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MARTIN
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**MASSIVE
ATTACK**

**LUCINDA
WILLIAMS**

RANCID

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This month's exclusive CD includes cover star **RANCID**, as well as tunes from neu-metal kings **KORN** and punk granddaddy **BOB MOULD**. Indie troubadours **ELLIOTT SMITH** and **BILL FOX** also appear alongside angsty Brit-pop from **EMBRACE** and **CATATONIA**, psychedelic trance from **SUNKINGS**, rootsy yarns from **GILLIAN WELCH**, and glorious pop from **IMPERIAL TEEN**, **MIDGET**, **TRIPPING DAISY**, **POSSUM DIXON** and **EDNASWAP**.

On the cover: Rancid photographed by Dennis Kleiman. Here: Medeski, Martin & Wood photographed by Terzaan.



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ON THE COVER

rancid 38

Life Won't Wait is "much more political, because [politics] affected us that much more this time around. But we'll always say that we've been *personal* political all along. But we don't want to try and shove our views down anybody's throat, because then you look like a fucking evangelist, you know?" Tom Lanham talks with the East Bay punkers in London and in Los Angeles about their expanding world view and the lingua franca that punk's become.

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"When we tried to work together as a collective, we were all at different levels—we couldn't see to eye to eye. Never once did we go into the studio to do the vocals together. That's why the tension's there, the fact that you can feel that we weren't getting on, that certain things were going on in the camp at the time." On the eve of a performance at London's Royal Albert Hall, Tim Haslett talks with Massive Attack's three members, separately, about their third album, *Mezzanine*.

medeski, martin & wood 32

"I just want to communicate with my instrument, I just want to make it a better world. I want people to realize that they can be more creative, they can be more imaginative. That kind of energy is where it's at." NYC's groovy jazz trio talks with James Lien about its debut for Blue Note Records.

lucinda williams 36

"It upsets me when I realize how reliant people are on computers to communicate. I like to keep track of people's birthdays. It's a hobby for me. It gives me an excuse to write a lot of letters, and buy a lot of cool old birthday cards." The world may have finally caught up with the old-fashioned ways of this Southern gothic singer/songwriter. Matt Hanks talks with Williams about her triumphant fifth album, *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road*.

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2000

THE SPORTSCENTER SET,
11:27 P.M.,
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"Iron Dan." "Der Spieler." "The Velvet Anchor." SportsCenter fans witnessed a milestone last spring when Dan Patrick took his seat behind the anchor desk for his 2000th consecutive broadcast. Day in and day out this bulwark of sports journalism has consistently raised the bar at SportsCenter, and redefined the way a generation thinks about sports. Co-anchor Kenny Mayne sums it up best: "He's that big industrial scale in the locker room upon which all others must be weighed." And amidst the hullabaloo of the evening's celebrations, what did the Man-of-the-Half-Hour have to say? "I'm honored, but it's all just a lot of fuss. I'm just out there doing what they pay me to do." Sure Dan, sure. Lights. Camera. History.

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opinions are like us

I am writing to say that you people at *CMJ New Music Monthly* are a bunch of assholes. I have been buying your magazine (subscription on and off, but I have every issue) since January '95. In all those issues (about 42) I have heard some good CDs, some bad ones (by my standards). Once in a while I'll end up buying five or six CDs inspired by *CMJ's* sampler. Sometimes only two or three or even none. I just bought July's issue. I have never been so appalled by one of your CDs. I have a serious problem with just about every song. Because of your goddamn magazine, I have just gone out and spent \$300.

If you ever put out a CD with that many great bands again, I'll have no choice but to stop buying your magazine. Assholes.

Philip
Guelph, Ontario
Canada

If making sarcasm the lingua franca of this column is reaping what I've sown, I think this last swing of the scythe just threw my back out. —Ed.

watching my scotty grow

A week before I got one of your issues of your magazine I got in trouble because of something I did with a girl. Then I got your magazine and read it and put it in my room. My aunt seen it in my room and looked through it and seen the article on Nashville Pussy. And the next morning [sic] she yelled at me and I got grounded for four months. And I can't have any calls from any girls. I can't even talk to a girl at school. But don't worry, I'm pretty much over being grounded. And I still get your magazine when I have the money. But if my Aunt finds

them then I'll be in big trouble. I love your magazine. They are really cool. And your new music CDs are too. I don't know about you, but I can't stand Ben Folds Five. Well my Aunt is coming toward my room. I'll write back later.

Scotty A. Myers

To well-meaning parents, guardians and printing plant managers everywhere: While written for adults, the only thing this magazine aims to corrupt are mainstream listening habits. Now if we could just get Anton Newcombe to keep his pants on... —Ed.

duff gardens

This isn't any big deal at all, but I just wanted to point out that 10 Minute Warning wasn't Duff McKagan's first band. His first was the Vains, which released a single in 1980 on Kurt Bloch's (Fastbacks) No Three's Records. Duff was also the second drummer (out of about 15) for the Fastbacks. Anyway, random facts.

Jacob McMurray
Curatorial Assistant
Experience Music
Project

emo's is a fine club in austin, texas

I just purchased the May '98 issue of *CMJ New Music Monthly* and I am appalled at yer lack of knowledge concerning emo core. Not only was the article horrible written [sic] but none of your so called "facts" about emo are correct. Considering I have been a fan of emo since 1988 and I'm in an emo band I feel it necessary to point out some minor errors in yer article. First of all, Rites Of Spring were not the first emo band. Perhaps if you would pull yer head out of the

asses of major labels and delve a bit deeper you'd find that Moss Icon was around a long time before Rites and they were playing emo, real emo, not the crap that yer rag considers emo. Second of all you neglected emo legends such as Samiam and Jawbreaker, bands who have more "emo" in their ear wax than all the other bands you listed in yer magazine. I guess the only music that truly matters to you are the bands who can get major label deals, not the ones who are out there really playing emo and busting their asses to get heard. So not to my surprise you yet again put the better known major label bands on display in your pathetic little magazine while other struggling emo bands will read this and then yet once again be embarrassed to say they are an emo band. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT EMO IS ALL ABOUT!!!!!! People like you have no business talking about stuff you have no idea about. While you're worried about the perfect picture and magazine readership, I'll be on stage, playing real emo, singing songs about how much people like you are ruining the sanctity of our scene. You have placed a very ugly black mark on the emo scene, and bands like mine and others are getting fed up with it. I can guarantee there's been at least a hundred people who believe your crap about emo. Of course these are also the kids fighting for Green Day tickets at Blockbuster.

Nil
Drummer, Triphanmer

Quick—everybody who wants to hear a band sing songs about magazine articles raise your hands. FYI, a quick scan of The Scene Is Now piece on emo-core (May issue) reveals that two bands covered in the piece, Far and Mineral, are signed to major labels. —Ed.

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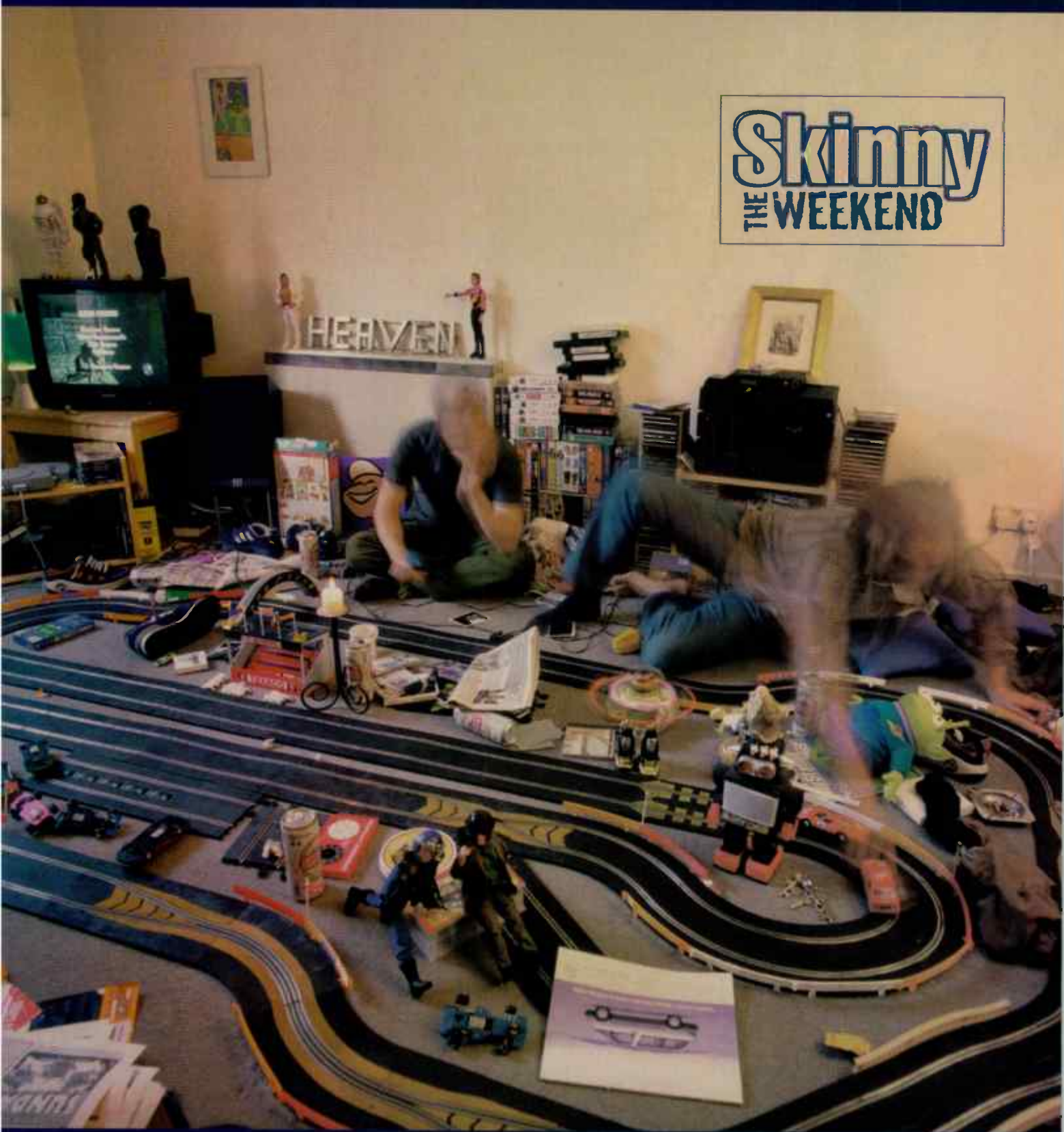
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WEIRD RECORD OF THE MONTH

Dick Clark and Ed McMahon be damned, Nick Bougas (who is best known for his macabre *Death Scenes* book) asserts himself as reigning king of celebrity bloopers with *Nick Bougas Presents Celebrities...At Their Worst* (on the Mad Deadly Worldwide Communist Gangster



Computer God label), a 63-track, double-CD collection of audio flubs and blunders by stars like Elvis Presley, Casey Kasem (whose profanity-laced "Doggie Death Dedication" was

sampled by Negativland), Barry White, Orson Welles and Mike Tyson. It's potty-mouthed humor at its best, whether it's the 59-second symphony of obscenity from unidentified "ABC Announcers" or John Wayne's immanently repeatable "ri-goddamn-diculous." Coming soon to an answering machine near you.

LABEL PROFILE

Rawkus

Started in 1996 by Jarret Myer and Brian Brater, New York City's Rawkus Records has quickly become one of the most respected indie hip-hop labels in the country, with a roster including Company Flow, Mos Def and Shabazz Sahdeeq. According to Dan Seliger, the head of publicity, the label was driven by "the idea that an independent label could function with the same gusto that a major could, but with the music representing an underground movement." Although hip-hop has become the company's primary focus, Rawkus initially aimed to document various forms of electronic underground music.



The label also maintains a strong drum 'n' bass presence through its Raw.Kuts/Rawkus imprint (previously called Rawkus Primitive), which has licensed tracks from British hardstep drum 'n' bass labels Trouble On Vinyl and Renegade Hardware, and also works with US drum 'n' bass producers DJ Wally (who records under the name Pish-Posh) and Shawn Bear. >>> Tim Haslett

BUZZ WORD

Shipped

The term describes the quantity of a particular album that has been ordered by various record-selling outlets (stores, catalogs, distributors, CDNow, etc.). The number of copies of an album shipped is not actually the figure used to officially designate an album's status as gold or platinum—that's determined by actual sales (i.e. SoundScan). It is, however, often used for marketing purposes to emphasize an album's potential sales—hence the phrase "shipped gold."



L-R: ROWLANDS, SIMONS

HIT THE DECKS

Story: M. Tye Comer

Chemical Brothers Get Back To Basics With DJ Mix Album

Few experiences are more cherished by fans of rock icons than the intimate, acoustic gig. Stripped of recording studio sheen, the otherwise untouchable superstars are left to sink or swim on the merits of their basic, unadorned talents alone.

But Chemical Brothers "unplugged"? Absurd—"unplugged" doesn't even translate to the language spoken by electronic music producers. So how does a world-renowned, Grammy-winning, big beat techno outfit keep it real? If you're Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons, you leave the octophonic soundsystem and epilepsy-triggering light show behind and prove you can still wow the crowd with nothing but two turntables, a mixer and a crate of vinyl.

"In our studio, we have two rooms," says Rowlands. "One room is full of keyboards, computers and samplers, and the other is set up with two decks, a mixer and loads of records. Those two things, making records and playing them, share an equal space for us. You don't really get Liam Howlett [of Prodigy] going out

and DJing because that's just not what he does. But DJing has always been a great incentive for us to make our records, so we're comfortable in both environments. It's where we come from."

"We've been DJing in clubs for about eight years," says Simons. "Tom was making records initially, and that's how we were asked to be DJs. We started making records to DJ with, and that really focused how we worked in the studio. It helped us to see what was needed on the dancefloor. When we DJ, we try out tracks we've made, which we then put on record, which we then play live. It all fits into a kind of natural order."

"It's a very symbiotic thing," adds Rowlands. "One totally feeds off the other. And that's probably why we brought more of a musician's approach to making a DJ record than most DJs would."

"We wanted to make this record from a musician's point of view," Simons says of *Brothers* (Continued on page 14)

Remix Redux

As we edge toward the millennium, genre distinctions are becoming increasingly blurred, and the cross-pollination fostered by the remix has only made the situation more confusing. But it's led to some fascinating reinterpretations of both rock and electronic music.

the band	the gist	the rem'ers	the best	the tidbit
 Pizzicato Five Remix Album: <i>Happy End Of You</i> (Matador)	Japanese lounge-synth act joins the global village	808 State, Dimitri From Paris, Sean O'Hagan, Momus, GusGus	The sample-happy "Love's Theme" by the Automator (Dr. Octagon)	Originally released as a series of 12" singles. All singles featured that cute daisy on the label.
 Tortoise Remixed (Thrill Jockey)	Post-rock heavies succumb to their electro instincts	Jim O'Rourke, Luke Vibert, Markus Popp (Oval)	Spring Heel Jack's d'n'b take on "Galapagos"	Also initially released as a series of 12" singles. All had orange sleeves with different colored labels.
 Low OwL remix <i>Low</i> (Vernon Yard)	Slowcore trio dissected electronically	DJ Vadim, Jimmy Somerville/Sally Herbert, Neotropic	Tranquility Bass's bouncy "Over The Ocean"	Skull Valley Dub's contribution is a remix of Tranquility Bass's original remix.
 Mogwai Kicking A Dead Pig + Mogwai Fear Satan Remixes (Jetset)	Scottish experimental rockers sprawl out over two CDs	Alec Empire, µ-Ziq, Third Eye Foundation, Arab Strap	My Bloody Valentine's "Fear Satan" remix. Yes, it's the 16-minute crescendo you've been waiting for since <i>Loveless!</i>	Idea conceptualized by Mogwai's Stewart Braithwaite and Aphex Twin Richard James, who helped hook the band up with several contributors.
 Takako Minekawa Recubed EP (March)	Synth-savvy Japanese chanteuse	Sukia, Land Of The Loops, Pulsars, Trans Am	Buffalo Daughter's new wavy "Klaxon!"	Minekawa is the star of Sony PlayStation's recent ad campaign in Japan, and that's her voice saying "PlayStation!" in the American version.
 Dylan Group Re-Interpreted (Bubble Core)	Vibraphone-crazy duo becomes even more post-rock	Sukia, Land Of The Loops, Pulsars, Trans Am Him, We, Bundy K. Brown	Nobukazu Takemura's spacious "Decay"	The Dylan Group's original version of "Scoober, Meet Harry" is made up of noises from a cappuccino machine.

Chemical Brothers

(Continued from page 13)

Gonna Work It Out, the first official release off the Brothers' own Freestyle Dust imprint (through their proper label, Astralwerks). "We didn't limit ourselves to just two turntables, which would have been the purist thing to do. We used a lot of the same tricks we use when we make our own records. We channeled some of the tracks through old analog gear. We sampled up loops and put some of our own crusty effects on them. We played a couple of cuts through synthesizers to give them a bit more of a crunch. This mix wasn't done in one take by any stretch of the imagination. We wanted to make something special that stood up to repeated listenings and that involved putting our own fairy dust and magic over it."

But there aren't any tricks up the Brothers' sleeves when they hit the decks at live gigs, as American fans discovered when the duo recently

graced the States with a series of exclusive DJ gigs.

"We never really thought we'd go all the way to America just to play records, but it's something we've always wanted to do," says Rowlands. "Playing live, there's so much to worry about and there's so much pressure. Plus, by the necessity of being on a stage, we're a bit more removed from the crowd. But when you're spinning at a club, you're practically on the dancefloor with the people. It's a totally different, more intimate experience."

"We've always shied away from playing gigs in America because DJs usually have a higher level of technical ability in the States," explains Simons. "We'll turn up for a gig and there'll be these local, 17-year-old kids spinning with a quality of blending and mixing that is often a lot better than that of English DJs. But at the same time, English DJs have learned from acid house culture and know how to tell a bit of a story, how to build to crescendos and take people through ups and downs. We're not real technical DJs, but I also think that we can do some things that other people can't."

But as inspired and entertaining as *Brothers*

Gonna Work It Out is—the 23-track mix pairs classic cuts with a few of the duo's unreleased gems—the album and accompanying tour are only a bone thrown to rabid fans to keep them at bay until the release of the Chemicals Brothers' next album of original material.

"We've been in the studio working on our new album practically every day for the past six months," notes Rowlands. "We worked really hard last year touring and stuff, but we really missed just being in the studio and playing around. We've now earned the kind of time we need to concentrate on making music that's really worthwhile and on the next level. We're really trying to push ourselves into some other place."

"We are aware that things have obviously changed since we made [*Dig Your Own Hole*]," he continues. "More people are taking notice of what we do. But most of the pressure on the Chemical Brothers is still generated by Ed and myself. The hardest thing for us to do is to satisfy ourselves when we're sitting in our studio making music. That is the total driving force." e n d

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Rufus Wainwright
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A Movable Feast (book)
- Wiseguys
Ooh La La
- Top Skater (arcade game)

TOURS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

Happy, Happy, Joy, Joy:

Sublime, This Perfect Day, Lucky Me, Miss Bliss, Cloud Nine, Happy Mondays, Happy Bunny, Health & Happiness Show, Too Much Joy, Smile, the Pursuit Of Happiness.

PHOTO: STEVE CHASE



Sugar Ray frontman Mark McGrath recently proved himself a rock 'n' roll trivia heavyweight as a contestant on VH1's *Rock & Roll Jeopardy*, the new TV series modeled after the original answer-in-the-form-of-a-question-please game show. McGrath wiped the floor with opponents Graham Nash and Joe Walsh, earning a total of 23,100 points.



eliza carthy THE NEW FACE OF FOLK

At 22, Eliza Carthy is emerging as the future of folk. Her new double album, *Red Rice* (Topic), assails traditional material, originals, covers and even some dub and drum 'n' bass. "If you don't try and do something new with the music, it stagnates," she explains.

Carthy is also one of the most prolific performers around, having released four records over the last two years, one of which was as Waterson:Carthy, in which she's joined by her parents, Martin Carthy and Norma Waterson, England's first couple of folk. She can also be heard on Billy Bragg's recent Woody Guthrie project. "I haven't heard that yet, actually," she notes. "But I really enjoyed doing it, and Wilco are great."

Add to that the six bands she plays in, and you've got one of the busiest women in the business. Not bad for someone who only took up the fiddle eight years ago.

This year has already taken Carthy to America, Peru, Bolivia and Australia—"we were also supposed to go to Siberia and Johannesburg, but they fell through"—as well as all over England. August will bring her back to the US, after which she'll be recording yet again, all contemporary material this time. And then, maybe, a few moments for herself? "Um, I don't know," she grins. "I did have a couple of weeks off in January. But I really love what I'm doing." —Chris Nickson

BILLY BRAGG

Q&A

The ambitious *Mermaid Avenue* (Elektra) project assembles an unlikely musical triumvirate: English singer-songwriter Billy Bragg teamed with American roots rockers Wilco to write songs around unrecorded lyrics penned by the late folk legend Woody Guthrie. After Bragg finished reading his daughter some bedtime stories, he spoke to us about his reflections on the project and why today's music fans need to know more about Woody Guthrie than "This Land Is Your Land."

>>> Wendy Mitchell

Q: HOW DO YOU THINK WORKING SO CLOSELY WITH GUTHRIE'S MATERIAL IS GOING TO CHANGE YOU AS A SONGWRITER? DO YOU SEE THIS EXPERIENCE AS SOMETHING YOU'RE GOING TO CARRY WITH YOU?

A: I do, but I don't know how yet. I really don't know how, but I do feel that it's just been so inspirational to me that it can't fail to open new ideas and new approaches to making or writing songs. I feel [while I was recording] my last album I was in sort of a transitional phase: I'd become a parent. The album before had been kind of a poppy album. But I'm in a bit of a cul de sac because I'm not really a pop singer, you know? It left me in a rather funny situation where I was making singles and videos and all that stuff, which really is not me. And so the last album was feeling my way back into being Billy Bragg. And now this Woody Guthrie project has come at a really interesting time. So much has changed since I made *Don't Try This At Home*, not just in my life, also the government in England has changed, the government in America has changed, apartheid is gone, the Soviet Union is gone, the Berlin wall is gone. So I'm sort of feeling my way around to see what it means to be Billy Bragg, and it's really nice to be able to spend some time reflecting on this Woody Guthrie stuff while I make my mind up.

Q: DO YOU THINK THIS ALBUM IS GOING TO INTRODUCE WOODY GUTHRIE TO A LOT OF YOUNG PEOPLE THAT MAY NOT KNOW HIM ALREADY?

A: I hope, for those people who know Woody Guthrie, it will introduce a different Woody Guthrie to them. And those people who don't know Woody Guthrie, I would like to think that perhaps overall it may lead to a reassessment of his legacy. Because I think it's very, very important to the music that we listen to today. Whether we talk about the influence he had on Beck, or the influence he had on Bob Dylan, whichever angle you want to come at it, he is a figure in



L-R: NORA GUTHRIE, BRAGG

American culture that there aren't many people you can compare to him. He's a man who was born in 1912, a long, long, long, long time ago, but whose vision is in some ways undiminished: the things he believed in and the clarity of that vision that's expressed in "This Land Is Your Land" is still capable of inspiring people. He wrote that in 1940, nearly 60 years ago. I wish that a song I wrote was that powerful. I think that's something we'd all like to aspire to. But I don't think people genuinely recognize how important he was; his career needs reassessing. And I'm not saying this album is going to achieve that. I would just like people to begin to rethink who Woody Guthrie was, and through that to recognize the huge contribution he's made to the popular music that we hear every day on the radio.

The Maxell Mix Tape

We all MAKE UP TAPES of our favorite songs, they're driving companions, records of ill-fated romances, letters to girlfriends or boyfriends, whatever. What's your favorite mix? Tell Us. And if we pick your entry, the kind folks at Maxell will send you a bunch of goodies.

This Month's Winner is

Mark S. Hayes !!

Murfreesville, KY

SIDE ONE:

John Hartford
Missing Project
Long Ryders
Looking For Lewis and Clark
Cramps
Get Your Hubbed Out
Consolidated
Dig and Long John
Nine Inch Nails
Dead South
R.E.M.
Talk About The Feeling
Starlings
That's A Good Thing
Wayne Hancock
Johnny Lee
Southern Culture On The Skids
Country Park
Steve Earle
New York City
Cake
I Still Survive
Edzup
Walk The Cow
Spider Virus
Newport News
Duane Allman
No Army Band
Rick Lowe
Crockin' Up

SIDE TWO:

Byrds
I'm Not A Republican
Wilco
Unsubstantiated
Replacements
Arrogance
Lou Ann Barton
Near Near Near
Beastie Boys
Night Before Driver
Me'Shell Ndegeocello
Deuteronomy: Vagabond
James Brown
Looking Like-Running Stick
(The...)
Rank & File
Conductor Steve Black
Eric Ambel
Dad That I Ain't Got
Beat Farmers
Spoon
Rockers Hi-Fi
Do I Believe
Muddy Waters
Chicago's Last Newies
Howlin' Wolf
Bulls Eye Camera
Goose Creek Symphony
Don't Braid

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Mix it up!

CMJ NEWMUSIC



maxell

The American Heritage dictionary defines "catatonia" as "an abnormal condition variously characterized by stupor, stereotypy, mania and either rigidity or extreme flexibility of the limbs." Ironically, it's one of the few abnormal conditions not witnessed firsthand by Cerys Matthews, who chose the name for her ethereal alter-n-pop outfit. A couple of years before the Welsh singer started Catatonia (after busking the streets of Cardiff), she was punching an entirely different type of clock: at a mental hospital, where her training as a psychiatric nurse placed her on the facility's high security ward. "We had all the top nutters there," she grins, gulping down her third lunchtime margarita at an LA diner. "People, for example, who constantly thought they were on fire. And there was one guy in the ward who actually thought he was a wolf." Matthews clucks a sympathetic tsk-tsk. "Poor chap. Too much cannabis, I think it was..."

During her tenure, Matthews studied schizophrenia, manic depression and Alzheimer's disease. "Oh yeah," she adds, "and lots of psychos! There was particular feisty lady who just went mental one day on the ward. She had loads of energy, so she started wreaking havoc everywhere. And when she started doing that, all the other patients started parading up and down the ward as well. So we had to jump on top of her and hold her down."

In a recent concert at a London club, Matthews wailed, growled and hissed over selections from Catatonia's hypnotic sophomore disc, *International Velvet* (Vapor-Warner Bros.). Appearing onstage in a slinky dress and high heels, Matthews didn't look the Hannibal Lecter-restraining type. "Ha!" she guffaws, finishing her drink and wiping a spill from her skin-tight track suit. "How little you know!"

How did this nurse get the rock 'n' roll bug? "You had to be pretty strong to work around that illness all the time," she explains. "I wasn't. So I just left. And I had always thought that I'd end up being 30 or 40, married, with children, and so desperate that I'd start singing professionally then. Like Mary Coughlan, you know, the Irish singer? She never did anything until she was about 35 or 40—she had a husband, kids, the works, but eventually she was desperate enough to have the guts to do it. But I was lucky enough to be in this band by the time I was 23."

Which doesn't mean that Matthews has given up completely on psychiatry. Some textbook cases, she says, still pique her interest. "Did you know there's a form of epilepsy which is characterized by taking all your clothes off?" she queries, eyes flashing. "It's actually a type of epilepsy. I saw a video of it during training! It's mad, isn't it?"

