

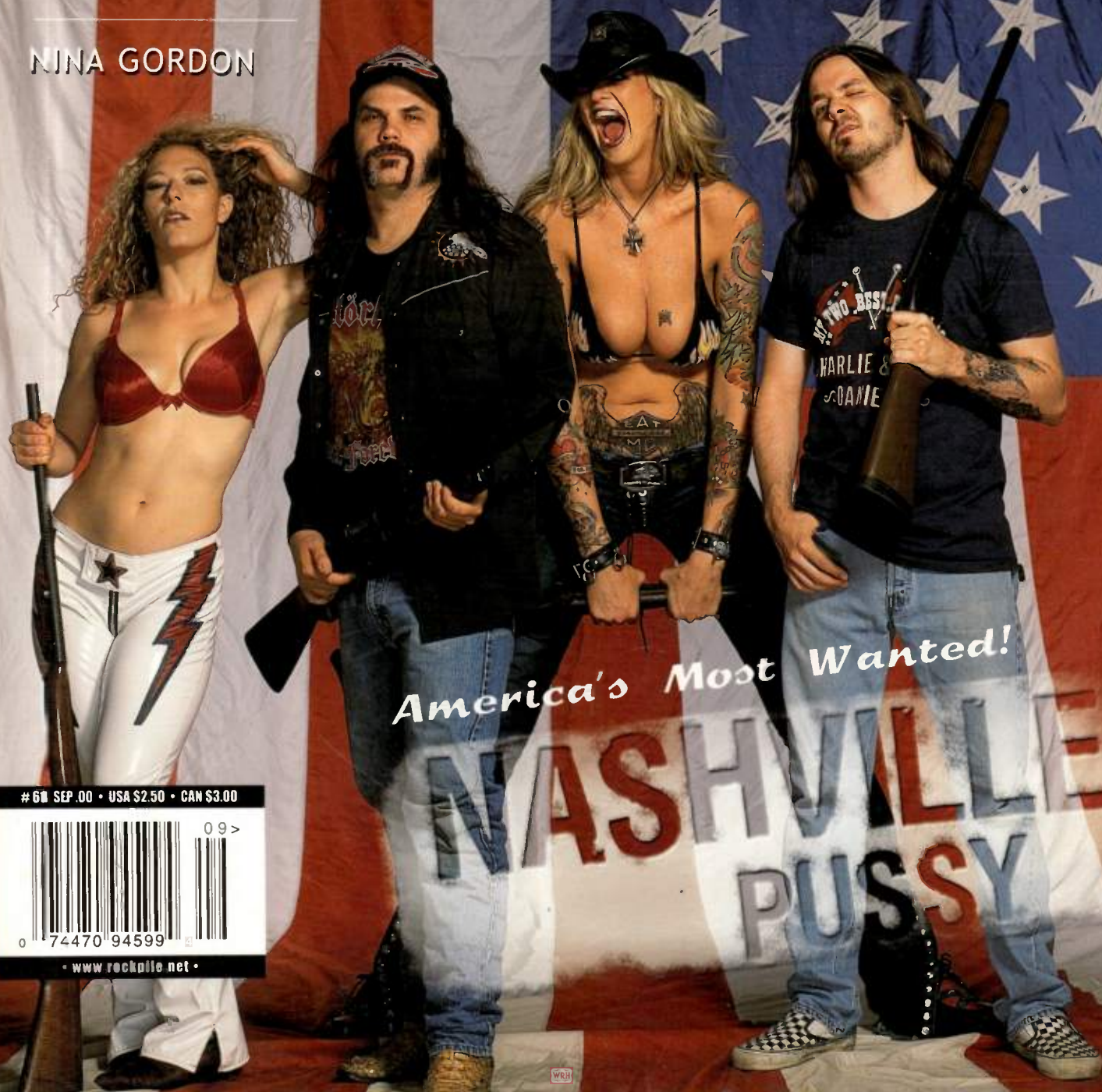
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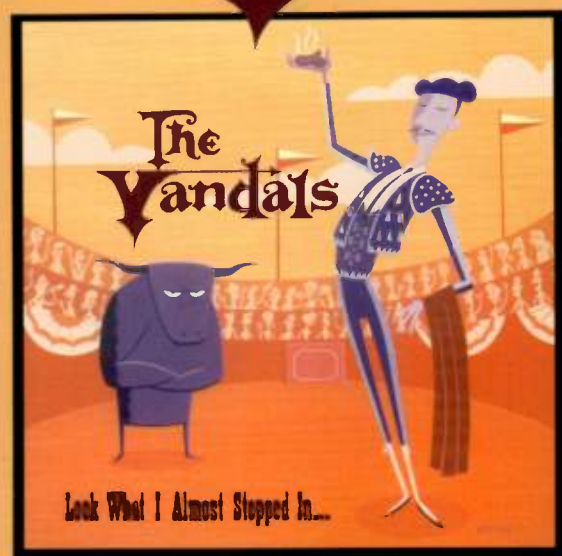
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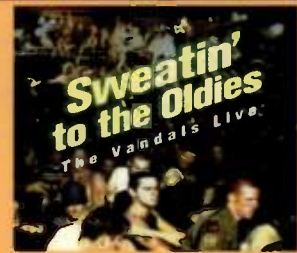
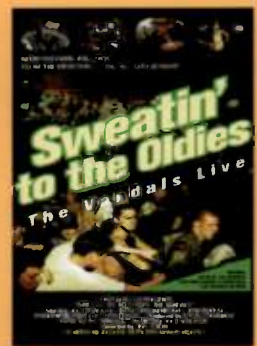
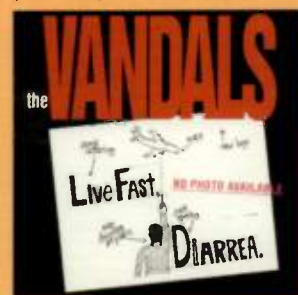
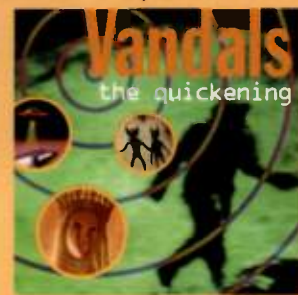
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Christina Heritage: Erik never wears underwear...

Erik Caplan: I don't. I'll admit it. There's nothing to admit. Underwear is the work of the devil. It's made to constrict the gonads. And I'm against the constriction of gonads.

C.H.: And what's the point of boxer shorts? What do they do, and why?

E.C.: I think it's supposed to be another layer of cloth between you and the world. And I think that's fascist.

C.H.: But what about the zipper thing? Don't you worry about zipping up your naughty bits? Without wearing underwear you have that danger...

E.C.: No, I've never been concerned about harnessing the franks and beans in my zipper.

Joe Kirschen: You gotta be careful with that zipper. It requires a little bit of thought before you tug up that sucker.

E.C.: I've never worried about that at all. I don't know whether that says something good or bad about me.

J.K.: How about those tight pants that women have? I guess they have some similar considerations.

E.C.: If you have similar worries as a man about zipping a zipper, you may not actually be a woman. If you have that problem, you might be living a lie.

C.H.: Speaking of that whole area... I like those Speedo bathing suits men wear—y'know, the ones where you can see the exact size of their unit.

E.C.: American guys don't seem to wear those often, but go to some place in Mexico or Italy, and it doesn't matter what kind of body the guy has—they all wear those fuckin' Speedos.

C.H.: Yeah, those British guys. When I was in Disney World, all of them were wearing those little things. The skinniest, whitest peo-

ple on earth. They have these... Tiny little Speedos on!

E.C.:(Together) Tiny little Speedos on!

C.H.: And why is that OK? I mean, would it be OK if Joe took off his clothes right now and walked around in his tighty-whities?

E.C.: I don't know... That's a good question. Like, for example, if you go to the beach, it's OK for a woman to walk around in what's essentially a bra and panties. And yet, if you were to walk up the street in the same outfit, you would get some weird looks. It would be inappropriate for some reason. You couldn't go into a convenience store in a bra.

J.K.: I saw a guy walk in with bare feet the other day.

E.C.: That's just stupid.

J.K.: The guy from behind the counter said, "No shoes, no service!"

E.C.: Yeah! "No shirt, no shoes, no dice!" The immortal words of Jeff Spicoli.

J.K.: No hoagie, either.



ROCKPILE

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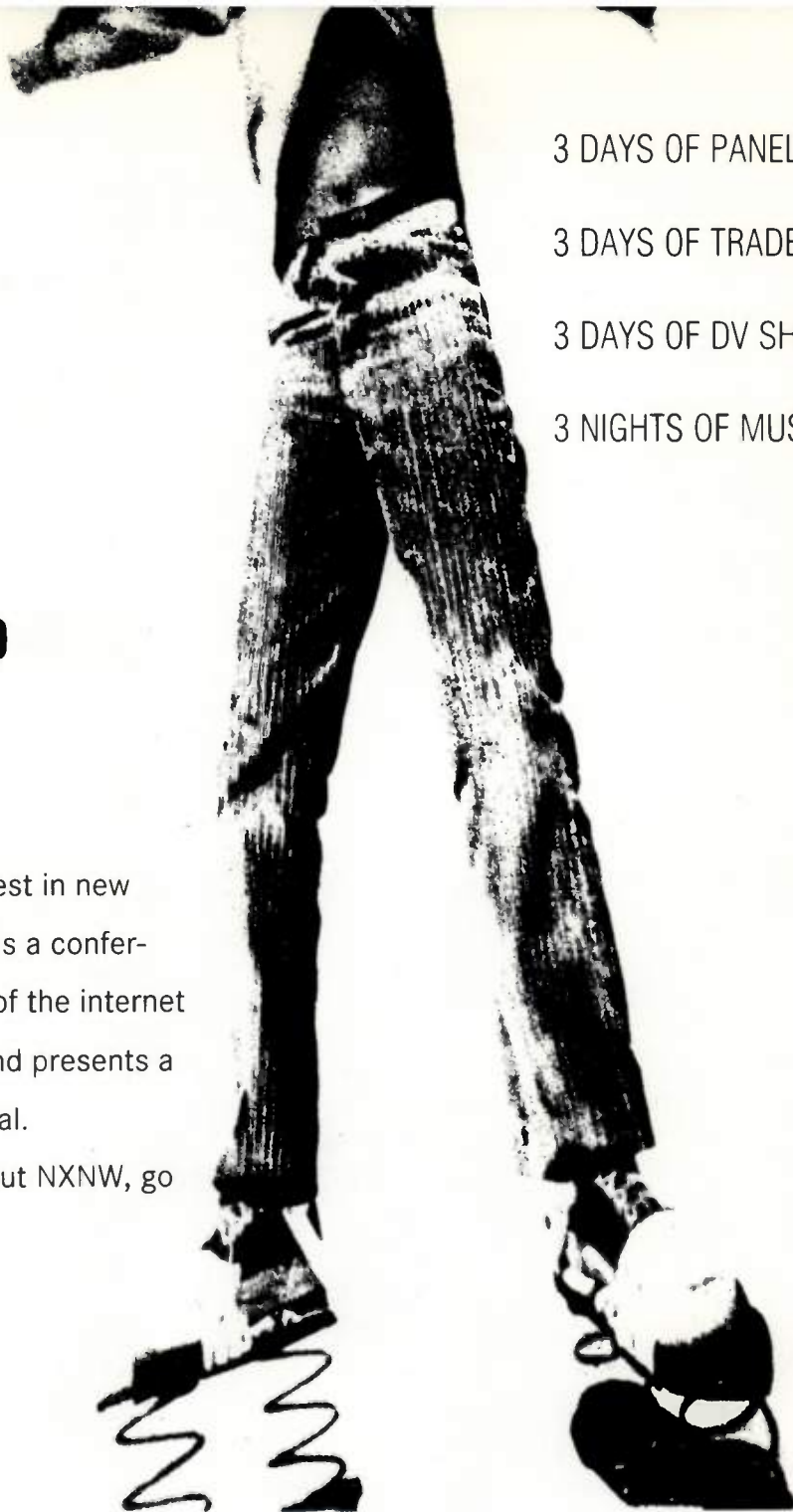
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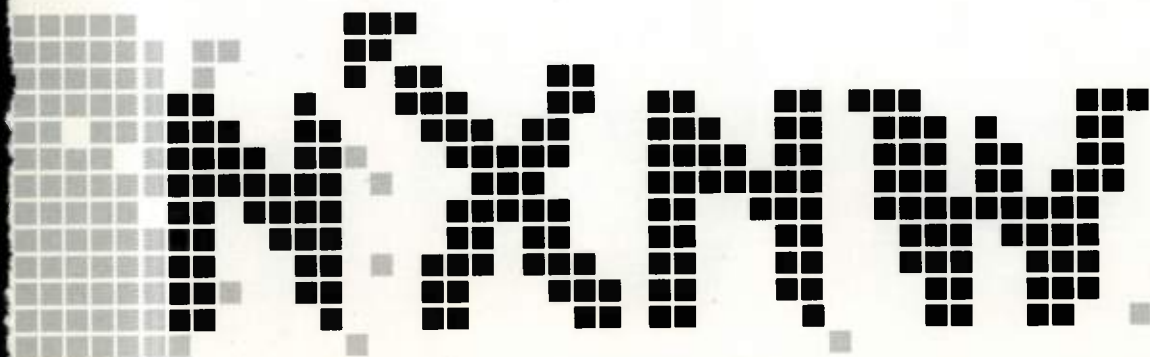
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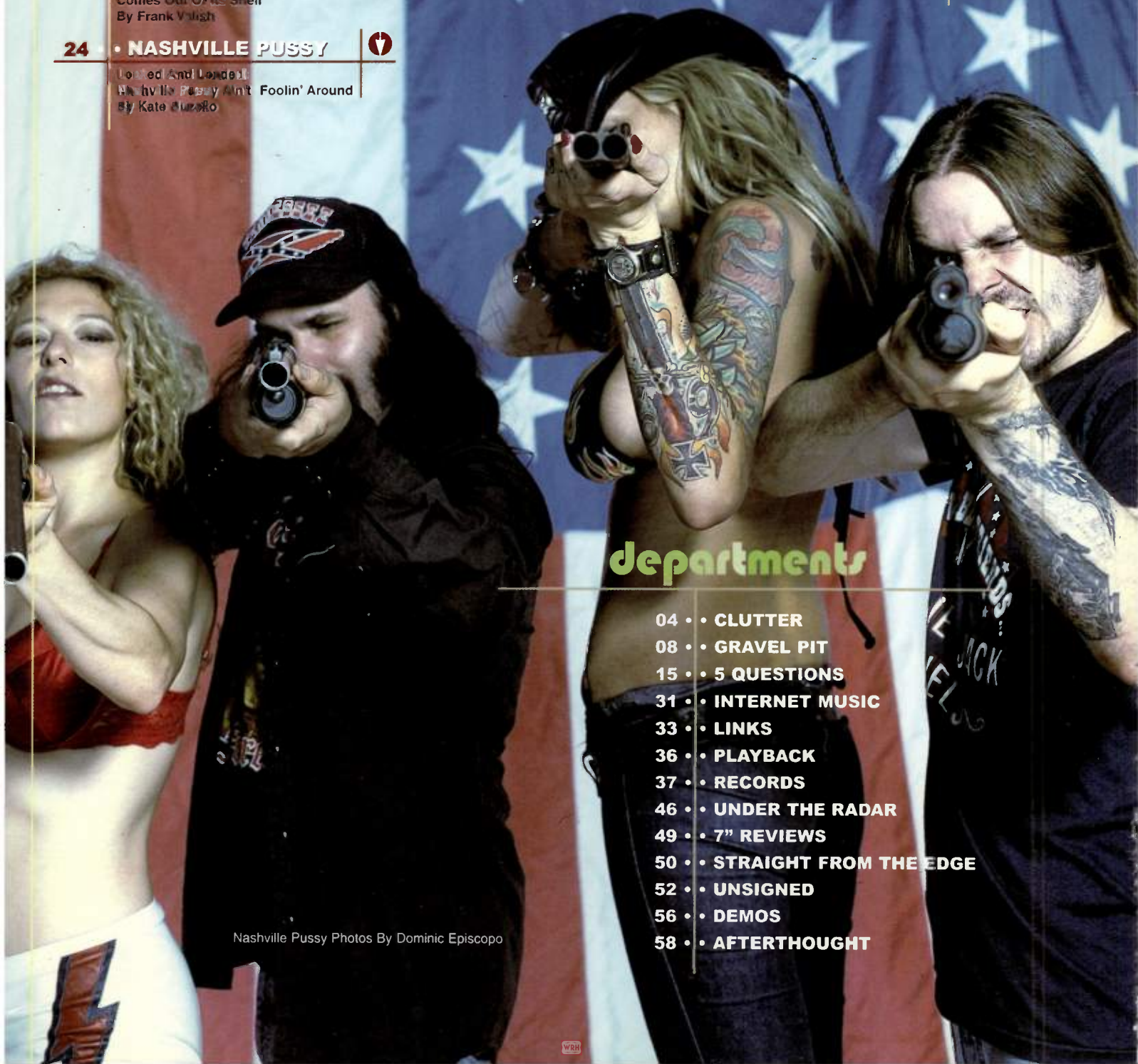


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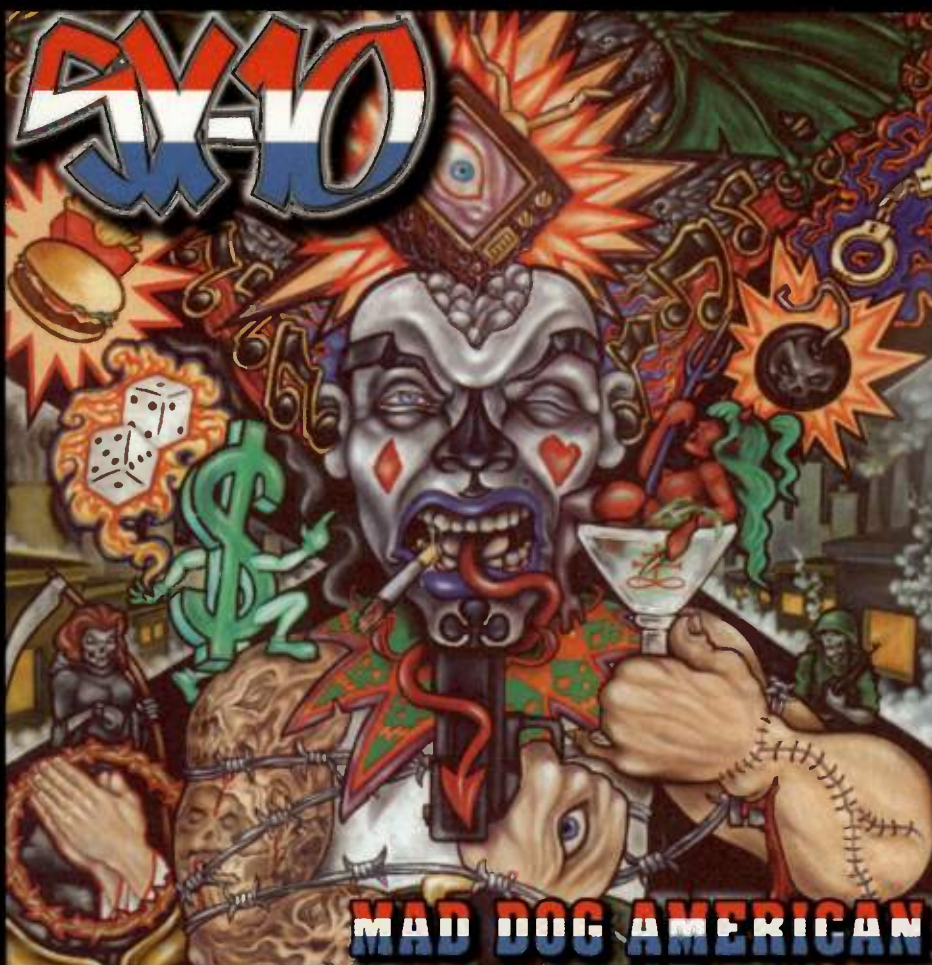
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TREES FALLING IN SEATTLE

According to singer Mark Lanegan, The Screaming Trees has played its final show. Although it was rumored the grunge rockers were preparing to record the follow-up to 1996's *Dust*, Lanegan says the band broke up several months ago but was offered enough money to re-form for a concert celebrating Seattle's Experience Music Project interactive rock museum.

Since forming in 1983, the band has split at several points in

its career, with the blame falling on its members' notorious drinking and fighting. In fact, the band has only played a handful of shows together in the last three years.

However, band manager Brian Klein says The Screaming Trees' split may not be as final as Lanegan makes it sound. The group supposedly has several projects in the works, including a compilation featuring a mix of live and old studio tracks as well as some new songs.



Mark Lanegan



Pantera

PANTERA'S PORN PROMOTION

In addition to co-headlining *Ozzfest 2000*, Pantera has planned an added treat for fans of its metallic sounds and infamous debauchery. The band has launched a series of in-store appearances to promote its new album—with the help of a few porn stars.

The band will be signing copies of *Reinventing The Steel*, while Kira Kener (star of *Nurses*, *House Sitter* and *The Bet*) and

other actresses from Vivid Video will sign DVD copies of their films.

"Since a large portion of our audience is male, we thought we'd give them something to look at, too," jokes Pantera drummer Vinnie Paul. "So you get your autograph from the band, and you get to meet some of the girls that are in your favorite porno flicks."

Pantera and the ladies of Vivid Video will hit record stores on a late summer promotional tour.

