *Tremolo* is Cuddy's approach to his vocals, particularly on "Shed My Skin" and "Dragging On," where he sings at the bottom of his register, a development he traces to hearing a record by Jane Siberry. "When I first heard her album, *When I Was A Boy* (1993), I was shocked at how evocative Jane's voice was, and how much it had changed from previous records, to the point where I hunted down her vocal teacher and took some lessons with him and it's taken me a couple of years to figure out how to use more of my voice," he explains.

Another of the album's highlights is "Me & Baz," a road song of sorts, in which Keelor takes a bittersweet look back at the band's history. Says Donovan — the "Baz" in the title — "I think it's Greg reflecting on a lot of time having gone by, you know, Blue Rodeo being a band that's been a bit of a workhorse over the years, and I think it also had something to do with Greg having just had to deal with some health problems, and that's where the first line came from: 'things are much worse than what I first let on.'"

And of their decade-long career, Cuddy smiles warmly and says: "What a long, strange trip it's been."

Indeed. And it's not over yet.

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DISCOGRAPHY

- 1987 *Outskirts* (Warner)
- 1989 *Diamond Mine* (Warner)
- 1990 *Casino* (Warner)
- 1992 *Lost Together* (Warner)
- 1993 *Five Days In July* (Warner)
- 1995 *Nowhere To Here* (Warner)
- 1997 *Tremolo* (Warner)

THE PRODIGY

Continued from Page 1

The Prodigy's story is a unique one, not only because they've managed to avoid being dragged down by the death of the rave scene — with which they were initially so closely identified — but also because all their albums have been released on XL Recordings, a British indie label that has negotiated individual distribution licenses for each country (in Canada *Fat Of The Land* is distributed by Beggar's Banquet; in the U.S. it's Maverick) and oversees every facet of its world-wide release (including artwork, manufacturing, and promotion) from its London offices. And with estimated world-wide sales (at press time) hovering around 3 million, *The Fat Of The Land* is undoubtedly the most successful truly indie album ever released.

We spoke to Leeroy the day before The Prodigy was to leave for the U.S. to join the Lollapalooza tour, and despite his all-night escapade the night before our conversation, he was warm, friendly and very candid.

Network: Have you been surprised by the reaction the new album has generated, because there's been so much hype about you guys that a lot of the media were prepared to be disappointed, but the reviews have been universally great?

Leeroy: No, that's because I think there's a track on there for everyone; it appeals to such a wide audience, people who listen to hip-hop, anything, you know, but all the hype's bullshit. At the end of the day, people make their own decisions, and if you hear it and like it, you buy it. It's a little bit scary Stateside, especially America — Canada's not so bad because there's a bit of a European feel there — but in America everyone wants you; it's like you could be doing a photo shoot at midnight and the guy's saying, "c'mon, get angry, show me some faces," and we've been doing it for three hours with the same background and you know, if you haven't got something from those 30 rolls of film you've already shot, you're not going to get anything different now. And he tell us, "but we normally have bands for 12 hours," and we're like, "not us you don't *(laughing)*." You know, there are so many magazines we turned down because we don't want to be in people's faces, you know, if the press is going to do that that's up to them, but we won't do TV, and we won't do every magazine that asks us, because we don't want to be stars, we're just normal people and we've got control of what we do and we're not going to let that slip out of our hands and have someone else blow it for us.

Network: Well, I noticed you did do an interview here in Toronto with the *New Music* TV show

Leeroy: Well, that's a cool show about music; we won't do, you know, Saturday morning kids shows *(laughing)*.

Network: *(laughing)* Wait, that could be good, having Keith introduce the cartoons and scaring the kids

Leeroy: Yeah, right *(laughing)*.

Network: I was reading an old issue of *Future Music* magazine from '93 and one thing Liam said then, and I know he's repeated it lately, was that he doesn't consider

The Prodigy to be a "techno" band; that he prefers the term "hard dance." Why is that?

Leeroy: We've never wanted to be called techno. I imagine if in 1993 you went to a country outside of England or Germany, or a few others, and people said "what's the music like there?" you'd say "oh, it's dance music." "What's dance music?"

"You know, techno." You used to say, "you know, techno, electronic music." So you'd say "it's dance music," techno's the newest description you can give someone of dance music if they don't know anything, you know? And in Europe they wanted to call us the kings of techno, and we always said we're not techno.

Everyone tries to pigeon-hole you, like this year, not being big-headed, but when people ask us, "are you rock or punk or dance,"

we just say "we're The Prodigy, there's no one else like us, so why do we have to say we're like something else?"

Network: What do you think makes you unique?

Leeroy: A few things. The fact that we're all mates, we never have arguments, it's just like being in a crew, hanging out, 'cause you know, we never went searching for nothing, we haven't let it go to our heads. The second thing is, we've got the best songwriter (Liam) in the world, not so much in lyrics, but in his field. If you went round to him and asked him to give you a bit of music to fit an old karate film he could do it; he can do anything. His music just does something to you, and that's a gift, you know? And it's not formulated, it's a natural thing,



PHOTO: MORTEN LARSEN

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THE PRODIGY

and with us it was never about wearing the right clothes or anything like that, you know, trying to look cool

Network: You mean like the Spice Girls?

Leeroy: Yeah, exactly (*laughing*) they're a load of bollocks, they were put together by these producer guys

Network: So we won't be hearing a Prodigy/Spice Girls single any time soon?

Leeroy: Never. You won't even see us on the same stage as the Spice Girls.

Network: Is there a psychology or attitude that defines your music?

Leeroy: It's street music, it's the real thing, just taking influences from cool scenes, what cool peo-

ple are into. The Prodigy is a rhythm thing, we were all brought up on music, different stuff, from hip-hop, reggae, rock, The Jam, The Clash, punk, ska, everything — we're open-minded people who like everything, and that's why we're not scared to dabble and try things.

Network: So I assume you consider the way your music has changed an evolution, as opposed to a radical change, but for the older fans the essence of what you used to do was almost entirely instrumental, but with *Fat Of The Land* it's virtually an entire vocal album, and that's got some of the old fans saying you sold out

Leeroy: Well, we added vocals because it's interesting to us. Liam could write another album like *Experience* (1992) but he's never going to do it. I don't want to dis-

respect anybody, but we don't want to be like Phil Collins or Simply Red, where you put the album on and you don't know whether it's their third album or fifth album; when a new Phil Collins single comes out you think, "I know this, where have I heard this?" When I go out and buy an album I want the next one to be different than the last one, to progress. A lot of people who say they only like *Experience* and want more of that from us maybe they should look at what they're doing to see if their life has progressed in six years, know what I mean (*laughing*)? Life progresses, we've all grown up. Liam was 19 when we started this and we were in an English culture that can never, ever be recreated anywhere else; England is so small that the closeness and quickness of things changing is just unbe-

lievable. And the original stuff was part of a culture that will never ever happen again, like the punk thing, or whatever, you can't recreate those things.

Network: What are your memories of the first time you came together with Liam and started to realize what he was doing? What was it that seemed special at the beginning, what drew you in then?

Leeroy: Just the music, I mean, Keith

Keith's the shy one...



PHOTO: BRUCE LAM

had a tape of it — me and Keith used to hang out — 'cause Liam used to DJ and Keith used to tell 'em he really loved the music he played and Liam gave Keith a tape of some of it and he put some of his own music on it and asked Keith to tell 'em what he thought about it. And you know, when a friend does that you don't know what the hell to expect, 'cause if it's bad do you tell 'em the truth, you know? But me and Keith were out one night partying and he put it on for me and we just love it, we kept playing it over and over — we just couldn't believe it! You know, when we used to go out we'd be in some place and some track would come on and it'd be like, "yeah, that's my tune, I've gotta go rock to that," and that's what it was like with every single track on that tape, and we thought, "let's ask him if he wants to get a live show together." So we did and he said yes and we decided we wanted a voice for it all and we had this friend named Maxim and we hooked him up.

Network: What stands out for you about the rave scene in the late-'80s, early-'90s? What made that culture so significant?

Leeroy: A lot of it was drugs, but a lot of it was revolution. In 1987, when acid house came in we were all still into hip-hop and funk, James Brown and all that sort of stuff, and we used to look at all these people taking acid and listening to this bleeping music and we couldn't get into it and that after that, around '88, '89, things started to change here, and rhythmic stuff started to catch on and that acid stuff started to fade out, and you would have 15,000 people in a field and you wouldn't get one fight! There was no alcohol there, a lot of people were doing ecstasy, but the scene wasn't a commercial thing then, it was for people in the know. There'd be like five cars loaded with your mates and you'd just drive somewhere and wait around with your mobile phones with another 200 cars, waiting for a phone call telling you where the venue was and then it was just flat-out-forget-about-the rules, park your car anywhere, just stop it in the middle of the road, just leave it and run and get in this warehouse where someone had broken into it and set up a sound system. Then just party until the police came with riot gear to throw you out. There'd be dogs and thousands of police, it seemed, and things like that. And

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that can't be recreated because it was only for people who knew about it then, then it got bigger in the tents and the rave parties, which was sort of '91 or '92, and then after that it got so it was getting commercialized, with promoters trying to skim money and putting shit sound in and ripping people off, basically. And we didn't want to be part of that.

