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# the new HIP- HOP

notes from the  
underground

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**ON THE COVER:  
THE NEW HIP-HOP** 38

Hip-hop has gone from being the "black CNN" to the dominant sound of American pop music. But it's the voices you aren't hearing that have the most to say.

**NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND**

Years after giving up a career on the mic, writer Neil Drumming reflects on the current state of underground hip-hop, from NYC's newest star, Mos Def, to his one-time LA running mate, Dr. Oop, who's still fighting the good fight.

**MOS DEF**

Meet the guy whom Bahamadia is calling "the second coming of Q-Tip." Story by William Werde.

**BEASTIE BOYS' PAUL'S BOUTIQUE**

Ten years before Eminem: Props to the most influential white hip-hop record ever.

**PUBLIC ENEMY**

Through with record companies, PE courts a nation of millions in cyberspace.

**TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS**

Graffiti as marketing: how the new sounds of hip-hop get heard.

**FEATURES  
SKUNK ANANSIE** 26

"I'm at odds with the gay community, I'm at odds with the black community, all for the same reason—I don't play the game." Skunk bandleader Skin may not be a team player, but she's a helluva frontwoman. Story by Tom Lanham.

**BIS** 30

"This time, we realized we had to write an album as opposed to songs. That was a crucial difference—as opposed to just sticking everything you record on it." Our little Bis has grown up. And into a fierce Eurodisco machine. Story by Mark Woodlief.

**SEVENDUST** 34

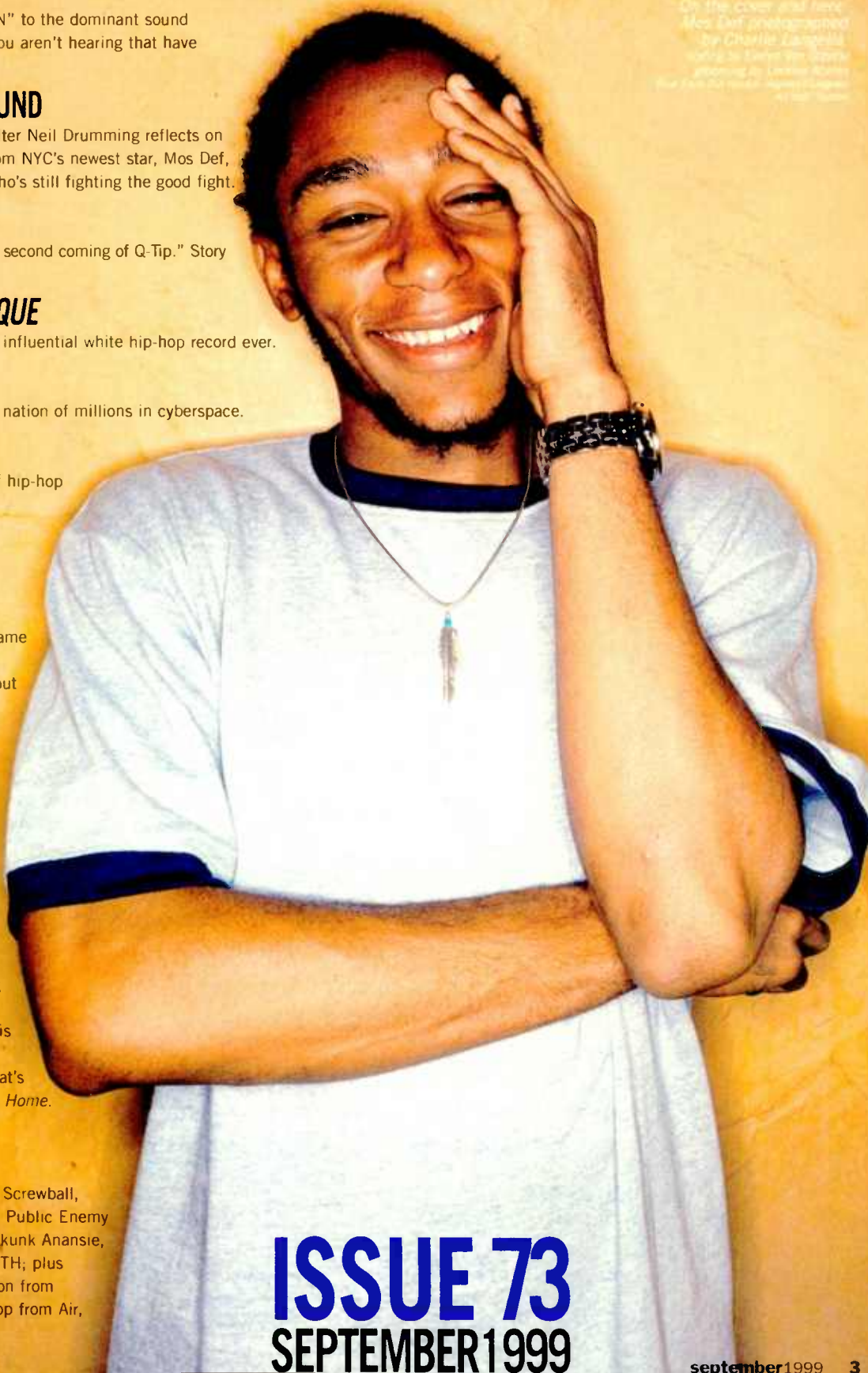
"Being away from family is the hardest thing for us, and that's what our new record is about—getting lost on the road. This album is about reconnecting with what we feel we've been taken away from for so long." Guess that's why the Atlanta rockers called their new one *Home*. Story by Dylan Siegler.

**ON THE CD** 83

Samples of the New Hip-Hop from Mos Def, Screwball, Tricky, the High & Mighty, Natural Elements, Public Enemy and Dr. Oop; tastes of the New Metal from Skunk Anansie, Sevendust, Filter, Ash, Showoff, and Drain STH; plus soulful ska from the Pietasters, unusual fusion from Santana featuring Eagle Eye Cherry, floaty pop from Air, and Eurodisco from Bis.

38

On the cover and here, Mos Def photographed by Charlie Lampella. Writing to follow the "State of the Union" by Lewis Lacey. Plus: "The New Hip-Hop" by Neil Drumming.



**ISSUE 73**  
**SEPTEMBER 1999**





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# contents (continued)

30

## DEPARTMENTS

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR 8 QUICK FIX 13

Blinker The Star moves to LA, Carl Craig's Innerzone Orchestra plays the park, P.O.D. gives Christian metal a good name, Lamb confronts its fears, the Pietasters revive ska's soul, Iggy Pop revisits Avenue B, and much more.

### ON THE VERGE 24

Tell 'em you knew about turntablist duo Ming & FS, Zombie-kin rockers Powerman 5000, and Scandinavian metal babes Drain STH way back when.

### THE SCENE IS NOW 66

Gram Parsons inspired a few generations of alt-country rockers before dying at 26. Matt Hanks looks at his legacy.

### GEEK LOVE 68

John Mellencamp revisited. Neil Gladstone fesses up to his "Jack And Diane" fantasies.

### TOP 75 74

### DIRECTORY/INDEX 89

### JUST OUT 90

### LOCALZINE 94

Buffalo, New York.

## LIFE/STYLE

### FULL STREAM AHEAD: INTERNET RADIO 75

Point and click your way to the best radio anywhere. Story by Richard Martin.

### FILM 76

*Whiteboys* examines an Iowa farm kid's fascination with hip-hop, Christian Bale hits the road in *All The Little Animals*, *Bandits* introduces us to a group of German metal chicks, and *That's The Way I Like It* takes us to the disco, Singapore-style.

### BOOKS 77

A study of music and race, a look at indie labels of yore, Dave Marsh's favorite singles, and a collection of essays on music and myth.

### LIGHT READING 78

Holy archetype! Alan Moore's literary comics.

### ELECTROMEDIA 79

Click and moan: Gripping on the 'Net.

### HIPTRONIC STYLIN' 80

The Jungle Sky crew models updated versions of funky hip-hip threads from the '80s.

## GAMING 84

Fire up those hard drives with *X-PLANE 5.0*, *Pac-Man World 20th Anniversary*, *Railroad Tycoon II*, and *Sports Car GT*.

## IN MY LIFE 85

Swank DC duo Thievery Corporation in its native habitat: the couch-filled club Eighteenth Street Lounge.

## REVIEWS

### BEST NEW MUSIC 21

It doesn't get any better than this: Guided By Voices, Café Tacuba, Cesaria Evora, Wiseguys, Richard Thompson, and Taj Mahal & Toumani Diabate.

### REVIEWS 50

Sive Style, Karry Walker, and 34 in between.

### MIXED SIGNALS 65

### METAL 69

### HIP-HOP 70

### DANCE 71

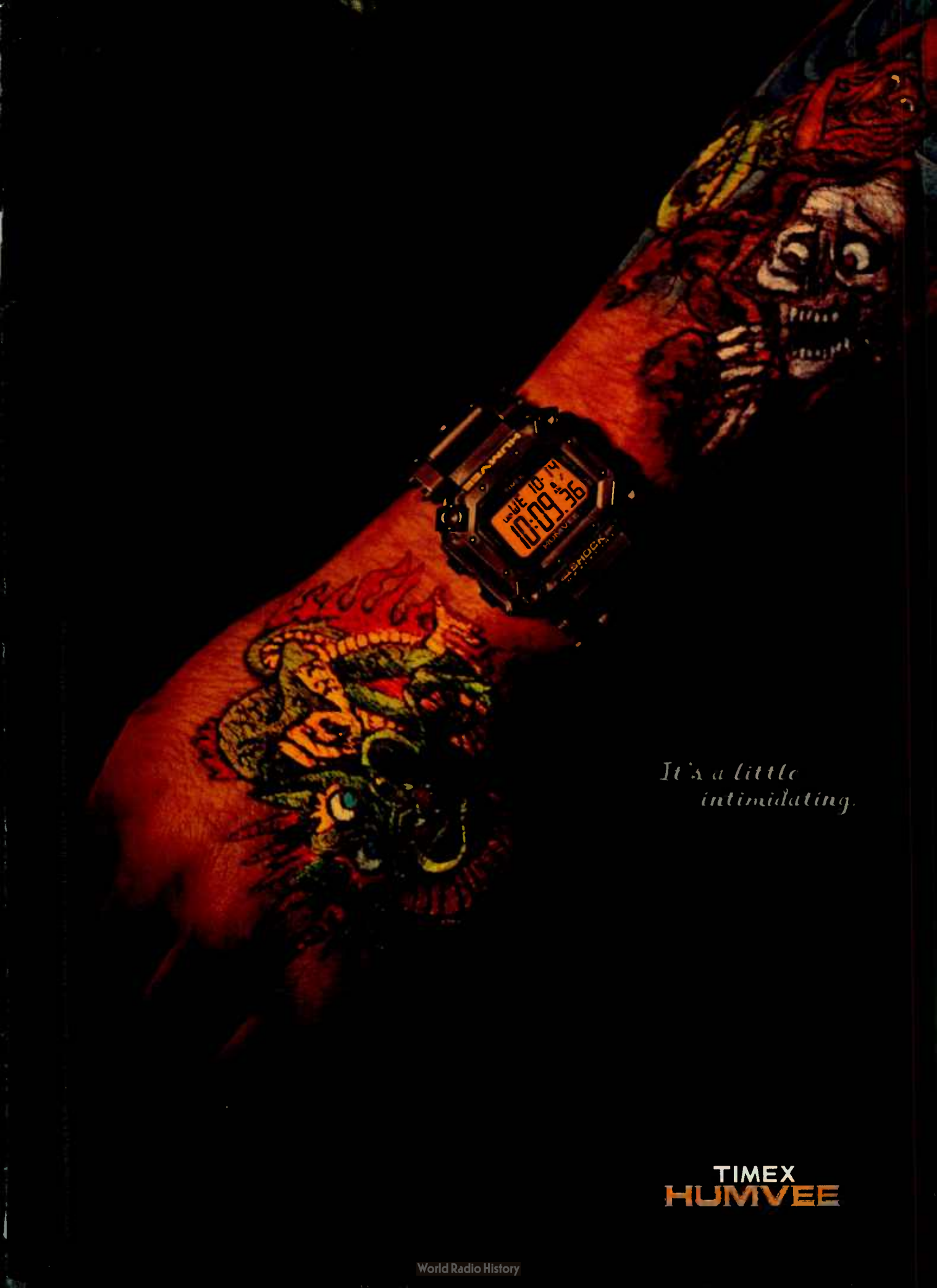
### SINGLES 72

### FLASHBACK 73

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Bis photographed  
by Dennis Kleiman





*It's a little  
intimidating.*

**TIMEX  
HUMVEE**



## Six degrees of appreciation

1. I am a geek.
2. I have a Rush fetish.
3. I have stood on line to hear Sasha/Digweed.
4. I enjoy pornography.
5. I am intimidated by Bernard Sumner.
6. I thoroughly enjoyed issue no. 71.

Mark Babyak [hymm43@hotmail.com]

## In Zane, in the membrane

Who doesn't like porn? As long as the industry motto is "Sex, Drugs, & Rock 'N Roll," the public will see porn and rock linked in many new joint ventures. Your article on porn's presence was outstanding, although you failed to mention one of the most interesting combinations on the West Coast. Matt Zane has his own porn video company (Zane Entertainment), his own record label (InZane Records), as well as spearheading the aggro band Society 1. With rather inventive "plots" involving the things groupies will do to meet their favorite bands, several of the videos mix concert footage from the Warped Tour alongside guest cameos from the likes of such interesting rock stars as Insane Clown Posse, Coal Chamber, the Descendents, and the late Lynn Strait. Whether you are watching the video for the sex or for the rock is something only the viewer will know.

girlfriday72@hotmail.com

*Only the viewer, the video store clerk, passers by, certain species of dogs, and anyone who doesn't cock an eyebrow at the phrase "interesting rock stars." —Ed.*

## Speaking of watching porn, how did Prince Andrew greet his scandalous ex-girlfriend? "Hi, Koo."

I wanted to tell you that your response to the guy that wrote the haiku letter in issue 71 (July CMJ New Music Monthly) was fantastic.

I love it when I find evidence that there are intelligent life forms on this planet, and that not all humans I come in contact with eat pork rinds and wear beer-stained tank tops whilst sitting on a ratty sofa (tuned into WWF) in a mobile home on cinder blocks.

Thank you for being you. Don't ever change. Stay sweet.

Michele Marietta

*At last, my use of conspicuous erudition to cover rampant insecurities is finding an audience. Soon, women will start listing "defensive" and "snarky" as desired attributes in Cosmo surveys; couples will hook up at parties when one says, "I like it when you evade my question by poking fun at the seriousness with which we take our opinions." Of course, that last paragraph reads like something written in a high school yearbook by someone who didn't want to pick up any bad karma by dissing the guy who has a crush on her before she went to college, so I'll try not to get ahead of myself. —Ed.*

## Punctuation is your friend

Hi, I'm from Cape Cod and I am friends with Cast Of Lyndon I know you get letters like check them out but I wanted to know if you heard them or if you just had word of mouth if not they are playing at the Middle East (Boston) soon I don't know when but if you are around...?

Jeffrey Buoncristiano [j.buoncristiano@worldnet.att.net]

*Drink... less... coffee. Repeat after me: Drink...less...coffee. —Ed.*

## CV joint

Okay CMJ, I have been buying your mag since early '96. There were a lot of things that happened to *New Music Monthly* that made me upset along the way: the mag's size got weird, price went up, bands on the cover that had no business being there, more and more awful music every month, the list sadly goes on. But the biggest atrocity happened when I picked up the anticipated July issue. My favorite band, the Donnas, had a song on your sampler that was spelled so wrong [i.e. "Hyperactice"]. How much more can I take, CMJ? Is the spelling error due to the fact that you lowered the price one cent from the previous month? What happened to the CMJ I used to know? I don't know what to do. Can I ever face another issue of *New Music Monthly*?

Jane Dee Stuart [Bluenebula@netscape.net]

*The spelling error is due more to the fact that the "v" and "c" keys are next to each other than the recent price decrease. We down here in Editorial Hollow don't have much to do with things like the price of the magazine, which is determined by a cabal of black-cloaked lords in a secret ceremony involving sacramental wine, dusty tomes, and old Nektar records. Are you distracted enough to forget that we sometimes don't look at things as closely as we should? No? What if I told you the wine was that new Blackberry Merlot crap, the dusty tomes were back issues of The New Yorker that they were hoping to get to over vacation, and the record was really by Days Of The New? No? Well at least we'll be able to go full-steam ahead with our new "loveable screwups" marketing strategy. —Ed.*

Editor-In-Chief Scott Frampton: He did it for the nookie, the nookie. →

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SCOTT FRAMPTON  
Managing Editor:  
LYDIA VANDERLOO  
Associate Editor:  
JENNY ELISCU  
Editorial Assistant:  
WILLIAM WERDE  
Editor-At-Large:  
KURT B. REIGNLEY

Art Director:  
MERV  
Assistant Art Director:  
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Contributing Editors:  
IAN CHRISTE, AARON CLOW, BRIAN COLEMAN,  
M. TYE COMER, JOHN ELSASSER, TIM HASLETT,  
JAMES LIEN, DOUGLAS WOLK

Contributing Photographers:  
CHAPMAN BAEHLER, ANGELA BOATWRIGHT, PAT  
GRAHAM, BRIAN INATSUKA, DENNIS KLEIMAN,  
CHARLIE LANGELLA, ALIA MALLEY, NIGEL MARSON,  
NICOLE ROSENTHAL

Intern:  
DAVID GREENFIELD

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Orders, inquiries, address changes, customer service  
call: (800) 414-4CMJ

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write: CMJ New Music Monthly

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

fax: (516) 466-7159

email: cmjmonthly@cmj.com

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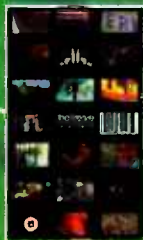


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MEGAN FRAMPTON

Advertising Sales Director:

KHRIS KLINE

Director Of Sales:

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ROBERT K. HABER

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JOANNE ABBOT GREEN

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General Counsel & Chief Operating Officer:

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

fax: (516) 466-7159

write: [cmjmonthly@cmj.com](mailto:cmjmonthly@cmj.com)

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ZADOROZNY, SECOND FROM LEFT

# STAR HUSTLER

Story: Matt Ashare  
Photo: Alia Malley

**Blinker The Star's** Jordan Zadorozny moved to LA and wrote songs with Hole. Surprisingly, neither ruined him. CD

**T**hree years ago Jordon Zadorozny was just another promising songwriter from Canada fronting another promising post-Nirvana trio with a major label debut (on A&M) showcasing at the CMJ Music Marathon in New York. Zadorozny had previously played in a band called Tinker with Hole's new bassist Melissa Auf der Maur, so it wasn't a total surprise that one celeb who turned up to see Blinker The Star that night, escorted by Auf der Maur, was Courtney Love. Factor in Zadorozny's background—he's a sensitive kid from the small logging town of Pembroke, Ontario—and the general sound of Blinker The Star back then and it even makes a bunch of sense that Courtney and Jordan would connect. Still, it wasn't like Zadorozny was expecting to get a call a few months later inviting him out to LA to collaborate with Love on a song or two.

"I think that's basically how it happened," Zadorozny recalls. "When we were done with that tour Melissa called me and asked if I'd like to come out and work in some yet-to-be-determined role. Sometimes it was just the two of us—Courtney and I—working on a song, and then other times I would come in with the rest of the band and play along. We didn't have any closure on any of the songs when I went home. They would have an idea for a song and I would sort of throw in my two cents all over the place and they would keep whatever they wanted."

Only one of the tunes Zadorozny worked on made it onto *Celebrity Skin*—"Reasons To Be Beautiful." But the experience introduced Zadorozny to a new city and a new way of working, elements that would help elevate Blinker The Star's power-pop from basic to sophisticated. The result, *August Everywhere* (DreamWorks), is a

*(Continued on page 14)*



**BLINKER THE STAR** (continued from page 13)


richly layered collection of moody, melodic tunes embellished with carefully arranged background vocals, strings, and keyboards, bearing only a trace of the raw guitar angst that fueled 1996's *A Bourgeois Kitten*.

"I guess the whole process started about two years ago. I moved to LA from Canada, got a little guesthouse up in the hills, which is very nice and idyllic and quiet and two minutes from Hollywood. And I just set about writing and demoing a record. I spent a year and a half up there just writing and I met some friends—Medicine's Brad Laner and Lusk's Chris Pitman—and collaborated with them and basically just learned a hell of a lot. The demoing process wasn't limited to getting three people together and recording a song in the studio. I could sit down in my little house and just keep adding and subtracting things forever. Everything got boiled down until I thought it was right."

By "right," Zadorozny appears to mean "more like XTC," because that's definitely what *August Everywhere* brings to mind.

"Yeah, I remember getting *Skylarking* when I was 13. And it took probably about a week or two to sink in. But once I realized the magnitude of that record I remember thinking that I would never know how to physically make a record like that. I would only know how to admire a record like that. And I remember listening to our last record about a year and a half ago and realizing that it was so far away from anything that I've wanted to do since I was young. But I think I got a bit closer this time. I kind of learned the trade."

**LABEL PROFILE - SIX DEGREES**



Bob Duskis and partner Pat Berry met while working at Windham Hill (home of the original new age noodling) in the early '90s. The idea behind Six Degrees, says Duskis, was to take the concept of marketing non-pop records into more adventurous territories. "Deep Forest had had a hit," he explains. "We thought that was a bit more pop-y than we wanted to go. But the idea appealed to us." Originally part of Island, he and Berry left when Island founder Chris Blackwell departed, and linked—like Blackwell's new Palm Pictures label—with Rykodisc for distribution. Six Degrees has three subdivisions: Six Degrees "proper," which releases singer-songwriters such as Peter Himmelman and Willy Porter; the Travel series, featuring world music and world hybrids, including the recent Brazilian showcase, Bossa Cuca Nova, and Banco De Gaia's latest; and, debuting in July, the Climate series, highlighting more ambient, textural music, such as Chilean harpist Monica Ramos. "We focus on these hybrids that combine the old and the new, the traditional with the modern," says Duskis. "It's an exciting time to be doing this. The music we're getting from around the world is amazing."

**ORCHESTRAL MANEUVERS (IN THE PARK)**

**Carl Craig's Innerzone Orchestra** makes live improvisational jazz out of techno, and vice versa.

Carl Craig is hailed as one of the pioneers of Detroit techno, the mastermind behind diverse titles by Paperclip People, 69, Psyche and other projects. Yet Innerzone Orchestra invariably confounds even his diehard fans. On the new *Programmed* (Planet E-Astralwerks) and in sporadic performances, Craig's latest project sounds closer to Coltrane than Coldcut. In a world where the tepid drivel of Kenny G. could even be conceived of as "jazz," "lite" or otherwise, Innerzone Orchestra aims to shake things up.

"I felt that a lot of jazz that's being made right now is a bit narrow, and what people perceive of as jazz is completely wrong," he emphasizes. Joining him is a clutch of seasoned sidemen, including Sun Ra alumnus Francisco Mora on drums, pianist Craig Taborn (James Carter, Lester Bowie), and bassist Paul Randolph.

Just to confuse matters, Craig characterizes the group's New York debut—playing Central Park on a sweltering June afternoon—as "punk rock." Technical glitches kept them on their toes, but Craig's not complaining. "It worked in our favor. Because of those [problems], we were jamming on stage, so the people could truly hear us doing our thing."

Improvisation is essential to *Programmed*, but as the title implies, Craig had an agenda, too. "I wanted it to have a natural feel that was completely sequenced and digitized. Whatever I did with Craig and Francisco was there to be sampled and rearranged."

The album folds a disorienting array of sounds into a compelling whole, including heartbreaking violin lines and Tricky-esque rapping by Lacksi-daisy-cal. Richie Hawtin (alias Plastikman) assists on the chilling "Architecture," and even a cover of the Stylistics' "People Make The World Go 'Round" slips into the mix. "The concept was to take all of the energetic, almost non-jazz stuff and put it at the top of the peak, and then make everything go downward and level out," explains Craig of the artful sequencing.

*Programmed* closes with "Bug In The Bassbin," Craig's 1992 classic that inadvertently redirected UK breakbeat hardcore into the fresh dimension of drum 'n' bass. This new rendition uses the original as its departure point, then echoes the evolution of Innerzone Orchestra by incorporating more traditional instrumentation. "This is the last time I'm going to mess around with it," Craig concludes, proud of the song's legacy. "Anyone who jumps on to the drum 'n' bass bandwagon ends up hearing about 'Bug In The Bassbin.' That's great, because maybe then they'll come over to Innerzone Orchestra, and we can open up some minds." >>>Kurt B. Reighley



CRAIG, SECOND FROM

ANGELA BOATWRIGHT



# SABBATH, HOLY SABBATH

**P.O.D.:** To be Christian, and still heavy as hell.

**F**or many heavy young bands, the holy trinity is sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. For P.O.D., it's more traditional: the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. But just because P.O.D. (which stands for Payable On Death) is a Christian band doesn't mean the members don't like the heavy, subversive sounds of Black Sabbath.

"Oh, dude, I've been a Black Sabbath fan... I'm 26 now, and my mom and dad had me when they were 14, so I grew up with [my parents]. My dad was a drummer and into AC/DC and Led Zeppelin and Sabbath," begins enthusiastic drummer Wuz.

In fact, he and the other members of P.O.D.—his cousin, singer Sonny, bassist Traa and guitarist Marcos—were hanging at one of this year's Ozzfest shows. "I grew up in a rough environment, and it wasn't until the later years of my life that I grew to know the Lord and become a spiritual person," the church-going Wuz explains. "Same with the other members. We know what [bands like Sabbath] say is against what we believe, but we don't take it personally. That's between them and God."

Though P.O.D. isn't on Ozzfest, the Rage Against The Machine-like amalgamation of influences on its Atlantic debut, *The Fundamental Elements Of Southtown*—ranging from Latin to reggae to hardcore to metal—and positive but not preachy lyrics make the band an ideal candidate to play alongside acts like the Deftones and System Of A Down. The band takes a lot of inspiration from its home, Southtown, an area of San Diego near the Tijuana border that's something of a cultural melting pot. "Marcos is into Santana, a lot of Latin stuff... he's Mexican," explains Wuz, whose own influences include an uncle who hosted a reggae show on San Diego station 91X. "And Traa's from Cleveland—he's the black dude—and he grew up with R&B and soulful stuff." These varied influences turn up on the aggro "Hollywood," the mellow reggae vibe of "Set Your Eyes To Zion" and the au courant heaviness of the first single, "Outkast."

Though huge in Christian circles, having played to audiences as big as 20,000, P.O.D. is looking forward to bringing its music and message to people of all faiths, the common denominator being a love of music. "We love playing hardcore music and this is an opportunity for us to get in front of these kind of kids and give them our message," Wuz concludes. "Just like Marilyn Manson gives his. We don't shove it down anyone's throats."

>>>Katherine Turman



L R WUZ TRAA SONNY MARCOS

CHAPMAN BAEHLER

## THE COMP PILE (OUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO COMPILATION CDS)

TITLE	CONCEPT	TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	NAMES TO DROP	SUMS IT UP	VERDICT
 Exposed Roots (K-Tel)	The Grand Ol' Opry: Two-disc survey of alt-country, past and present.	The discerning American (Budweiser taste, microbrew budget)	Johnny Cash, Lucinda Williams, Steve Earle, Whiskeytown	Steve Earle "Guitar Town"	Good country cookin' from the K-Tel cheese factory? Yes, ma'am!
 Groove Jammy 2 (32 Jazz)	Says it right on the cover: "Mocean Worker (Adam Dorn) digs into the 32 Records vault for some more great funk classics"	Geeky groove mongers and the casually funky	Les McCann, Grant Green	Grant Green "High Heel Sneakers"	Get ready to do the white guy dance—your cocktail party has never swung like this!
 Oh, Merge! (Merge)	Merge artists pay tribute to the indie-rock label on the occasion of its 10th anniversary	College grads who still wear Levi's cords	Superchunk, Lambchop, Magnetic Fields, Neutral Milk Hotel	East River Pipe "So Much Hate"	Compleatists could celebrate worse things than 10 years of independent entrepreneurship
 Panthalassa: The Remixes (Columbia)	One step beyond: remixes of Bill Laswell's reconstructions of Miles Davis's '70s fusion work	Conspicuously erudite lounge lizards	Bill Laswell, DJ Cam, DJ Krush, Jamie Myerson	"In A Silent Way" remixed by DJ Cam	Laswell is intent on proving that even interred, Davis is still breaking new ground
 Unknown Werks (Astralwerks)	Collection of unsigned US electronica acts assembled by the label that brought you Chemical Brothers and Fatboy Slim	Electrophiles who aim to stay one step ahead	"Unknown" says it all.	Beat Pharmacy "The Next Big Chill"	A great way to bum out that skinny record store clerk who always knows about stuff before you do



## WEIRD RECORD OF THE MONTH

Finnish conceptual artist/photographer Kake Puhuu is hell-bent on making you pay attention to his free-associative rambling. Under the name **Keuhkot** (translation: "lungs"), he rants like some humanitarian Hitler, beats the crap out of wheelbarrow percussion, and transforms any given venue into a mess of lecterns, lottery machines, home movie projections and mechanized mobile sculptures. Oh, and he supplies his audiences with complementary logs and carrots. The brand new *Ruskea Aikakirja* (Bad Vugum) is one of those great, what-the-fuck? masterpieces that could only have been created in a truly remote locale by a truly unique individual. Imagine a calliope-happy Sun City Girls strangling the Residents over a sonic backdrop of *No New York*, and you'll still have scant insight into this surreal collage of creepy circus melodies, hellish marches, no wave noise and decidedly non-Scandinavian folk music. ABBA it ain't.