Grouser

There is an unsteady vibe in Richmond, Va., jolting its citizens to attention. The pulse of the city stops and starts, slave to the beat of music that changes its rhythm at a whim, jolting and twisting at calculated intervals.

It is the breeding ground of math rock.

The genre, pioneered by bands like Breadwinner, has inked its name to rock power trio Grouser. Guitarist/vocalist Mike Wells defines math rock as "herky-jerky," full of time changes and quick stops.

"We're kind of growing out of that, but we grew up listening to that in Richmond," say Wells.

Though the band is often lumped into the math rock cate-

gory, Wells says Grouser's sound reflects more of a pop element.

"It's not quite metal, but it's not quite punk rock either," he says. "It's kind of emotional, all over the place."

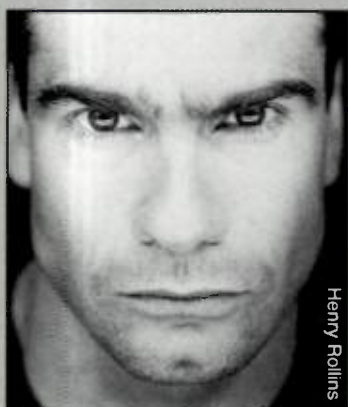
The two-and-a-half-year-old band is currently working on the follow-up to its debut release, *Harmonic Freight Train*, and is hoping to organize a European tour in addition to its Canadian and East Coast gigs.

Wells is confident new bassist Mike Bishop, formerly of Gwar and Kepone, will give the band a more driven edge.

"It's definitely going to make a change for the better and make the music more intense."

—Paige Wolf





Henry Rollins

HENRY ROLLINS—THE COMEDIAN?

Henry Rollins may not be the first name on everyone's mind when it comes to comedy, but he plans to give it a shot for an upcoming TV special.

Apparently, while working on his tattoo collection and musical career, Rollins will shoot a humor

program entitled *Live And Ripped From London*.

Topics for the stand-up show will include the former Black Flag singer's roles in films like *Heat* and *Lost Highway*, his thoughts about former Smiths frontman Morrissey and memories of his first kiss. The bulky vocalist also plans to incorporate material from his 1999 *Think Tank* spoken-word tour.

"It's fairly long-winded, humorous, insightful and, as always, honest," he says.

Rollins is currently on a European tour with the newest incarnation of The Rollins Band, which issued *Get Some Go Again* in February, and he plans to tape the special between legs of the tour. He also plans a brief spoken-word tour later this year.



The Dandy Warhols

STEALING RIFFS WITH THE DANDY WARHOLS

In the music business, defining the line between tribute and plagiarism has always been difficult. With the release of The Dandy Warhols' new single, "Bohemian Like You," some listeners have voiced concern about the track's similarity to The Rolling Stones' psychedelic classic, "Jumpin' Jack Flash."

Dandy Warhols frontman Courtney Taylor maintains he didn't

intend for it to be a Rolling Stones rip, but once it was broken down to acoustic guitar he noticed the similarity.

"I don't really care how much crap I get for taking it," he says. "It's what I want to hear, and it's what my friends want to hear, and it sure is a lot of fun to play, so that was that."

The band is currently touring the States in support of its new album, *13 Tales From Urban Bohemia*.



The Bangs

The Bangs is Olympia, Wash.'s, answer to The Go-Go's and the female answer to The Ramones. With more provocative lyricism and a slightly softer side than girl-led punk bands like The Donnas and Candy Ass, the band fuses hard hitting guitar riffs with vocals shifting between a sharp bite and a sweet kiss.

Featuring the talents of new drummer Kyle Ermatinger, singer/guitarist Sarah Utter and singer/bassist Maggie Vail, the band just finished a national tour in promotion of its new record, *Sweet Revenge*, which Vail says far surpasses its previous effort.

"The last album makes me cringe," she says. "(On *Sweet Revenge*) we spent a longer time writing the songs and arranging them, which makes it better."

From the first track, "Fast Easy Love," an aggressive ear-opener jolting the listener to attention, the album continues with spunk and edge, closing with a witty cover of Cheap Trick's "Southern Girls."

With this armory of new music, The Bangs opened for Sleater-Kinney on the first part of its tour. The band's gig beside the highly acclaimed indie rockers allowed it the opportunity to play for full and eager audiences every night.

"Every one one of their shows sold out, and it was mostly really

enthusiastic young girls," says Vail. "Those are the funnest crowds to play for."

The trio certainly has grounds for comparison. Each of its members is involved in several other musical projects, giving them the opportunity to play for different audiences. Vail says her other bands appeal to the different facets of her musical identity.

"They're all really different, musically. Frenchie And The German Girls (with sister Tobi Vail of Bikini Kill) isn't quite as rock as The Bangs," she says. "In Gene Defcon, I sing back up and wear a blue wig. All the songs are about parties or sex."

But Vail attributes the success of The Bangs to the chemistry of its three members and the appeal of strong rock music coming from female musicians.

"There's not a whole lot of women playing interesting music these days or playing rock," she says.

Looking forward to a hectic touring schedule and planning to start a West Coast tour with Ronnie Specter in early September, does the band feel like a bunch of full-blown rock stars?

"No way," Vail quickly responds. "We sleep on people's floors, drive a van around, carry our own equipment. It's nothing glamorous."

—Paige Wolf

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LIQUID GANG *By André Calilhanna*

The story leading up to Liquid Gang's signing with Atlantic Records and subsequent major-label debut sounds something like the stuff of rock n' roll fable. It begins with an exemplary work ethic, an unselfish temperament and a comprehensive DIY strategy leading to the release of *Sunshine*.

Sunshine follows two indie releases on Gotham Records and showcases the band with a new sound and a refreshingly energetic attitude. All the talk of the hard work and dedication never comes across as cliché, and all five members are focused and realistic about life as a full-time rock band.

Let's jump to Liquid Gang's showcase gig at a music conference last year. It had been a mild winter until the first day of the conference—then, as fate would have it, the band was assaulted by cold weather and heavy snow, hampering travel and making gigging a precarious proposition.

"It was a shitty day, weather-wise," recalls bassist Eric Nagy. "Here we were, freezing our asses off, about to do a show. First, we meet with (EMI Publishing), who was interested in us. After that, our lawyer shows up with the contracts."

"We literally put pen to paper and then played," adds guitarist Chris Holt.

"He actually walked in with his briefcase and whipped out these contracts," Nagy continues. "He handed them to each guy and said 'It's marked, sign here and here and here.'"

"It was very surreal," Holt concurs. "And then one of our techs came in and said, 'You guys have got to go. You're on in 40 minutes!'"

"And (it's) come around full circle," drummer Craig Smith chimes in with a grin. "We just signed with EMI Publishing last week."

Major label interest started when the band released *Nineteenth Soul* on Gotham early in 1999. Singer Jose Maldonado joined the band while the album was being recorded and joined Holt as a second frontman while Liquid Gang was cranking out some furious rap-influenced rock. Maldonado was friendly with the band (he had actually played in a band with guitarist Stinger) and had made it a habit to jump onstage and sing back-up.

"It gave me an excuse to come to these guys with a song I had that we all collaborated on," Maldonado says of his joining the band. "We did the song, and it was really cool, and we caught the ear of (producer) Malcolm Springer. I don't know what he heard in what we did, but he approached us and wanted to produce some demos. It was pretty apparent then that we needed to go with one lead vocalist."

"And more guitars!" cries Holt, who moved to permanent rhythm guitarist and background singer.

"Yeah," Maldonado agrees. "One vocalist, big guitars and a kick-ass rhythm section. So we wrote and recorded some songs as a demo, and that was the magic. It was completely natural, and the rest is history."

"The demo was finished in October," Nagy emphasizes. "And we were signed in January." ■

l-r: Craig "Mud" Smith, Stinger, Chris Holt, Jose Maldonado, Eric Nagy

lava



THROWAWAY GENERATION *By Mark Ginsburg*

Ah, the romantic life of a rock star—rolling from town to town, living it up and partying down. Standing on a pungent West Philadelphia street in the midst of another sticky, sweltering summer while waiting to go on at the legendary warehouse punk space The Killtime, the boys from Utah's Throwaway Generation are probably wondering what such a life might be like.

After recently signing with New Hampshire's Cyclone Records, not much has changed for them. They're still packed into a tiny, beat-up van, still dragging their asses across the countryside and still ripping up the underground with a special brand of old-school attitude and new-school melody.

"When you're on the East Coast in the summer, there's no need to take a shower, because five minutes later you're wet anyway," jokes bassist Chris Bradley.

While some bands might find this kind of adversity daunting, Bradley and the rest of Throwaway Generation just seem to feed off it.

"We consider ourselves a very hard-working band. We're always out on the road," he says. "You've got to get out there and do the groundwork to get a bigger audience. The whole premise of our band is about playing live. I think we've really progressed a lot as a group by playing live. We've been refining it."

The signing with Cyclone has also been a great thing for the band, in Bradley's opinion, even if it hasn't netted rock star lifestyles.

"We're excited to be working with Cyclone. They're a really good label. [Label head] Jeff [Surrette] seems to have his head on his shoulders," he says. "Everything we've seen promotion- and publicity-wise seems to show he's doing a lot of hard work for us."

Throwaway Generation's debut full-length on Cyclone, *Tomorrow's Too Late*, which hit stores in June, shows a band pushing at the walls of the studio to

get to the stage. This group must play live to thrive, yet this disc has managed to capture some of the band's lightning energy for home consumption. Guitars ring out, vocals carry an old-school rasp and bass and drum punch hard, keeping the whole thing grounded.

"It's really hard to capture the sound of a live show in a studio recording," says Bradley. "You can't jump around—well, I guess you can, but you have to try to be professional," he smiles. "I mean, it is all punk rock, but you have to have some deal of professionalism so the recording turns out right. Actually, we did a lot of stuff live in the studio. We were in different rooms but playing at the same time, instead of just laying over tracks one at a time on top of each other. I think people will be pleasantly surprised with the new recording. It has a lot of energy."

Looking past its next tour stop and its next record, Bradley muses over what the future might hold for the band.

"Personally, I wouldn't mind if this went far enough to where it could be a job. That would be awesome. It's everybody's dream. I don't care how punk a band is or how DIY, nobody starts a band thinking, 'It would be cool if we could play in our garage to nobody for the rest of our lives.' Everybody wants to have recognition. Everybody writes music hoping people will come out and get something out of it. I think it would be absolutely amazing if we could do that—in five years or 10 years make this fly and do it as a job," he says.

With a strong record like *Tomorrow's Too Late* on the shelves and such a powerful touring ethic, it looks like rock n' roll stardom may be in the offing for Throwaway Generation after all. ■

l-r: Chris Bradley, Shane Harris, Bryce Larsen, Drew Smith

gravel pit

MALONEY FILLS HOLE IN MÖTLEY CRÜE

Bassist Melissa Auf Der Maur is not the only member of Hole to test the waters of another band. Though Auf Der Maur took a permanent vacation from the band to join The Smashing Pumpkins, drummer Samantha Maloney has planned a temporary gig without fellow Hole members. She's set to replace

Mötley Crüe's Randy Castillo on *The Maximum Rock Tour*.

The band asked Maloney to take Castillo's place while he recovers from recent stomach surgery. Bassist Nikki Sixx says in a press statement he had met Maloney and thought, "She was dynamic and could add a real edge to the live show."

Maloney, who will remain with the band until Castillo is fully recovered, says the gig is the fulfillment of a life-long dream.

Mötley Crüe will be joined by Anthrax and Megadeth for *The Maximum Rock Tour*, which began in June and will continue throughout the summer.



Grand Theft Audio

"I'd say they were probably too ugly to sell records on their own," laughs Grand Theft Audio frontman Jay Butler when prompted about his convergence with three of his best mates, Chris McCormack (guitars), Ralph Jezzar (keyboards) and Ritch Battersby (drums) to form GTA more than a year ago.

During this short time, the band quickly garnered a notorious reputation for its unpredictable antics on and off the stage (namely at any local British pub) while attracting the attention of stateside label London/Sire, which will release the band's domestic debut, *Blame Everyone*, this month. Co-produced by the band and Dave Bottrill (King Crimson, Peter Dinklage), the album finds the group showing off its AC/DC meets The Sex Pistols sound with a sprinkle of Prodigy. GTA comfortably fashions

itself alongside other recent high-energy U.K. exports including Pitchshifter and Groop Dogdrill.

"We're basically fans of anything that rocks," Butler adds.

The band already finds itself rocking on several *Warped Tour* dates with a full slate of touring set well into 2001. None of these four are strangers to the rock n' roll lifestyle, as their string of late-night barroom escapades would lead one to believe. All bring years of experience, most notably McCormack, who found himself to be the final piece of the GTA puzzle after finding fame with The Three Colors Red.

"We've really been surprising many American fans who might be expecting a typically reserved U.K. band," says Butler.

Yanks, you can consider yourselves warned.

—Chris Johns



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SX-10 By Gregg McQueen

"This is definitely the kind of music to get rowdy to," says vocalist Sen Dog of his new project, a rap/metal fusion outfit called SX-10.

Better known as B-Real's comic sidekick with hip-hop heavyweights Cypress Hill, Sen Dog is now top dog for SX-10, which recently dropped its debut, *Mad Dog American*.

The inaugural release on Sen Dog's own Latin Thug Records, *Mad Dog American* is a blistering assault of rap, rock and fuck-you attitude, melding street-tough hip-hop rhymes to driving metal riffs and pounding rhythms. Think Ice-T's *Body Count* with more accomplished musicians and greater emphasis on rapping. Tracks like "Caught Up In The System" and "Heart Of A Rebel" spew more venom than any limp-wristed Limp Bizkit tune ever could, with Sen Dog providing bluster on the mic while Andy Zambrano (guitar), Jeremy Fleener (guitar), Glen Sobel (drums) and Frank Mercurio (bass) tear it up in the wings.

Temporarily emerging from the shadows of a supergroup allows Sen Dog to stretch his legs.

"I wanted to step out of my realm a bit," he explains. "You need to upgrade your style sometimes, or get the fuck out of the game. It's great to be able to record all of my own material."

Mad Dog American features cameos by Everlast, The Kottonmouth Kings, Mellow Man Ace, Eric Bobo and Downset. The guest appearance by Everlast has the SX-10 leader particularly stoked.

"It was cool to get him to rap because he's been doing a lot of the singing stuff lately," explains Sen Dog, who's been buds with Everlast for about a decade. "I played him the music to the track, and he made up his rhymes right there on the spot."

Critics should take heed before alleging SX-10 is another group simply jumping on the rap/rock hybrid bandwagon. Sen Dog has been jamming with his SX-10 mates since 1996, long before the genre was a cash cow, but various label problems and other obstacles conspired to keep his music from being heard until now.

"I tried to get Cypress into the idea of doing rap and rock years ago, but they weren't really into it," says Sen Dog. "They wanted to stay true to their hip-hop roots."

A deal with Flip Records in 1998 went sour after a Fred Durst-produced SX-10 sampler was circulated to the press. Arguments over who should produce the debut full-length record ensued, and the contract disintegrated.

"It was rough," recalls Sen Dog. "I was really pissed off at the music business."

That anger fueled SX-10 tracks like "Had Enough" and "Punk Ass," and convinced him to work with a label where he could call his own shots. But to play the rock game, this old dog needed to learn some new tricks.

"The heavy rock stuff SX-10 does is more difficult, performance-wise, than what I'm used to," he says.

continued on page 17

l-r: Andy Zambrano, Glen Sobel, Sen Dog, Jeremy Fleener, Frank Mercurio

5 questions

With: Bill Stevenson,
Lemmy Kilminster,
Hopey Rock and
Galadriel

By Paige Wolf



Formerly the drummer for Black Flag and The Descendents, Bill Stevenson has been offering his rhythms to All since its beginnings in the mid '30s. The punk band is currently on a U.S. tour to promote its recent release, *Problematic*.

1. What would people be surprised to know about you?

I can do the splits. (seriously)

2. How do you feel about the availability of free music on the Internet?

I'm not an expert—I can barely check my email—it seems that the tide needs to settle a little bit on all the matters concerning new capabilities as a result of the Internet.

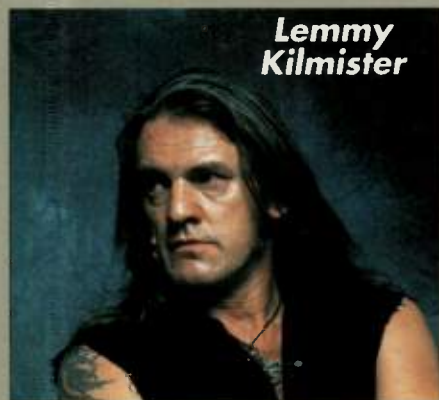
3. What is the strangest thing a fan has ever said or done for you?

Bought me weird tighty-whitey-style underwear by the name of "Big Yank."

4. Describe the plot of a recent dream or nightmare. My dad came and told me he was only trying to antagonize me for the last two months. (He had been ill, and I had been taking care of him until his death.)

5. What would you buy with \$1.50?

One of those butterfinger ice cream bars.



Former Jimi Hendrix roadie Lemmy Kilminster founded the metal band Motorhead after the demise of Hawkwind more than 25 years ago. Motorhead has been penned "the loudest band in the world." Still rocking after all these years, the band is currently on tour with Nashville Pussy.

1. What would people be surprised to know about you?

I am legally reptile.

2. How do you feel about the availability of free music on the Internet?

If I do a day's work, I want a day's pay, just like anyone else.

3. What is the strangest thing a fan has ever said or done for you?

"AH!"

4. Describe the plot of a recent dream or nightmare. You don't plot dreams! I think it had something to do with a zoo.

5. What would you buy with \$1.50?

Not much.



Hopey Rock and Galadriel are two of the self-proclaimed bad girls of the pop/punk band Candy Ass. With its new release, *Orgy*, the band deems itself "the sassiest, sluttiest, ferocious feline pink punk band in the universe."

1. What would people be surprised to know about you?

Galadriel: That I held the Miss America title in 1991.

Hopey: That I have three extra nipples.

2. How do you feel about the availability of free music on the Internet?

G.: I don't like it, 'cause kids who can't afford music also can't afford computers. So the rich get richer.

H.: I don't like it 'cause it's ruining Hanson's career.

3. What is the strangest thing a fan has ever said or done for you?

G.: Wrote a poem in which he claimed to get a sex change. I only date girls.

H.: Bought me a drink. Weird!

4. Describe the plot of a recent dream or nightmare.

G.: That Hopey broke a guitar string, and I had to do 10 minutes of my stand-up shtick and backflips for the crowd.

H.: There was a huge comet that was going to hit the earth, and they set up space ships to get everyone off the earth, but they didn't want the gays to go.

5. What would you buy with \$1.50?

G.: Something awesome at the 99-cent store like a hideous shade of blush.

H.: Five cigarettes.

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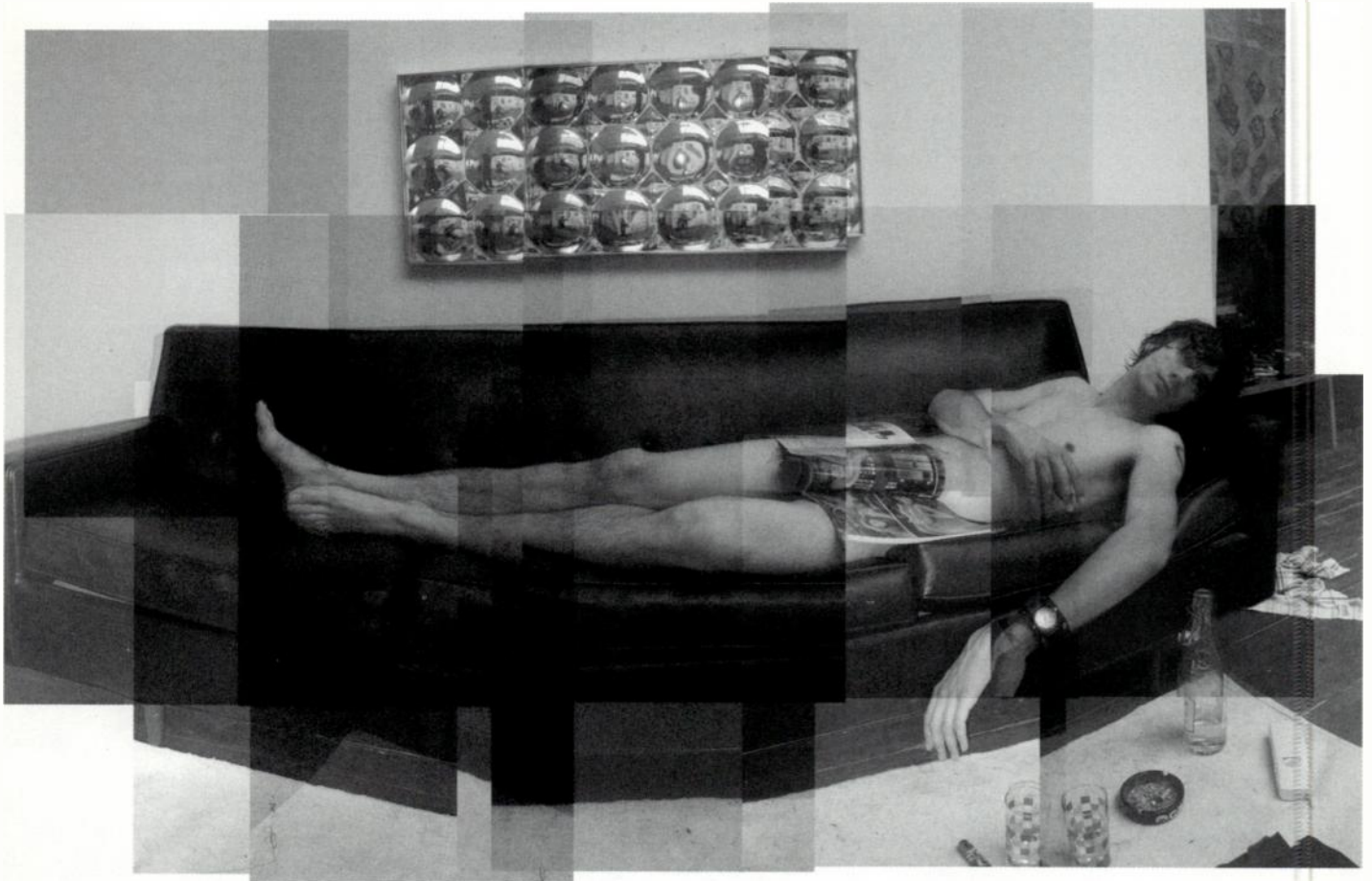
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SX-10 continued from page 14

With Cypress Hill, Sen Dog plays the jester, interjecting rhymes while helping to incite the audience, but SX-10 is a different animal.