Network: I find it interesting that when that was going on there, North America was going through the grunge scene, which, although interesting in a way, was kind of about whining and being miserable, while the rave scene seemed to be kind of a celebration of life. Why was it such an up scene?

Leeroy: It was about friends. You'd go to a party and you'd meet people from Scotland, from Wales, because England is so small you could travel all around the country and you'd know there'd be mates there, at these parties. It was about the buzz of meeting people, with a lot of people doing ecstasy, and there was no violence anywhere, until you got these guys trying to rip people off and people getting on beer. Now, I'm not trying to promote ecstasy, but football violence *stopped* when people did it, but when people drank there was all this fighting that's a fact.

Network: With the way your music's already changed, do you have a sense of where it will go from here?

Leeroy: Well, we're all quite relaxed at the moment. We feel like we've actually caught up with ourselves; the album is an accurate representation of our live show — we do seven tracks off the album — that's what it's about for us at the moment, the live show. That's why Keith started doing vocals; it wasn't about "let's try and change the music," it was like, "let's enhance the live show." That's why we're touring all the time, there's this buzz we get, and the minute that buzz stops the band will be over. We never expected nothing, and here we are going on seven-and-a-half years if it stops tomorrow we've got all these great memories and when we're dead people will remember us. That's cool.

Network: So how do you account for the huge audience you've garnered over the years?

Leeroy: It's been from us doing live shows practically every week for the last six years, and you know when you do a show like this one we did last year in Seattle, where there were 25,000 people there and they were rockin', the word from that can only spread, you know people checkin' out the album and they tell their mates and it spreads and you can't control that, you can't control who likes you. I mean, we *don't* want everyone to like us, we don't want to be like an Oasis-type band, you know, we love Oasis, but we're not out there to please everyone's mom and dad. When we're doing a show we want the people there to forget about everything, it's not about politics or anything like that, it's just an hour-and-a-half of full-on energy, which ever way you want to let it off, and we want you to get up the next day and say "fuck, yeah I experienced something last night and I'll remember

that." Feeling as if you're part of the show and the atmosphere, that's what it's all about. You know, some of the shows in the States have been funny 'cause we

rehearsed, it's a spontaneous vibe and it keeps changing and that keeps it interesting. Some of the music is a lot more suited to my dancing than Keith and basically


say "Keith Flint, Prodigy's front man," and Keith's like "I ain't the front man, we've been together for seven years and you've only just seen us from 'Firestarter.'" And they

come to the show and they just don't know what to expect; one guy said all we needed was a construction helmet and a cowboy hat

and we'd be the Village People (*laughing*)! What the hell is this guy watching?

Network: Are you amazed by the popularity of "Firestarter?" It came out in March of '96 there and even here it's been out since at least last fall, and yet it just goes on and on — people love it?

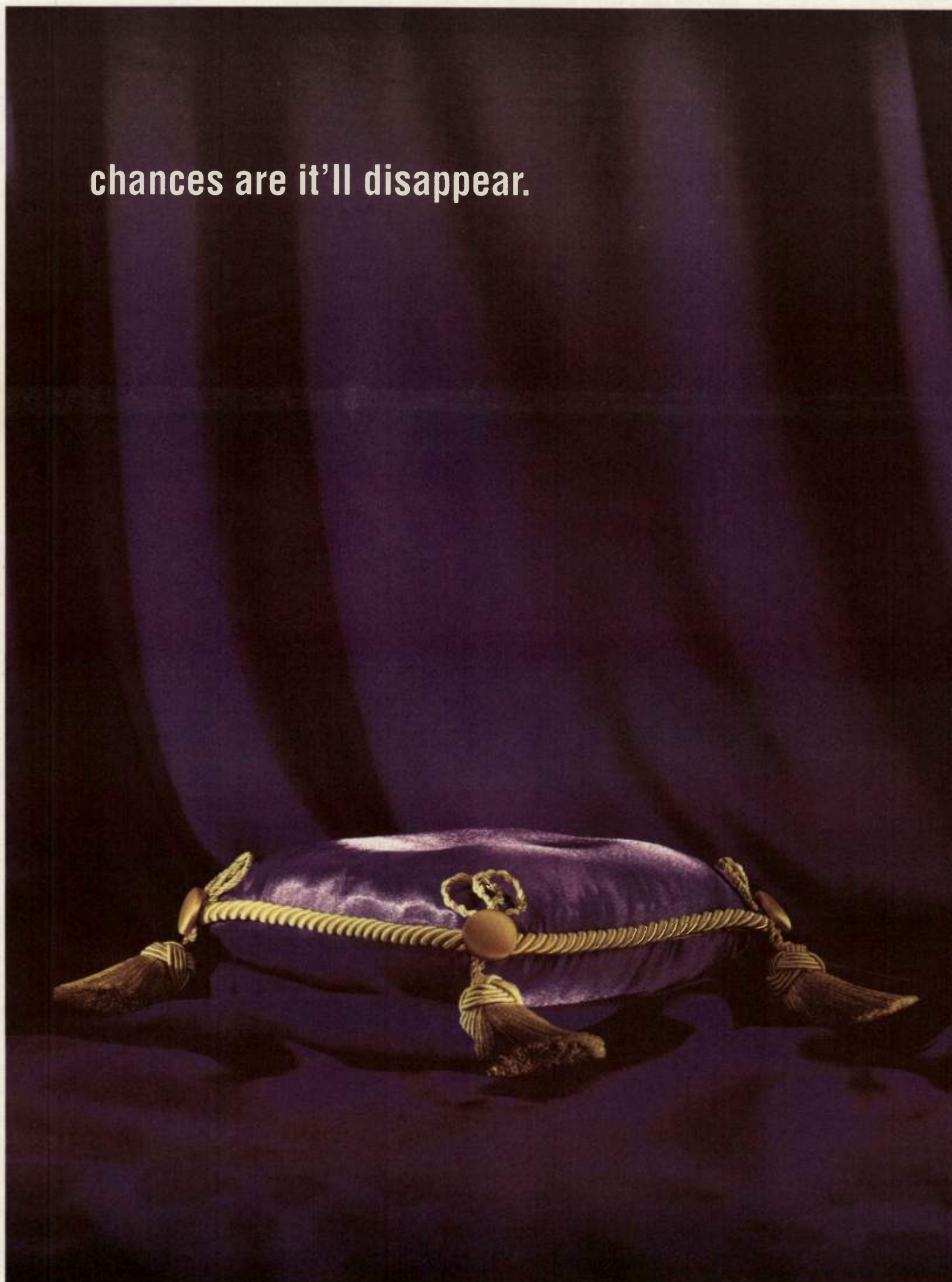
Leeroy: Yeah I am, but then again, I'm not because to me it doesn't fit into any category; it

changed a lot of the music industry, that record; the way people look at things, so I kind of think it's timeless because it doesn't fit into any category, and that's the great thing about what we're doing now. If you listen to the *Experience* album, that was part of the dance scene in England, but we had to move on. And so here we are. 

DISCOGRAPHY

- 1991 **What Evil Lurks EP** (XL-Recordings)
- 1992 **The Prodigy Experience** (XL/Beggar's Banquet)
- 1994 **Music For The Jilted Generation** (XL/Beggar's Banquet)
- 1997 **The Fat Of The Land** (XL/Beggar's Banquet)

chances are it'll disappear.



REVIEWS

For an alphabetical index of these reviews, see "DISCOVERY" on Page 6

★ A star at the top of an entry indicates a Network "pick"

POP/ROCK



Living In Clip
ANI DIFRANCO
Righteous Babe

Ani DiFranco is without peer when it comes to writing and performing emotionally intense, intellectually aggressive politically charged music. Though often described as a "folk" artist — because acoustic guitar is at the centre of all her songs — the label is far too narrow to encompass and contain the breadth of her challenging, explosive songs. This two-disc live set, featuring Sara Lee on bass and Andy Stochansky on drums, is the perfect showcase for DiFranco's caustic, inventive lyrics, extraordinary voice and dramatic stage presence. She may not be riding high on the charts with all the other female performers currently selling millions of CDs, but in terms of naked talent she dwarfs them all. If you've never heard any of DiFranco's stuff, this is the place, and time, to start.
— s.h.

One Night, Live In Australia
ELECTRIC LIGHT
ORCHESTRA PART II
CMC/BMG

Why such an ill-conceived project made it to disc is a mystery of the highest order. ELO reuniting for a live album is bad enough; ELO reuniting for a live album, *without* Jeff Lynne is utterly pointless.
— w.p.

Sins Of The Father
CAMUS
Warner

Alternative Rock is no more. It has ceased to be. It has expired. If you hadn't nailed it to the Lollapalooza stage, it'd be pushing up the daisies this very minute. Want proof? Just listen to Camus. Or, better yet, saw off your own head.

This has been a review.
— c.s.

You're The Inspiration,
A Collection
PETER CETERA
PGS

Now here's something the world didn't need: a collection of Peter Cetera's wimpiest love songs, including a few from his Chicago Days ("If You Leave Me Now," "You're The Inspiration," "Baby What A Big Surprise", all re-recorded for some reason), as well as some of his prized duets ("The Next Time I Fall," with Amy Grant, et al). Yikes!
— f.i.