>>>Jordan N. Mamone

## RANDOM QUOTES

**"[Our new album] will probably offend some people that are used to some pussy-ass music. It might shock some people who are not used to people who go into a room and sweat and actually manually play instruments manually, so there may be some surprises there to the MTV generation. Of course, I gleefully laugh and do not give a fuck."**

>>>Henry Rollins, on manual dexterity



**"Roger McGuinn told me once he wished he called it 'Roger McGuinn and the Byrds.' He said, 'That was a real good idea putting your name in the title 'cause I suffered a lot by not doing that.' He was really doing the lion's share of the work."**

>>>Tom Petty, on runnin' down a dream

## TOURS WE'D LIKE TO SEE

### Reign Of Terror Tour:

Royal Crown Revue, Amazing Crowns, King Biscuit Flower Hour, King Crimson, The King, Citizen King, King Chango, King Black Acid, King Cobb Steelie, King Diamond, King Missile, King Kong, King Size, King's X, Mini-King, Queen, Bandit Queen, Queen Latifah, Queensryche, Queen Pen, Size Queen, Speed McQueen, Prince, Prince Far I, Prince Buster, Prince Paul, Princess Superstar

## BLACK SHEEP

British duo **Lamb** finds being polar opposites nothing to be scared of on *Fear Of Fours*.

**T**here's a moment early in Lamb's second disc *Fear Of Fours* (Mercury) when Andy Barlow's aggressive jungle beats shoulder aside the bass to sputter forth from your speakers, and the voice of Louise Rhodes lays into those beats with a minor-key melody that prickles with dark energy. "How typical," you think, your mind drifting through the long post-punk parade of somber Brits with synths and axes to grind. Until you notice that Rhodes is singing about "rainbows, fresh snow, and the smell of summer," and cautioning you not to "forget to live." That moment says a lot about where Lamb is right now: aware and in control of its internal contradictions, and eager to use them to subvert our expectations of both pop and dance music.

Lamb's self-titled debut album was praised by critics thrilled to hear techno with heart as well as gonads. But between Barlow and Rhodes, there was a lingering question: Could a tech-head DJ who describes himself as "not a big song fan" make common cause with a soulful folkie's daughter who claims that "songs are what really move me most of the time"? On *Fear Of Fours*, they've broken the impasse by freeing each other of their opposite tendencies. Rhodes sings more expansively than ever on the vocal numbers, while the longer instrumental tracks give Barlow space to create complex textures from live bass and horns and digital percussion.

"I think we respect each other a lot more these days, and trust each other," says Rhodes. "On the first one, we were worried that we had too many differences, that maybe we shouldn't be writing an album together. As we got to know each other more, we realized that those differences make our music what it is. It's a positive thing."

The many months they've spent on tour also have helped. "When we're onstage, we're basically a five-piece band," Barlow says of the musicians who join them on tour. "We're so tight with each other, we change the arrangements live onstage," he adds, showing how far he's come from his beat-programming roots. "We try to use as much live stuff as we can, and keep the technology as open as possible, to allow for mistakes to happen and natural things to occur."

"The energy that we get from crowds is very important," says Rhodes as they prepare to play Glastonbury, England's largest music festival. "We need that feedback. I tend to become more animated when I'm on stage. And Andy's just a nutter!"

>>>Andrea Moed



L-R RHODES BARLOW

JEREMY MURCH





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A taco from last night in my dresser

Unpacked luggage

Space for Salma Hayek or Jennifer Lopez to visit

ADD N TO X: Ann Shenton

Jean Yves Labat Monsieur Frog "1970s mental album with Mr. Frog's own personal idea of a musical score in a pull-out inside sleeve. He is a comical genius."



Danielle P. Mannix (book) For Those About To Die "Part historical, part filth about the Roman Arena and the horror that happened. The huge perfume sprinkler systems they had to install to do away with the stench of disemboweled animals and humans."

(film) Demon Seed "Julie Christie and her violent relationship with Proteus (computer) who wants a child."

Delia Derbyshire (of Radiophonic Workshop & Dr. Who theme song fame)

Previously unreleased works "To be released by Drew Mulholland of Mount Vernon Arts Lab."

British Mongol Gods The Pin Years

GO-BETWEENS: Robert Forster

William J. Mann (book) Wisecracker: The Life And Times Of William Haines, Hollywood's First Openly Gay Star



Miles Davis "In A Silent Way"

Luna "Superfreaky Memories"

J.O. McClatchy (book) Contemporary American Poetry

Mogwai "Punk Rock"

L-R. ROB, ROBY, TOM, JEREMY, ALAN, STEVE AND TODD



SOUL PROVIDERS



For the Pietasters, soul and ska go together like Sammy and Dean-o.

Screaming, bouncing, beer soaked: Pietasters shows aren't easy, but they're fun. One of the hardest working bands around, these veterans of the DC ska scene throw every ounce of energy into their performances. Lacing a Stax shout-out feel with Caribbean rhythms, their new album *Awesome Mix Tape #6* (Hellcat-Epitaph) makes good on the band's G&T spilling swagger as the driving soul side always lurking beneath the hooligan antics finally emerges.

"We used to open up for guys like the Skatalites, bands whose sounds are based on Jamaican reinterpretations of American soul music," explains Steve Jackson, whose sentimental roar belts out over bassist Todd Eckhart's James Jamerson/Motown-inspired wall of sound. "We simply emulated our musical heroes and began to explore the roots of American soul." This emphasis on soul gives the Pietasters' music a dimension lacking in many third-wave ska bands, and it also inspires crowds at their shows into a dancing frenzy, especially on their occasional returns to the smaller venues where they built their following. "Sometimes it's hard to say where the band ends and the crowd begins," laughs guitarist Tom Goodin.

The Pietasters take inspiration from the classic ska bands, but the band's hometown of Washington also contributes to their sound. "In between our early tours, these drunken neighborhood soccer games would turn into all-night house parties," Steve remembers, "with local DJs Keef and Selah spinning everything from James Brown and Ol' Blue Eyes to The Clash, Dave & Ansel Collins and the Four Skins." On tour after tour, these influences, burned into Steve and Todd during these smoky, heaving all-nighters, would surface in the Pietasters' own soulful stew, giving their punk sound a rolling-drunk rat-pack feel.

"We first got into that stuff back when there weren't many soul DJs in DC," Steve continues. "We'd go digging for old 45s in the leftover bins of record shops around Trinidad," a dangerous DC neighborhood. There the Pietasters turned up cuts like Willie Parker's "I Live The Life I Love," the Startones' "Lovin' You Baby" and even "Hook And Sling" by Eddie Bo, which became the inspiration for the wild Pietasters single "Soul Sammich," featuring Selah. "Punk and R&B are both at the center of DC's musical history," Todd reflects. "And we're just another part of that."

"Every time you listen to something great, it changes you," Steve elaborates, "and I'd like to think we keep changing for the better."

>>>Scott Lightsey

RANDOM QUOTES

"Now we listen to a lot more kinds of music, and I think those influences are showing on this album. It's just being able to say, 'All right, yeah, we'll pick up a guitar, pick up a piano, and play that shit on this record.' I'll listen to, like, a Prince record, and I'll hear a piano in there or something and say, 'I wonder what ICP would sound like with that?' And it sure doesn't sound like Prince."

>>>Insane Clown Posse's Violent J, on you can say that again

"Since this accident, I even quit smoking, and I've smoked for over 50 years. It made a true believer out of me. And I know it's going to be hard for people to believe me with the past that I've got, but they can believe me, because there won't be no more foul-ups for George Jones, cuz my drinking days are over. And smoking, and I can't even drink coffee. I've lost my taste for coffee—and I usually have to have two cups every morning."

>>>George "Possum" Jones, on waking up from a coma and not smelling the coffee





# Q & A IGGY POP



Iggy Pop kicks off his new album *Avenue B* (Virgin) with a spoken-word piece bluntly titled "No Shit." "It was in the winter of my 50th year when it hit me," he moans. "I was really alone, and there wasn't a helluva lot of time left." The once peanut butter-smearing punk who kept rocking into middle age on powder kegs like *American Caesar* and *Naughty Little Doggie* is revealing a serious, introspective side, pausing to survey his crumbling marriage and, he says, discuss "human things" via "a softer record. I kept *Avenue B* way softer, so that I, personally, could find it very pleasant to listen to."

>>>Tom Lanham

**Q: You seem very focused on your age here. Is death a big reality for you now?**

**A:** I'd take out the "big" and just say reality. A present reality. Then what gets big is the *life*. Suddenly the life is much bigger than it was—it's like somebody took my life and fucking enlarged the cocksucker, put it on a fucking IMAX, because I feel that it's more finite, that there's a more finite amount of time. But that's a general thing, I assume, that I might share with other people. But at the same time, a unique feature of my particular life is that I, uh, got a lot of cookies late in life, if you see what I mean. And I've also got all sorts of options and choices and possibilities that I never had before, so the two things are kind of colliding right now. Shit—the year that I was 50, I was just getting over the record I made when I was 29, y'know? The *Lust For Life* record. Then when I was 51, out comes *Raw Power* again.

**Q: How did it feel to have "Lust For Life" boomerang back after all those years, thanks to *Trainspotting*?**

**A:** It felt fucking *great*. It felt like all my faith was justified and that I'd made what turned out to be a very wise investment, frankly. "Lust For Life" was all over the place. Even before *Trainspotting*, I was starting to hear that one and *Raw Power* and *The Idiot* a lot in bars. And I never used to hear my music in normal, everyday social settings. It started popping up, so I knew something was up. And you know what I think happened? I think tastes changed in the direction that I took prematurely. It's as simple as that—people caught up with me.

**Q: But for years, you've acted like you were indestructible, pretty much spat in the face of death.**

**A:** I never thought about it one way or the other, so I guess I must've felt that. Because I wasn't thinking about it. So this is a different position to be in—I've now found something to which I definitely and indisputably feel vulnerable. And that's interesting to me. And the one solace, at this stage of the game, is that it's a more human and classic thing to which to be enthralled than things like "Gee, does that girl like me?" Or "What do people think of my music? Can I make a living at this?" Those normal, everyday insecurities that hold everybody in check. "Does my breath smell?" The little insecurities, you know? I have my share of those like anybody. But there's something else to color my actions right now.

**Q: How do you imagine the Grim Reaper finally coming to claim you?**

**A:** Well now, *this* is a very interesting subject! Well, I wouldn't mind if I was looking at a flower, tending tomatoes, sitting in my backyard, or making love. Singing would be all right. Playing guitar would also be acceptable. But what I would hope, when the time comes, is that I'll have some very pleasant things going through my mind.

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Smashing Pumpkins  
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Ain't That Unusual  
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William, It was Really  
Nothing

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I've Got A Feeling  
Everything But The Girl  
Troubled Mind  
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Insane  
Tori Amos  
Iieeee  
Faith No More  
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**GUIDED BY VOICES**

**Do The Collapse**

TVT

The marketing hook to Guided By Voices's *Do The Collapse* is that Ric Ocasek—he of the sleek Cars—produced, thereby obliterating any chance that the band will retain the “lo-fi” albatross that leader Robert Pollard has never embraced as an aesthetic. Actually, Ocasek's involvement produces only incremental changes: The last GBV album, '97's *Mag Earwhig!*, fell relatively high on the fi-scale, anyway. On *Collapse*, though, the songs sound more *finished* than ever before. Where past GBV albums each had standout tracks, gems that leapt out against the fragments and fuzz, *Collapse* is full of complete, fully realized songs. Sure, Pollard continues to revisit his favorite anthemic melodies, but whereas before he didn't always bother writing an ending, or sometimes a beginning, for his killer choruses, here the songs not only have the production clarity of the “arena-rock” style he aims for (I count four permutations of the “Don't Fear The Reaper” riff), but they also have the structure to make them stick. And Pollard's surreal non-sequiturs remain; “Surgical Focus,” “Optical Hopscotch,” “Strumpet Eye,” and “Teenage FBI” live up to their titles (and “Hold On Hope,” “Wormhole,” and “Wrecking Now” surpass theirs). Unless you valued GBV for its messy fragmentations, *Do The Collapse* offers a higher concentration of what the band does best than any of its previous albums.

>>>Steve Klinge



Guided By Voices

**OUT:**

August 3

**FILE UNDER:**

Indie arena rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Cheap Trick, Goo Goo Dolls, Mott The Hoople

**CAFÉ TACUBA**

**Reves/Yo Soy**

WEA Latina-Warner Bros.

Does a band still rock *en Español* if the language of Cervantes is omitted altogether? Alter-Latino favorites Café Tacuba raise this issue with the all-instrumental album *Reves*. The vocal companion record *Yo Soy*, is a polyglot stew of Mexican indigenous rock, sparse piano baladas, shimmering Beatlesque harmonies and plaintive meditations. Although the melodic brilliance of 1994's *Re* and the funky guaca rock of 1996's *Avalancha De Exitos* are conspicuously absent, *Reves/Yo Soy* nevertheless beckons the listener with its level of sophistication and intelligence. The group's keen sense of pop is readily apparent on “La Locomotora,” which begins as a shifty polka, but quickly metamorphoses into a life-affirming jaunt where jangly guitar and acoustic piano soar to gorgeous heights over Ruben Albarán's distinctive vocals. Café Tacuba struggles for a balance that suits both its mainstream and experimental tendencies. *Reves* confirms that Stereolab imports have made their way into the heart of Mexico—both bands share a zest for playing with loops, samples and mood-inducing soundscapes. The ominous industrial drive of “La Dos” conveys the gritty, smog-filled environment of Mexico City in a way that lyrics simply could not. Although Café Tacuba's bold reinvention may alienate its more conservative fans, *Reves/Yo Soy* will likely enchant newcomers, while forcing longtime fans to scratch their heads and ponder what direction these ambitious rockeros could possibly take on their next release.

>>>Josh Norek



**OUT:**

July 20

**FILE UNDER:**

Latin alternative.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Stereolab, Los Fabulosos Cadillacs, Beck.

**CESARIA EVORA**

**Café Atlantico**

RCA Victor

Once the hypnotic spell of *Café Atlantico* has abated, and clear-headed thinking prevails, listeners may scratch their noggins wondering how on Earth Cesaria Evora postponed her professional career until the age of 47. Even if you can't decipher a single lyric of these 14 new recordings, experience and wisdom radiate vividly in the sensual stylings of “the barefoot diva of Cape Verde.” On her seventh album since 1988, she focuses on the musical legacy stamped on her birthplace, Mindelo—the island port dubbed “the Creole Rome” by passing trade ships en route from South America and the Caribbean. While contributions from Cuban sidemen and Brazilian arranger Jacques Morelenbaum (a favorite of Caetano Veloso) expand Evora's colorful repertoire of traditional *morna* (Creole blues that melds West African percussion with echoes of Portuguese *fado* and Brazilian *modinha*), the vocalist discretely commands the spotlight throughout. On the intimate “Paraiso Di Atlantico,” her thoughtful restraint suggests a young Peggy Lee or *Dusty In Memphis*, while the ballad “Desilusao Dum Amdjer” meticulously maps out every peak and valley of a faded romance. With lively brass fanfares (“Carnival De Sao Vincente”) and a bolero rendition of a Spanish classic (“Maria Elena”) rounding out the program, *Café Atlantico* transcends geographic and musical boundaries with irresistible élan.

>>>Kurt B. Reighley



**OUT:**

August 10.

**FILE UNDER:**

Song of the siren

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Caetano Veloso, Amalia Rodrigues, Marisa Monte, Cassandra Wilson.



## WISEGUYS The Antidote

Wall Of Sound-Ideal

After his partner Regal split, some crackpots suggested England's Theo Keating—a.k.a. DJ Touché—drop the “s” from his band's name. But if the giddy rhythms and colorful samples of *The Antidote* are accurate indicators, Touché boasts enough attitude to fuel the careers of many men. Although the affiliation with the Wall Of Sound label (home to Propellerheads) has prompted lazy scribes to mislabel them big beat, *The Antidote* actually builds upon old school hip-hop. One spin of the dizzy “Re-Introduction” (complete with Oscar the Grouch cameo) and it's apparent that Touché's aesthetic is closer to the playful collages of Grandmaster Flash circa “Adventures On The Wheels Of Steel” than the drunken rumblings of Fatboy Slim. And like the South Bronx block party pioneers, the Wiseguys keep your backfield in motion; both “Start The Commotion” and “Ooh La La” are certified floor fillers. Touché also knows when to change the beat, drawing inspiration from Rachmaninoff's *Prelude In C Minor* for the disorienting, DJ Shadow-esque crawl “Face The Flames,” and peppering cuts like “Search's End” and “The Temple” with a liberal sprinkling of '60s EZ-listening kitsch. Four cuts featuring guest rappers don't add much (although “The Grabbing Hands” gets points for biting rhymes from Depeche Mode); Touché simply doesn't need extra assistance to get the job done superbly.

>>>Kurt B. Reighley



**OUT:**

September 7.

**FILE UNDER:**

Back-to-(old) school.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

DJ Shadow, Grandmaster Flash, Beat Junkies, Bronx Dogs.

## RICHARD THOMPSON Mock Tudor

Capitol

After years of epic brooding, Richard Thompson has kicked himself into overdrive and made his hardest rocking record since 1991's *Rumor And Sigh*. One might be tempted to credit his new producers, Bong Load's Tom Rothrock and Rob Schnapf, with the change, but from the very first song it's clear that Thompson means to show off his brash side. “Cookstery Queen” is pure testosterone, with Thompson growling in a Jagger-esque style over honky-tonk harmonica vamps. “Do you really ache for me as I really ache for you?” he asks on “Sibella,” another propulsive love song. Here as throughout, the sound is bass-driven and full. Thompson's music thumps where it once bounced along, and backing vocals are used more liberally than ever. On the six-minute “Hard On Me,” he takes not one, but two howling guitar solos. What hasn't changed is the lyrics, which are typically rich with the specifics of place and emotion. The album is divided into three thematic sections: roughly, they are desire, rejection, and the passage of time. The tunes grow mellow along the way, but the intensity remains. “I stole your soul when you weren't looking/I reached inside and cut it free/It suits me more than it ever suited you/Hope you like the new me,” Thompson sings on the final track, wielding his native originality with equally native irony.

>>>Andrea Most



RICHARD THOMPSON  
**MOCK TUDOR**

**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

Fired-up folk rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Wilco, Billy Bragg, Graham Parker.

## TAJ MAHAL & TOUMANI DIABATE Kulanjan

Hannibal-Rykodisc

In the '60s, guitarists Taj Mahal and Ry Cooder briefly played together in a folksy, bluesy band called Rising Sons. Since going their separate ways, they've each won a few Grammys investigating a world of traditional blues and folk styles. While *Kulanjan* may not make the headlines Cooder did with *Talking Timbuktu*, his 1994 collaboration with Malian guitarist Ali Farka Toure, the joyous interplay between Taj and Malian kora player Toumani Diabate and other African musicians has its own triumphs and charms. *Kulanjan* proves the same theorem that Cooder and Toure put on record. West African music and American blues are blood relatives. But Taj and Diabate's all acoustic affair arrives at that result by different means. For starters, Diabate's sparkling 21-string harp opens up the polyphonic and rhythmic possibilities of the conversation, giving even the slow-burning “Catfish Blues” an otherworldly prettiness against Taj Mahal's rugged National steel guitar. The mixture of styles within the songs is a success, as is the mixture of songs themselves. By alternating between stateside blues numbers and African traditional pieces as the base for their dialog, Taj and Diabate are compelled to use their instruments in new ways. What's a Grammy voter not to love?

>>>Steve Cabanani



**OUT:**

August 3.

**FILE UNDER:**

Grits n' griots.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Alvin Youngblood Hart, Baaba Maal, Ali Farka Toure with Ry Cooder, Ernest Ranglin.





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BRITTA MATSUOKA

## MING & FS

"Hell's Kitchen is a really diverse area [in New York City], but it seems like everything works together really well and gives it a good flavor," says Aaron Albano, 27, the "Ming" to partner Fred Sargolini's "FS." Albano likens the eclectic neighborhood, where their label, Madhattan, and studio are located, to their debut album, dubbed not coincidentally *Hell's Kitchen* (Om). "There's jazz, rock, drum 'n' bass, hip-hop, electro," he says. "We call it 'Junkyard'—any form of music produced from a hip-hop perspective." Alternately smooth and jazzy, then hard and funky, *Hell's Kitchen* picks up on the creative vibe the duo displayed with its standout track on last year's *Deeper Concentration* (also on Om), a collection of turntablist-inspired and -produced tracks, and on the subsequent Deeper Concentration tour around the US. The two also frequently spin drum 'n' bass at club nights around New York. "London took us to school in the electronic scene in the last few years," says Albano. "Most of the good shit's been coming out of Europe and the UK. Well, welcome to *graduate* school. Here's the Ming & FS album."

>>>William Werde



VIVIANE OH

## POWERMAN 5000

Powerman 5000's sophomore stab, *Tonight The Stars Revolt!* (DreamWorks), is somewhat conceptual, tying together the name of the record with heavenly body-themed song titles and groovy sci-fi artwork. Singer (and art school dropout) Spider does all of the artwork for the band and says the album is consistent because "it all comes from the same place. Your job is not over once you write the songs." Musically, the band's scorched-yet-hooky new metal sound will likely appeal to the Korn and Limp Bizkit (DJ Lethal guests) crowd, as well as to fans of Spider's scary sibling, Rob Zombie. *Tonight* isn't just "rip your head off" aggression, however. Powerman 5000 crafts songs that rock *and* leave a lasting impression, the kind of melodies you hum long after you've turned the stereo off. Having played with everyone from Primus to Pantera, the LA-by-way-of-Boston five-piece has a desire to "tour forever and ever," a wish that may come true as Powerman is being considered for the second annual Family Values Tour this fall.

>>>Amy Sciarretto



TAYLOR BROTHERS

## DRAIN STH ★

One needed only to look at the faces—or at the wagging tongues—of adolescent boys at this summer's Ozzfest to spot the appeal of Sweden's Drain STH. "Because we're women, we have to play harder, be better than the other bands on the tour," said guitarist Flavia Canel, relaxing on the grass with her bandmates after an Ozzshow in New Jersey. Seems like it worked: A crowd that was frequently more interested in watching women get their breasts airbrushed than in watching the second stage was eager to ogle Drain's four Scandinavian beauties: Canel and vocalist Maria Sjöholm, bassist Anna K and drummer Martina Axen. But it's the band's licks, not its looks, that make this quartet one to watch. Generating more heat than a moshpit in August, Drain's churning guitar riffs recall metal's glory days in the '80s. Maybe this is what struck a chord with Black Sabbath guitarist Tony Iommi: He and Maria recently got engaged. This past summer's tour, in support of *Freaks Of Nature* (Mercury-Island Oel Jam), marked the second time Drain STH had supported Mr. Osbourne's summer hobby. "I'm not saying we are better than all these other bands," continues Flavia. "We are," interrupts Martina. "Okay," laughs Flavia. "We are."

>>>William Werde



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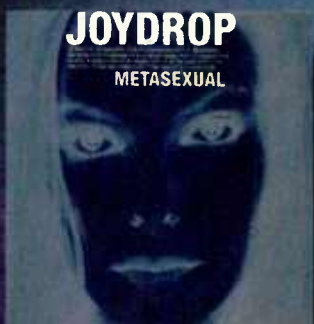


**IAD**

## KRISTIN HERSH

### *Sky Motel*

After a decade as lead singer/guitarist for The Throwing Muses, Kristin Hersh disbanded the group and pursued a solo career. This is her third album and follow-up to 1996's acoustic "Strange Angels".



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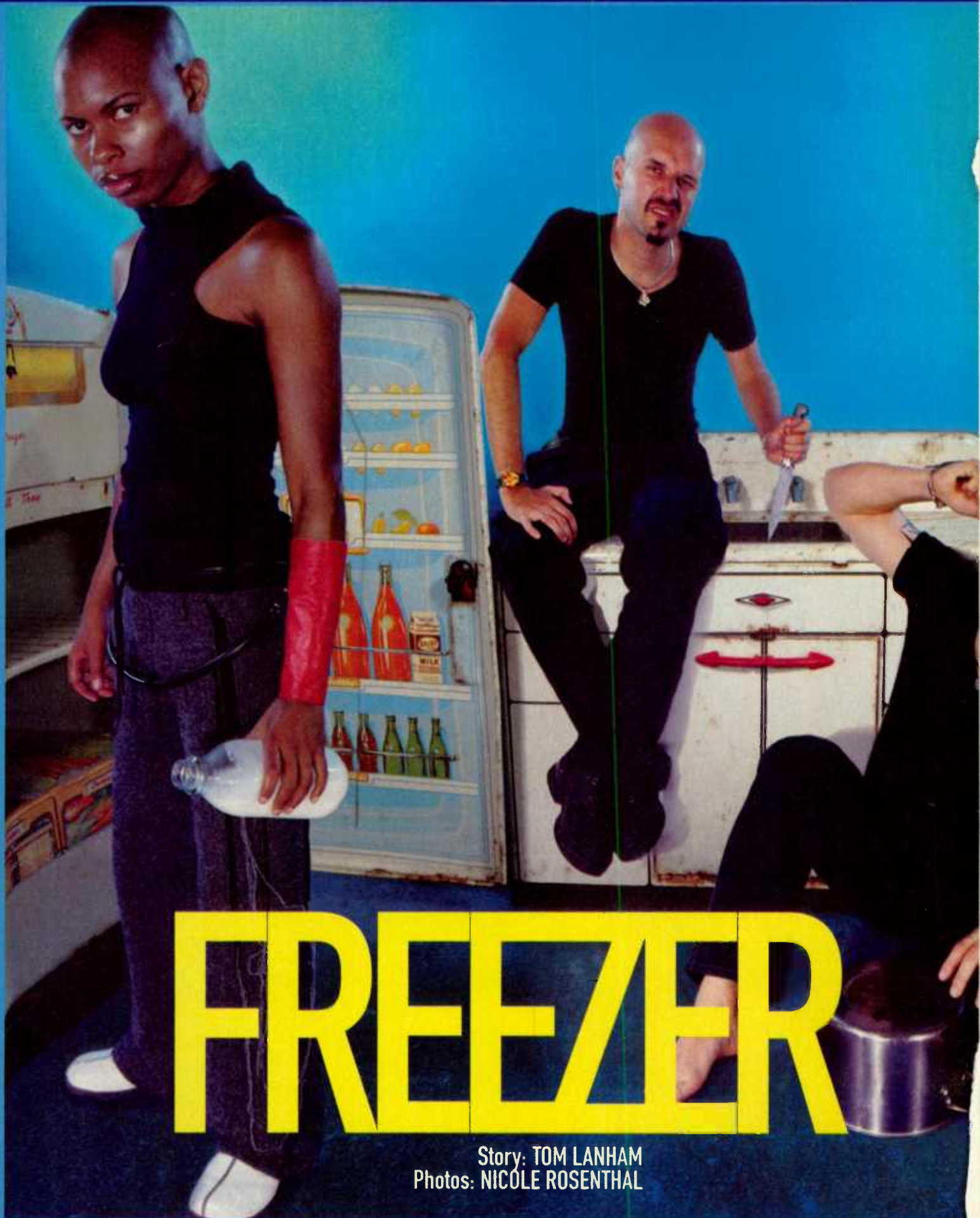
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**Newbury Comics**

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# FREEZER

Story: TOM LANHAM  
Photos: NICOLE ROSENTHAL

Stylist: JEN BUSH/Celestine    Makeup: GERALDINE SHAKER-KEKATI/Artist Group  
World Radio History





## British rage rockers **SKUNK ANANSIE** raise goose bumps with their white-hot new album, *Post Orgasmic Chill*.

**S**outh Africa. Where the specter of National Party apartheid still taints even the simplest black/white interaction; where there are an estimated three million HIV/AIDS sufferers in need of treatment; where the incoming Thabo Mbeki regime threatens to be less careful of the white minority than Nelson Mandela. It's not exactly the best place to plot a fun-filled summer vacation with the kids. But for Skin, militant mouthpiece for UK funk-punk firebrands Skunk Anansie, there could be no better, and no more inspiring, getaway. So a couple of years ago, before the group started work on its third album, *Post Orgasmic Chill* (for new label Virgin), the black, openly bisexual singer packed a few changes of clothes and took off to see the conflicted country. No tour guide, no handmates for support. Just a backpacking Skin, on her inquisitive own.

Some of what she saw made its way onto *Post*, most notably in the torrid, metal-scraping processional "We Don't Need Who You Think You Are." You can't help but shiver at the anger when she screams, at the top of her mighty lungs, "Succulent white, secrete revenge... Starve the mind and drain the face, segregate shit nigga race/Cry for credible debate, but now them blackies legislate." As in most of her work, Skin pulls no punches, and isn't afraid to draw a little blood. And no wonder. During her trek from Johannesburg to Capetown to former German colony Namibia, she relates, "A lot of people thought I was South African, so I experienced everything more from a South African viewpoint. And [black society's] whole experience there is, 'White people are trying to fuck you.' And not only are they trying to fuck you, they think of you as nothing less than animals and you should be down on your knees, working for them as slaves."