>>> Tom Lambam



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September 6 - Cleveland

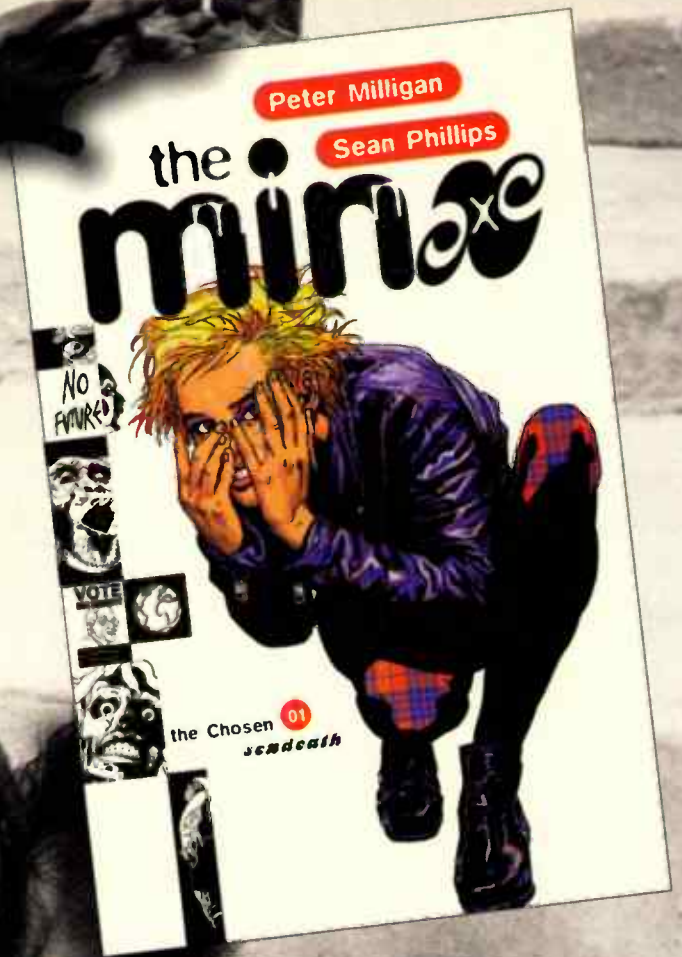
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World Radio History

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VERTIGO

ELLIOTT SMITH

XO

DreamWorks

There are bound to be rumblings of dissent now that indie underdog Elliott Smith has made the jump from Kill Rock Stars to DreamWorks. But after three under-produced solo CDs, it's good to hear the former member of Heatmiser giving his songs the treatment they deserve, especially since his Oscar nominated work on the *Good Will Hunting* soundtrack proved that a little polish goes a long way on material this strong. Which is not to say that *XO* is particularly over the top in that regard. The disc opens with Smith doing what he's always done—singing in that ghostly whisper of a voice against a skeletal backdrop of acoustic guitar for a couple of verses. Then two of the things that have too often been missing from his songs—bass and drums—kick in along with some piano and, well, it just feels so right. Elsewhere, strings underscore the melancholy mood of "Oh Well, Okay...", a sax dances through the emotional wreckage of "A Question Mark," and a chorus of multi-tracked vocals in harmony cushions the plaintive blow of the a cappella "I Didn't Understand," which features this rosy little couplet: "My feelings never change a bit/I always feel like shit." So don't worry—it's not like he's gone and gotten all happy and sappy on us.

>>> Mutt Ashare



RELEASE DATE:

August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Confessional folk-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Nick Drake, Lou Barlow, Will Oldham, Alex Chilton.

R.L. BURNSIDE

Come On In

Fat Possum

You might see *Come On In* filed in the blues bins of your local store, but when you listen to it, you're really listening to the next evolution of the blues, something much more modern than that genre tag suggests. It had to be, given that it's comprised of tapes of North Mississippi blues king R.L. Burnside fed through the fingers of remixers like Tom Rothrock (Beck, Elliott Smith, Foo Fighters) and Alec Empire (of Atari Teenage Riot). So you get disembodied samples of hollers, bluesy moans, wailing guitar licks and stomping hill-country rhythms mixed, scratched and cut in with Beck's beats and a crateful of DJ samples and hip-hop tricks. It makes sense in some elemental ways, because to someone like R.L., the blues isn't a genre or a set of chords, but an attitude, the original "I don't give a damn." *Come On In* establishes the connection between a Mississippi juke joint and *Paul's Boutique*, between white lightning and *Mellow Gold*. The real rhythmic glue is R.L.'s grandson, the powerhouse drummer who nails most of the beats on *Come On In*; it's all about the hypnotic power of the groove, whether it's droning guitars in a Mississippi roadhouse or the bonus beats buried on the inside groove of a hip-hop 12". Like a kudzu vine, which thrives no matter what hand the environment deals it, the blues finds a way to live on.

>>> James Lien



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Pre-millennium blues.

R.I.Y.L.:

Beck, Beastie Boys, Mississippi Fred McDowell.

SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS

Perennial Favorites

Mammoth

In this week's Vig-A-Tone Newsreel (crude graphic of radio tower and lightning bolts flickers on screen), Squirrel Nut Zippers release their third album! (Flickering image of James Mathus, Tom Maxwell and Katharine Whalen walking off the gangplank of a steamer while a crane lowers various tuba, trombone and other oddly-shaped instrument cases.) Scott Fitzgerald, Harry Houdini and Leonard Zelig are on hand at the record release party! (Grainy shot of Zippers clowning around playing croquet.) ...The Squirrel Nut Zippers' *Perennial Favorites* picks up where last year's *Hot* left off, and perhaps because of *Hot*'s surprise popularity, it parties like it's the day Prohibition ended and the boats of booze have just arrived in the harbor. Besides the suits, fly-collared shirts and two-tone shoes, the Zippers' endearing popularity continues to hinge on the group's ability to turn a funny phrase: "Fat Cat Keeps Getting Fatter" literally lives up to its title, each verse more preposterous than the last, or the jumping record executive ode "Suits Are Picking Up The Bill." While the Zippers' breakthrough hit "Hell" was basically a calypso novelty tune, there's much to *Perennial Favorites* that indicates growth. There's the gypsy-tinged "My Drag," the soundtrack-to-a-silent movie "The Kraken," and "Soon," which takes its plot line from a Charlie Chaplin film where everyone in town seems to know something fishy's going on except the hapless narrator.

>>> James Lien



RELEASE DATE:

August 4.

FILE UNDER:

Jazz under a hot tin roof.

R.I.Y.L.:

Bix Beiderbecke, Tom Waits, Buster Keaton Films.



Imperial Teen
What Is Not To Love

RELEASE DATE:
 September 15.

FILE UNDER:
 Slightly shaggy pure pop.

R.I.Y.L.:
 Early Blondie, Heatmiser, Versus.

IMPERIAL TEEN

What Is Not To Love

Slash-London

When you were young (and your heart was an open book), developing an emotional relationship with a record came easier. Perhaps that's because the immediacy of rock dovetails neatly with the primal nature of adolescent emotions. Or maybe young folks just enjoy more free time in which to cultivate corollaries between people, places and pop songs. Unfortunately, this ability often wanes over the years, with only the rarest of releases—such as Imperial Teen's 1996 debut *Seasick*—connecting with the heart, intellect and ears in a fashion that commands, and rewards, extensive investigation. With the follow-up *What Is Not To Love*, the San Francisco unit delivers a succinct yet expansive 11-song opus on which the quartet's continued attention to the strengths showcased in its previous work—memorable yet never obvious melodies, less-is-more arrangements—yields exponential returns. Although two tracks (“Hooray,” “Alone In The Grass”) clock in at over seven minutes, they don't wear out their welcome, allowing the band to revel in the merits of its cakewalk approach to rotating musical roles. And the sensual manner in which everyone's singing voices blend now (Will Schwartz sounds decidedly less snot-nosed) reinforces the musical cohesiveness throughout. A fresh set of captivating but sketchy characters populate the lyrics, which still seethe with sublime sexual twists, the better to pencil in your own individual associations over time and repeated listens.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



Beastie Boys: Hello Nasty

RELEASE DATE:
 July 13.

FILE UNDER:
 Funky bosses.

R.I.Y.L.:
Licensed To Ill, Rhino's *Street Jams* series, DJ Shadow.

BEASTIE BOYS

Hello Nasty

Grand Royal-Capitol

When the Beasties ceremoniously returned to NYC from LA, you had to figure it would affect their style, and you were right. Short, snappy and straight to the pelvic epicenter, *Hello Nasty* will make you happy: Twenty-two songs stretched over 70 minutes, the new record brings the Beastie Boys full circle in their quest for the partytime funk, and in the, gulp, 13 years since the summer of *Ill*, they've once again recorded a drinkin' and dope-smokin' summer soundtrack. Rumors that they were going old school are kinda true—they do whine and pump and three-part-yelp à la *Licensed* more than the last couple records—but *Nasty* is pure 1998. You can hear it first in the sophisticated beats that draw from jungle and new school electronica, and in their ever expanding sample snatching skills (along with some *choice* “wicky wicky wicky” Newcleus-style manipulations and funky robots). Unlike the geezers who make “comeback records,” though, the Beasties never had to come back from anywhere, because they've been riding the crest of the creative wave way longer than most, even if it's breaking at Rockaway rather than Redondo Beach. Step back, junior, and let 'em show you how it's done.

>>> Randall Roberts



MOCEAN WORKER
Home Movies From The Brainforest

RELEASE DATE:
 June 30.

FILE UNDER:
 Flowing breakbeat science.

R.I.Y.L.:
 Amon Tobin, Spring Heel Jack.

MOCEAN WORKER

Home Movies From The Brainforest

Conscience

“When Judy Garland was seven, she sounded better than Mariah Carey will ever sound,” says Adam Dorn from his NY office at 32 Records, a jazz label in which he's a minority owner. Dorn, a.k.a. Mocean Worker, would know—he's compiling a four-CD set that could be the definitive Garland collection. If this doesn't sound like the typical side-project for a rookie breakbeat producer, it's because Dorn (son of renowned jazz producer Joel Dorn) and his first solo release, *Home Movies From The Brainforest*, are anything but typical. While the album incorporates plenty of drum 'n' bass, it can't be that easily pigeon-holed. *Home Movies* defies classification, with its samples and jazz-tinged riffs revealing—piece by savory piece—the impressive musical catalogue that is Dorn's point of departure. His trip-hop version of Mahalia Jackson's “Summertime/Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child” is an unexpected perfect match, pitting minimal drum beats and piano against Jackson's sultry, show-stopping pipes. The noir-ish “The Mission,” with a sax squawking above a piano bossa-nova kick and percussive rhythms, brilliantly betrays Dorn's ambition to produce movie scores, as does the dreamy “Floating,” with its horns and lush, drawn-out strings. *Home Movies From The Brainforest* is a stellar offering of jazzy breakbeats that shines brightest when Dorn flavors his fluid grooves with his (and our) rich musical heritage.

>>> William Werde



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mix master mike

To call California's Mix Master Mike a "scratch DJ" is like referring to Luciano Pavarotti as simply a singer—it's an accurate assessment of his occupation, but falls short of recognizing his inherent skill and expertise. As the self-described "lead guitarist" of the Bay Area turntable orchestra Invisibl Skratch Piklz, and newest member of the Beastie Boys' entourage, this three-time world champion DJ has taken the art of scratching and beat-juggling to areas unimagined by his '80s predecessors. Mike's work on the Beastie Boys' *Hello Nasty* demonstrates his prowess as a highly-skilled, ambidextrous hip-hop DJ, while his first solo album, *Anti-Theft Device* (Asphodel), showcases a broad-minded musician who incorporates jazz, classical, rock, spoken word and abstract musics into his intergalactic cut-and-paste symphonies. Following the Beasties' worldwide tour, Mike will rejoin the rest of the Skratch Piklz, who will drop their long-awaited debut album by year's end.

>>> M. Tye Come

robbie fulks

Robbie Fulks's first two records could very well define the term coined by Bloodshot, the indie label that released them: insurgent country. Relying on traditional American roots music styles, but with a defiant, honest lyrical take, Fulks was as likely to sing songs of heartache as indictments of the conservative Nashville music industry. This gave his heartland-bred songs an edge of sarcasm and biting humor that appealed to his local, city-bred Chicago crowd. With his major-label debut, *Let's Kill Saturday Night* (Geffen), Fulks just as defiantly breaks out of the traditional musical confines he'd drawn for himself, recording a confident country-rock album. While tracks like "You Shouldn't Have" reveal Fulks's heartland country heart, radio-ready cuts like the rousing "Let's Kill Saturday Night" and the Tommy Keene-like "She Must Think I Like Poetry" might appeal to those lamenting John Cougar Mellencamp's sidestep into the film business. Fulks honed his touring band into shape last spring opening for Ben Folds Five, and he'll be making the rounds through the Midwest, then to the coasts, this fall.



>>> Lydia Vanderloo



gomez

In recent years, much-hyped UK bands have been of a type; the type has varied (Brit-pop or trip-hop), but there was always something (Beatles recidivism or downtempo beats) that tied the latest lauded import to a larger movement. All of which makes Gomez's graceful shuffle through that mid-'70s haven for dissolute rock stars, comedown blues, sound like a voice from the wilderness. Ripe with melody and eccentricities, *Bring It On* (Virgin) sounds like Traffic by way of Dr. John, and its spot in the racks may be the one place in the record shop where Verve fans and post-Deadheads rub shoulders. Even when the songs include modern eccentricities, such as the Beck-like distorted raps in "78 Stone Wobble," they only garnish the band's main appeal: the warm rasp of Ben Ottewell's bluesy keen and inventive slide guitar. Look for Gomez to stroll through the States for selected live dates this fall.

>>> Scott Frampton



Gillian Welch
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TELETUBBIES VS SPICE GIRLS



TELETUBBIES

Laa-Laa, Tinky Winky, Dipsy and Po

Last summer, David Thompson, the original Tinky Winky, was fired

Created in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1997

Exaggerated, sexually ambiguous bodies

"Pinkle winkle, Tinky Winky"

Exposed tummies used for TV viewing

Fans are largely pre-speech

Teletubby Land

Fueled by tubby toast

Short stubby legs impede movement

Children's drawings of them abound on the 'Net

"A-gain!"

Have a pet vacuum cleaner

Drug-addled ravers have found them to be objects of fascination

"Time for Tubby bye-bye!"



SPICE GIRLS

Scary, Sporty, Baby and Posh

This summer, Geri Halliwell, the original Ginger Spice, quit

Created in London in 1994

Exaggerated, sexually ambitious bodies

"Tell me what you want, what you really, really want"

Exposed tummies used for belly-button viewing

Fans are largely pre-menses

Spiceworld

Fueled by "Girl Power!"

Tall platform shoes impede movement

Nude photos of them abound on the 'Net

"I've had a little love, and I'm back for more"

Have a movie that really sucks

Adolescent males have found them to be objects of masturbation

15 minutes of fame nearly up

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

VS.

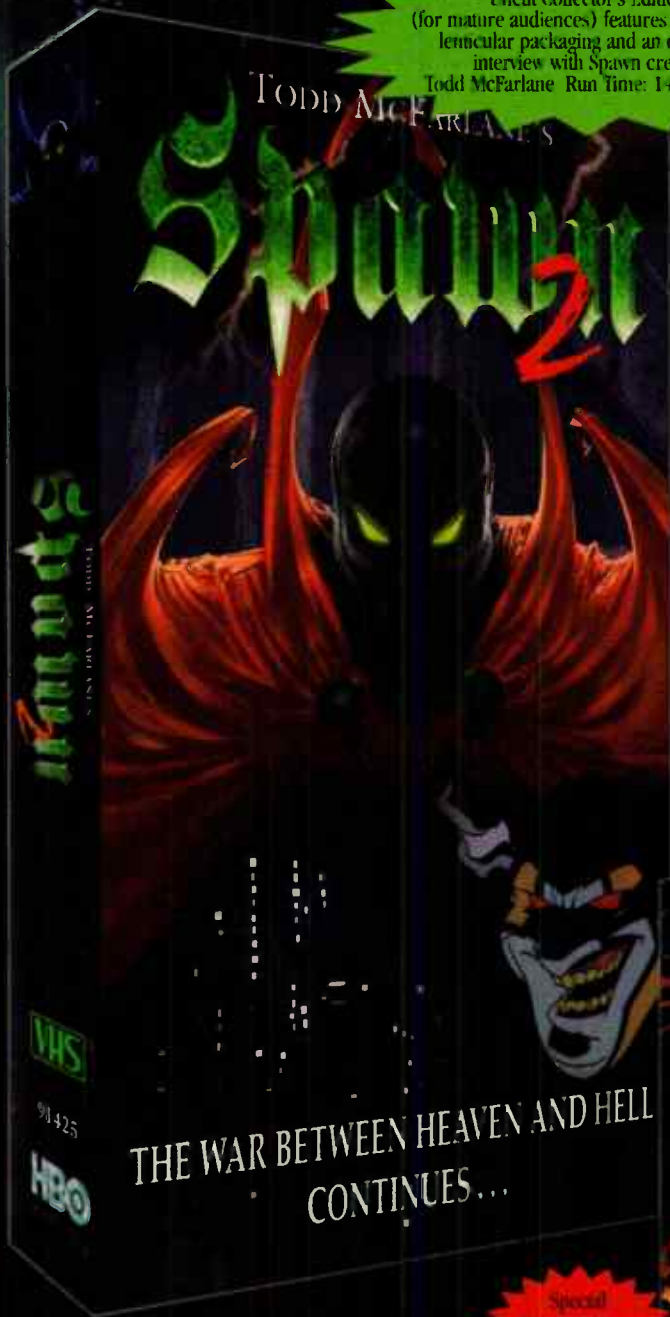
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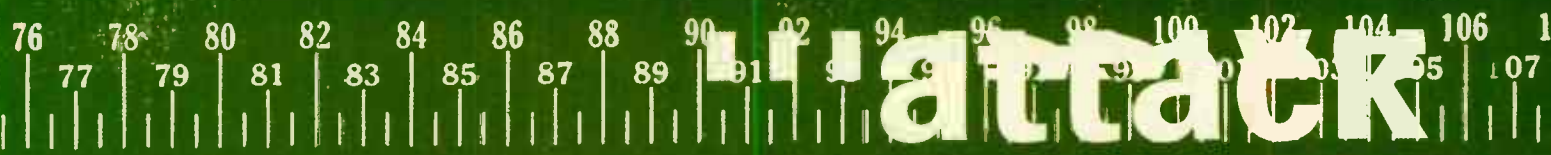


utterly massive

at london's royal albert hall, our intrepid reporter tries to get past the *mezzanine*.

story by tim haslett photo: donald christie





It is a rainy, dull afternoon in southwest London, in front of the Royal Albert Hall, built in honor of Queen Victoria's husband. It now stands as a stone symbol of the British Empire's loss and ruination. At the entrance to the backstage area, two security guards are chatting. One of them remarks, "It's gonna be a right circus in here tonight, I reckon," undoubtedly referring to the arrival of a large, young, multi-racial crowd about to witness Massive Attack's first concert inside this consecrated musical institution, a venue never designed for what Britain has now become: a multi-ethnic, hybrid society that would have Albert and Victoria turning in their respective graves.

Mushroom, Massive Attack's reticent and contemplative songwriter and DJ, feels a little uncomfortable tonight. "Sorry I'm a little quiet, mate, but this is the *Royal Albert Hall*." He's a little unsettled by the record industry's expectations of touring. "I'd rather be at home working on music, back in the studio. Being on tour takes you away from your friends," he laments. But the group is only at the beginning of an extensive tour of Western Europe, Asia and eventually the US, where, after having backed out of an arena tour with labelmates The Verve, it will finally arrive on a tour of its own on this month.

When the collective—Mushroom, 3-D and Daddy-G—first came together in 1983 in the gray world of Bristol's housing estates, hip-hop was a life support system for the loose collective of DJs, rappers and breakdancers known as the Wild Bunch. According to Mushroom, members of the posse would "break into warehouses and throw illegal parties, with breakdancing and all that," presaging the British rave movement by at least five years. From its debut *Blue Lines*, on, it was quite apparent that Massive Attack was crafting a uniquely British music that couldn't have emerged from the US.

When Daddy G, the group's lanky, talkative vocalist/songwriter/producer, speaks of his upbringing in Bristol, he recalls listening to The Clash, X-Ray Spex, and the Slits: "We come from so many different backgrounds in music—3-D got into punk through reggae and I got into reggae through punk. There was this time when punk and reggae shared this same anarchistic ethos. What was going at the time was a lot of anti-fascism movements, because there was a fascist ethos creeping into punk music, but bands like The Clash grew up with black kids, so when they went into the studio, that was what they had in mind."

The confluence of those two movements at that moment in British youth culture reveals so much about the cross-pollination going on in Britain that simply wasn't happening in the US. Massive Attack's roots stretch back at least as far as late '70s British punk, and further still to the ghostly sound experiments taking place in Jamaica in the early '70s. As Daddy G explains, "We represent the first generation of West Indian immigrants that came to England. We didn't want to go back. There was reggae here, Latin American music and the punk thing, and the On-U Sound, new wave, 2-tone, the whole lot, but reggae was certainly a big part of what we listened to in the Wild Bunch. Massive Attack

really came out of chucking a whole load of things together: 'Planet Rock' beats, soundtracks, reggae, hip hop. Bristol's got a really big West Indian community, and a lot of the early Wild Bunch gigs were in those areas, sort of no-go areas, so we appealed to a mixed race crowd.

"England's just an island," he continues. "The size of England's nothing, so for everyone to be imploded together, if people didn't get on on this little island, we'd be fucked. I don't think in America you'd get such a cross-culturalization of music." But, he adds, "We try not to be explicitly political on our records. The songs are more about social things—how you feel about your girlfriend or your best mate, or what's going to happen tomorrow. In the *Mezzanine* period, there are all sorts of questions like, 'Do I really love this person? Am I going to carry on the relationship?'"

Translating the band's very British amalgam to American audiences has been a challenge throughout the band's career, but Daddy G asserts that the gap in understanding is narrowing. "I think they will understand it in the States now, because we've transformed it from a DJ collective thing into a live thing, so it's more direct. When you see Massive Attack now, it's more of a traditional band, so it's easier for people to accept. But we still follow the Jamaican dub model in doing 'versions' or dubs live and in the studio, letting each player be a star, stripping out the vocals, then the bass, then the guitar, in the spirit of dub."

Fans and critics of Massive Attack on both sides of the Atlantic seem to agree upon one fact: that *Mezzanine* represents a much darker and desolate excursion into the echo chamber. With heavy guitar work pushed to the front of the mix, an unprecedented technique in the band's career, the new album unveils an unquestionably rock strain that was entirely absent from *Blue Lines* and its follow-up, *Protection*.

"On 'Safe From Harm' on *Protection*, we translated the synth sound to guitar and the guitar brought a hard-edged different feel to it," explains Daddy G. "It leans a bit more towards where 3-D was coming from, and he was the driving force on *Mezzanine*, and he's always been into the punk thing. So many of the tracks were done on a personal basis. We didn't actually get along all that well in the studio; we all had our own ideas. When we tried to work together as a collective, we were all at different levels—we couldn't see eye to eye. Never once did we go into the studio to do the vocals together. That's why the tension's there, the fact that you can feel that we weren't getting on, that certain things were going on in the camp at the time."

As the group's set at the Royal Albert Hall progresses, it carves a distinct pathway, moving from the more reggae-inspired pieces from *Mezzanine*, such as "Man Next Door" (featuring Horace Andy on vocals), to the plaintive simplicity of "Unfinished Sympathy," culled from *Blue Lines*, and finally to a six-minute, roaring guitar solo crescendo which vividly brings to mind a Public Image Ltd. show. This progression reveals the group's extraordinary musical dexterity, as it effortlessly moves from minor key reggae-infused pieces to

(Continued on page 63)



World Radio History

how has a band with no vocals, no videos and no commercial radio play become one of the most talked-about, in-demand live acts of the late '90s? by playing jazz?

>>>

medeski martin & wood

groove heart

is in the

story: james lien photo: tarzaan

shot: art direction at the musical box, 210 ave d, nyc

midget

JUKEBOX

Size doesn't matter.



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groove is in the heart

At a time when jazz music is either staidly academic or totally underground, the New York funk/groove/jazz trio Medeski, Martin And Wood has reached out to the rock crowd and has in turn been embraced with open arms. Not since Miles Davis deliberately played in rock palaces like the Fillmore in the late '60s have rock and jazz been brought together so effortlessly. Keyboardist John Medeski, drummer Billy Martin and bassist Chris Wood are a self-described "groove band" that's already something of a phenomenon, and on the brink of an even bigger breakthrough.

If the band's mix of genres, styles and sounds speaks to its musical appetite, the three members of MMW are equally ravenous about life: They're voracious epicures and ardent nature buffs. They're completely enamored with taste, feel, sight and sound—at one point in the interview, Martin actually exclaims "I'm in love," like a beatnik digging the scene around him.

Wood is getting a rep as the group's chief gourmand, seeing a link between food and the group's music. "Feed us a good meal and you'll get a good show," he's been known to say.

"He's always talking about food," says Martin of his bass-playing compatriot.

(In one of the funniest and cutest events this writer has ever witnessed in the course of writing about music, at the close of my interview, Wood's fiancée arrives, bringing him a falafel from the restaurant down the street from their apartment. "Oh, I already got one for you too, honey. It's over there," Wood said, sheepishly pointing to a tinfoil bundle on the kitchen counter.)

As the three work together and achieve increasing popularity, however, they have experienced some growing pains. The trio's been playing for ever-larger crowds, which can threaten the intimacy of its explosive gigs. Does a bigger crowd mean you have to play a bigger, louder, possibly dumber show? "The smaller the audience, the less of a force they are," Medeski says.

"It's bigger everywhere," Martin picks up, "but I feel like it's just as important playing for five people when we first started doing gigs as it is playing for 2,000. I don't feel any difference. Sometimes, there can be a situation where there's more people and there can be more noise, or people yelling out names of songs, that may get in the way of the vibe."

"There's the one guy who keeps yelling for 'Chub Sub' or something," Medeski agrees. "People have their thing, it's a certain thing, it's hard for me to relate to. I don't have time to sit around like that," he says moments later, referring to the idea of MMW playing a rote set of its most popular "hits" live.

For Medeski, Martin And Wood, taking chances with the music is inseparable from playing it. "It's not fun for us otherwise," Medeski notes in a quiet voice. "It's got to be a journey, we have to get something out of it, too. I feel like the music will attract whatever audience, if you put it out there and keep it out there—that's what it's always been, that's how it started. Those are the people we're interested in playing for. And you have to keep it fresh."

"These days [a lot of jazz groups] are thrown-together sidemen around the leader," continues the keyboardist, who's played in his share of combos. "But that's not how it was. That's not what Miles [Davis] was about. It was band-oriented. They were a band; those guys were together all the time. That's what Miles was really a master of. Trane [John Coltrane] was definitely that way with his thing, too, the quartet. Just look at what McCoy Tyner was able to bring to it." There's no denying that part of MMW's spark comes from the fact that the three are of similar ages and backgrounds, and are on essentially equal musical footing—any one can take the lead, provide a new direction or take a different tangent at any given moment.

Part of Medeski, Martin And Wood's appeal to "jam band" audiences is that its music's groove is so thick and heavy, its vibe so heady, that it occupies a space separate from reality. "I just want to communicate with my

(Continued on page 63)



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Lucinda Williams

H A P P Y W O M A N B L U E S

I swear, this really happened: It's late on a Tuesday night, and I'm eking out the last few paragraphs for this very story, when a friend calls to tell me that Lucinda Williams is about to play on *The Late Show With David Letterman*. My television picks up about one-and-a-half stations, with CBS being the half, but I reckon Lucinda on *The Late Show* is worth my giving the old rabbit ears a tweak. I spend ten minutes twisting my antenna in every direction, picking up nothing but snow. Then, out of nowhere, a crystal clear picture beams through the tube, just as Letterman is introducing, "Our next performer, a Grammy winning artist... here to perform a song from her new album, *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road*. Ladies and gentlemen, Lucinda Williams." Williams glides through "Right In Time," the leadoff (and perhaps, best) track from her long-awaited fifth album. She plays the elegiac song with confidence and ease. The time-curved brim of her cowboy hat frames Williams's narrow face and recently dyed brunette hair like a halo. Even in front of millions, she's a complete natural. Williams draws the song to a close, and Letterman steps over to the stage, kisses her hand, and offers congratulations on her "great song." Then, just as swiftly as it left, a haze of snow falls over my television screen again. Weird, huh?

Maybe not. Lucinda Williams hasn't released an album since 1992, and the intervening years have been turbulent ones, artistically and commercially. Since beginning work on the *Car Wheels* album, she has signed with three different record labels, and recorded in three different studios with four different producers. She's scrapped and re-scrapped the songs on *Car Wheels* (eventually released on Mercury) more times than she'd care to count. Williams's penchant for perfectionism has become the stuff of legend, but like all perfectionists, she knows exactly what she's doing. Clarity, it seems, is one thing Lucinda Williams has never lacked.

A week prior to my moment of television Zen, I called Williams at her home in Nashville. She was tired, from lack of sleep and the oppressive summer heat. "It just takes me a while to get going in this heat. I can't even sit on the

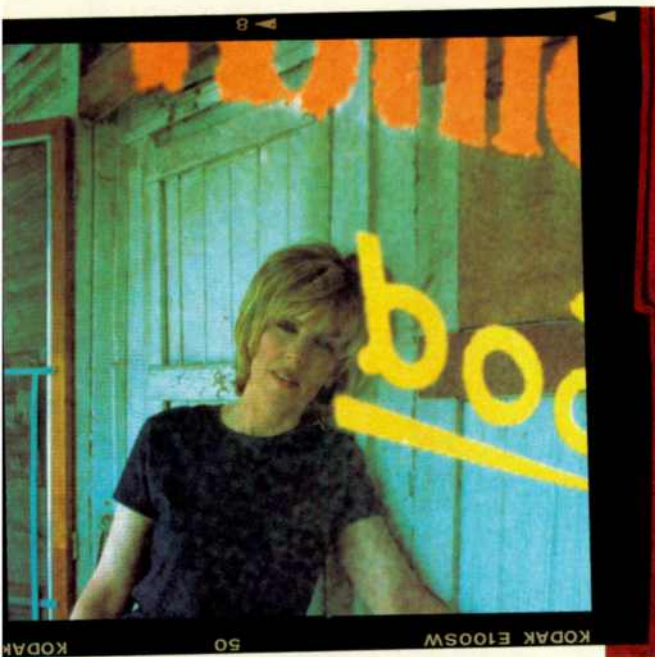
front porch on a day like today." For Williams, that's a serious hindrance. She cherishes the things—porch sitting, letter writing, what have you—that most people don't seem to have time for anymore. "I refuse to let the art of letter writing die," she demands. "It upsets me when I realize how reliant people are on computers to communicate. I like to keep track of people's birthdays. It's a hobby for me. It gives me an excuse to write a lot of letters, and buy a lot of cool old birthday cards. It's also a great way to pass the time when you're on the road."