"This is totally hardcore. I've got some rock moves I can bust out, though," he jokes. "I've been practicing."

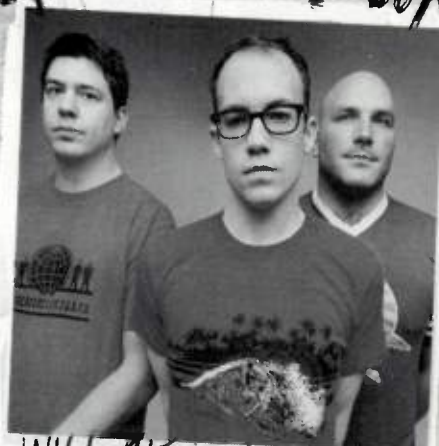
Sen Dog enjoys the startled look on people's faces when they expect his new band to play material resembling Cypress Hill, then are hit with Rollins Band-like intensity. By the end of the set, surprise turns to approval, and the crowds are clamoring for more. The connection with the audience is what Sen Dog craves.

"I put a lot of emotion into the music, because that's what people want to hear," he says. "You know the kind of music that makes the hair on people's necks stand up when they listen to it? That's the kind of stuff I want to write." ■

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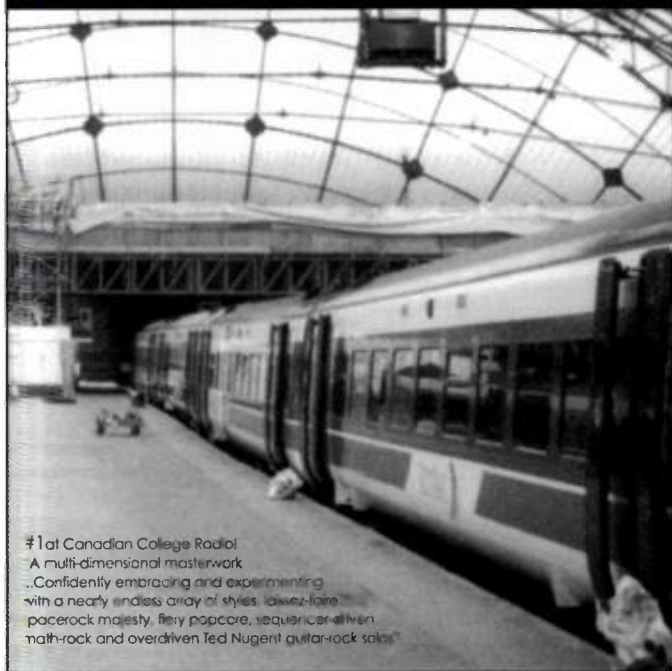
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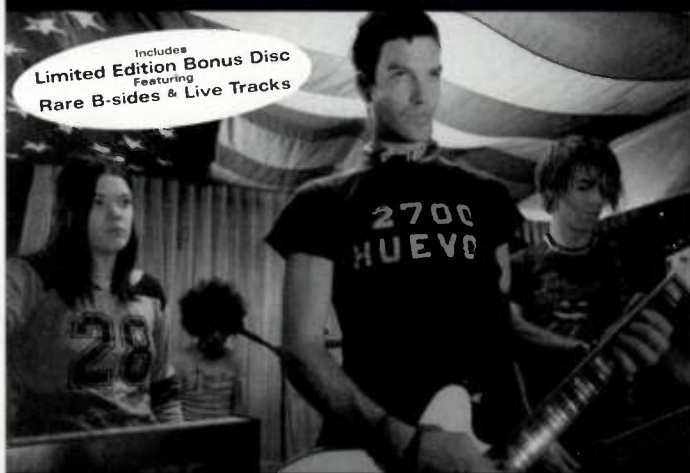
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MOVING

Sunny Day Real Estate has always been a bit of an enigma. Its history is fairly well-known—the band's early no-interview policy, a curious break-up, Jeremy Enigk's Christian rebirth, Dan Hoerner's move to natural living, William Goldsmith and Nate Mendel's stint in The Foo Fighters. But since its glorious reformation in 1997, the band (sans Mendel) has turned over a new leaf. It has recently released *The Rising Tide*, the second album since the original split. The interview embargo has been lifted. And the band members, having already come clean about their hazy past, are ready to assume the life of typical rock n' rollers. Well, kind of.

Walking onto the band's tour bus prior to a sold-out gig in Philadelphia, everything seems normal. Pulling the curtain to the living area reveals a mounted television with an apparent satellite hook-up above to the right.

Below lay some scattered CDs (Rocket From The Crypt's *Scream*; *Dracula*, *Scream* and something unidentified by Sunny Day Real Estate). To the left, at the window, is a blue couch, and behind it, a counter holds a can of Coca-Cola and an empty case of Heineken. Dark red blinds shade the entire room.

Guitarist Dan Hoerner is lying on his back on the couch, hands over head. He's clad in dark green army fatigues, a white t-shirt and an unbuttoned brown long-sleeved shirt cuffed just enough to make out an unidentifiable tattoo on his inner left forearm. On his feet are nothing but gray-bottomed sweat socks. As the interview begins, he speaks with eloquence and shows obvious pride for what his band has accomplished.

"I have had generally good experiences with the press," says Hoerner. "By far and away, we get great reviews, and everybody I do interviews with seems to like the record. The only thing that annoys me after a while, just because they're so boring to talk about, is that William (Goldsmith) was in another band or Jeremy (Enigk) had a religious phase in his life, and it's like, we had a hiatus where we broke up for a while. I don't mind talking about anything, but I think that so much is happening right now with the record and stuff that when people like to just get focused on boring things, it gets more tedious to do interviews."

The current press blitz is surrounding Sunny Day Real Estate's new album, *The Rising Tide*. It shows a band stripped to a trio (vocalist/bassist/pianist Enigk, guitarist Hoerner and drummer Goldsmith) for the first time since Sunny Day Real Estate's pre-Enigk inception. It also showcases the culmination of the fuller sound hinted at on 1998's *How It Feels To Be Something On*. The explosive power is still there, but the album favors a quieter, more intricate, yet somehow larger sound. Strings swell, accentuating the stripped-down acoustic guitar and emotional vocals of "Rain Song." Atmospheric sitar and lightly marching drums lend a subtle Indian tone to "Fool In The Photograph." Moody keyboard and swirling guitar provide ethereal texture to Enigk's patiently longing lullaby in "Tearing In My Heart."

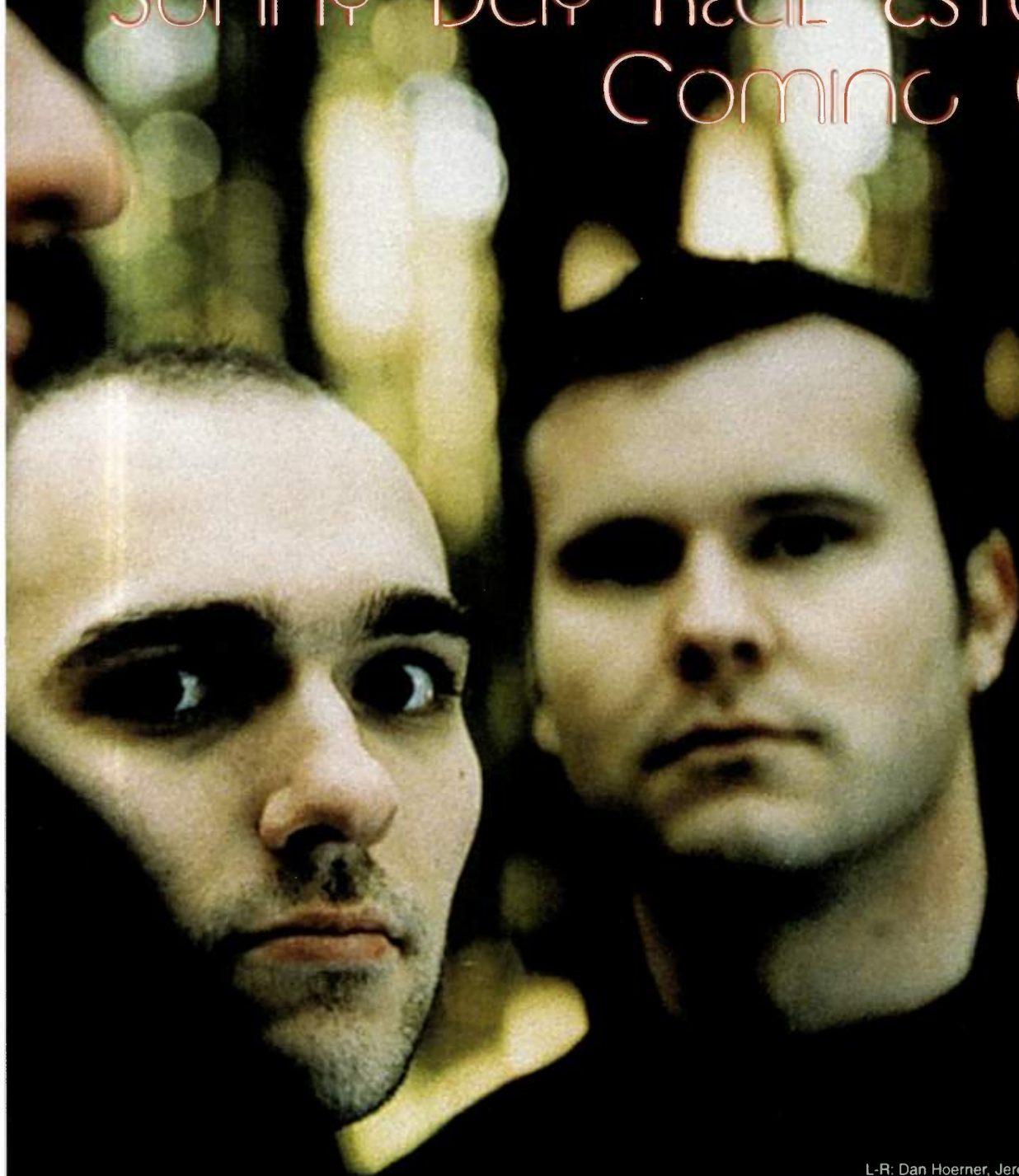
For a band that gained rabid cult status using a much different and more intensified approach, some just don't understand the change.

Sure, the difference was most visible on the band's reunion LP, *How It Feels to Be Something On*, but, as Hoerner asserts, that band was one searching for itself, re-establishing a working relationship and "trying to figure out how to be Sunny Day again." The band of *The Rising Tide* has figured this out, and its product is more focused and cohesive, albeit on a somewhat different path.

in MYSTERIOUS WAYS

BY FRANK VOLISH

SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE'S
COMING OUT



L-R: Dan Hoerner, Jeremy Enigk, William Goldsmith

"What we wanted to have was a record that we could just work and get behind, because we definitely want to expand Sunny Day's audience," says Hoerner. "We never try to intentionally direct ourselves, but, I think, as any living entity, Sunny Day Real Estate has to evolve. You can't stay a 12-year-old your whole life. You have to grow and change, experience life and respond."

Part of this has meant a lyrical departure of sorts. In the old days, Hoerner and Enigk would collaborate, both hunkering over a sound board, mind to mind. The lyrics were often internal cries of loss, hurt, pain and longing. Now, due to Enigk's increased musical role in the band (taking over bass and piano duties), Hoerner has become the primary lyricist. And his focus has turned more outward, exemplified most clearly in the commentary on societal greed, "Snibe," and the oft-misinterpreted, "Television."

"I would say that 'Television' is one of the most misunderstood songs on the record, in that a lot of people think it's a love song about a girl," he continues. "And it's not. It's about being in love with television, about the sort of collective human consciousness being attached to television and receiving its information from television, receiving its direction and essentially becoming media zombies. ('Television') is an attempt at poking fun, both musically and verbally, at that kind of sentiment. So a lot of people don't get that song, and a lot of people hate it. But I love it."

"I think it's a natural progression," says Hoerner of the lyrical change from internal to external inspiration. "A lot of my lyrics are very internal, but I can't persist as a human being in the world and see what I see and experience what I experience (without writing about it)."

Maybe it has to do with Hoerner's personal growth. Sometime around Christmas he will become a father for the first time. He's also

about to become a published author, with a collection of four short stories for adults entitled *The Little Monkey Chronicles* completed and waiting for release.

He describes the book as, "a collection of comical children's book-like stories depicting various facets of human failures and frailties as embodied by a very naughty little monkey who consistently gets himself into trouble and generally ends up paying the ultimate price."

Nonetheless, right now Hoerner is focused on Sunny Day Real Estate. His commitment to the band seems unyielding. He says the band plans to tour with *The Rising Tide* until the record breaks, however long it might take, and then follow it up with studio time and a new album. Most assertively, he talks of the band having a "seamless career."

But certain questions remain unanswered. While Hoerner is gracious, personable and infinitely talkative, Enigk and Goldsmith aren't present. While it's suggested Enigk is catching a pre-show nap due to a bad cold, he walks past several times during the interview and is found outside the bus smoking a cigarette and chatting. All this points to some lingering mystery.

But the enigmatic whole of Sunny Day Real Estate seems to become just a little bit clearer as Hoerner speaks of his Eastern Washington home, the place where he retreated after Sunny Day Real Estate's initial break. He speaks eloquently and longingly of its mixed pine and fir forests, beautiful orchards, fields and ponds.

"It's kind of my spiritual center," says Hoerner. "It's got some really untrammelled, wonderful areas that make me long for the destruction of the human race, so that entity and that consciousness which I believe is a truly living being, could somehow take over the earth again—steal it back from that fucking greedy little monkey."



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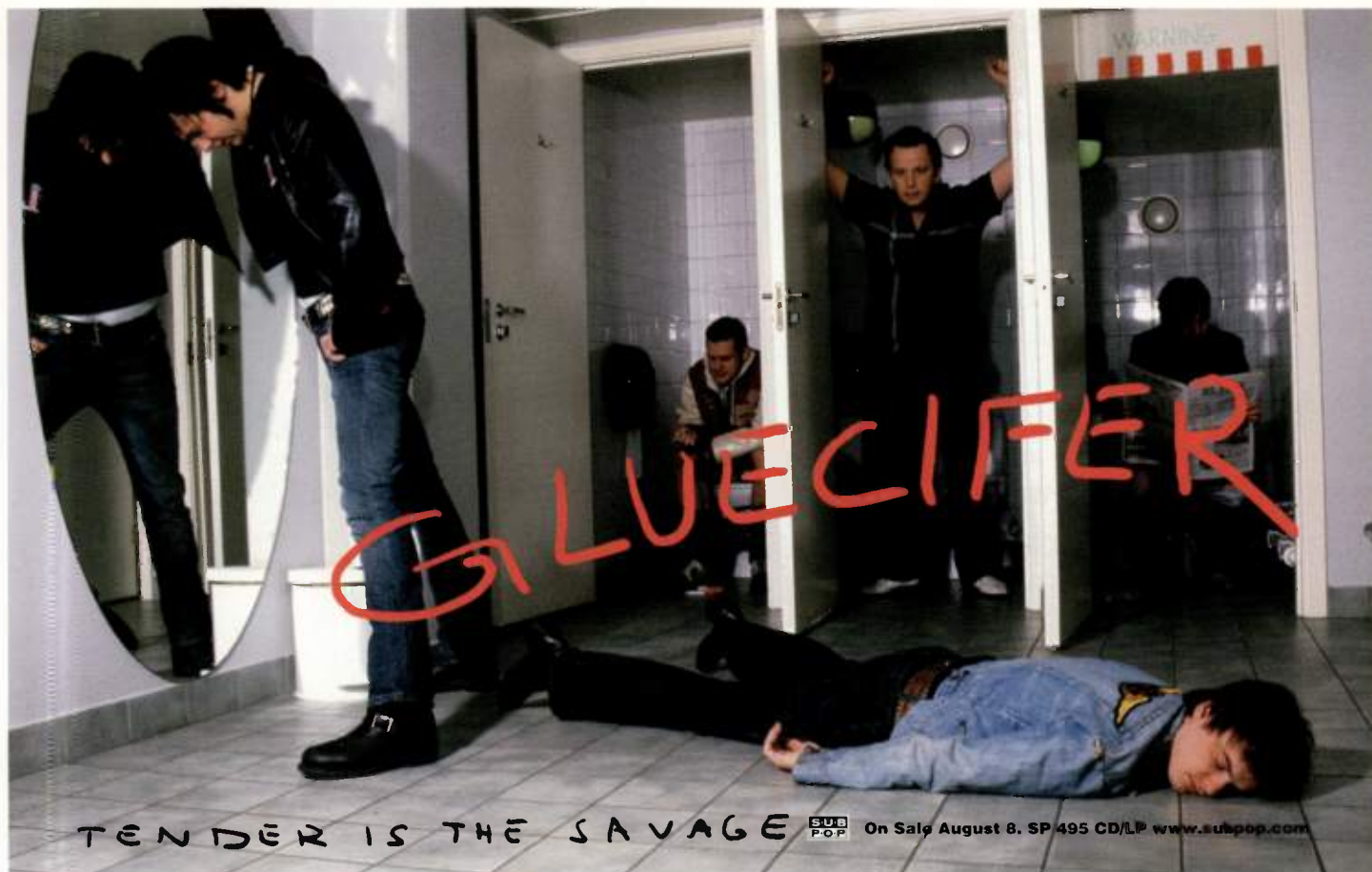


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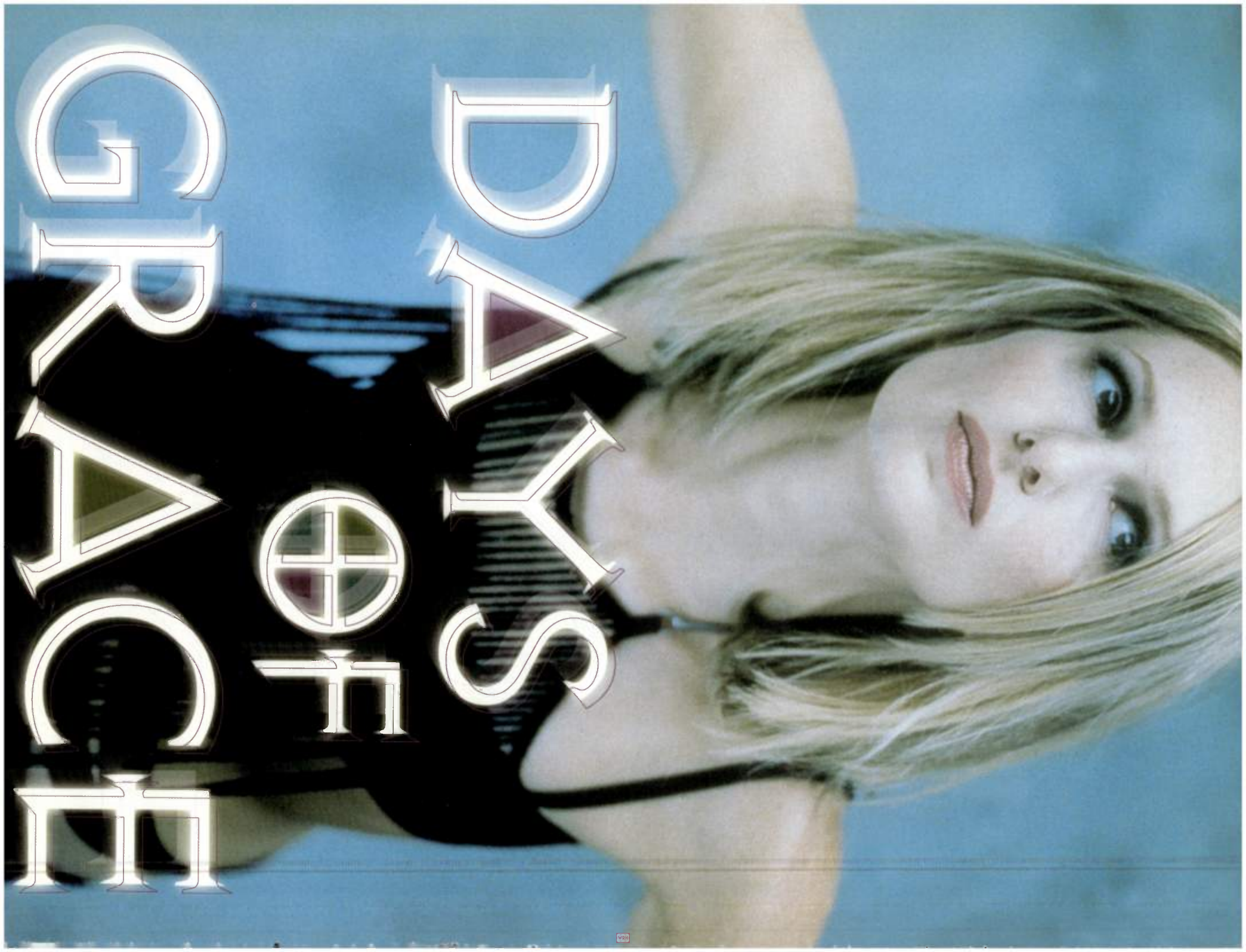
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She'll admit it later in the conversation, but it's obvious from "hello"—Nina Gordon isn't much of a morning person. Her day—spent talking on the phone with friends and fiddling on her computer—won't start until well into the afternoon. But today she's easily bypassed her better urges to rise with the rest of Chicago's working mass and talk about her solo debut, *Tonight And The Rest Of My Life*. In a matter of minutes, it's easy to pick up on Gordon's gleaming optimistic renewal as her voice shines through the phone brighter than the morning sun.