Skin sighs, slumps back into a patio chair at the intimate venue her band's playing this particular San Francisco evening, and takes long, thoughtful sips of her orange juice. With her is Skunk axeman Ace. Like his chum, he has a shaven head and several piercings, but there's one small difference: He's white. And when he returned with Skin to South Africa several months later, to play Mandela's 80th birthday party, he witnessed the situation from the other side. "We were accepted as a band," Ace reflects, "but we also felt a certain pressure when the white South Africans, especially the older ones, 40s-onward, were really rude to the black South Africans. And it was embarrassing when you're there, being white, and you see other whites being rude. It makes you cringe, and you automatically think that [the blacks] will hate you, too."

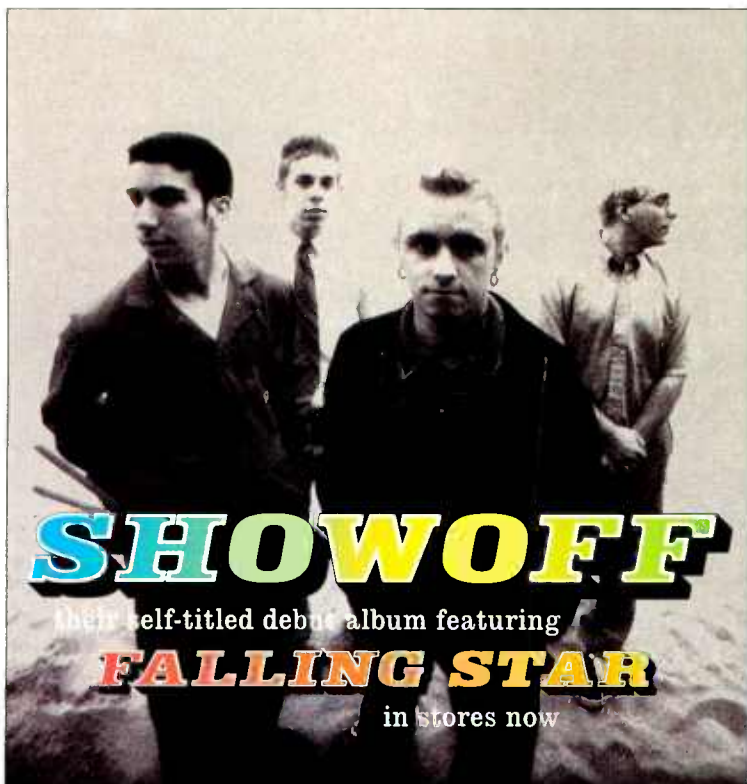
No offense, Skin shrugs. "But I have to say, I can completely see why they'd think that." Obviously, the more sensitive the issue, the more it attracts her. She routinely confronts racism (e.g. "Little Baby SwastiKKKa" from Skunk's '94 debut, *Paranoid And Sunburnt*), and has put her thoughts on organized religion into a song called "Selling Jesus." Skunk Anansie's musical approach always manages to ruffle a few feathers, as well. Although *Post*

boasts sleeker arrangements than past work, even introducing a string section or two, the quartet hasn't strayed far from its feral hybrid of

# BURN

L-R: SKIN, ACE, MARK, CASS





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**“Women seem to be the ones Clinton’s fucked the most, in terms of how he’s carried on with himself. We’d appreciate it if he’d like our minds, not our pussies.”**

serrated guitar and bottom-heavy rhythms anchored by Skin’s alternated sultry singing and shrieking wails. But a few years ago, during the height of Blur/Oasis Britpop, few knew what to make of this sonic assault. Britpop is now on the wane; Skunk Anansie keeps right on ranting. And the band’s time might have finally come.

*Post Orgasmic Chill*, produced by Andy Wallace, taps into the pre-millennial, Y2K-wary tension. The epileptic “On My Hotel TV” studies advertising from a mass-marketed band’s perspective; the Helmet-ish “The Skank Heads” and the Zeppelin-muscular “Charlie Big Potato” both slam all the hangers-on that such a band attracts; and the dreamy ballad “You’ll Follow Me Down” speaks in billboard-huge anti-Clinton/Tony Blair metaphors. How does Skin (née Deborah Dyer) see the two leaders? Skin proffers a toothy smile, then clears her throat demurely. Blair, she says, has been a big disappointment. “And a lot of women voted for Bill Clinton because they thought he was going to be a women’s President.” The grin suddenly turns crocodile sharp. “But we seem to be the ones he’s fucked the most, in terms of how he’s carried on with himself. We’d appreciate it if he’d like our minds, not our pussies.”

Buried beneath her fleece Diesel jacket and pup-tent baggy jeans, Skin exudes a harsh but luminescent beauty, a thoroughly modern look that recently earned her a coveted Calvin Klein modeling offer. She turned it down, as she refuses any agency or ethnic/sexual/political group that tries to pigeonhole her. Everyone wants Skin for a spokesperson, she scowls, “so I’m at odds with the gay community, I’m at odds with the black community, all for the same reason—I don’t play the game, I don’t do what they want me to do. So at the end of the day, I know myself, and I know what I’m supposed to do with my music, with us as a band. I’m not running away from it, but I don’t wear my sexuality on my sleeve, either—it’s just a part of who I am, it all goes into the melting pot, gets mixed around, and comes out sounding like Skunk Anansie, the band.”

Contrary to her signature anthem “Yes, It’s Fucking Political,” Skin’s work doesn’t all have to fight city hall. On her trip to Namibia, she cast her glance elsewhere when a journalist friend piled her and his stepkids into a Landrover and drove them to an animal sanctuary deep in the bush. “I actually learned a lot about animals,” she recollects. “Like, there’s a big difference between a wild animal and a domestic animal, and a wild animal will never be domesticated.

“There was an incident with my friend’s two-year-old,” she shudders. “All the lions and panthers and leopards on the preserve were disabled, so they just hung out with all us humans because they move so slowly, dragging themselves around. And the little kid ran to me, with a leopard about 40 feet away, and I’m from Brixton, so I’m watching that leopard closely. And I saw it—there was something in the movement of the kid’s legs that looked like an animal—and the leopard tried to go for it, but it was too slow. So out of frustration, he jumped on this 19-year-old and knocked her down. It doesn’t matter if the animal has been living on your farm for 20 years,” concludes Skin. “All that needs to happen is one little thing to flip that genetic switch in them, and they attack. You just can’t stop the wildness from coming out.”

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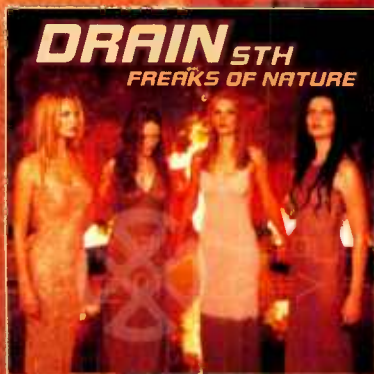
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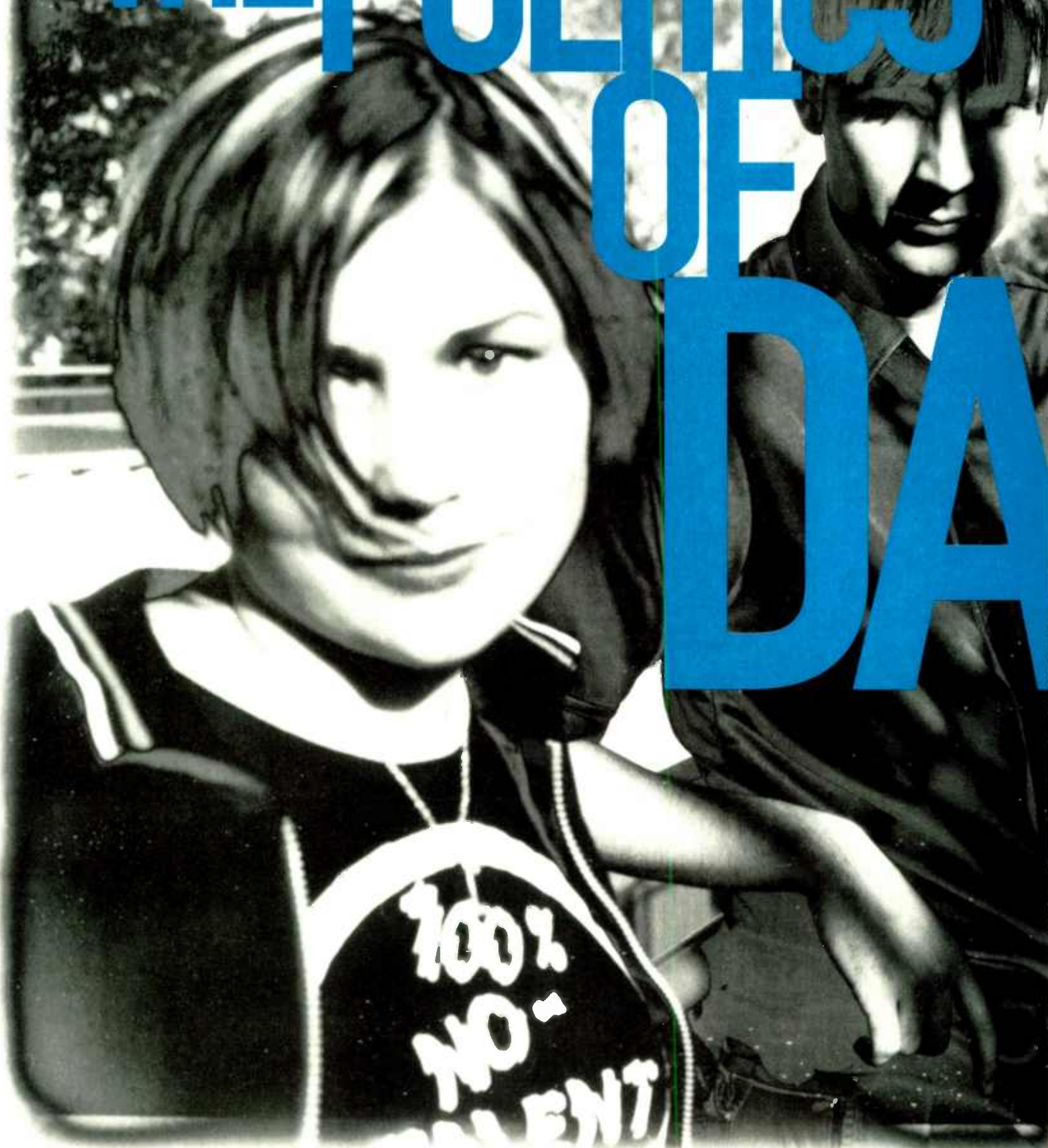
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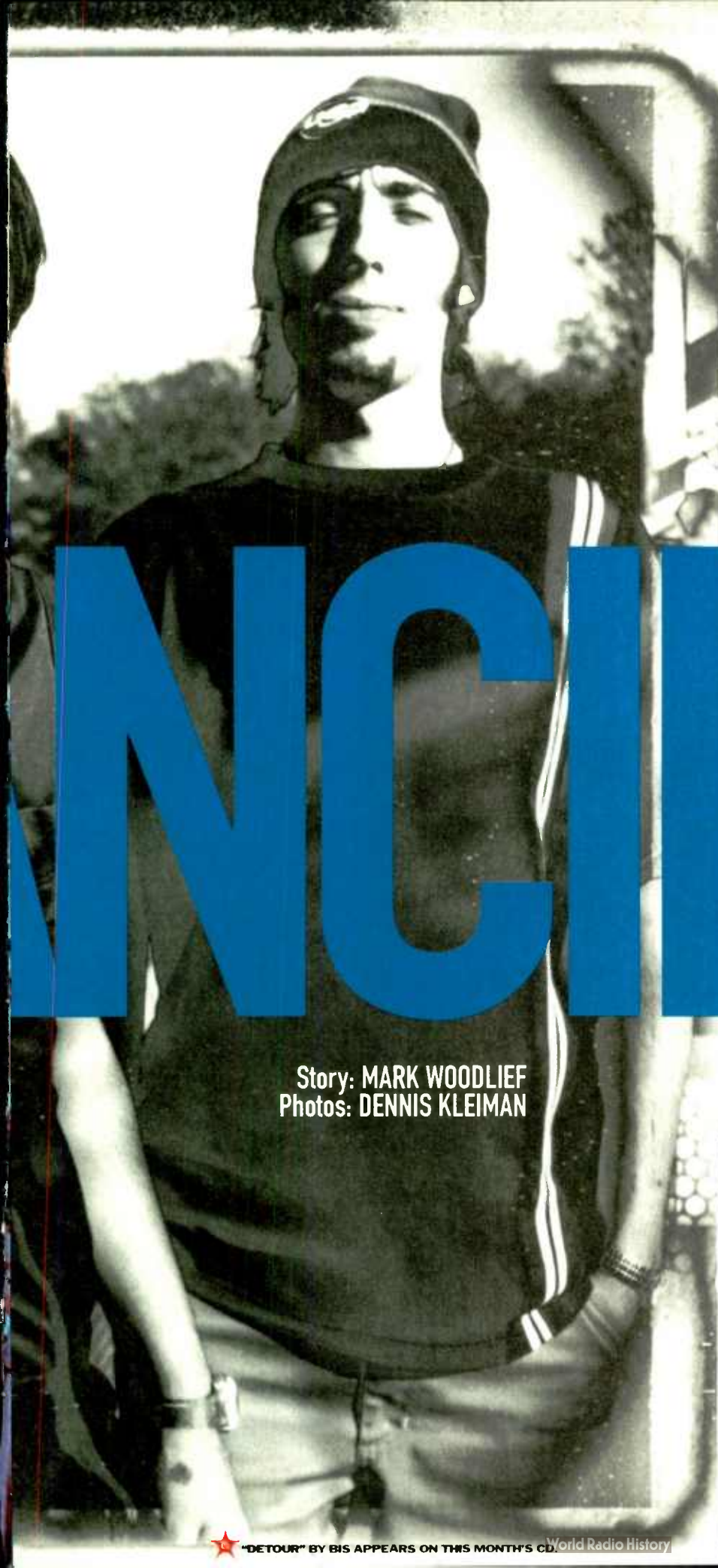
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# THE POLITICS OF DADA







**BIS** grows out of its bouncy DIY pop and into some swank Eurodisco.

# DANCING

Story: MARK WOODLIEF  
Photos: DENNIS KLEIMAN

**A**fter emerging in 1997 as progenitors of "Teen-C Power," an infectious and invigorating melange of new wave, punk and hyper-disco, Glasgow, Scotland's Bis is suddenly feeling a bit mature.

The trio's eldest member, 23-year-old Sci-Fi Steven, sits on a tattered couch in his publicist's New York offices, and without a trace of a smirk announces, "We feel like we've grown up a bit." Accordingly, the band has titled its newest CD *Social Dancing* (Grand Royal-Capitol), an oblique—if typically charming—reference to the "good old days" of elementary school.

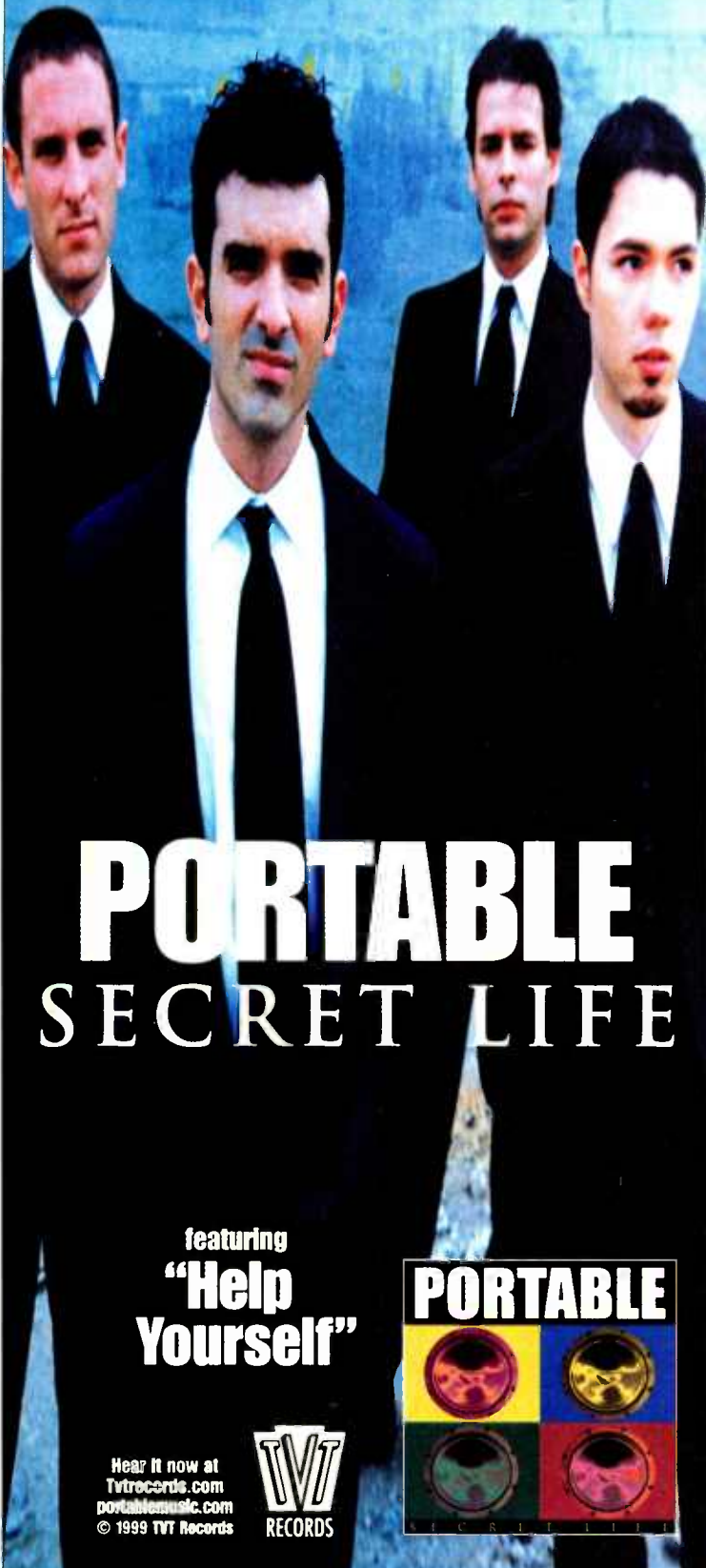
"It's a bit of a play on the fact that we've got old," explains Steven, this time with a touch of a grin. "It's a school thing, like where you have lessons in P.E. and it's called social dancing and you've got to learn Scottish country dancing. It's meant to be a reference to some bizarre ritual you have to go through at school."

*Social Dancing*, however, doesn't feature any of the awkwardness—the geeky miscues or embarrassing faux pas—of such childhood rites. True to Steven's word, Bis (Steven, his younger





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**"The main reason we signed with**

brother and fellow guitarist John Disco, and keyboardist Manda Rin) actually has matured musically with its sophomore effort, honing its frantic sound while developing an ambitious melodic approach that some might call precocious. But *Social Dancing* may simply be proof that earlier Bis successes, like the EP *This Is Teen-C Power!* and the full-length *New Transistor Heroes*, were no four-track flukes.

The trio's smart, caffeinated, DIY pop—they've been home-taping and programming those hyper drum machines for years—took the youngsters all the way to BBC's "Top Of The Pops" in 1996, then on to America and a label deal with Grand Royal. "[Beastie Boys] Mike and Adam were over in Britain and bought our single," Manda recalls. "And they really liked it."

Of course, being courted by the Beastie Boys' label (and other US imprints as well) was a heady experience, but Manda toes the Bis maturity line nicely. "It's easy to sign with someone you think is really cool," she explains, "but you've got to be professional about it. It's your career—you need to make sure that you're going to be set up with the right stuff in your contract."

Steven lapses momentarily and interjects, "The main reason we signed with Grand Royal was Mike D's pool!"

John Disco snaps him out of it. Bis, he says, is part of the Glasgow indie-pop scene that includes contemporaries such as Yatsura, the Delgados, and newcomers Yummy Fur. "It's strange that we're the elder statesman of the whole scene," he says. "We've been at it a little longer, really. Most of the Glasgow bands that came up around the same time as us haven't made very much of an impression in the States yet. But there's a second generation starting to become more recognizable there."

On *Social Dancing*, one mark of the group's evolution was its willingness to work patiently in the studio, and to record with a producer, former Gang Of Four member Andy Gill.

"He gave us a lot of courage to try things out," Manda says. "We were too afraid to do things in the past, and we didn't have a lot of time, to be honest."

Steven elaborates, "It wasn't that a really conscious growing up happened. It was more a sort of realization of what we'd done well—and what we've done badly—in our first two or three years of being in a band. [This time] we wrote songs together as opposed to writing them individually. We became a





L-R: SCI-FI STEVEN, MANDA RIN, JOHN OISCO

## Grand Royal was Mike D's pool."

lot stronger, spent a lot longer in the studio.

"We realized we had to write an album as opposed to songs," Steven continues. "That was kind of a crucial difference, really—considering how to pace a record, and what songs should go on it and why they should go on it, as opposed to just sticking everything you record on it."

Gill's assistance, the band members agree, helped give *Social Dancing*, which flows from shimmering pop and frantic disco to soulful surprises and jungly electronic textures, a defining cohesion.

"It's the difference between treating all songs as equals or just starting from scratch with each song," says Steven. "This is just a much more cohesive record, by virtue of being more different at the same time."

The biggest surprise may be "Detour," the lead single that features guest vocals from K Records' diva Lois Maffeo, a fan who championed the group last year in the pages of *Time Out New York*. "Detour" revolves around sultry beats and lush instrumentation not normally associated with the pogo-ready romps Bis is best known for.

"It's the one song that people will think isn't Bis," Steven says. "And there's a lot on there like that."

Still, there's also plenty of percolation on *Social Dancing*. Bis may have launched the album around "Detour's" silky strut, but the manic "Eurodisco" was the earlier choice. The insistent "Action And Drama"—with its skillful pop hooks and catchy, telling "Give me '80s Madonna" refrain—is raw sonic sugar, while Manda evokes an eccentric Scottish synthesis of Moon Unit "Valley Girl" Zappa and Cyndi "Girls Just Wanna Have Fun" Lauper on the hysterical "Shocking Shopaholic." With its second album, Bis has created the rare recording that possesses both undeniably brash energy and a sense of depth. It's already put ideas in Steven's head.

"I think because we're relatively young, we evolved really quickly," he says. "Already—even though I really love this new record—I can already see where we can take it forward from this one. It's hard to sort of control the pace that you develop at musically."

It makes you wonder what Bis will be doing when they're in their 30s.

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# ROAD

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: WITHERSPOON, CONNOLLY, HORNSBY, ROSE, LOWERY



**Sevendust** toured its ass off for two years. A half million fans later, the band brings it all back *Home*.

Story: DYLAN SIEGLER  
Photos: NIGEL MARSON

# RULES

**"S**o we're all rooting around in the yard trying to find his cut-off toes," whispers Lajon Witherspoon, leaning forward in his chair. "And then I step on one, and it kind of squishes out from under my foot."

The dreadlocked frontman of Atlanta metal band Sevendust is explaining the childhood origins of his foot phobia over a beer at Vortex, a bar in the punky Little Five Points section of the city. His Uncle Don, it turns out, sought little Lajon's help after a bloody lawnmower mishap shaved the toes off the unlucky uncle's foot. Almost 20 years have passed, but Lajon still can't get near feet—even his own. "I wear socks with flip-flops," he relates with a shudder.

The anecdote speaks volumes, mainly because in two full days spent chilling with these nouveau metalheads, this has been the conversation's grittiest turn. Ozzy-style rodent decapitation and alarming G.G. Allin scatology are not on the bill for this civilized band, onstage or off. While these guys are as pierced, tattooed and foul-mouthed as one would hope from a band prone to thundering rhythm guitar and ominous atmospherics, they're also as polite as their Southern upbringing demands. This is a paradoxical metal band—one for whom a Family Values tour could take on serious meaning.

"Being away from family is the hardest thing for us, and that's what our new record is about—getting lost on the road," explains





**“We sold a gold record because of touring, and that’s the first piece of proof I’ve seen that that really happens. Word of mouth is selling the record right now. I feel good about that.”**

drummer Morgan Rose. The band can still smell the sweat and exhaust from the grueling 21-month tour that backed up its 1996 self-titled debut. Returning home to Atlanta for only one or two days every month or so “got pretty brutal,” recalls Rose, who was at least afforded the luxury of touring with his wife Rayna Foss’s band, Coal Chamber, for part of the outing. “Think about leaving your house for a weekend—it’s going to be out of order when you get back,” says Lajon. “Now think about leaving your house for 21 months. This album is about reconnecting with what we feel we’ve been taken away from for so long.”

The intense, aptly titled *Home* explores this theme with a melodic and dynamic range not present on the band’s unyielding, high-decibel first effort. Lajon’s buttery tenor growl has earned the band comparisons to most every black male-led rock entity in history, from Hendrix to Fishbone to Living Colour, and the former funk/soul singer exhibits a hard-won sense of his own rock credibility here. Rose’s frenetic percussion antics, legendary with the band’s fans, are as essential to Sevendust’s line of attack as the studied thrumming of bassist Vinnie Hornsby and guitarists John Connolly and Clint Lowery. And whirring, industrial-inspired synth helps link the album’s primordial and millennial ingredients.

Sevendust might jones for a home-cooked meal, but when Lajon (who prefers to go by his first name only), Rose, and Hornsby get together, they’re suckers for sushi and hot sake. Arriving at a strip mall Japanese joint called Ru Han, Lajon greets not only the waitresses but also the parking attendants by name, and the bandmates order plates of raw fish like they’re turning Japanese. Picking a piece of nori off his lip, (and while being chided by Hornsby for his lax manners in front of a lady), Rose quietly takes the credit for bringing together the boys of Sevendust.

His former group with Hornsby, Snake Nation, had dissolved amid ego-driven clamoring for publishing rights and profit cuts after being passed over by RCA in favor of the Dave Matthews Band. “I thought, ‘The last time I remember having fun was when we were a shitty band, but we all liked each other,’” says Rose, who set out to assemble a covey of potential drinking buddies who also happened to be respectable musicians. Sevendust was gathered from a who’s-who of Atlanta’s harder acts. Although the band was intended for fun, not profit, it wound up having a lot more potential

than most. In fact, as Rose tells it, the band was soon scooped up byTVT Records on the strength of one “really bad” live show and a three-song demo tape.

Thousands of highway miles later, Sevendust has a gold record under its belt and some money in the bank, and two of its members have babies on the way. The group also has a high tolerance for intoxicants—the quintet’s nightly alcohol allowance on tour is three cases of beer, two fifths of liquor, and a bottle of wine, and the guys are known for debauching with friends Pantera and Limp Bizkit. After sushi, Lajon and Rose demonstrate their appetites for destruction at the Whiskey Rock, a roller rink-sized dive of a rock club that showcases local acts. Admirers’ homespun recordings pile up amongst the beer bottles at the band’s table, while Sevendust’s friend and road manager Dennis Brennan winces just perceptibly at the evening’s entertainment. Everyone in Atlanta seems to want to hug Lajon and waive his friends’ cover fees, but free admission is small consolation tonight once the amateurs hit the stage.

“It amazes me that 500,000 other people like the same music that we do,” yells Rose, who has been contemplating the band’s SoundScan figures despite the din and the steady stream of young women who want his attention. “We went from being able to fill a room with about as many people as are at this table to being able to play some pretty decent-sized places and have people know who we are. We sold a gold record because of touring, and that’s the first piece of proof I’ve seen that that really happens.” Without MTV, veteran metal cred, or crossover-friendliness, Sevendust has certainly captured the attention of flocks of kids at the Whiskey Rock, and tens of thousands more like them all over the country. “Word of mouth is selling the record right now. I feel good about that,” says Rose.

Tonight is an early night. Lajon, Rose, and Brennan wait respectfully until the last band’s final, deafening cadence, then head to the parking lot. Lajon wants to work in the yard of his newly purchased house in the morning, and “the wife” is expecting Rose at home in Marietta. It’s just 48 hours before the band embarks on a five-week stint co-headlining the Warped Tour, and preparations are in order. “You have to have something to come back to when it’s all over, the serenity of a home base,” says Lajon. “But in a sense,” he pauses, grasping his studded leather steering wheel cover and turning onto the highway, “I feel Sevendust is home.”