Maladjusted
MORRISSEY
PGS

How one man can suffer so much indignity at the hands of life is almost beyond belief, but it's all there in Morrissey's songs. And, once again, most of this album is a bummer that only the crooner's most ardent fans will enjoy — with one notable exception:

the title track, a raging, bitter song with slicing, swirling, *hurtful* guitar, may be the best Morrissey song since the Smiths ended.
— s.h.

Love Among The Ruins
10,000 MANIACS
Universal

With Natalie Merchant off braying in a field of daisies somewhere, perpetually faceless '80s nice guy band, 10,000 Maniacs re-enlists former deserter John Lombardo and new partner (and cute enough Natalie surrogate) Mary Ramsey to add their trill to what may be a sinking folk-rock ship. The result is a pleasant listen, and it's catchy enough, but don't expect the Spice Girls or the brothers Hanson to lose much sleep over chart competition.
— c.s.

★
Live at Carnegie Hall
STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN
AND DOUBLE TROUBLE
Sony

Stevie Ray Vaughan and Double Trouble marched into Carnegie Hall in 1984 on the special occasion of Stevie Ray's 30th birthday. Besides Double Trouble, Stevie Ray was backed up by a unique band which included the talents of Jimmie Vaughan, Dr. John, and the Room Full of Blues horns. However, the real star of the show



was Stevie Ray himself: intense, fiery fretwork, powerful tone, and masterful singing...he gave the performance of a lifetime. This CD will appeal to neophytes and devotees alike...there is something here for everyone. With Stevie Ray's inimitable guitar playing — by turns rapid fire, slow, bluesy and hard rocking — at the musical center, the band romps through several Vaughan staples like "Love Struck Baby" and "Pride and Joy," as well as adding some newer material like "C.O.D." and "Letter to My Girlfriend." A great performance by all.
— d.w.h.

★
OK Computer
RADIOHEAD
EMI

Following up an album as good *The Bends* (their last release) is no easy task but with *OK Computer* Thom Yorke and Co. have fashioned a piece of work that not only maintains their high standards but actually ups the ante. *OK Computer* is a paranoid, hellish,

nightmare of a record that, perhaps better than any other album this decade, captures the disconnected feeling of life at the end of the decade, century and, of course, millennium. And rather than expressing these bleak sentiments via screaming guitars or just plain screaming, Radiohead choose to couch them in lush, textured, atmospheric music that, while melodic and memorable, is nonetheless strangely disconcerting. Oblique, somewhat contradictory lyrics further enhance *OK Computer's* gloomy beauty.

One of the best albums of the year.
— s.h.

Attack Of The Grey Lantern
MANSUN
Sony

Mansun's debut album begins with an orchestral arrangement heralding a dreamlike quality that runs throughout its songs. But whereas Mansun's ethe-

real sound, nurtured by frontman Paul Draper's soothing vocals, mesmerizes in songs such as "You, Who Do You Hate?" and "Wide Open Space," the dream becomes a nightmare in tunes such as "Naked Twister" and "Disgusting" which flounder without direction.
— c.w.

★
Be Here Now
OASIS
Sony

With all the crap that's been written about them in the past couple of years — much of it deserved — it's easy to forget that behind it all Oasis creates really good music. *Be Here Now*, their third album, finds Noel Gallagher and Co. in a wonderfully defiant mood, hinting at the problems and conflicts that have made news for more than two years. With 12 songs and clocking in at over 72 minutes, *Be Here Now* is something of an epic — ponderous and overblown in spots; lively, energetic and melodic throughout. Standout tracks include "My Big Mouth," "Stand By Me" and "All Around The World." They may be impudent, obnoxious and annoying, but at least they've got the songs to back it up.
— s.h.

Cats And Dogs
CATS AND DOGS
Indie

Featuring a couple of Canadian rock veterans — Bob Segarini (All The Young Dudes, Segarini) and David Henman (April Wine, All The Young Dudes) — Cats And Dogs play a melodic, slightly ragged brand of roots-rock that's as warm and familiar as an old blanket. Standout cuts include their cover of "Kockin' On Heaven's Door" and "Pour Me A Double ('Cause I'm Single Again)."
— s.h.

Shelter
BRAND NEW HEAVIES
Delicious Vinyl

With a new singer in tow — Michael Jackson cohort Siedah Garrett, who replaces N'Dea Davenport — the Brand New Heavies had a chance to strike out new ground. Instead, the band continues its slow evolution away from the acid jazz that made it a force, in favour of a more standard '90s R&B flavour. Now, no one is suggesting the Heavies rehash old material, but they still sound best when they stick to what they know best. As when the vibe shines through on the instrumental "Once Is Twice Enough" and the funk of "You Can Do It," the two songs that strangely close the album. The rest of *Shelter*, like the disco-ish title track and the electro-ballads, are alright, but that's all.
— a.h.

Get Some
SNOT
Universal

As the name suggests, Snot is stoopid. In a good way though. Combining metal and punk with a bit of grooviness, Snot's debut album is filled with goofy tunes that are as fun as anything the Presidents of the United States of America put out, but sonically more dense and more angry. For example, "Joyride" is about bad drivers, "The Box" is anti-TV, and "Mr. Brett" takes pot-shots at Epitaph founder Brett Gurewitz. Silliness to help out the back-to-school grind.
— a.h.

Wandering Home
MAURA O' CONNELL
Ryko/Denon

Irish singer Maura O' Connell blends traditional Celtic songs with contemporary folk for an album that builds a bridge between the past and present. And with a voice both strong and soft, *Wandering Home* is like an aural painting sung in pastoral colours but rendered in bold brush strokes.
— s.h.

Last Great Alibi
COREY ELLIS
Iron Music Group

Toronto singer/songwriter Corey Ellis is being touted as a singer akin to



Steve Earle, which might be pushing it, but there's no doubt that the rough-hewn beauty of his songs straddles the line between rock, folk and country. With a gorgeous sandpaper voice, and a gift for understated writing, Ellis is an exciting addition to the lengthy list of burgeoning local talent.
— c.m.

Dan Bern
DAN BERN
Sony

Get past the opening track's way-too-Dylan homage and give Bern the benefit of the doubt. The second track's self-aware sarcasm more than makes up for it. This is the unabashed street folk of the '90s — the acoustic thrum of unplugged punk illuminating life lessons from the School Of Hard Knocks.
— p.s.

Interiors
BRAD
Sony

What makes Brad's latest album, *Interiors*, so remarkable isn't the group's reputable members, Pearl Jam's Stone Gossard for one, but the acclaimed artists that its eclectic songs evoke. In "Secret Girl," the forced whispers of soul man Shawn Smith of Satchel conjure images of Iggy Pop writhing in cut glass, the funky intro to "These Three Words" recalls Terence Trent D'Arby, "Lift" bellows Black Crowes with its gritty R&B-inspired chorus and the metro-nomic piano chords of "Some Never Come Home" echo Bob Mould.
— c.w.

Pure Energy Vol. 4
VARIOUS ARTISTS
SPG/Quality

This latest edition in the successful *Pure Energy* series continues the non-stop dance party, with choice cuts by Fun Factory ("I Wanna Be With You"), Culture Beat ("Take me Away"), Max-A-Million ("Fat Boy") and Lina Santiago ("Feels So Good"), among many others.
— w.p.

Destination Anywhere
JON BON JOVI
PGS

All jokes about hair cuts and liposuctions aside, Jon Bon Jovi has always written simple, sing-a-long pop songs. On his second solo effort (the first being the excruciating *Young Guns II* soundtrack), JBJ replaces his traditional metallic guitars with loops and programming. The result is a safe,

accessible pop record that will appeal to the over-40 crowd too tired to keep up with the times. Primary producer Steve Lironi (Black Grape) tries to update JBJ's sound, but there's only so much one man can do.
— a.h.

Blues For The Lost Days
JOHN MAYALL
BMG

A seminar in advanced bluesology by a living master. Backed by longtime sidemen the Bluesbreakers, this homage to blues pioneers (particularly on the name-checking "All Those Heroes") is mostly new, mostly Mayall, totally classic. Lush, modern production by John (Buddy Guy/The Smiths) Porter.
— p.s.

Karma Cleansing
HAREM SCAREM
Warner

Hair metal without the hair, but just as bad, *Karma Cleansing* is Can-con at its absolute worst. There's lots of standard mid-tempo rockers here, even an instrumental, proving you can only write so many poor lyrics before you run out. Plenty of those dreaded power ballads, too, but the only reason to flick your Bic is to set fire to this album. However, plastic doesn't burn very well. Suggested mode of disposal: Take a hammer to it.
— a.h.

Avalon
JOHN TESH
PGS

Pretty hair. Pretty music. Lots of new-age piano, keyboards and a multitude of strings, horns and other instruments pretty much what you'd expect from the former *Entertainment Tonight* talking head. It's all so sweet and lush, it makes you want to wretch.
— s.b.