And that's a well-tested recommendation. Paradoxical as it may sound, the road has been one of the great constants in Williams's life. Born in Lake Charles, Louisiana, she moved frequently growing up, from small Southern towns to large Southern metropolises, then to Mexico City, then to Santiago, Chile, then back to the US again. Her adult life has been only marginally less itinerant. Movement is her muse. "I come up with better ideas when I'm on the road. I get inspired. It's 'cause I'm not home with all the typical distractions. I could go out every night here in Nashville, but when I come back to a hotel room, the beds are made, the phone's not ringing. It's the solitude that inspires me."

Inspired her it has. For all the music biz misfires, for all of Williams's own precocity, there's something about *Car Wheels* that finally feels right. It's an album full of classic songs that once and for all confirms her status as the Gram Parsons of our time. Decades from now, people will speak of *Car Wheels* in the same reverential tones that characterize discussions of *GP* or *Grievous Angel* today. From the ageless *Exile On Main Street* groove and brilliant vocal phrasing of "Can't Let Go" to the lilting lament of "Drunken Angel" to the devastatingly plaintive "Greenville" (with vocal accompaniment from Williams's number one fan and next door neighbor, Emmylou Harris), *Car Wheels* delivers one tuneful epiphany after another.

In the hands of another songwriter, some of these epiphanies might seem contrived. But one of Williams's purest talents lies in her ability to imbue well-worn notions with a new truth. It's a talent that she likely picked up from her father, the accomplished poet/professor Miller Williams. Lucinda once remarked that he "taught me a lot about the craft of writing, of being aware of not wasting words." When she sings, "I just wanna live the life I please/I don't want no enemies/I don't want nothing if I have to fake it," she isn't posturing, she's testifying. Every word is hard-won. Though rendered in her characteristically casual tone, these lines from *Car Wheels*' "I Lost It" are precise and, in retrospect, prescient. You see, that song originally appeared on her 1980 Folkways album *Happy Woman Blues*. It's a testament to Williams's integrity, to her earnest,

(Continued on page 63)



front porch on a day like today." For Williams, that's a serious hindrance. She cherishes the things—porch sitting, letter writing, what have you—that most people don't seem to have time for anymore. "I refuse to let the art of letter writing die," she demands. "It upsets me when I realize how reliant people are on computers to communicate. I like to keep track of people's birthdays. It's a hobby for me. It gives me an excuse to write a lot of letters, and buy a lot of cool old birthday cards. It's also a great way to pass the time when you're on the road."

Wake up and hear the music.



- 1 This **Lisa Loeb**
- 2 Soulfully **Catie Curtis**
- 3 I Need Love **Sam Phillips**
- 4 Seven Sisters **Mary Lou Lord**
- 5 Uncle Alvarez **Liz Phair**
- 6 Lake Charles **Lucinda Williams**
- 7 Secrets & Lies **Jonatha Brooke**
- 8 Amateur **Aimee Mann**
- 9 Part of the Process **Morcheeba**
- 10 One Big Love **Patty Griffin**
- 11 Train Song (Dionne & the Cobblers) **Victoria Williams**
- 12 Evidence (Chris Lord-Alge Mix) **Tara MacLean**
- 13 Why Do I Lie? **Luscious Jackson**
- 14 Getaway (February) **Jen Trynin**
- 15 Trampoline **Wild Strawberries**
- 16 Sway **Bic Runga**
- 17 Gazebo Tree **Kristin Hersh**
- 18 The Link **Bettie Serveert**

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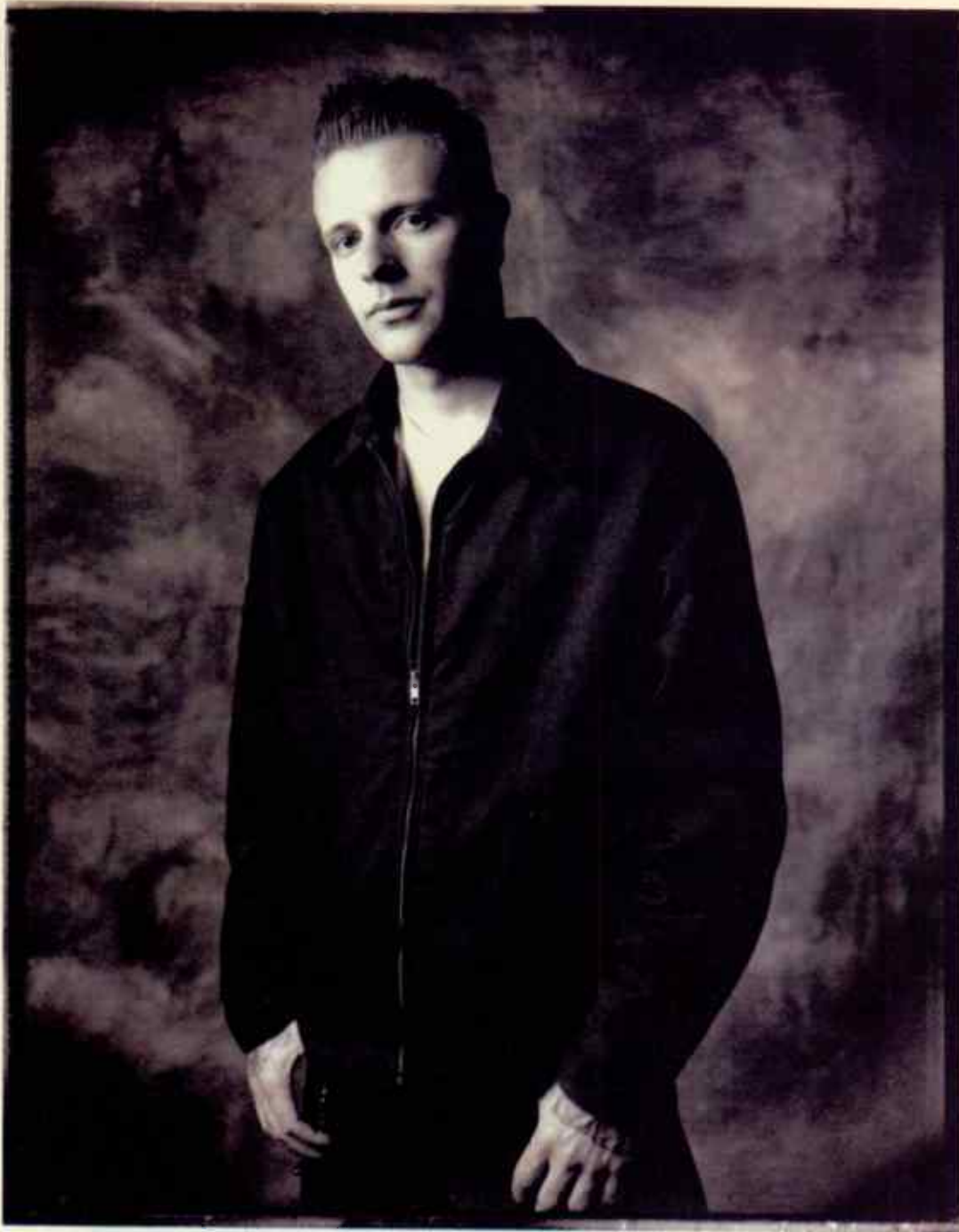
RANCI

**HOW WILL
THE WOLVES
SURVIVE?**

TIM ARMSTRONG

WITH ITS BEST
RECORD—*LIFE
WON'T WAIT*—
RANCID FINDS A
PLACE FOR PUNK
IN THE NEW
WORLD ORDER.

story: TOM LANHAM photos: DENNIS KLEIMAN



BRETT REED

with their safe little worlds and nothing more. "No one seems to be taking any chances these days," he grouched. "But we took a chance with this record, because there was no pressure on us like there is on other bands. We do one record at a time for Epitaph, and after this record we don't owe nothing to nobody. And I think the theme of *Life Won't Wait* is 'the little man fighting all the big man's wars'—that's the running motif throughout the whole record. And the 'little man' could be anybody."

Another case Rancid wanted to make, Armstrong added, "was to have a lot of black artists on our record. Like 'Hooligans' has the Specials on it, which was a statement in itself for us." And what of the black/white, punk/rude-boy violence condemned in the song? Has Rancid witnessed this firsthand? A look of mild surprise crossed

Armstrong's lizard-calm features. "Segregation and racial hatred? Hell yeah, we've seen it! Everywhere we go—*fuck* yeah! You see it a lot—different ethnic groups getting the beatdown all the time. And different countries have their own trips about who's the minority. In Britain, it's the Pakistanis. And they're a hard-working people, just like any minority group that's trying to make it. We hung out with Buju, you know, and that kid grew up on dirt floors—he's from the ghetto of hardcore Kingston. And that brought a really heavy vibe to *Life Won't Wait*, just to get that kid to sing on our record. And he's really spiritual, too. He took us to this place up in the mountains, this beautiful little brook that

(Continued on page 44)

Imperial Teen



What Is Not To Love

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A stylized, handwritten signature or logo in the bottom right corner, possibly reading "Sleazy".

RANCID

(Continued from page 42)

was just this cool, magical, mystical place. The kind of place you don't think you'll ever get to visit."

Through such trips, bassist Matt Freeman piped in, Rancid has learned not only more about the world, but more about Rancid's place within, and newfound responsibility to, this larger food chain. "People come up to us wherever we're playing, and you get a different perspective on things just by talking to them, whether it be in Europe or Japan or Australia. And you hear a lot of stories. But our experience growing up in the East Bay is not gonna be the same as some other kid growing up somewhere else. So you hear a lot of different stuff, and it really has an effect on you, and it may stay with you and finally come out in its own way."

"Jamaica, Japan—they really stick out in my mind," added Frederiksen. "And I think I'm the only one of us who came up with this assumption, but they're almost identical places—one's very hi-tech and keep-to-yourself, and the other's a very street-level place. I mean, when we went to Kingston, it was dirt floors. 'Shanty town'? They *mean* it. We went driving through Trenchtown, and there were these little kids walking around with machetes in their belts. Just like in Japan, you got the impression of a dog-eat-dog world. And still, every great reggae artist of the last 30 years has come from places like that in Jamaica."

Frederiksen was sporting all black that day in LA, all the way down to his thick-soled creepers, and there wasn't one part of his exposed skin that wasn't adorned with some type of tattoo or other. Even his knuckles, like Armstrong's, bore the letters P-U-N-X. When he was a kid of 11, he said, he got his first taste of prejudice when he was first hauled before a judge in juvenile hall. "I remember my court-appointed lawyer told me to say that I wasn't involved with punk rock, because it was a bad thing to say, they might look down on it. And I thought to myself, 'Why would I deny who I am?' I was 11, I was totally into punk rock. I had short black spiky hair and was making the 'Oi' sign anytime a camera went off. But I remember thinking that just because I liked a certain type of music, it might look bad on my *record*? Weird."

The roots of Rancid's outsider outlook might have begun right then and there. Being punk, after all, is a fairly isolationist career choice. Frederiksen, who'd toured with notorious British thrashers the UK Subs, signed on with Rancid in '93. By that time Armstrong and Freeman, fresh from the short-lived, but highly influential, group Operation Ivy, had already released the eponymous *Rancid*. Armstrong wore a mighty GBH-bristled Mohawk at the time, and safety pins, black leather jackets and perpetual fuck-off sneers were *de rigueur* for the decidedly atavistic outfit. Rancid finally caught public attention with a cut from its sophomore release *Let's Go*, "Salvation," based on Armstrong's time spent living at and working for the Salvation Army. The band was writing from experience, and that was all it understood at the time. And now?

Frederiksen, scowling, gestured a tattoo-heavy forearm toward Los Angeles. "And now you can just look around and see—everyone knows how fucked up the world is. It's pretty obvious. Go into a ghetto neighborhood and look at all the billboards. Malt liquor. That's right, man—keep 'em down. Because the biggest threat to the American government is the people themselves. I mean, it always amazes me how we constantly get a new enemy. We had the Cold War for 50 years. Then we had Khomeini, Hussein, Noriega, all these *enemies*. And they've turned Saddam Hussein into this bad Adolph Hitler guy—it's all propaganda. Like 'Well, he *killed* people!' But I'm sure Ronald Reagan killed a lot of people. And I'm sure

George Bush, when he was head of the CIA, killed a lot of people, too. So what's the difference?"

Throughout the interview in LA, Freeman and Armstrong appear inseparable. Whenever one was speaking, the other nodded in silent agreement. In fact, these childhood chums only disagreed over one thing recently—Armstrong's downtime descent into an old habit, drug and alcohol abuse. Post *Wolves*, Armstrong, who swears there was "nothing for me then except my band," was feeling lonely and abandoned. He started using again, which forced Freeman to give his friend an ultimatum: Keep it up, and Rancid is kaput. Epitaph, sensing that idle hands are the devil's workshop, tacked on a postscript: Stop using, and we'll give you your own label to keep you busy. The Epitaph-distributed Hellcat label, which is home to groups such as Hepcat, the Dropkick Murphys and the Pietasters, centers around Armstrong's Bloodclot Studios, where he records and/or produces many of the bands inked to Hellcat. It was the perfect solution, for all concerned.

Frederiksen is in constant awe of Armstrong's kinetic creative energy. "The kid has just got a guitar on him, 24-7, bangin' out the shit. That's what he knows how to do, that's where he's comfortable—he knows how to make *records*. You can't stick him in some carpenter's job and expect him to build a house. He'd be runnin' back to the studio, first chance he gets to sneak away, because that's the perfect environment for him. And with Hellcat, he's also giving back to the scene which gave so much to us. You've always got to keep giving back, man—it's a give and take thing."

Armstrong and Frederiksen have also been grounded in another way: They both recently wed their punk rock sweethearts. Both find married life highly agreeable. Dutifully, a couple of *Life* numbers rhapsodize on the subject of love—"Corazon De Oro" and the what-does-she-see-in-me tune "Who Would've Thought." And staying happy, believes Armstrong, is something that requires a bit of emotional elbow grease. "There's a *lot* of sadness around. You go all over the world, you see some shocking stuff..." Before he could finish, Freeman picked up the trail. "And it's music that's taken us all over the world. We've been really lucky that we've been able to play all over the place, which is pretty great, considering where we come from. I mean, my parents have never been out of the United States."

"And my Dad's never even been to the East Coast, never been to New York his whole life!" Armstrong marveled. "And we're just some kids from Albany, [California,] and we get to see the *whole fuckin' world!*"

Back in London, Rancid is communicating its thoughts and political theories, but this time in the way it best knows how—on stage in front of an audience. It's hard to tell who appreciates the moment more, Rancid or the polite punters in the audience, bringing to mind something Armstrong said back in the Epitaph cactus garden.

"We are *really* lucky," he beamed. "And I *never* take it for granted."

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ADVENTURES IN STEREO

Alternative Stereo Sounds
Bobsled

Adventures In Stereo songs at first seem like soundtracks to that game that challenges the listener to identify a song by a snippet, only in this case each snippet brings an immediate smile of joy if not recognition. Half the songs on the Scottish band's *Alternative Stereo Sounds* clock in around 90 seconds (the two-minute, 13-second "Catch My Soul" seems positively suite-like), and even though each riff, hook and beat seems appropriated, usually from fragments of pre-1964 guitar pop, the results are so charmingly crafted and ecstatically brief, that only callous critics need play "guess the source." Besides, that deconstructionist temptation, so strong with the duo's first two sample-reliant imports, lessens now that AIS works as a six-piece band, even though their sound hasn't dramatically changed. Leader Jim Beattie (formerly of Spirea X and Primal Scream) builds songs around his trebly melodic guitar and memories of Motown rhythms or Beach Boys riffs ("Out Of Sight," "Dream Surf Baby") or wispy 4AD-ish interludes, and cohort Judith Boyle sings early-'60s girl group melodies and harmonies in a high, clear uninflected voice. "Summertime is here," she sings on "Here Together," and *Alternative Stereo Sounds*, high concept music though it is, signifies pure sunny pleasure. >>> *Steve Klinge*



RELEASE DATE:
August 4.
FILE UNDER:
Reconstructed '60s pop.
R.I.Y.L.:
Sandie Shaw, early Beach Boys, His Name Is Alive, Papas Fritas.

ALUMINUM GROUP

Plano
Minty Fresh

Had the Aluminum Group catapulted from the heavens into our Earth at any given point in the 1980s, it seems fair to bet its tunes would still be piping from the finest of grocery and department store speakers today. Nearly every song on the band's debut, *Plano*, has an almost dramatic timelessness—comfortable, but not dated. Poppy, lush, background-looped and full of seductive familiarity, the Aluminum Group's songs dwell in the post-new wave, incurably romantic, slightly sinister shadows of pop music, and the production, by the band and Pulsars' main man Dave Trumfio, is clean sounding, yet totally warm. Brothers Frank and John Navins, AG's songwriters and singers, turn phrases like "Am I bringing you down/When I'm bringing you candy" and their themes revolve around the most dicey parts of love and affection: dependency and repulsion, the realization of a deflated fantasy, immersion and hesitation. Altogether low-key and almost loungey (it's hard to use horns these days without that stigma), *Plano* wafts between delicate and soaring, and is usually both. The band's new-wave formula pop has already stirred up comparisons to the Magnetic Fields, but it comes off a lot better than most other bands' attempts at the style. This is a compelling and endearing debut. >>> *Liz Clayton*



RELEASE DATE:
August 11.
FILE UNDER:
Melancholic, new wave-inspired pop.
R.I.Y.L.:
Magnetic Fields, Dream Academy, The The, Belle And Sebastian.

AISLERS SET

Terrible Things Happen
Slumberland

Good guitar-pop gets compared to candy all the time, but *Terrible Things Happen* is more like a candy shop: Its pick 'n' mix verses and white-chocolate choruses offer up, on one record, the many sugary, tart confections perfected by UK and USA pop kids from 1966 to '88. The best songs are supremely catchy and riff-driven, designed to be heard after riding a moped, or played while wearing miniskirts and target T-shirts; one even boasts arty topics and recorded hand-claps, extolling "me and my paint box." The album-opening, charming guitar drone, along with its racy floor-tom beat, comes straight from the Shop Assistants; slower numbers lay out minimal chords like cloud-wisps over a mountainous bass line, evoking the lazy lyricism of Galaxie 500 and the Pastels. Singing alternates between winningly chirpy and dreamily distracted, and the curvy, quick-change bass lines to the fast songs betray the band's roots in the punkier band Henry's Dress. Words and song titles ("Holiday Gone Well," "My Boyfriend Could Be A Spanish Man") hint at a "concept album" about Continental romance—"the language that he speaks is not as foreign as the way he treats me," one song confesses. But the Aislars Set's real love is for Swinging London, whose fans should give this more than a taste. >>> *Steve Burt*



RELEASE DATE:
July 13.
FILE UNDER:
Jangly pop.
R.I.Y.L.:
Galaxie 500, Pastels, Unrest, Shop Assistants, Mazzy Star.

THE AVENGERS

Soundtrack
Atlantic

The name of the game in soundtracking these days is demographic crossovers, as in rapper Puff Daddy, classic rocker Jimmy Page and alterna-dude Rob Morello teaming up on *Godzilla*. Though *The Avengers* soundtrack isn't overflowing with an embarrassment of multi-platinum riches, it does boast a few promising partnerships and a somewhat diversified portfolio that throws a little ska into an otherwise electronic rock-heavy mix. The conceptual hook is a techno-meets-pop and rock thing, as Iggy Pop joining Utah Saints to play cut and paste with an old Stooges nugget ("Search And Destroy") on "Technowledgy," or former Veruca Salt gal Louise Post hooking up with Ashtar Command (Yum-Yum's Chris Holmes and Filter's Brian Leisegang) for something that sounds suspiciously and appealingly like a Garbage tune ("Solve My Problems Today"). Former Madness guy Suggs offers some horny ska; Marius De Vries does to the *Avengers* theme what U2's Adam Clayton and Larry Mullen Jr. did to *Mission Impossible* a few summers ago; Grace Jones turns in her version of a "Nobody Does It Better"-style theme; and Roni Size branches out with some guitar 'n' drum 'n' bass. I'm not sure what any of this has to do with the film, but that's clearly beside the point. >>> *Matt Ashare*



RELEASE DATE:
August 11.
FILE UNDER:
Space-age techno-rock polymers.
R.I.Y.L.:
The Jackal, Dead Man On Campus, Shaken And Stirred—The David Arnold James Bond Project.

BLACK EYED PEAS ★

Behind The Front

Interscope

For a crew that so vigilantly avoids stealing others' songs, Black Eyed Peas—a rap band that offers live grooves, not samples—are not above borrowing the silliest conceit from De La Soul's *3 Feet High And Rising*: a series of between-song skits that depict a hip-hop game show. In one skit, the smarmy host asks where a certain musical hook comes from; contestants one and two guess Puffy and Mase, but the winner remembers that the line was sampled from an old Gloria Estefan song. The point, of course, is that sampling is lazy—a self-righteous argument that fortunately does not infect the loose-limbed, deeply funky grooves that power *Behind The Front*. The sound of Los Angeles-based Black Eyed Peas combines hip-hop and R&B with a Latin influence. In addition to the solid MC skills in evidence, the agile backing band makes *Behind The Front* perhaps the most spacious-sounding hip-hop album you've heard, suited to headphone or (unlike most rap) background listening. Able to shift from "Be Free," a Prince-esque dance jam, to "Say Goodbye," an exploration of LA violence that evokes A Tribe Called Quest, to "Communication," which recalls George Benson, Black Eyed Peas prove that a live band has advantages a DJ with even the largest record collection can't fully duplicate.

Chris Molanphy



RELEASE DATE:

June 30.

FILE UNDER:

Live, not Memorex.

R.I.Y.L.:

Definition Of Sound,
Fugees, A Tribe Called
Quest, Roots.

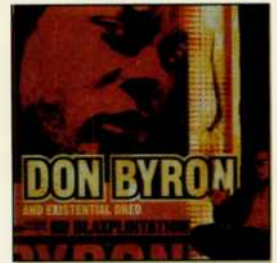
DON BYRON

Nu Blaxploitation

Blue Note

The moment that captures the essence of Don Byron's approach to music lies within *Nu Blaxploitation's* phenomenal version of "If 6 Was 9." There, perfectly placed within his clarinet solo, Byron sneaks in the melody from the Turtles' "Happy Together," revealing the overplayed, ubiquitous '60s melody to be gloriously complex. It's these juxtapositions that make Don Byron one of the most important jazz musicians of our time. His wide-eyed equanimity places Mickey Katz, Duke Ellington, Raymond Scott, Eddie Palmieri, Biz Markie and the Turtles on the same plane. *Nu Blaxploitation*, though, is a long walk from previous projects, even for Don Byron. Using as many words as notes—mainly centered around the voice of poet Sadiq Bey—the record moves from diatribes to yarns to extended groove-based jams to an homage to '70s funk masters Mandrill. Consumed whole, *Nu Blaxploitation* works like a basement funk variety show; its wide-angle scope attempts to understand issues both musical and social while maintaining the groove. At times, Bey's singular approach to the recorded word gets old, and you wish Byron would go berserk with his clarinet and drown him out—but as a document and a hulking creation, *Nu Blaxploitation* is absolutely unique and highly recommended.

>>> Randall Roberts



RELEASE DATE:

July 28.

FILE UNDER:

Jazz-funk spoken word.

R.I.Y.L.:

Gil Scott-Heron, Rhino's *In
Yo Face* series, William S.
Burroughs's musical
datribes.

BUTTERFLY CHILD

Soft Explosives

Hitit!

Wide-eyed naïveté and orchestral pop music make strange bedfellows. Arrangements bursting with brass and strings traditionally imply intelligence and sophistication hard-won through experience, which sits nicely with the cynical epistles for grown-ups who have been through the mill of love a time or three. But Butterfly Child's Joe Cassidy not only wears his heart on his puffy, Edwardian sleeve, he does so proudly, drunkenly toasting listeners with a chalice of love's bittersweet tears, rendering painfully sincere poetic turns of phrase in a bruised tenor. Like Van Dyke Parks and Prefab Sprout's Paddy McAloon, he tempers the European classical leanings of his ornate songs with the optimism of pioneering American composers like George Gershwin and Aaron Copland. *Soft Explosives*, this UK outfit's third full-length, is kaleidoscopic in the kindest sense, i.e. not drug-addled and unfocused, but constantly shifting in tone and timbre. Wet, echo-and-reverb-drenched tracks like "Big Soft Mouth" and "Zepplin Catches Fire At Speed" suggest a collaboration between Brian Wilson and Butterfly Child contemporaries A.R. Kane. Hawaiian accents dot "Mad Bird," "Holy Hymn" recalls *Double Fantasy*-era John Lennon, and "When You Return" evokes melodic nuances from "Send In The Clowns" without sounding maudlin. *Soft Explosives* navigates the narrow strait between precious and pretentious with astonishing elegance. >>> Kurt B. Reighley



RELEASE DATE:

July 28.

FILE UNDER:

Elegant, orchestral pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Blue Nile, Prefab Sprout,
Rufus Wainwright, A.R.
Kane.

GRAHAM COXON

The Sky Is Too High

Transcopic

As if to prove that Damon Albarn casts no shadow, guitarist Graham Coxon steps away from his Blur-mate and locks into a lo-fi groove on his solo debut. Aside from the occasional percussive outburst or toy-organ warble, *The Sky Is Too High* is mostly a boy-and-his-guitar affair. Coxon's scaled-down aesthetic suits his existentialist and occasionally absurdist lyrics, which dance around in somber tunes with calliope-like guitar figures ("Where'd You Go"), eerily soothing wind chimes ("In A Salty Sea") and entrancingly repetitive strums ("A Day Is Far Too Long"). Problem is, the singer-songwriter's semi-dramatic crooning can sound stilted, and his competent six-string work usually lacks the flair to escort these compositions out of the bedroom and into a realm of greater relevance. Coxon's better off when he picks up the pace and saunters into raw Brit-pop squalls, as when he develops a winsome, minimalist melody to accompany the poignant lyrics of "R U Lonely," or gestures to one of his—and the album's—noticeable influences: "I wish I could bring Nick Drake back to life" ("I Wish"). Coxon's album is too uneven to (figuratively) accomplish such a task, but in *The Sky's* brighter moments, the guitarist matches the immediacy and charm of Blur's self-titled '97 Stateside breakthrough.

>>> Richard Martin



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Lo-fi bedroom musings.

R.I.Y.L.:

Sentridoh, Richard
Davies, Guided By Voices.

DAAU

We Need New Animals

Sony Classical

The accordion, clarinet, cello and violin are not unlikely instruments to populate a record on a label like Sony Classical, but in the hands of the Belgian quartet DAAU, these instruments produce some rather unexpected forms of music. As pretentious as the group's name seems—DAAU is an anagram for a German phrase lifted from a Herman Hesse book that translates to “the anarchistic evening entertainment”—DAAU's music is more stunning than strident. The new sounds that DAAU creates come from relatively old blueprints, namely klezmer, tango and a handful of Euro-folk styles—all filtered through a sensibility that emphasizes the “neo” in neo-classical. After opening the record quietly, DAAU quickly establishes a place where rock drums can mesh with hard-driven violin riffs and accordion moans that are frequently mutated through digital effects. Styles often run at each other head on, but no one gets hurt: DAAU seems to find ways to erase the seam between styles without losing the distinct features of either one. When the gypsy dub of “Dip ‘N Dodge” rolls around, it seems perfectly natural for Angelique Willkie's vocals to be backed by clarinet and a cello that plucks out a dubby groove.

>>> Steve Ciabattoni



RELEASE DATE:

June 2.

FILE UNDER:

Artful anarchy.

R.I.Y.L.:

Astor Piazzolla, David Byrne's *The Forest*, Kronos Quartet, Klezematics.

DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM

Out Of Your Mind

K

Calvin Johnson is a very busy man. For a brief post-Beat Happening moment it appeared he would focus on running his studio and record label, and only dabble in side projects to get his performing ya-ya's out. Two of those “projects” have now developed into regular gigs—on the heels of the third (and most successful) Halo Benders CD comes this second full-length from Dub Narcotic Sound System. Johnson's stated goal is to make a record that could be played at an indie dance party, and he intermittently succeeds. The low-end wallop of newcomer bassist Chris Sutton is impressive throughout, and at peak moments is joined by squalling guitars to recall early '80s punk funk experiments. “Basemess” brilliantly combines seriously over-modulated organ and vocals to achieve the effect of a '60s soul vamp blaring from a damaged transistor radio. Unfortunately, too many of the tracks resemble loose-limbed hard rock jams, and the grooves simply don't hold up for three-to-five minutes. DNSS isn't the first dance band to struggle with the challenge of sustaining interest over an entire LP. *Out Of Your Mind* leaves me wishing Johnson followed through more often on his earlier credo to “fuck shit up,” rather than cut a straightforward 4/4 path.