As good as it sounds, things haven't always looked so glorious for Gordon. Couple a well-publicized split with her long-time collaborator and best friend of six years with the number of times her record has been delayed, and it's a wonder Gordon even gets out of bed at all. But with the fractured friendship a thing of the past and endless delays behind her, she speaks of

Existing peacefully

with Veruca Salt

situated comfortably

in her rear-view,

Nina Gordon

discusses her journey

to creative liberation

with Chris Johns.

Tonight...—produced by Bob Rock and recorded with a round of guest musicians including Jon Brion (of Aimee Mann and Fiona Apple fame), guitarist Michael Eisenstein, bassist Scott Riebling and drummer Stacy Jones—with the affection of a new parent.

"This is a happy record. Personally, for me, by not dwelling in the past," Gordon admits. "There is only so much thinking you can do until you put something behind you. The record touches on all aspects of my past and not necessarily what I went through with Veruca Salt."

continued on page 30

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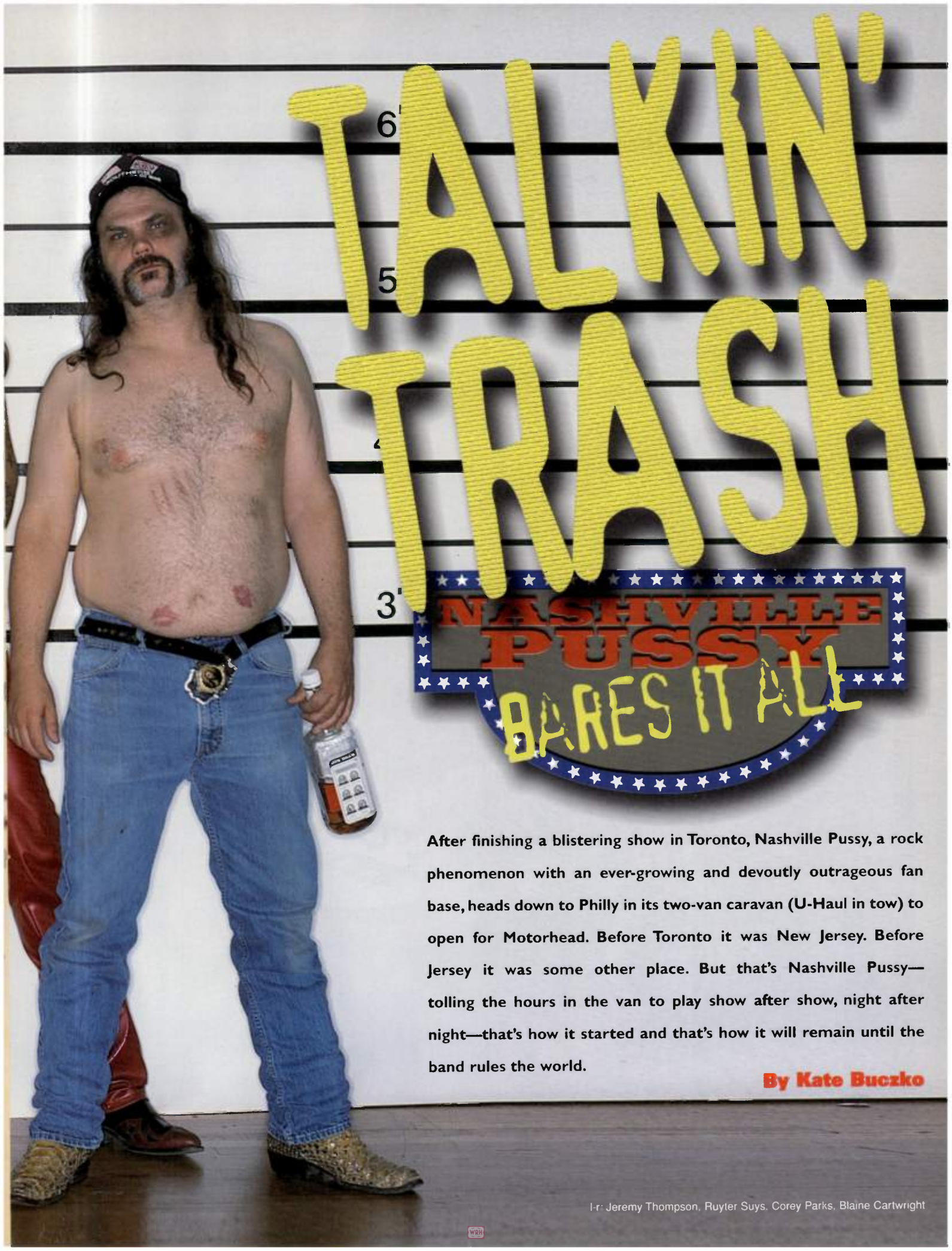


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TALKIN' TRASH

NASHVILLE PUSSY

BARES IT ALL

After finishing a blistering show in Toronto, Nashville Pussy, a rock phenomenon with an ever-growing and devoutly outrageous fan base, heads down to Philly in its two-van caravan (U-Haul in tow) to open for Motorhead. Before Toronto it was New Jersey. Before Jersey it was some other place. But that's Nashville Pussy—tolling the hours in the van to play show after show, night after night—that's how it started and that's how it will remain until the band rules the world.

By Kate Buczko

T

he band arrives at the venue a bit behind schedule—but as early as could be expected considering the miles traveled—only to find the headlining act, the infamous Motorhead, had a problem with the sound and decided not to play. At the advice of its tour manager and Motorhead's people, Nashville Pussy chooses not to unload for the show and heads directly to a photo shoot.

A lack of sleep and the disappointing cancellation have certainly marked the band. Each member wanders over to the building as leisurely and beaten down as they please. Ruyter Suys (lead guitar) seems the most enthused—sporting shredded jeans, flip-flops and a ragged t-shirt while lugging a duffel bag and a make-up case. Her wild, wavy blonde hair flaps in the breeze amidst introductions and smiles. She is followed shortly by bassist Corey Parks, who is possibly the modern incarnation of an Amazon warrior princess (screw Xena). Standing six feet, three inches tall, Parks takes her long strides without a word. Suys' husband and co-founder of the band, Blaine Cartwright (guitar/lead vocals), and drummer Jeremy Thompson are last. Long hair, dirty jeans, facial scruff—this crew looks to be the essential clientele for any respectable, hole-in-the-wall dive bar.

When these four make it upstairs to the studio, they are immediately struck by an oversized American flag hanging from ceiling to floor—the back-drop. Suys' mouth falls open as her eyes widen.

"Beautiful," is all she can muster.

She bounces around—ecstatic over the sick, suitable twist of fate—and a new life steadily seeps back into these road warriors.

Coffee, beer and smokes aid in the band's rejuvenation, but possibly the expectation of an excellent photo shoot really does the trick. Ideas start flying back and forth as duffel bags are torn open and clothes are strewn about. The girls have some decisions to make. Which pair of leather pants would go best with that flag? Which shade of red looks hotter? But one thing remains constant—off come the shirts and out come the breasts. (God bless 'em, these ladies have got nice boobs.) For the guys it's a matter of snagging

a pair of jeans and throwing on a t-shirt. There are black t-shirts as far as the eye can see, but, in the end, the difference in the men's wardrobe is barely noticeable.

For Nashville Pussy, image is everything, but the image it projects couldn't be truer to form. These rockers live hard, they party hard, they play hard—they are true bad-asses. They are not shy, they are not subtle, they make no excuses and they are not interested in any complaints—again, they are bad-asses. The band's music is about making grandmothers turn over in their graves and preachers cry "Damnation!" The band thrives on the opportunity to exude carnality, and for Nashville Pussy, opportunity poses itself with almost every move.

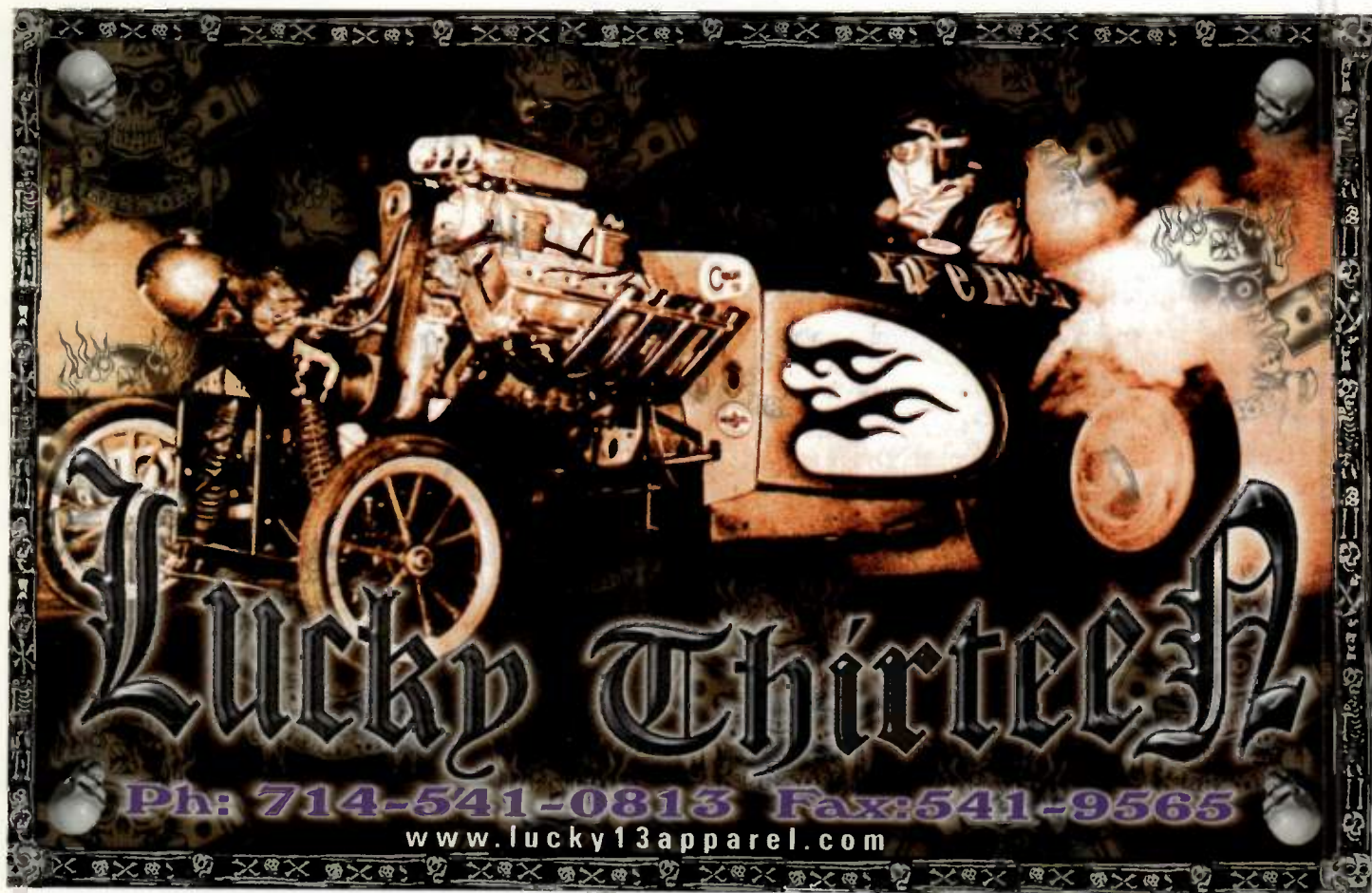
Beginning with its R-rated choice of titles for its Mercury Records debut (originally pressed by Amphetamine Reptile), *Let Them Eat Pussy*, the album cover features Suys and Parks "gettin' head" from two totally bad men. Although the band switched to TVT Records, it offered a fitting follow up with *High As Hell*, with such images as a joint rolled on the Bible, Parks giving a lap dance to Motorhead's Lemmy Kilmister while sitting in an electric chair and Cartwright as a redneck, monster truck-pull Christ figure.

"We have some really nasty ideas for the future. Our first album was sent out wrapped (because of the cover)," says Suys.

Not without compromise, the band allowed a more downplayed cover for *High As Hell*. The band wanted its albums to be spotted by fans rather than wrapped up like a dirty secret. The blush-worthy artwork was saved for inside the sleeve.

"It still went out wrapped," Suys sighs. "So fuck it."

The real shock value comes from Nashville Pussy's music and live performances. From its 1996 conception, the band has toured non-stop—logging in more than 300 shows in a 14-month span. The shows literally blaze at will, thanks to a party trick Parks picked up (think Gene Simmons' trademark fire-blowing gimmick from the mouth of a topless Amazon) and more generally to the bombastic, beating-brains-out brand of rock the band exudes. Songs like "Blowjob From A Rattlesnake," "High As Hell" and "Shoot First And Run Like Hell" are testosterone-filled cock rock laced three times over with sex. The fans are frenzied.



"There are usually two kinds of reactions to our shows. Bloody, bruised and begging for more or bloody, bruised and begging for mercy. I hope they're all bloody, bruised and begging for more. There are passengers and there are drivers. Well, I'm a driver," says Parks, perhaps unknowingly paraphrasing a Volkswagen commercial as she kicks back in her chair and applies lipstick.

But the beer-soaked, hormone-enraged fury is not without its good intentions.

"I want people to feel the way we used to after seeing a show," adds Suys. "Hot and horny. I hope everyone after our shows goes home and gets laid. Hell, I think everyone should be getting head. Two times a day. I guarantee there will be no more road rage."

Rowdy delight overcomes the band when shotguns are introduced as props for the first shots. Trades are made, hilarity commences. The let-down of not being able to play seems a distant memory with all this goofiness, but jokes still linger about Nashville Pussy being Motorhead's bitch.

"I'll be Motorhead's bitch any day," Parks answers.

She'd wear the title as boldly as she does her triangle bikini top adorned in flames.

Loyalty is a line in the sand Nashville Pussy won't cross. Its commitment to Motorhead is its first priority, and the band stands by it. There's nothing these folks would like better than to tear Philadelphia a new ass and recruit another wave of believers, but the decision is simple. However, this band is not without a heart.

"I got nothing about playing. I just feel bad about all the kids that drove cut," admits Suys sincerely.

So how does Nashville Pussy do it? How is it possible to keep it up night after night, show after show, all pretty much from the confines of a couple of vans?

"It's for the greater good of rock n' roll," says a completely serious Parks.

Then she follows up with the band's recipe for amicability, knowing not

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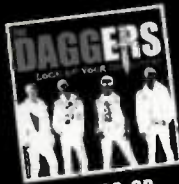
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even the noblest rocker could keep up with this band's pace on ideals alone
"We drink, we smoke pot—we smoke a lot of pot," she laughs.

A testament is Cartwright's ability to produce a half-drunk bottle of Jack Daniels for the second backdrop—a fake police line-up. (No pot, but hey, it was short notice.)

"If you want a moment to yourself, you go hang out in the toilet for about an hour. Or you just take it where you are," says Parks.

"(Blaine and I) are the easiest part of the team," declares Suys. "Unless there's drugs and women (at a party), we're outta there first. We are the rock, and they (Parks and Thompson) are the roll."

"We are the foundation on which this house of rock has been built," she adds with a sarcastic laugh.

The high really comes from being exactly where these four always wanted to be—out every night tainting the world with adulterous, obliterating rock. In the beginning, Nashville Pussy had it tough. Sleeping on floors, lugging all its equipment around in the vans, all the while touring constantly. But the band's ardent commitment made it all easier to swallow and wait.

"It was good that we were out there playing rather than sitting home waiting to hit. We just hit," says Parks.

She can pin the moment down precisely.

"When we made the cover of *Flipside*. I rode that high for months," she reminisces. "That was more exciting than seeing a tiny picture of me in *Rolling Stone*."

The shoot winds down with Cartwright and Suys heading down to the van to take a picture for *Alternative Press*. Thompson and Parks are gathering up their stuff and getting ready to head back out on the road. The band is heading up to New York for a show tomorrow, and Thompson's agenda is pretty tight—"Eat some pizza. Play some pinball."

Loyal and defiantly true to its image with stamina to spare and an appreciation for the finer things—it all might be for the "greater good of rock n' roll," but rock is lucky to have such a bad-ass spokesband. ■

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Nina Gordon continued from page 23

Gordon is best known for her pairing with fellow Chicago native Louise Post to form grunge-era favorite Veruca Salt, whose 1994 debut, *American Thighs*, featured the smash hit, "Seether." Veruca Salt would go on to release a Steve Albini-produced EP, *Blow It Out Your Ass It's Veruca Salt*, and a subsequent full-length, *Eight Arms To Hold You*, before Gordon jumped ship. She simply refers to it as a "highly-charged atmosphere." It's a collaboration she remains proud of, although the association fell apart nearly two years ago.

"I have no problem answering questions about Louise. It's something that's very much a part of my past, and you have to expect people to bring it up. I've dealt with it, and I just felt like it was time to move on," continues Gordon.

While she admits to being unaware of whether or not Post has pressed her ears to *Tonight...*, it's hard to imagine not a hint of curiosity from the latter, which begs the question—should the Veruca Salt name have died with the band?

"The curiosity dissipates in time and eventually fades away," says Gordon nearly two years after the split. "But yes, I've heard it (*Resolver*, Post's first Veruca Salt album sans Gordon.

Under a legal agreement, if one member left Veruca Salt, the other one would retain the name), but I don't consider it a Veruca Salt record at all. It's weird to see the name Veruca Salt attached without my input. I just consider it a Louise Post solo album."

"This is a happy record. Personally, for me, by not dwelling in the past," Gordon admits. "There is only so much thinking you can do until you put something behind you. The record touches on all aspects of my past and not necessarily what I went through with Veruca Salt."

While *Resolver* comes off as more of a reactionary effort, *Tonight...* exudes an inner confidence of having once stared adversity in

the face before looking right over its broad shoulder and into a confrontation-free future. The lyrical ambiguity could be misconstrued as a blatant attack on her former mate, but Gordon is adamant in explaining Post is not being the target of the cathartic 13-track album.

The exception being "Number One Camera," to which Gordon freely admits as being a reaction to life without Post as she pseudo-laments, "I remember you in Polaroid/The glitter and the glue/All that noise. I should probably sorta miss you/But I see you all the time in Polaroid... everybody knew the score/They knew they could not trust us/I could peel you like a pear/And God would call it justice." *Tonight...* breaks the original Veruca Salt mold as well by leaving the fuzz-filled rocking tracks behind for the sweet sounds of the true pop hook provided by Gordon's strong yet distinctly beautiful voice. *Tonight...* standouts include "Now I Can Die," "Fade To Black" and the title track. "I've had fans write me and say, 'You don't rock anymore, what gives?' I had a lot of those songs originally slated for the record, but they got shelved to make myself happy with the final product. I'm confident they'll grow with me," explains Gordon. "I've done the rock thing, and it was just time to move on." ■

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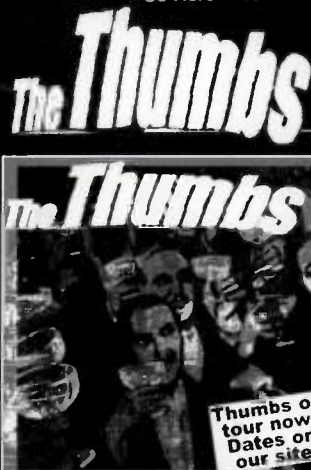


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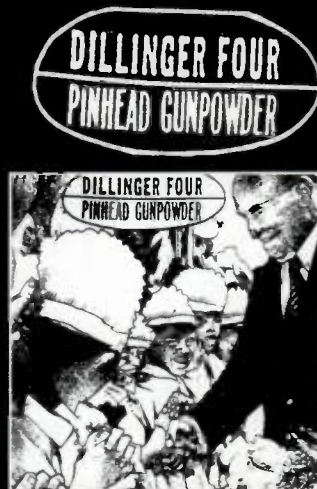
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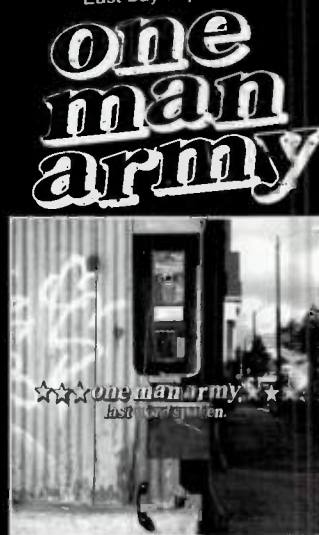
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Are Subscription Services For Internet Music Viable?