**NMM**





PETER BAGGE AND GILBERT HERNANDEZ

PRESENT

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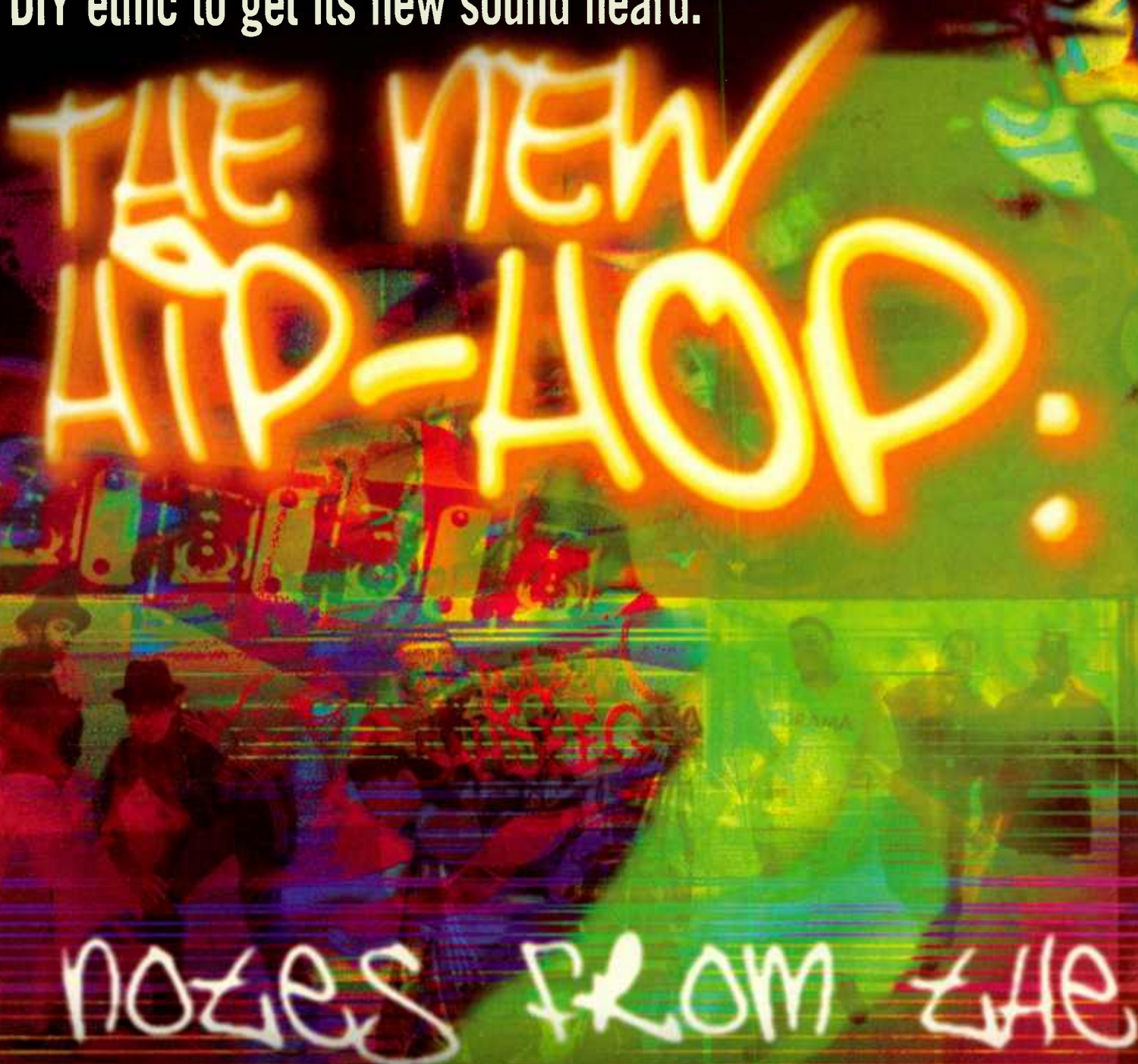
## HOMAGE COMICS

BEGINNING  
IN AUGUST!

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Disaffected by the music mainstream, a growing underground of fiercely original artists adopts a DIY ethic to get its new sound heard.



Sound familiar? It should. Every time pop music gets too Puffed up, something real comes along to kick it in the ass. But not before the rigors of survival—necessity, as they say, is a mother—turns artists on the fringe into an underground united against its own neglect. New sounds. New ways of getting heard. New ways of looking at the past and to the future.





# UNDERGROUND

Such is the way with the New Hip-Hop, from New York, where Mos Def is about to become MTV's new face of hip-hop, to LA, where Dr. Oop is still fighting the fight.



# MOS DEF

## THE BLACK STAR RISES

Don't call him the future, he's been here for years.

Story: WILLIAM WERDE  
Images: CHARLIE LANGELLA

Walking down the dim corridors of Chung King studios in Manhattan's Lower East Side is like travelling in a hip-hop time machine. Fluorescent light reflects from one platinum or gold record plaque after another, shiny tokens of appreciation for time in the studios. First is Run-D.M.C., *Raising Hell* and *Tougher Than Leather*. Up a bit is *Bigger And Deffer* from L.L. Cool J and beyond that is Public Enemy's seminal *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*. The Beastie Boys' *License To Ill*, Dana Dane, 3rd Bass, Cypress Hill, and the list goes on. And then, at the end of the hall, you're back to the future: It's Mos Def, in the flesh, hanging out at the studio where he's working on his debut album.

What makes Mos Def the most compelling new face in hip-hop?

Maybe it's his smooth lyrical stylings. As longtime hip-hop goddess Bahamadia says, "He's like the second coming of Q-Tip." It could be the recent work he's done, showing up in the studio with De La Soul, the Roots and A Tribe Called Quest. Or maybe it's whom he associates with. Just 25, Mos has been indoctrinated into the Native Tongue tribe, a collective of near-mythical figures in hip-hop, including Tribe, De La and the big daddy himself, Afrika Bambaataa. Native Tongue is about positivity in hip-hop, a celebration of culture.

"I understand the history," says Mos. "I'm not afraid of the future. But I understand the history. Sounds in America. Black music in America. Black people in America. The conditions that this music and this art arose out of." By recognizing his place in the African cultural continuum, he is able to bring it—and us—his meaningful perspective.

Mos is a contemporary poet. Having grown up in Brooklyn's famous (and infamous) Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in the '80s, surrounded by Flatbush reggae and local hip-hop, he was as likely to rap as to write. In conversation, Mos references poets such as Jessica Care Moore, star of the spoken word scene, and Ai, who writes powerfully about racial and sexual politics.

Mos credits his parents for instilling the importance of reading to him at a young age. "I would read anything," he says of his time growing up in Bed-Stuy. "Anything that was lying around that had words on it. Pamphlets, anything. Flyers. As I got older, I started really having preferences. I was a real big fan of Chinua Achebe after I read *Things Fall Apart*," he recalls of the 1958 novel about what happens to African tribal customs after the arrival of the white man. "Then I read *No Longer At Ease* [Achebe's 1961 novel about a man whose foreign education has separated him from his African roots], then I started reading his essays."

And then there's the music. "You just heard music in the environment," says Mos. "It was pretty difficult to grow up where I grew



up and not be influenced by it. It was just stuff that was in the area. If you lived in certain parts of town, you knew about it. That's when hip-hop was really, really like a folk music."

"Art marks people," he continues. "It lets you know that certain people are there. Hip-hop arises out of a certain longing, out of a want. Out of a lack of access. Out of a lack of respect or representation. Rock 'n' roll was the hip-hop of that era. Be-bop was the hip-hop of that era.

"The thing that's most exciting about hip-hop," continues Mos, "is that it hasn't been removed from the people yet. You can't really say the same for jazz now. You can't really say the same for blues. It's not as close

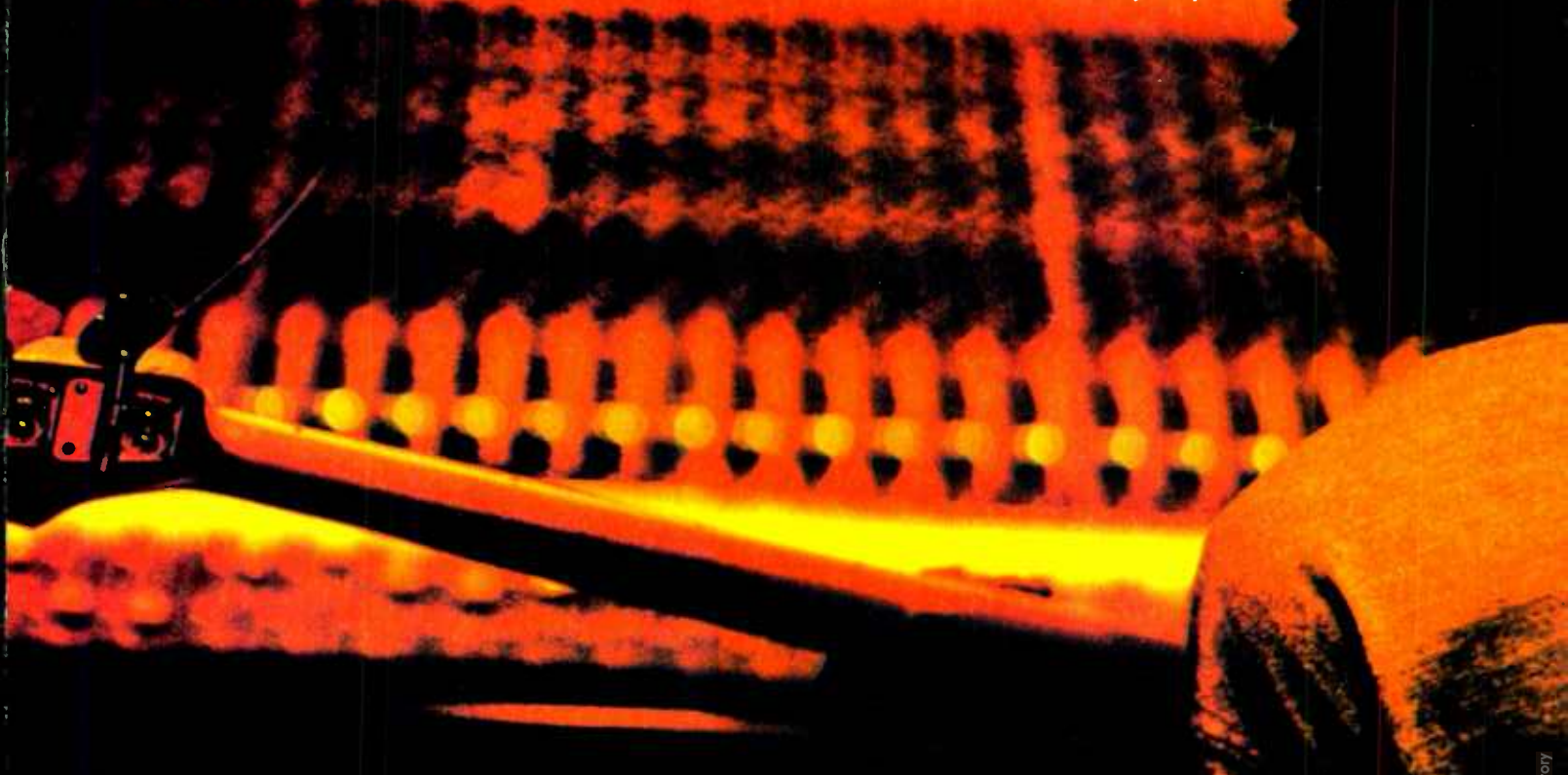
### HIP-HOP: TIMEZONE

the underground to the mainstream

- 1967** Clive Campbell—alias Kool DJ Herc—relocates to the Bronx from Kingston, Jamaica.
- 1971** Harlem favorite DJ Hollywood weaves rhymes (like "hip-hop, you don't stop") with musical passages; by the mid-'70s, he's one of NYC's #1 disco jocks, routinely drawing 2,000-plus dancers.
- 1973** Herc plays his first gig, a birthday party. Tracks like James Brown's "Give It Up Or Turn It Loose" are among the highlights.
- 1974** Barbados emigrant Joseph Saddler begins spinning at house parties. Within two years, he'll rise to Bronx prominence as Grandmaster Flash.
- 1975** DJs with mobile set-ups—patterned after Jamaica's roving sound systems—gain increasing popularity. Kool DJ Herc, who has begun isolating rhythmic points within songs ("breaks") and stringing them together, dominates the scene.
- 1976** Zulu Nation founder Afrika Bambaataa plays his first official party. Previously a gang member, Bambaataa recognizes hip-hop's potential as a force for social change.
- 1977** While practicing on the decks, Grandwizard Theodore is interrupted by his mom. Distracted, he accidentally jiggles a cue-dup record back and forth. Voila—scratching!
- 1979** Aided by a Harlem rapper, the Fatback Band releases the funk jam "King Tim III (Personality Jock)," the first rap single.
- 1979** "Rapper's Delight" by Sugarhill Gang, the first rap track recognized by the mainstream, is released. The record peaks at #4 on the R&B charts and pierces the lowest reaches of the pop Top 40.
- 1979** Thanks to Mr. Magic and his popular "Mr. Magic's Rap Attack" from WHBI in New Jersey, rap is introduced to the radio.



**"Hip-hop arises out of a certain longing, out of a want. Out of a lack of access. Out of a lack of respect or representation. Rock 'n' roll was the hip-hop of that era. Be-bop was the hip-hop of its era."** -Mos Def



to the environment that produced it when it first came out. I would like hip-hop to stay as close to that environment as possible. Because that's what's going to keep it fresh.

Though it may seem to contradict his "keep it for the people" politics, Mos will be hosting the follow-up to *Yo! MTV Raps*, a show dubbed *Hip-Hop Nation*, which begins airing in September, coinciding closely with the release of his debut. "I think it would actually be really good if it were done the right way," says Mos of the show. "Get some good music. Do some different things. It might be interesting to have Fiona Apple on the show. Or whoever. Just to show that hip-hop is not this isolated phenomenon. It's not this one-dimensional thing."

Which is what he'll also try to demonstrate with the album, *Black On Both Sides*. Mos says his single from this summer's *Soundbombing II*, "Next Universe," with its fluid rhymes, get-your-groove-on production and cuts by Etch-A-Sketch, is a good indicator of what to expect. "I got some instrumental joints. 88 Keys did a joint. I got a joint with Busta [Rhymes] that I'm doing. Primo's doin' a joint for me," he says referring to Premier of Gang Starr. "Shawn J. Period. Ali Shaheed. It's me. It's all of the things that I'm excited about. It's music. It's something that you can play in your home. For your crew, for your mother, for your children."

**It's hip-hop.**

**1980** Blondie's "Rapture"—including shout-outs to Grandmaster Flash and Fab-5 Freddy—is the first #1 pop song to showcase rapping.

**1980** Kurtis Blow releases "The Breaks," the first rap record to be certified gold.

**1981** Chopping tunes by Blondie, Chic, Queen and others into a grody mish-mash, Flash captures all the fresh tricks of the DJ's trade live on three decks for "The Adventures Of Grandmaster Flash On The Wheels Of Steel."

**1982** Melle Mel's lyrics convey the urgency of the medium to an audience outside the inner city, while rap gets political with "The Message" by Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five.



**1982** Afrika Bambaataa and Soul Sonic Force's "Planet Rock," a hybrid of classic breaks and icy Kraftwerk-style synthesizers, lays down the blueprint for '80s electro-funk.

**1982** Whodini's salute to Mr. Magic, "Magic's Wand," becomes the first rap song to feature an accompanying video.



**1983** Run-D.M.C.'s Top 20 R&B hit "My Adidas" ushers in a tougher, more menacing sound than the playful fare of Kurtis Blow or Whodini.

**1983** *Wild Style*, a docudrama depicting the lives of South Bronx b-boys and girls, captures the four aspects of hip-hop culture—rapping, graffiti, DJing and breakdancing—with refreshing accuracy.



**1983** In Bristol, England, the Wild Bunch forms. Artists as diverse as Massive Attack, Nellee Hooper, Tricky, Neneh Cherry, Smith & Mighty and Mad Professor will pass through the ranks of this UK sound system DJ collective.

**1983** Grandmixer D.ST scratches on Herbie Hancock's "Rockit." The animated video becomes an MTV staple.





Story: NEIL DRUMMING  
Imaging: MERV

## I USED TO BE A RAPPER.

Back in the day, back in college. My crew was called Black Love and my partner was Droop, a.k.a. Droop Capone, a natural behind a microphone. When we met, it was more about hanging out and freestyling at the domino table than making records. But Droop, my personal hip-hop Yoda, convinced me that I was a talented MC. After we'd braved the mic together at a couple of house parties and wowed a few people at the university radio station, we began to consider ourselves a team, a rap group. That's how it starts. We stayed up all night improvising, constantly wrote rhymes, and recorded songs anytime someone left a four-track unprotected. Our style gelled into a sort of politically aware, but thoroughly weeded lyricism. We put together a demo or two. We'd go to clubs or shows and try to slip the tape into the right hands. During that time we became aware of a small community of people like us in LA and up the West Coast. Most of us—even the ones with a little street

buzz—were broke. But we were all idealistic and everybody had his or her little twist on the music. I remember sitting in KSCR's studio with Key Kool and DJ Rhettmatic at one time, Chino XL at another. We crossed paths with Oakland's Saafir

**"Style is the best of virtues in the hip-hop world. In the underground, the aim is**

The Saucy Nomad and Souls Of Mischief on more than one occasion and were aware of rap groups like the Black Eyed Peas and Jurassic 5 making names for themselves around town. Of course, we were hardly a big hit on campus. But we started to feel like we were part of something larger. We were underground.

I haven't really been back down to the underground much since those days. Recognition was slow in coming for

**1984** Rick Rubin and Russell Simmons found Def Jam records, using Rubin's New York University dorm room as their HQ.

**1984** U.T.F.O. drops "Roxanne, Roxanne" about a woman who spurns them. It spawns over 100 answer records, including "Roxanne's Revenge" by early female MC Roxanne Shanté.

**1985** LL Cool J's *Radió*, co-produced by Rick Rubin, fuses the Spartan beatbox style of Run-D.M.C. with a streetwise snarl and pop sensibility. Within a year, the LP goes platinum.

**1985** "Fresh Is The Word," the debut from influential NYC act Mantronix, mixes freestyle dance rhythms, hip-hop production and soulful vocals.

**1985** The movie *Krush Groove*—featuring Run-D.M.C. and Kurtis Blow—does well at the box office, solidifying rap's place in mainstream culture.

**1986** With his mellifluous, rapid-fire flow, Rakim sets a new standard for MCs on Eric B. & Rakim's "Eric B. Is President."



**1986** Run-D.M.C. releases *Raising Hell*, featuring the Aerosmith collaboration "Walk This Way." That song climbs to #4 on the pop charts. *Raising Hell* is the first rap LP to top the R&B charts, crack the pop top ten, and achieve platinum status. Run-D.M.C. is also the first rap group to pierce MTV's color barrier.

**1986** Mixing breaks with go-go, Queens trio Salt-N-Pepa—one of the most successful all-female acts of the next decade—scores with "Push It."



**1987** LL Cool J's *Bigger And Deffer* shoots to #3 on the pop charts, largely due to the ballad "I Need Love." Purists decry the rapper as a sellout.

**1987** Compton ensemble N.W.A. releases *N.W.A. And The Posse* to lukewarm response.

**1987** Boogie Down Productions—KRS-One ("Knowledge Reigns Supreme Over Nearly



FROM  
BACKGROUND

the Black Love Crew, and 'round about junior year at USC I began to get a little panicky about my future. In the end, I chose to concentrate on school and had all but abandoned the microphone by the time I left Los Angeles with my

**to trump the next man's style, not his paycheck."**

degree. I still try to keep track of the underground today, and I watch the music that bubbles to the surface. I know about Black Star and the rising independent label phenomenon that is Rawkus Records. I knew who Eminem was long before Dr. Dre and millions of MTVeenagers discovered him. When I first heard Prince Paul's second release on Tommy Boy, *A Prince Among Thieves*, I was thrilled to hear Breeze of the Juggaknots as the featured MC. I've always looked out

**PUBLIC ENEMY**



**Prophets Of Rage  
In The Online Age**

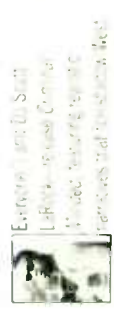
"I'm fortunate to have a genre that's under-served," says Public Enemy's Chuck D. Although these days he sometimes sounds more like a CEO than the leader of one of the most important hip-hop groups of all time, Chuck's goal is still the same: to change the music industry. Or, as he puts it, to "bomb the business with a new template." This time, though, he doesn't need an Uzi to get the world's

attention. He's traded it in for a laptop computer. Shortly after "murdering" his contract with Def Jam last fall, Chuck and Public Enemy signed a landmark partnership deal in early 1999 with the newly formed Atomic Pop label, helmed by music industry vet Al Teller. Aside from an important clause allowing Chuck to retain the rights to his own master tapes—which is almost unheard of in the music business—the deal works well for the label, too. Atomic Pop is a full-service company whose online home ([www.atomicpop.com](http://www.atomicpop.com)) not only represents the record label, but also includes an online CD store, a video game arsenal and more. So the company gets to use the always provocative PE as the poster child for its efforts to change the way music is consumed in the online age. The company's first important step is to sell PE's strong and angry new album, *There's A Poison Goin' On*, online at the low cost of \$8 for two months before it hits stores. The site also offers such non-traditional formats as A2B and MP3, which allow the music to be downloaded digitally, and Zip Disks, 100 megabyte "floppy" discs playable on your computer.

Chuck has been delving into the online arena for some time now, building a presence on the group's multimillion-hit homepage, [PublicEnemy.com](http://PublicEnemy.com), and his Internet radio consortium, [BringTheNoise.com](http://BringTheNoise.com). Being an integral part of both—lurking around and posting on chat boards and soliciting DJs for possible contributions to his network—Chuck sees the obvious benefits offered by online communication. "Before the homepages," he says, "it would have been impossible to get this kind of interaction—unless I hijacked a TV network or a syndicated radio station."

Chuck has used his band's legendary name and his own online savvy to harvest monetary benefits on the web. But he also sees great potential for young independent artists. "[The Internet] allows a kid who has a .8 percent chance of getting signed to become their own record company and get into the game."

"You have to overstand the system to overthrow it," Chuck states. With Public Enemy leading the way in online music distribution, that artistic coup d'état may take place sooner than the major labels want to admit. "By 2002 we're looking at about a million artists and 500,000 labels on the web," he says. "Come one, come all. This is gonna be fun." >>> Brian Coleman



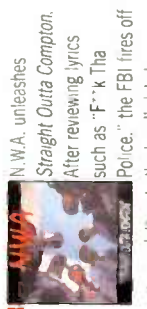
Eric B. & Rakim's "My Adidas" video featuring the rapper James Brown sent the rapper Godfather's adverstising to the practice.

**1987** Eric B. & Rakim's "My Adidas" video featuring the rapper James Brown sent the rapper Godfather's adverstising to the practice.

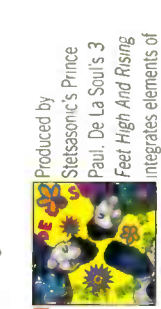
**1987** Licensed to a by a record label, rockers the Beastie Boys became the first rap act to go platinum.

**1987** Inspired by the beats of the funk scene and the portable tactics of pastoral hip-hop acts, London's Coolest—Jin More and Matt Black—brought their release "12" "Say K Us What Time Is It?"

**1988** Public Enemy unveils its second full-length, *It Takes A Nation Of Millions To Hold Us Back*, distinguished by Chuck D's incisive lyrics and the Bomb Squad's blistering production.



**1988** N.W.A. unleashes *Straight Outta Compton*. After reviewing lyrics such as "F\*\*k The Police," the FBI fires off warning letters to the band's label.



**1989** Produced by Stetsasonic's Prince Paul, De La Soul's 3 Feet High And Rising integrates elements of psychedelia, '60s pop, and reggae into hip-hop, balancing social consciousness with goofy humor. Along with A Tribe Called Quest, the Jungle Brothers and Queen Latifah, the trio belongs to the loosely knit Native Tongues posse, an Afrocentric antithesis to gangsta rap.

**1989** The track "DJ Premier In Deep Concentration," from Gang Starr's *No More Mr. Nice Guy*, presents a new approach to turntable composition, adopting a milder style that winds up influencing DJ Shadow, among others.

**1989** Tone-Loc becomes the first black rap artist to score a #1 pop hit with "Wild Thing."



## NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

for his erratic, bizarre Brooklyn flow. There are many others that I listen to and some that I admire. It's not really difficult to find evidence of the underground; you just have to know where to dig. The Internet, with its fuzzy Real Audio clips and hotly contested MP3s, has made cake out of sampling a massive amount of hip-hop. Finding something to listen to is simply a matter of scrolling and clicking. Honestly, there's almost too much to shovel through, and it can be pretty confusing. For every MC like Eminem that blows up, there is an Evidence, Emanon, LMNO, and El-P still striving for recognition.

The underground is definitely growing. It also seems to have solidified. It's now a concrete designation that artists claim proudly and adamantly. By far the strongest proponents of the term seem to be unsigned artists that shun major labels and are often heard denouncing the entire record industry. For me, this is a new attitude. I remember being aware of the danger of being lost in a vast major label roster yet still very much wanting to sign a record contract

**"When I heard hip-hop, I was inspired because I thought, 'This guy had to be pretty smart to say that.'"**

with an established label. Gang Starr, Redman, the Roots—all of these acts were signed to major labels while still managing to be not just participants in, but pioneers of the underground sound. So being underground cannot be synonymous with being independent. There has to be more to it.

While I was hopping from website to website looking for the latest and most obscure tracks to help me put my finger on the underground aesthetic, I repeatedly came upon a familiar name, Dr. Oop—one of Droop's favorite aliases. Over the past few years, as I was struggling to pay back the mounting interest from my college loans, I heard whispers of Droop funneling what money he could into the production of independent releases. Apparently, he had become even more dedicated to pursuing rap as a career after I'd left. I thought he was crazy.

Droop's second and most recent EP contains four songs and, from what I can tell, seems to be getting a fair amount of play on college radio stations as well as some love on commercial mix shows. A review of the release in *URB* confirmed that Dr. Oop was now a recognizable name in subterranean hip-hop. I decided to give him a call and see if he could help me make sense of this whole underground business. The self-professed Dr. Of Oral Poetry had just returned from a show in Topeka, Kansas, of all places.

What's Going On?

D-BERTZ



Recent release: *Wave Twisters* (ISP)

"I'm in my own world. A lot of time DJ Flare and D-Styles will come over and we'll just practice. They'll have something new, and I'll have something new—techniques, styles—and we'll share ideas. That's what moves me. Mostly I just buy beats and drums and sound effects. Lots of producers are making DJ tools now. You find those things like on Dirt Style Records, they have all kinds of sound effects for DJs."

What's Going On?

CTOP XL of Quannum and Blackalicious



Recent release: *Quannum Spectrum* (Quannum)

"My favorite record in the past year is M.O.P.'s album, *Firing Squad*, on *Relativity*. It's like classic Premier and Lazy Laze. The energy they put out as MCs is heartfelt. Plus it's got a guest appearance by Freddie Fox, one of the dopest, most underrated MCs. Loot Pack, Ugly Duckling, Roots Manuva, stuff that's goin' on in the London underground scene. I'm really digging Company Flow's instrumental album. It's incredibly phat."

**1989** Young MC snags the very first Grammy for Best Rap Performance with "Bust A Move."

**1989** The Beastie Boys release the landmark album *Paul's Boutique* (see sidebar on page 48).

**1989** With "Ladies First" and *All Hail The Queen*, rapper Queen Latifah brings a feminist consciousness to hip-hop.

**1990** As *Nasty As They Wanna Be*, from Florida bass scene mainstay 2 Live Crew, is declared legally obscene, Four months later the US Supreme Court overturns the decision.

**1990** With rubbery funk and ludicrous humor, Digital Underground's *Sex Packets* (featuring "The Humpty Dance") sparks a George Clinton P-funk obsession that shapes the early '90s West Coast sound, including the output of ex-DU dancer Tupac Shakur.

**1990** After an acrimonious split from N.W.A., Ice Cube (assisted by the Bomb Squad) drops the scathing *AmeriKKKa's Most Wanted*. Meanwhile, his former colleagues release *Niggaz4life*, an outburst of over-the-top gangsta posturing.

**1990** Florida MC Vanilla Ice—boasting self-fabricated street cred—dominates the #1 pop slot for 16 solid weeks with "Ice Baby."

**1991** Ice Cube returns with *Death Certificate*. Though it features outbursts of homophobia, anti-Semitism and misogyny, many consider it his finest hour.

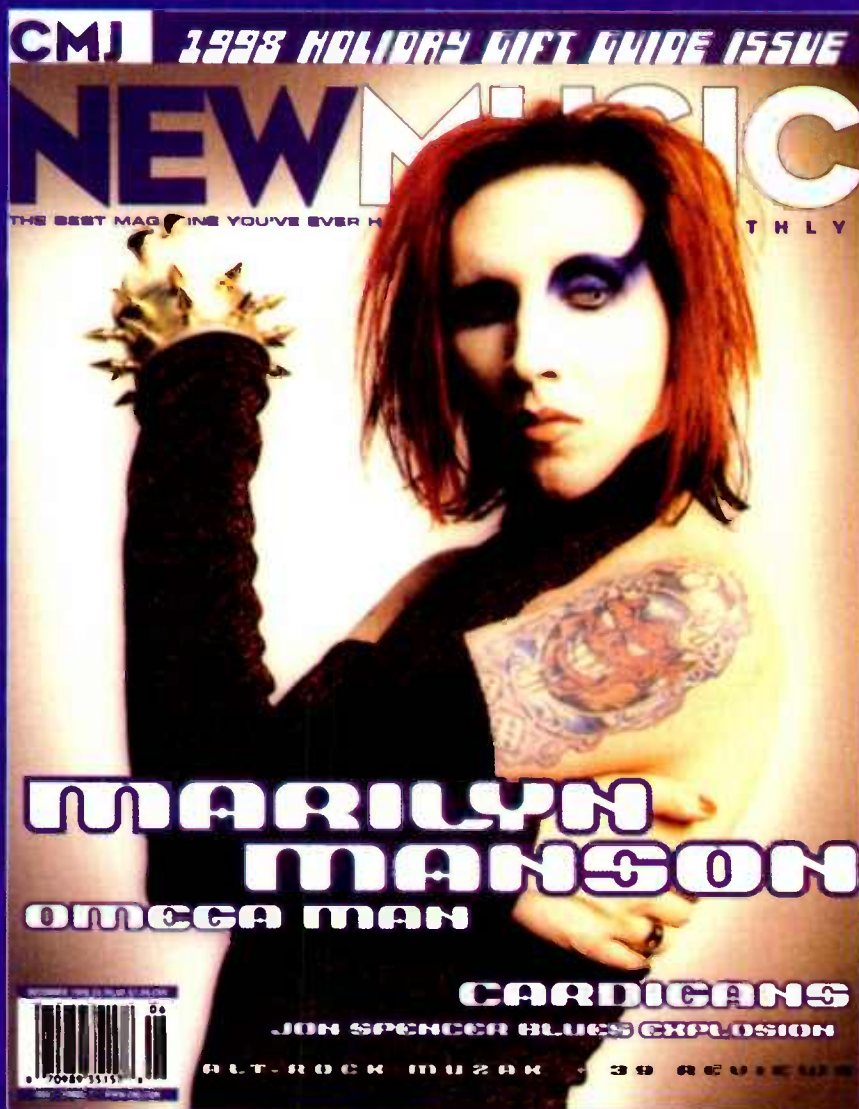
**1991** The Low End Theory, the second album from A Tribe Called Quest, is hailed as a masterpiece of jazz hip-hop fusion.