>>> Glen Sarvady



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Indie punk-funk.

R.I.Y.L.:

Bush Tetras, Halo Benders, Pop Group.

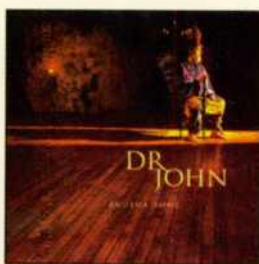
DR. JOHN

Anutha Zone

Pointblank-Virgin

In the late '60s, New Orleans session musician Mac Rebennack borrowed some studio time from Sonny & Cher, dragged a bunch of Crescent City musician-crazies into LA's Gold Star Studios and invented his alter ego, Dr. John Creaux, the Night Tripper, a wigged-out, potion-toting conjureman persona made famous on albums like *Gris Gris* and *Gumbo*. Since the '70s, Dr. John has zig-zagged an erratic career through the recording studio, alternating Grammy-winning landmarks with howlingly mediocre records and commercials for fried chicken and flea collars, but it's worth sitting up and taking notice of his new record, *Anutha Zone*, on which he's helped out by an unexpected cast of collaborators, including Paul Weller, Jason Pierce of Spiritualized and members of Portishead, Supergrass, Primal Scream and Ocean Colour Scene. Pleasantly enough, all these skinny young English folks (especially Paul Weller) help bring out the qualities in the good Doctor that have been missing from his recent albums: the spacey, psychedelic, mystical swamp funk that made his name in the first place. *Anutha Zone* won't take the place of his seminal albums, but if it helps turn a few young heads on to the music of Dr. John, then that's a very good thing.

>>> James Lien



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Return of the hoodoo man.

R.I.Y.L.:

Dr. John, Royal Finger Bowl, Marsha Hunt's “Walk On Gilded Splinters.”

E-DANCER

Heavenly

Planet E

Like Planet E's recent *Faces & Phases* compilation of Kevin Saunderson tracks, the complementary *Heavenly* collects the finest moments of his E-Dancer output, providing fans both old and new an aid for more fully appreciating this Detroit pioneer's contributions to the intertwined legacies of techno and house music. The 14 tracks here—including “World Of Deep,” “Velocity Funk” and the irrepressible “Feel The Mood”—have been igniting club floors for several years, providing welcome relief from repetitive grooves that ape the Spartan arrangements and trademark technology of the great Motor City masters, yet rarely approach their heights of creativity. Now, administered in a larger dose, the recuperative benefits of E-Dancer's offerings are even more evident. Propulsive as his swirling rhythm lines feel, Saunderson doesn't compromise melody or harmony, and he never exhausts his seemingly simple ideas, or clutters compositions up with unnecessary ornamentation (except for “Behold,” the album is almost entirely instrumental). And while the bass line of “Cry For The Future” recalls New Order, and the slippery metallic tweaks of “Pump The Move” summon up Saunderson's groundbreaking commercial successes with Inner City, this album's treasures sound surprisingly timeless. Which promises to make spinning them repeatedly in years to come that much easier.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



RELEASE DATE:

August 10.

FILE UNDER:

Vintage minimal house.

R.I.Y.L.:

Kevin Saunderson, Juan Atkins, Carl Craig, Derrick May.

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

EDNASWAP ★

Wonderland Park
Island

After releasing three versions of its song "Torn" on a pair of albums and an EP in the mid-'90s, the members of Ednaswap have sat on the sidelines while Australian pretty face Natalie Imbruglia rides her version of the same tune to worldwide superstardom. Frustrating as this may be, the scenario should increase scrutiny of the band's third major-label album, the confident and catchy *Wonderland Park*. Picking up where the lovelorn adolescent tone of "Torn" left off, Anne Preven explores the intricacies of modern relationships in a voice that teeters between vulnerability and assertiveness. Backed by steady, surging grooves, songs like "Back On The Sun" and "74 Willow" sound earnestly radio-friendly without entangling the listener in hooks. Preven and her writing partner, guitarist Scott Cutler, display more depth than the average alt-rockers, shuttling from the riff-based "Flower" to the enveloping guitar romp "Without Within" to the melodically malleable highlight "Safety Net" with a deftness that keeps the collection long on potential hits and almost devoid of filler. Without the baggage of "Torn" to carry around, it seems as though all that separates Ednaswap from success this time around is that elusive little element called luck.

>>> *Richard Martin*



RELEASE DATE:

August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Radio-ready rock.

R.I.Y.L.:

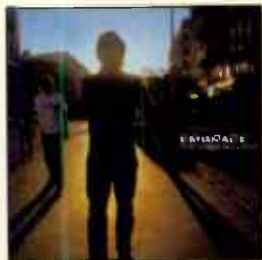
Alanis Morissette, Sheryl Crow, That Dog.

EMBRACE ★

The Good Will Out
DGC

Embrace's debut comes rolling out of the hi-fi speakers like a grand pop apotheosis, with swaggering melodies and sing-along choruses and orchestral swells and twinkling piano figures. It could be the work of some mad musical scientist or the first release from the Gallagher boys after intensive family counseling, but *The Good Will Out* comes from another set of British brothers, vocalist Danny and guitarist Richard McNamara. They lead the four-piece Embrace through a near-perfect album that makes up for what it lacks in unruliness or soul with masterly, zestful songwriting that's catchy enough to include your standard "ba ba ba" device and artfully literate so as to pull off wistful wordplay like "I stretched over to reach you/I tried to meet you, I've been wrong/Now the fireworks in me are all gone." There's no shortage of epics, with the exuberant "All You Good Good People" and the explosive "I Want The World" leading the way, yet the McNamaras' savvy extends to sweeping, string-soaked ballads such as "My Weakness Is None Of Your Business" and dustbowl-inflected ruminations like "Now You're Nobody." Danny McNamara's voice holds it all together, imparting wisdom, pain and humanity with a straight-faced Brit-pop drawl capable of rousing the boys in the pub or soothing those stuck in the sad confines of the lonely hearts club.

>>> *Richard Martin*



RELEASE DATE:

July 28.

FILE UNDER:

Orchestral Brit-pop.

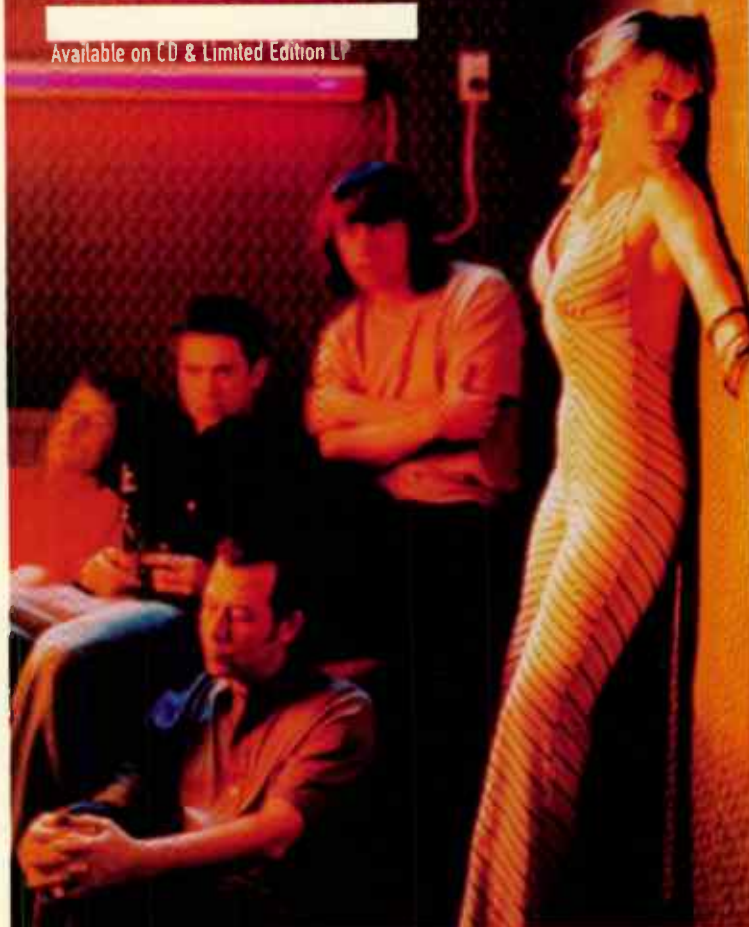
R.I.Y.L.:

Oasis, The Verve, Supergrass.

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★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD

FOR THE MASSES

Various Artists
1500-A&M

Oddly enough, Depeche Mode has managed to have a comeback without going very far away. Its last album wasn't too embarrassing, given the band's admitted drug problems and lineup changes. Now a multitude of bands influenced by Mode's misery-loving lyrics and seminal keyboard hooks have gathered to cover their favorite dance-gloom anthems. The results range from the electric—The Cure's "World In My Eyes"—to the wimpy—Smashing Pumpkin's oft-bootlegged "Never Let Me Down Again." Interpretive opportunities, like death, are all around: Veruca Salt's little girl lost "Somebody," God Lives Underwater's surprisingly rocking "Fly On The Windscreen," and Rammstein's "Stripped," which sounds like... well, Rammstein. Meat Beat Manifesto and Apollo 440 go electronica, and do it pretty well but fail to improve on original remixes. And, unsurprisingly, many bands get the idea that Depeche Mode and trip-hop go hand in hand, with Hooverphonic's retro "Shake The Disease" the best. For all their self-absorption, Depeche Mode's songs hold up quite well, with their catchy choruses and impeccably layered melodies. Sure, they appeal mainly to those who were sensitive teenagers, locked in a room, convinced no one in the world understood them. But evidently, that's something a lot of today's musicians can relate to. >>> Heidi MacDonald

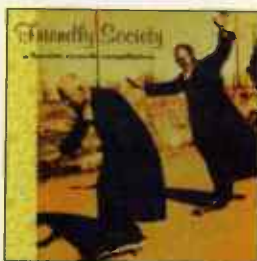


RELEASE DATE:
August 4.
FILE UNDER:
All-star black celebration.
R.I.Y.L.:
Depeche Mode, The Cure,
Hooverphonic.

FRIENDLY SOCIETY

Various Artists
Harriet

Below the radar of general trend detection, Harriet Records has quietly built up a consistently worthwhile roster of do-it-yourself pop music. From Cambridge, Massachusetts, home of mordantly jangly guitar bands like Prickly and Balloon Chase Team (and of the label itself), to Melbourne, Australia, home of the jittery, intellectual Ampersands, most bands on Harriet share not a sound, but an ethos: smart, melodic, subtle, unpretentious, verbally agile and earnest. (The label is named for kids'-book hero Harriet the Spy; the compilation is named for 19th century working-class mutual-aid cooperatives.) Here you'll find the one-boy band Shy Camp, whose propeller-powered, home-recorded riffs may dominate your memory for months; the Raincoats-esque Receptionists—accordion, castanets, one guitar, three voices—being catchily sad in Spanish, then kissing off a phone pest in American; and the heartbreaking, perfectly-constructed songs of Mad Planets, who say goodbye to a friend and lover with depth and sincerity. These 22 tracks—two new ones each from 11 Harriet regulars—also include three covers: one of the Magnetic Fields (who used to be on Harriet themselves), and two of Jonathan Richman, with a hilarious, garage-rock take on his "Dodge Veg-o-Matic." There couldn't be a better introduction, either to the label (which is ending after this release) or to its array of bands—most of which, with luck, will stay this wonderful for years. >>> Steve Burt



RELEASE DATE:
May 8.
FILE UNDER:
Best of bedroom- and
basement-pop
R.I.Y.L.:
Jonathan Richman, Beat
Happening, Heavenly.

GANGER

Hammock Style
Merge

Initially, the Glasgow quartet Ganger was a groove band, recording 12" singles that were more or less explicitly in the Krautrock tradition (and collected last year on *Fore*), following a rhythm wherever it led for long stretches of time. Then the group swapped out half its members (keeping drummer James Young, whose forceful snap gives Ganger a lot of its power, and bassist Stuart Henderson), and added—for the first time—a couple of singers. The songs still tend to be awfully long, and to get where they're going by increments rather than by chord changes, but Natasha Noramly's occasional whisper-singing builds tension where they used to meander nervously. And a common problem with two-bass bands is asserting itself more and more: Things can get very ponderous very quickly unless guitarist Craig B. lights a fire under the throbbing grooves. There's a second side to Ganger, heard on a series of remix 12"s that came out early this year: The band is comfortable having its music chopped up for pure tone and reassembled, and what results from that is often more interesting than the real-time playing. But aside from two brief instrumentals, there's very little of that side here. Ganger's musicianship is impeccable, but it's too often pinned to the ground by its own exactitude. >>> Douglas Wolk



RELEASE DATE:
August 11.
FILE UNDER:
Post-rock, bass division.
R.I.Y.L.:
Th' Faith Healers, Ui,
June Of 44.

GEARWHORE

Drive
Astralwerks

Chicago native Brian Natonski spent his formative years soaking up both the raw, industrial feedback of units like Ministry and the smooth soul of house masters like Frankie Knuckles. While these diametrically opposing influences make for an interesting foundation, the mixed signals have also made Natonski a very confused man: He's not sure if he'd rather rock or rave. On his self-titled debut as Gearwhore, he attempts to express both sides of his bipolar musical personality. Natonski takes the familiar rock-plus-techno formula to new extremes on tracks such as "Accelerator" and "11:11" with his potent and polluted brand of diesel engine electronics—the squelchy, revving 303 acid noises he creates roar like a loud-pipes-save-lives Harley and make his inclusion of real guitar riffs completely irrelevant. While these cuts smoke the tires off the line, his repetitive, unfocused techno-rantrums quickly grow tired and tedious. Gearwhore makes strides when he allows his sentimental side to take the reigns. The soulful melodies and bass thumps of "Ghost By Day," "Love" and "Brain Fusion" soothe and direct the songs' underlying fierce temperaments, gracefully directing them towards the intersection of his twin influences. There are a few pleasant pit stops, but *Drive* would go further if Gearwhore weren't so anxious to push his tachometer into the red at every turn. >>> M. Tye Comer



RELEASE DATE:
July 28.
FILE UNDER:
Diesel-powered techno-
house.
R.I.Y.L.:
Chemical Brothers,
Prodigy, KMFDM.

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

HOOVERPHONIC



Blue Wonder Power Milk
Epic

As Garbage leads drum 'n' bass and trip-hop into the pop world and proves that at least bits and pieces of the genres are mass digestible, it's going to be harder and harder to create solid, groove oriented Brit trip-hop 'n' bass without seeming like a wannabe pop star. It doesn't seem as though Hooverphonic really gives a shit about genre and marketplace viability, though; this group just cares about pop. Where last year's *A New Stereophonic Sound Spectacular* was a perfectly capable (and largely underappreciated), moody post-Portishead groove, *Blue Wonder Power Milk* has a quicker pace and a wiry disposition. On its surface are the breakbeats, the hooks, the (somewhat generic) vocals of Liesje Sandonius and Geike Arnaert—all of which are, you know, just fine. It's when you take a shovel and some headphones to the record that *Blue Wonder* explodes: Strings, quiet grumbles, horns and tympanis—all the messy ingredients of classic '60s and '70s pop as funneled through a breakbeat time machine—color in any blank space with sound, creating a density that's tough to wrap your head around in one sitting. *Blue Wonder Power Milk* isn't going to make you rethink pop, but it'll pleasantly muddle up your brain while it's on.

>>> Randall Roberts



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Headphone trip-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Garbage, Laika, Madonna's *Ray Of Light*.

MIKE JOHNSON

I Feel Alright
Up

If Mike Johnson truly feels all right, as the title to his third solo album suggests, it stems from his ability to brazenly turn his back on love. It's unclear whether he's scurrying away from his ex-wife (Leslie Hardy of the defunct band Juned), his record company (his previous record bowed on Atlantic's discarded TAG imprint) or the disbanded group with which he launched his career (Dinosaur Jr), but the Seattle singer-songwriter broadcasts his wish to bury his past throughout *I Feel Alright*. He sings in a baritone approaching Tuvan proportions and strums his acoustic misery into a variety of fastidiously textured sonic constructs. A twangy guitar and baroque string section support the melancholic break-up tune "Turn Around"; a simpering violin spotlights the bitterness in a take on the Saints' "A Minor Aversion"; and a fuzzy lead guitar flits around the lilting, waltz-tempoed "One Liner." He's dour throughout, tossing in covers of Lee Hazlewood's "The Performer," Leonard Cohen's "Leaving Greensleeves" and Arthur Lee's "Message To Pretty" to underscore the point. Insisting that he doesn't have an achy-breaky heart, Johnson employs floating orchestral backdrops and soulful vocals to lighten the mood behind the lovelorn theme, catapulting this into the upper echelon of masterful downer records.

>>> Richard Martin



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Lovingly rendered gloomfests.

R.I.Y.L.:

Tindersticks, Lambchop, Mark Eitzel.

DEAD MAN ON CAMPUS

music from the motion picture
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Blur

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The Dust Brothers

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Creed

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Executive Music Producers: THE DUST BROTHERS (John Kling & Michael Simpson)

Music Supervisors: ELIZABETH WENDEL & AMY FINNERTY

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LEGENDARY JIM RUIZ GROUP

Sniff
Minty Fresh

It's not surprising that Jim Ruiz namechecks the Housemartins, the Jazz Butcher and Aztec Camera on "Goodbye To All That," the eighth track on his band's second album, *Sniff*. Like those artists, the Legendary Jim Ruiz Group tops jazz-flecked college rock with wry vocals. "You might be honest or be sincere, that never got me anywhere," croons Ruiz in the empathetic ode to Sasquatch, "Bigfoot." Stephanie Winter-Ruiz is the effervescent Cher to Jim's Sonny, adding ba-ba-ba background vocals and counterpoint melodies. When the group attempts straight-ahead Latin jazz, it's obvious that the guitarists could still use a few more lessons, but the downy chorus of horns makes up for at least some of what they're lacking. Like many great college rock bands, the Legendary Jim Ruiz Group is endearing because its musical aspirations are more advanced than its abilities. For that same reason, the band is also willing to add wacky accents such as shooting star synthesizer hits and hoedown licks. Don't be surprised if at times you feel like you should be on the lido deck of the Love Boat listening to this schmaltzy kitsch. Just ask that imaginary Isaac to make you a Hurricane and take comfort in knowing that the band is in on the joke.



RELEASE DATE:

July 7.

FILE UNDER:

Lounge pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Early Everything But the Girl, Lloyd Cole, Aztec Camera.

>>> Neil Gladstone

MARAH

Let's Cut the Crap And Hook Up Later On Tonight
Black Dog

"Look, if the Rolling Stones were 25 years old and from South Philly, they'd probably be labeled alt-country because they dabbled in gospel, blues and all that stuff," says Marah lead singer Dave Bielanko. What separates Marah (pronounced ma-RAH) from the proliferation of no depression dabblers is "all that stuff": the arrangements, for one, which have the casual abandon of the garage band these boys are, but which might add horn sections, or honky-tonk piano, or Phillis baseball announcer Harry Kalas or, often, banjo. The fingerpicked country shuffle "Baby Love" includes both a spinning fishing reel and the finest bottle-blowing solo you ever heard. The epic "Limb" begins with a banjo hook and adds layer after layer until the bagpipes drone in and (unfortunately) someone starts snoring. Rather than seem jokey, these twists convey the love of music-making that went into the album; any friend who dropped by the garage/studio got to play, it seems, although nothing sounds cluttered. Like the Replacements in their heyday, Marah walks the wobbly line between the craft of great songs ("Firecracker," "Formula, Cola, Dollar Draft") and the drunken joy of rocking ("Eventually Rock," "Head On"). Unpretentious, unassuming, unconventional—Marah dabbles better than just about everyone else in the crowded alt-country corrals.



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Kick-ass alt-country.

R.I.Y.L.:

Bottle Rockets, Replacements, Wilco.

>>> Steve Klinge



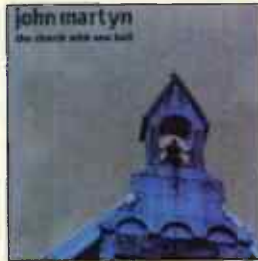
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JOHN MARTYN**The Church With One Bell
Thirsty Ear**

The critic owns up: Despite his 30-year career (including collaborations with everyone from Lee "Scratch" Perry to most of The Band), this is the first of John Martyn's music I've heard. Most Americans are little different; save for two long stints on Island, Martyn has rarely had a label with a significant US presence. *The Church With One Bell* is a curiously effective way to (re)introduce him to these shores; though the 49-year-old Anglo-Scotsman normally writes his own material, he's presented here as an interpreter of blues-inflected, socially-conscious material ranging from Randy Newman's cynical "God's Song" to "Strange Fruit," forever associated with Billie Holiday. Portishead's "Glory Box" undergoes the greatest transformation—with Martyn's lived-in slur of a voice replacing Elizabeth Gibbons's sub-zero reading, "Give me a reason to love you" comes off as a plea instead of a challenge. Dead Can Dance's "How Fortunate The Man With None" fares less well—the biting, Brecht-penned lyrics are lost in Martyn's scattling. But for most of this impressive collection, Martyn manages a rare alchemy, putting his own stamp on the songs *and* retaining their shape. In my opinion, anyone who can make a Ben Harper song compelling deserves more than a cult following.

>>> *Franklin Bruno*

RELEASE DATE:

July 7.

FILE UNDER:

Moody blues.

R.I.Y.L.:

Van Morrison, Robert Wyatt, Joni Mitchell's jazzy stuff.

MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO**Actual Sounds And Voices
Nothing**

There's a reason Meat Beat Manifesto tracks have been sampled by Prodigy, Chemical Brothers, Fatboy Slim and countless others. A true innovator, MBM main man Jack Dangers helped lay down the rules for dub-inflected electronica, throwing down heavy breaks atop challenging experimental sounds and spicing it with repetitive vocal samples adding quirky, inventive twists some 11 years ago. *Actual Sounds* starts off interestingly enough, and by the third track, "Book Of Shadows," seems poised to shake itself from the late late-career malaise of *Subliminal Sandwich*. The tune's a return to form: delightfully simple, booty-bumping, slightly off-kilter dance music with infectiously weirded-out electronics that might be a Xenakis sample or Dangers's own creation. But the next song makes Prodigy look startlingly inventive, and the disc devolves into pop-industrial clichés with horrible chant-along singing that almost makes you want to hear EMF again. Dangers can't sing convincingly; even his whispering on "Let's Have Fun" is daft and annoying. The last few tracks, "Wavy Lane" in particular, feature some lovely jazzy sounds, but by then it's too late. In 1998 so many musicians have taken off from Meat Beat's launching pad into brave new worlds of gorgeous, recombinant dance-based sound, that *Actual Sounds* comes off sounding pale and empty by comparison.

>>> *Mike McGonigal*

RELEASE DATE:

August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Fusion-y electronic.

R.I.Y.L.:

KLF, Prodigy.

nick heyward

the apple bed

"THE APPLE BED is stuffed with McCartney-like echoes, each song has a hook to die for, and it's totally cool!" —*Maxim magazine*



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MIDGET ★

Jukebox
Sire

First impression upon seeing a photo of these cherubs is that the market run on impossibly young punk-pop trios continues apace, but leave it to the Brits to put a fresh spin on the proceedings. Midget's trick is to unapologetically drive the meter well into the pop side of the equation. Frontman Richard Gombault delivers his lines with a lilting frailty that recalls '60s flower children more than leather jackets (and he has an excuse for singing in a heavy British accent, since he and his mates grew up 100 miles north of London). Several tracks are punctuated by an ebullient brass section that meshes nicely with the guitars without sounding at all smarmy. Some also weave unobtrusive keyboard into the mix, further demonstrating Midget's impressive knack for arrangement. It hardly sounds like the work of a trio, and certainly not a trio barely old enough to buy beer in this country. At times the blaring guitars seem almost an afterthought, and only when Midget falls back on such rave-ups does it sound relatively ordinary. The package is most often reminiscent of the Undertones caught at the confluence of their teenage kicks and later, baroque pop experiments. Though hardly world changing, *Jukebox* is a welcome burst of late summer sunshine.

>>> *Glen Sarvady*



RELEASE DATE:

July 14.

FILE UNDER:

Adolescent Anglo punk-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Boo Radleys, Supergrass, Undertones.

JOCELYN MONTGOMERY WITH DAVID LYNCH ★

Lux Vivens (Living Light): The Music Of Hildegard Von Bingen Mammoth

Hildegard von Bingen was an abbess in the 12th century and was the first female composer of note (which probably has more to do with the remarkable physical preservation of her music than with her sex). Jocelyn Montgomery has never sung this type of music before. Film director David Lynch provides synthesized accompaniment. This sounds like a spectacular disaster in the offing—especially as Lynch claims to have “discovered” Montgomery as she walked through a park, singing—doesn't it? It's not. Montgomery's voice is hardly diva-quality, but she handles Von Bingen's demanding scores quite well (even though, strictly speaking, this is ensemble music). And Lynch's creepy, low-volume minstrelsy, with its rumbling pads and heartbeat rhythms, is more complicated than it sounds on first listen. Sure, it belongs in the category of all those white noise-damaged “brooding soundscapes” we've come to expect from the likes of Enigma and Deep Forest, but there are some layers here, including some particularly nice strings, which never fully materialize. The ridiculous amount of reverb on Montgomery's voice aside, this actually takes chances with classical material without straying into the realm of novelty or pathos.

>>> *Andrew Beaujon*



RELEASE DATE:

August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Post-modern plainsong.

R.I.Y.L.:

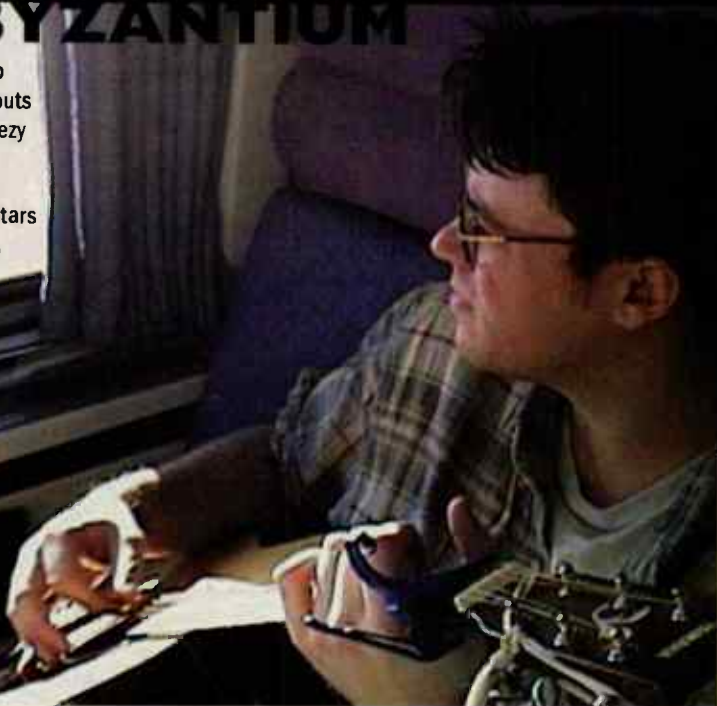
Clannad, Anonymous 4, Julee Cruise.

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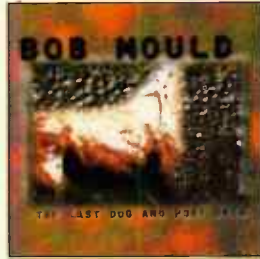
World Radio History

BOB MOULD ★

The Last Dog And Pony Show

Rykodisc

Bob Mould may have divorced himself from Sugar a few years ago, but the king of jangly/jagged power pop and the mighty chord progression continues to embrace the style. And even though his instantly familiar melodies and gnarl of guitar tricks are predictable, they're also still effective. There's plenty of strummy, upbeat songs. "Along The Way" revisits the angry, yet gorgeous balladry of *Workbook*, and the amiable "First Drag Of The Day" skates along on the roller rink vibe of the organ. Drummer Matt Hammon ably drives the bus with a style appropriately indistinguishable from those of previous Mould collaborators Anton Fier or Malcolm Travis. When Mould strays from his formula, he gets a bit silly. On the embarrassing "Megamanic," the electronica intro may shock, and it's sort of cool to hear Mould monotone, "I never panic/I'm megamanic," but he's about as enthralling a rapper as Alex Karras. As per usual, the lyrics droop under inspection, being generally of the "No one took the time to understand me" variety. Mould nevertheless gets them to work with his elastic snarl and forceful, jaded resignation. *The Last Dog And Pony Show* is reportedly Mould's final go-'round, and he seems to have scraped off splatters from the drop cloths of his last several records for it. What of it? It still frigging rocks. >>> *Anne Marie Cruz*



RELEASE DATE:

August 25.