Comic Book Whore
JANE JENSEN
Universal

Like Beck, Jensen's a bit of a scavenger, banging together the odds and ends of industrial, hip hop and rock 'n roll until the finished product breaks free of proven genres. That she's doing it from a bratty, often ambiguous and truly ironic (ie, not of the "... rain on your wedding day" variety) female perspective sets her apart from her more earnest peers.
— c.s.

Pain
DUB WAR
Earache



.... Wherein Rage Against The Machine tones down the guitar, turns up the bass and goes medieval on your ears. Heavy, groovy, funky — Dub War is all that and more.
— s.h.

Fat
FAT
A&M

Brits turned New Yorkers Fat try to inject a little fun into a tired rap-metal genre suffering from self-righteous whiners taking life too seriously over plodding beats, by adding to the mix some humorous sing-a-long lyrics and a little bit of techno and pop. "Dog" features the catchy chorus

Reviews: Pop/Rock

"Boot to the head of the dog man," while "Downtime" throws in some neat sound effects. To top it all off, several tracks feature former Twisted Sister drummer Joe Franco. Dee Snider, call in please.
— a.h.

99th Dream SWERVEDRIVER Universal

Forget that shoegazing dreampop is dead as Dillinger. This London band defies all Brit trends (and sheds some of their American indie rock edge) to return with a pleasing, if insubstantial, dip in the shivery guitar ether.
— c.s.

★ Do It Yourself THE SEAHORSES Universal

Now that minimalist grunge is petering out, many bands are back into making big sounding records. That doesn't mean the over-the-top excess of the likes of Asia (anybody still remember them?) as former Stone Roses guitarist John Squire's new project, The Seahorses, proves. Despite layering levels of sounds upon sounds, Squire steps light years away from the bloated Roses. From the opening Beatlesque "I Want You To Know" to the seven-minute-plus jam of "Love Is The Law," Squire never lets the 'Horses run amok.
— a.h.

Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space SPIRITUALIZED BMG

Despite the album's nursery rhyme lyrics, Spiritualized's third release is a sophisticated amalgam of Memphis horns, orchestral string arrangements and technical gimmickry. "All of My Thought" pivots at various points with dizzying crescendos, the lethargic melody of "Stay With Me" sets the world in slow motion and "The Individual" maintains chaos with a whirlwind of seemingly improvised jamming. Although "Come Together" mistakenly banks on its repetitiveness for ambiance, *Ladies And Gentlemen* collectively establishes an impenetrable mood.
— c.w.

Wacko Magneto EDNASWAP Island

Chances are, you've never heard of Ednaswap, whose first album and follow-up EP barely made a dent in the public consciousness. And, chances are, you won't hear of the band any time soon because its music just doesn't have a hook. Repeated listening almost drags you in, but frustration sets in because it never gets where it's going. There are lots of sparks, witness the Pixies-squeal of "Chordomatic" and the circular Mo Tucker-like drumming on "Pale." Ultimately, though, it doesn't satisfy. However, the CD packaging does come with a little pinball.
— a.h.

A New Stereophonic Sound Spectacular HOOVERPHONIC Sony

Hooverphonic's debut album sounds like something Twin Peak's creator David Lynch would spin if he were DJ-ing a rave. Lead singer Liesje Sadonius' celestial vocals float throughout typical ambient music punctuated by the Belgian quartet's use of scouring pads, amplified breathing and obscure sound bites. But not unlike *Eraserhead*, you have to be in the mood to appreciate it.
— c.w.



The Cicadas THE CICADAS Warner

Despite its great pedigree and choice of songwriters to collaborate with and cover, the Cicadas' debut outing never boils over the way it should. Low-key, back-home country-fried rhythms are all well and good, but J.D. Loudermilk's classic "Tobacco Road" should kick ass, not limp to the finish line. Rodney Crowell is a fine singer/writer/producer, but somebody please light a fire under his posterior and get him moving. Life is too short.
— a.h.

★ Strangers Almanac WHISKEYTOWN Universal

This Raleigh, N.C. band mines the same territory that has propelled bands like Wilco, the Jayhawks, Son Volt, et al, to prominence: countrified

rock 'n roll. And *Strangers Almanac* plays it on both sides of the fence, sometimes sounding like a square dance where everyone's taken speed; sometimes like a rocking chair on a 100-year-old wooden porch.
— s.h.

★ Mauler CUB Augogo

This cool collection of Cub singles and rare tracks for Australian indie label



Augogo arrives just in time for the fall party circuit and if you're a fan of the Vancouver band's fuzzy, cuddly, power pop it's a must-have disc. Standout cuts include "You Know He Did," "Exit," "Pregnant" and an early version of "Pillow Queen."
— s.h.

The Dance FLEETWOOD MAC Warner

With few exceptions, the best way a band can mark a notable anniversary (in this case 20 years since *Rumours* shot up the charts and 30 years since the original Mac was formed) is to release a really good collection, perhaps with some rare, unreleased tracks. The way *not* to do it, especially if you're Fleetwood Mac, is to re-form, re-record all your old hits for an MTV special, add a few new, lame songs and start touring again.
— f.l.

Plasticene PLASTICENE Universal

Puffed up by L.A.'s money-spending anglophile demi-monde, this ersatz-Britpop by ex-pat teabaggers Colin and Roger Gisborne (is dad's name "Guy" by any chance?) rip off their betters too

shamelessly to be tongue-in-cheek and too eagerly to be encouraged.
— p.s.

Evergreen ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN PGS

Despite Ian McCulloch's whining to the contrary, this *is* a reunion album and, unlike most, it's a good one. Or at least, it's a good one if you like late period Echo — melodic, hummable pop with rich vocals — as opposed to their earlier, edgier stuff.
— c.m.

Fush Yu Mang SMASH MOUTH Universal

Oh boy, another California punk/pop/ska band! More soulless, pointless ersatz ska, by a bunch of Rancid wannabes! Where's an earthquake when you need one?
— s.g.

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Crown Royal

Reviews: Pop/Rock

★ Love With Fabio THE MINIPOPS IHL Records

This six-song EP from Quebec's Minipops could be dismissed as being so retro-'80s it's hardly worth a listen except that it's so damn good. Sure, all the sounds are undeniably familiar (especially the Gary Numan-inspired synths), but fuzzy pop this quirky and good never gets old.
— s.b.

One Good Turn Deserves Another SLAVES ON DOPE Just A Minute! Records

A brash combination of metal and punk, the music of Montreal's Slaves on Dope is notable mostly for its raw power, but singer Jason Rockman's versatile vocals — that are as supple as they are heavy — lift *One Good Turn* above the clanking crowd.
— w.p.

Getting Stronger BERES HAMMOND Heartbeat/Denon

Leaving his R&B pretensions behind — except for the smooth "Come Again Tonight" — and promoting a more rootsy sound pays creative dividends for one of Jamaica's favourite singers, Beres Hammond. While lover after lover seems to leave him, Hammond remains optimistic and his humorous lyrics belie the pain of breaking up, all backed by strong, seamless grooves. Reggae's answer to Barry White.
— a.h.

★ Fuzz JUNKHOUSE Sony

Hamilton, Ontario's Junkhouse may have a new line-up, but on this, their third album, their appeal can still be traced to long-time frontman Tom Wilson, whose powerful, magnetic presence and hurricane vocals infuse virtually every track with the kind of personality rarely found in the three-chord guitar trash being pumped out by today's punk poseurs and radio whores. As the title suggests, *Fuzz* is a more textured, musically adventurous album than their previous two discs.
— w.p.

Fallen Is Babylon ZIGGY MARLEY/ THE MELODY MAKERS Warner

Musically diverse and well-produced, *Fallen* is a great-sounding album, but, unfortunately, not a great album. In a sense, its biggest strength is also its biggest weakness: its musical eclecticism. Sure, it makes sense for Ziggy and the gang to continue exploring different styles of rhythmic music — from hip hop to dance — but in this case it leads to an erratic album that's short on truly good songs and classic reggae.
— s.b.

Revolution SLAUGHTER CMC/BMG

Recognizing its '80s metal just doesn't cut it artistically or financially any more, Slaughter tinkles with its worn-out sound with mixed results. On the leadoff track and single, "American Pie" (no, not *that* American Pie), Slaughter comes off sounding all T-Rexy. Surprisingly, it's not the worst Marc Bolan rip-off ever recorded and the song boogies away. Unfortunately, the boogie doesn't last, and within a few songs Slaughter is back where it began. Give frontman Mark Slaughter credit for trying to keep up, but it's too little too late. Less a revolution, than a one-shot deal.
— a.h.

Feelin' Alright CARLOS MORGAN Universal

Gently funky, soulful and smooth as silk, *Feelin' Alright* is the kind of album that will appeal to old-school R & B fans as well as anyone who likes sensual grooves.
— c.m.

Drop Kick Me Jesus DROP KICK ME JESUS Neptune

Straight-ahead rock from this aggressive Toronto band features ambitious lyrics, powerful vocals, and strong melodies.
— c.m.

G3 Live In Concert JOE SATRIANI, ERIC JOHNSON, STEVE VAI Sony

For aficionados of modern guitar wankery, this is "tha bomb." Hey, somebody's gotta carry the torch. Traditionalists may despise this stuff, but if you like effect-drenched string torture, welcome to the orgy.
— d.h.