By Craig Combs

internet music

Since armies of lawyers from the most powerful entertainment conglomerates on the planet started working for the destruction of file-sharing services like Napster and Scour Exchange, which present nebulous business models at best, the quest to turn downloads into dollars is leading record labels to explore alternate realities.

In one of these alternate realities, subscription services provide copyright holders and distributors with money and provide music aficionados with a great deal on downloadable music.

In a speech to music industry executives, Island/Def Jam CEO Jim Caparone touted subscription models as the route majors would seek to gain revenue through downloadable tunes. Attempting to escape the black hole of hype surrounding Napster, Caparone did manage to dispel a few doubts about subscription service viability by painting a colorful picture of what such a model might look like. He spoke of portable players, which would work with both cars and the home stereos and could be taken to concert kiosks to download an entire concert. Other value-

added elements would be exclusive interviews, studio outtakes and videos. No time frame was given for this subscription service rollout.

In his speech before the Senate Judiciary Committees hearing, *Music On The Internet: Is There An Upside To Downloading?*, Fred Ehrlich, President Of New Technology And Business Development for Sony Music Entertainment Inc., also presented subscription services as the future.

"Subscription models allow record labels to offer tiered services in both the streaming and downloadable format to more closely match consumer preferences," he said. "These services might be delivered through a variety of playback media, including digital TVs and wireless and other portable devices. For instance, a monthly fee might allow you to enjoy all of the music and video from your favorite artist, with access whenever you want it."

Ehrlich said Sony would soon be rolling out its version of the subscription model.

While the majors wait to resolve issues of digital rights management and licensing, indie Internet music retailers, labels and destina-

tion sites are—as one might expect—taking the lead.

After getting spanked by the courts for massive copyright infringement, MP3.com is in the midst of negotiating with the majors a potentially prohibitively expensive subscription service for access to major label music. However, the file-sharing issue has MP3.com CEO Michael Robertson on the same side with the majors with subscription services as the agreed antidote.

"A subscription system has the potential to double the music business, just as cable TV grew the film business to more than double its previous revenues. It's important to note that this revenue stream is in addition to CD sales as the subscription system complements CD sales," he says.

MP3.com has launched a classical music subscription service for \$9.99 a month and is allowing its artists to create their own channels.

SpinRecords.com has launched an all-you-can-eat indie music buffet for \$4.95 a month. With its attempt to aggregate top indie bands, the site has found a niche Napster hasn't touched. Most of the music on

SpinRecords.com can't be found amongst Napster users, and the musicians are getting paid. SpinRecords.com takes 60 percent of the revenues generated by subscription fees and allocates them to the artists in proportion to the number of downloads each artist receives.

For obvious reasons, the idea of people paying for music is undoubtedly attractive for labels of all shapes and sizes. But the attraction for the consumer remains to be seen. The Internet aphorism, "Information wants to be free," certainly seems to have been applied to music. Yet music is more than just information. Even most Napster users polled have expressed a willingness to pay a monthly fee for the service.

The higher perceived value inherent in music files is the key to inducing consumers to pay. Subscription services may well evolve into the dominant model for profiting from downloadable music—a most elusive goal indeed.

Craig Combs is the managing editor for independent music sites SpinRecords.com and SomeMusic.com. He can be reached at craig@spinrecords.com.



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ROCKPILE **33**



At The Drive-In is praying to the right God.

Relying on constant touring and completely off-the-wall, uncat-egorizable rock, the band made the jump from Fearless to Grand Royal Records. In the meantime, as the band decided who would produce its newest release, *Relationship Of Command*, producer Ross Robinson (Korn, Limp Bizkit) broke down the door looking for the job. The band didn't decide on him until it was almost forced to try record- ing one song with Robinson—then it was love at first sight. And while hanging backstage at a taping for *Saturday Night Live*, Foo Fighter Dave Grohl suggested Andy Wallace (Nirvana's *Nevermind*) would be a good candidate for mixing the record. Noted pop icon Iggy Pop just shrugged and said, "OK," when he was asked to contribute vocals to a track.

Rage Against The Machine called At The Drive-In for an opening slot on a week- and-a-half tour. And the band is now set to open up for The Beastie Boys and RATM during an upcoming two-week tour. It's on the short list to play with countless bands like The Promise Ring, Jimmy Eat World and The Get Up Kids.

Making Mental Movies

At The Drive-In's Thought Opera

by Kevin Wheeler

Just imagine — this band started touring out of boredom.

"There isn't much in El Paso (Texas, the band's home- town) to do, so we just started touring and never stopped. At The Drive-In hasn't had a break since March of 1998. The band just got back from the festival circuit in England and is going back out in a week to tour behind the new album," says guitarist/pianist/back- up vocalist Jim Ward.

Relationship Of Command builds on the bizarre sounds, oddly rhythmic beats and obscure lyrics showcased on last year's EP, *Vaya*. The beginning opens with drum beats right from The Cure's "Hanging Garden" before exploding into Bixler's desperate screamed vocals. The guitarists show no remorse as the duo breaks all the rules of melody and rhythm to hack and slash their way through the song. At The

Drive-In straddles the line between punk, hardcore and progressive rock without falling into overindulgence. It would have been too easy to include long guitar solos and power ballads, so the band decided to chronicle, as best as possible, the intensity of an At The Drive-In live show. The first track is only a quick glance at the musical ride in store for listeners.

Experimentation, both in sound and theory, abounds—the band took a full two months to make the album. At one point, Ward put a walkie-talkie on his guitar, cranked the amp and recorded his back- ground vocals by singing through the bizarre device. Iggy Pop trades screams over video game-like wild bleeps and blips during "Folodex Propaganda." Constantly changing guitar sounds with no two songs sounding the same are hallmarks of the album, a feat rarely achieved in even the most overblown, expensive pop album.





L-R: Paul Hinojos, Jim Ward, Tony Hajjar, Cedric Bixler, Omar Rodriguez

Relationship Of Command also marks Ward's first steps into serious piano playing, first introduced on *Vaya*. His solid playing on songs like "Arc Arsenal" and "Invalid Litter Dept." add depth and timbre to the already well-crafted songs. His lines sound like oil poured on rough and chaotic slabs of rock. On some tracks he holds the rhythm while the guitars journey to places unheard. On others he handles the piano like he plays guitar—seething with barely contained aggression.


"Non-Zero Possibility" is the band's first attempt at creating a song wholly in the studio. It begins like the beginning of the soundtrack to a foreign barbarian film, bending its way eerily through a dark, morose territory with a layover at "Cureville" and stops for directions at "Gothtown." Consider it a dark "Bohemian Rhapsody" with a bit of "Stairway To Heaven." The song shows At The Drive-In's ability to craft entertaining, long-winded epics to rival The Moody Blues.

"It would be impossible to play it the way it is on the album live. We wanted to see how far we could push a song, so we decided to write one in the studio," says Ward.


While the music is ambitious and far-reaching, the lyrics are often obscure and impenetrable, reflecting, as Bixler puts it, "the many elements against us—our age, language barriers, hostile crowds and unfamiliar places."

He tackles topics like revolution, state-sponsored apathy and the relationship between elders in authority and disenfranchised youths. "I think the obscurity makes it interesting. We find a lot of times that kids will come up and give us totally out-there interpretations. We'll be totally blown away. People like the lyrics and the band because it isn't run-of-the-mill 'my girlfriend left me' fare," Ward says. "Those songs have been done to death, and we think it is time for a change." ■

TINA




THE DANDY WARHOLS: 13 Tales From Urban Bohemia




Where its last album, *The Dandy Warhols Come Down*, contained a lot of boring, white noise tracks, every song on this offering is an easy listen. (Capitol, 1750 Vine St., Hollywood 90028)

THE STONE ROSES: The Stone Roses




Those who like Blur (not Oasis), will undoubtedly like this 1989 eponymous release from The Stone Roses. This CD shows 13 examples of British pop at its finest. (RCA, 8750 Wilshire Blvd., Beverly Hills, CA 90211)

JOE




JIMMY PAGE & THE BLACK CROWES: Live At The Greek




OK. This stuff is like real old. And digging Led Zeppelin isn't cool for a guy who puts out a hip music rag like *Rockpile*. Too bad. Crank it up, dude. The Black Crowes turns out a crisp and ballsy effort in recreating these Zeppelin classics. Jimmy Page's explosive playing sounds like the guitar hero has sobered up a bit, as well. And even a cool rendition of "Out On The Tiles." Far out. (TVT, 23 E. 4th St., New York 10003)

FRANK ZAPPA & THE MOTHERS: Just Another Band From L.A.

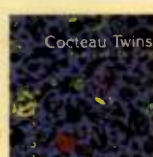


Billy was a mountain, and his girlfriend, Ethel, was a tree that grew out of his side. They decided to go on vacation, and then things got weird. Frank Zappa was the master of writing soundtracks to stories like the 26-minute opening track, "Billy The Mountain." This is just one of those CDs that should be spun a few times every year to help maintain some sort of sanity in life. (Rykodisc, Pickering Wharf Bldg. C-3G, Salem, MA 01970)

PAIGE




COCTEAU TWINS: Four Calendar Café




Who knows what they're saying—or if they're even speaking English? It doesn't really matter when The Cocteau Twins' lush harmonies and swirly guitars entrance listeners for ages, making long road trips fly by dreamily. (Capitol, 1750 Vine St., Hollywood 90028)

JULIANA HATFIELD: Beautiful Creature




Although her last album, *Bed*, didn't do justice to Juliana Hatfield's sweet, innocent voice, she redeems herself on *Beautiful Creature*, the softer side of her current two CD release. As she tends to mix the striking with the bland, for each weaker effort on the record there are gems like "Might Be In Love" and "Hotels." (Zoe, 1 Camp St., Cambridge, MA 02140)

MATT




CAPLETON: More Fire



With 18 tracks still hot from the stage of his recent tour, "The Prophet" Capleton is back again. Dancehall fans will be delighted with the majority of this album. Those into roots reggae may feel a bit left behind, but slower tracks like "Danger Zone" still explode with Capleton's righteous inferno. (VP Records, 89-05 138th St., Jamaica, NY 11435)

PAUL SIMON: The Rhythm Of The Saints



A trophy of storytelling accomplishment in Simon's career. The Brazilian tribal influence echoes the African wonder of *Graceland*, yet focuses more on percussion than vocals. A treat for everybody; just plain good music. (Warner Bros., 75 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 10019-6908)

ERIK




QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE: Queens Of The Stone Age




Josh Homme's post-Kyuss project shows something of a departure from his roots. Where Kyuss almost always went for big riffs and a Robert Plant-like screech, Queens Of The Stone Age reaches beyond the typical desert rock clichés and into the stratosphere for its sounds. (Loosegroove, 2508 5th Ave., #110, Seattle 98107)

MASSIVE ATTACK: Mezzanine



It's hard to categorize this act—one minute it seems Robert Del Naja and his cronies are purely about creating smooth electronica, the next it's a jazzy fusion of pop and dirty guitar. No matter what is attempted, the end result is invariably the same—pure listening satisfaction. (Virgin, 338 N. Foothill Rd., Beverly Hills, CA 90210)


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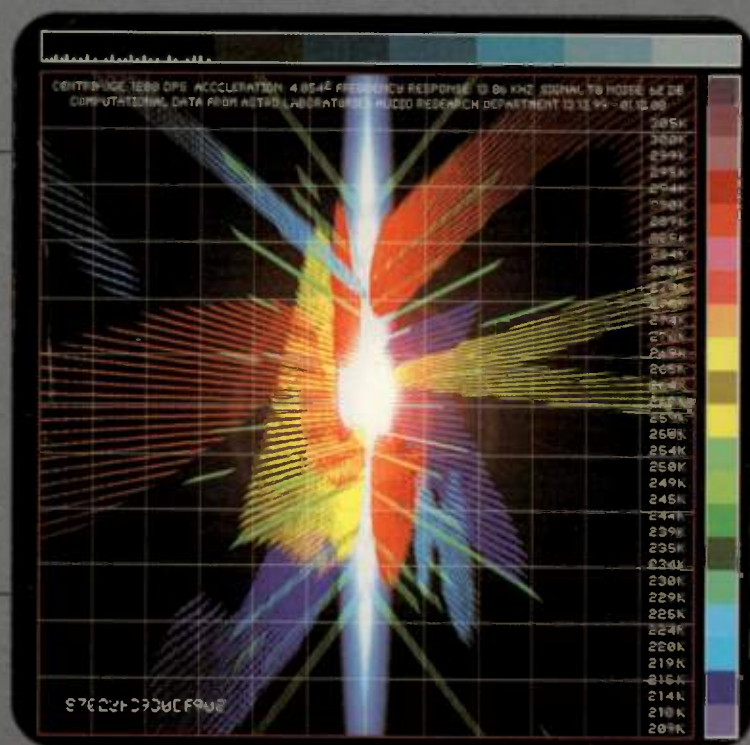
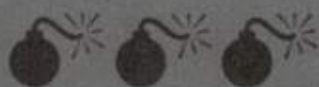
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MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?

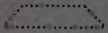
A Spectrum of
Infinite Scale



The closest thing to the sound of *A Spectrum Of Infinite Scale* can be heard by playing *Skate Or Die* or *Pole Position* on an old Atari game system. The album offers a musical time warp somewhere between the days of surfing the waves and surfing the web, but often ends up sounding more like a mid-'80s arcade game. Man Or Astroman? is adamant in stressing its unearthly origins, claiming to come from outer space and surviving its stay on earth by playing early-'60s surf rock mixed with futuristic transmissions and audio noise. One wonders how something so innovative and daring could sound so boring at times. But alas, repetitive guitar effects with interspersed screeches and clunky drum solos don't make good mood music for grooving—or eating, sleeping or most normal daily activities. What might this music best accompany? Folding paper into the tiniest possible pieces or perhaps counting to infinity. But the music must be taken with the correct degree of humor. Featuring infinitely long, incomprehensible track names and liner notes written in Hebrew, Arabic and numerical gibberish, the music certainly matches the theme. For those brave enough to venture into Man Or Astroman's space-age world of fantasy and nonsense, this album is sure to please. But more grounded listeners should be wary—it just may be a little too far out. (Touch And Go, P.O. Box 25520, Chicago, 60625)

—Paige Wolf

track listing

01. Pathway To The Infinite
02. Song Of The Two-Mile Linear Particle Accelerator
03. Preparation Clone
04. Curious Constructs Of Stem-Like Devices...
05. Um Espectro Sem Escala
06. Many Pieces Of Large Fuzzy Mammals...
07. 
08. Very Subtle Elevators
09. Within One Universe There Are Millions
10. Spectrograph Reading Of The Various Phantom Frequencies...
11. A Simple Text File
12. Obligatory Part 2 Song...
13. Multi-Variational Stimuli...

For Fans Of: Famous Monsters, Link Wray, The Ventures

Ratings: ♦♦♦♦♦ To Die For ♦♦♦♦ Highly Recommended ♦♦♦♦ Worth A Shot ♦♦♦ Better Than Silence ♦ Don't Bother

CARRIE AKRE

Home



There's a strong element of electronica weaving its way through *Home*, and Carrie Akre's breathy but powerful vocals interact with these computer-generated sounds the same way a good tennis player alternately lobs and smashes. The music has a tendency towards the atmospheric, but Akre's organic voice maintains a bluesy, almost R&B tone. This is a very modern sound, something akin to The Sneaker Pimps, but with something less of an overt pop appeal. Akre's voice is undoubtedly the best aspect of this project, and, with a slightly greater emphasis on hooks, Akre could be on her way to radio stardom. (Good Ink, P.O. Box 19645, Seattle 98109)

—Stuart Pitt

ANGEL DUST

Enlighten The Darkness



Suddenly, with a track record provided by Century Media's re-releases and fans searching the Internet for the pair of late-'80s albums, the stakes are now higher for Angel Dust. But somewhere along the way, these Germans forgot

about what it means to be a metal band. The opening track, "Let Me Live," is harder than anything off the band's last album, while "The One You Are" adds a new wrinkle, albeit briefly, in the form of female backing vocals, also sparingly evident on the piano-dominated "Still I'm Bleeding." The acoustic start to "Enjoy!" gives the false impression of a ballad (which shows up later on "Beneath The Silence"). Actually a mid-tempo chugger with synthesized strings, the ride cymbal clanks more frequently than the bell on a firetruck en route to a five-alarm blaze. (Century Media, 1453-A 14th Street #324, Santa Monica, CA 90404)

—Mark Gromen

ARAB STRAP

Mad For Sadness



Mad For Sadness is the next installment in a brief line of maudlin, emotional rancor for Arab Strap. Lonely guitar, somber rhythms and accented, spoken-word vocals about as coherent as the Gallagher brothers after a night of boozing, call out for a smoke-filled bar on a rainy day. Beneath the darkness looming all over this album, however, Aidan Moffat and Malcolm Middleton have crafted tales of lost love with a maturity

and honesty coming from fellas who've lived it. The album is dramatic, maybe melodramatic at times, and shows no fear. Arab Strap incorporates shimmering guitar and erratic cymbals ("New Birds") to shake one out of a hazy daydream and synthesizers and piano to recapture listeners into the spell ("Here We Go"). It is certainly no cure for depression, but *Mad For Sadness* could be a great accompaniment. (Jetset, 67 Vestry St., Suite 5C, New York 10013)

—Kate Buczeko

BLONDE REDHEAD

Melody of Certain Damaged Lemons



Somewhere between Alice Cooper and Siouxsie And The Banshees, Blonde Redhead possesses the rare ability to create music both enticing and frightening. The eerie mood created on *Melody Of Certain Damaged Lemons* is unique and inescapable. It lies somewhere in the mix of the songwriting, performances, arrangements and production. The songs themselves are strange stories of personal fears and emotions with evocative titles like "Hated Because Of Great Qualities" and "Loved Despite Great Faults." The per-

formances are crafty and affected, building and waning consistently to underscore and punctuate the songs. The arrangements include synthesizers, drums, guitar, bass and vocals. Plenty of open space and a certain New York desperation prevails in Blonde Redhead's music. The production incorporates a perfect amount of percussive additions and strange sounds to add to the soundscape. This album begs for repeated listens. (Touch And Go, P.O. Box 25520, Chicago 60625)

—André Bilhanne

BRAID

Lucky to be Alive



An energetic live performance from an emo/pop quartet, the 17 original tracks on this album are well-written and were performed entirely live at The Metro in Chicago. Of these songs, however, few break the four-minute barrier. Track six, "What A Wonderful Puddle," contains a great breakdown where everything ceases to reveal a quiet, soulful guitar riff. The dueling guitar and vocals of Chris Breach and Bob Nanna fuse together over the tightly knit drums and bass of Damar Atkinson and Todd Bell respectively. As

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a whole the band sounds a lot like Dinosaur Jr. on speed. It is pure adrenaline pushing these musicians to create crafty compositions. (Glue Factory, P.O. Box 404-BL, Redondo Beach, CA 90277)

—Teil Linn Wise

BLAKE CHEN

Shadow



There are a number of ways to convey an eerie, haunting atmosphere. Chen seems to draw from the best while keeping the sound provocative and beautiful. Looping drums and whispers merge with acoustic guitars and gospel choirs. Chen's vocals range from low, deep draws to melancholy harmonies. The lyrics, while pondering God and robotics, remain just as intriguing as the music. While combining musical forms and instrumentation is a tricky trade, Chen succeeds in blending them to the benefit of the listener. (WHIMusic, P.O. Box 1129, Birmingham, MI 48012)

—Paige Wolf

THE CONCRETES

Boy, You Better Run Now



Lo-fi and not terribly musically proficient, The Concretes spends a lot of

time noodling around and creating a pretty boring album. There are horns, synthesizers and the occasional harmonica, but these attempts to spice up the arrangements are way too little too late. The sleepy vocals covered with cavernous reverb are nothing short of ignorable, and the goofy guitar lines are just too bad to be cool. The compositions are just as poor as the playing, and, apart from a few moments when the band does something good in spite of itself, *Boy, You Better Run Now* is an album trying to be hipper than thou by virtue of its disinterest in anything musical. It's really just unenjoyable. (Up, P.O. Box 21328, Seattle 98111)

—André Calilhanna

THE DAGGERS

Lock Up Your Daughters



In the tradition of The New York Dolls and The Stooges, here's some leather jacket rock n' roll with punk undertones. No meaning, no point, just lots of beer and chicks. "In The Bathroom," "Let's Get It On," "She's Hot," plus 12 more tracks in the same silly, sexist tone. Vapid cock rock is a pretty strong trend these days, so no doubt this band will do well. These boys definitely have

chops, and the production on *Lock Up Your Daughters* is first rate. If the live shows hold up, The Stones have some competition. (Unity Squad, 354 W. 100 N., Logan, UT 84321)

—Mark Ginsburg

DARKEST HOUR

The Mark Of The Judas



Surprisingly, Darkest Hour attempts a hybrid somewhere between old-school Swedish death metal (belched vocals buried beneath a wall of distorted, down-tuned guitars) and hardcore, especially the quick-hitting "A Blessing In Tragedy." Imagine a growling, less technical Arch Enemy. The acoustic guitar and cello instrumental, "Pt. 2," is a nice intermezzo between eight other similar-sounding cuts. With a little more imagination/variation, things might brighten up for Darkest Hour. (MIA, 315 Church St. 2nd Fl., New York 10013)