**1991** Thanks to his #1 hit "Good Vibrations" and complete lack of modesty, gay icon Marky Mark parries substantial rapping into a successful modeling (and later acting) career.



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# THE UNDERGROUND ECONOMY

From windbreakers to graffiti murals: how the new sounds of hip-hop get heard.

Hip-hop's underground is proving to be a source of not only innovative beats and rhymes, but of marketing tactics as well. "Street marketing" as a concept was perfected in the mid-1990s by Steve Rifkind, CEO of the Steve Rifkind Company (SRC) and Loud Records (home to the Wu-Tang Clan), and he's become a wealthy man because of it. So successful was his game plan of promoting hip-hop records to a young, "urban"-oriented market that his business now includes promoting films, sneakers, and magazines. Others have followed suit and now you can't go anywhere without drowning in flyers and stickers, spotting artist promo vans, or seeing ghetto celebrities endorsing a pair of kicks. Now, companies such as Rawkus Records and Bomb Records (known for its *Return Of The DJ* compilations), as well as artists like Mos Def and Common, are developing their own techniques.

"We're not on the radio—at all," says Jarret Myer, co-founder of Rawkus. "We have no choice but to seek out another method." Although his label does engage in some traditional forms of marketing (advertisements, stickers, etc.), it also emphasizes its merchandising division, which sells everything from T-shirts to windbreakers, and employs local artists to create amazing graffiti murals in Manhattan and Brooklyn depicting their logo and album covers. What's more, Myer notes, the label benefits from the enthusiasm of its followers, who require a barrage of promotional material to be reached. "The fans are a little more proactive," he says. "They have a passion for music, a hunter's mentality, so that they seek it out anyway."

Los Angeles-based Celestial Records, home to jungle DJ Hive and hip-hop freestylers Supernatural and Phoenix Orion, takes its cues from house and techno labels and hosts a weekly, label-sponsored party in L.A. called *Konkrete Jungle*. Celestial also employs the Internet—a tool most hip-hop labels are just now beginning to exploit—sending out regular email updates about new releases and events happening around the country. Another example of web-exploitation is the Bay Area rap collective Hieroglyphics (Del The Funky Homosapien, Souls Of Mischievous, Casual), who rely solely on their website ([www.hieroglyphics.com](http://www.hieroglyphics.com)) for their promotion.

As Myer explains, "Our music isn't going to be found on DJ Clue's next mix tape and not on the radio. So, what the hell else are we going to do?" >>>Joseph Patel

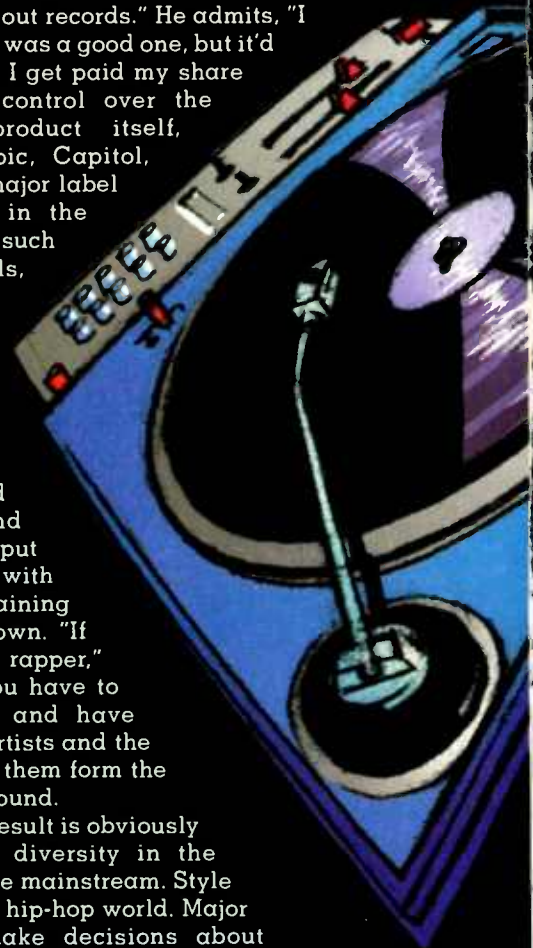


# NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

Unfortunately, he was on last, as the crowd was thinning out and there were no turntables to speak of.

Droop concurred that back in school he too had his eyes on a big time record deal. "Basically, I was like, 'Yeah, I want to get a deal.' Whatever that means. Money paid to rap. Paid to put out records." He admits, "I still would take one if it was a good one, but it'd have to be a good one: I get paid my share and I get complete control over the merchandise, the product itself, everything." Since Epic, Capitol, Arista, and any other major label I could name aren't in the business of giving out such pie-in-the-sky deals, Droop and other hip-hopsters have little choice but to follow in the footsteps of the punk rockers before them. They've adopted a DIY disposition, and begun working and paying to press up and put out their own material, with the ultimate goal of gaining an audience on their own. "If you really want to be a rapper," Droop states, "what you have to do is put music out and have people hear it." Such artists and the audiences that flock to them form the core of today's underground.

The most positive result is obviously a greater amount of diversity in the underground than in the mainstream. Style is the best virtue in the hip-hop world. Major labels, by nature, make decisions about artists for financial reasons, so the value of individuality pales in comparison to the importance of record sales. But in the underground, the aim is to trump the next man's style, not his paycheck. This is not to say that underground artists are not concerned with money, but if it were the only goal, all MCs would follow trends rather than set them. "You know how they say 'the four elements of hip-hop [MCing, DJing, breaking, and graffiti]?' Droop asks. "There's a fifth element that's more prevalent in the underground. It's the consciousness. Most



**1991** Wild Bunch alumna Massive Attack drops *Blue Lines*. Atmospheric production techniques and dub elements exert tremendous influence on the wave of "trip-hop" records that follow.

**1992** Coldcut, recording as Bogus Order, releases *Zen Breaks*, which launches the group's label Ninja Tune.

**1992** Dr. Dre (né André Young) releases *The Chronic* and raises the bar for gangsta rap, melding a marijuana mindset with tight, funk-driven production.

**1992-1994** The Rocksteady DJs, featuring Mixmaster Mike, Q-Bert & Apollo, dominate the DMC World Championships. The DMC eventually asks them to bow out of future competitions.

**1992** With his band Body Count, Ice-T brings a heavy metal/hip-hop fusion to the disgruntled suburban teens of America via the first Lollipopz.

**1992** Cypress Hill (Seren Reyes, DJ Muggs and B-Real) becomes the first Latino hip-hop star with its eponymous debut.

**1992** Suge Knight and Dr. Dre form Death Row Records. The label will produce acts such as Warren G, Snoop Dogg, and Blackstreet.

**1992** Tupac Shakur breaks from Digital Underground and under the name 2Pac releases *2Pacalypse Now*, a gangsta rap album that is criticized by then-Vice President Dan Quayle—especially the song "Brenda's Got A Baby." The album ranks in the top 30 on the R&B charts and goes gold.

**1993** Snoop Dogg releases *Doggystyle*, a mimic of Dre's G-Funk style; it enters the charts at #1.

**1993** DJ Shacrow releases his 17-minute hip-hop symphony "Entropy," which is a hit with the DJ underground and gains the attention of British label Mo' Wax.



rappers who consider themselves underground have morals, backbone as far as what they'll do and won't do."

These "morals" are part of the understanding that even the most pop-oriented rappers come from an underground sensibility, and regardless of where they are now, it was probably their originality that got them noticed. Jay-Z is a perfect example. While his most recent incarnation—the drug-dealing, gun-talking, Rolex-wearing Jigga—shot him to the top of the charts, he had been a respected and talented MC struggling underground for years. MCs only truly "sell out" when they abandon the individuality that they started with. Non-mainstream rappers and producers pursue originality with near-religious fervor. Their efforts have led to a wide variety of brilliant, explorative lyrical and musical works. Notably, Talib Kweli of both Black Star and Reflection Eternal has followed in the conscious-lyric footsteps of groups like Public Enemy and X-Clan, but in a more understated and accessible manner. Yeshua DapoEd of Fondle 'Em Records, his partner Siah, and the Juggaknots tell provocative tales with fascinating, tongue-twisted deliveries. On "Clear Blue Skies," African-American MCs the Juggaknots explore interracial dating from the point of view of a white man and his son. Last year, Los Angeles's Aceyalone of the legendary Freestyle Fellowship released what had to be one of the most confounding records in hip-hop history. *A Book Of Human Language* disrupted all the preconceived notions of what rap was supposed to be about. Each song seemed to be a single, fully fleshed-out metaphor. Music that takes risks and stirs thought is part of what makes underground hip-hop exciting. "When I heard hip-hop," admits Droop, whose music bounds between politics and punch lines, "I was inspired because [I thought,] 'This guy had to be pretty smart to say that,' you know? I shouldn't be ashamed to say some shit that shows that I can actually make clever lines up. That's what's different about the underground."

The failure of larger audiences to recognize the power and potential of the underground has caused a lot of



**Recent release: *Kakusei* (Red Ink-Columbia)**

"I am watching Japanese hip-hop/rappers Tha Blue Herb very closely. They rap in Japanese without losing the inherent beauty of the Japanese language. Sinister and other young battle DJs are doing some inspiring work, and I want to see what new 'paintings' I can make with these cats. I play 'A Paroxysm Of Excellence' by Gravity, from Stockholm, in my set all the time."



**Recent Release: *Black Elvis/Lost In Space* (Ruffhouse-Red Ink)**

"The Ricky Martin record, man. I can't go nowhere without hearing it. Now I go into a club, everything is a bounce thing. JT Money, I'm hearing a lot of his stuff. I've been hearing a lot of Southern stuff, Virginia and Florida. Missy Elliot, Trick Daddy. Nothin' really moves me except my own albums. I think we'll hear some new sounds in the year 2000."

**1993** Wu-Tang Clan releases *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* on Loud-RCA. The nine MCs—each has two-to-five aliases—further establish themselves with a slew of side projects: RZA, GeniusGZA, Ol' Dirty Bastard, Method Man, Raekwon, The Chief, Ghostface Killa, U-God, Inspecta Deck and Wasta Killa.

**1994** The Notorious B.I.G. (Chris Wallace) releases his debut, *Ready To Die* (produced by Sean "Puffy" Combs), eventually selling 2 million copies, and establishing him as the face of East Coast hip-hop—and a rival to West Coast hip-hop poster boy 2Pac.

**1995** Thirty-six side projects? RZA records the Prince Paul-produced *6 Feet Deep* with the Graveyardz; it goes gold. Raekwon releases a single on the Fresh label, co-produced by RZA and Ghostface Killa. Method Man releases *Tical* to rave reviews and high record sales.

**1996** Japanese DJ Hideaki Ishii, a.k.a. DJ Krush, turned on to hip-hop by the movie *White Snake*, releases *Stray Turntablez* (MC's, Inc.).

**1994** DJ Vadim moves from Russia to London and starts the Jazz Fudge label. A year later, he releases *Abstract Hallucinating* Gassess EP, which gets played by hip-hop and acid jazz DJs in the UK.

**1994** Gang Starr releases the jazz-heavy *Hard To Earn*, which goes to #2 on the Billboard pop charts.

**1994** Portishead's *Dummy* brings trip-hop to America.

**1994** Warren G. (Warren Griffin III) releases *Regulate... G-Funk Era*. The single "Above The Rim" peaks at #2 on the pop charts; the album goes triple platinum and brands the West Coast style as G-Funk.

**1995** Ex-N.W.A. member Eazy-E dies of AIDS. (Dre and Cube reportedly made amends before his death.)

**1995** 2Pac's *Me Against The World* enters the charts at #1, making him the first rapper to enjoy a #1 record while serving a jail sentence.



# PAUL'S BOUTIQUE

Ten years ago, the Beastie Boys went shopping for a new sound, and bought into the ideas of a pair of young producers who helped them make hip-hop history.

**"To get just the right sound, we used a blue bong, high quality indica buds, hash, hash oil, freebase, red wine, cigarettes, LSD, coffee and whippets."**

>>>The Dust Brothers on producing *Paul's Boutique*, *BAM*, April 6, 1994

Few albums inspire the kind of ardent dedication that the Beastie Boys' seminal *Paul's Boutique* does. The Boys' second album, which sees a 10th anniversary re-release this year, is a milestone amongst hip-hop enthusiasts for its brilliant cut 'n' paste production, courtesy of the Los Angeles-based duo the Dust Brothers. And the album's rag-tag lyrics have made a lasting imprint on the mainstream vernacular.

Kids across the country are still spouting *Boutique* phrases like "shake your rump-ah," "Doris the finkasaurus" and the perennial favorite, "chillin' like Bob Dylan." There exists a secret society of fanaticism for an album that's got its own unfathomable obsession with pop culture. It has inspired an Internet community to build a definitive breakdown of all of its eccentric samples and references (check [www.csulb.edu/~bsb/beastieboys/samples/paulsboutique.html](http://www.csulb.edu/~bsb/beastieboys/samples/paulsboutique.html)).

The enduring appeal of *Paul's Boutique* lies also in its audible abandon. There is a real sense that both the producers and the artists are having the time of their lives. Thanks to the tremendous success of their 1986 debut, *Licensed To Ill*, the Beasties were experiencing a newfound wave of superstardom. And the Dust Brothers, who were still college radio DJs in Claremont, California, were riding the high of working with some of their favorite rappers on what had started out as a pet project—their first collection of instrumental tracks. The recording sessions also gave them their first shot at using a professional studio.

"We just loved hip-hop music, loved making it. We were kind of amazed that we could actually make it," remembers Dust Brother John King. "We were just making that transition from being a fan to being an insider." Before they finished production on *Paul's Boutique*, the Dust Brothers scored a number one album with Tone-Loc's *Loc-ed After Dark*.

It was a match made in heaven: As the Beastie Boys verbally referenced everything from law firm Jacoby & Myers, Rapunzel and Humpty Dumpty to Isaac Newton and Alfred E. Newman, the Dust Brothers were right beside them, constructing grooves spliced from Creedence Clearwater Revival, Alice Cooper, Afrika Bambaataa, Wilson Pickett and the Bar-Kays.

"We didn't understand clearance issues," says King. "We were more about, like, getting caught or not getting caught. It wasn't even about 'it costs this much.' It was like, 'We just can't do it cuz we'll get caught.' It was much more childish back then—[being concerned with] getting busted! We were pretty much reckless with samples. We were already reckless, and the Beastie Boys encouraged it even more. Whenever we would have caution, they'd just be like, 'Nah—use it!'" >>>Tamara Palmer

# NOZES FROM THE UNDERGROUND

animosity among both its fans and artists. Groups like Company Flow and the High & Mighty have been particularly aggressive in voicing their disdain for "corporate control" and major label artists. Mos Def's verse from the High & Mighty's "B-Boy Document '99" is typical of the current climate down below:

**I'm not feelin' you; don't know what your label's  
Tellin' you—or what magic beans they sellin' you  
I can flow. You can't, though, example  
Of a cat who's just a modern day Sambo (yeah)  
Who be bitchin' out to A&R demands so  
You can collect your little petty cash advance, ho'  
You're knock-kneed and sloppy, but not me  
I'm I-N-D, E-P-E, N-D-E-N-T**

The independent movement has been good for hip-hop, and I love Mos Def to death, but the above verse represents a dangerous pattern. Too many songs are now angrily directed at the mainstream and are written only to tout the superiority

# What's Going On BAHAMADIA



**Featured on Roni Size/Reprazent's *New Forms* and former host of the radio program *Bahamadia's B-Sides* on Philly's 103.9.**

"I can't make up my mind. There's so much stuff out, and I'm really removed from the major releases. I'm loving Lootpack's stuff. I like Saukrates's *The Underground Tapes*. I like the originality in it. And I like that he's really talented. His production is really tight. And I like the way he structures his songs and stuff. I like Slum Village. I'm loving them. I love the Herbaliser. Anything innovative is an inspiration to me."

**1995** The Invisible Skratz Piliz form in San Francisco, heralding a new breed of DJs: turntablists. Today, the core of the group is DJ Q-bert, Mixmaster Mike (the Beastie Boys' current DJ), Shortkut, D-Styles and Yoga Frog.

**1995** Started by a teenaged James Lavelle, the Mo' Wax label releases the *Heaz* compilation, innocently—and accurately—subtitled *Instrumental Excursions From The Hip-Hop Avant Garde*. The double album features DJ Shadow, Autechre, La Funk Mob and others.

**1995** The Roots release *Do You Want More?!!!??!*, making live instrumentation cool again for hip-hoppers.

**1996** After having formed the Soundlab collective (with We. Byzar, Sub Dub and others), DJ Spooky releases *Songs Of A Dead Dreamer* (Asphodel). Fusing his DJ abilities, wide-ranging musical and philosophical interests, and pretension, Spooky becomes the face of the burgeoning "libient" movement, employing turntables as avant instruments.

**1996** Featuring the talents of the Beat Junkies, Cut Chemist, Rob Swift, Mixmaster Mike and others, *Return Of The DJ* (Bomb Hip Hop) is one of the first turntablist compilation CDs.

**1996** Kool Keith, a.k.a. Keith Thornton, teams up with turntablist Q-Bert and producer the Automator to record as Dr. Octagon. *Dr. Octagonologist* is released by indie label Bulk, and later reissued by DreamWorks.

**1996** 2Pac's *All Eyez On Me* goes quadruple platinum. It's also the first double CD of original material released in hip-hop history.

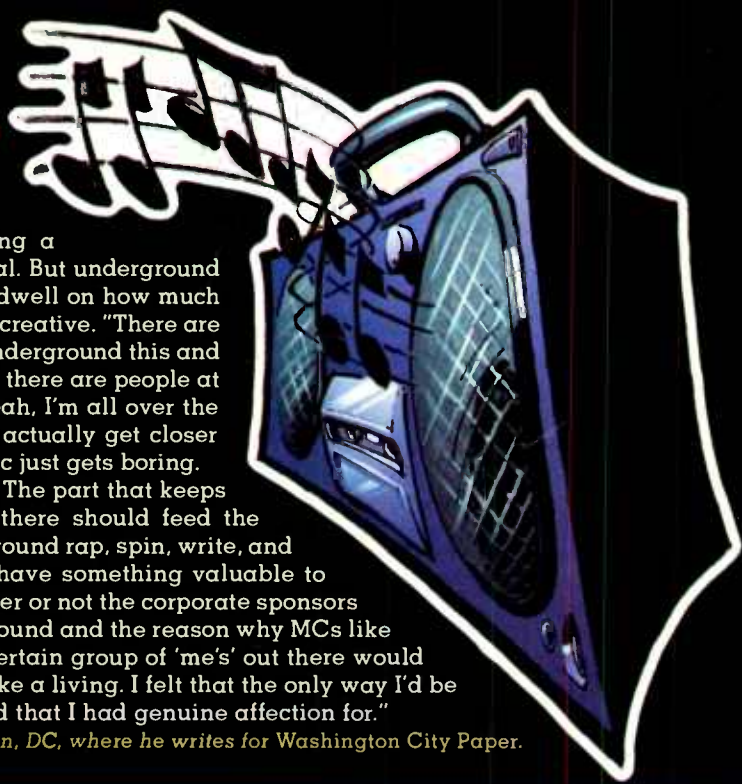


**"The underground is the heart of the art. The part that keeps it alive."**

of small independents. The problem with corporations handling hip-hop is that it is often easier to make money by following a successful trend than by supporting something fresh and original. But underground hip-hop artists run the risk of sounding just as stale when they dwell on how much they can't stand the mainstream. They are more reactionary than creative. "There are extremes," Droop says, "there are the [artists] who are like, 'I'm underground this and that. I'm never going to go to a studio and put a record out.' Then there are people at the completely other end, the 'jiggy' pop stars who are like, 'Yeah, I'm all over the radio and I'm not dealing with you cats down there.'" The two actually get closer together as they get farther apart, and the end result is that music just gets boring.

The underground is, as Droop puts it, "the heart of the art... The part that keeps it alive, that gives it substance." The creation that goes on there should feed the mainstream and not the other way around. Artists in the underground rap, spin, write, and backspin out of love for the art and the confidence that they have something valuable to contribute. The hope is that audiences will figure that out whether or not the corporate sponsors do. That is the aesthetic, the real motivation behind the underground and the reason why MCs like Droop Capone stick it out. "I felt like I had some music that a certain group of 'me's' out there would want to hear and that I could make money off of—or at least make a living. I felt that the only way I'd be happy is if I was doing something that I really wanted to do and that I had genuine affection for."

>>Neil Drumming lives in Washington, DC, where he writes for Washington City Paper.



**TOUCHÉ** *What's Going On?*  
of the Wiseguys



**Recent release: The Antidote (Wall Of Sound-Ideal)**

"Despite the moaning of naysayers, my appetite for choice hip-hop is constantly sated. Recent artists that have rocked my world include Ugly Duckling, Dilated Peoples (plus Evidence's collaborations with Encore, DJ Revolution, Joey Chavez, etc.), DJ Spinnas projects—Jigmastas, Polyrhythm Addicts, I.G. Off and Hazardous etc. Also stacks of great independent product from all over the US, Europe and Canada. Hell, even some of the jiggy shit gets me open!"

**MR. LEN** *What's Going On?*  
of Company Flow



**Recent release: Funcrusher Plus (Rawkus)**

"'Mayor' by Pharoah Monch is intense. He makes you envision a movie in your head. I'm diggin Slick Rick's 'Adults Only.' It's one of those graphic Slick Rick songs where if you play it too loud, your moms be like, 'Yo, turn that off!' Pacewon's 'I Declare War' is just bangin'. Mister Lif, LP did the production. The beat is a crazy nasty funky slow joint. And Dilated Peoples' 'Guarantee' is a classic hip-hop joint."

**1996** Shadow Records introduces funky Parisian DJ Cam to the US with *Mad Burner*, jazz, a compilation of his first two European albums.

**1996** In the spring, Dre leaves Death Row to his partner Suge Knight and starts Aftermath Records, claiming that gangsta rap is dead. For the most part, Dre is correct.

**1996** 2Pac is killed by a shooting. One rumor is that the Notorious B.I.G. had him killed for saying the slept with Biggie's wife Faith Evans; others felt it was an extension of what had been an ongoing East Coast/West Coast rivalry. Biggie is murdered in a similar fashion six months later.

**1997** Uniting two LA crews, Rebels Of Rhythm and Unity Committee, the six-member Jurassic 5 releases the critically hailed *Jurassic 5 EP*, which also features the work of DJs Cut Chemist and Nu-Mark.



**1997** Los Angeles' Marshall Mathers, a.k.a. Eminem, takes second place in the freestyle category at the Rap Olympics MC battle, earning the respect of Dr. Dre, who went on to produce his '99 album *Slim Shady*.

**1998** Mixmaster Mike tours the world as the Beastie Boys' DJ.

**1999** Lauryn Hill's *The Miseducation Of Lauryn Hill* takes the album of the year award at the Grammys, becoming the first hip-hop record to receive the honor.





**5IVE STYLE**  
Miniature Portraits

Sub Pop

Proving there's more than one way to skin a cat, 5ive Style—yet another Chicago art-rock outfit that has sprouted up in the impressive shadow of Tortoise—eschews the straight-ahead jazz-funk played by many of its fellow travelers in favor of a highly syncopated, often humorous style that recalls the swinging sounds of the '50s bachelor pad scene. True to billing, this instrumental album offers up 12 songs that sound more like sketches than full-fledged musical compositions, all with appropriately oblique titles. Many of these portraits are quite successful. The album

opener "Mythical Numbers," with its nimble, acoustic finger picking and fluid runs, is evocative of the best aspects of 1970s prog rock. The high-strung "Pledge Drive" is powered by steel drums (which are present on about half the album's tracks) and tightly wound guitar trills, while songs such as "Hit The Decks" and "Wrong About You" show the band's funkier side. Elsewhere, however, the results can be cloying: "Father Time" borrows equally from the early, laid-back days of dub reggae and the surf-guitar aesthetic of Dick Dale without capturing the joy of either genre, and "The Lost Oar," a gentle, organ-fueled romp, is ruined by a clavinet, which inexplicably is given lead billing. When 5ive Style fails, it does so because it descends into the ugly side of kitsch, where insipid jams and vacuous musicality reign supreme. >>>Seth Mnookin



**OUT:**  
August 24.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Nerd fusion.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Bela Fleck & The Flecktones, Medeski Martin And Wood, Lounge Lizards.

**AMERICAN ANALOG SET**  
The Golden Band

Emperor Jones

Throw all the Texas references out the window when it comes to this Austin/Dallas ensemble. The American Analog Set's spindly indie-rock lullabies don't rage like a tornado or stomp like a cowboy boot on a line-dance floor. The third full-length from this self-proclaimed *Golden Band* sparkles with efficacy: a simple musical phrase repeats and builds to an easy-landing crescendo; a buzzing analog synth wraps itself around a gently strummed melody. AmAnSet honed these techniques on earlier albums that earned comparisons to Stereolab, but here the Texans settle into a

relaxed offhandedness that allows them to slip deftly from a near-waltz into a jazzy meditation complete with syncopated rhythms. Gone are the rambling seven-minute studies, replaced by purposeful pop shuffles like "A Good Friend Is Always Around" and "Weather Report." Vocalist Andrew Kenny hangs back throughout, stepping out of silhouette only to pronounce evocative lines like, "Now I'm waiting for you like a life that's passing me by" ("The Wait"). But Kenny also sounds jaded, railing against the fakeness of Los Angeles in the stunning four-part suite "New Drifters" and threatening, amidst a spunky beat interlaced with ringing vibraphone, to walk offstage in "I Must Soon Quit The Scene." Brilliantly, American Analog Set diffuses the tension with an album-ending ballad and a soothing cello send-off. >>>Richard Martin



the american analog set the golden band set  
**OUT:**  
August 3.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Gently down the stream.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Bethesda, Belle & Sebastian, Belle.

**AIR** ★  
Premiers Symptomes (First Signs)  
Astralwerks

Prior to casting a quixotic spell over the music world with its debut album *Moon Safari*, Air released a limited-edition EP of its first few singles that set *la table* for the pending praise. The five sumptuous tracks, now reissued to a wider audience, reveal the Parisian duo's pop sensibilities and its talent for immersing melody in a warm bath of analog synthesizer, acoustic guitar and tuba. "Casanova 70" sounds like the '70s, with unrepentantly synthetic orchestration and space-age gurgles

sauntering in a sly flaunting of retro-chic; it's as if Jean Benoit Dunckel and Nicolas Godin crafted it especially for the fashion runway. Air's trick is to turn an unstylish aesthetic into the essence of hip, and each of *Premiers Symptomes'* original five tracks takes a different means to this end, from the cushiony "J'ai Dormi Sous L'Eau (I Slept Underwater)" to the fluid "Les Professionnels." This re-release fills out the EP with a couple of add-ons that border on extraneous. "Californie," a B-side to the later hit "Sexy Boy," starts out all funky but settles into a taut groove; a remix of the '97 single "Brakes On" sounds jarring when heard alongside this original material—more buzz than brains. But these first signs are still worth following. >>>Richard Martin



**OUT:**  
August 24.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Easy listening electronica à la française.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Source Material compilations, perfume commercials, early DJ Shingora, Burt Bacharach.

**APPENDIX OUT**  
Daylight Saving

Drag City

It was noted in nearly every review of Appendix Out's debut album, *The Rye Bears A Poison*, that it sounded like a Will Oldham/Palace-related project. True, guitarist and singer Ali Roberts started out as an Oldham acolyte. But look at it this way—Melville worshiped Hawthorne, yet *Moby Dick* is as drastically different from *The Scarlet Letter* as its robust author was from his reclusive peer. On *Daylight Saving*, Roberts veers even farther afield from the Palace method than on his prior recordings. Where Oldham cants upon

character and the American psyche, Roberts reflects on physical settings. The windowsills, rusty pots and frosty stars are not the songs' decorations; they are the subjects. Like the logbook of a naturalist's expedition into the wilds of colonial North America, these songs form a pastoral history, rather than a character-driven chronicle. "The Scything" begins like a 17th century English folk song, yet when Roberts's off-kilter voice drifts into a lyric about space-age beauty, it still sounds as arcane as any of his lyrics about mildew and owls. It's tempting to describe Appendix Out's music as being anchored by American idioms, but this isn't No Depression music. Or slow-core. Or Palace. This is agrarian folk that studies lives in the slow measures of harvests and seasons. >>>Lois Maffeo



appendix out daylight saving  
**OUT:**  
July 12.  
**FILE UNDER:**  
Slow folk arcana.  
**R.I.Y.L.:**  
Low, Songs:Ohio, Palace.