★ Glass Bottom Boat TWO THIRDS WATER Indie

On *Glass Bottom Boat*, this foursome from Etobicoke, Ont. writes offbeat songs that seamlessly blend trippy rock, oddball pop, and even what they call "space country" into a diverse, yet cohesive whole. Cool tracks include "This Morning," "One More Mile" and "In This World."
— s.h.

Evil Twang CHRIS HOUSTON Supermono

This perfectly-titled disc is something of an all-star affair; Houston's guests include Greg Keelor and Jim Cuddy, Art Bergmann, Brian Goble and Mary Margaret O'Hara, among others — all of whom are complicit in this wonderful wacky album that does, indeed, have a sort of dark garage twang to it. Of particular note is Houston's surf cover of The Forgotten Rebels' "Surfin' On Heroin."
— s.g.

Paradise In Me K's CHOICE Sony

There's an earthy authority to Sarah Betten's vocals that save K's Choice from unkind Cranberries/Cardigans comparisons. Raucous layers of unpredictable guitar over ennui-laden melodies and lyrics. Euro-rock more adventurous than Roxette but still a little too polished for North American credibility.
— p.s.

Haute Anxiety MY DEAR HERETIC Indie

This Toronto quintet is notable for the depth of its writing, the dark quality of its aggressive rock and the rich bari-

tone voice of singer R. Kelly Clipperton, who seems to imbue every note with a real sense of urgency and importance — without sounding cheesy.
— s.h.

★ Taxman LUCKY DUBE Gallo/Shanachie

South African Lucky Dube is the best selling living reggae artist in the world today, but like most reggae artists, he has failed to break in North America. That may change with this his eighth studio album, and the follow-up 25-city North American tour.

Often compared to Peter Tosh, Dube sings with a similar powerful delivery on these highly-charged political songs. He's been frequently banned at home, but it has not stopped him from singing from within the belly of the apartheid beast, and now, in post-apartheid South Africa, he's equally vigilant about addressing the challenges and inequities of the "free" South Africa. Features a striking reinvention of Foreigner's "I Want To Know What Love Is."
— d.a.

Imperial Comet Hour MEXICO70 Red Ant/St. Clair

British band Mexico70's bio reads, "Lead singer Mick Bund has always loved Americana." But judging by the band's second effort, *Imperial Comet Hour*, Bund's adoration of American pop music doesn't extend beyond Wal-Mart's Top 10 best-seller list. When the band isn't paying unnecessary tribute to our neighbour's Hootie and The Blowfish with vacuous songs such as "I Want You," Mexico70 offers lullabies such as "It'll Never Happen Again" that seem to parody the soothing vocals of Britain's Paul Weller. In the end, Imperial remains trapped in no-man's land.
— c.w.

No Dumping FENCE Rabian

Static distortion with a metallic crunch, this outing would make for a

great eviction party. With songs like "From Fear To Hate" and "Brainwash Of A Nation" these guys are paranoid and angry — and would like you to know all about it. Also has plenty of Hitler's actual speeches mixed in, for sentimental reasons.
— d.a.

★ Rock Collection POND Sony

Better than Weezer, less nasal than Ween, slacker than Pavement but no less hook heavy. Former Sub-Poppers from Portland, Pond's third LP is no less raggedly understated than its predecessors without sounding self-consciously lo-fi. If this is what's left after the smoke, maybe the death of grunge isn't such a bad thing.
— p.s.

Flaming Pie PAUL MCCARTNEY EMI

Despite the mostly positive press it's received, *Flaming Pie* is no *Band On*



The Run, let's make that clear. But compared to the plethora of limp albums the former Beatle God's released for most of the past two

decades, this one's pretty good, primarily because McCartney's opted for a more stripped down, acoustic sound this time around, and as a result, the true essence of the songs are allowed to shine through.
— c.m.

A Crime For All Seasons MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT Red Ant/St. Clair

Mining the under-appreciated danceable industrial territory between the heat of Ministry and the cool of Depeche Mode, the Thrill Killers continue to release records to a public that really isn't buying. On its sixth outing, the Kult continues its sonic adventures but hides the pain behind innuendo and humour. "Sexy Sucker" and "Dope Doll Jungle" are examples of what are essentially pop songs with a hard edge, both musically and lyrically, that the Kult haven't visited since early on. Guaranteed no commercial airplay, pick up *A Crime For All Seasons* before it disappears.
— a.h.

Make Believe PINEFOREST CRUNCH PGS

Lithe, charming, bubbly yet poignant, so wonderfully Joni-esque, as delectable as ice cream on a summer day. The story is in the telling on "Noodle Chicken Soup," a successful single for Pineforest Crunch, (incidentally a flavour of ice cream found at Ben and Jerry's). With the breakthrough of this Swedish band, can an influx of Swedish pop be forthcoming? (for instance, the Wannadies who along with the Cardigans are on the *Romeo and Juliet* soundtrack). Jangly guitars and Asa Eklund's sweetiepie voice gives this CD a polished pristine patina of pleasurable pop.
— b.l.

Happy Birthday To Me THE MUFFS Warner

More aggressive punk/pop from L.A. combo The Muffs, features hummable tunes, solid three-chord strumming and singer Kim Shattuck's pissed-off snarl. Not exactly original, but fun just the same.
— s.b.

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Reviews: Pop/Rock, Re-Issues

Double Allergic POWDERFINGER PGS

Cryptic lyrics, sombre melodies and heavy guitar riffs solidify Powderfinger's latest album *Double Allergic*. Yet despite the Australian band's intentionally restrained sound, the album's unique songs resist becoming melancholic. Instead, the album teases the listener by presenting emotions in scattered musical arrangements that defy categorization.

— C.W.

Black Night Deep Purple Tribute VARIOUS ARTISTS DeRock Records

This is what a tribute album should be — not limp "karaoke" retreads like the ill-fated new-country Eagles mess from a few years back, but absolutely fearless interpretations by artists willing to take a few chances and have a little fun. Thankfully, there is no attempt to make these songs sound palatable for '90's audiences. This New York tribute to British heavy metal features T M Stevens, Vinnie Moore, Ritchie Kotzen, Joe Lynn Turner, Al Pitrelli, Stevie Salas and many others. '70s metal roots, druid!

— d.h.

Heavy Soul PAUL WELLER Island

Heavy Soul is Paul Weller's best work since leaving the Jam a decade-and-a-half ago, mixing aggressive guitar with funky, slightly psychedelic pop and soulful ballads for an album that reflects all of his influences without being beholden to them. Standouts include the spacey pop of "Mermaids," the pure pop of "Driving Nowhere" and the heavy "Peacock Suit." In the wake of the release of the extraordinary Jam box set, it's cool to hear Weller still producing music this compelling.

— s.h.

Egyptology WORLD PARTY EMI

Look out over the mountains, look out over the sea, World Party is back with its fourth album. Karl Wallinger, with his penchant and ear for the glory days of '60s British pop and psychedelia, lays it on the line with strumming folksy assertions.

— b.l.

livefromsourcity LATIMER World Domination/True North

World Domination, the record label founded by Dave Allen (Gang of Four and Shriekback) brings the third album from Philadelphia trio Latimer. The fast-paced and quickly recorded album's lead track "Citizenjive" is as dour and snarly Sex Pistols-like as it comes. Not a pleasant listen but it hits you between the eyes.

— b.l.

Flame PATTI LABELLE Universal

Like that other ageless wonder Tina Turner, LaBelle still looks fine and always seems to come from nowhere to rack up the hits. On *Flame*, LaBelle gets a lot of help including: producers like David Foster, Gerelad Levert and Jimmy Jam; top session musicians; and pick of the crop of the factory songs. Despite the personnel mess, LaBelle turns "You Saved My Life" into a moving tribute to her fans and "Flame" into a personal scorcher. Great MOR for folks who still remember how to get it going on.

— a.h.

Throwing Rocks At The Moon THE BACKSLIDERS Attic

Less disciples of No Depression's college-led alternative country movement than kindred spirits to the brawling poetry of Merle Haggard and Steve Earle, the Backsliders are ragged ass honky-tonkers trapped, quite happily, in a post-punk world. A brash, honest volume of heartbreak and loneliness that kicks nostalgia square in the nic-stained teeth.

— C.S.

Restraining Bolt RADISH PGS

With everyone focusing on the fact that these guys are still teenagers, no one seems to notice how accomplished an album this really is. No, they haven't re-invented the proverbial wheel, but they have put together a record full of catchy, crunchy punk/pop that rocks from start to finish — and is impossibly melodic and memorable at the same time, particularly "Dear Aunt Arctica" and "Sugar Free." Deserves to be heard as much as Bush or Silverchair.

— w.p.

Retreat From The Sun THAT DOG Universal

Abandoning its trademark 'artsy' vibe, That Dog's latest release *Retreat From The Sun* is a blend of catchy pop songs fuelled by lead singer Anna Waronker's angelic yet aggressive voice. Although at times it seems as if the band is exercising musical self-restraint, the album's unusual lyrics are crisp and confident.

— C.W.