—Mark Gromen

DAVID HILLYARD AND THE ROCKSTEADY SEVEN

Playtime



David Hillyard took a lifetime of musical influence and translated it into 53

minutes of funky ska. Jump up and dance or grab 12 cigarettes and just ride this record out sitting down. David Hillyard And The Rocksteady Seven takes the sounds of ska, reggae, bop, swing, jazz and a bit of Latin and R&B, and regurgitates it into a whole new ear. The band first hits with the sound of bop on "Sidney's March." A Coltrane influence can clearly be heard on "Playing Time" and "Sidney's Ghost" is a tribute to New Orleans' great Sidney Bechet. The band includes the likes of Mike Bitz (Mephiskapheles) on bass, trombonist Will Clark (The Skatalites), trumpeter Roy Campbell (Other Dimensions Of Music), and pianist/organist Victor Ruggiero (The Slackers). Hepcat vocalists Greg Lee and Alex Desert provide the album's only lyrics on "The Fool" and "Angry Lady." (Hellcat, 2798 Sunset Boulevard, Los Angeles 90026)

—Kevin Harris

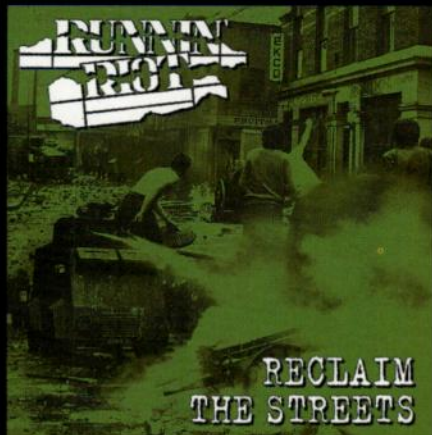
THE DELGADOS

The Great Eastern

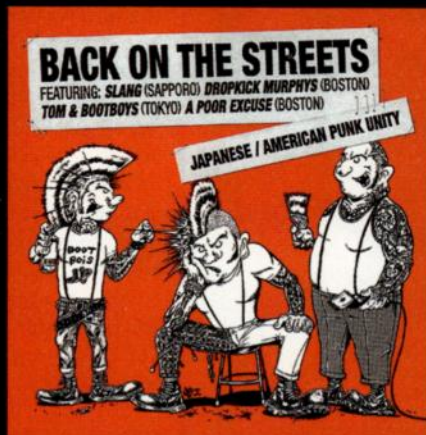


Expertly produced and ambitiously arranged, The Delgados' *The Great Eastern* incorporates accordion, strings, woodwinds, vibraphones, dulcimers and

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ROYAL TRUX

Pound for Pound ●●●

Royal Trux, the brainchild of musical couple Jennifer Herrema and Neil Hagerty, formed in 1985. After tantalizing the indie scene with three ever-changing albums, major label offers came in droves. Virgin finally won out, but it was a fleeting pairing. Now, six albums after leaving Virgin, conformity is still not in the cards for Royal Trux. The band's latest release, *Pound For Pound*, is a postcard look at the musical roads it's traveled to get to this point. Summer anthems, blues rock, cock rock—it looks like it's been a hell of a trip. Herrema is Janis Joplin meets Joan Jett, while Hagerty is Joe Cocker through Axl Rose-colored glasses. They couple finely, providing layered vocals with blood and guts. On "Sunshine And Grease," they slather jaded sex appeal thickly over Hagerty's unrelenting rock guitar. Be it a looser,

bluesy style ("Small Thief") or struttin' down-your-throat riffs ("Fire Hill"), Hagerty gets the job done with a vengeance. Adding to, if not driving, this demonstrative force is the heavy hitting drumming of Chris Pyle and Ken Nasta. They play explosively over each other, sending each track over the proverbial top. The brutal beating they inject into "Teenage Murder Mystery" sets the chest vibrating. While the outrageous, show-stopping double solo plopped right in the middle of "Dr. Gone" is a testament to their fury. Essentially, *Pound For Pound* is an album refusing to remain stagnant in fickle waters. Royal Trux has had a taste of mainstream success but found it sour at the thoughts of losing the freedom staying indie can offer. (Drag City, P.O. Box 76867, Chicago, 60647)

—Kate Buczko



track listing

- | | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 01. Call Out The Lions | 07. Blind Navigator |
| 02. Fire Hill | 08. Teenage Murder Mystery |
| 03. Platinum Tips | 09. Small Thief |
| 04. Accelerator (The Original) | 10. Dr. Gone |
| 05. Deep Country Sorcerer | |
| 06. Sunshine And Grease | |

For Fans Of:

Captain Beefheart, Royal Trux

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various other instrumentation to create an album both expansive and expressive. Add to this intelligent, creative writing, and this outfit from Glasgow, Scotland, raises itself into the upper echelons of contemporary pop. The material and production often call to mind traces of The Flaming Lips minus the unmistakable vocals. But The Delgados offers vocals with no less quirkiness, with Stewart Henderson and Emma Pollack alternating between off-setting and solo lead vocals and harmonies. The combination, like everything else on the album, is done with precision and adds to the unpredictability of the material. Many of the tracks border on epic, with string interludes, classical passages and tubular bells. This is good stuff. (Beggar's Banquet, 580 Broadway, Suite 1004, New York 10012)

—André Calilhanna

Williamson and Noah Lewis. The surprise here is the success of *Devil In A Woodpile*'s tribute. Through such classics as Johnson's "I'm a Steady Rollin Man," Williamson's "Wake Up Baby" and probably the first and greatest bad date song, Big Bill Broonzy's "Out With The Wrong Woman" (here listed simply as "Wrong Woman"), *Devil In A Woodpile* sacrifices nothing. The feeling is there, the soul is overflowing and the instrumentation—traditionals along with washboard, plumb pipe, ukulele, tuba and upright bass among others—get the job done with utmost style and flair. Even *Devil In A Woodpile* originals (and there are several) stand proudly alongside the classics. Once this album is played once, it'll stay in the CD player for months. Long live the blues. (Bloodshot, 3039 W. Irving Park Rd., Chicago 60618)

—Frank Valish

DEVIL IN A WOODPILE Division Street

●●●●●

Division Street is the sophomore long-player by Devil In A Woodpile, seeming a harbinger of a traditional blues revival. To laud this album is to laud the collected works of such forerunners as Robert Johnson, Sonny Boy

THE ELECTRIC HELLFIRE CLUB Witness The Millennium

●●●●●

Continuing its dominance of the metallic goth scene, the long-awaited release of *The Electric Hellfire Club*'s newest record is sure not to disappoint the Satan-worshipping set. Hard as solid rock and tighter than a frog's butt,

Witness *The Millennium* is every bondage gear-wearin', black lipstick-appliyin' goth boys and girl's wet dream. The theme of the album seems to be anti-God. Hell it doesn't take a genius to figure out the meaning behind "Paradise Reclaimed" or "My Name Is Legion." The songs are all hardcore dance music with plenty of metal guitar—the dark themes and four-on-the-floor beat is certain to give some parents nightmares. The band doesn't seem to be advocating overthrowing God as much as concentrating on being scary. A good thing. Slayer already marketed the hell out of that demographic. It's time to charge the band's name to The Electric Hell-Yeah Club! (Cleopatra, P.O. Box 257, 313428 Maxella Dr., Marina Del Rey CA 90292)

—Kevin Wheeler

THE FALSE PROPHETS

Blind Beches And Fat Vultures: Plantsmagoric Beasts Of The Reagan Era



Oh for the days when bands like The False Prophets were the norm on the punk rock landscape. Rising out of the smart punk era of the '80s, this retrospective collection is a reminder of how good the form can be when it's pursued with talent, energy and intelligence. Rock to the old fashioned doo-wop sounds of "Blind Obedience," an *American Bandstand* rant about our shallow culture. "Seven Deadly Sins," "Somebody React," "Baghdad Stomp," "Banana Split Republic" and many, many more sardonic, darkly witty little gems pack this disc. Pick up The False Prophets and surf to the sounds of rebellion. Damn good shit. (Alternative Tentacles, P.O. Box 419092, San Francisco 94141-9092)

—Mark Ginsburg

FU INLE

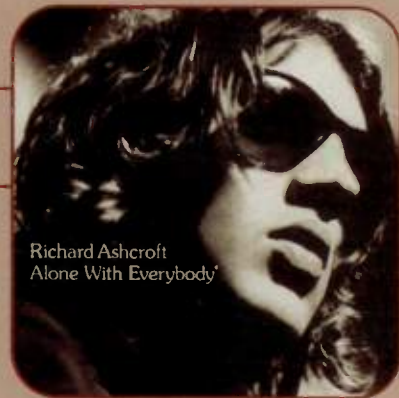
Somewhere Else



The first track on *Somewhere Else* is doubtlessly grunge-inspired, giving the impression it's straight out of early-'90s Seattle. However, after passing the second track's whiny ballad, the music becomes more promising on "Know I Don't," which shows skilled drumming against quirky guitar riffs and more pleasing vocals. Unfortunately, the album does not maintain this vibe throughout, opting for almost calculated alternations between the three styles. Despite the weaker tracks, it's worth it to fast-for-

RICHARD ASHCROFT

Alone With Everybody



Richard Ashcroft
Alone With Everybody

Who needs the rest of The Verve when Richard Ashcroft shows proficiency not only on vocals but guitars, keyboards, percussion and even Mellotron? Sounding like Bono at times and Jeff Buckley at others, Ashcroft expands his vocal range to accompany lush string arrangements. The resulting album is sensual and beautiful and often roll-around-in-the-sand sexy. "You On My Mind In My Sleep," "On A Beach" and "A Song For The Lovers" are seductive lullabies and siren songs, perfect for making out or just making breakfast. Harmonizing effect-heavy guitar riffs with soaring harp accompaniment adds to the pop appeal of tracks like "Crazy World." Ashcroft has abandoned the cynicism of "You're a slave to money then you die," replacing it with "I've got money to burn, I wanna spend it on you." Suddenly he's finding beauty in all his surroundings, from a serene beach to the slightly more bustling island of Manhattan. Maybe he found a good woman, maybe he just got laid... who cares? *Alone With Everybody* retains the gorgeous harmonies of The Verve but adds a softer, sweeter yet unsappy Ashcroft pouring his heart for the listener to drink up. (Virgin, 338 N. Foothill Road, Beverly Hills 90210)

—Paige Wolf

track listing

01. A Song For The Lovers
02. I Get My Beat
03. Brave New World
04. New York
05. You On My Mind In My Sleep
06. Crazy World
07. On A Beach
08. Money To Burn
09. Slow Was My Heart
10. C'Mon People (We're Making It Now)
11. Everybody

For Fans Of:

The Verve, Jeff Buckley

ward to the good stuff. (Revo-Groove International, 90 North Pearl St., 3rd Flr., Albany, NY 12207)

—Paige Wolf

FUTURE BIBLE HEROES

I'm Lonely (And I Love It)



Stephen Merritt is back yet again with another album chock-full of melodrama more befitting of an NBC sitcom. Just a year after the release of the three-CD set, *69 Love Songs*, Merritt has toiled away on this appropriately-titled EP with partner in crime Claudia Gonson. The newly crowned Pope Of Mope presents an album bursting with frivolous dance floor beats—thanks to the devastatingly handsome mixings of Chris Ewen—and sarcastic affectations galore. Cynical but suave, *I'm Lonely...* is a romp in the woods without a breadcrumb trail. Enter at your own risk. (Merge, P.O. Box 1235, Chapel Hill, NC 27514)

—Cynthia Gentile

F.Y.P.

Toys That Kill



More tuneful, bizarre punk rock from F.Y.P., maybe a bit more melodic than the

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Hank Williamses"
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the giraffes

"...in the tradition
of Folk Implosion,
early Beck and
Sebadoh"
—Rockpile

cash money 237

the mother hips 7

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STRUNG OUT The Element Of Sonic Defiance

Strung Out is hopped up on an obnoxious mix of punk and metal with enough progressive rock to keep things interesting. The band's constant use of samples throughout the album wears thin after a while, but the music more than makes up for it. This is hard without being overtly metal but lacking the three-chord punk rock thing. Strung Out is an odd addition to the Fat Wreck stable. *The Element Of Sonic Defiance* has more in common with At The Drive-In's *Vaya* than NOFX. What's obnoxious about it? Strung Out changes tempo and rhythms constantly and often fools the listener into thinking the damn song has stabilized. It hasn't. A definite must for punks tired of Rancid rip-offs or more punk bands ripping off The Working Stiffs. (Fat Wreck Chords, P.O. Box 143690, San Francisco 94119)

—Kevin Wheeler



track listing

01. Mission To Mars
02. Scarecrow
03. Savant
04. Blew
05. Everyday
06. Razorblade
07. Jackie-O
08. Mephisto

For Fans Of:

At The Drive-In, The Weakerthans

last record, but at the same time, a good deal louder. This band's song writing ability has improved, without a loss of simple sickness. *Toys That Kill* opens on the sweet sounds of "Where the Creeps Go," then immediately breaks up into the superfast psycho rant "Stupid's On." The lyrics are still really strange and they have a certain grade school quality. F.Y.P. always seemed to be a band made up of the kids who ate paste in the back of the classroom. Fans of F.Y.P. take note, after this album, the band dissolves, and the two remaining members will become Toys That Kill. More sickness to come, no doubt. (Recess, P.O. Box 1112, Torrance, CA 90505)

—Mark Ginsburg

THE GALACTIC COWBOYS

Let It Go

The title of the latest effort by The Galactic Cowboys suggests this might be the last we'll hear from these Texas star rangers, and it would be unfortunate if this were true. This album sees a number of internal changes. Jerry Gaskill (King's X) is now on drums and singer Ben Huggins is relegated to background vocals on the majority of the album, while bassist Monty Colvin, always the principal writer, sings seven of the tracks. Missing now is the traditional Galactic Cowboys assault, and guitarist Wally Farkas' production fails to deliver the goods. The band has always been about strange juxtapositions, layering lush harmonies over ultra-heavy riffs and a balls-out rhythm section peppered with Colvin's love for the occasional sappy ballad. This album sees the band experimenting with fewer pyrotechnics and more subtlety, and it doesn't quite work. Let's just hope there's something more to come. (Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran Street, PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065-2793)

—André Calilhanna

GLUECIFER

Tender Is The Savage

Having gained notoriety on the European music scene over the last five years, Norwegian heavy rockers Gluecifer eventually signed to American-based Sub Pop Records. The band has an energetic, high-octane sound, which is part punk, part hard rock and part solid rock n' roll. Distorted guitars, vocal hooks and aggressive riffing abound on *Tender Is The Savage*. Some of the many fine tracks on this release include "I Got a War," "Ducktail Heat" and "Drunk And

Pompous," all of which exemplify Gluecifer's no-holds-barred approach to songwriting. Best of all, the band is tight in its delivery, executing each riff and chord progression with skilled precision. Gluecifer may be relatively new on the American scene, but a recent tour with the likes of Motorhead and Nashville Pussy should give the band the exposure it deserves. With *Tender Is The Savage* in its musical armory, Gluecifer is ready to attack unsuspecting audiences with its own fierce brand of rock n' roll. Be forewarned. (Sub Pop, P.O. Box 20645, Seattle 98102)

—Domenic DiSpalao

HOME GROWN/LIMBECK

Connection

Another day, another group of heartbroken, angst-ridden rockers. But hey, this is the stuff heartbroken, angst-ridden people want to hear. The two bands featured on this record certainly come through with traditional pop/punk songs peppered with promise-breakers and fed-up relationship haters. The bands sound similar enough to be indistinguishable between the tracks, and each sounds no better or worse than the thousands surfacing in the recent pop/punk explosion. However, each band shows more than enough competence and talent to produce enjoyable music for listeners in the market for more of the same. Let's just hope these boys don't go and find requited love. (Utility, 222 Fashion Lane Suite 104, Tustin, CA 92780)

—Frige Wolf

IDA

Will You Find Me

After a brief and strikingly unsuccessful stint on Capitol Records, Ida has gone indie once again, releasing its sixth full-length album on Tiger Style. *Will You Find Me* paints an ultra-vivid scene, filled with tension, emotion and lavish lullabies. Chanteuse Elizabeth Mitchell's voice is nothing short of stellar, intricately weaving precision with beauty. Taking its name from a friend's clairvoyant grandmother, Ida has consistently proven simple talent goes farther than glitz and glamour. The band's debut album, *Tales Of Brave Iac*, is like looking through a rainy windowpane—it is innocence in slow motion. In nearly every moment, Ida spins tall tales of love and langour with a few Richard Thompson and Prince covers thrown in for good measure. *Will You Find Me* is more of the same sensual goodness, but

DOLLY VARDEN



"The Dumbest Magnets is one of the most beautiful records of the year"

- No Depression

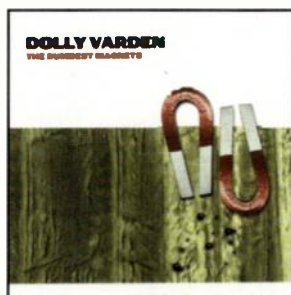
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with a mature, jagged edge. Tracks like "Maybelle" and "Past Is Past" are all-powerful and pass the time in shimmering shadows. (Tiger Style, 149 Wooster St., 4th Fl., New York 10012)

—Cynthia Gentile

IDLE HANDS

Building A Desert

Idle Hands is not what one would expect from Trustkill, a label whose name has become synonymous with aggressive, angry and progressive hardcore. A female-fronted indie rock/post-hardcore band decidedly influenced by the likes of Sleater-Kinney and Discount, Idle Hands sounds like it sailed out of the Pacific Northwest. One can even detect a trace of the defunct A Day For Honey. Idle Hands' chanteuse calls to mind a younger, more footloose and fancy-free version of Natalie Merchant. This lady is never sickeningly sweet. She asserts herself quite nicely over heady, mid-tempo guitars, proving one doesn't have to shred one's larynx to achieve emotion in rock n' roll. (Trustkill, 23 Farm Edge Lane, Tinton Falls, NJ 07724)

—Amy Sciarretto

JACKPOT Weightless



This record's title is accurate, as Rusty Miller's gentle singing and twang-steeped guitar playing are light and airy, serving as the backbone of these songs. At its best, Jackpot mimes the relaxed country-rock charm of acts like Wilco and The Jayhawks. The unpretentious "La La Land" opens the record with sleepy-eyed rhythmic strumming. Chiming guitar and Dave Brockman's tasty backbeat propel "In A Trance," while the roots-rock of "Whiskey" is ripe for a sing-along. Don't mull too long over quirky lyrics like, "If this piano is a woman I'll find myself a chair/Run the comb of my fingers through reverberating hair." The band's tight-yet-casual playing will suck in listeners. Jackpot boasts a cozy, live sound, conjuring images of hearing these tunes in a local bar, chilling over a cold beer and good conversation. Most tracks are mellow, except the disorderly "Radio Robots," which degenerates into a rocking grunge/blues jam to make Mudhoney proud. Get *Weightless* and float away. (Future Farmer, P.O. Box 225128, San Francisco 94122)

—Gregg McQueen

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"For Fans Of: Wilco, 764-Hero, Spoon" - CMJ New Music Report

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DAMIEN JURADO
Ghost of David



Neil Young and Cat Stevens (better known these days as Yusef Islam) had a child together. Or one would be inclined to believe as much after listening to the first three and final four songs on *Ghost Of David*. The creamy center of this record gets progressively experimental, culminating with the Tom Waits-inspired track, "Paxil." Minimal guitar and hypnotic drum loops provide a smooth subtext for the distorted vocals. Damien Jurado obviously has musical talent—but not in every genre. Perhaps combining his folk songwriting with some lo-fi drum n' bass would mesh better. (Sub Pop)

—Teil Linn Wise

KATAKLYSM
The Prophecy (Stigmata Of The Immaculate)



Well, at least it's not *Victims Of This Fallen World*, Kataklysm's (thankfully) Canadian-only release, which saw the purveyors of northern hyperblast adopt a Rage Against The Hardcore "socially relevant" lyrical approach. One can't explain it away, but the band's style has

definitely returned to the brutality of severe, no-frills death metal. Only the traditional metal-sounding finale, an aptly titled, "Renaissance," shows any sign of subtlety or slowing down. Protracted, gremlin-voiced sneering and baritone-throated delivery alternate within each of the nine tracks. (Nuclear Blast America, P.O. Box 43618, Philadelphia 19106)

—Mark Gromen

KILLSWITCH ENGAGE
Killswitch Engage



Like Hydrahead, Ferret is one of the small labels who never puts out a disappointing release, focusing on spell-binding quality over quantity. Killswitch Engage could very well plot Ferret on the hardcore/metal map. The Northeast foursome, which contains ex-members of the late, great Overcast, kicks off its self-titled debut with the balls-out scremfest, "Temple From The Within," and maintains the brutal, unforgiving pace until the last note of the closing track, "One Last Sunset." Killswitch Engage is relentless—its pitbull-like, pugnacious intensity never gives up or gives in. Mixing the melodic ferocity of At The Gates with the gut-churning

noise of Overcast and some well-placed breakdowns, this debut unceremoniously grabs its listeners by the nape of the neck and drags them along a path of guitar carnage, maniacal growls and beautiful, quirky, clean vocal passages. In some instances, this even calls to mind Poison The Well with less of an emo vibe. Tense, front-loaded metalcore at its most uncompromising. Start beating the piss out of your neighbor to "Irreversal," "Prelude" and "Into The Unblind." (Ferret, P.O. Box 4118, Highland Park, NJ 08904)