**ASH** ★

**Nu-Clear Sounds**

DreamWorks

**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

Concrete riffarama.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Foo Fighters, Verbenä, Everclear, Joan Jett.

Who's Ash again? Oh, yeah! Those cheeky little Irish teenies who sound like a bunch of underage Undertones, the ones with the Star Wars obsession and the killer tune about Jackie Chan. Well, yes and no. Seems that since we last checked on them, Ash has left adolescence behind, been through a couple years' worth of let's-be-Keith Moon rock 'n' roll excess, gained a second guitarist in 18-year-old Londoner Charlotte Hatherly, and begun picking up some sleaze rock classics like *Raw Power* and *White Light White Heat*. The results are certainly darker than the group's debut, *1977*, but Ash's brand of riff rock is closer to the Foo Fighters than to Iggy And The Stooges. Still, gravel in the larder is gravel in the larder, and this sophomore release is indeed a darker, more grinding Ash worthy of its Flying V guitars and Marshall half-stacks. The fact that the band can also whip out balladic moments that resemble proper pastiches of the Velvets' "Sunday Morning" is just a bonus. Now, if it can avoid reflecting the yen for Iron Maiden and Thin Lizzy it's grinningly admitted to in the British press, Ash can only grow into a quartet of real cool killers.

>>>Tim Stegall



**ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL**

**Ride With Bob**

DreamWorks Nashville

**OUT:**

August 10.

**FILE UNDER:**

Western Swing and those who like it.

**R.J.Y.L.:**

Pine Valley Cosmonauts, Ernest Tubb, George Strait.

Aw-haw! If that exclamation means nothing to you, drop this magazine immediately and go buy Rhino's Bob Wills collection, *Anthology (1935-1973)*. Wills popularized the fusion of country and jazz called Western Swing. He played the fiddle and led a mean band, but he's perhaps most famous for abrupt expressions of joy like "Oh, there's got to be a guitar!" and "Aw, pig!" Roots-revival band Asleep At The Wheel sounds uncannily like Wills's band (perhaps because this is the group's second all-star Wills tribute) and has brought in a Texas-sized roster to reproduce his yelps. Merle Haggard turns in the record's best performance on his version of "St. Louis Blues." Texas yodeling legend Don Walser's version of "I Ain't Got Nobody" trumps everyone's since Louis Prima's. And while Clint Black's version of Haggard's "Bob Wills Is Still The King" is sung with evident pride, Tracy Byrd's "You're From Texas" is enough to make anybody wish he'd been born a longhorn. The only real disappointments here are the Dixie Chicks' phoned-in "Roly Poly," which could have been a real winner in the hands of someone who cared, and Shawn Colvin and Lyle Lovett's lackluster "Faded Love." But strong tracks from Lee Ann Womack and Willie Nelson with Manhattan Transfer (!) are enough to make one believe in tribute albums again. Or, at the least, shout "aw-haw!" every once in a while. >>>Andrew Beaujon

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**ANDREW BIRD'S BOWL OF FIRE**

**Oh! The Grandeur** Rykodisc

**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

Heinz 57 traditionalism.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Squirrel Nut Zippers, Tom Waits, Tiny Tim.

After the release of Andrew Bird's debut album *Thrills* last year, the 26-year-old singer/violinist, and sometime Squirrel Nut Zipper accompanist, was enthusiastically, if erroneously, embraced as a man out of time—a fierce traditionalist in an age of artifice. But Bird is too cunning an interpreter for such easy categorization. He uses history—rewrites it, in fact—in a manner more akin to Tom Waits, or even Tiny Tim—men who knew the meaning of "Old, Weird America" before Greil Marcus coined the term; men whose art is more reinvention than revival. Like *Thrills*, *Oh! The Grandeur*, combines all manner of mid-century Western music—hot jazz rave-ups, Tin Pan Alley pop, Latin-laced instrumentals—and infuses them with a lyrical bent so skewed it could only exist in the here and now. When Bird lets fly with phrases like "I can tell by the way you take your infusion, you've spent some time in a mental institution" ("Tea & Thorazine"), you can imagine him, eyes closed, fists clutched to chest, painfully extracting every word. He is probably the closest thing we have to a male Edith Piaf. Bird has the chops to plunder any genre that comes to mind, and a willingness to float in and out of their established parameters (his violin playing actually hints at atonality in spots). It seems nothing is sacred to him. Let's hope it stays that way.

>>>Matt Hanks



**BOWS**

**Blush** Too Pure-Beggars Banquet

**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

Gothic techno-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Snowpony, Björk, DJ Shadow.

Bows' debut single, "Big Wings," made the band out as a sort of cross between the orchestral maneuvers of DJ Shadow and the siren song of Björk. The album, *Blush*, reveals a quieter, odder band. Songwriter Luke Sutherland has an almost obsessive fondness for round, sexy sounds: softly exploding bass drumbeats, swelling synthetic string sections, muted horns. Having left the relentlessly angular Long Fin Killie to found Bows, he has spun these elements into an intimate sonic otherworld. Making his first vocal appearance on the title track, Sutherland mocks the "sycophantic asses" of the world as menacing violins and distant drums sound. "Overfor Kommer Derefter" sounds like a club at the gates of heaven: Over phantom bass drums, harp-like arpeggios play with eerie precision and the narcotic voice of Ruth Edmond chants a mysterious benediction. There are some jungle moments ("Girls Lips Glitter") and a nod to drum 'n' bass ("Britannica"), but just as often *Blush* evades the discipline implied by beats. Ethereal gorgeousness trumps all other tendencies, as on the aptly named "Sleepyhead," in which guitars simply waft over sharp yet unobtrusive snare drums. The understated pleasures of Bows are best summed up in "King's Deluxe," a quiet but catchy tune. On the hook, Edmonds offers this peculiar endearment: "Don't believe the hype/But you're everything I've hoped for."

>>>Andrea Moed



**BROKEBACK**

**Field Recordings From The Cook County Water Table** Thrill Jockey

**OUT:**

July 27.

**FILE UNDER:**

Bass 'n' bass.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Tortoise, Dos, low-end Emilio Morrisson, narcotized Charles Mingus.

Among the press materials accompanying *Field Recordings* is a telling quote from its primary, Doug McCombs, in which he gives credit for the record to an instrument: specifically his Fender six-string bass. It's just like a bassist to defer the spotlight, but McCombs certainly deserves some props for Brokeback, his bass-based solo-project. First heard as a member of the long-running Eleventh Dream Day, and more recently as an original architect of Tortoise, McCombs continues to play with both acts while occasionally indulging in a myriad of side projects (including Pullman and Toe 2000) coming out of Chicago's jazz/electonica/avant-garde fusion scene. While it may be correct to credit his Fender with this album's warm tones, it is his richly melodic style that prevents this brooding, drowsy, instrumental record from getting ponderous. Accompanied by Noel Kupersmith's double bass and some intermittent, light percussion, these songs chug along as deliberately and purposefully as the locomotive sampled in the introduction to "Returns To The Orange Grove" (reprised here from an earlier single). With the considered sensibility he brings to all his projects, McCombs deserves to be crowned low-end king of the underground music scene.

>>>Alec Hanley Bemis



**CATIE CURTIS**

**A Crash Course In Roses** Rykodisc

**OUT:**

August 3.

**FILE UNDER:**

Coffeeshouse songs with Southern grooves.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Sheryl Crow, Heather Nova, Dar Williams.

Catie Curtis's background as a New England coffeeshouse folkie percolates through *A Crash Course In Roses*, her first album for Rykodisc. All the earmarks of urban folk music are here: carefully structured songs with prominent choruses delivered with heartfelt earnestness, and lyrics with hints of therapeutic self-examination and didactic sincerity. In "What's The Matter," Curtis interjects, "What if I am Black or Jew, straight or queer, mother of two, run around in a hippie dress, ride my bike in a leather vest—what's the matter?" The why-can't-we-just-get-along-and-accept-each-other's-differences sermon is a noble one worth repeating, but the message distracts from the song itself. Not that all the songs follow thematic suit: Hearts are trump here, the costs of love gained and retained. Fortunately, Curtis has outgrown coffeeshouse arrangements. The band's flexible, vaguely Southern grooves furnish sultry settings for her soulful, pure voice. With Duke Levine's guitar and Jimmy Ryan's mandolin making the songs roll rather than rock, the band proves equally adept at country-tinged acoustic shuffles, slinky electric grooves, and sparse soulful ballads. Not everyone will find the overstated heart-on-her-sleeves folkie moments distracting, and the variety of understated arrangements behind Curtis's aching voice ultimately makes *Roses* rewarding.

>>>Steve Kluge



**OUT:**

July 15.

**FILE UNDER:**

Bacharach breakbeats.

**R.I.Y.L.:**Thievery Corporation, Bossa Cuca  
Nova, Mocean Worker.**DE-PHAZZ****Godsdog**

Mole

Television commercials and hip boutiques have established electronica as bankable background music, but until the masses want beats in their homes, the genre won't receive widespread commercial respect. German producer Pit Baumgartner offers down-tempo grooves that are easy for anyone to dig just about anyplace; as with Moby's *Play* or anything from Thievery Corporation, Junior will smirk when Mom and Dad ask what's on instead of turning it down. On his previous album released last year, Baumgartner matched jazz and blues samples with appropriately smooth

breakbeats. This time around, on *Godsdog*, the motif is bossa nova-infused jazz, and once again, Baumgartner's production work makes for a welcome new take on a classic sound. Vocal samples and programmed drum patterns don't overly mechanize these sensual South American rhythms and '70s easy-listening sound-alikes. Rather, Baumgartner uses his deft studio touch to add complimentary textures and depth and, sometimes, a dance energy that makes perfect sense. Case in point: "Happiness," with a female studio vocalist, a muted trombone, strings that swell in and out, and eighth and sixteenth notes ricocheting just beneath the melody. Baumgartner may never get rich on record sales in America, but he sure seems to know the way to San Jose—in 1999, it's via the synth.

&gt;&gt;&gt;William Werde

**OUT:**

August 10.

**FILE UNDER:**

Melody-filled feminist confessionals.

**R.I.Y.L.:**Lois, early Liz Phair, Elliott Smith,  
Mary Lou Lord.**SARAH DOUGHER****Day One**

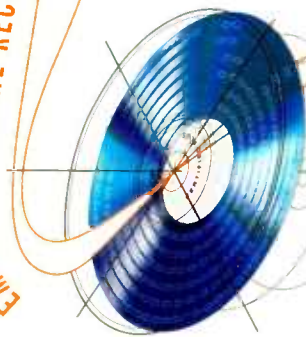
K

The first solo CD by Portland, Oregon, scene mainstay Sarah Dougher brings to mind several antecedents, and they're all good ones. Legions of female singer/songwriters may look to Joni Mitchell as a touchstone, but few possess the skill to evoke reasonable comparisons to *Blue*. Dougher glides effortlessly from a solo setting (overdubbing her own rich harmonies) to full band workouts incorporating guitar, piano, cello and drums. She's "punk rock" in the same sense as Elliott Smith, embracing a DIY aesthetic without

raising a din. She painstakingly crafts her lyrics, which reveal three-dimensional psychological sketches. One might as well pen short stories if they're not backed up with strong melodies, though, but Dougher has these in spades. Virtually every track sports a depth only hinted at by her work with the Lookers, an indication that she deserves plenty of the credit for last year's excellent Cadallaca collaboration with Sleater-Kinney's Corin Tucker. The album isn't perfect—"Bella Abzug" is uncharacteristically strident, and Dougher's deft recasting of the Eagles' "Take It To The Limit" can't do more than turn an awful song into a bearable one. Even so, *Day One* belongs on a select list of albums that wed sophisticated melodies to unguarded feminist exposition.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Glen Sarvady

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**EVIL TAMBOURINES**

Library Nation

Sub Pop

**OUT:**

July 20.

**FILE UNDER:**

Gimme indie hip-hop.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Dub Narcotic Sound System, early De La Soul, Beck, Julie Ruin.

If a hip-hop disc featuring vocals from K Records stalwarts Lois Maffeo and Some Velvet Sidewalk's Al Larsen strikes you as Olympia, Washington's DIY free-spiritedness taken to unpardonable extremes, you wouldn't be alone. Sorry Charlie, but this debut by the duo of Tobias Flowers (whose flow recalls A Tribe Called Quest's Q-Tip) and Andy Poehlman proves a delightful surprise, mating the playful loops and funky rhythms of early rap with the warts-and-all intimacy of indie rock. *Library Nation* isn't without flaws: An outside producer

(Steve Fisk, perhaps?) might have trimmed the meandering codas from the album's first half, and Maffeo's wistful intonation errs on the flat side on "Pathways." But the last four cuts are solid as a rock (skip the hidden track afterwards, which sounds like drunken Barney from *The Simpsons* moaning the blues). The brass-tastic "Saturn" bobs and weaves à la the uppity younger cousin of De La Soul's "A Rollerskating Jam Named 'Saturdays,'" and the intertwined vocals of "On Mars And Venus" waft lazily by like clouds in a summer sky. Best of all is the raucous title tune, from which Larsen emerges as the Pacific Northwest's answer to The Fall's Mark E. Smith, mating regional politics (an attack on Seattle's extravagant new stadium) with a celebration of library patrons everywhere.

>>>Kurt B. Reighley



**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

New metal.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Ministry, Stabbing Westward, Rob Zombie.

**FILTER**

Title Of Record

Reprise

Filter got in early on the late '90s hard-rock resurgence: After singer/guitarist Richard Patrick left his post as one of Trent Reznor's bitter little apprentices in 1994, Filter proved that the techno-industrial complexity of Nine Inch Nails was rather easily appropriated on *Short Bus* and its modern-rock hit "Hey Man, Nice Shot." Thus Filter was cast as the genre's one-hit-wonder copycat prototype. But nothing seems to inspire guys like Patrick more than a little me-against-the-world role playing, if only because it confirms their paranoid fantasies. Unfortunately, when it

came time to record a second album, Patrick's angry inner child managed to alienate the co-architect of *Short Bus*, programmer Brian Liesgang, and *Title Of Record* suffers from his absence. It's still a commercially viable release, with more than enough turgid riffage, angst-ridden lyrics (i.e. "I am a guilty man/I can't believe the things I've done to you"), and pounding drums to fit somewhere between Ozzfest and Family Values. But the occasional electronic touches—the techno beats and squiggles of "It's Gonna Kill Me," for example—are now just window dressing instead of integral to the arrangements. In other words, more metal, less techno, right down to a couple of by-the-numbers acoustic ballads. Which should please critics even less than *Short Bus* and sustain Patrick's paranoia through at least another album cycle.

>>>Matt Ashare



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**FOLK IMPLOSION**

**Folk Implosion**

Interscope

**OUT:**

September 7.

**FILE UNDER:**

Buoyant pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

"Natural One," Sebadoh, Beck.

Does anyone really care whether the Folk Implosion is "selling out" with this record? That the band seemed to have waltzed into the studio hell-bent on writing a clone to "Natural One," the duo's surprise hit from the *Kids* soundtrack? That the end result is a half dozen songs that could very well be booming out of Troy's Camaro by the end of July? Perhaps a few indie rocker Lou Barlow-heads stuck in 1993 might be sweating the details, but surely not anyone who digs a grand groove and bouncy party beats. So long East Coast,

hello West Coast: Folk Implosion's major label debut hides the guitar behind the beatbox and contains a real-life love letter to L.A. No, Folk Implosion is neither folk nor an implosion, but a glistening pop explosion, and perhaps were the record a disaster it'd be safe to gripe about the sheen and the 180 degree shift, but hell, anything this infectious can be forgiven nearly everything. Those (understandably) attached to the skewed vocal delivery of the other half of the Implosion, John Davis, may be disappointed; Barlow sings most of the tracks here, while Davis merely harmonizes. But you can hear Davis's personality, which has always been wonderfully optimistic, beam through every nook, and the combo of buoyancy and beats has rarely sounded so alive.

>>>Randall Roberts



**ROBYN HITCHCOCK**

**Jewels For Sophia**

Warner Bros.

**OUT:**

July 20.

**FILE UNDER:**

The madcap matures.

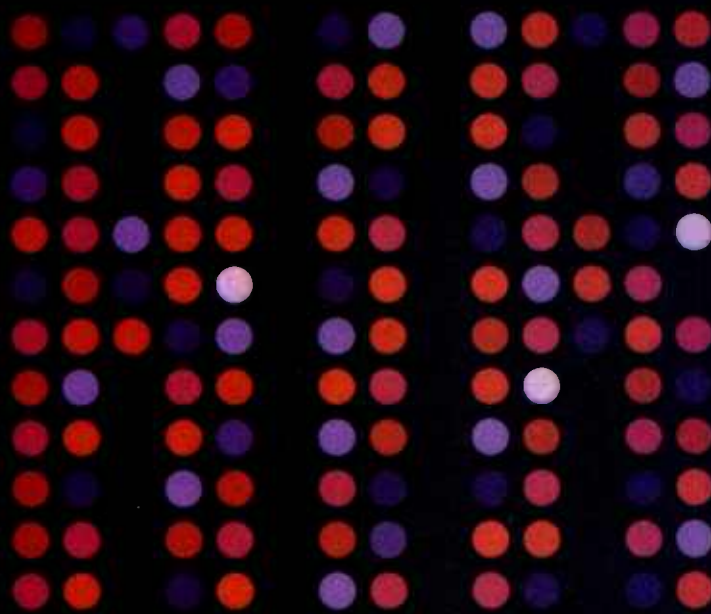
**R.I.Y.L.:**

Billy Bragg, Ben Lee, Syd Barrett, Freedy Johnston.

*Jewels For Sophia* continues a resurgence Robyn Hitchcock launched on 1996's *Moss Elixir*, averting a path to self-parody while retaining the essence that made him special in the first place. *Jewels* was recorded in various studios with an assortment of name collaborators, and has the disjointed feel you'd expect from such an approach. Peter Buck and the Young Fresh Fellows anchor the highlight "Viva Sea-Tac," which ambles along at a "Subterranean Homesick Blues" pace while Hitchcock spews lyrics with the perfect blend of humor and spleen venting. The

overdue reunion with Soft Boy cohort Kimberly Rew yields mixed results: "Sally Was A Legend" delivers chiming pop reminiscent of "Black Snake Diamond Role," while the gonzo energy of "NASA Clapping" sounds forced. The balance of the record is sparser and more intimate, draped in a shimmering recording quality. Hitchcock's whimsical non-sequiturs and vaguely insightful wordplay remain, and mostly pass muster, but he seems to be consciously building a bridge to mature acoustic tunesmithery he can gracefully stride into middle age. Last time I saw him play, someone yelled out for the old Soft Boys song "I Wanna Destroy You." Hitchcock responded, "Can you really imagine someone my age singing a song called 'I Wanna Destroy You'?" No matter—*Jewels For Sophia* holds pleasures for a few eras of Robyn Hitchcock fans.

>>>Glen Sarvady



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## reviews

### ISOTOPE 217 *Utonian Automatic*

Thrill Jockey



**OUT:**

August 10.

**FILE UNDER:**

Post-rock/jazz art noise.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

*Bitches Brew*-era Miles Davis, Herbie Hancock's *Headhunters*, Tortoise.

Isotope 217 is a relative newcomer to the Chicago art-rock scene, which has been evolving over the last five years. The quartet spun off of Tortoise, the hub of the new Midwestern Zeitgeist, several years ago, and this is only its second album. But the band is already the darling of the scene, combining hard-nosed jazz-rock-funk with spacey, electronic-fueled ambience in a way that's getting props across both the progressive jazz and rock spectrums. On *Utonian Automatic*, the band shows the effects of both its weekly gigging and

conservatory training with a range of impressive songs. “LUH,” the album's opening, ten-minute track, shifts on a dime from a full-throttle, industrial strength jam led by cornetist Rob Mazurek's declarative lead lines to a dreamy, effects-based wash before evolving into a steady, undulating flow propelled by the band's two percussionists. Other songs, such as the playful “Audio Champion,” focus more on vintage synthesizers and gurgling bass lines, while “Looking After Life On Mars” is a dense, frenetic funk workout. The album begins to lag, however, when Isotope 217 trades in its jazz chops for ambient soundscapes: A handful of songs on the album work fine as background but don't have enough going on to sustain the listener's attention.

>>>Seth Mnookin

### ALISON KRAUSS *Forget About It*

Rounder



**OUT:**

August 3.

**FILE UNDER:**

Delicately beautiful country ballads.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Rosanne Cash, Shawn Colvin, Cowboy Junkies, Emmylou Harris.

Alison Krauss's bluegrass roots run deep, and her “with Union Station” albums still spotlight her remarkable fiddle-playing and her band's firm grasp on the tradition. Although the Union Station guys play on *Forget About It*, augmented by some guests, they don't share top-billing, and aside from the occasional brilliant Sam Bush mandolin solo, the focus is on Krauss's singing and the sound is strictly “triple A.” That's no drawback: Krauss's voice, delicate and beautiful in any setting, seems even more nuanced when it's the main focus,

and the pastoral, singer/songwriter tones make this album perfect for Sunday mornings when you need help easing into the day. Understated and soothing, the songs on *Forget About It* are comfortably monochromatic—a narrow range of bright and trebly, soft and slow. Krauss moves seamlessly from Todd Rundgren's “It Wouldn't Have Made Any Difference” to Shenandoah's “Ghost In This House” to an amazingly tender version of Waylon Jennings's signature “Dreaming My Dreams With You.” (Krauss could sing the phone book and make it sound pretty.) On those weekend mornings when you don't want anything jarring and you do want something soothing, mellow, and resuscitating, *Forget About It* will go perfectly with your toast and tea.

>>>Steve Kluge





slap-happy

**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

Women got the power.

**R.I.Y.L.:**Joan Jett, AC/DC, Ramones,  
Lunachicks, Motörhead.**L7****Slap-Happy**

Wax Tadpole-Bong Load

Much has changed in the L7 camp since the band's last studio transmission, '97's *Triple Platinum: The Beauty Process*. For one thing, you can now call these women moguls, as they've returned to the indies for the first time since they departed Sub Pop for Slash-Warner Bros. Records some eight years back. They are doing it with a difference, however, opting to release *Slap-Happy* on their own custom imprint Wax Tadpole, an adjunct to Bong Load Records (occasional home to Beck and a few others, in case you were wondering). For

another, they're back down to a trio of guitarists/snarlists Donita Sparks and Suzi Gardner and drummer Dee Platkas, following bassist Gail Greenwood's departure for geographical reasons. What hasn't changed is what's made L7 a mark of quality for about a dozen years now. They're still the queens of the Big Grimy Riff, princesses of Screaming Loud Distorto Rock. Fortunately, L7 hasn't lost an ounce of its silly-ass sense of humor. Over time, the group has also acquired an odd sense of melody and grasp of hooks that makes it, in L7's own warped fashion, a very sweaty, extremely loud pop band. Still, L7 has enough grind to scare away your average radio programmer, which is much of its charm. In short, L7 remains too rowdy to ever be a sell out.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Tim Stegall

**LUNAR DRIVE****All Together Here**

Beggars Banquet

Mixing too many genres simultaneously can be dangerous, and in the race to collect the strangest array of disparate musics, a load of somewhat ridiculous amalgams have arisen of late (though nothing tops Malcolm McLaren's '80s attempt at combining rap and square dancing). Toss into the ring the latest curious distillation, Lunar Drive's blending of Native American chants, techno, hip-hop, pop structure, a touch of sampled reggae, spoken word and a smidgen of country fiddling. The result is *All Together Here*, the product of four

Native Americans and a Brit who, to make matters more complicated, don't even all live in the same country. Either they're fighting an uphill battle, or they're offering a peek into the future of music creation. Unfortunately, more of the former is true than the latter; *All Together Here* suffers from a bad case of schizophrenia, one in which a steady groove drives individual songs, but fails to propel itself over the course of the entire record. The sound is nearly revolutionary at the start, but by the end the cross-cultural melding sounds rather, well, played out. By mid-disc, you'll wish one of them would tyrannically take the wheel and go go go, rather than the lot of them playing musical chairs.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Randall Roberts

**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

Cross-cultural amalgams.

**R.I.Y.L.:**Cornership, Parlor James,  
Asian Dub Foundation.**TRICKY**

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World Radio History

## reviews



**OUT:**

August 3.

**FILE UNDER:**

Indo-rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Can, Tortoise, gamalan orchestras.

### MACHA

See It Another Way

Jetset

Prior to recording Macha's first full-length last year, frontman Joshua McKay visited Indonesia. The Athens, Georgia, resident's excursions produced a bonus CD of field recordings and some of the instrumentation that colored the exotic-sounding debut. But this was no mere culture raid. He extends Macha's musicological experiment on a new mini-LP, merging-of-the-moment indie-rock structure with Indonesian elements such as gamelan percussion and Javanese zithers and horns. What does such an unlikely amalgam sound like? Olivia Tremor Control jamming with King

Crimson, perhaps. Or Frank Zappa lost on a South Pacific island. Then again, Macha's practically urging us to listen with an open mind on *See It Another Way*, artfully slipping in terse non-vocal tracks that steer more toward the traditional music on McKay's earlier field recordings. They've got sneaky anglicized titles like "Riding The Rails" and "Come Close," but avoid any allusions to rock. They're well played, and serve as pleasant musical bridges to daring Indo-rock songs that seesaw between chugging guitar riffs and high-pitched horn parts. Tracks like "Salty" and "Until Your Temples Are Pounding" integrate the unusual instrumentation into what becomes a form of relentless, raucous rock. With a couple of moodier tunes added to the mix, this 36-minute disc offers a richer palette than albums twice its length.

>>>Richard Martin



**OUT:**

July 27.

**FILE UNDER:**

All-purpose aggro.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Fear Factory, Soulfly, Deftones.

### MACHINE HEAD

The Burning Red

Roadrunner

*The Burning Red* is one of those albums that, if nothing else, helps you appreciate just how far metal has come during the '90s. Just a short ten years ago was more or less the zenith of the days of poofy hair, good-time lyrics, and absurd guitar-school soloing, but that's ancient history to today's youth. Had *The Burning Red* come out in the early '90s, it would have taken its place among the path-breaking albums from artists ranging from Pantera to Ministry that helped demolish the metal edifice into so much kindling. Unfortunately, for a metalhead culture

that has come to expect themes of aggression and alienation, down-tuned chunka-chunka riffing, pummeling stop-start dynamics, and vocals alternating between guttural and soaring, Machine Head today is pretty much aggro business-as-usual. "Desire To Fire" is a case in point, as powerhouse vocalist Robert Flynn fluidly veers between his Phil Anselmo and Layne Staley vocal tics, while the band grinds out familiar-sounding low-end riffage and throws in some Limp Bizkit-styled hip-hop flourishes for good measure. Expert high-gloss mixing from Terry Date maximizes the sheer sonic impact, though, and if you turn up *The Burning Red* loud enough, you won't be thinking about what's been done before, only reveling in the music's thunderous visceral crunch.

>>>David Jarman





## MADDER ROSE

Hello June Fool

Thirsty Ear

New York's Madder Rose staked out a woozy, haunting sound early in its career, and hasn't strayed far from that beachhead. Guitars play less of a role on the band's recent releases than they did on their predecessors, and washes of electronica have found a permanent home in the quartet's arsenal, but fans who latch on to one of the band's albums are unlikely to be disappointed by others. *Hello June Fool* finds Madder Rose in a laconic mood, with a few beat-oriented tracks approaching the fringes of trip-hop (or in the case of "Train,"

marking a successful foray into dub reggae). Billy Coté hasn't pawned any of his guitar effects pedals, though, and when he lets loose, as on the standout "Hotel," the result is akin to Bob Mould on extreme sedatives. Mary Lorson's rich voice remains a formidable weapon, providing a needed focal point to songs like "Overflow" and "Fade." *Hello June Fool* is an insinuating, atmospheric album—on first listen it seems a tad light in the melody department, but it reveals its charms over time. Despite having changed labels (from Atlantic to the indie Thirsty Ear), Madder Rose is astute enough not to depart radically from an approach that's working just fine, thanks.

>>>Glen Sarvady

### OUT:

August 10.

### FILE UNDER:

Woozy, insinuating rock.

### R.I.Y.L.:

Recent Everything But The Girl, Belly, Bettie Serveert.