Waterbed Hev HEAVY D Universal

While Bone Thugs 'n Harmony try to push the aural boundaries of rap, more established artists like Heavy D (without the Boyz) are staying closer to home. *Waterbed Hev* picks up where *Nuttin' But Love* left off, with cross-over-friendly beats, breathless background vocals and laid-back raps about lovin' buried in the mix. Things pick up briefly with "I'll Do Anything" — one of the better tracks his Heaviness has ever done — but it doesn't last. It must be hard to be rebellious from the penthouse.

— a.h.

Very Best Of WEST END GIRLS Dexter Entertainment

In the extremely redundant category comes this greatest hits collection of Vancouver's West End Girls, featuring some of their best-known songs ("Pure," "R U Sexin' Me") and a bunch of remixes. Yawn.

— f.l.

National Steel COLIN JAMES Warner

Canadian blues-rocker continues to squander youth pursuing diverse musical territory while record company execs stand around scratching their heads. The winners here are music fans, blues lovers and Colin himself, who will never have to deal with being perceived as a washed up rock star. A collaboration with Colin Linden, who is also a formidable guitarist, this follow-up to 1995's *Colin James And The Little Big Band* is as an authoritative foray into traditional, raw acoustic blues as you're likely to find, not to mention more fun than a barroom brawl.

— d.h.

Mars Pennsylvania JOHN SOUTHWORTH A&M

Appearing on his CD cover in a periwinkle blue cardigan, John Southworth takes geek chic to new heights with his unusual debut album entitled *Mars Pennsylvania*. A UK native, now based in Toronto, Southworth's nasal voice conjures early James Taylor, Butthole Surfers snarling "The Hurdy Gurdy Man" and the Monkees singing "Daydream Believer." Melding these odd vocal evocations are cleverly surreal lyrics, Dixieland banjo arrangements and a reminder of what 'alternative music' is really about.

— C.W.

The Early Year SCUD MOUNTAIN BOYS Sub Pop

As gentle as a summer breeze, this double CD of Boston's Scud Mountain Boys' first two homemade albums, is for all those who love the sweet country/folk twang of bands like Wilco and Son Volt.

— c.m.

In The Name Of Love EARTH, WIND & FIRE Beatfactory

The return of Earth, Wind & Fire in 1997 might not be big news, except for two things: 1) people are in need of some serious funk and 2) this album contains some serious funk. Best of all, *In The Name Of Love* is a sprightly combination of that classic horn-heavy EWF sound and more contemporary influences, most notably hip-hop. A welcome return.

— f.l.

Here Comes Tomorrow THRILL SQUAD Ape No Kill Ape

Vancouver's Thrill Squad play fuzzy, melodic power pop, the kind of stuff that would have sounded great in 1979 and, fortunately, also sounds good in 1997. This six-song EP is a nice introduction to a band that's got energy and hooks to spare.

— f.l.

The Breits THE BREITS Alert

Unceremoniously dumped ten years ago by their record company after only one album, the Breits have hung tough, biding their time by performing and recording with a veritable who's who of Canadian artists. Exploring genuine, deceptively unpretentious roots rock, the Breits continue to hone their songwriting skills and their already considerable musical chops. While the music industry continues its relentless search for the next big thing, the Breits will, in time, take their rightful place alongside their peers. Highly enjoyable.

— d.h.

Stompin' Grounds CHRIS CHOWN Speakeasy

It's a rare pleasure to "discover" new talent, especially someone as young and humble as this brilliant guitarist from London, Ont. When I first heard him play, it was a guest spot in a Toronto club, packed with some of the finest veteran players and singers in the country. By the end of the brief set, every jaded musician and listener was up on their feet, hailing 'the kid.' This is Chown's debut CD, recorded at the ripe old age of 16. He plays traditional Texas-style blues, and the Stevie Ray Vaughan comparisons are inevitable, but one listen to this simple guitar, bass and drums recording and you'll be mesmerized and left wondering how someone so young could have so much depth and feel,

with such a wide vocabulary of guitar licks and tricks.

— d.a.

RE-ISSUES



Direction Reaction Creation THE JAM PGS

Never has there been a better time to re-evaluate the career of The Jam, one of Britain's finest bands from the first wave of punk, circa '77-'82. With Britpop garnering all kinds of attention, it's wise to look back at the career of a truly great pop band — one that effortlessly meshed aggressive, political lyrics with powerful, melodic music. *Direction Reaction Creation* is not only one of the best box sets to come out recently; it's one of the best ever to be released. It includes all the best known Jam

tracks — from angry early classics like "In The City," and "All Mod Cons" to their final huge hit, "Town Called Malice" — and, unlike some infuriating collections, it doesn't selectively pick certain tracks from their albums but, rather, includes every track of every album, plus a disc of b-sides, singles and other rarities. A must.

— s.h.

Love/Hate/Who Says Girls Can't Rock/Teenage Meat THE DISHRAGS/ THE 'B' GIRLS/THE CURSE Other People's Music/Outside

Three more releases in Other People's Punk Hole Of Fame that cast a light on Canada's rich punk past. This time the focus is on three all-female bands, each of whom were pioneers on the punk scene in North America: The Curse, reportedly the first all-female punk band in North America; Vancouver's pop-punkers the Dishrags and Toronto/New York popsters The 'B' Girls. Each of these releases is an energetic reminder of a late, great scene that, lamentably, is all but forgotten.

— s.h.

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Reviews: Re-issues, Jazz, Country/Roots, International, Classics, Home Video

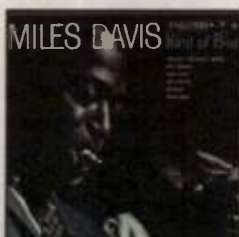
Two Virgins/Life With The Lions/Wedding Album/Plastic Ono Band JOHN LENNON/YOKO ONO Ryko/Denon

Time is on Yoko Ono's side. The fact is, these experimental albums, recently re-released by Ryko, probably sound better now than they did in the late-'60s when their arrival wasn't exactly embraced by fans or critics.

However, such distance doesn't change the fact that fans of conventional music — that is to say, any music with structure — won't enjoy these albums, no matter how much they dig Lennon or even Ono's later solo work. Interesting, but mostly unpalatable.

— s.h.

JAZZ



Kind of Blue MILES DAVIS Columbia/Sony

Another reissue?! Yes, and it's the best one yet. The sound is more robust and (it's a complicated story — just check the liner notes) every tune is in the right key. Miles Davis was one of the few true jazz innovators. So every jazz collector needs at least one of his recordings and nothing's better than *Kind of Blue*. It has five tunes (six counting the "bonus" alternate take of "Flamenco Sketches") and features seven musicians. Miles plays trumpet, Cannonball Adderley plays alto sax, Wynton Kelly plays piano (on "Freddie Freeloader"), Bill Evans on piano (on "So What," "Blue In Green," "All Blues" and "Flamenco Sketches"), Paul Chambers plays bass, Jimmy Cobb plays drums, and John Coltrane (another master innovator) plays tenor sax. Originally recorded in 1959, *Kind of Blue* marked a shining moment in jazz history; some say music history, period. If you've already heard it, here's a chance to refresh your ears. If you've never heard it, here's a chance to enrich your life.

— c.j.w.

What We See MORGONN Indie

What We See is notable not only for the Toronto jazz singer's silky, versatile vocals but also the fact that she proves herself to be a songwriter worthy of serious consideration — she wrote or co-wrote seven of the album's ten tracks. Recorded with some of the best players in the city, including George Koller (bass), Great Bob Scott (drums), Joe Allen (trumpet) and Richard Underhill (alto sax), this is a rich and satisfying disc.

— s.h.

D.D. Jackson PAIRED DOWN, VOLUME ONE Justin Time

Jackson seems to be following in Dave Young's footsteps with a series of duet CDs. This one pairs the pianist with



James Carter (saxophone), Hugh Ragin (trumpeter), Santi Debriano (bass), Hamiet Bluiett (baritone saxophone), Billy Bang (violin), and David Murray (tenor sax). All compositions are original and so is the playing. Some might call it pushing the jazz envelope.

— c.j.w.

Essential Ella ELLA FITZGERALD Verve/PGS

If you need a little Ella in your life (and who doesn't?), here's a place to start. Wading through the choices of boxed sets and other compilations representing this treasured singer's work can be daunting. So you can dip your big toe in the waters of this CD before taking the big plunge. There's a good smattering of songs from her songbooks (Gershwin, Rogers & Hart, Cole Porter). But if you already know Ella, you can skip this Verve intro. There's nothing new here.

— c.j.w.

Here On Earth INGRID JENSEN Justin Time

Now here's a jazz trumpeter. She'll leave scorch marks in your disc player. What is it about British Columbia that breeds remarkable jazz musicians — first Renee Rosnes and Diana Krall, then Ingrid Jensen. *Here On Earth* offers a quintet setting for a couple of Jensen compositions (one from Ingrid, one from her sister Christine), a couple of standards ("Time Remembered," "You Do Something To Me"), and even a couple of vocals (from Jill Seifers). Winning a Juno for her 1995 debut recording (*Vernal Fields*) was obviously just a warm-up for this fresh, exciting player.

— c.j.w.