—Amy Sciarretto

KING DIAMOND
House Of God



Former Mercyful Fate vocalist King Diamond has forged a reputation for writing epic, horror-style concept albums set to dark, atmospheric metal music. Diamond's latest work, *House Of God*, is the story of a man whose journey leads him to discover an ancient church, revealing the shocking, supposed reality of Jesus Christ. Both the vocals and the instrumentation are used to great dramatic effect, conveying an ominous mood and luring the listener through the music's subtleties

and nuances. As with a concept album, *House Of God* demands more than a mere casual listen. It is the musical equivalent of an epic movie, which requires the individual's undivided attention to fully absorb the story. Such an effort will be well rewarded, as the listener will be treated to a thought-provoking, shocking tale set to an hour of quality metal music as only King Diamond can effectively deliver. Turn out the lights, ignite the candles and enjoy the ride. (Metal Blade, 2828 Cochran St., PMB 302, Simi Valley, CA 93065-2793)

—Domenic DiSalvo

LAWRENCE ARMS
Ghost Stories



Watch out, the garage punk band down the street has made a record, and it's actually good. Lawrence Arms is the greatest band name in the world—it's so lame. Musically, the band tries to rip off The Dwarves and Rancid. Too cool! Some songs are hit-or-miss—"Turnstyles" could have leaped from almost any Weston B-side, but the band redeems itself with the off-sitter and bizarrely named "Asa Phelps Is Dead." "Here Comes The Neighborhood" is



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AUGUST 2000

more like the rock punk popular—a wall of distortion and a catchy hook. Not bad. The bassist has his treble turned way up and is a very credible player. He overplays at all the right spots and holds the bottom together. With a few more releases and a few more years, Lawrence Arms could be ready for the big leagues. Good luck. (*Asian Man*, P.O. Box 35585, Monte Sereno, CA 95030-5585)

—Kevin Wheeler

LIFETIME Seven Inches



Who didn't love the dearly departed Lifetime? Certainly not all the kids who fostered a cult-like worship of the now-defunct *Mid Dynamite*. A gift for all Lifetime addicts, Temperance Records is releasing the revered pop/punk dynamo's seven-inches, all collected on one neat tightly packed album. It will close all gaps in any fan's collection. Here, addicts can revel in Lifetime's cover of Embrace's "Money," along with "Ferret," "Starsixtynine," "Amperсанд" and "Dwell," just to name a few. It's like Lifetime never left. (*Temperance*, P.O. Box 556 Somers Point, NJ 08244)

—Amy Sciarretto

MAZINGA PHASER Dissatisfied Customers of Hallucination



While the liner notes refer to the fact this is Mazinga Phaser's third album, *Dissatisfied Customers Of Hallucination* sounds like a basement effort by a very green band. The songs ramble endlessly with no direction and no semblance of order. The vocals are sophomoric at best, with melody lines sounding like works in progress in a very limited range. The rest of the band doesn't do much to help, as the musicians seem content to noodle and flounder, making noises just for the sake of it. The sound is lush, with the musicians just strumming chords and bashing away more often than not. It simply doesn't have any continuity or meaning, and it isn't an interesting listen. (*Idol*, P.O. Box 720043, Dallas 75272)

—André Calilhanna

NERVE AGENTS Days Of The White Owl



When Nerve Agents first hit the scene years ago the band presented itself as a Youth Of Today sound-alike. The singer was like a third generation Ray Cappo. However, *Days Of The White Owl* showcas-

es a markedly different Nerve Agents. The quartet has steered itself onto a more rough-necked, rowdy, gutter punk rock path. It's a welcome, fun change. The vocals are bratty and adenoidal, while the fast n' sassy riffs strut their stuff. The band has adopted a spooky, Misfits-type image, sporting eyeliner and make-up. Nevertheless, the spirit of Dag Nasty/Black Flag punk weighs in the air. Start a barroom brawl with "Off Come The Blindfolds," "Your Warning" or just about any track on this kick-ass collection. (*Revelation*, P.O. Box 5232, Huntington Beach, CA 92615)

—Amy Sciarretto

THE NORTH MISSISSIPPI ALLSTARS Shake Hands Wit Shorty



The sons of notable Memphis producer Jim Dickinson, Luther (lead vocal, guitar) and Cody Dickinson (drums) collaborate with big bad bass man Chris Chew to form The North Mississippi Allstars. This debut album is a tribute to such Mississippi blues legends as Junior Kimbrough, R.L. Burnside and the still-kicking-at-92, five-and-drum musician Otha Turner. These sons of the Delta reinvent the sounds of short hills country-funk into an echo of

their own. The first single, "Shake 'Em On Down" has a great bar beat translating well to drive-time radio. Tracks like "Drinking Muddy Water" and "K.C. Jones (On The Road Again)" give the record the sound of old with a taste of new. And "All Night Long" is the perfect ending to this mellow, smokey evening. (*Tone-Cool*, P.O. Box 276, Newton, MA 02459)

—Kevin Harris

ONE KING DOWN Gravity Wins Again



The questions about One King Down's *Gravity Wins Again* were running thickly before it came out. Would the Albany, NY, band stick with the gritty, noisy, Converge style of metal marking 1999's *God Loves, Man Kills*? Or would OKD return to the more traditional, Snapcase-style hardcore of its earliest work since prodigal son singer Rob Fusco returned to the fold? Not ironically, *Gravity Wins Again* is an amalgam of both styles. Fusco has stepped into his old role of frontman rather seamlessly, and OKD charges forward with a fast, boisterous guitar sound. Fusco's layered vocals alternate between barks and high-pitched singing. There are still

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As commercial radio gets more unlistenable by the minute, Under The Radar gives the scoop on some fabulous records destined for relative obscurity. Don't miss these!



The guru of crimson and clover rock, John Dragonetti, is back on the nehru-jacket-and-love-beads scene with a new CD. *Soft Songs LP: Aviating* is Jack Drag's first Sugarfree Records sonic venture since the band's former label got swallowed up by a black hole in space. ...*Aviating* finds Dragonetti—now flying solo—returning to the more psychedelic sounds of *Unisex Headwave* and earlier Jack Drag records, spawned from this four-track maniac spending too much time alone in his bedroom. Bluntly put, ...*Aviating* kicks some

paisley-patterned ass. An homage to the doomed major label deal, "We Could Have Been Big"—where Dragonetti tosses out the lyric, "We could have been more popular than Jesus Christ"—shines brightly among this collection of gems. As to the fates of fellow former Drag-sters, bassist Joe Klompus is touring with Tracy Bonham's band, and drummer Jason Sutter has relocated to Los Angeles after touring with Ben Lee. Dragonetti recently scored the music for a Volkswagen commercial and says the next Jack Drag record will be a collaboration with Dan The Automator (of Handsome Boy Modeling School). Pink Floyd meets De La Soul, perhaps?



Admiral Twin is the Frankenstein monster of a rock band one might get by crossing the cheek-ily sub-

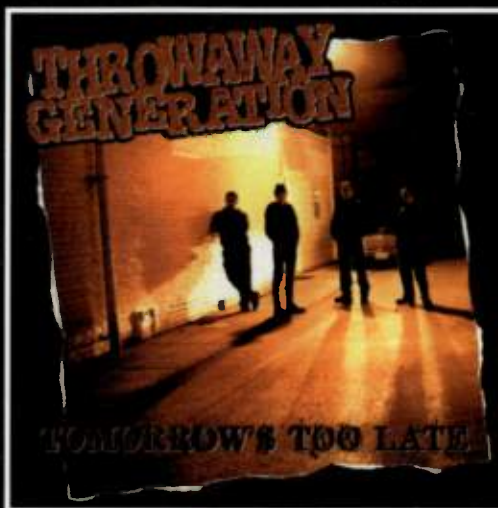
versive Brit pop of Supergrass with the dark-underbellied intellectualism of Better Than Ezra. An excess of naked talent is clearly present on the Mojo Records debut, *Mock Heroic*. Submitted for approval, the transcendent "Better Than Nothing At All"—a sort of open-handed slap in the mouth disguised as a love song, ambitiously combining Squeeze-esque harmonies, pre-Messiah-complex Bono vocals and the riff from Blondie's "One Way Or Another," all wrapped up in a sing-along refrain. Laundry list of influences aside, this Oklahoma quartet creates real songs rather than just recycling the flavor of the moment and glooping on whiney synth loops. Imagine if The Monkees possessed the songwriting talents of The Beatles, and one can see why *Mock Heroic* is a strong contender for a slot among the year's top 10.



The members of Norway's The Euroboys have worked hard to cultivate a bad-boy image in the underground press, while picturing themselves smoling in the boys' room with Swedish tattooed-biker-gang counterparts like The Backyard Babies and The Hellcopters. On 1999 *Man*, however, the band has more in common with softer-touch retro-garage bands like The Brian Jonestown Massacre or The Forty-Fives. Gently blurring the boundaries between the best aspects of stoner rock and the "Parents, lock up your daughters" fierceness of the groups mentioned above, this four-song EP on Man's Run Records is just a taste of The Euroboys' fluid style, putting the band on equally high ground with slow, intense rockers or sublime, surf-style instrumentals. Also recommended, last year's *Long Days Flight Till Tomorrow*.

Both bands on tour this summer

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RECORDS

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breakdowns aplenty, as evidenced by the urgent title track and the rock n' roll vibe of "Poison What You Give." OKD still pens thoughtful posicore lyrics. Also included here is OKD's long out-of-print, elusive *Absolve E*. In essence, *Gravity Wins Again* is a schematic of the full evolution of this band. (Equal Vision, P.O. Box 14, Hudson, NY 12534)

—Amy Sciarretto

POLE

3



Four minutes into Pole's latest, *3*, and listeners might begin to wonder if there is something wrong with the disc. In actuality, it is an experiment with interference. Stefan Betke, the man behind Pole, uses a defective analog sound filter to create irregular rhythms full of interference or noise. Then he runs them in repetitive loops. The result is one long, eight-track song. The album, written and produced by Betke, is defective at best. To the ear, it is scratchy and skippy, all the while laying the groundwork of what could be a song. Unfortunately, it never builds. With titles like "Silberfisch," "Berfahrt" and "Fohlenfutz," they might as well translate

to a soundtrack for really dull moments in a foreign film—"Ivan Walking," "Helga's Gas" and "Gorby Sneezes"—it's about all the excitement one can expect. (Matador, 625 Broadway, New York 10012)

—Kate Buczek

PORTASTATIC

Del Mel, De Melao



Although recent activity on the Superchunk front has kept frontman and record industry mogul Mac McCaughan from his Portastatic duties, this five-track EP is a perfect reminder of just what he can do with a little raw inspiration. *Del Mel, De Melao* is McCaughan's take on work by Brazilian artists Caetano Veloso, Gilberto Gil, Arnaldo Baptista, Gail Costa and Joyce. He became aware of these artists while on tour in the South American nation seething with musical creativity. Presented mostly in their native Portuguese with English verses inserted only where the translations truly worked, the EP is an amalgam of tastes and styles. This is anything but a cover album. Without a doubt a perfect accent to any summer night, Portastatic's foray into the multi-national cha-cha is a rousing success. (Merge)

—Cynthia Gentile

THE PROSTITUTES

The Prostitutes



Oh yeah, The Prostitutes kick ass! This self-titled CD is packed with thick, buzzy rockin' punk with simple, straight-ahead lyrics and a fuck you attitude. This is no cure for cancer, but it will get the feet movin'. While there is some social commentary here, it's less of the intellectual sort and more of the screw you variety. Songs like "Fucked Up In The USA" and "Youth Riot" carry a simple message—things are wrong and it sucks. Kevin McGovern's vocals are tinged with anger and boredom, sneering along with the driving guitars of Justin Haley and Brian Shuey. Bassist Dave Cohen and drummer Jeff Peterson give all the songs a nice, heavy, dark underbelly. Good stuff. (Pelado, 521 W. Wilson #C103, Costa Mesa, CA 92727)

—Mark Ginsburg

QUEENSRYCHE

Greatest Hits



Seattle's Queensryche has been releasing quality hard rock since the early '80s. *Greatest Hits*, the band's first compilation release in its 18-year existence, demon-

strates how well the band has survived amidst the changing musical climate of the '80s and '90s. The album opens with "Queen Of The Reich," the band's signature tune from 1982. There are several tunes from each of Queensryche's subsequent albums, including heavy rockers like "Take Hold Of The Flame," "Eyes Of A Stranger" and "Empire." Also included are the dreamy "Silent Lucidity" and the haunting "The Lady Wore Black"—both became standard encores in the band's live set. Two bonus tracks round out the album, including the unreleased tracks "Chasing Blue Sky" and "Someone Else?" The latter, which originally appeared on 1994's *Promised Land* as a piano ballad, features a full band performance as well as alternate lyrics. *Greatest Hits* is a living testament to the enduring talents of this often-overlooked gem of a band. Discover what has captivated the many dedicated Queensryche fans for almost two decades. (Virgin, 338 N. Foothill Rd, Beverly Hills 90210)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

THE QUEERS

Beyond The Valley



Joe Queer is one angry, angry dude. If *Beyond The Valley* were a movie, it

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VAGRANT RECORDS

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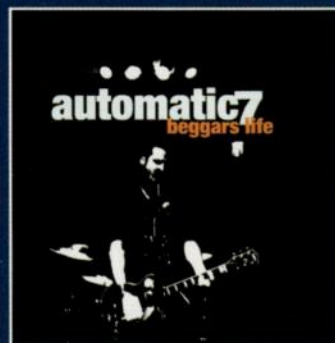
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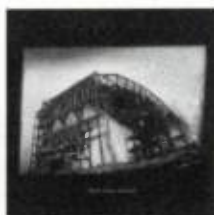
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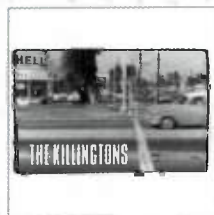
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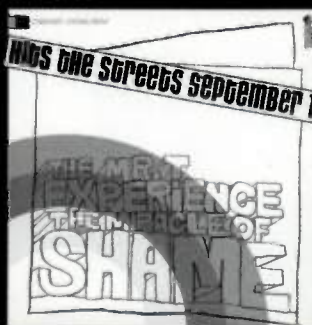
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7" reviews

by Mike McKee

BELL

Vi al Love/Unshockable



Excellent, excellent party music. This is the band that comes and plays at a dingy basement show and just blows everyone away. Clever, mid-tempo grooves and messy, harmonized male/female vocals are sewn together around well-written rock tunes. Simply a fun band with great post-punk sensibility and attitude.

(Yeah It's Rock, P.O. Box 85775, Seattle 98145)

BACK ARMY JACKET/ AGOTHOCLES



It's almost impossible to tell these two bands apart. Maybe this is why they're both on the same record—

they're virtually interchangeable. So how do they both sound? Fast as hell, with growling vocals reminiscent of Brutal Truth and most cool grindcore.

(Deaf American, #3 Bethel Church Rd., Dillsburg, PA 17019)

THE GRISLY GHOSTS OF GUY

I Am The Haunted



Horror punk never had it so good. Granted, this stuff sounds like it might have been recorded in a shoebox, but, dammit, this is pretty fuckin' good. Mikie, the band's vocalist/guitarist, sounds the way Glenn Danzig wishes he did in his midget dreams. Side one's "I Am The Haunted" is a future classic with all the trappings of grisly punk—all that's missing is a

theremin. Side two's "Hung Up On You" has a little more of a '60s vibe in the guitar's surfy fuzztone, like The Yardbirds or the like. Keep this one. (Bronx Cheer, PO Box 13, Glasgow, Scotland, UK G128YT)

THE HIGH SCHOOL ROCKERS

The High School Rockers



Is this playing at the right speed? Yep. 45 rpm. Fuck, what's up with this band? This shit is good, but man, get into a studio with at least one microphone instead of a pair of headphones taped together. The sound is basic, like amped-up '50s rockabilly filtered through snotty punk. Oh... It was recorded at The New Wave Hookers' headquarters. That explains everything. A good song is a good song, and this slab

has four of 'em. But it's really hard to appreciate them with a recording this poor. (Alien Snatch, Moerikeweg 1, Uppergruppenbach, Germany 74199)

THE HUDSON FALCONS



Working-class music for working class drinkers. The Hudson Falcons is all about Irish pride, heavy drinking and serious Oi!. This release finds the band somewhere in the realm of The Dropkick Murphys with a bit more panache than The Falcons' New England bretheren. Sing-along bar anthems are always fun, and these guys take this saturated style to a new level.

(Headache, P.O. Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432)



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straight from the edge

by Amy Sciarretto

New Rising Sons is a band featuring Drew Thomas (formerly of **Into Another** and **Bold**) and Garrett Klahn (ex-**Texas Is The Reason**). Ignore the hardcore/emo/post-hardcore pasts of the members. Its EP, *Thieves And Angels*, is completely Brit-poppy without an ounce of angst or breakdowns. But that doesn't mean it's not good. It's excellent. Look for it on **GrapeOS Records**... Speaking of post-hardcore greats, former **Quicksand** bassist Sergio Vega has released a solo EP titled *The Ray Martin Sessions*. Again, not what one would expect given his past, but definitely worth a listen for those who've grown disenchanted with hardcore and like pensive singer/songwriter stuff... Guitarist Walter Cardenas has left **Inhuman** and has joined a new band called **Flat Earth Society**, which has been likened

based post-hardcore band with a sound like **Sick Of It All** mixed with **Jawbox** and **Snapcase**... **Ignite** frontman Zoli Teglas is doing a side project with **Ignite** bassist Brett Rasmussen. These guys released a demo simply titled *Zoli*, and the songs are a far cry from the fast-paced punk hardcore of their main band. The compositions are acoustic, rummative and utterly beautiful, with lyrics addressing various women and relationships. It's gorgeous, poppy and thought-provoking... The working title of **Vision Of Disorder's** new album is *Sunshine*. Don't know what label will release it, but the titles of some killer demos are as follows—"On The Table," which features a crushing breakdown, "Regurgitate," "Itchin' To Bleed" and "Don't Let Me Down," which is a Twisted Sister cover. It's all

about Strong Island... The **Movielife's** *Revelation* Records debut is titled *This Time Next Year* and will be available in October. A full tour with **Kill Your Idols** is in the works... **Revelation Records** will also issue a one-off EP by punk rockers **The Explosion** in October... It's rumored exiled **One King Down** frontman Jon Peters has a new band called **Spark Lights The Friction** and it's got a total **Quicksand** vibe. He doesn't scream a la **Converge** like he did with **OKD**—he adopts a clean, high-pitched vocal style. Ironically, the rumored reason recently returned **OKD** frontman Rob Fusco was booted from the band in the first place was because his vocals were shifting to a more high-pitched style. Jeez, wait a



to **Ignite**, **Bad Religion** and **Pennywise**. **Inhuman** is looking for a replacement axeman at this time... **Downset's** demos are kick-ass. Some titles are "Fallen Off," "Check Your People," "Coming Back," "Chemical Struggle," "Together," "No Home," "Which Way," "Tear Us Apart" and "En Al Agire." The Los Angeles band still has the groove-metal-hip-hop-hardcore thing down, but the guitar riffs are more sludgy and **Black Sabbath**-inspired. It's excellent! Can't wait to hear how the finished product, tentatively titled *Check Your People*, turns out... **This Year's Model** is a Long Island, N.Y.,-

tangled web the Albany, N.Y., hardcore kids weave... **Will Haven** singer Grady Avenell sings with **The Deftones'** frontman Chino Moreno on the track, "Pain," from **Soulfly's** sophomore album, *Primitive*, which rocks hard and still sounds like early **Korn**... Everyone is talking about **God Below** after its *Hell Fest* performance. The band features former **Earth Crisis** guitarist Kris Wiechmann and sounds like **Bloodlet**, **Crowbar** and **All Out War**. The band's album is called *Painted Images With The Blood Of...* ■

RECORDS

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would also have "This time... It's personal" underneath the title. Queer is back with a new line-up and an even more cynical take on everything. Everything. "It's all about the money/It's all about the money/When you are beyond the valley of the fuckers," he deadpans during the song "Theme From..." Twenty years in the music biz have taken their toll, and Queer is ready to burn a few bridges with songs like "Little Rich Working Class Oil-Boy," "Stupid Fucking Vegan" and at least two songs with the word "cunt" in the title. Walmart might have a few problems with distributing *Beyond The Valley*. He even rips into *Maximum Rock N' Roll* several times! The music is more aggressive than previous efforts, kind of like the speed the Ramones played live rather than the speed the band played on its records (a difference of about 100 BPM). The music itself hasn't changed much, The Queers is still about the Ramones-meets-The-Beachboys minimalist punk with one-note leads. Joe Queer makes music for himself and no one else. Buy it or don't buy it. He'd still be putting out music even if he had to record it on a boombox. (Hopeless, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91409)

—Kevin Wheeler

REPTILICA

Crome Feather Future

As the twisted spawn of Ed Creagan, Reptilica breaks all the rules on this soundtrack to the bizarre. "Caminante" begins with unusual percussion noises and eases in piano and sampled female vocals, then culminates with Sonic Youth-inspired guitar feedback. "Drive To MN" mixes surfy guitar twang with a droning accordion, while "Autobot" is a funky techno instrumental. No single style is apparent here—clearly, it's anything goes. Often, Creagan seems to be producing sounds from any noise-making device he can find. Most of what he comes up with is pretty good, though the instrumental tracks are better due to Creagan's often paper-thin voice. "Eyeball Room" intrigues with astute guitar rhythm, and "Queen Of Luxury" emotes a '60s folk feel. Reptilica sounds extremely weird, yet somehow the music all seems to fit together, and repeated listens are assured. Is Creagan simply some hack to let loose in a studio or an eclectic genius with an innovative knack for blurring musical boundaries? Likely, the answer is a little bit of both. (Lens, 3023 N. Clark St., Chicago 60657)

—Gregg McQueen

RICH CREAMY PAINT

Rich Creamy Paint

Rich Creamy Paint treats the listener to bright blasts of energetic guitar-based pop executed with a light, carefree abandon. The opening track, "You're a '10,'" which is also the first single, leaves a good first impression of the basic style on this self-titled debut. Alas, it doesn't paint the entire picture of what Rich Creamy Paint has to offer. Songs like "I Found Love" and "Happy Days" feature a four-piece string section, along the lines of older Smashing Pumpkins material, while songs like "Telephone Number" conjure up the approach of The Foo Fighters. There's an interesting mix of material on *Rich Creamy Paint*, and the diversity of styles prevents the album from becoming repetitious and predictable. Even more compelling, the entire band is the brainchild of a 19-year-old singer/songwriter named Rich Painter. If Painter is capable of writing material of this caliber at his age, what's he going to sound like when he becomes a seasoned pro by, say, the age of 25? The mind boggles. (Hollywood, 500 S. Buena Vista St., Burbank, CA 91521)

—Domenic DiSpaldo

RIVER CITY HIGH

Forgets Their Manners...