FILE UNDER:

Power pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Sugar, Foo Fighters, Fretblanket.

OTHER DIMENSIONS IN MUSIC

Now!

AUM Fidelity

All improvised music bears the promise of the unexpected, but in the case of the free jazz quartet Other Dimensions In Music, the realm of possibilities seems exceptionally vast. This group of band leaders and veteran players has performed together on and off for over 14 years, but hasn't recorded since 1990. For all the star power on hand, what is initially most striking about this record is its understatement. It opens with "For The Glass Tear," a diffuse, half-hour piece that rarely rises above a middling volume, culling its momentum from the alternation of fast, boppy playing with more sentimental passages, culminating with Daniel Carter's substitution of flute for tenor saxophone. In the process, the four players succeed in building a vocabulary of their own, circling around one another in ensemble playing of rare intimacy. This relationship comes to most impressive fruition on "Tears For The Boy Wonder (For Winston [sic] Marsalis)," an ironic and perhaps backhanded tribute to the traditionalist trumpeter by the exponents of a rival aesthetic. Roy Campbell Jr.'s blowsy, muted trumpet tone accompanies William Parker's slightly ragged bowing of the bass as easily as it snakes around Carter's trumpet lines a few measures later. Where much ensemble improv is a meeting of different aesthetics, ODIM comes off as a musical mind meld. >>> *Andrea Moed*



RELEASE DATE:

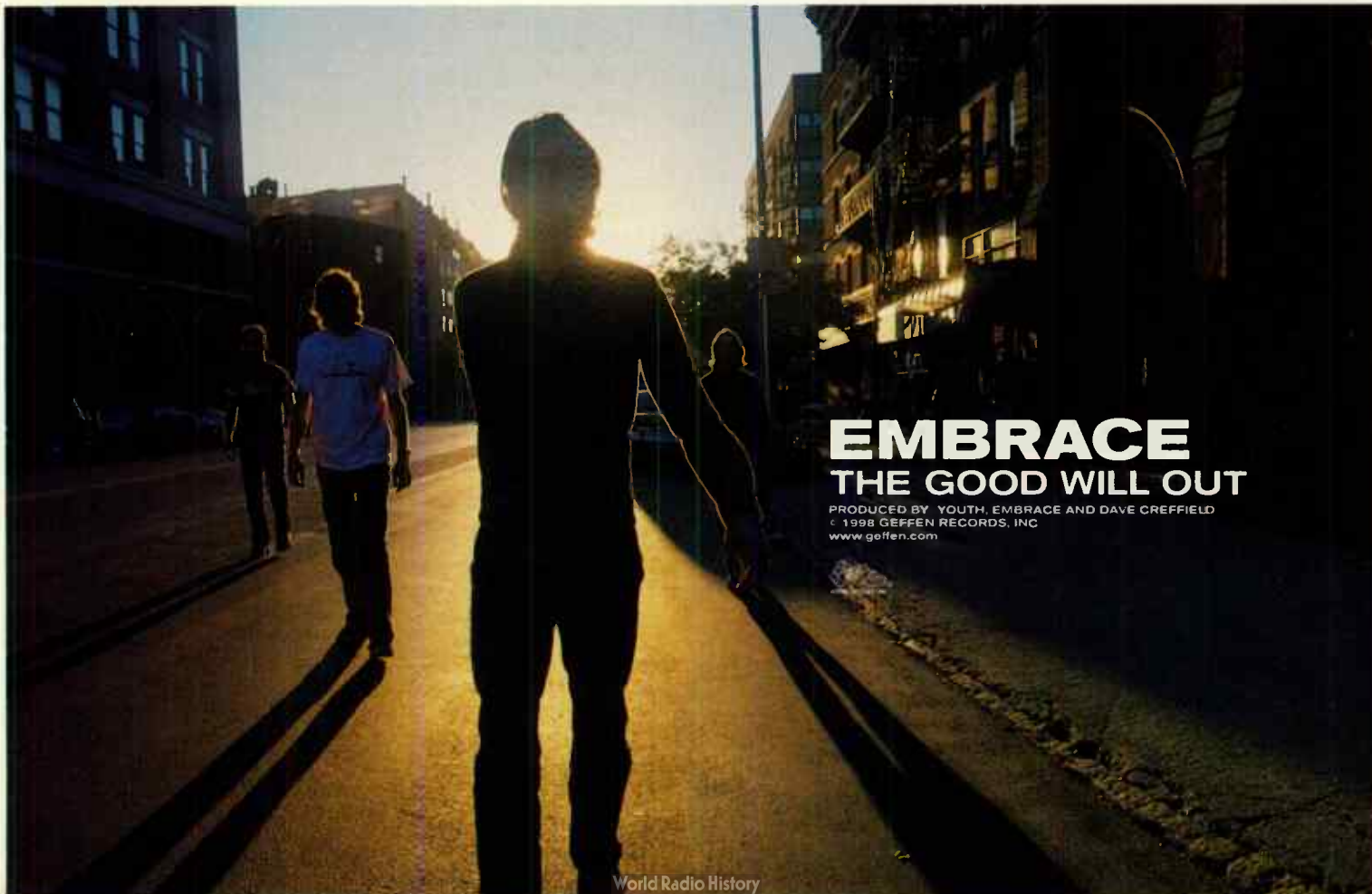
May 14.

FILE UNDER:

Otherworldly free jazz.

R.I.Y.L.:

Cecil Taylor, Anthony Braxton, Matthew Shipp.



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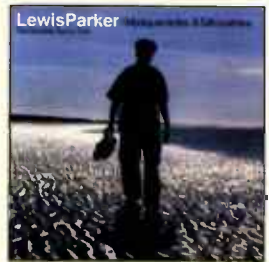
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REVIEWS

LEWIS PARKER

**Masquerades &
Silhouettes**
Melankolic



Lewis Parker Masquerades & Silhouettes

RELEASE DATE:

July 28.

FILE UNDER:

X-Wing trip-hop.

R.I.V.L.:

Jeru The Damaja,
Bahamadia, Scarface.

The Jedi Nation has a new recruit—Lewis Parker. The 21-year-old, London-based rapper was born the same year *Star Wars* was released, and the movie seems to have caused a chain reaction in his psyche like the laser fire that took out the Death Star. In his press release, Parker explains that if you master the hip-hop arts of breaking, rhyming, graffiti creation and DJing, it's like "you're the ultimate Jedi and Yoda combined." Beware young rapper, such thoughts will bring you many bad puns. On first listen to *Masquerades & Silhouettes*, the references to ancient scrolls, Tuscan Raiders and the Red 1 squadron leader seem a tad clunky. Parker's halting, staccato delivery shuffles and bubbles, rarely kicking into hyperdrive. After several playbacks, though, it's apparent that The Force is with him more often than not. Parker's blend of science fiction imagery and street tales is often inventive and the gurgling riffs on the backing tracks are subtly infectious. The blend of epic tones, rippling beats and snippets of lounge hits would be perfect to blast while cruising across Tatooine in your landspeeder. This young knight may not be ready to overthrow the evil empire of tired rap, but he's certainly an asset to the rebel cause.

>>> Neil Gladstone

LIZ PHAIR

Whitechocolatespaceegg
Matador-Capitol



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Whip-smart pop.

R.I.V.L.:

Beth Orton, Elliott Smith,
PJ Harvey.

Wedding ring on her finger, newborn at her bosom, Lilith concerts in her datebook, Liz Phair '98 might seem dulled, neutered, edge-free—a worrisome prospect, if you agree that her first records still blow away the '90s women who have sold truckloads of records in her wake. The truth is, Phair has lost her edge, but not her voice, and thank god, because she would have lost her edge even if she'd kept singing of blow-job queens and fucking and running. The long-promised *Whitechocolatespaceegg* comes freighted with expectations both artistic—Phair agonized over the songs for three years—and commercial, as she's been paired with R.E.M. producer Scott Litt and big-rock mixer Tom Lord-Alge. For all that labor, *Spaceegg* still comes out as unmistakably Phair's, with all of her hallmarks: sly wit, unadorned guitar, fearless singing and, most crucial, empathy—not just for women but for a generation needing to be cool and unguarded at once. Closer to 1994's songwriterly *Whip-Smart* than to her unrepeatable jaw-dropping debut *Exile In Guyville*, *Spaceegg* gets better on each listen, with some of the best songs ("Polyester Bride," "What Makes You Happy") produced by Phair and old friend Brad Wood. "Home is very ordinary," Phair sings on "Perfect World," confirming she's not yet domesticated. "I know I was born to lead a double life/I want to be cool, tall, vulnerable and luscious." Don't we all.

>>> Chris Molanphy

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

POSSUM DIXON ★

New Sheets

Interscope

From his first lyrics on *New Sheets*, you can tell something is different about Possum Dixon frontman Rob Zabrecky. "Pull those curtains back/Let's get some light in here," he sings on "Lenny's Song (Holding)." It's a gesture meant to broaden the band's jittery, dark perspective, and it's no surprise, really—since the LA group's inception, it has often sought reinvention. Having recorded its two prior efforts with Concrete Blonde's Earle Mankey and Tim O'Heir (Sebadoh, Buffalo Tom), respectively, this time around Possum

Dixon hired Cars helmsman Ric Ocasek to help shape its turn toward new wave. Rich in '80s-era sheen, *New Sheets* is mostly crisp and studied in the detached-cool manner Ocasek made popular in his heyday. But the group has always split the difference between Devo and the Dream Syndicate (two groups Possum Dixon often covers), and *New Sheets* maintains elements of garage-rock intensity ("Now What?") while affecting aloofness (the title track, "Stop Breaking Me"). On "Always Engines," when Zabrecky cries, "I'm breaking up n sound/I'm waking up in sound," you have to wonder if he means he's moving in stereo. With an edgy musical confidence and his usual lyrical disaffection, it sounds like he is.

>>> Mark Woodlief



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Moving in stereo.

R.I.Y.L.:

Post-Panorama Cars, Everclear, Weezer, Third Eye Blind.

PRAM

The North Pole Radio Station

Merge

Taking its name from either common British parlance for a baby carriage (likely) or the acronym for Dr. Enaida B. Guernica's Preventive Remedial Associative Model for child behavior modification, a technique that seeks to enhance creativity through music therapy and other means (unlikely, but strangely appropriate), Pram is the sonic equivalent of *Rosemary's Baby*—an unsettling amalgam of virtue and impending peril. Actually, Krzysztof Komeda's brilliant score to *Rosemary's Baby* is that film's true artistic equal. And like its closest conceptual

kin, *Broadcast*, Pram is substantially influenced by Komeda's work. *The North Pole Radio Station* carries all of Pram's trademarks—Rosie Cuckston's delicately deadpan vocals accompanied by the band's uneasy and entirely unorthodox arrangements—but this is the band's most skeletal album to date. For the most part, Pram's newfound economy yields brilliant results. The album's leadoff track "Omnichord" employs minimal guitar, melodica, a homemade theremin and God knows what else to create an existential samba. The group's organic/synthetic alloy only falters when the group leans too heavily on the latter element ("Fallen Snow"), yielding hurried and awkward results. Then again, *North Pole* is nothing if not otherworldly, and Pram obviously knows more about the elemental balance of that world than we ever will.

>>> Matt Hanks



RELEASE DATE:

July 21.

FILE UNDER:

Music for a G-Rated horror film.

R.I.Y.L.:

Broadcast, Laika, the soundtrack to *Rosemary's Baby*.



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PULLMAN

Turnstyles & Junkpiles
Thrill Jockey

On this side trip from Directions In Music, his other current project, multi-instrumentalist Bundy Brown (ex-Tortoise and Gastr Del Sol) joins three other notable musicians—Come's Chris Browkaw, Eleventh Dream Day's Doug McCombs, and Rex's Curtis Harvey—for 14 low-key acoustic instrumentals. Compared to the tension (Browkaw) or complexity (Brown) of these musicians' other bands, Pullman is a Sunday in the park: Gentle, fingerpicked guitar patterns are the order of the day here, though lap steel and banjo also peek through. Jim O'Rourke's John Fahey-obsessed *Bad Timing* might be a recent precedent, but Pullman deals in neither O'Rourke's layered orchestrations nor Fahey's edginess, the live-to-tape recordings nicely capturing the largely subdued playing. The angular waltz "Iyasnya," led by what sounds like a bouzouki, is less genteel, as are the varied solo tracks (one by each player) that dot *Turnstyles'* second half, especially McCombs's "Fullerton," which reveals him as the member behind the slide instruments that crack his mates' sometimes chilly facade. But this isn't a criticism—Brown and company aren't trying to make intense, or even very difficult, music here. While Brown's old pals in Tortoise explore stasis and texture via studio fragmentation, Pullman inhabits a similar space in real time.

>>> Franklin Bruno



RELEASE DATE
August 11.
FILE UNDER
Instrumental art-folk.
R.I.P.:
**John Fahey, Terry Riley,
Nick Drake, Jim
O'Rourke's *Bad Timing*.**

RUTH RUTH ★

Are You My Friend?
RCA

Big beat, speed garage and all manner of electronica be damned: There's still room for another guitar-pop band in this world, and New York's Ruth Ruth is it. The quartet released an EP on punky Epitaph (1996's *The Little Death*), after its debut on American, *Laughing Gallery*, went nowhere, but persistence keeps the band in the game for another effort. *Are You My Friend?* is punctuated by chirpy buoyancy, gritty guitar duels between co-founder Mike Lustig and ex-Eve's Plum member Michael Kotch, and capped by Chris Kennedy's understated pop handiwork. Sure, it's more—to borrow a phrase from the Undertones—songs about chocolate and girls, but these 13 confections are rich in all-natural ingredients. From smart pop culture references ("Agent 99," "Turning To Eva") to an earnest on-tour confessional ("Cadillac, Michigan"), Kennedy's knack for framing hooks and riffs is equal parts new-wave simplicity, pop tradition and postmodern pastiche. When the songwriting lends itself to the process, as on "If I Can't Have You," co-producer Chris Shaw (Redd Kross, Weezer) weighs in with Spector-esque textures, and Ruth Ruth's catchy revisionism proves intelligent and infectious.

>>> Mark Woodlief



RELEASE DATE
August 25.
FILE UNDER
Guitar pop.
R.I.P.:
**Fountains Of Wayne,
Weezer.**

RASPUTINA

How We Quit The Forest
Columbia

If Rasputina, a trio of female New York cellists who play clad in Victorian corsets, didn't already exist, somebody would have invented them—L. Frank Baum most likely. Like Dorothy Gale, the heroine of Baum's *The Wizard Of Oz*, founding member Melora Creager grew up in Kansas before bizarre adventures led her to a fantastic city, and is blessed with a pioneering spirit, an inventive mind, and a curious balance of naïveté and wisdom. On paper, Rasputina sounds like some featherweight vintage 4AD outfit, till you learn these women have toured with Marilyn Manson (who remixed their single "Transylvanian Concubine" last year). On its sophomore LP, Rasputina confounds expectations with every cut, sawing furiously one moment, plucking away in a pizzicato frenzy the next. Over 15 tracks, ranging from Lesley Gore's independence anthem "You Don't Own Me" (offset by the hilariously shrewish "Diamond Mine") to the danceable "Mayfly," Rasputina shoehorns the distinctive sonorous properties of its instruments, plus Creager's lyrical fetishes (including, but hardly limited to, death, madness and exorcism), into pop song formats with all the grace of a linebacker squeezing into his first pair of stiletto heels. And the outcomes are pretty similar, too: precarious and uncomfortable, yet weirdly alluring.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley



RELEASE DATE:
August 4.
FILE UNDER:
Chamber punk.
R.I.P.:
**Lisa Germano, late
Miranda Sex Garden,
Hangovers.**

SILKWORM

Blueblood
Touch And Go

Silkworm's early material illustrated the essential difference between heavy and ponderous rock. The band made heavy music (riffs, bone-crunching downbeats) about heavy shit (departed glory, sexual alienation) that nonetheless had the unembellished clarity of classic folk ballads—or the badge of post-Big Black Midwestern indie cred, depending on your point of view. In the glare of those sharp, trebly guitars and clean arrangements, the band members proved themselves as players and songwriters. These days, as Silkworm evolves away from spareness and toward a more '70s-rock sound, the question is, can it still bear the weight of its psychosexual imaginings and technical chops without going ponderous? Not to spoil the ending, but *Blueblood* delivers a stimulating mix of riff-fueled rants and more meandering tunes. Guitarist Andy Cohen's lyrics are cruder and funnier than ever—especially "Beyond Repair," a jaded-band-on-tour song that alludes to both LL Cool J and Bon Jovi in its opening line. Bassist Tim Midgett may be writing esoteric stuff about algae and elevators, but his soulful singing gives it wings. Joined at one point by Steve Malkmus on vocals, the band seems remarkably laid back—not content, just on a roll.

>>> Andrea Moed



RELEASE DATE:
July 21.
FILE UNDER:
Smart-ass rock.
R.I.P.:
**Grifters, Pavement, Red
Red Meat.**

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

SIX FINGER SATELLITE

Law Of Ruins

Sub Pop

Imagine, for some terribly odd reason, that Steve Albini, Helios Creed and Gary Numan all found themselves in the same rehabilitation program, and to satisfy their community service requirement they collaborated on an instructive concept album on why not to take drugs. Chances are good it would bear a strong resemblance to *Law Of Ruins*, the latest fusion of paranoiac man and antiquated machine from Six Finger Satellite. The usual 6FS mix of overdriven bass grindings, furious double-time drumming, and J. Ryan's jumpy, pained howling is present on most songs—but the main change the band has made is that John MacLean has picked up his six-string with a renewed vengeance, downplaying his collection of cannibalized and refitted analog synths, which set the tone on the previous couple of albums. The result sounds less like a coked-up version of Devo and more like a standard rock duel between throbbing bass and squawking guitar. Not everything on the album is terse and tense, though; *Law Of Ruins* is also twice as long as its predecessor, *Paranormalized*, and that gives the band room to stretch out, using drony synths and dub bass to create doomy ambient soundscapes like "Fall To Pieces." Six Finger is as difficult as ever to pigeonhole, but one thing is constant: the discomfort and claustrophobia levels are still refreshingly high. >>> David Jarman



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Cyborg art damage.

R.I.Y.L.:

Chrome, Big Black,
Birthday Party.

SPRING HEELED JACK USA

Songs From Suburbia

Ignition

Except for its misfortune to have chosen a name very much like that of a British techno act, everything seems to be going swimmingly for Spring Heeled Jack USA. In 1996 the seven-piece ska band from Connecticut released its debut and upped the ante by touring the country almost non-stop, garnering the band a fervent mass of followers and allowing it plenty of time to polish up its chops, which is particularly apparent on *Songs From Suburbia*. Here the group displays exemplary musicianship, surpassing the accomplishments of its debut to secure a position as one of the foremost purveyors of pop-influenced ska and among the worthiest of heirs (along with Hepcat and the Pietasters) to the kingdom of 2-Tone. Everything works with precision, from the gutsy horns to the syncopated guitars to the refreshing three-man team of vocalists. Of the 12 tracks, there isn't one that disappoints, each capturing an adolescent carpe diem mentality while avoiding the usual teenage pitfalls of stupidity, pretension and faux-poignancy. The album is a dance party from the onset, from the easy sway of the cool, soulful opener "Mass Appeal Madness" to the frenzied skank of the toast-infused finale, "Man Of Tomorrow." >>> Kelso Jacks



RELEASE DATE:

July 21.

FILE UNDER:

Smooth, soulful ska.

R.I.Y.L.:

Hepcat, Pietasters,
Specials.

gearwhore | drive.

- COMPACT DISC
- DOUBLE VINYL

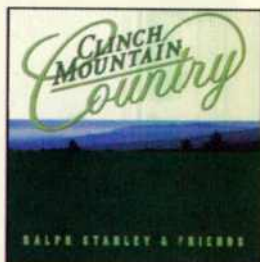
steamroller breakbeats, wickedly fierce techno, mashed-up, chilled-out downtempo grooves and hypnotic, punk-ified house that'll leave you feeling like you've been fucked by a train.

<http://www.astralwerks.com/gearwhore/>

RALPH STANLEY

Clinch Mountain Country Rebel

That Ralph Stanley is an American treasure is beyond debate. That he has a new album out is, in and of itself, hardly cause for remark, since he's released over 150 of them. That his fiercely loyal audience will snatch up this new album is a given. But among all this permanence—a permanence that has been hard-earned every step of the way in Stanley's five-decade-long career—*Clinch Mountain Country* stands alone as a unique moment, a flair in Ralph Stanley's permanence and a strengthening of it all at once. *Clinch Mountain Country* is a two-disc set of duets, on which Stanley's accompanists range from the cream of the credible country crop (Patty Loveless, Dwight Yoakam) to bluegrass music's brightest lights (Ricky Skaggs, Alison Krauss) to some of Stanley's fellow standard bearers from the old school (Porter Wagoner, George Jones). Bob Dylan also contributes to one track and he called the experience "the highlight of my career." Aside from the overly reverential liner notes (Dylan's is only one of several hyperbolic testimonials), this is a beautifully conceived and executed package. The songs are timeless, the interpretations faithful, and the result (like Stanley's other 149 platters), is all but objectively essential. This is a landmark release in the bluegrass genre, if for no other reason than because it captures the art form's current, thriving state.



RELEASE DATE:

May 19.

FILE UNDER:

Timeless music with a timely twist.

R.I.Y.L.:

Bill Monroe, Ricky Skaggs, Alison Krauss.

>>> Matt Hanks

TRIPPING DAISY ★

Jesus Hits Like The Atom Bomb Island

In the evolution of any good band, there comes a point when it has lots of ideas but hasn't quite figured out what to do with all of them. With *Jesus Hits Like The Atom Bomb*, Tripping Daisy has reached that point. Over the past several years, the Dallas band has evolved from an arty post-grunge outfit into a neo-psychedelic pop group cut from the same pattern as the Flaming Lips. Like the Lips, Tripping Daisy experiments with a panoply of noises, treating each song as a musical experiment. Like a kid with its first chemistry kit, the band mixes together all types of sonic elements and the results are as varied as you'd expect from such an imprecise methodology: Sometimes it creates a fascinating new concoction ("Field Day Jitters," "Our Drive To The Sun/Can A Man Mark It?"); other times the different parts just neutralize each other and what's left is an inchoate mess. But its moments of mastery are pure delights, and songs like "Sonic Bloom"—so jubilant and catchy, a-buzz with hand claps and "la-la's"—prove Tripping Daisy capable of brilliant inventiveness. All it needs now is to learn which formulas work, and which will blow up in its face.

>>> Jenny Eliscu



RELEASE DATE:

July 7.

FILE UNDER:

Trippy pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Flaming Lips, Sixteen Deluxe, Porno For Pyros.

TERRA DEVA

Pulled Apart Om

Consciously or not, most dance music fans have already sampled the talents of San Francisco veteran Terra Deva. The 21-year-old producer/singer/songwriter has collaborated with regional stars including Electric Skychurch, the Hardkiss Brothers, Bugs, and Furry Phreaks. But she's also crossed paths with artists as diverse as jazz guitarist Andre Bush and Elton John. Like the innovators she lists among her influences—Nina Simone, Björk, Joni Mitchell—Terra Deva shows zero interest in coloring within prescribed lines. So while the aural palette of *Pulled Apart* favors shades of drum 'n' bass, with accents of house and trip-hop, the proceedings are far from monochromatic, even throwing a bossa novating reading of Kurt Weill's "Speak Low" into the mix. Inventive programming aside, her debut LP delivers an essential element many comparable platters lack: consistently solid songs. A pair of reinterpretations ("Inside (Bugs Remix)" and "Fresh Start (House Remix)") only underscores how sturdy her tracks' foundations are. While her vocal turns at times feel a mite calculated, overall the delivery infuses uncomplicated lyrics with distinctive top notes of emotion and personality, and she fills the nooks and crannies of the airy arrangements with superlative discretion.



RELEASE DATE:

July 7.

FILE UNDER:

Drum 'n' bass 'n' heart 'n' soul.

R.I.Y.L.:

Nicolette, Ultra Naté, Billie Ray Martin, Des'ree.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley

VAINIO VAISANEN VEGA

Endless Blast First-Mute

Nearly two decades ago, Alan Vega was the brain (and voice) behind Suicide, a New York City duo that used minimalist synthesized melodies and sampled found-sound to create music that was abstract, avant-garde and more oriented toward tapping the subconscious mind than moving bodies on the dance floor. Since then, Vega has kept a relatively low profile, occasionally popping up with solo albums or guest appearances. His latest surfacing is a collaboration with two members of Panasonic (now called Pan Sonic), a Finnish band which shares his characteristic creepy minimalism. Aside from a few pieces that benefit from current recording technologies ("Medal" is guaranteed to put your stereo to the test, with tones zooming from around 60 to 20,000 hz), this is an album that could well have been recorded during Suicide's reign. Most songs contain only a few layers: simple oscillator tones and staccato analog rhythm generators, background bloops and bleeps or crinkling noises, and on top of it, Vega's distant and echoey free-associative rants. Much of it has the loose, unstructured feel of a quickie one-off collaboration, with some of the material likely improvised directly to tape, but again, that spontaneity is very much in keeping with the Suicide's original ethos.

>>> David Jarman



RELEASE DATE:

August 11.

FILE UNDER:

Minimalist electronic noise.

R.I.Y.L.:

Suicide, Cabaret Voltaire, Throbbing Gristle.

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

GILLIAN WELCH ★

Hell Among The Yearlings
Almo Sounds



RELEASE DATE:

July 28.

FILE UNDER:

Raw American music.

R.I.Y.L.:

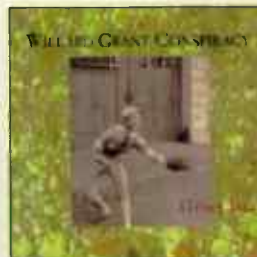
Carter Family, Lucinda Williams, Stanley Brothers, *Anthology Of American Folk Music*.

If Gillian Welch made chairs, even the screws would be handmade. You can imagine her carefully eyeing every curve to make sure it flowed smoothly, and could be certain that the result would not only be gorgeous, but would hold a horse. She makes her country songs this way, and the music on her second release is even more sparse and gentle than her exquisite debut. Owing more to the Carter Family than to Loretta Lynn, the music on *Hell Among The Yearlings* is skeletal in its design. Not a note is wasted nor a word misused, and this attention to the bits that create a song is what makes it so jarring. Even when singing of darkness and doubt, which she often does, Welch isn't afraid to poke around in the tender places with a firm hand; you wouldn't expect this delicate, otherworldly voice to tell stories about rape and morphine, but she does, and it hurts. *Yearlings* may be too raw to make it onto country radio, but you can be sure that dozens of years from now when those radio songs have rotted away, the songs from *Hell Among The Yearlings* will be alive and solid, sitting in a corner waiting for their inevitable rediscovery. Don't wait that long; they're here for you now.

>>> Randall Roberts

WILLARD GRANT CONSPIRACY

Flying Low
Slow River



RELEASE DATE:

August 4.

FILE UNDER:

Poetic post-Americana.

R.I.Y.L.:

Lambchop, Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds, American Music Club.

The low, lonesome sound of Willard Grant Conspiracy is a meditative, expansive, and sometimes spooky update of classic American music, with a taste of spaghetti-western soundtrack music thrown in, not to mention an Eastern European dirge here and there. When you can figure out what deep-voiced singer Robert Fisher's mumble-moaning about, it's usually something to do with drinking and loneliness. His words only occasionally sink into depressive bombast; usually they're perfectly quotable, poetic even: "There's no such thing as clean"; "It's the kind of cold that heat won't cure... that comes from deep inside of you." The comfortable arrangements throw an array of generally drummerless sounds into the mix—accordion, guitar, fiddle, mandolin, harmonica, Autoharp, harmonium—without swallowing it all up. This Boston group's full, wide sound is similar to that of Lambchop or Pinetop Seven; they cram so much feeling and sound into these simple tunes you're afraid they'll explode unexpectedly, like a too-pregnant water-balloon. Songs range from suicide waltzes to dynamic, jam-heavy thinking person's rock, making *Flying Low* the perfect gift for Bad Seeds fans confused about what new music (aside from the Dirty Three) to listen to.