## MARINE RESEARCH

Sounds From The Gulf Stream

K

Perhaps no band seemed less likely to be torn apart by suicide than Heavenly. The English quintet's sprightly melodies, tra-las and Pastels badges seemed an effective shield against the real world. Heavenly ended abruptly when drummer Mathew Fletcher (brother of singer/guitarist Amelia) took his own life two years ago. The four remaining members have added a new drummer and regrouped under a new name. Oddly, not much has changed. Sure, there's a *Twin Peaks*-meets-surf-rock rumble to "Glamour Gap," and a lovely orchestrated lilt to "You And A Girl." But

those who thought tragedy might bring an increased sophistication to Amelia and company would be wrong. There seems to be a greater sense of wistfulness over half-finished pop songs (in "Hopefulness To Hopelessness") than any deep expression of loss. Maybe that's an expression of strength, a sense that life goes on, or a refusal to give a tabloid culture any details that ought to remain private. Fletcher has always coated razorblade lyrics with her high-pitched lullaby of a voice and bright-eyed beats. Still, that tragedy creates an odd disconnect between real life and these strumalicious melodies. And when *Gulf Stream* closes with "Y.Y.U.B.," a beautifully aching lament for a woman whose dreams are fading, it feels like a what-might-have-been had the players really engaged their feelings.

>>>David Daley

### OUT:

August 24.

### FILE UNDER:

Early '90s nostalgia.

### R.I.Y.L.:

Tiger Trap, Beat Happening, Beth Orton.



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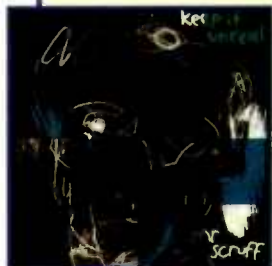


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**MR. SCRUFF**

**Keep It Unreal**

Ninja Tune

**OUT:**

June 15.

**FILE UNDER:**

3 a.m. infernal.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Funki Porcini, Thievery Corporation, upbeat Kruder & Dorfmeister.

Of course the sample's not credited, so there's no way to know what it is, even though it's been heard in a thousand different contexts. It's a simple sax line on *Keep It Unreal*, the debut full-length from Mancunian Mr. Scruff; the line's from a big band song, maybe Ellington, and Scruff has gently sliced around the curvy edges and placed it into "Spandex Man" to marvelous, recontextualized effect. The energy remains intact, but surrounding it is an icy, detached vibe. This template is used throughout; Scruff will find a

relaxed melody, either organic or sampled, and load the beats and bits on its back. These bits include an occasional vibraphone, deep dub bass, vocal utterance (some funny dude praising fish), piano, or organ all contributing to the gestalt. *Keep It Unreal* is often sleepy music, there's no denying it; rarely does it race, and when it does, it quickly gets tired, especially when Scruff concentrates on a generic diva sample bellowing "do you hear what I hear?" (of all the samples in the world, why use a snoozer?). Scruff suffers from such missteps half the time, and the other half is quite nice, though never jaw-dropping. Get your program buttons ready.

>>>Randall Roberts



**OTHERSTARPEOPLE**

**OtherStarPeople**

A&M-Interscope

**OUT:**

August 10.

**FILE UNDER:**

Sugarcoated glam-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Rentals, Redd Kross, Hole's *Celebrity Skin*.

Dubbing their ersatz glam-pop the "Caliphonic Sound," OtherStarPeople dons wraparound shades and follows in the footsteps of No Doubt and Hole's *Celebrity Skin*. The band's debut album rips off a barrel of West Coast genres, from hard rock to new wave to riot grrrl, but OSP can't get out from under the shadow of more sophisticated talents like Imperial Teen—it's better at pop appropriation. OSP's lineup includes some post-grunge fallout: Ex-27 bassist Jennifer Finch (who's switched to guitar and reverted to her family nickname

"Precious") and ex-Juliana Hatfield drummer Todd Philips team up with newcomers Junko Ito on bass and Xander Smith on guitars. On *OtherStarPeople*, crunchy new wave guitar ticks precisely through each song; Finch and Smith harmonize throughout, aping the fey vocals of Billy Corgan and singing about, well, nothing of consequence. While the album isn't without some infectious stupidity ("Drip drip drip drop/Looking around for the spoon/But the spoon ran away with the cup"), the songs are almost indistinguishable from each other, with few shifts in beat or instrumentation. OtherStarPeople promises pop pleasures, but it's about as durable as a pair of cheap plastic sunglasses.

>>>Peter Terzian



**NECKBONES**

**The Lights Are Getting Dim** Fat Possum-Epitaph

**OUT:**

August 17.

**FILE UNDER:**

Midbilly punk blues.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Gaza Strippers, Gories.

On the opening track of his band's sophomore album, the Neckbones' lead singer laments in his inimitable scream, "I haven't seen a new girl in 64 days." Throw in some meditations on drunkenness, boredom and rocking out, and you pretty much have the full range of subject matter for this blues-punk outfit. The Neckbones stick to the tried-and-true bass/drums/guitar formula perfected by punk progenitors from Iggy Pop to the Ramones: Play fast, play loud and play rude. (The band, which features members of the Oblivians and Wilco, does feature

piano and organ on some tracks, but this does not detract from the bare-bones feel of the music.) There is some slight variation in song structure—the album contains a handful of blues romps, such as the T-Model Ford cover "Nobody Gets Me Down," along with the predominant 4/4 rockers—but for the most part, the Neckbones focus their energy on playing ferociously and with unceasing abandon. Most satisfying is the relentless humor the band displays on every track, from the screw-up anthem "You're All Winners" to the down-and-out mourning of "Capitol Hill." While this formula is unlikely to win over fans looking for a more arcane musical experience, the music is perfect for those folks who want to get drunk at home and listen to something very loud and very cathartic.

>>>Seth Mnookin



**QUICKSPACE**

**Precious Falling** Hidden Agenda-Parasol

**OUT:**

August 3.

**FILE UNDER:**

Bizarre, fuzzy Euro-rock.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Neu!, Th' Faith Healers, 3Ds.

While it is absolutely a kindred soul to the swirly/hippy/pot-smoker UK laze-about ilk—guitarist/vocalist Tom Cullinan was in Th' Faith Healers, after all—Quickspace is, thank heavens, a bit more complex than that. And while the band walks a fine line between drone and drivel at times, on its second album it manages to deliver a fine series of songs that *almost* rock, each one (sometimes unsteadily) managing to settle into its own transfixing groove. Bearing out the minimum of twee-ness and lightness that's pretty much

required when you name your record *Precious Falling*, the song selection here is pretty diverse. The noisier tracks borrow successfully from some of the best and more obvious artists—Morricone, Eno, Neu!—but the group elegantly works the axis between simple yet cluttered pop and wailing multi-layered jams; its lighter numbers veer towards the folksy more than a couple of times. While there are some limp, and even annoying moments on *Precious Falling* (the song "Obvious" is just that), it's hard not to expect a little chaff to fall from the wheat, as Quickspace tries to execute some rather lofty goals. Save for the smattering of spazzy vocals and slight overcompensation in the "decorative sounds" department, it's a pretty valiant effort overall.

>>>Liz Clayton



**OUT:**

July 6.

**FILE UNDER:**

Drums and wiretaps.

**R.I.Y.L.:**Global Communication, Luke Vibert,  
Black Dog.**SCANNER**

Lauwarm Instrumentals Sulphur-Beggars Banquet

Some musicians serve as lightning rods for multiple media; either by accident or design, they create work that draws the attention not only of other musicians, but of poets, painters and performance artists. Recorded under the moniker Scanner, Robin Rimbaud's early experiments with anonymous cell phone conversations and police scanners distilled questions of technology, privacy and information into an ominous sludge, and succeeded so grandly that at this point the method is his calling card. Apparently he's cool with that: A

seductive French whisper introduces *Lauwarm Instrumentals*, but the voice soon develops a digital stutter, and in quiet corners throughout, words gather like dust bunnies. Out in the open, though, stands the real drama. Whether with breakbeat rhythms—"Lithia Water" is a massive 12-minute drum 'n' bass workout—or beatless ambience, the record spooks at every turn. And as a singular composition, *Lauwarm* is fantastic, perfectly paced between quivering and quiet, between anthemic and abbreviated. Occasionally the drama slips into histrionics—Rimbaud has a soft spot for overwrought eeriness and peppers the entire album with it. But if you're up for an emotional roller-coaster ride of electronic instrumental music, *Lauwarm* is aces.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Randall Roberts

**OUT:**

July 13.

**FILE UNDER:**

The Hootie of hip-hop.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Lauryn Hill, DAG, D'Angelo.

**SPEECH**

Hoopla

TVT

First making waves in 1992 with a poppy mix of soulful hip-hop and down-home Southern R&B, Arrested Development was a great idea. The group influenced numerous other acts and paved the way for the Fugees, Lauryn Hill and the Roots to stride into the platinum club without being carded. But AD was also surpassed by these artists, and floundered after 1994. On his sophomore solo CD *Hoopla*, former AD leader Speech is an artist still in search of his solo voice. As with Arrested Development's finest tunes,

he's at his best when he glides over a track in singsong vocal style. When he raps he generally comes up short, displaying shockingly puerile vocal sensibilities. With painfully simple rhymes like "I'm in harmony with trees and dirt/I flirt with skies and clouds/That scream out loud/Like Tarzan" ("The List Goes On"), it wears thin pretty damn quick. But there is some redemption here, in smooth R&B groovers like "Movin' On," "Slave Of It All" and "The Mountain Of Lonely," where Speech leaves his raps at the front door, instead tipping his hats to Sly Stone and Al Green. Speech gets a B for effort, but *Hoopla* sounds like a friend's demo that you try to dig, but just can't quite feel it.

&gt;&gt;&gt; Brian Coleman

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**SUPERCHUNK**

**Come Pick Me Up**

Merge

**OUT:**

September 7.

**FILE UNDER:**

Über-indie.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Portastatic, Squirrel Bait, Archers Of Loaf.

Consistent almost to a fault throughout its ten-year career, Superchunk had reached a point by 1995's *Here's Where The Strings Come In* where there wasn't much left to say about its distinctive brand of revved-up 'n' bittersweet emotive pop-punk. You either liked it, or you didn't. Or maybe you had your Superchunk moment and outgrew it. But after a long layoff, the band is back just in time to help mark the tenth anniversary of the Merge label owned and run by singer/guitarist Mac McCaughan and bassist Laura Ballance. And this is really where the strings come in,

thanks in part to Chicago post-rock luminary Jim O'Rourke, who recorded and mixed the album with Superchunk in Chicago, and who probably had a hand in bringing violin and viola into the mix along with sax, trumpet, and trombone. O'Rourke's fingerprints are most visible on the album opener, "So Convinced," which begins with a heavily treated drumbeat, a rumbling bass line, and only the slightest hint of McCaughan and Jim Wilbur's dueling guitars. But before it's over, the guitars are back and it sounds, well, an awful lot like Superchunk again. Later, a sax solo gives "Smarter Hearts" a touch of E Street Band feel, and strings cajole the gorgeous underachiever fight song "1000 Pounds." But nobody's gonna mistake those tunes for anything other than Superchunk either.

>>>Matt Ashare



**TARWATER**

**Silur**

Mute

**OUT:**

August 24.

**FILE UNDER:**

Electronica noir.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Recent Einstürzende Neubauten, Can, To Rococo Rot.

The hills of Germany are suddenly alive again with the sound of experimental electronics, as a new movement of bands draws inspiration from mighty elders like Can and Kraftwerk. This tendency can lead to the cold, abstract electronics of Oval or Kreidler, but Tarwater takes a more accessible and song-oriented approach. Ronald Lippok (who is also in To Rococo Rot) and Bernd Jesträm work more of the prog-rock side of the equation, starting with ambient synth washes and looped samples but adding slowed-down hip-hop beats and overlapping melodies

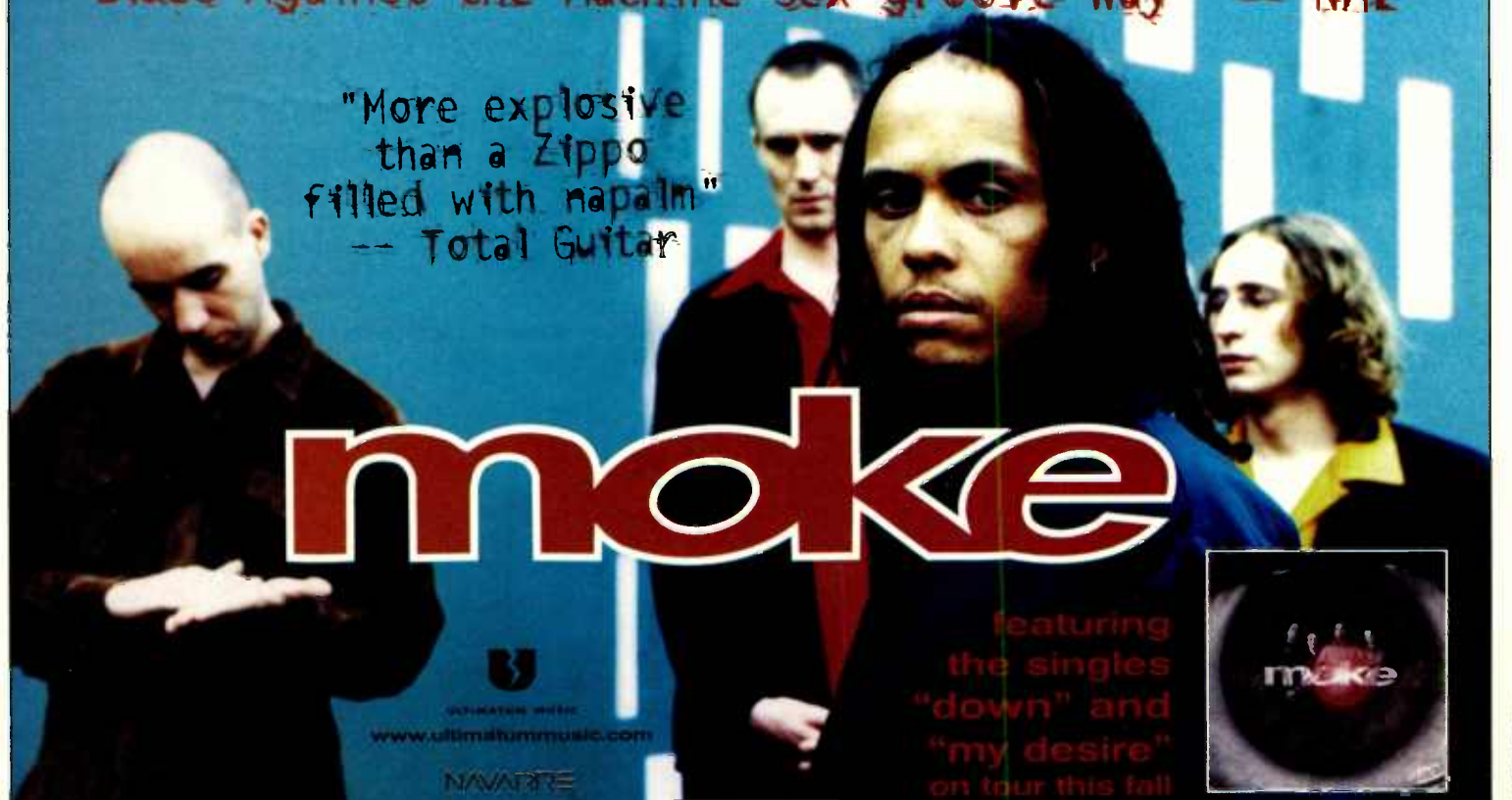
plunked out on bass, piano, and other (gasp!) real instruments. But the biggest departure is the use of untreated vocals on many tracks—spoken-word artist Danielle Markoff contributes, but most of the vocals come from Lippok, who delivers other authors' lyrics (using dialogue from such science-fiction authors as Aldous Huxley and Richard Kadrey, for instance) in a muttered sing-speak. The result sounds less like their current German techno colleagues and more like what Einstürzende Neubauten and Coil have done as they've aged and become more interested in songcraft. *Silur* is still a long way from being commercial or even hummable, but in a genre where the usual tactic is to sound as robot-like as possible, Tarwater deftly blends its avant-garde electronics with a human presence.

>>>David Jarman

"Moke rocks in a staggeringly proficient Blues Against the Machine sex groove way" -- NME

"More explosive than a Zippo filled with napalm" -- Total Guitar

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**OUT:**

August 17.

**FILE UNDER:**

Dark, twisted hip-hop.

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Gravediggaz, Massive Attack, Kool Keith.

## TRICKY WITH DJ MUGGS & GREASE ★

Juxtapose Island Def Jam

Tricky's relationship with hip-hop has always been tenuous at best, considering his general avoidance of its accepted tenets, even despite his roots in the form. Much of his recorded output, in fact, seems hell-bent on deviously mangling the concepts and sounds that define mainstream American hip-hop. That said, it's a wonder that *Juxtapose*, Tricky's collaboration with Cypress Hill's DJ Muggs and heavy-hitting rap producer Grease (of DMX fame), is such a successful venture. Muggs and Grease have hardly led Tricky away from the dark side, but their

presence seems to have kept his claustrophobic production inclinations in check, resulting in a leaner, more stylistically straightforward record. Stripped of his typically thick, nightmarish cloak, Tricky is forced to create paranoia and tension with newfound restraint and guest contributions. On "For Real," his soft growl is paired with the sparest bit of acoustic guitar and hand percussion, while on "I Like The Girls," guest toaster/rapper Street Dog takes over as Tricky's manic, lesbian-obsessed alter-ego. "Hot Like A Sauna," which appears here in two different mixes, features a bouncing electro-funk rhythm that wouldn't sound out of place on a Missy Elliott single. A new, more accessible Tricky? Maybe, but there's still plenty of dirty-faced angels lurking in the shadows of even the most accessible tracks here.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Colin Helms

**OUT:**

July 27.

**FILE UNDER:**

Alt-rock lives!

**R.I.Y.L.:**

Pearl Jam, Everclear, Dishwalla.

## VERVE PIPE

The Verve Pipe RCA

This album begs to be played loud, like your favorite grunge record from five years ago. That may sound surprising if you only know the Verve Pipe from its big, torpid 1997 ballad, "The Freshmen"—one of the last alt-pop singles to sneak into the top 40 before the teen-pop gates came crashing down. But on *The Verve Pipe*, Brian Vander Ark, frontman and main songwriter, rocks like it's 1993. Obviously we all have varying levels of nostalgia for that epoch; for their part, Brian and his cohorts—brother and bassist Brad Vander Ark, guitarist A.J. Dunning and

drummer Donny Brown—have turned in a meticulously crafted album that makes up in atmosphere and modest hooks what it lacks in diversity. Much of that atmosphere can be credited to producer Michael Beinhorn (Soundgarden, Marilyn Manson, Hole), who kept the band slaving over the record, its first in three years. For many albums such labor would signal trouble, but for the Pipe's often gloomy songcraft, it helps, particularly on tightly wound cuts like the throbbing "Television" or the slowly building "Headlines." Vander Ark's voice eerily resembles that of a young Peter Gabriel, particularly on the spooky ballad "Kiss Me Idle." More importantly, he's also got his husky shout tuned up loud enough to be heard above the well-crafted din.

&gt;&gt;&gt;Chris Molanphy

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## reviews

R.I.Y.L.—RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



### OUT:

August 3.

### FILE UNDER:

Gently understated acoustic melancholia.

### R.I.Y.L.:

Big Star's *Third*, Elliott Smith,  
Vulgar Boatmen.

## VERY SECRETARY

### Standing In The Shade

Mud

Champaign, Illinois-based Very Secretary is a quartet with a polite, homey sonic texture. Cleanly picked guitar meshes with violin to create a comfortable sound somewhere between alt-country and the aching melancholy of Big Star's somber side. The band is almost pathologically understated, with Dave Johnson apparently reluctant for his vocals to upstage the gentle instrumentation. Songs like "Sister Psyche" (gee, there's a Big Star title!) exude a cozy back porch aura reminiscent of indie-era Elliott Smith

(whose voice Johnson's resembles, albeit with less rasp). Too often, though, the songs lack the melodic oomph to prevent the prim arrangements from fading into the background. Rachael Dietkus's violin is so integral to Very Secretary's sound that it's hard to fathom that she joined the band (replacing a second guitarist) after its 1998 debut. Oddly, Dietkus vanishes from the disc's final few tracks just as a percussive insistence emerges that propels the band near Steve Reich drone terrain. Alternative mood music may have its purposes—*Standing In The Shade* is a CD you could put on when your aunt visits for brunch without losing credibility with your roommate.

>>>Glen Sarvady



### OUT:

June 22.

### FILE UNDER:

Adventurous electronic folk.

### R.I.Y.L.:

Beth Orton, Ben Lee's *Breathing*,  
*Tornados*, Kate Bush, Fiona Apple.

## KARRY WALKER

### Lipsbury Pinfold

Ubiquity

Several new folkies have blended acoustic music with the subtle beats of electronica. Many of these artists devote more energy to one form or the other—for instance, Beth Orton's slight electronic leanings often seem like an afterthought. Karry Walker seems to have her heart firmly in both camps—yearning for the personal expression of folk music but captivated by the atmosphere that electronic sounds can create. With her debut full-length, this northern California singer/songwriter already sounds like a master of packaging evocative images into atmospheric songs.

She augments her meaty guitar work with strings, beats, samples and keyboards, and of course her emotional vocals, which can sound like an ingenue's sweet coos or a madwoman's screams. As a lyricist, she creates streetwise but literate poetry about male-female relationships, society's brainwashing and the struggles of growing up. Because she can write such sharp, creative lyrics, it's particularly disappointing when she slips into high school poetry on "Brown," in which she compares a guy to a "cheeseball scamming all the crackers/Pissing off all the other hors d'oeuvres on the tray." It's much better to remember her for lines about being "down and dirty in a dizzy new millennium," because Walker's impressive take on "new folk" is an apt soundtrack for the dizziness of modern life.

>>>Wendy Mitchell



by M. TYE COMER

# mixed signals

American DJ royalty doesn't get more regal than Philadelphia's **JOSH WINK**. One of the most famous talents to rise from the US rave scene, Wink boasts an exemplary musical flair and an admirable grassroots mentality that's helped the blonde-dreadlocked DJ and producer to rise from local Philly attraction to a class "A" superstar draw. Most of Wink's newer fans know him primarily as the producer of landmark rave anthems such as "Higher State Of Consciousness," "Don't Laugh," and "Are You There." His latest release, **Profound Sounds Vol. 1** (Ovum/Ruffhouse-Columbia), completes the picture and introduces



his growing mainstream audience to his formidable skills as a DJ. While the eclectic *HearHere*, Wink's 1998 album of original material, shifted its energy, direction and influence throughout, *Profound Sounds* is a smoothly orchestrated, coherent musical experience that rises from minimal, atmospheric house to funky, multi-layered, peak-hour techno without skipping a beat. Featuring a host of new and unreleased tracks as well as

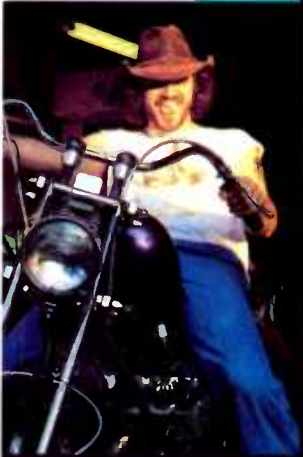
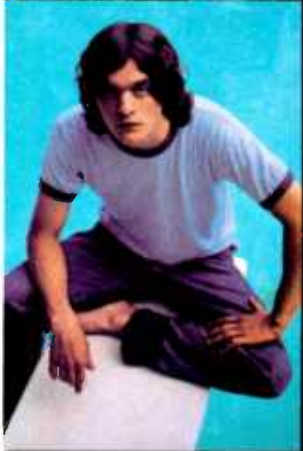
remixes by Sylk 130, Blaze, Stacey Pullen, Wink himself and others, the set maintains his trademark, traditional grooves without revisiting the now overplayed club anthems that aided his rise to power. *Profound Sounds* is a fine showcase for Wink's raw turntable talent and impeccable track selection, and yet more proof of why he remains one of the most respected and sought-after decksmiths on the planet... The British are coming and they mean business. The success British DJs such as Sasha, John Digweed and Paul Oakenfold have found on American shores in recent years has prompted several European DJs and record labels to follow their path across the Atlantic. Renaissance, a well-known touchstone of trance and progressive house music, made one of the most noteworthy moves this year by assembling a package tour of some of the UK's most lauded club DJs, in an effort to deliver the British clubbing experience to many major US cities. In conjunction with the tour, the company has released **Renaissance America Vol. 1** (Container-Universal), marking the first domestically available "Renaissance" mix. While the album commemorates the tour, it's also the first US mix by Renaissance resident DJ **DAVE SEAMAN**,



who through vibrant trance sets and production work as half of Brothers In Rhythm, has made a name for himself as one of the UK scene's top men. Seaman's mix includes elements normally associated with progressive trance music—atmospheric melodies, ethereal vocals, and ambient breakdowns—but his CD rides a tougher edge than those of his cohorts. Howling speed garage bass hits invade the music's

cascading melodies, complex breakbeat structures emerge from dense netherworlds of ambiance, and evil techno noise battles deep progressive house structures. Veering away from the core of popular anthems found on most trance/progressive house CDs, Seaman's offering is highlighted by a host of lesser-known standouts and as-yet-unreleased anthems. Moving from subtle foreplay to fiery climax to soothing afterglow, *Renaissance America* is a surefire favorite and a necessary addition to any respectable progressive trance collection.

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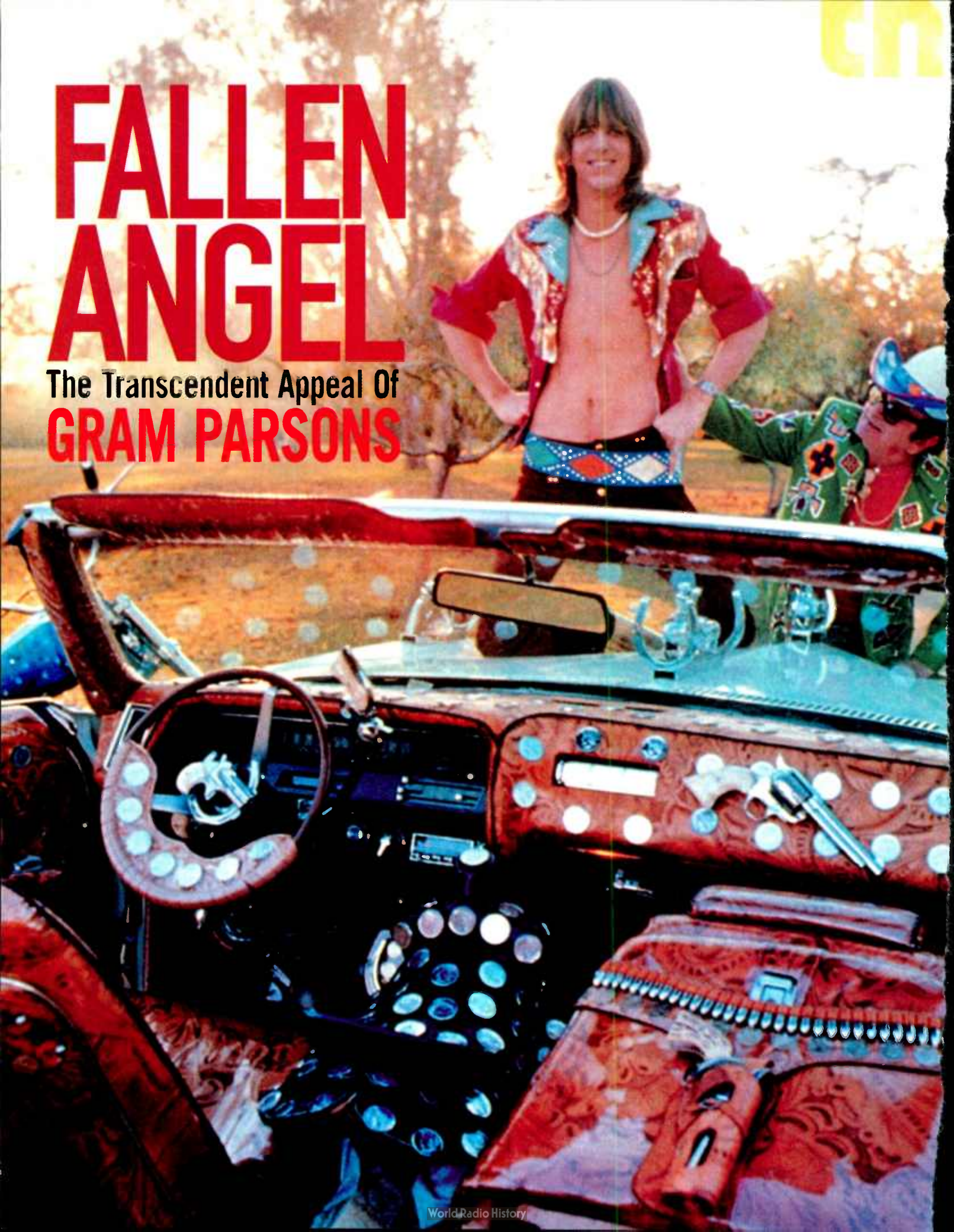
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# FALLEN ANGEL

The Transcendent Appeal Of  
**GRAM PARSONS**





by MATT HANKS

**1968:** The Year Country Broke. After 18 months of psychedelic excess and civil insanity, popular music—lost in its present, uncertain of its future—did what any prodigal son would do: It reached back to its roots. But unlike most radical shifts in popular song, this newfound need to go up to the country came down from on high. Bob Dylan and The Band released *John Wesley Harding* and *Music From Big Pink*, respectively; both works of quiet resolve, and timeless, rural majesty. The Stones, emergent from a year of chemically induced foggyheadedness and consequent drug busts, released *Beggars Banquet*, an album laced with country implication, and on a couple tracks—“Dear Doctor” and “Factory Girl”—thorough immersion. Even the Beatles, whom a lot of people blamed for all this mess in the first place, set their sights on simpler concerns, laying plans for their abortive “Get Back” sessions. The name said it all.