River City High's five-song EP starts promisingly enough with "Gone Sour," a punchy guitar rocker sounding a bit like The Foo Fighters but holding its own enough to be a single. From there, River City High falls off the cliff. The band sounds like an Offspring cover band trying to write its own material. It's awful. The band is still driven by guitars, but the shouting/screaming of the vocalist takes center stage and pushes the band from being merely derivative to downright unlikable. Even the clichéd band photo at the diner is old. The band just can't make its case, and *River City High Forgets Their Manners* should gracefully fade into obscurity until the band figures out its identity. (Big Wheel Recreation, 325 Huntington Ave #24, Boston 02155)

—André Calilhanna

RUN DEVIL RUN

Sinking Deeper

Run Devil Run features former members of The Spudmonsters and In Cold Blood (which featured former members of Integrity, now known as Integrity 2000—but don't get knotted in the whole who-what-when mess). *Sinking Deeper* is a document of old-fashioned, early '80s-

style hardcore. Those who yearn for the days when The Bad Brains, classic Agnostic Front and The Cro-Mags reigned supreme will love Run Devil Run, with its talk-singing vocals, minimal production, Doc Marten stomp-downs, singalongs and posicore lyrical bend. (Victory, P.O. Box 146546, Chicago 60614)

—Amy Sciarretto

SACRED STEEL

Bloodlust

The lightning rods of the resurgent power metal scene are back with a third helping of Manowar-inspired titles about "metal," "blood" and "steel." Combine the trio of words into a relatively coherent description and Sacred Steel has probably used it—if not, there's always the next album. While critics lambast Gerrit Mutz' attempted singing, most still enjoy the music. In fact, when Mutz is absent, Sacred Steel demonstrates a good grasp of the territory. These hackneyed lyrics form a Medieval story, although a concept album is a tough sale when the public can't stand the orator. "Metal Is War" is quicker and harder-edged than the surrounding tracks. Sacred Steel should dump Mutz, find a real singer and probably rise to international acclaim. Seems simple enough. (Metal Blade)

—Mark Gromen

SIN

Noisy Pipes Lovely Noises

Sacre bleu! French industrial/techno outfit Sin claims it's out to conquer America with some "lovely noises," but there's nothing pretty about the haphazard beeps, squawks and beats here. Sin stumbles out of the gate with "Painful," lost in a perplexing melange of keyboard noises as an annoying robotic voice barks, "I'm the sex you'd ever feel, it gives you everything you'd ever want to have." "The Launch" boasts straightforward singing by Franck Renou and more sensible techno pulsations, but the tune fails to generate any steam. "Stolen Gestures" is more like it, as live drums mix with a swirling electronic landscape and some added guitar chaos by Damien Barquero, but things quickly go downhill again from there. A study in monotony, "Ambient1" repeats the same rumbling noises for more than eight minutes, and "Hard Pain" duplicates the sounds available in any industrial plant. This is barely more entertaining than factory noise. (Koch, 740 Broadway, New York 10003)

—Gregg McQueen

CURT SMITH

Aeroplane

Ever wonder what happened to former Tears For Fears singer Curt Smith? Well, he's back with this EP featuring four original songs and two remakes of Tears For Fears classics. Smith intends to combine a variance of musical elements on his compositions, but to no real avail. The title track skips along to a jazzy beat, broken up by anthemic choruses and a squealing talk-box guitar solo, but the result is awkward and uninspiring. "Where Do I Go" is a stark, brooding number simply inducing yawns. The dreadful "Snow Hill" is pure bossa nova, sounding as if it was taken from a programmable Casio keyboard. A live acoustic rendition of "Everybody Wants To Rule The World" is the one salvation, recalling the melodic strength of the original hit. It's not a compliment to say the best material on here is the old Tears For Fears stuff. (Zerodisc, 7 W. 22nd St., New York 10010)

—Gregg McQueen

SPEED DIAL

Kecam

It's hard to explain, but despite the catchiness of Speed Dial's music, this is not a highly recommended album. The band writes nice tunes centered around the acoustic guitar. Everything is ably arranged, simply and elegantly, without any extraneous or unnecessary complications. The lyrics are happy but not sappy, flavored with Scottish charm (presumably, the liner notes don't make any reference to the band's national origins). So it isn't like *Kecam* is filled with too much sugary goodness, but the album just doesn't speak to a greater audience. It sounds like a very well-done home recording, done for the benefit of friends and family and not for public consumption. Perhaps that's the rub. It almost feels like listening in on a private conversation. (Motherwest, 132 W. 26th Street, New York 10001)

—André Calilhanna

MATT SUGGS

Golden Days Before They End

Matt Suggs was once the singer/guitarist for indie poppers Butterglory. His solo debut is pop music as well, but it's not so simple. Suggs' eccentricities differentiate this album. One can't miss his wavering, unsteady vocals, and the instrumental assemblage is filled with mandolins, lap-steel guitars, pianos, violins and accordions. But probably the most noticeable thing is more than half of the songs have

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unsigned

by Paige Wolf

AWAKE

How Better Is The Blue?

It's hard to understand a word the lead vocalist of Awake sings. This is probably because he thinks he's Eddie Vedder. This band has all the makings of a Pearl Jam rip off. The musicianship on *How Better Is The Blue* is solid enough, but hardly original. Plus, it's fronted by a mumbling, often incoherent singer. Basically, this is a band for Creed fans. (2865 S. Eagle Road, Newtown, PA 18940-1546)

COINMONSTER

The Schematic

As driving guitars and heavy drums are the backbone to hardcore, intelligent lyrics are the meat. The Coinmonster's album offers juicy tales of porn writers and introspective bites of street life. With lyrics like, "Your shame is wearing a spot on my easy chair," the words define *The Schematic*. And the album has the pulsing guitars and pounding beats to boot. (419 Bon Aire, New Castle, PA 16105)

CLOUD PARTY

Real

The first track on *Real* has the makings of an epic power ballad in the style of "November Rain." "Mansion On A Hill" begins with two-and-a-half minutes of guitar soloing, and when the chorus of voices comes in, the listener can picture lighters waving in the air as the audience links arms to sway in the time of the music. Much of the rest of this album is in the same vein, with a country-gospel echo in every refrain. Clear, crisp guitars highlight the album, but the Internet webcast recording quality dims the vocals. (P.O. Box 14594, Reading, PA 19612)

JERK MEDIA

Stop The Presses

This album begins with the blending of two genres at their finest. On the first track, Jerk Media puts Limp Bizkit to shame with its quick rhymes and guitar prowess. However, the band strays from the proficiency it initially shows with more passé tunes like "Seems To Be" and "Richie C'mon," on which the band drops its rock/rap stylings for a power ballad approach. Jerk Media should heed the old saying about

sticking to one's first instincts. If the band had proceeded in the style of its first track, this would have been one hell of an album. (P.O. Box 1981, Media, PA 19063)

MANTA RAY

Manta Ray Presents

The Betty Popperetta

Twelve songs about Betty. Twelve longing, pining, whining songs about Betty. As the band explains on "Betty, Please," "Betty's not just one girl, she's every girl. That's why we love her." The first few tracks are a blur as the band sings of its yearning for this composite woman, the song ending, "What can I do?" as the next begins, "Don't know what I'm gonna do." The band has definite potential—strong drumming and clever hooks on songs slightly straying from the theme, like "Intoxication." But there's a fine line between clever and stupid, and though this band is musically talented, this album has the tendency to cross it. (P.O. Box 814, Wayne, PA 19087)

TAGYERIT

Tubeman

Tagyerit has the spirit of a musical playground. Kitchy, fantastical storytelling is set to a jolting beat. The vocals rise and fall unevenly in an attempt to match the unearthly atmosphere of the album. But there is something a bit too unsettling in the constantly changing melodies and rhythms. Although the wonderland motif is interesting, the music is too eerie and unsettling to make for an enjoyable listen. (P.O. Box 0823, Amherst, MA 01004-0823)

TY COBB

Trophies For Lovemaking

Noise experimentation has not been this successful since Sonic Youth. And when Ty Cobb fuses the sound of the "no wave" era with musical stylings similar to Beck, the result is unique and surprisingly pleasing. Though the band's vocals are lacking, what the singer lacks in talent he makes up for in style and lyrical intrigue. Each track has its own distinct quality, making the album one begging to be played over and over again. (1335 Mill Rd. Southampton, PA 18966)

RECORDS

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no chorus, only three to six short versus and interspersed instrumental breaks. The album's not all disappointing, but perhaps somewhat confusing. Some of the most notable tracks include "Harold Had A Hunch," a pleasantly tuneful song of resignation and acceptance of fate, "Western Zephyr," the heartfelt, country-styled remembrance of a deceased lover and "Soon The Moon Will Glow," a beautifully blatant (a though chorus-less) rip of "My Back Page." Sometimes Suggs' eccentricities weigh him down, and it's difficult to craft a memorable song without chorus to complement melodic verse. Nevertheless, this album shows promise. (Merge)

—Frank Valish

THROWAWAY GENERATION

Tomorrow's Too Late



It's party time for Throwaway Generation. Blending old-school, raspy vocals with bright rock hooks, *Tomorrow's Too Late* is a happy record packed with energy and emotion. Some songs are shouting, some are crying, some are sneering, all are pedal to the metal rockers. These boys just want to make the crowd dance. No doubt they

do. Throwaway Generation is a tight unit, with guitar and vocals locked to drum and bass. The result is a solid wall of pure intensity, offset with heartfelt sentiment. (Cyclone, 24 Pheasant Run, Merrimack, NH 03054)

—Mark Ginsburg

JOE LOUIS WALKER

Silvertone Blues



Joe Louis Walker has been jamming the blues for 30-something years now, and he knows what works. Once again he puts the right equation into *Silvertone Blues*. Nothing outrageously difficult about this, though the sweet slide guitar, soft piano, raspy vocals and squealing harmonica stand to be noted. Walker goes back to the basics of the blues on this album, and it works well. At times the lyrics (as sometimes blues lyrics can be) sound a little contrived and cliché as demonstrated by the very first sentence ("I've been playing with fire") and the very last sentence ("I got way too much of bad love") of the album. But the overall musical layout gives this album a sound of pure soul. Cameos by blues-friends James Cotton (harmonica), Alvin "Youngblood" Hart

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Junk records

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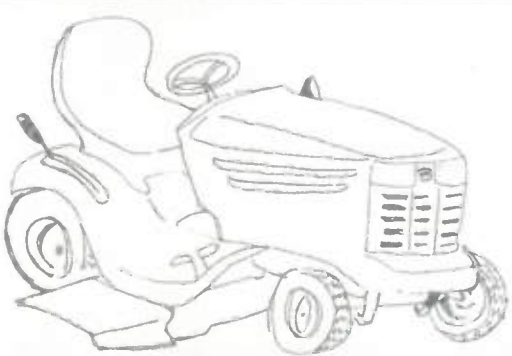
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RECORDS

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(guitar) and Kenny Wayne (piano) spice up tracks throughout. (PolyGram, Inc., 825 8th Avenue, New York 10019)

—Kevin Harris

THE WEAKERTHANS

Left And Leaving



The Weakerthans makes intelligent music for intelligent people. The lyrics beg to be dissected, and the musical accompaniment is well thought out while bordering on folk punk. *Left And Leaving* starts where last year's *Fallow* left off. Beginning with a whisper and a laid-back groove, The Weakerthans exhibits its unique sound best described as "quiet subversive." The guitarists have added more texture with fingerpicking, a technique normally applied to acoustics, and the band has left behind rocking songs for slow mopes. "Without Mythologies" owes more to '60s folk protest songs than The Sex Pistols. *Left And Leaving* is mellow with no sudden jarring, slamming punk songs, a far cry from the band's roots in Propagandi. It's not for everyone, but those who can appreci-

ate a well-turned phrase and a mellow sound should enjoy *Left And Leaving*. (SubCity, P.O. Box 7495, Van Nuys, CA 91469-7485)

—Kevin Wheeler

WHITE HASSLE

Life Is Still Sweet



Life Is Still Sweet is the sophomore offering by Marcellus Hall and Dave Varenka of Railroad Jerk fame. This six-song EP is replete with down-home fun, ranging from the deep-south blues of "Two Fingers Cross'd" to the upbeat harmonica and acoustic guitar folk of "Life Is Still Sweet." Of the five tunes here, all are worthy of mention. Be sure to notice "Futura Trance," the album's denouement and a fantastical, knee-slappin' harmonica boogie filled with percussive instrumentation—spoons and metal pots. And don't forget the beautifully off-key cover of the love ballad "Let It Be Me," (formerly put to tape by the likes of The Everly Brothers, Nancy Sinatra and Nina Simone) featuring hip-hop scratching, drum machine beats and amateur violin playing. With all of this, its title is proven. (Orange, 520 W. Erie LL, Chicago, 60610)

—Frank Valish

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ALJALA

Aljala goes for a sort of Squeeze vibe with perhaps a bit of Caribbean influence by way of steel drum accents. The musicianship and overall tone is reminiscent of Peter Dinklage's (R.E.M.) side project, Tuatara. While the technical skill of these players is quite impressive, the songwriting here is a little lacking. In fact, if this band had songcrafting ability equal to its chops, it would truly raise eyebrows. Perhaps in time this will improve.
(312) 842-8367

BROKEN HEART SURGERY

This band seems to have most of the right pieces in place for a new-school, Green Day sort of punk band. The tempos are speedy, the guitars are chunky and the vocals are suitably harmonized. The missing element is confidence. Maybe Broken Heart Surgery hasn't done much recording—who knows? These boys are close to hitting their sonic goals

demos

by Alan Pinkerton

in punk, but are probably just a little short in experience.
(P.O. Box 5271, Delanco, NJ 08075)

CINCOTTA

This is the spot where The Rollins Band meets Limp Bizkit. The band does a fairly passable impression of Rage Against The Machine while the vocals are more than a little similar to those of Mr. Rollins. The singer here has a much better melodic sense than Rollins, using some clever rhythmic moves and a Pantera sensibility in his grunts. Sounds like second stage Ozzfest stuff for sure.
(215) 232-5625

EAST MONROE

What's Fugazi without a political agenda or screaming? East

Monroe. This is what people called emo before it was a music industry buzzword. Something like Rites Of Spring with less aggression, East Monroe has the quirky, oddball guitar thing figured out. It's clever, thinking person's music.
(512) 407-8928

HEIDNIK

Yikes. Scary. Very fast, abrasive and violent. And named after a famous serial killer. Cute. This is like Eyehategod or Buzzoven without the slower, Black Sabbath-influenced parts. There are a ton of time changes (most of them fast), and the vocalist sounds like he's got a cupcake jammed down his throat. It beats The Dave Matthews Band any day.
(215) 733-0770

KUSASI'S SECRET

Good use of dynamics is really the secret to success in any style of music. Kusasi's Secret seems to know this, and the band makes its own style of poppy punk more interesting in the process. Ranging from almost total silence to blaring noise in a natural way, this band showcases interesting ideas and new directions in its genre.
(P.O. Box 35272, Brighton, MA 02135)

RED LIGHT DISTRICT

The singer for Red Light District goes for a little Alanis Morissette and The Cranberries, but comes up short on both tacks. Her singing is a little flat—double-tracking her shaky vocals didn't help much. The band is unspectacular, but it's doing what it can to back her up. It's a safe bet this singer wouldn't be in the band if she weren't one of the other members' girlfriend.
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NOSTALGIA—A THING OF THE PAST

by Kevin Wheeler

Why are we nostalgic for our parents' generation, or in the case of punk, our big brothers'? It seems like today just isn't like the good old days (and it never is), as bands and fashion designers dredge up the corpse of forgotten decades to cobble together some bastardized version of originality. Punk came back, giving way to ska and hardcore. The British invaded again. Kiss came out of retirement and showed the world why it retired in the first place. Now everyone is metal again, and stadium rock is cool. Cue "Doctor Feelgood."

Mass market nostalgia for an older generation's icons is a relatively new phenomenon. Our parents didn't hold Lindy hops, wear zoot suits, try to cross the Atlantic in a single-engine plane, bomb Japan again or blow up the USS New Jersey to instigate a war with Spain. OK, so they did instigate a war with Cuba, but it was less of a retro trend—we lost. Even Jello Biafra took a trip in the Way Back Machine with Lard to do a '70s stadium rock album. Admittedly, he was making fun of the trend, but he sounded like he was having a little too much fun with the cowbell. Watch for leopard skin spandex and hair extensions next.

C'mon, did anyone actually *look* at the clothes people wore in the '80s? Has anyone ever listened past "Take On Me" on A-Ha's album? Even hair bands have people reliving their glory days of mullet cuts and primer-gray Firebirds with *The Rock Never Stops Tour*. Kevin DuBrow, lead singer of Quiet Riot, has put the band back together again and is presumably out in Bumfrique, Ark., playing an endless version of "Come On Feel The Noise" to people asking themselves, "Why don't bands rock like this anymore?" It is a sad day when people think Lita Ford is making sense (see her rant on MTV's '80s special for reference).

Even the modern version of The Grateful Dead is a pale comparison. A recent trip to a Phish show parking lot showed hordes of 20-somethings dressing like a Gap version of the '60s. It wasn't even the sterile, pre-packaged '60s done by VH-1 or Disney. It was a decade done by the WB Network—acres and acres of half-clothed pretties writhing in a kind of half-assed debauchery. It was the '60s without any causes, consciousness raising or black people.

Unfortunately, it was also more Woodstock than Altamont. There were no Hell's Angels anywhere. In the end, even The Grateful Dead didn't want these people and their parasitic nostalgia. How far can the music industry push it before people are wondering whatever happened to the good old days of third wave ska and seeing The Sex Pistols before the band was known as The Nike



Illustration by Joe Reinhart

Sex Pistols? What happens when people get fed up with "waves" or music? Does Time/Warner punish them with wave after wave of swing revivals, or does Cleopatra buy up everyone's back catalogue? We don't know, but *Rockpile* will be the first to throw it on the cover and market the hell out of it. This is our promise to our readers. ■

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EXHUMED

Slaughtercult

Just toured with Mayhem! On tour now as part of contamination 2000! Exhumed coagulate the extremes of goregrind and death metal, delivering blazing, blood-soaked brutality forged in fire and formed in flame.



SHADOWS FALL

Of One Blood

"(Shadows Fall make) highly intelligent heavy music that defies easy categorization and the result of all the mixing, matching, melding and messing is damned brilliant. If Shadows Fall is exemplary of the future, I think I'm sticking around for the next century!" - Metal Maniacs



KRISIUN

Conquerors Of Armageddon

Fiercely unrelenting death metal at its fastest and most brutal, produced by Morbid Angel / Hate Eternal guitarist Erik Rutan.



SKINLAB

Disembody: The New Flesh

"Skinlab have the culture and ammunition to blaze their own distinctive trail of destruction." - Terrorizer
The latest release from one of the most talked about and fastest rising new bands.



IN FLAMES

Clayman

Sweden's #1 metallers return with the massive Clayman. Destined to set new heights in the metal realm. See them ignite the United States alongside EarthCrisis this August!!!



DESTRUCTION

All Hell Breaks Loose

The Return of the true trash gods. Witness All Hell Break Loose as the original line-up devastates the states along side label mates Kataklysm. This August!!!



HYPOCRISY

Into the Abyss

Peter Dinklage and crew are back to DESTROY!! Into The Abyss captures all the intensity, brutality and chaos that is Hypocrisy! Recorded in his acclaimed Abyss studios, I.T.A. captures all that is meta, pounding drumming, and insane guitar.



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Metal Dreams Vol. 2

Featuring metallic ballads from the likes of Stratovarius, Iced Earth, Halloween, Skid Row, Mr. Big and Night.



GAMMA RAY

Blast From The Past

Blast from the Past is the best Gamma Ray album of all time. It's two cds of the greatest Gamma Ray songs, most of them re-recorded with the current line up, including a 28 page color booklet, over 80 pictures and liner notes from Kai Hansen, the god father of German power metal.

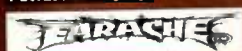


MONDO GENERATOR

Cocaine Rodeo

Cult material from members of KYUSS, QUEENS OF THE STONEAGE, FU MANCHU. A heavy aggressive kick in your teeth assault. Stoned Damage ROCK!

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A promotional poster for Lip Service featuring five models in gothic fashion against an American flag background. The models are wearing red and black outfits with skull patterns, fringe, and corsets. The text 'REDRUM' is at the top, 'PIONEERS OF CLOTHING FOR FASHION FREAKS©' is in the middle, 'WWW.LIP-SERVICE.COM' is below that, and 'LIP SERVICE' is in a large stylized font at the bottom.

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