>>> Mike McGonigal

"The SKY is Too High"
By grahamcoxon



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MIXED SIGNALS

Germany's **HARDFLOOR** duo, Oliver Bondzio and Ranton Zenker, may not have invented acid house music, but the tweaky, freaky sound that springs from the unit's passionate, monogamous relationship with the Roland TB-303 bass machine has been immeasurably important and influential to the current generation of techno producers. Since 1992, Hardfloor has continually reinterpreted and remodeled the sound that erupted from soundsystems all over Europe in 1988, the birth year of "acid" music. *Hardfloor X-Mix: Jack The Box* (Studio K7) is the duo's first DJ release, and a fond look back to that "summer of love" that serves as an audio history lesson for those who missed the initial explosion. Through 20 hand-selected cuts, the pair retraces the steps that made the acid melody a mainstay in underground dance music. Featuring classic Chicago tracks from pioneers such as DJ Pierre ("Box Energy,") Armando ("Land Of Confusion,") and Phuture ("Spank Spank," "The Creator"), *Jack The Box* is a 65-minute mind-fuck whose futuristic appeal still resonates, despite the age of many of the cuts. The collection also includes three exclusive new Hardfloor tracks, made to sound like they were recorded back in the day. It's a necessary trip for acid house-heads who wish to relive the revolution... Britain's **CARL COX**, the inventor of the three-turntable technique, has reigned as the world's most famous and respected techno-house assassin for the latter half of this decade. UK clubbers worship him like a deity, and Cox's current plan is to ensure American night owls drop to their knees as well. Following his first-ever domestically released mix, 1997's *F.A.C.T. 2*, Cox returns with *The Sound Of Ultimate B.A.S.E.* (Worldwide Ultimatum-Moonshine), a 17-track audio adventure featuring cuts known to blow the doors off of his two-year-old Ultimate B.A.S.E. nightclub. Living up to his heady reputation, Cox drops a flawless mix every 90 seconds, layering techno and house anthems like a mason. This energetic release serves as the first of an Ultimate B.A.S.E. series—look for the forthcoming mix by resident DJ Jim Masters... Keeping Cox and crew on their guard is Trade, the original UK after-hours venue whose warped, nu-energy house symphony keeps hands waving in the air long after the cock crows. The club's reputation has expanded far beyond its London base as the Trade crew has held court in major cities including New York, Paris, Amsterdam and Miami. Under the guidance of resident deck technician **TONY DE VIT**, *Trade* (Groove Radio International/Egil_Music-Priority) is the first domestically released mix to bring the magic of this event into your own living room. Piling classic upon classic, the smooth, high energy groove flows for more than 70 minutes, peaking with favorites such as Brainbasher's "Do it Now," Watchman's "Kick Some S***" and De Vit's own "Get Loose."



>>> M. Tye Comer

massive attack

(Continued from page 31)

post-punk stylings in the space of one hour.

The set's diversity is all the more compelling for the unmistakable change of mood among the enormous crowd. The couple in front of me, who'd been chain-smoking spliffs for a good 40 minutes, seems to lose the buzz and enthusiasm when the guitar began to dominate the room. In contrast, behind me, some members of the drunken, British football shirt-clad audience are headbanging to the guitar, after showing little response to the dulcet tones of Horace Andy's and Liz Fraser's vocals.

Despite the rapid growth in popularity in North America of what has been dubbed "trip-hop" and "electronica," it is difficult to pin down precisely where Massive Attack fits into the American musical landscape. Certainly, *Mezzanine* is the closest the band has come to rock 'n' roll, but it nevertheless remains a dark and profoundly pessimistic record, not at all reveling in the rebellious, cathartic spirit of even the most dour US rock. On the other hand, a newly converted legion of electronic music listeners might find the pure pop heart that beats at the center of *Mezzanine*'s grim corpse a little much, given electronic music's distaste for song structures, let alone vocals.

For all Massive Attack's immense talent, its refusal to restrict itself to a single point of influence may impede its success in America. But it remains to be seen if in the US, where lip service is often paid to the value of diversity, cultural and otherwise, an audience can be found for *Mezzanine*'s leap into the unknown. And Massive Attack, about to appear, reluctantly, before Stateside club crowds, is about to find out.

e n d

medeski, martin & wood

(Continued from page 34)

instrument, I just want to make it a better world," says a more subdued Martin, moments after his "I'm in love" outburst. "I want people to realize that they can be more creative, they can be more imaginative. That kind of energy is where it's at. It's more important to focus on that than on destructive energy or despair or how terrible things are or whatever. So hopefully music can help that, or at least chill people out for a while, make 'em feel like there's something beautiful in the world. That's one of the things I think music can do." Martin is also a visual artist, who designed the group's distinctive hand-shaped logo. He is currently working on a book about rhythm, combining visual depictions of rhythms with an abstract history of the funky groove, tracing the roots of the beat from Africa to the Caribbean, South America and into the US.

Unlike previous MMW albums, which were recorded quickly and designed to document the group's organic live sound, *Combustion*, the trio's first album for Blue Note Records, benefited from a longer incubation period, with more time spent in the studio sculpting the tunes into optimum shape. "We grew so much from record to record, that usually by the time they're out, we're onto something different," says Medeski. "This was the first time we had the opportunity, the time to really work on the songs and give them shape. Most of the creative process, even if you're Mozart or whatever, the spark comes from the first few minutes you sit down to play—you just hit on something. And we're very good at that. But it's the refining that takes the work."

Combustion also features turntable work from New York's DJ Logic, who often performs live with the group. "DJ Logic has a musical, intuitive sense," notes Martin. "He can hear sounds and add them, use them in the music, where it doesn't have to be about rhythm at all. It adds another dimension."

"Multidimensional" is a good word to describe MMW, both in relation to the music it creates and to the sense of the beyond it suggests. Hands splayed, hunched over his keyboard like a medium at a Ouija board, Medeski conjures up phantasmagorical sounds and deep-consciousness riffs, sometimes playing his most astonishingly intricate passages with his eyes clenched shut in concentration. "He really gives it up. He inspires me a lot," says Martin of his partner.

For his part, Medeski sums up his view of collaboration, which he's done with artists such as New York guitarist/songwriter Oren Bloedow or jazz guitarist John Scofield, this way: "If it's somebody else's music, I'm there for them. That's what I like to do." Recently, Medeski worked on Sean Lennon's record, and at the time of our interview, he was rehearsing to appear on the next album by jazz trumpeter Michael Ray's Cosmic Krewe.

At its very broadest, MMW may represent the next evolution of music. The group's success comes partially in the wake of populist self-made acts such as Dave Matthews and Phish, though musically, MMW is part of a trend that's more and more common in this post-modern world, where new art is built out of disparate building blocks and reference points. And on a more spiritual level, the group represents a sharp turn away from crass music business commercialism and toward a world where soul, heart and the intuitive beauty of music reign supreme. And that's the key to Medeski, Martin And Wood: that the group can be seen simultaneously as a ferocious downtown jazz fusion outfit and as a gateway to the next millennium.

e n d

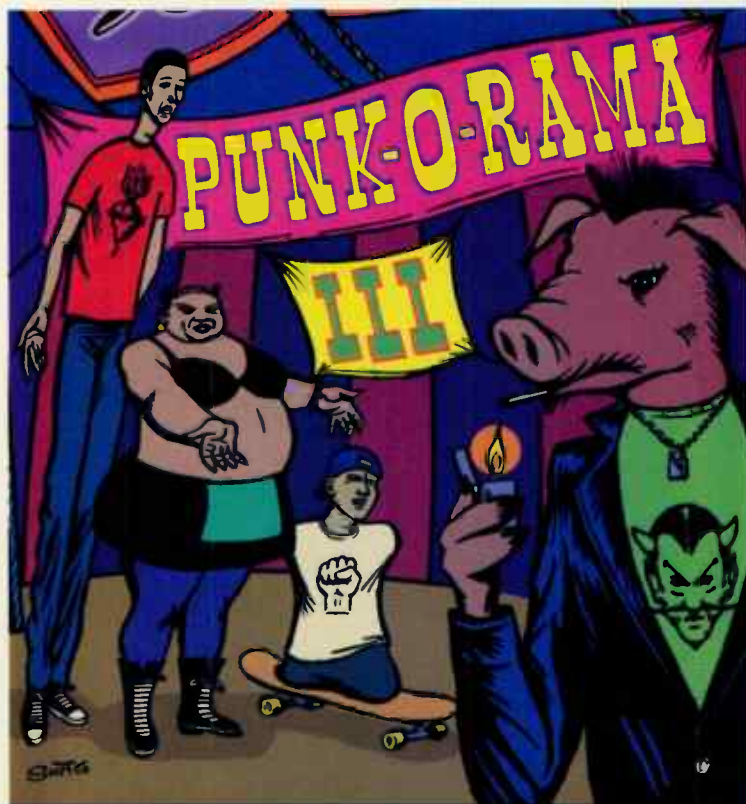
lucinda williams

(Continued from page 37)

lucid vision, that time has only increased the purity of those words.

"The last few years, I've felt dis-combobluted from all the waiting," Williams reflects, "but I'm starting to feel more like myself again. I can't believe the record is finally coming out, but I guess it'll sink in after I get out on the road and see the fruits of my labor." Maybe then, Williams will finally be able to leave her Happy Woman Blues behind.

e n d



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LA Confidential

LOS ANGELES'S SWING SCENE THE SWING REVIVAL WAS BORN IN THE CITY OF ANGELS. SAM WICK BREAKS OPEN THE DOSSIER AND DECLASSIFIES THE FILES ON HOW OUR CURRENT INFATUATION WITH SWING EVOLVED.

BIG BAD VOODOO DADDY



If “it don’t mean a thing if it ain’t got that swing,” then this great nation of ours, down to every last mom, American flag and apple pie, didn’t add up to diddly squat for the better part of the last two generations. Swing, a uniquely American art form that nearly faded into obscurity, is making an unlikely comeback. But the word swing, like another ironic misnomer, alternative, is really a sizable umbrella covering a grand array of jivin’ American roots music including hot jazz, Western swing, race music, Latin jazz, jump blues and much, much more. It’s morning again in America as increasing sales and radio airplay have thrust groups like Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, Squirrel Nut Zippers, Royal Crown Revue and Cherry Poppin’ Daddies into the national consciousness. It is a national phenomenon that owes its roots to the city of sunshine and wealth. It was Los Angeles, the city that begot Raymond Chandler, the gilded pen of pulp noir, that would jump ‘n’ jive ‘n’ start the neo-swing movement.

Those who count the 1996 Jon Favreau/Vince Vaughn sleeper hit *Swingers* as their first indoctrination into the world of swing, may be surprised to know that the scene was actually cuttin’ the rug way back in 1989. The style we associate with the scene today may have been absent, but the passion was there. Many subscribing to the “live fast, die young” ethos decided they wouldn’t mind making it to 30 after all. The swing scene became a refuge for punkers, rockers, bikers, rockabillys and counter culture freaks who decided if they couldn’t reinvent the system, they could at least tweak the past. “It was cultural rebellion in its most subversive form,” says V. Vale, whose book *Swing: The New Retro Renaissance* is an oral history of the pioneers of the neo-swing movement. It was the conservative revolution.

It didn’t seem conservative to Eddie Nichols and Mando Dorame when they started Royal Crown Revue in 1989. Nichols and Dorame played together in a local rockabilly favorite called the Rockamatics. They weren’t the first ex-punkers to don double-breasted suits—San Francisco’s Timmie Hesla & His Orchestra easily hold that honor—but Royal Crown Revue was the first to take the energy of the punk

lifestyle and mix it in a shaker with the flair of American roots music. It was swing music, but it had balls. The RCR wound up being the band that kick-started the neo-swing movement. Crazy tattooed kids were already attending shows by other roots favorites, most notably the Western swing of Big Sandy and the Latin bounce of Jump With Joey. The hazy outlines of the scene were just beginning to emerge, recalls Dorame. "A lot of the punk kids were into rockabilly and psychobilly. They idolized Elvis Presley and Gene Vincent, and wore patch pockets. They were in the '50s. When we started the '40s scene, they were already half-way there."

It was at King King, a dragon-festooned sweatbox that attracted Hollywood's movers and shakers, that Royal Crown Revue's "big band gone crazy" sound began to blossom. King King's eclectic booking policy attracted burgeoning crowds and celebrities throughout the early '90s. Mickey Rourke and Bruce Willis might jam on Mondays, while an equally groundbreaking club called Brass was spawning a lively acid-jazz scene on Thursdays. It was a place to see and be seen, and the Royal Crown Revue was headlining Los Angeles's first weekly swing night.

When King King closed in 1993, it left a gaping hole in the swing scene. Within months, two new clubs opened to fill that void. On the East Side of town Tammi and Tony Gower opened the club that would become synonymous with swing, The Derby. Located on the former spot of a drive-in called the Brown Derby, it promoted high-class roots music seven nights a week. But it was the ingenuous addition of free swing lessons that brought out the crowds and made the venue an immediate success. And the tantalizing possibility of peeking at airborne panties didn't hurt the draw either. Every Wednesday zoot-suited kids would crowd in with the "cigar 'n' martini" yuppie set to learn how to strut their stuff. Once they came, they came back week after week to shuck, jive and lindy hop when the Royal Crown Revue hit the stage.

Across town Johnny Depp had purchased a decrepit Hollywood club called the Central, and rechristened it The Viper Room. Best known as the spot where actor River Phoenix overdosed on the sidewalk, The Viper Room shares equal kudos in the development of the scene. Within months of the opening of The Derby, The Viper Room's Sal Jenco and Dean Miller threw their fedoras into the ring, launching Mr. Phats' Royal Martini Club. The joint was jumpin'. If you were anybody in the swing scene you graced Mr. Phats' stage. Current major label signings the Mighty Blue Kings, Flying Neutrinos, Indigo Swing and New Morty Show all made numerous appearances. It wasn't just the newcomers either: Veterans such as Beverly D'Angelo, Kid Creole and ex-Stray Cats frontman Brian Setzer & His Orchestra loved the intimacy of Mr. Phats' club. But it was Ventura's Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, a high-octane swing act, that became the spot's calling card. If The Derby had the yin of the swing scene in Royal Crown Revue, Mr. Phats had established its yang in Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.

When Royal Crown Revue signed with Warner Bros.—becoming the first of the neo-swing bands to sign with a major—the group walked away from the most successful weekly swing night in the country. Big Bad Voodoo Daddy quickly took its place, and stayed there for two and a half years. The band landed a break when swing aficionado Jon Favreau asked the band to appear in his low budget film, *Swingers*. The group agreed, but only on the grounds that clips would show it performing live. "Lip-synching," recalls drummer Kurt Sodergren, "would not be tolerated." When *Swingers* opened, a captivated nation was clued in to what Los Angeles already knew: that this

was one swingin' party. In a matter of months Big Bad Voodoo Daddy's draw increased exponentially, and soon the band landed a major label deal of its own.

The scene had exploded. Magazines like *Swingtime*, *Screamin'* and *Lounge* sprang up to cover it. In San Francisco, Club Deluxe and Cafe Du Nord were packing them in with Mr. Lucky, Lavay Smith and Lee Press-On & The Nails. Every town from Chicago (Mighty Blue Kings) to Austin (8 1/2 Souvenirs) had its own local heroes. Swing was back, but as media attention increased the scene began to splinter.

As swing grew it was increasingly fueled by kids from the suburbs. When Big Bad Voodoo Daddy stopped playing The Derby, it left a growing scene without an epicenter. Even Dean Miller knew it was time for a change. Mr. Phats' became Primos 500, a club focusing on what just may be the next underground movement, burlesque. Promoters in outlying areas opened their own clubs, and kids that used to drive to the city were now staying in their own backyards. The scene had lost sight of its roots. Royal Crown Revue's Mando Dorame says he no longer recognizes anyone at The Derby. *Swingtime* editor Michael Moss concurs in V. Vale's *Swing*: "The core group that started the scene is no longer with us. Kids coming into the scene don't



MANY SUBSCRIBING TO THE "LIVE FAST, DIE YOUNG" ETHOS DECIDED THEY WOULDN'T MIND MAKING IT TO 30 AFTER ALL. THE SWING SCENE BECAME A REFUGE FOR PUNKERS, ROCKERS, BIKERS, ROCKABILLIES AND COUNTER CULTURE FREAKS WHO DECIDED IF THEY COULDN'T REINVENT THE SYSTEM, THEY COULD AT LEAST TWEAK THE PAST.

realize that this was once a very 'punk' thing to do."

So the swing lifestyle is quietly taking its place in the mainstream. It's like one of the old Bogart films that Dorame idealized as a child—only this time Bogart is getting the girl and the cash. Or is it? Every bar has last call. When Disney opened *Atlantic Swing*, its own take on swingtime, many felt a saturation point had been reached. Dorame disputes this. The scene, he says, "is about a love of old America. How can [America] be a fad?" Perhaps he's right. In a time when we view the future with trepidation and fear rather than hope, how can we ever tire of the past?

Sam Wick is publisher of Lounge magazine, and covers the Los Angeles scene for Drink magazine.

Billy Squier

ONE NIGHT WHEN I WAS ABOUT 12 AND IN ANOTHER CABLE ZONE, I WATCHED THE NEW MUSIC TELEVISION CHANNEL: LIVE OR SIMPLE CONCEPTUAL CLIPS OF BILLY JOEL, STYX, THE J. GEILS BAND, TOTO, LOVERBOY AND SAGA. THEN THERE WAS "MY KINDA LOVER" BY BILLY SQUIER, WHO HOWLED IN HIS UPPER REGISTER, AND STRUTTED BACK AND FORTH WITH HIS GUITAR. THE BAND LOOKED AWKWARD COMPARED TO CAMERA-READY GROUPS LIKE JOURNEY, BUT BILLY WAS MAGNETIC, AND THE UNCHOREOGRAPHED FASHION MESS OF A BAND ON STAGE MADE HIM LOOK ALL THE MORE REAL. HIS VOICE WAS SLINKY AND PECULIAR AS HE DRAWLED THE OFFBEAT LYRICS ("YOU'RE MY SITUATION?"), AND THE SIMPLE CHORUS (THE TITLE REPEATED THREE TIMES). BUT THE TOUCH OF HYSTERIA IN THE WAY HE DOZED THE LAST "LOV-AHH-HA" MADE ME CERTAIN HE HELD SOME DEEP, SECRET DELIGHT.



He had an earlier solo record, and a couple with the group Piper, but the guy at Disc-O-Mat recommended the hit album *Don't Say No* (1981). On the cover, Billy sits on a bathroom floor noodling on a guitar, with his denim shirt unbuttoned, hair falling over his deep-set eyes, and guitar player's veins visible on his forearm. Like Jim Morrison, whose hair he also had, Billy did not smile in photos; the most you'd get was a kind of existential grimace.

The first song, "In The Dark," opens with a whanging guitar, as Billy croaks, "Life isn't easy from the singular side/Down in the hole some emotions are hard to hide." Hmm, were these emotions better off hidden or expressed? I was confused, riveted. "Can you break away from your alibis/Can you make a play, will you meet me in the dark?" What sort of invitation was this?

"The Stroke" was irresistible, with spiky riffs, nimble fuzz bass, and a sly skewering of the record industry. Even as a kid it was hard to miss the campy double entendre. Perhaps the album's most durable song is "Lonely Is The Night," whose opening salvo is instantly true and familiar: "Lonely is the night, when you find yourself alone/Your demons come to light and your mind is not your own." This is Billy's signature, writing about that ambiguous spiritual panic which has no single cause and no simple cure. He suggests cutting loose, but leaves the details to you. Although the song rocks, I could see Billy coming up with the near-classic riff on that bathroom floor. Not only did he possess emotions and moods, but he was also showing them off, wrestling with them in a way that made him seem complicated and sexy. He found a way to be sensitive, even a little freaky, and still pack a punch.

Billy followed up with an equally strong LP, *Emotions In Motion* (1983), which featured a cover portrait by Andy Warhol. If Billy had been invited to the cool parties that year, it made sense, since the first single was the saucy, leering hit "Everybody Wants You," his take on life in that lane. The album's funky title track is perhaps his finest recorded moment, where he both stretches and perfects his style. *Signs Of Life* followed in 1984, but judging by the godawful second side, Billy's inspiration was running dry.

I finally got to see Billy at the Meadowlands Arena, and bought a T-shirt to wear to gym class. Seeing my shirt, the popular kids began to mock his quavering moans on "Rock Me Tonight." Despite having penned "The Stroke," Billy was becoming uncool. Any loyalty doubts I had, however, were blown away when MTV aired a video from the Meadowlands concert—I knew it was my show because Billy had kicked a beach ball offstage right after his solo. The song was "All Night Long (Don'tcha Wanna Live)," another chapter in his volume of hot-blooded angst: "I get up—I run through the streets like a fire."

Looking back on his output, it's clear that Billy was handy with a riff, he had an unusual voice, and his personality struck at deeper chords than the going male rockers—but he was still stuck in a familiar format. He was neither a man for the Video Age nor an artist protean enough to survive it.

Billy's had 10 records all told, but the last few have traveled beneath most radar. Last time I saw him on MTV, he looked tired and half-hearted beside dancing bikini models. I was embarrassed for him. I recently saw his name on the back of the "Gotham Writers' Workshop" course circular, where he can be found thusly recommending the school: "My confidence as a writer has soared, and I've already completed three drafts of a full-length screenplay... I'll be back." Hey, lonely is the void.

BY IAN CHRISTE

CENTURIAN

Of Purest Fire

Full Moon Productions

Who are these bugs? The fingers of Centurian, a group of twig-skinny creatures from Holland, flutter as fast above the frets as hummingbird wings, but aren't quite so genteel. In its sustained whirl of bitter nectar production, the group makes fools of the fleshy fatsos in Deicide, while upgrading the quirky animosity of death metal to hyperspeed registers more familiar to black metal bands like Immortal and Marduk. Compared to less brilliant bands than those, Centurian is far more dynamic and crazed. The six tracks on *Of Purest Fire*—including a meticulous cover of Morbid Angel's "B.A.s.p.h.e.m.y." that seems 1.5 times as fast—establish the band as a master of a perennial favorite, the Satanic chaos zone. The strategy is push-push-push to infinite extremes, representing about a jillion hours in the state-sponsored practice room. Give these Dutch devils their due. Their well-tempered

oscillations scream from devoted hearts, with a tensile density that is inscrutably strong in structure, not heavy and loaded down in mass. Even when Centurian doesn't take its talents into radical new realms, it's still setting a high standard.

Hailing from Tel Aviv, the five lads in **ORPHANED LAND** weave beautiful, romantic dark metal on *Sahara* (Holy). Recorded in 1994, the music is like Enslaved, Samael and Iron Maiden, but stretched in all directions by Middle Eastern instrumentation, chord progressions and singing styles. A genuine attempt to fuse ancient music expression with post-modernist metal, *Sahara* is at least as successful as similar efforts by Sepultura and Dark Throne. Frenzied celebrations are cut short by a mediocre production and a slightly dated sound, but the question is very much: What is this band doing today?... On a more contemporary tip, **NILE**, another band taking inspiration from Mesopotamia, presents the full-bore killing session *Amongst The Catacombs Of Nephren-Ka* (Relapse). It includes Sufi screaming, atonal keyboard parts and plenty of sun-baked craziness (a shared trait of death metal and devotional music), so it's not that surprising to learn that the members of Nile are actually South Carolinians with Middle Eastern roots. Their professional onslaught of whirling dervish-core brings a brilliant systemic madness to the unpredictable blur of metal's bluesy future-churn. With Dracula bands like Cradle Of Filth sucking the life out of the scene, it's good to hear Mummy-influenced suffocation sounds that reconcile Morbid Angel and Muhammad... In embarrassing contrast, the most hopelessly regressive elements of the black metal scene are gathered together with the second issue of **THE SEVENTH SCROLL** magazine (Box 2176, Champaign, IL 61825). Those interested in the physical exercise practices of Christian Vikernes Of Burzum, the business philosophy of Samoth Of Emperor, or the impotent rage of Enthroned should find a copy immediately. The editors have decent taste in music, and a knack for getting interviewees to say hilariously stupid things—as when jailbird Vikernes professes his love for marching bands and proclaims all metal racially impure.



metal top 25

- 1 **SLAYER**
Diabolus In Musica
American/Columbia-CRG
- 2 **MONSTER MAGNET**
Powertrip A&M
- 3 **SOULFLY**
Soulfly Roadrunner
- 4 **KILGORE**
Search For Reason Unsound-Revolution
- 5 **CRADLE OF FILTH**
Cruelty And The Beast Fierce-Mayhem
- 6 **ANTHRAX**
Volume 8: The Threat Is Real Ignition
- 7 **VOIVOD**
Phobos Slipdisc
- 8 **CLUTCH**
The Elephant Riders Columbia-CRG
- 9 **CLAY PEOPLE**
Clay People Slipdisc
- 10 **CANNIBAL CORPSE**
Gallery Of Suicide Metal Blade
- 11 **MERCYFUL FATE**
Dead Again Metal Blade
- 12 **DRAIN S.T.H.**
Horror Wrestling The Enclave-Mercury
- 13 **ULTRASPANK**
Ultraspank Epic
- 14 **INCANTATION**
Diabolical Conquest Relapse
- 15 **MAOBALL**
Look My Way Roadrunner
- 16 **GRAVITY KILLS**
Perversion TVT
- 17 **NILE**
Amongst The Catacombs Of Nephren-Ka
Relapse
- 18 **CONVERGE**
When Forever Comes Crashing Equal Vision
- 19 **DARK FUNERAL**
Vobiscum Satanas Metal Blade
- 20 **BAD RELIGION**
No Substance Atlantic
- 21 **SYSTEM OF A DOWN**
Sampler (5") American/Columbia-CRG
- 22 **MINDROT**
Soul Relapse
- 23 **TURA SATANA**
Relief Through Release FAD
- 24 **OBITUARY**
Dead Roadrunner
- 25 **BENEDICTION**
Grind Bastards Nuclear Blast America

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

DEEJAY PUNK-ROC

Chicken Eye

Independiente

It is now clear that the "big beat" movement, exemplified by the Chemical Brothers, Propellerheads and the Crystal Method, is a huge phenomenon in North America. Whether they acknowledge it or not, these artists are indebted to mid-'80s hip-hop, but what would happen if someone who's been immersed in hip-hop culture from the get-go decided to make a so-called "big beat" record? The answer comes in the form of *Chicken Eye*, produced and recorded in Brooklyn by DeeJay Punk-Roc. Punk-Roc introduces old-school hip-hop's original techniques—staccato edits, thick scratching and tractor-pulling drum loops, which were at the time avant-garde—into the domain of jazzy, sometimes loungey, contexts. It's a bold experiment that could have easily failed, but didn't. The lounge/hard breakbeat fusion works

best on "No Meaning" and "The World Is My Ashtray," but Punk-Roc's got an arsenal of other tricks that have more to do with breakdancing mats than lounge lizards of any stripe. One listen to the first single, "My Bearbox," places you squarely in Mantronix territory, with a vocoder that bites like a snapping turtle and some jagged acid lines that feel like a filthy shot of adrenaline at the base of the spine.