Triptycal BEN NEILL Antilles

Neil's sound is too fluid to qualify as techno or trip hop, but there's nothing acoustic here. Call it ambient jazz. The liner notes list Neil as responsible for "mutantrumpet" and "electronics." He also gets help on a few tracks from DJ Spooky and DJ Olive, who work the turntables. The music tends to induce the kind of vision you'd get from daydreaming while sitting and staring out the window of a moving train. This is the soundtrack for a spaced-out trip.

— c.j.w.

COUNTRY/ROOTS



Word From The Range: A Canadian Cowboy Collection VARIOUS ARTISTS Glenbow

This unique album was the outgrowth of a project by the Glenbow Museum in Calgary and features 22 songs by a wide range of Canadian country artists, past and present, that reflect the Canadian cowboy experience. From Wilf Carter's "Calgary Roundup" to Ian Tyson's "Cowboy Pride," and Gary Fjellgaard's "Drifting Cowboy," *Word From The Range* is an authentic, timeless collection of songs that each have an overwhelming sense of time and place. Best of all, these songs are about as far away from "New Country" as you can get.

— s.h.

Nothin' But The Tailights CLINT BLACK BMG

Please welcome Clint Black: singer, songwriter, guitar player. Huh? Not only has he taken over the lead guitar duties from his past co-writer, Hayden Nicholas, Black has finally come of age as a lyricist, no longer sounding like he's straining to make a point. This may have something to do with acquiring the likes of Steve Wariner, Marty Stuart,



Alison Krauss and Skip Ewing, among others, as collaborators. Clint's record company is hyping this as a "landmark," and it's no idle boast. Easily his best work. So good, in fact, that the chart-topping duet with Martina McBride ("Still Holding On") is actually the low point on this release.

— d.h.

Cover To Cover BILLY RAY CYRUS PGS

Probably the only country singer who takes himself more seriously than Billy Ray Cyrus is Dwight Yoakam, who somehow gets away with it. Cyrus, however, continues to come off like a dork, making it difficult to separate the artist from the act, as is so often necessary. You see, Billy Ray's actually a pretty decent singer. Check out "Bluegrass State Of Mind," as well as "Trail Of Tears," which he wrote. Thankfully, someone had the presence of mind to program "Achy Breaky Heart" as the last cut, giving you plenty of time to hit the "stop" button, thereby thwarting potentially serious property damage.

— d.h.

Words SHERRIE AUSTIN BMG

One word: Fluff.

— d.h.

Whatever Comes First SONS OF THE DESERT Sony

The real challenge of songwriting is finding new and inspiring ways to tell the same old stories. Nearly every song on this entirely likable debut, one of those each-song-is-better-than-the-one-before rarities, succeeds in doing just that. Despite looking like a bunch of high schoolers with summer jobs (no hats, no mustaches, one beard), Sons of the Desert could very well save "new country" (country music with a condom) from itself. Besides, a Texas band singing about Toronto and (huh?) Sault Ste Marie must have somethin' goin' on. Move over, Mavericks!

— d.h.

What My Heart Already Knows JULIAN AUSTIN BMG

Saint John, New Brunswick native Julian Austin may have what it takes to fill a huge void left by Handsome Ned (Toronto's "Queen Street Cowboy" who died a veritable unknown several years ago). The unfettered joy and ebullience that sizzles just beneath the surface of nearly every track on this major label debut is exhilarating.

A couple of soggy ballads and an embarrassing attempt to legitimize Meat Loaf's "Two Out Of Three Ain't Bad" notwithstanding, this is certain to be one of the most significant Canadian releases this year. Let's keep this guy away from Nashville.

— d.h.

INTERNATIONAL



Shadows On Stone MATT MOLLOY Caroline/Page

Matt Molloy, who plays flute with Irish traditional music kings The Chieftains, has, on this fine new album, created a beautiful, pastoral tribute to the rich-

ness of Celtic music. Featuring a bevy of great Irish musicians, including Derek Bell of The Chieftains and Christy Moore, *Shadows On Stone* is a rich, satisfying album that highlights a passionate, poetic musical tradition.

— s.h.

Latino! Latino! VARIOUS ARTISTS Putumayo/Koch

Putumayo continues to build its catalogue of excellent world music collections with this edition of wonderful Hispanic songs. Recorded with the same fantastic production values as their previous collections, this a great introduction to artists virtually unknown on this continent.

The vibrant Latin rhythms of Salsa, Rumba, and Son are all featured prominently on this disc. Like Poncho Sanchez, most of these artists are huge stars in their native countries of Spain, Columbia, France, etc. All the more reason to indulge yourself in this danceable Latino experience.

— d.a.

Free At Last REBECCA MALOPE EMI

Lovely, elevating and inspiring gospel from a popular South African solo artist. While the instrumentation is almost negligently rudimentary, Malope's soaring vocals totally dominate. Mostly native dialects make the songs seem all the more universal.

— p.s.

Culloden Field EACHDRAIDH Eachdraidh Productions

The catalyst behind this unique exploration of Scotland's rich musical past is Ontario native Davie Simmons, whose interest in the music of his ancestors led him on a profound journey — the result of which is this evocative disc that folds the spirit of traditional U.K. music into this collection of original songs that evoke the myths, legends and stories of ancient Scotland, Ireland and England.

— s.h.

CLASSICS



The Seven Deadly Sins (Weil) STRATAS-NAGANO Warner

With yet another collection of interpretations of his work by contemporary pop stars in the offing, this is the perfect time for the release of this fine ode to Weil's unfettered brilliance by soprano Teresa Stratas and Co., with the Orchestre De L'Opéra National De Lyon, under the direction of Kent Nagano.

— t.a.

Piano Transcriptions ARCADI VOLODOS Sony

Russian pianist Arcadi Volodos offers more than an hour of seamless interpretations of everyone from Bizet ("Carman Variations") to Liszt ("Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2"), as well as Schubert, Prokofiev, Tchaikovsky, Bach and Mozart, among others.

— t.a.

Rachmaninov: Piano Concerto No. 3 SHURA CHERKASSKY London

These solo piano works, performed by famed pianist Shura Cherkassky, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra,

were the final recordings of the late Russian musician's career (he passed away on Dec. 27, 1995) and act as a suitable ode to his lengthy and brilliant life on the stage.

— t.a.

HOME VIDEO



JAGGED LITTLE PILL LIVE Warner

Although this live document of Morissette's massive *Jagged Little Pill* world tour is mostly of interest to her fans, it is, nonetheless, a pretty fascinating glimpse into her meteoric rise from obscurity to the creator of the best-selling album of all-time by a female artist. Snippets of live club performances just before the record exploded are intercut with some of the huge gigs that followed, offering a graphic view of just how far — and fast — her star rose after "You Oughta Know" took off. Mostly shot in a rough, hand-held fashion, the video has homemade, travel journey kind of feel about it. All in all, it's an interesting time capsule of an unparalleled event in pop music.

— s.h.

THE FIRST WIVES CLUB Paramount

Virtually everyone can identify with the feeling of being dumped, and that's what makes *First Wives Club* a film with considerable appeal — particularly to women who, like the characters in this devious comedy, have been left for a younger woman. But while Goldie Hawn, Diane Keaton and Bette Midler are all in fine form here, there's something silly and nasty about the story that is bound to turn off a lot of people.

— d.a.w.

LIAR, LIAR Universal

After the (relative) failure of *The Cable Guy* Jim Carrey retreated to more familiar territory with this joke-a-minute story of lawyer who, after his young son makes a birthday wish, finds that he can't lie for 24 hours — a definite problem for a man in his field. It's not terribly inventive, but *Liar, Liar* does allow Carrey do what he does best: broad, over-the-top comedy.

— d.a.w.

KIDS IN THE HALL BRAIN CANDY Paramount

Much as I, like every red-blooded Kids In The Hall Fan, wanted to love the famed troupe's first foray onto the big screen, alas, I was disappointed. Certainly on paper it appeared to have all the ingredients of a good film: an original idea about the creation of a pill that makes people perpetually happy, with the Kids collectively playing more than 40 roles, but somehow it just misses the mark. Although it's worth a look for fans, ultimately, *Brain Candy* is a more interesting than funny film.

— d.a.w.

Reviews Contributed by:

Ted Appleby, David Armstrong, Stu Black, Scoop Gerbil, David Henman, Dan W. High, Andy Holloway, Stephen Hubbard, Bruce Lam, Fred Langton, Cathy McDowell, William Peyton, Perry Stern, Cindy Waxer, D.A. Withers, C.J. Wren

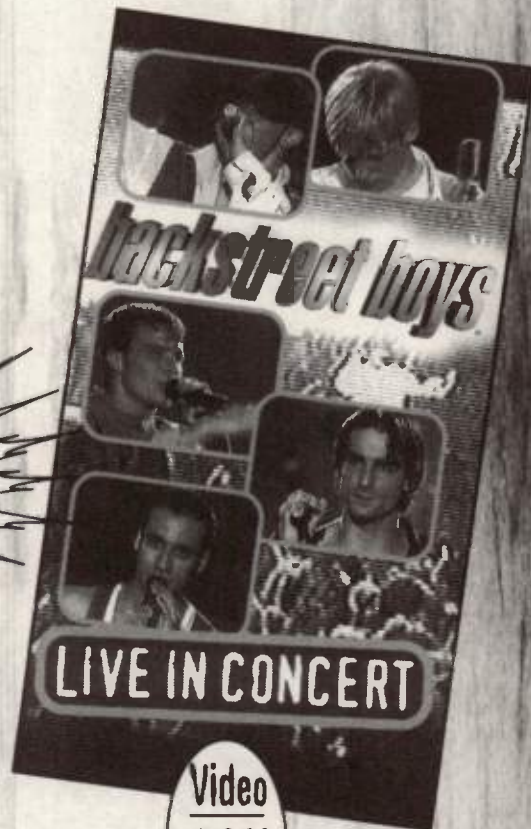
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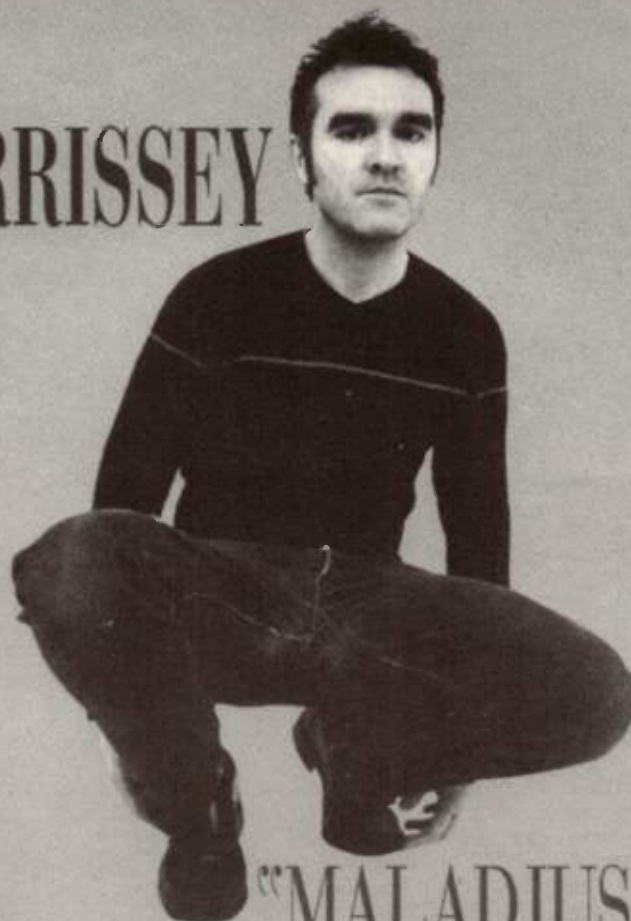
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MORRISSEY

MALADJUSTED featuring "Alma Matters"

MORRISSEY

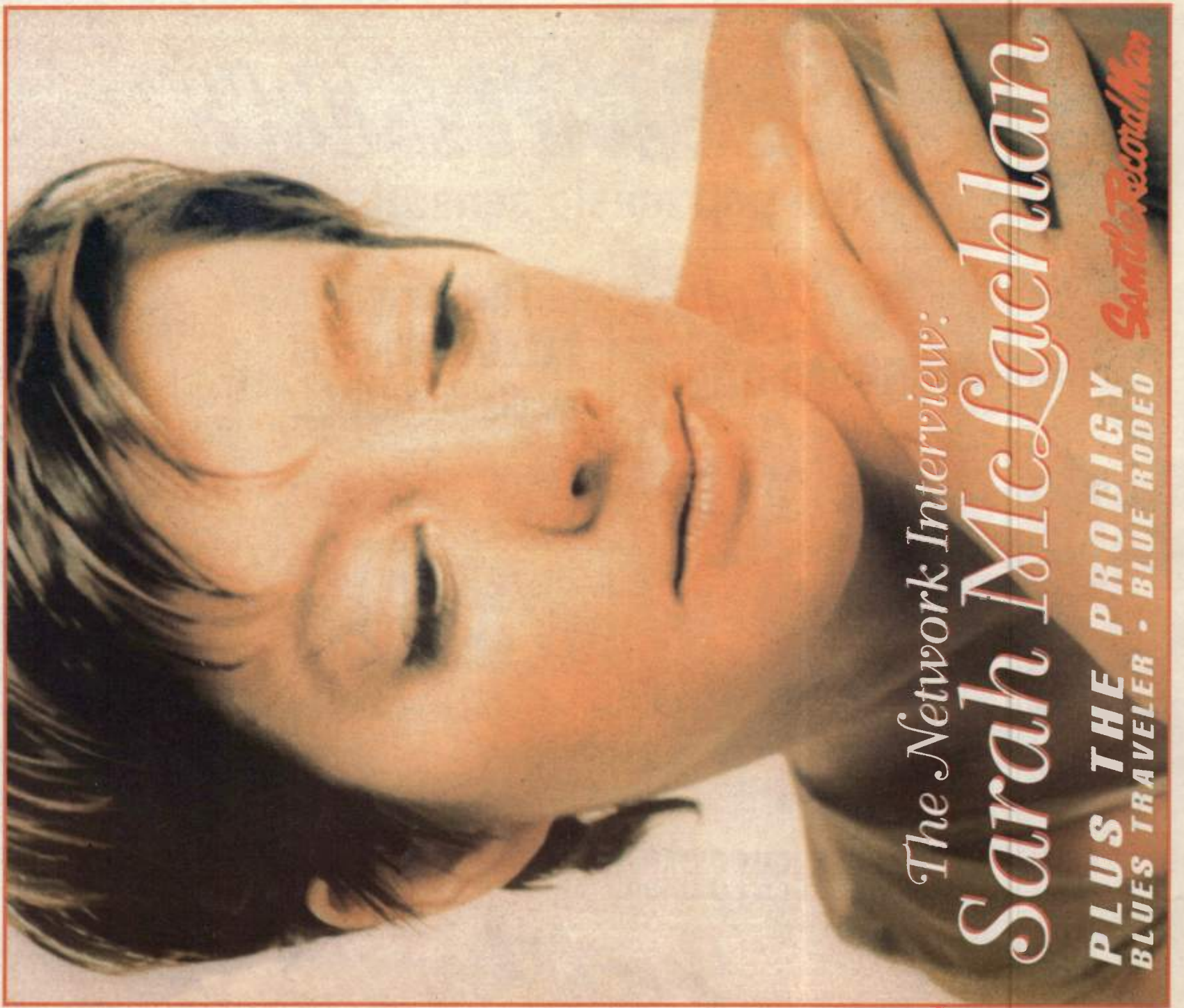


"MALADJUSTED"

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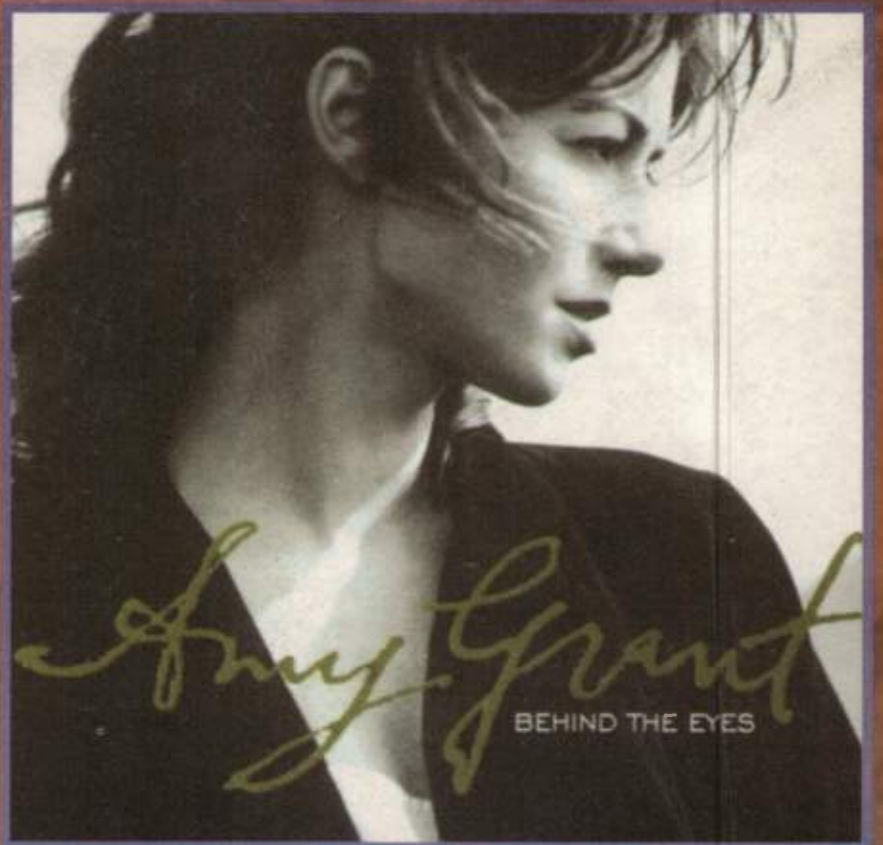
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The Network Interview:
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PLUS THE PRODIGY
BLUES TRAVELER • BLUE RODEO
SantheRecordMan



Vanessa Williams "Next"
includes the hit "Happiness"



Amy Grant "Behind The Eyes"
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