The rate at which styles change in electronic music is not only exhaustingly fast, but it tends to compress momentous generational shifts into increasingly shorter periods. It was only a decade ago that the synthy dance music that DeeJay Punk-Roc draws on was the freshest sound around, and that same sound has also given inspiration to FUZZ AGAINST JUNK on its new single "Country Clonk" (Nu Phonic). Featuring a large ensemble of live players, it opens with a long intro reminiscent of *Ceremony*-era New Order with a Peter Hook-y bass line and minor-key chord changes before moving into a flattened, thick house kick offset by guitar work that could have been lifted from David Gilmour's moments of excess and brilliance on Pink Floyd's *The Wall*. Although this is clearly a dancefloor record, I suspect it will find an audience that could care less about being behind or in front of a pair of turntables. At ten minutes plus, this is either a slab of epic disco or a long, meandering prog rock track. But does it really matter?... Since we're in the world of the musical hybrid, why not talk about what just might be the best and most significant single of the year, "Mango Drive" by RHYTHM & SOUND. (Record Time). You may be familiar with the faltering sinewave dub of the Maurizio/Basic Channel/Reaction school in Berlin—techno so minimal it's nearly at the frequency of a dog whistle, almost outside the range of human hearing. Well, Maurizio and co. have a soft spot for Bronx dub producer Lloyd "Bullwackie" Barnes, so they decided to give the old Berlin treatment to Bullwackie's '79 classic "Mango Walk," turning it into a chilling, gorgeous electronic track. Imagine landing on the surface of the moon and hearing a sonorous bass pulse infused with the sound of Lee Perry and you'll get an idea of what's going on here. Had Stanley Kubrick not used "Thus Spake Zarathustra" as the soundtrack to *2001: A Space Odyssey*, "Mango Drive" would have been a perfect substitute.

dance top 25

- 1 **MASSIVE ATTACK**
Mezzanine Circa-Virgin
- 2 **PLASTIKMAN**
Consumed M_nus/Novamute-Mute
- 3 **TRICKY**
Angels With Dirty Faces Island
- 4 **BEN NEILL**
Goldbug Antilles-Verve
- 5 **WINK**
HereHear Ovum/Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 6 **COVENANT**
Europa 21st Circuitry
- 7 **VARICUS ARTISTS**
Diva X Machina 2 COP International
- 8 **LIONRÖCK**
City Delirious Concrete-Time Bomb
- 9 **ADD N TO X**
On The Wires Of Our Nerves Satellite-Mute
- 10 **VARICUS ARTISTS**
MTV's Amp 2 Astralwerks
- 11 **AMON TDBIN**
Permutation Ninja Tune (Canada)
- 12 **DJ CAM**
The Best Assassinated
Inflammable/Globetrotter-Sony
- 13 **MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO**
"Acid Again" (5") Nothing-Interscope
- 14 **µ-ZIQ**
Brace Yourself (EP) Astralwerks
- 15 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
The United States Of Drum & Bass Evil Teen
- 16 **MOGWAI**
Kicking A Dead Pig Jetset
- 17 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
V Classic Volume II Konkrete Jungle-Ultra
- 18 **SNOG**
Buy Me... I'll Change Your Life Metropolis
- 19 **RX**
Bedside Toxicology Invisible
- 20 **JHNO**
Kwino Delicate Ear
- 21 **DARWIN CHAMBER**
The Ghetto Electro Chronicles
Bottom Heavy-Moonshine
- 22 **APOPTYGMA BERZERK**
The Apocalyptic Manifesto Tatra-Metropolis
- 23 **WAGON CHRIST**
The Power Of Love (EP) Astralwerks
- 24 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Funkfusion Ninja Tune (Canada)
- 25 **PIGFACE**
Below The Belt Invisible

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

BY BRIAN COLEMAN

hip-hop top 25

- 1 **GANG STARR**
"Militia" Noo Trybe-Virgin
- 2 **PUMPKIN HEAD**
"Dynamic" Makin'
- 3 **LAURYN HILL**
"Lost Ones" Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 4 **NOREAGA**
"N.O.R.E." Penalty
- 5 **JOHN FORTE**
"Ninety Nine (Flash The Message)"
Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 6 **JAY-Z**
"A Million And One Questions" Def Jam-Polygram
- 7 **FEATHER B**
"Do You" MCA
- 8 **XZIBIT**
"Three Card Molly" Loud-RCA
- 9 **PUBLIC ENEMY**
"He Got Game" Def Jam-Polygram
- 10 **KING T**
"Got It Locked" Aftermath-Interscope
- 11 **ALL CITY**
"The Actual" Geffen
- 12 **CAM'RON**
"Horse & Carnage" Entertainment-Epic
- 13 **ONYX**
"React" Def Jam-Polygram
- 14 **DMX**
"Stop Being Greedy" Def Jam-Polygram
- 15 **DAZ DILLINGER**
"It Might Sound Crazy" Death Row-Priority
- 16 **DIAMONDS IN DA ROUGH**
"The Dee" Roc-A-Fella
- 17 **RAS KASS**
"Understandable Smooth Shit" Patchwork-Priority
- 18 **SUNZ OF MAN**
"Shining Star" Red Ant
- 19 **GOODIE MOB**
"Black Ice" LaFace-Arista
- 20 **MASTER P.**
"Thinkin' Bout U" No Limit-Priority
- 21 **DJ JAZZY JEFF & THE FRESH PRINCE**
"Summertime '98" Jive
- 22 **WYCLEF JEAN**
"What's Clef Got To Do With It?"
Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRG
- 23 **FREAKY NASTY**
"Do What You Feel" Power-Roadrunner
- 24 **PRAS MICHEL**
"Ghetto Superstar" Interscope
- 25 **A-**
"Boys 2 Men" Universal

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

MIX MASTER MIKE

Anti-Theft Device

Asphodel

Turntablism is, slowly but surely, beginning to enter the realm of exposure previously reserved for vocal hip-hop. After the X-ecutioners' excellent *X-pressions* and the continuing excellence coming from the BOMB label, it's fitting that Mix Master Mike, the conceptual linchpin of the Invisibl Skratch Piklz crew, should be next up to bat in the full-length game. Mike's style is deeply informed by his super-ill cutting technique, but is also compositionally complex. While most of *Anti-Theft Device* follows a similar format—start with an electro beat, then mix, shake, cut and stir sounds around on top of it—there are quick stops and new avenues of sound around each bend, marking him as a musical thinker first and an untouchable DJ shortly thereafter. The overall tone of this 31-track tract is surprisingly serious and musically ominous, but his keen sense of humor and love of the absurd frequently peeks through in his choice of samples and sounds: bips, deep acid tones, funky keyboards and snippets of everything from the JB's to Falco to Dick Hyman. *Anti-Theft Device* is another great addition to the DJ-on-wax genre and is a captivating and complex listen from start to finish.



It's somewhat sad to say, but the DEF SQUAD's new platter *The Album* (Def Jam) is one of the best major label releases out this year. Why is this a shame? Because straight-ahead, no-nonsense, well-executed and unpretentious rap albums are so damn hard to come by these days. The Def Squad crew—producer/rapper supreme Erick Sermon, Redman and Keith Murray—is solid all the way through, and throwdowns like "Countdown," the kick-drum-less "Full Cooperation," "Rhymin' Wit Biz" (featuring Mr. Markie as ringmaster) and "Can You Dig It" will halt your skipping from track to track while the album grooves all the way through... The BLACK EYED



PEAS ★ aren't exactly musical trailblazers, but there's nothing wrong with adding to a good thing. The live feel of *Behind The Front* (Interscope), and the rap styles it draws upon, reveals an obvious debt to both the Native Tongues vibe and the Roots, but there are enough dope cuts here to make you overlook the reference points and just surrender to the groove. With a mix of everything from hard hip-hop illness to easygoing soul and even a house groove thrown in, the album is a damn good party jam that will please just about everyone... COOLER THAN SMACK not only breaks all the current conventional wisdom in the rap game, it doesn't even seem to know which rules it's bending. Straight out of a time warp from the end of

the electro years, the beats and rhymes on *The Diabolical Dope Act* (Linoleum) are demented, lo-fi and sometimes just plain sloppy. But that's not all bad: The group's super-real raps about its own destructive drug use and a view from the underbelly of society are refreshingly frightening. Those who are sick of slick, overprocessed hip-hop will be pleasantly surprised by CTS... And if you've got an electro jones, do yourself a favor and check out BASS MEKANIK's *Sonic Overload* (Pandisc) and the DJ Dave Clarke-compiled *ELECTRO BOOGIE VOL. 2* collection (Studio K7) for hours of acid bass, super-thump and vocoder pleasure.

LOL COXHILL
PHIL MINTON
NOEL AKCHOTE



Improv-saxophonist **LOL COXHILL** has, bizarrely, picked the middle of the year to release a Christmas single. "The Christmas Song" (Rectangle) is, in fact, the Mel Tormé chestnut (roasting on an open fire), which Coxhill, uh, sings, pretty much straight, backed by Phil Minton making all kinds of horrible vocal noises and Noel Akchote's perfectly

normal-sounding guitar parts. Coxhill also essays a medley of whatever other Christmas songs he can call to mind, along with the quasi-traditional "Donal' Wheer's Y' Trewsers." It's curious to hear these *very* culturally loaded pieces in the hot summer months, and Coxhill gets to show off his berserk sense of humor.

The third volume in Slap A Ham Records' extreme grindcore series, **BLLEEEEEAAAUUURRRRRGGHHH! A MUSIC WAR**, is now out, and it's, uh, extreme: It crams 73 bands and 84 songs onto one 7" single. Eighty-four *very, very short* songs, mostly well under ten seconds long—some no more than a little blurt of noise, some so fast that the band never gets a chance to synch up, some that sound like they were actually written in advance. More or less. There are a few familiar names here from the hardcore world (Los Crudos, Melt-Banana, In/Humanity), a few others that sound like they might have practiced a couple of times, and a lot that seem more like an excuse to put a band name and a title on the back of the record than anything else. Anyone for Japanese Torture Comedy Hour's "I Ran Over Your Dog While It Was Taking A Shit (Part 2)"?

The folks at Descò Records—basically the Soul Providers and whoever they can rope into singing—are continuing to pump out fabulous soul and funk singles, all newly recorded, though you'd never know they weren't cut between 1968 and 1972 (the label designs and heavy vinyl help with that). The pick of the recent litter is **SHARON JONES's** "You Better Think Twice," an instant sassy soul-barbecue-ready classic with some terrific organ, backed by a creditable cover of James Brown's "I Got The Feelin'." Also new: **LEE FIELDS's** smoldering soul ballad "Take It Or Leave It," and a little kicker called "Who's The King? (You Know That's Me)" by **JOSEPH HENRY** that sounds like some of Hank Ballard's casually funky early-'70s stuff.



A few quick drops of the needle: **DOUBLE D AND STEINSKI's** mid-'80s "History Mix" singles have never really been

commercially available, but they're cut-and-paste classics among DJs—the guys in Coldcut almost always play at least one of them whenever they DJ—and now a 12"

EVOLUTION CONTROL COMMITTEE

"Rocked By Rape" *Eerie Materials*

The Evolution Control Committee, the people who brought you the "Whipped Cream Mixes" of Public Enemy vocals synched up with Herb Alpert instrumental tracks, have topped themselves with this

stroke of genius. It's months' worth of Dan Rather speaking on the CBS Evening News, edited down to its essence—Rather naming one calamity after another in that impeccably serious, slightly overenunciated tone of his—and set to a cut up and rearranged AC/DC groove. The effect is hysterical (in both senses): One bridge goes "Wild and woolly semi-automatic truck bomb/Emergency anti-fatal shooting rampage/Notorious negative police brutality/Fear the hidden Nazis next door/Maoist rebels, serious murderer/Accidents, problems, punitive damages/Like that negative heartwrenching controversy/Time for us to bug out." This could very easily be cute and nothing more, but the ECC has made it an actual *song*—drum breakdowns, solos, choruses, you name it—and, best of all, the Committee has arranged Rather's vocals so it sounds like he's speaking real sentences, meaningless as they are, and hitting the groove. The B-side has a very long string of Rather disasterspeak on its own. Mix your own hit!



bootleg has shown up with all three "History Mixes," along with Steinski & Mass Media's "The Motorcade Sped On." Seek it out... The natural descendant of the "History Mixes" is the **HERBALISER's** "Wall Crawling Giant Insect Breaks" CD single (Ninja Tune), a cut-up about the history of hip-hop culture with all kinds of breaks (especially from Malcolm McLaren's *Duck Rock*, a Steinski favorite) and campy spoken-word bits dropped in. It's entertaining, kinda funky, and backed up by a couple of live tracks... **BATTLE OF THE BANDS** (Super-8) is a trashy, nifty little compilation 7" with low-tech rock songs by four high school-age girl bands: Skinned Teen (whose members seem to have learned to play an instrument or two since we last heard from them), Angora, the Knock-Ups and the Rondelles, whose organ-accented "Mission Irresistible" is the most fun thing here... Fans of **DUMP**, the solo project of Yo La Tengo's James McNew, should keep an eye out for "Easter Dress," a gentle, strummy single that's the first release on the Japanese label Favorite Things; its B-side, "Almost Home," is as spare and intimate a song as he's recorded.

BY JAMES LIEN



Reprinted in the CD booklet to the eponymous reissue of the **LYRES'** first recordings is an article from *New Musical Express* from December 1981, in which the Boston garage-rock band's first EP is reviewed alongside R.E.M.'s "Radio Free Europe" and Mission Of Burma's vastly influential *Signals, Calls And Marches*. That's the kind of company the Lyres kept, and now they've had their four seminal albums reissued by Matador with

excellent bonus tracks on each. For most of the '80s the Lyres slugged away in the clubs, and kept the garage rock flame alive before most people even realized such a flame existed.

Fantasy Records has reissued **JOHN FAHEY's** classic album *America*, and plans to re-release his *Death Chants, Breakdowns And Military Waltzes* this summer. Fahey's idea was to take acoustic finger-picking guitar technique and apply it outside of the framework of traditional musical structures like folk and blues. Sounds simple enough, but while most white kids in the '60s came off as goofy folkies or conical copycats of old grizzled bluesmen (John Hammond, Paul Butterfield, etc.), Fahey was inventing his own language and vocabulary. Here *America* is expanded with bonus tracks to double-album length, a sprawling masterpiece of beautiful instrumental guitar music. Fahey's influence resurfaced in modern day players like Jim O'Rourke, Thurston Moore, Cul De Sac and other so-called post-rockers, and *America* is as great a place to dip into his music as any.

Fahey's ever-intriguing label, Revenant Records, has released a CD by **JENKS "TEX" CARMAN** called *Chippewa! The Essential Dixie Cowboy (1947-1957)*. Carman was a poorly understood country music novelty artist who played Hawaiian guitar and sang old, anachronistic songs in a frightening-sounding, strangled tenor. The fact that he often did so while wearing a feathered Indian headdress (in honor of his Cherokee grandmother) probably made him seem even weirder to the meat-and-potatoes country music audience of his day. This CD compiles material from the career of the inscrutable man who may have been country music's Andy Kaufman.

Rhino's **'SABROSO' THE AFRO-LATIN GROOVE** has been struck in my player since I first heard the '60s Latin novelty hit "Shingaling Shingaling" by Kako & His Orchestra. Laying down a wicked and funky groove, Kako pulls a stunt lifted from Ray Charles's "What'd I Say," teasing the listener by abruptly stopping the song halfway through the record. Suddenly, you hear all these people in the studio moan and complain—"Aw, c'mon, Kako, play the 'Shingaling' one more time!" Naturally Kako obliges, kicking in the band in for another chorus or two to the delight of the crowd, which cheers and whistles. The rest of the album is a cherry-picked collection of 18 choice Latin and boogaloo classics from the '50s, '60s and '70s, from the likes of Willie Bobo, Joe Cuba, Tito Puente, Mongo Santamaria and others.

The 32 Jazz label has reissued four **EDDIE HARRIS** albums as a two-CD set. Harris, who was name-checked in rhyme on the Beastie Boys' *Check Your Head*, was a jazz trumpeter of the '60s and '70s who succumbed to all sorts of hip novelties, such as plugging into primitive electronic saxophones and layering his albums with gaudy psychedelic effects. Thus Harris's worst albums by jazz purist standards were actually his best: Let him play straight-ahead ballads and he'll induce yawns all around, but plug him into some

KINKS

Muswell Hillbillies Everybody's In Showbiz Preservation Act 1 Preservation Act 2

Konk-Velvet

The Kinks galvanized the British invasion by adding the slashing guitar riff to the shaking mop-top haircuts and "yeah yeah" choruses of the Beatles, resulting in hits like "You Really Got Me," "All Day And All Of The Night" and "Tired Of Waiting." Then, in their middle years, the Kinks became dazzlingly creative, dandyish psychedelic rockers with albums like *The Village Green Preservation Society* and *Lola Versus Powerman And The Moneygoround*. Ultimately, though, the group settled into a long, slow 1970s: there were few hits, but dozens of low-key yet memorable

albums that find songwriter Ray Davies lovingly assessing human character and the foibles of the modern world. Velvet has released the first salvo in what will be an extensive program to reissue these later, lower-octane Kinks albums. One cult favorite is 1971's *Muswell Hillbillies*, a play on Muswell Hill, the neighborhood where the Davies brothers grew up. *Muswell Hillbillies* plays brilliantly upon the preposterousness of the infatuation with country music in the early '70s. It's just one of those incredibly brilliant moments—a hilarious send-up of early '70s country rock that's actually played with genuine affection and warmth. Purists might argue that these albums are not as brilliant as the '60s Kinks masterpieces, but there's something lovable and charming about dissolution and slackerism, especially when it comes in well-crafted, funny songs penned by someone as witty and full of winking mirth as Ray Davies. Future installments will include *Sleepwalker* and *One For The Road* right on up to *Give The People What They Want* and *Come Dancing*.



kind of battery-powered '70s electronic gizmo and get him to play gutbucket blaxploitation funk, and you've got the party record of the night. This makes *Greater Than The Sum Of His Parts* a mixed proposition, but the highlights, such as Harris's wailing, theremin-like, electric sax solos on 1974's *Silver Cycles* album, are exceptionally groovy.

1	ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT	RFTC	Interscope
2	MASSIVE ATTACK	Mezzanine	Circa-Virgin
3	TRICKY	Angels With Dirty Faces	Island
4	BILLY BRAGG/WILCO	Mermaid Avenue	Elektra-EEG
5	JESUS & MARY CHAIN	Munki	Sub Pop
6	BAD RELIGION	No Substance	Atlantic
7	SPINANES	Arches And Aisles	Sub Pop
8	SONIC YOUTH	A Thousand Leaves	DGC
9	SOUNDTRACK	The X-Files: The Album	Elektra-EEG
10	MOGWAI	Kicking A Dead Pig	Jetset
11	GRANT LEE BUFFALO	Jubilee	Slash-WB
12	MONEY MARK	Push The Button	Mo Wax/Irr-London
13	SHONEN KNIFE	Happy Hour	Big Deal
14	SMASHING PUMPKINS	Adore	Virgin
15	BRIAN JONESTOWN MASSACRE	Strung Out In Heaven	TVT
16	BEASTIE BOYS	"Intergalactic" (5")	Grand Royal-Capitol
17	SEAN LENNON	Into The Sun	Grand Royal-Capitol
18	BAXTER	Baxter	Maverick
19	GRAVITY KILLS	Perversion	TVT
20	TORI AMOS	From The Choirgirl Hotel	Atlantic
21	CIV	Thirteen Day Getaway	Lava-Atlantic
22	BRIAN SETZER ORCHESTRA	The Dirty Boogie	Interscope
23	GIRLS AGAINST BOYS	Freak*On*ica	DGC
24	LENNY KRAVITZ	5	Virgin
25	GETAWAY CRUISER	Getaway Cruiser	550
26	DRUGSTORE	White Magic For Lovers	Roadrunner
27	MXPX	Slowly Going The Way Of The Buffalo	A&M
28	DON CABALLERO	What Burns Never Returns	Touch And Go
29	MITCHELL FROOM	Dopamine	Atlantic
30	MONO PUFF	It's Fun To Steal	Bar/None
31	ROSE MELBERG	Portola	Double Agent
32	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Selector Dub Narcotic	K
33	DJ CAM	The Beat Assassinated	Inflammable/Globetrotter-Sony
34	FUGAZI	End Hits	Dischord
35	GARBAGE	Version 2.0	Almo Sounds
36	OZOMATLI	Ozomatli	Almo Sounds
37	BARRY ADAMSON	As Above So Below	Mute
38	ADO N TO X	On The Wires Of Our Nerves	Satellite-Mute
39	DAVE ALVIN	Blackjack David	HighTone
40	CONNELLS	Still Life	TVT
41	JOAN OF ARC	How Memory Works	Jade Tree
42	UNWRITTEN LAW	Unwritten Law	Interscope
43	VERSUS	Two Cents Plus Tax	Caroline
44	FIREWATER	The Ponzi Scheme	Jetset
45	CALEXICO	The Black Light	Quarterstick
46	WILL OLDHAM	Black/Rich Music	Drag City
47	VIRGIN-WHORE COMPLEX	Succumb	Emperor Norton
48	HOME GROWN	Act Your Age	Outpost
49	VARIOUS ARTISTS	MTV's Amp 2	Astralwerks-Caroline
50	LUCINDA WILLIAMS	Car Wheels On A Gravel Road	Mercury
51	SOUNDTRACK	Godzilla	Epic
52	CHIXDIGGITI	Born On The First Of July	Honest Don's
53	NEGATIVLAND	Happy Heroes	Seeland
54	SWINGIN' UTTERS	Five Lessons Learned	Fat Wreck Chords
55	SISTER SOLEIL	Soularium	Universal
56	PERE UBU	Pennsylvania	Tim/Kerr
57	JAO AND DAVID FAIR	Monster Songs For Children	Kill Rock Stars
58	ROBERT POLLARD	Waved Out	Matador
59	NATALIE MERCHANT	Ophelia	Elektra-EEG
60	BOMBORAS	Head Shrinkin' Fun	Zombie A Go-Go-OGC
61	JEFF BUCKLEY	Sketches For My Sweetheart The Drunk	Columbia-CRG
62	HAYDEN	The Closer I Get	Outpost
63	PUBLIC ENEMY	He Got Game	Def Jam-Polygram
64	LIONROCK	City Delirious	Concrete-Time Bomb
65	DIAMANDA GALAS	Malediction And Prayer	Asphodel
66	TOM WAITS	Beautiful Maladies	Island
67	PLASTIKMAN	Consumed	M nus/Novamute-Mute
68	HILLBILLY HELLCATS	Our Brand	Rockin' Cat
69	JESUS LIZARD	Blue	Capitol
70	BEN NEILL	Goldbug	Antilles-Verve
71	CAUSTIC RESIN	The Medicine Is All Gone	Alias
72	CORNELIUS	Fantasma	Matador
73	PRISSTEENS	Scandal, Controversy & Romance	Almo Sounds
74	PIZZICATO FIVE	Remix Album: Happy End Of You	Matador
75	GUSTER	Goldfly	Hybrid-Sire

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT RFTC



#1 ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT
RFTC

FIVE YEARS AGO

1. P.J. HARVEY

R D OF ME

ISLAND-PLG

2. PORNO FOR PYROS

PORNO FOR PYROS

WARNER BROS.

3. PRIMUS

PORK SODA

INTERSCOPE

4. FRONT 242

ON 21 03 11 UP EVIL

EPIC

5. THE FALL

THE INFOTAINMENT SCAN

MATADOR ATLANTIC

TEN YEARS AGO

1. CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN

OUR BELOVED REVOLUTIONARY SWEETHEART

VIRGIN

2. SUGARCUBES

LIFE'S TOO GOOD

ELEKTRA

3. WIRE

A BELL IS A CUP UNTIL IT IS STRUCK

ENIGMA

4. TRACY CHAPMAN

TRACY CHAPMAN

ELEKTRA

5. JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

BARBED WIRE KISSES

WARNER BROS.

Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 30 most played releases that week.

L I F E / S T Y L E

DANNY ELFMAN PROBABLY DOESN'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, AND UNLIKE ELLIOTT SMITH, CRAIG WEDREN PROBABLY WON'T BE SINGING AT THE OSCARS NEXT YEAR BETWEEN TRISHA YEARWOOD AND CELINE DION, BUT SHUDDER TO THINK HAS REINVENTED ITSELF WITH SOUNDTRACKS FOR THREE OF THE YEAR'S BEST INDIE FILMS.

SHUDDER TO THINK GOES TO THE MOVIES BY DAVID DALEY

Wedren and Nathan Larson, both film fanatics, decided to make soundtracks their priority after their last album, 50,000 B.C., proved a critical and commercial disappointment. They've rebounded by showing off three completely new sides of their band on three decidedly different soundtracks. Two they composed entirely themselves—the short, crystalline compositions of *High Art*, and the old-fashioned period pieces with guest vocalists including Billy Corgan and Liz Phair for *First Love, Last Rites*. (See review on pg. 74.) They've also contributed three *Ziggy Stardust*-style numbers for Todd Haynes's anxiously awaited *Velvet Goldmine*, joining the elite company of Radiohead, Iggy Pop, Pulp and Sonic Youth, among others.

As an extra benefit, writing music for films seems to have recharged Shudder To Think creatively, inspiring the band to explore all of these musical angles on its next studio album.

"We needed something to do," says Wedren over iced lattes in SoHo, explaining how the soundtrack work started. "Our last record, for lack of a better word, bombed, and we felt so discouraged. We weren't interested in the pop-group treadmill anymore."

They'd always done different projects outside the band, Larson playing with Mind Science Of The Mind and the band writing themes for television comedy programs *The State* and *Viva Variety*, performing music for fashion shows, and working on commercials and friends' films. Eventually, these other outlets became as creatively fulfilling as Shudder To Think.

(Continued on page 78)



L-R: CRAIG WEDREN, STUART HILL, NATHAN LARSON

C O N T E N T S

66 EDMC ALL THE CLOTH THAT'S FIT TO PRINT

- 74 FILM
- 75 BOOKS
- 76 LIGHT READING
- 77 ELECTROMEDIA

>>> compiled by Jonny Wallace >>>

PERMANENT MIDNIGHT

[Artisan Entertainment]

If *Permanent Midnight*, which chronicles Jerry Stahl's days as both a heroin addict and a successful LA television writer, wasn't framed by an insipid storytelling device whereby Ben Stiller (as Stahl) recounts the



tale to his new flame Kitty (*ER*'s Maria Bello), this film would be a solid modern drama about the perils of selling out to get ahead. In the '80s, Stahl wrote for a variety of shows, including *Alf*, until his personal problems finally overtook him. Stiller makes a convincing portrait of a self-loathing and damaged adult who knows that he's the main saboteur of his own "promise." Scripted just enough to show his increasing drug dependence without justifying all his motivations, the film realistically takes us to his lowest depths: The scene portraying a desperate drive in search of a fix with his baby in the passenger's seat is particularly

chilling. There are no grandiose interventions here, only variations on classic enablers and pushers, from his marriage of convenience to Elizabeth Hurley, to his dealer, the omni-crazy Peter Greene. But most of the characters beside Stahl's are left in pilot stage and the relief-love of Bello and Stiller has lackluster chemistry—they're like a poor man's Rizzo and Joe Buck commiserating on the back of the bus. Thankfully, heroin is not the main character here, neither glamorized nor used as fodder for social commentary. The point of the story being, if life's troubles have turned you into a junkie, writing for *Alf* will put you over the edge.

>>> Millys Lee

MODULATIONS

[Caipirinha-Strand Releasing]

The music documentary is a tricky genre, wanting both to indulge the fans and to inform the curious. In the case of *Modulations*, Iara Lee's genealogy of electronica, the film tries to inhabit the buzzing, blooming confusion of the scene while also providing some historical and critical perspective on it. Lee attempts to satisfy both aims by structuring the film as a kind of hypertext or electronic network that allows her to surf through a massive archive of interviews, concert footage, video clips and digital animation. The result is a series of image- and sound-bites that does little to capture what is most characteristic about the music: its long durations and the generation of difference through repetition. And the director's glee in the blurring of boundaries—between male and female, the natural and the synthetic, audio and video, etc.—ends up masking important distinctions between subcultures, political positions and historical movements. In the end, *Modulations* is simply too ambitious and pulled in too many directions to be thoroughly satisfying. But this failure is also its success. If the film collapses under the weight of its material, it is because this material is too wonderfully rich to be contained within the film's 75 minutes.

>>> Christoph Cox



FIRST LOVE, LAST RITES

[Strand Releasing]

Like Brett Ratner and David Fincher before him, ex-Lemonhead and music video director (e.g. the Foo Fighters' Mentos parody) Jesse Peretz hopes to make the jump from MTV to movie megaplex with his debut feature, *First Love, Last Rites*. The film, adapted from an Ian McEwan short story by Peretz and Lemonhead David Ryan, examines the magnitude of a first serious relationship between Sissel (Natasha Gregson Wagner) and Joey (Giovanni Ribisi). The couple enacts a responsibility-free fairy tale romance, comprised of an exchange of secrets, takeout, great music and even better sex in their one-room existence on the Louisiana bayou. Unfortunately, the real world inevitably invades, in the form of pesky brothers, finances, lack of parental role models, insecurity and a rat in the wall, and both realize their bliss may be temporary. Peretz's first effort falls somewhere between the delicious darkness of Fincher's *Seven* and the commercial mediocrity of Ratner's *Money Talks*. The slow-paced independent has some brave moments (did I mention the male frontal nudity?), but eventually falters, unable to carry its initial ideas through to conclusion. Because of Peretz's background, the most brilliant parts of the film are the realistic portrayal of youth culture and the way he seamlessly weaves a timeless soundtrack by Shudder To Think, with vocalists such as Billy Corgan, Liz Phair, John Doe and Jeff Buckley, into the action. But his background in the small-screen, short attention span medium may also send him back to the treatment-writing table.

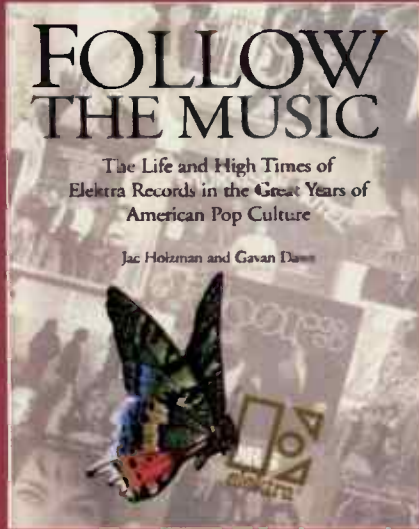
>>> Carrie Bell

FOLLOW THE MUSIC

THE LIFE AND HIGH TIMES OF ELEKTRA RECORDS IN THE GREAT YEARS OF AMERICAN POP CULTURE

By Jac Holzman and Gavan Davis (FirstMedia)

Jac Holzman founded Elektra Records in 1950, at the age of 19, and built it into one of the great '60s record labels before he left it in 1973. *Follow The Music* is a massive history of Holzman's years at the label, told in his words and the words of dozens of other people—virtually everyone associated with it in any capacity. As you might expect, it's a bit of a Holzman hagiography ("He felt good, he was strong, he knew he was a



leader"), but the authors squeeze in all sorts of sides of the story. And all sorts of stories—the book is a music-biz anecdote gold mine, especially in its fascinating discussion of how the Nonesuch line (bargain-priced classical records with mod-illustration covers) was founded and the parade of tales of trippy '60s excess. Once the drugs hit in a big way, the book bogs down a bit: The Doors were Elektra's big late-'60s success story, and the countless stories of Jim Morrison getting wasted and doing something obnoxious get a little repetitive. As a look at the way '50s bohemian and folk culture became '60s hippie and rock culture and '70s drug and soft-rock culture, though, *Follow The Music* is an eye-opening piece of oral history. >>> Douglas Wolk

LIFE/STYLE

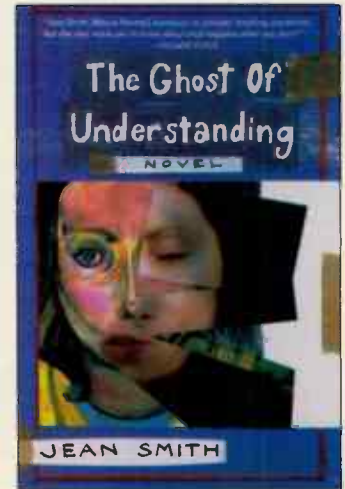
>>> compiled by Jonny Olsson <<<

THE GHOST OF UNDERSTANDING

By Jean Smith

(Arsenal Pulp Press)

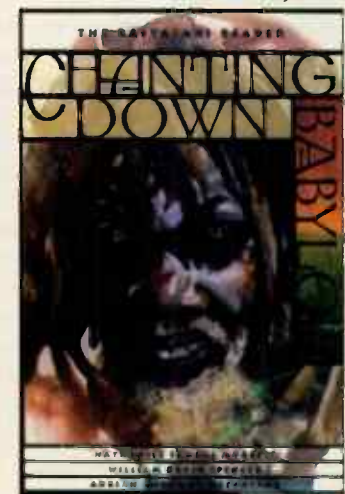
The back cover copy on Jean Smith's new, second novel identifies the book as "¿Fiction?" The question marks are apt, since *The Ghost Of Understanding* concerns both the imaginary odyssey of Claudine, a woman on the geographical and sexual fringes of North American society, and the obviously drawn-from-life experiences of Smith, her band Mecca Normal, and indie rock scenesters of her native Pacific Northwest in the early 1990s. The two narratives are interspersed throughout the book, as if to suggest that Claudine, a mystically introspective wanderer who flees the city to a stone house between the sea and the forest, and Smith, the forceful, press-savvy avatar of radical social politics and riot grrrl, are really two sides of the same persona. Smith makes this case rather well with Claudine's story, in compelling and sometimes beautiful depictions of Claudine's friendships, loves and profoundly sensual relationship with matter and nature. To this fan of Mecca Normal, reading Claudine's world is like being shown the place where Smith's songs come from. By contrast, the inserted conversations with area scenesters like Slim Moon and Calvin Johnson, who run Kill Rock Stars and K, respectively, and fragments of a Mecca Normal tour diary contain few surprises and much that has already been said in the press. The merger of the two protagonists at the end of the book isn't totally successful from a narrative point of view. Like all of Smith's work, however, it makes a strong point about the inseparability of public and private selves, of one's art and one's living. >>> Andrea Moed



CHANTING DOWN BABYLON: The Rastafarianism Reader

Edited by Nathaniel Samuel Murrell, William David Spencer and Adrian Anthony McFarlane (Temple University Press)

"The Rastas [believe] they are buried alive in a hostile and godless white society that couldn't care less about the black man [sic] down at the bottom of the heap. They never wanted to come here and they don't want to stay.... They have defected body and soul from Jamaican society into an outcast astral identity beyond the law." This is how Adrian Boot, in his book *Jamaica: Babylon On A Thin Wire*, describes Rastafarianism. Far from the common misconception of the movement as a "simple" way of life centered around Bob Marley and ganja, Rastafarianism is a sophisticated messianic belief system developed in Jamaica in the violent aftermath of colonialism. *Chanting Down Babylon* is a lucid and revealing body of essays that addresses Rastafarianism not only from an academic standpoint, but also from the point of view of highly respected elders within the movement itself. Verena Reckford and Roger Steffens speak directly to Rasta music, while Imani M. Tafari-Ama discusses "Rastawoman As Rebel," considering and challenging the movement's traditionally masculinist character. Elsewhere, essayists take on the ways in which Rastafarians appropriated elements of Judeo-Christian narratives and refashioned them to respond to the suffering of the Jamaican people. This is an original and informative collection of writing on an oft-misunderstood belief system. >>> Tim Haslett



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SHUDDER TO THINK

(Continued from page 73)

"We realized this is silly," says Wedren. "This trying-to-be-pop-stars thing wasn't working, and the soundtracks were coming so naturally and allowing us to indulge all our musical tangents."

Indeed, the three soundtracks range as widely as Yankees shortstop Derek Jeter. The *First Love* (Sony) soundtrack sets the steamy tale of young love on the Louisiana Bayou to blues and bluegrass, along with some traditional Shudder To Think rock, with an all-star array of guest vocalists. Scoring Lisa Cholodenko's *High Art* (Velvet), a chic look at art, sex and drugs in the New York photography world, required lots of short, strange arty instrumentals. Wedren likens them to "atmospheric hardcore" or "contemporary drug-den electronica." Ally Sheedy says they help make the movie.

"They are so amazing," enthuses Sheedy. "Craig and Nathan are really special. They got the movie right off the top, and the music they did for it is just brilliant."

With *First Love*, Wedren and Larson wanted feelings of déjà vu, with songs so familiar and evocative that filmgoers would wonder whether they'd heard them before. The familiarity of the singers certainly helped. Guests include not just Corgan and Phair, but the late Jeff Buckley, X's John Doe, Cheap Trick's Robin Zander and Komeda's Lena Karlsson.

"We started with our friends who were famous, basically, and

hoped they would say yes," says Wedren, laughing. "It was a lot of fun. We've been The The fans forever, so we asked Matt Johnson. We were fanatical about the Cardigans' *First Band On The Moon*, so we had to get Nina Persson. And for 'Automatic Soup,' this Zombies-like '60s psych-pop song, we just thought, 'Wouldn't Robin Zander be perfect?'"

First Love writer-director Jesse Peretz-Larson's roommate and a former Lemonhead--wanted the music to fit the film seamlessly, and not to force cool bands into scenes for the hipness factor.

"So many movies try so hard to have the hip soundtrack when it's inappropriate. I wanted music for the movie that didn't fit the alterna-rock genre. I wanted it to feel timeless and placeless," Peretz says. "Then we made the hip soundtrack and cashed in on the hip artists factor."

For Wedren, these soundtracks allowed Shudder To Think to break free from its arty, post-DC-hardcore cubbyhole. It's also a relief not to shoulder all the expectations. Headaches like reviews and sales are somebody else's worry.

"Between *High Art* and *First Love*, *Last Rites* you get two sides of a different coin that are both Shudder To Think, and it really opened up possibilities for us," he says. "Now we're writing a new record that is somewhere in between those soundtracks and older Shudder To Think records, which is a beautiful thing. Meanwhile, we'll do plenty more soundtracks. It's such a joy."

end

WITH LISA CHOLODENKO



JUO WHILDEN

VIDEO

UNDERWORLD VIDEOS 1993-97

FOOTWEAR REPAIR BY CRAFTSMEN AT COMPETITIVE PRICES

(Tomato)



With a mélange of videos as arty and sometimes baffling as the title suggests, this new collection of Underworld clips might leave the uninitiated wondering what all the hype is about. Fans of the UK electronic group, however, will want it as a keepsake—and to tide them over until the long-awaited follow-up to *Second Toughest In The Infants* comes out early next year. Tomato, the design firm started by the band's Karl Hyde and Rick Smith and responsible for all of the band's cutting-edge imagery, assembled this 90-minute, abstract art collection of 12 videos, layering psychedelic image upon psychedelic image, to make videos as intricate and compelling as the tracks they bring to life. Included are oldies and rarities—five videos have never been viewed in America, and two of the earliest songs (dating to before *Dubnobasswithmyheadinrar*) were never released Stateside on CD—but also favorites like "Born Slippy," from the *Trainspotting* soundtrack. —William Wurde

EDINA SWAP

From the writers of "Torn"
The new album **WONDERLAND PARK**
featuring the single
"Back on the Sun"



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World Radio History

Check out the track on this month's sampler



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BLUE ROBOT PJ SET, \$40

Stylist: Gabriel Trujillo at Red Salon Boutique, NYC

"You can't do it!" It's a warning that young clothing designers Eli Casdin, Dean Monogenis and Mitch Grobman have heard over and over again since they started their company, EDMC, two years ago. "Everyone in the fashion industry is like, 'You can't do it. It's not gonna work. It's the hardest industry. You can't do it,'" Casdin says, laughing. "And then they're like, 'OK, you're doing it but you're doing it wrong.' And then you do it right and they're like, 'You still can't do it.'" Today, their clothes hang in more than 60 retail outlets, including Bloomingdale's, Urban Outfitters and Wet Seal, and on the backs of bands like Luscious Jackson and Cibo Matto and television personalities like Carmen Elektra and "those crazy kids from *Clueless*."

The idea for EDMC germinated while the three native New Yorkers were still in high school; a friend had inherited a slew of Lilliput golf shirts—the kind that come with matching swim trunks—from his grandfather, and the guys were totally hooked on the Lillies' wild prints. "When we started, prints were so far out," Casdin recalls of the inspiration for the EDMC's repeating patterns of robots, bumblebees, army men and tigers.

"[Fashion] was all black and white," Monogenis chimes in. "We sort of envisioned that there would be this big resurgence in prints to take over the black and white."

So with the money that would have been tuition for Casdin's final year of college as their business's initial investment, the three began learning the fashion industry's ropes. "It's not like Mitch worked at Barney's and Dean worked at Ralph Lauren and I worked at DKNY," says Casdin. "We have no real concept of the industry but how we've developed it ourselves."

Grobman agrees: "We're defining it as we go along."

"We're making these ski jackets. I mean, we're making *ski* jackets," Casdin chuckles, as if he can't even believe it himself. "And people are like, 'You *can't* make ski jackets.' But somehow we make them and we're going to sell them. You just keep doing whatever you can do." end



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EDMC



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AUGUST 4

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 EAGLE-EYE CHERRY Desireless *WORK*
 FLIGHT 16 Flight 16 *550 Music*
 MICKEY HART/PLANET ORUM Supra Lingua *Rykodisc*
 MURMURS Blender *MCA*
Pristine Smut re-recorded, with extra tracks
 RASPUTINA How We Quit The Forest *Columbia*
 BEAU SIA Attack! Attack! Go! *Mouth Almighty-Mercury*
 SNOOP DOGGY DOGG Da Game Is To Be Sold Not To Be Told
No Limit
 SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS Perennial Favorites *Mammoth*
 WALKINBIRD Walkinbird *Prime*
Produced by Warren Haynes of Gov't Mule
 VARIOUS ARTISTS For The Masses *1500-A&M*
Depeche Mode tribute album featuring tracks by Veruca Salt, The Cure, Rammstein, Meat Beat Manifesto and others

AUGUST 11

A MINOR FOREST Inindependence *Thrill Jockey*
 ALUMINUM GROUP Plano *Minty Fresh*
 BEATNIK FILMSTARS Boss Oisque *Merge*
 BIS Intendo (EP) *Grand Royal*
 RICHARD BUCKNER Since *MCA*
 R.L. BURNSIDE Come On In *Fat Possum*
 BOBBY CONN Rise Up! *Thrill Jockey*
 GRAHAM COXON The Sky Is Too High *Transcopic*
Solo album from Blur guitarist
 OISHWALLA And You Think You Know What Life's About *A&M*
 DR. JOHN Anutha Zone *Pointblank-Virgin*
New Orleans voodoo man collaborating with Paul Weller, Jason Pierce of Spiritualized, and members of Portishead.
Supergrass, Primal Scream and Ocean Colour Scene
 DUB NARCOTIC SOUND SYSTEM Out Of Your Mind *K*
Latest album from K proprietor Calvin Johnson's groove outfit
 ECHOBELLY Lustra *Epic*
 EVINRUDES The Evinrudes *Das-Mercury*
 FUN DA MENTAL Erotic Terrorism *Beggars Banquet*
 FUNKMASTER FLEX Vol. 3, The Final Chapter *RCA*
 GANGER Hammock Style *Merge*
 HOWE GELB Hisser *V2*
Solo album from Giant Sand singer/guitarist
 GRASSHOPPER AND THE GOLEEN CRICKETS The Orbit Of Eternal Grace *Beggars Banquet*
Solo album from Mercury Rev guitaris/clarinnetist, Grasshopper
 GUV'NER Spectral Worship *Merge*
 NICK HEYWARD The Apple Bed *Big Deal*
Latest album from former Haircut 100 vocalist
 HOOVERPHONIC Blue Wonder Powder Milk *Epic*
 MIKE JOHNSON I Feel Alright *Up*
Third full-length from former Dinosaur Jr bassist
 KELLY FAMILY Almost Heaven *Virgin*
 KOTTONMOUTH KINGS Royal Highness *Capitol*
 LAROO The Hard Hitter *Virgin*
 BOB LOGG III School Bus *Fat Possum*
 SINEAD LOHAN No Mermaid *Interscope*
 LYDIA LUNCH Queen Of Siam (reissue) *Atavistic*
 CHEB MAMI Meli Meli Mondo *Melodia-Ark 21*
Latest album from the "Prince Of Rai"
 MAXIMUM PENALTY Superlife *Gypsys/Velvet*
 MYSTERIES OF LIFE Come Clean *RCA*
 ORGY Candyass *Elementree-Reprise*
First release on new Korn imprint
 LIZ PHAIR whitechocolatespaceegg *Matador-Capitol*
 PLASTICO Boomerang! *Epic*
 POSSUM DIXON New Sheets *Interscope*
 PULLMAN Turnstyles & Junkpiles *Thrill Jockey*
Featuring Bundy Brown (ex-Tortoise), Doug McCombs

(Eleventh Dream Day, Chris Brokaw (Come) and Curtis Harvey (Rex)

SCREECHING WEASEL Television City Dream *Fat Wreck Chords*
 ELLIOT SHARP ARC3: Cyberpunk & The Virtual Stance *Atavistic*
 SIX BY SEVEN Six By Seven *Beggars Banquet*
 SIX FINGER SATELLITE Law Of Ruins *Sub Pop*
 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS Severe Tire Damage *Restless*
 TRUMAN'S WATER Fragments Of A Lucky Break *Emperor Jones*
 ANA VOOG anavoog.com *Radioactive-MCA*
 VVV Endless *Blast First-Mute*
Features Alan Vega and Finnish group Panasonic

AUGUST 18

GLANOS Oouble Thriller *Bar/None*
 GRAND MAL Malediction *London*
 HARDEMAN Scream! *Epic*
 HELTAH SKELTAH Magnum Force *Duck Down-Priority*
 HOMICIDE Gelloland *Epic*
 GARY JULES Greetings from the Side *A&M*
 CANDYE KANE Swango *Antones-Sire*
 KID ROCK Kid Rock *Atlantic*
 KORN Follow The Leader *Immortal Epic*
Features guest appearances by Cypress Hill's B-Real, Ice Cube, Limp Bizkit's Fred Durst, Cheech Marin and Pharcyde's Tre Hardson
 LIGHTHOUSE FAMILY Post Cards From Heaven *Island*
 MC LYTE Seven & Seven *Elektra*
 JAMES MCMURTRY Walk Between The Raindrops *Sugar Hill*
 KEB' MO' Slow Down *550 Music*
 SIAMESE A Cat's Tale *Epic*
 SUNKINGS Soul Sleeping *Blueroom Americas*
 TOM RACER The Secret's Out *Risk*
 YATSURA Slain By Yatsura *Sire*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Treasures Left Behind: Remembering Kate Wolf *Red House*
Featured artists include Nanci Griffith, Lucinda Williams and Emmylou Harris

AUGUST 24

IRRESISTIBLE FORCE Nepalese Bliss *Ninja Tune*
 MOEBIUS/PLANK/THOMPSON Ludwig's Law *Drag City*
 ROYAL TRUX 3 Song EP *Drag City*

AUGUST 25

1,000 CLOWNS Freelance Bubblehead *Capitol*
 MERRILL BAINBRIDGE Between The Days *Universal*
 BETTER THAN EZRA How Does Your Garden Grow *Elektra*
 BIG HATE You're Soaking In It *A&M*
 CLUB OFF CHAOS Club Off Chaos *Mute*
 CRACKER Gentleman's Blues *Virgin*
 D+ Dandelion Seeds *K*
 OANCEHALL CRASHERS Blue Plate Special EP *MCA*
 DEL AMITRI Greatest Hits *A&M*
 DIVINE Fairy Tales *Red Ant-Mercury*
 EC8OR World Beaters *Digital Hardcore Recordings*
 EDNASWAP Wonderland Park *Island*
 FLEMING & JOHN The Way We Are *Universal*
 FLIPMODE SQUAD The Imperial Album *Elektra*
 GOAT Goat *Ruffhouse-Columbia*
 GRANOAOOY Under The Western Freeway *V2*
 JOHN HIATT The Best Of *Capitol*
 LAURYN HILL The Mis Education Of *Ruffhouse-Columbia*
Solo album by Fugees vocalist
 CHRIS ISAAK Speak Of The Devil *Reprise*
 JUNIOR KIMBROUGH God Knows I Tried *Fat Possum*
 LISA HALL Is This Real? *Reprise*
 MINERAL EndSerenading *Crank!*
 MONOCHROME Breathe The Day *Capitol*
 JOCELYN MONTGOMERY Lux Viven: (Living Light) *Mammoth*
Produced by David Lynch
 MOPES The Mopes EP *Lookout!*

MORLEY Sun Machine *WORK Group*
 MOTORBABY Motorbaby *No Solution-Mercury*
 BOB MOULOU The Last Dog And Pony Show *Rykodisc*
 MR. MIRAINGA Nueva *Trauma*
 MACEO PARKER Funk Overload *W.A.R.?*
 PHOTEK Form And Function *Astralwerks*
Six early singles plus some remixes
 PLASTISCENE Seeing Stars *Mojo-Universal*
 REISS Joying In The Vibe Of Life *Mercury*
 RENTALS Seven More Minutes *Maverick-Reprise*
 ROUGH HOUSE SURVIVORS Survival Of The Fittest *MCA*
 ROYAL CROWN REVUE The Contender *Warner Bros.*
 RUTH RUTH Are You My Friend? *RCA*
 SELF Breakfast with Girls *Spongebath*
 ELLIOTT SMITH XO *DreamWorks*
 SMUGGLERS Live in Madrid *Lookout*
 SNOWPONY The Slow-Motion World Of *Radioactive-MCA*
Features former members of My Bloody Valentine and Stereolab
 SOUNDTRACK Chicago Cab *Loosegroove*
Features unreleased tracks by Pearl Jam, Supergrass and Helmet's Page Hamilton
 STRANGEFOLK Weightless In Water *Mammoth*
 SWELL For All The Beautiful People *Beggars Banquet*
 PAUL VAN DYK Words/For An Angel 12" *Mute*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS All Men Are Liars *Fat Possum*
Sampler of artists on the Mississippi blues label
 VARIOUS ARTISTS So So Def Bass Allstars Vol. 3
So So Def/Columbia
 VARNALINE Sweet Life *Zero Hour*

SEPTEMBER 1

BUFFALO TOM Smitten *A&M*
 CHEMICAL BROTHERS Brothers Gonna Work it Out
Freestyle Dust-Astralwerks
DJ mix CD
 JACK ORAG Dope Box *A&M*
 GOODNESS Anthem *Epic*
 KURUPT Kuruption *A&M*
 LOCAL H Pack Up The Cats *Island*
 MISTER JONES Hall Mary *A&M*
 NATURAL CALAMITY Peach Head *Nickelbag*
 WILLIE NELSON Teatro *Island*
 TQ They Never Saw Me Coming *Epic*
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Modulations *Calpirinha-Sire*
Soundtrack to Lara Lee movie about electronica

SEPTEMBER 8

TINA ARENA In Deep *Epic*
 BARE JR. Boo Tay *Epic*
 BAUHAUS Swing The Heartache *Beggars Banquet*
Bauhaus live on the BBC
 BELLE AND SEBASTIAN Matador
 BLONDE REDHEAD In An Expression Of The Inexpressible
Touch And Go
 BONESHAKERS Shake The Planet *Virgin*
 BURGER/INK Las Vegas *Matador*
 FUCK Conduct *Matador*
 GOMEZ Bring It On *Virgin*
 EBELING HUGHES Transfigured Night *Zero Hour*
 WAYNE KRAMER Live Like A Motherfucker *Epitaph*
 LAMBCHOP What Another Man Spills *Merge*
 P.W. LONG Push Me Again *Touch And Go*
 MAIN Firmament III & IV *Beggars Banquet*
 NOTWIST Shrink *Zero Hour*
 PINETOP SEVEN Rigging The Toplights *Truckstop*
 SAINT ETIENNE Good Humor *Sub Pop*
 SOUNDTRACK Orgazmo *Nickelbag*
Soundtrack to movie by South Park creators Matt Parker and Trey Stone
 UB40 Labour Of Love III *Virgin*

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Glasgow, Scotland

>>> Continued from page 90

Roughly in the same part of town is the **Barrowland Ballroom** (244 Gallowgate, 552-4601). It's the best mid-sized venue I've ever been in, tops for atmosphere, sound and logo. If by some chance, say, Teenage Fanclub is playing there, you're in luck. Grab a ticket quick! Downsizing from there are three other pretty noteworthy venues: **King Tuts** (272 St. Vincent St., 221-5279), **Nice 'N Sleazy** (421 Sauchiehall St., 333-9637) and the **Renfrew Ferry** (Windmillcroft Quay, 429-8676).

RECORD STORES

Hipsters can pick up just about anything in Glasgow, from the latest techno to German electronics to the next Belle And Sebastian. And all before the suckers in London have caught on. Here's a list of my favorite record stores in particular order: **John Smith And Son** (252 Byres Road, 334-2769), a bookstore front for independent, electronic, avant-garde, jazz, classical and '60s music. **Eight-O-Three Records** (Flip basement, 70 Queen St., 204-1846) is a cardboard box operation with lots of cool US imports, punk rock and independents. Other spots to visit include **Missing Records** (685 Great Western Road, 400-2270, and 9 Wellington St., 400-1776) and **Fopp Records** (358 Byres Road, 357-1774). All of these stores stock vinyl, have courteous staff and will play you something off their racks.

RADIO STATIONS

I wouldn't exactly say we're spoiled for choice, but **BBC Radio Scotland** (FM 92.95, AM + MW 810kHz) has a fitfully worthwhile output. The following shows are worth checking: **Beat Patrol** (Sundays 8-9 p.m.), **Original Masters** (Sundays 3-4 p.m., repeat Mondays 8-9 p.m.), **Electronica** (Sundays 9-10 p.m.) and **Soundcheck** (Sundays 7-8 p.m.). Best of all might be **Duglas T. Stewart's** inserts on **Fred MacAulay** (Monday-Thursday 8:45-10 a.m.), which features anything from **Morricone** to the **Modern Lovers**. **Sub City Radio** (106.2 MHz) is seasonal and reception's pretty dodgy, but it did boast one of the greatest radio shows I have ever heard (**Coolport**). Now if London's **XFM** would only get a license and run that as part of its schedule...

UNROCK ACTIVITIES

If you come to Glasgow you might want to get out of Glasgow. But only because you're so close to the countryside you'd be mad not to. I

recommend hiring a car and going out to **Loch Lomond** late, late in the afternoon. Bring a mix tape, toast some marshmallows, and go skinny-dipping if it's not too cold and you're not being spied on. Alternatively you might want to go "doon the watter" (not that any of us actually speak like that). You can get info on **Clyde sailings** from **Calmac** (Caledonian MacBrayne Hebridean and Clyde Ferries, 0147-565-0100).

Exotic destinations, like **Dunoon** and **Rothsay**, ahoy! Actually the **Botanic Gardens** (730 Great Western Road, 334-2422) are pretty exotic and I've got to say we are very well served for parks and departments. Swots like me spend hours in the **Mitchell Library** (North St., 287-2999), and I also want to mention the **Women's Library** (109 Trongate, 552-8345). **Pat Laureate** (who also runs super-hip label **Vesuvius**) will happily guide you through the collection of women's writing and artwork, and Britain's most important lesbian archive.

EATING OUT

Fratelli Sarti's (113 Wellington St. (deli), 248-2228; 121 Bath St., 204-0440) is a great, great Italian restaurant. We like to eat in the delicatessen part, which is pretty informal and groovy. In fact, the last time we were there they forgot to charge us. Glasgow has quite a big Indian population and an impressive selection of restaurants reflecting that. But my tip is the **Asha Vegetarian Restaurant** (141 Elderslie St., 221-7144), which is quite traditional and low-key. The food is never less than excellent and the service is super-friendly. But since you've come to the UK, you've got to try a plate of fish and chips. The **University Cafe** (87 Byres Road, 339-5217) is probably the best place for this. It's so timeless you expect to be experiencing it through a grainy film. They also do great ice cream. The best pizza slice is at **Little Italy** (205 Byres Road, 339-6287). In addition, the following cafes are definitely worth checking out: **The Grosvenor Cafe** (31 Ashton Lane, 339-1848); **Java**, an Internet cafe (152 Park Road, 337-6814); **The Bay Tree** for vegan food (403 Great Western Road, 334-5898); **13th Note Cafe** for vegan food (see "Hang Outs" for address); **CCA** (see "Hang Outs" for address), and **Insomnia** for all-night food (38 Woodlands Road, 564-1700). We won't let you starve.

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BOTANIC GARDENS



GLASGOW FILM THEATRE



GROSVENOR CAFE



GLASGOW TIGERS

BY STEPHEN McROBBIE

Glasgow, Scotland

PHOTOS: KATRINA MITCHELL



KELVINGROVE ART GALLERIES



APPENDIX OUT AT THE 13TH NOTE

1 GLASGOW, SCOTLAND, THE UK, EUROPE, THE WORLD, THE UNIVERSE. BY THE AGE OF EIGHT IT SEEMED WE COULD ALL REEL OFF THAT LIST WITH A MANIC CERTAINTY THAT NOW SEEMS LIKE A PREDICTION. BECAUSE FROM ORANGE JUICE TO BELLE AND SEBASTIAN TO NATIONAL PARK. ALL OF THE BEST MUSIC FROM GLASGOW HAS BEEN LIKE THAT: AMBITIOUS, INTERNATIONAL AND EXTREMELY SELF-REVERENTIAL. 1 THUS IT SEEMS THAT A PARTLY MYTHIC GLASGOW GOT INVENTED. STUART MURDOCH'S CIRCULAR BUS ROUTE AND THE GROSVENOR CAFE SCAM, SATELLITE CITY AND THE BOTANICS, THE EXACT POINT ON GREAT WESTERN ROAD THAT THE WHOLE WORLD OPENS UP IN FRONT OF YOU. THOUGH THIS IS A SMALL PART OF GLASGOW AND YOU SHOULDN'T CONFUSE IT WITH SOME MODERN-DAY URBAN DISNEYLAND. I'D SAY YOU STILL OUGHT TO GIVE IT A VISIT. THAT IS, IF YOU LIKE STYLISH EARLY 20TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURE VIEWED THROUGH AN ALMOST PERPETUAL SLOW-MOTION DRIZZLE. AND ONE OF THE BEST NIGHT-TIME HORIZON VIEWS YOU'LL EVER SEE, A POINTILLIST UTOPIA MADE UP OF SOME OF THE MOST DISMAL HOUSING ESTATES IN WESTERN EUROPE. EVEN IF YOU'RE ONLY LOOKING FOR A GATEWAY TO THE TOURIST SCOTLAND OF BONNY THISTLES, LOCHS AND GLENS, WHY NOT TRY US? JUST DON'T MENTION EDINBURGH, OKAY?

HANG OUTS

The hub of Glasgow's music scene is unquestionably the 13th Note (13th Note Cafe, 50 King St., 553-1638; 13th Note Club, 260 Clyde St., 243-2177). Its ethos is noble and its intentions true. Everyone has played here, and everyone digs the rundown glam. The Centre for Contemporary Arts (350 Sauchiehall St., 332-7521) is slightly glitzier, slightly more expensive. I always think it's cool to check out an exhibition and then get drunk. But even the CCA must bow down to the Glasgow Film Theatre (12 Rose St., 332-8128) for effortless European avant-gardism. The GFT building is stunning art deco, and it gets all the best films and the hippest directors. Agnes Varda and Beth B have given talks. Also, Aggie [Wright, also of the Pastels] hung her first exhibition in its cafe/bar, so respect is due!

Saturday night is divine at the Art School (Vic Bar, Glasgow School of Art, 167 Renfrew St., 353-1608), Andrew and Slush Puppy's long-standing good vibration extravaganza. But don't get too wasted because Sunday is speedway day at Shawfield Stadium (Sundays, 6:30 p.m., Rutherglen Road, 647-4121), and I'll be expecting you to get pretty vocal on the fourth bend, with the awesome Glasgow Tigers.

>>> Continued on page 89

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