The signs were everywhere, but no other pop group delved deeper into the country music tradition than the Byrds. They’d hinted at this new direction in early ‘68 with the release of *The Notorious Byrd Brothers*, an album that contained “some new experimenting in the country & western and other fields,” as one promotional radio spot read. But it was the addition of Gram Parsons—a poor little rich boy from Florida cum 21-year-old Harvard theology school dropout—that tipped the scales and made the Byrds’ next effort, *Sweetheart Of The Rideo*, the country masterpiece that it is.

## Like Dylan did for rock 'n' roll, or Charlie Parker did for jazz, Parsons invented a new dialogue for country music.

Even with three decades hindsight, it’s difficult to imagine the shock that *Sweetheart* must have met with. The album—and Parsons himself, for that matter—was trapped between two genres: It was too “square” for a Byrds audience weaned on the lysergic ecstasy of “Eight Miles High,” too “weird” for the Grand Ole Opry audience that shunned the group when it played there shortly after *Sweetheart’s* release.

In a way, things haven’t changed much since then. This summer saw the release of *Return Of The Grievous Angel: A Tribute To Gram Parsons* (Almo Sounds). The fact that this is the second Parsons tribute inside of a decade—Rhino Records released the *Commemorative* compilation in 1993—is a telling indication of Parsons’s peculiar place in history. Though he has inspired some of the most obscenely popular music of our time (the Eagles anyone?), and his eminence among the current crop of alternative country bands, from Wilco to Whiskeytown, approaches biblical proportions, he remains a musician’s musician—a cult artist by default. Artists who follow his lead, *Return* contributor Lucinda Williams being a prime example, find themselves fated to a similar legacy. Williams’s 1998 album *Car Wheels On A Gravel Road* is a direct descendent of the Parsons canon, and will likely be remembered as one of this decade’s landmark releases. But with both rock and country radio afraid to touch it, the album has enjoyed only modest sales (on a par, almost to the digit, with Parsons’s own numbers), rendering Williams’s career yet another cautionary tale in the oil-and-water relationship between these two genres. Other artists face even slimmer prospects. Without major label support, bands like Freakwater, Hazeldine, and the Pernice Brothers—Parsons acolytes all—receive only marginal notice in the mainstream.

Of course, failure has a certain mystique. Parsons was about as mystical as they come, and his career rarely followed the straight-and-narrow. Parsons’s time in the Byrds was short-lived. He quit the

group on the eve of a South African tour, and over the next five years, he did about as much living as any one man is entitled to. He founded the Flying Burrito Brothers, an endeavor that would yield two more country-rock classics—*The Gilded Palace Of Sin* and *Burrito Deluxe*. But in 1970, he once again took leave with little explanation. In the early ‘70s he recorded two near-perfect solo albums—*GP* and *Grievous Angel*—which displayed the purest distillation to date of the “Cosmic American Music” that haunted his every thought. And then, in 1973, while lounging in a motel room in the middle of the Joshua Tree desert, he overdosed on a confluence of cocaine, speed, morphine and alcohol.

“I think a lot of musicians respond to Gram because he has a soulfulness that crosses all kinds of genres,” says former Parsons collaborator and lifelong proselytizer Emmylou Harris. “The general public would respond to him too, if it ever had the chance to hear him on the radio.” She pauses for a moment, “Of course, it would’ve helped if he had lived longer, too.”

Harris recorded and toured extensively with Parsons in his final two years, becoming an indispensable element in his Cosmic American sound. In the wake of his death she has become a conduit to his legacy, frequently covering his songs on her own albums, lauding his talents at every turn. “Basically, Gram turned me on to country music,” she recalls. “Before then I didn’t really hear it with my heart. I listened to it in almost a tongue-in-cheek kind of way, I’m ashamed to

say. He also taught me how to sing. I knew I had a good instrument, but he made me aware of my different strengths and the economy of emotion and phrasing that’s inherent to country music. He didn’t preach or anything. It was just the act of singing with him that made me attuned to these things.”

Arguably, it wasn’t the singing, but what was being sung that points to Parsons’s greatest contribution. Like Dylan did for rock ‘n’ roll, or Charlie Parker did for jazz, Parsons invented a new dialogue for country music. Whether it was draft dodging or lost love, Parsons jumped from topical to timeless, with all of country’s fundamental tenets intact.

Breathing new life into old traditions is no small task, but it’s an ambition that is upheld in the work of one of Parsons’s most inspiring devotees, Gillian Welch. “Gram definitely had a talent for confronting modern occurrences and dilemmas,” says Welch. Her rendering of Parsons’s signature tune, “Hickory Wind,” is *Return’s* standout track. Employing a National guitar and “a really cheesy Italian organ that [songwriting partner] Dave [Rawlings] bought at a junk shop for \$25,” Welch strips the song to its barest essentials, while retaining every bit of its crippling confessional impact. But Welch demurs that it’s the song, not the singer. “From the first time I heard [‘Hickory Wind’], it seemed like a really true song. I think it expresses a really universal feeling.” While “Hickory Wind” is one of Parsons’s more classically themed-songs—lost youth being its main premise—Welch notes that in its time, it still took risks. “Some people saw country music as a proper form, you know, not the best place for airing that [personal] kind of stuff,” she says. “But I think that’s what it’s always been around for. So you could either say that [Parsons] had an old-time approach to things, or a modern one.” Or maybe, judging by his continued influence, Gram Parsons just transcended time altogether. **NMM**



## JOHN MELLENCAMP



by NEIL GLADSTONE

"I don't get the Mellencamp thing," announces my managing editor soon after reading the praise-filled preview I've written for the Little Bastard's upcoming Philadelphia gig.

"We've discussed this several times," I remind her. She wants to know why I have little time for No Depression bands and singer-songwriters, yet carry a torch for the Coug's hayseed garage rock; why I shirk off Bruce Springsteen, yet celebrate that Springsteen wannabe.

"For god's sake, I wrote my college essay about the plight of American farmers because of Mellencamp," I note, underscoring my long-standing devotion. "I'll bet good money that I'm the only person who got into the Cornell Hotel School with an essay inspired by him."

An intern, overhearing the conversation, interjects: "Yeah, that would have been like me writing about the plight of Tibet after going to a Beastie Boys show."

Them's fightin' words.

Not that the Tibetan cause isn't laudable, but my appreciation for Mellencamp isn't just some overripe adolescent infatuation conjured up one night at a concert.

Growing up in a house with two Clash-loving, MTV-hating siblings, my "Coug" thing was derided from the get-go.

When the "Jack And Diane" video would come on, I'd punch the air in time with the edits just to bug my elder brother who invariably smacked his forehead and rolled his eyes.

That "Jack And Diane" heartland dream became part of the allure of my college sweetheart—a six-foot, blue-eyed blonde who could have easily passed for a farmer's daughter (or one of Mellencamp's wives). I remember the two of us dancing in her kitchen to "Cherry Bomb," she in tight blue jean cutoffs, me wearing her father's red-leather high school jacket with the big Texas patch on the front. While other students at the Hotel School foamed over opening a four-star-luxury resort, I considered opening up a country inn.

Few people other than she ever understood my preoccupation with the "Coug." A couple of years ago, I wrote a gushing review of *Mr. Happy Go Lucky* and an indie-rock acquaintance wanted to know if I'd been bribed by the record company (he wasn't kidding).

Even friends who say they enjoy one or two of his tunes don't want to

fork over the cash for a concert ticket. In '85, when I suggested to my high school buds that we go to a Mellencamp show at Madison Square Garden, they just responded by doing the "Hurts So Good" shuffle and cackling. The gig sold out and I kept my disappointment to myself. But when a last minute block of seats opened up behind the stage, I snagged one and went alone. In the darkened stadium I could shuffle, sway and shimmy as much I wanted, away from the hipster glare. I've seen Mellencamp four times by myself and I'm not sure I'd want another person there with me. I doubt anyone else would understand.

In those days, when I was wearing a green parka around, it was impossible to explain to any of the other mods why I dug this guy that looked like he should be working the ring toss at the high school carnival. Things didn't improve much when he was regularly donning a black leather jacket with fringes. Thumbing through the old Scarecrow Tour program, I'm thinking that Mellencamp could be the forgotten star of *Footloose: The TV Show*.

These fashion faux pas can be forgiven because Mellencamp, in interviews, willingly dismisses his career choices and music, often calling himself an "idiot" or "asshole." I can even forgive him for all of his unflinchingly earnest tunes, such as "Down In Out In Paradise" and "Hard Times For An Honest Man," because he tempers his idealism with self-disgust. In retrospect, the platitudes and vagaries of his lyrics are disturbingly similar to ones I found myself relying on all too often when I was writing songs in college. When I got disillusioned with band life, I re-read his old grouching interviews for solace.

While other acts I followed as a teenager have stagnated, Mellencamp remains uneasy. He's fed up with the music business, yet he wants to be a better songwriter. He dabbles in painting and directs movies, yet all the while he's painfully aware of his limitations. And he refuses to turn his back on the rock 'n' roll dream, continuing to make big rock albums, marrying a model and embracing hip trends like drum 'n' bass.

His latest, self-titled release sounds more like the country-rock John Mellencamp of the late '80s. Perhaps the single "Your Life Is Now" is a sign that he's settling down and coming to terms with who he is. But I hope not.

Neil Gladstone, the music editor at *Philadelphia City Paper*, likes suckin' on chili dogs outside the Tastee Freeze.



## metal top 25

- 1 **BIOHAZARD**  
New World Disorder King/Mercury-IDJMG
- 2 **S.O.D.**  
Bigger Than The Devil Nuclear Blast America
- 3 **TESTAMENT**  
The Gathering Spitfire
- 4 **MERCYFUL FATE**  
9 Metal Blade
- 5 **MINISTRY**  
Dark Side Of The Spoon Warner Bros.
- 6 **STATIC-X**  
Wisconsin Death Trip Warner Bros.
- 7 **NEUROSIS**  
Times Of Grace Relapse
- 8 **ORANGE 9MM**  
Pretend I'm Human Ng
- 9 **REVEILLE**  
Laced Elektra-EEG
- 10 **SLIPKNOT**  
Slipknot Roadrunner
- 11 **GWAR**  
We Kill Everything Metal Blade
- 12 **EMPEROR**  
IX Equilibrium Century Media
- 13 **LIMP BIZKIT**  
Significant Other Flip-Interscope
- 14 **IMMOLATION**  
Failures For Gods Metal Blade
- 15 **MONSTROSITY**  
In Dark Purity Mercury
- 16 **BLACK LABEL SOCIETY**  
Sonic Brew Spitfire
- 17 **BURIED ALIVE**  
Death Of Your Perfect World Victory
- 18 **MARDUK**  
Panzer Division Dsmose Productions
- 19 **HATE MACHINE**  
Destination 2KH8 Hate Machine
- 20 **DRAIN STH**  
Freaks Of Nature The Enclave/Mercury-IDJMG
- 21 **W.A.S.P.**  
HellDorado CMC International
- 22 **PISSING RAZORS**  
Cast Down The Plague Noise
- 23 **DIMMU BORGIR**  
Spiritual Black Dimensions Nuclear Blast America
- 24 **AMORPHIS**  
Tuonela Relapse
- 25 **GOD DETHRONED**  
Bloody Blasphemy Metal Blade

## IMMOLATION

Failures For Gods

Metal Blade



throughout "God Made Filth," "Once Ordained," and six other examples of archetypal devil music. Here and there, shards of piercing post-Sonic Youth dissonance cut the curdled chords into new weird shapes. The closest cousin to *Failures For Gods* would be Immolation's icy *Battles In The North*, a monochromatic blast of crisp metal epilepsy. Immolation, though not holding to such a stringent standard of intensity, is bearing more significant tonnage in its sound. The band's vivid hatred of Christianity acts as a diabolically divine inspiration—a valuable Bible school lesson about the artistic assets of knowing one's enemy.

>>> As someone who feels the **MELVINS** (Still Dead) is as respectably good a place to quit a few good years to Atlantic Records, it's a thrill to rediscover the trio's high integrity time stretch on *The Maggot* (Ipecac), the first of a trilogy of new Melvins discs promised for 1999. Unpretentiously magnificent, this CD hammers together a massive space of awkward but unfaltering dimensions. Credit the gluey treatment of digital workstation edit experiments for holding together the incongruous slabs of granite these guys call songs. Also, hats off (thank god) to new bassist Kevin Rutmanis, formerly of the Cows... As Scott Weinrich forges forward with Spirit Caravan, the tracks of his previous bands linger in the sludge. Besides leading St. Vitus through its best years, "Wino" fronted the **OBSESSED** for nearly two decades, perfecting a vision of Sabbath/Skynyrd-influenced, absolute rebel heaviness. The rare and unreleased Obsessed material on *Incarinate* (Southern Lord) brings together lost classics, both in original form ("Sodden Jackal"), and as re-recorded by the early '90s major label lineup ("Concrete Cancer")... Regardless of whether or not the backwards breed called tribute albums will survive into the next millenium, **A Tribute To Mercyful Fate**

Death metal that mimics combustion is the best of all, but also the quickest to exhaust itself. While all of Florida—save Morbid Angel—turns cool and slow, Yonkers, New York's Immolation exemplifies the churning, burning, and turning of things falling powerfully apart. Atonal, arrhythmic, and anti-Christian, the foursome seems to have its finger pretty firmly placed on a gloriously catastrophic apocalypse. Satan isn't boring when given this high praise. Wild gurgling guitars and erupting drums fly off from Immolation's vortex in every direction for the duration of *Failures For Gods*. Half-eaten tones are congealed and splattered under the staggered momentum that swings perilously

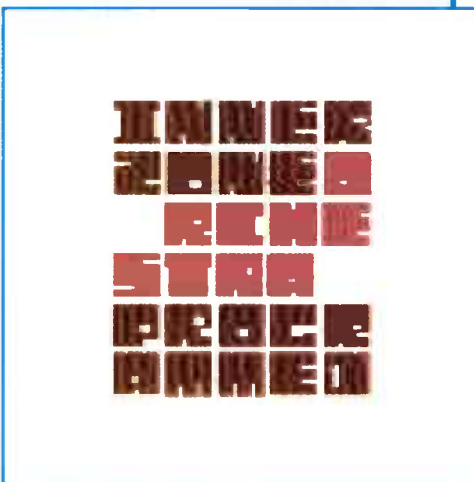


# INNERZONE ORCHESTRA

Programmed

Planet E-Astralwerks

I probably don't need to reiterate the story of Carl Craig's rise to the status of hero in electronic music circles here, so I'll just point out that no radical music ever emerges without opening unknown futures. And this is precisely where Craig has led his followers with *Programmed*, a record that will alter the parochialism embedded in what's called "electronic music." The Craig-penned press release accompanying *Programmed* is a travelogue for the album, navigating through his faintly pulsing memories of watching *Blade Runner* once too often (check "Manufactured Memories") and of listening to Ry Cooder's *Paris, Texas* soundtrack, harrowing house records like Bam Bam's "Where's Your Child," and the KLF's *Chill Out*—cultural reference points which bounce



around in his imagination like a Superball in a rubber room. What's remarkable is Craig's ability to incorporate these influences with grace and measure. He never clutters the tracks with aural name-dropping or boastful displays, instead allowing the musicians to synchronize their abilities. And the musicians here are indeed an Orchestra: Craig has brought together former members of Sun Ra's Arkestra, Richie Hawtin, Detroit-based rappers, and more extras than *Ben Hur* did, yet he's able to pull off a cogent album much like James Lavelle did with the recent UNKLE project. *Programmed* is composed of lacerating old-school hip-hop drum programs pushed to the back wall so the echo chamber can run roughshod over the mix. "Monsters" again makes clear that Craig can do more with drum sounds and thin skeins of melody than most people could do with an entire symphony orchestra or 128 channels of digital input. In addition, the album includes "Bug In The Bassbin," Craig's 1992 track which foresaw down-tempo drum 'n' bass by a good five years.

>>>Many North Americans were first introduced to the likes of Aphex Twin, Plaid, Black Dog and the stellar panoply of analog explorers from the British Isles through the *Artificial Intelligence* compilation series, launched in 1992. Back then, no one likely envisioned that this would lead to a new wave of North American electronic musicians, arising from smaller cities such as Miami, Louisville, Santa Ana, and Milwaukee. The **Dated** compilation (Toshoklabs) is but the latest in this blossoming underground movement, Emerging from a place still unknown, this collection of delicately sculpted, melodic pieces moves from the somnambulant "Yesteryear's Frequency" by Solomondilate 1 to the beautiful sine wave massacre of mdk's "Vi." Although the influence of such German minimalists as Mike Ink and Jorg Burger (whose recent collaborative album *Las Vegas* was released by Matador) is certainly felt here, it's more a question of elective affinity than mimicry. Although the reliance on repetition here might scare some off, close examination reveals that the music is slightly different

from one moment to the next, keeping the listener's levels of suspense at an unbearable and pleasurable pitch... Steve O'Sullivan is possibly the most overlooked electronic producer in Britain. He runs his own Mosaic imprint, records under a bewildering number of pseudonyms, and has worked with such folks as Russ Gabriel. He also has a keen ear for classic, melodic Detroit-inspired techno à la Robert Hood, as well as a great love for '70s roots dub. His latest excursion brings these two elements together into a profoundly satisfying album, **No Lightweight Stuff**, essentially a compilation of 13 otherwise hard-to-find tracks. The opening "Where's Burt?" has a serpentine bass line offset by delicate minor-key chord changes and robust percussion. "Echo Freak" is like a spider web glistening in the morning sun, held together by what seems like such fragile material, which actually demonstrates an impregnable strength. The deep dub strain continues on "Another Source," "A Factory Dub," and "Lock Up." This is a jewel of a record just waiting to be discovered by those willing to look a little deeper.

# dance top 25

- 1 **MOBY**  
Play V2
- 2 **CHEMICAL BROTHERS**  
Surrender Astralwerks
- 3 **ORBITAL**  
The Middle Of Nowhere London
- 4 **BANCO DE GAIA**  
The Magical Sounds Of Banco De Gaia Six Degrees
- 5 **THIEVERY CORPORATION**  
Abductions And Reconstructions  
Eighteenth Street Lounge
- 6 **SPACETIME CONTINUUM**  
Double Fine Zone Astralwerks
- 7 **ART OF NOISE**  
The Seduction Of Claude Debussy Universal
- 8 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
DJ Kicks: Thievery Corporation Stud!o K7
- 9 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Electro Lounge: Electronic Excursions...  
The Right Stuff
- 10 **UNDERWORLD**  
Beaucoup Fish JB0-V2
- 11 **FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY**  
Implode Metropolis
- 12 **NEUROACTIVE**  
Parallel Lifeforms A Different Drum
- 13 **SASHA**  
Global Underground: San Francisco Boxed-Thrive
- 14 **BOOM BOOM SATELLITES**  
Out Loud Epic
- 15 **FUNKSTORUNG**  
Additional Productions Stud!o K7
- 16 **DJ RAP**  
Learning Curve Higher Ground/Columbia-CRG
- 17 **RED SNAPPER**  
Making Bones Matador
- 18 **VELVET ACID CHRIST**  
Fun With Knives Metropolis
- 19 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Dr. Speedlove Presents Chemical Warfare...  
Invisible
- 20 **ATARI TEENAGE RIOT**  
60 Second Wipeout DHR/Elektra-EEG
- 21 **FREESTYLERS**  
We Rock Hard Freskanova-Mammoth
- 22 **EL STEW**  
El Stew Om
- 23 **HERBALISER**  
Very Mercenary Ninja Tune (Canada)
- 24 **NIGHTMARES ON WAX**  
Carboot Soul Matador
- 25 **KMFDM**  
Adios Wax Trax!-TVT

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



## hip-hop top 25

- 1 **ROOTS**  
The Next Movement MCA
- 2 **BEATNUTS**  
Watch Out Now Relativity
- 3 **GENIUS/GZA**  
Breaker Breaker MCA
- 4 **RAHZEL**  
All I Know MCA
- 5 **MR. LIF**  
Triangular Warfare Brick
- 6 **SWAY & KING TECH FEAT. DJ REVOLUTION**  
The Anthem Interscope
- 7 **UGLY DUCKLING**  
Fresh Mode 1500-A&M
- 8 **NATURAL ELEMENTS**  
2 Tons Tommy Boy
- 9 **SLICK RICK FEAT. OUTKAST**  
Street Talkin' Def Jam-IDJMG
- 10 **D. AUGUSTE**  
Not 2 Far Hi-Rise
- 11 **GANG STARR**  
Full Clip Noo Trybe-Virgin
- 12 **SPORTY THIEVZ**  
No Pigeons Rok-A-Blok/Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRC
- 13 **EMINEM FEAT. DR. DRE**  
Guilty Conscience Aftermath-Interscope
- 14 **RUFF RYDERS**  
What Ya Want Interscope
- 15 **1 LIFE 2 LIVE W/TIMBALAND**  
Can't Nobody LaFace-Arista
- 16 **CHRIS LOWE**  
Conn To Queens Bronx Side
- 17 **1 LIFE 2 LIVE**  
Throw It Up Y'all LaFace-Arista
- 18 **EPMD**  
Right Now Def Jam-IDJMG
- 19 **NOREAGA**  
Half Baked Penalty
- 20 **MOBB DEEP**  
Quiet Storm Loud
- 21 **SCREWBALL**  
F.A.Y.B.A.N. Tommy Boy
- 22 **ARSONISTS**  
In Your Town Matador
- 23 **ARSONISTS**  
Pyromaniac Matador
- 24 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
Rawkus Presents Soundbombing II Rawkus
- 25 **COMMON FEAT. THE 45 KING**  
Car Horn Groove Attack

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

## KOOL KEITH

Black Elvis/Lost In Space

Ruffhouse-Columbia



While the rest of the hip-hop world tries too hard to be cutting edge or tries too hard to be like everyone else, Koool Keith orbits the extraterrestrial ether, broadcasting from his own planet. He's impervious to musical trends and bandwagon-jumping, quick-sell schemes. So it seems all too appropriate that his first major-label solo release (not counting DreamWorks' Dr. Octagon re-release) bears the title *Lost In Space*. After the macabre madness of Keith's recent Dr. Doom album (on his own Funky Ass label), his Ruffhouse work is less gruesome subject-wise, but no less bizarre. *Black Elvis/Lost In Space* spends about half its time attacking the rap industry and the other half discussing everything that other rappers couldn't even have bad dreams about. "You are the

monsters of the original Mister Softee ice cream trucks," he complains of other rappers on "Intro." On "Maxi Curls," he alludes to "remote controlled alligators." And on "I Don't Play," he exclaims, "Half of y'all think I'm the Elephant Man." But even the craziest stuff that spills out of his brain sometimes makes sense. On "Lost In Space," he intones, "You're comin' so wack/You sound like the *Bulworth* soundtrack." And the chorus to "Livin' Astro" goes "Flyin' saucers/Spaceships move at warp speed/MTV level three/When I fly on BET." As usual, lyrics dominate Keith's work. Musically the album is solid, albeit similar from tune to tune, utilizing mid-tempo drum programs and heavy analog/Moog synth bass lines for his lyrical launch pads. "Rockets On The Battlefield," "Release Date," "Lost In Space," "The Girls Don't Like The Job" and "I Don't Play" rank up there with Keith's best work.

>>>On his debut album, *The Underground Tapes* (Serious), Toronto's **SAUKRATES** shows skills both on the mic and behind the production board, supplementing dusty, bouncing, catchy beats with a bold, intelligent rhyme style. And he's got some talented friends: Common, Xzibit, Heltah Skeltah, O.C., Masta Ace, Pharoah Monch and fellow Canadian Choclair all make very solid guest appearances. But on the best tracks—"Money Or Love," "Fine Line" and "Bag Da Biscuit"—Saukrates shines alone. He gets some definite demerits for more misogyny than a rapper of his obvious intelligence should harbor, but it's hard to overlook the serious talent that this MC possesses... Solesides Records is dead. But from the ashes of that great West Coast rap institution comes Quannum. It has essentially the same artist stable and owners as before—LaThef, Lyrics Born, Gift Of Gab, Chief XCel and DJ Shadow—but the label's new face has an even broader focus. Most of these artists appear together on *Spectrum*, credited to the collective also called **QUANNUM**, which includes the aforementioned list of MCs and producers, as well as female vocalist Joyo Velarde and ultra-rare Bavarian funksters Poets Of Rhythm... The amazing **DJ CRAZE** is the most-touted new turntablist on the scene today. The Miami-based DJ has been winning competitions since 1994, but after winning the '98 DMC world finals, he's been all over the place. His debut album *Craze Musick* (Bomb Hip Hop) is damn good. Using only two turntables and an eight-track recorder, he has put down a dozen tracks that proudly introduce him on the scene. Many cuts here are too short or too lacking in conceptual development—something that groups like the X-Ecutioners and Skratch Pilklz have mastered—to be called incredible, but outings like "Crabhappy Crabaholics," "Happy Thoughts," "Dangerous" and the drum 'n' bass-influenced "Mogli" mark him as a turntablist who will do some serious studio damage in the very near future... And just when you started to think they had retired again, **EPMD** is back, with *Out Of Business* (Def Jam). Not quite as consistently impressive as the group's 1997 return *Back In Business*, it's nonetheless got some of the trademark deep bass thumpers that will keep subwoofers working overtime this summer. "The Symphony" (which comes in two versions: one with M.O.P., one with Redman and Method Man), "Pioneers," "The Fan," "Rap Is Outta Control" and "Jane 6" are all premium, high-octane EPMD head nodders.



**PAVEMENT** fans disheartened by the grim mid-tempo-ness of *Terror Twilight* should lend their ears to both formats of the single for that album's best cut, "Spit On A Stranger" (Matador). The CD version has two outtakes from *Brighten The Corners*, the rather spiffy "Harness Your Hopes" (a tuneful little excuse for Steve Malkmus to free-associate for three and a half minutes: "Show me/A word that rhymes with pavement/And I will kill your parents") and a sardonic Big Rock Anthem called "Roll With The Wind," as well as two lesser, keyboard-laden doodles of more recent vintage. On the B-side of the 7" single, there's another BTC-era piece "And Then," an extended jam on a riff that's been kicking around Pavement's not-officially-released repertoire for a long while with various words attached to it.

**SQUAREPUSHER's** new EP, *Maximum Priest* (Warp-Nothing), thankfully reverses Tom Jenkinson's recent trend toward aimless Miles Davis worship and brings back his knack for uncanny drum programming and messy ultra-live electric bass. The killer opener "Song Our Underwater Torch" is as slow as old dub on 'luudes, and about as echoey and wet. But what Jenkinson has picked up from his drum 'n' bass days is the ability to make sparseness and crummedness suggest each other, and the track's organ melody occupies the space where its rhythmic logjams might be. He backs it up with two other hither and thither non-dance electro workouts ("Decathlon Oxide" really ought to be video game music, if it isn't already), a sub-30-second fragment and remixes by Autechre, Wagon Christ and Yee-King that salvage tracks from his jazz period with the help of lots of beats.

The new wave is alive and well in Brooklyn, thanks to the **TURN-OFFS**, four young women whose hugely fun debut 12" EP, *New Romance* (Paroxysm), sounds like it fell through one of those time warps that used to develop at Danceteria and Hurrah! back in 1980, primary colored sleeve and all. It's got gratuitous but cheerful

### the turn-offs



## COMPUTER COUGAR

Leonard Street Revival

Gern Blandsten

Gern Blandsten label guy Charles Maggio has been keeping his band Computer Cougar more or less a secret for the last couple of years—aside from a superb and well-circulated demo tape, the group's only recorded appearance has been one short compilation track. It's about time it got a single of its own, and this is a smashing debut, though the band's still a little cagey. The song titles are not listed anywhere on the record's package, for instance. Nonetheless, Computer Cougar has gone the long way around the world—via emo and old-fashioned sloppy punk—and come back to early Wire, in the sense that the players are merciless self-editors with coffee nerves and a willingness to abrade like sand on skin. "Leonard Street Revival" scores points for a distracted lead vocal that makes the injunction "so let's dance" sound like it means anything but that, and for the dual-guitar scrape-and-rip that drags the whole song along until it abruptly vanishes. Even better is the B-side, "Photographs That Don't Exist," which strings unexpected, not-normally-punky minor chords around the singer's spooked, cracking squawk. It's sharp-edged stuff, but it cuts neatly—in both cases, the band says something thoughtful and energetic, and then gets out—and the whole disc comes in comfortably under four minutes.



keyboards, just-off-the-beat rhythms, spindly atonal B-52's guitar, words so intentionally dippy they're cool (memorable phrases: "the Earth has nite livin' with a disco ball," "happy happy fist fight!"), and an overall vibe that demands lots of vinyl and mascara to appreciate it to its fullest.

Headcoats frontman **BILLY CHILDISH** has released more than 80 albums and several zillion singles with his various bands, but "Hangman Communication," the final volume of Kill Rock Stars' "Wordcore" series of spoken-word singles, is something very different. Backed up by crude guitar, Childish lays out his artistic manifesto: Down with professionalism, down with critics, up with amateurism. Childish has been making trouble at the periphery of the art world for ages (he collaborated with Tracey Emin back when she was spelling her name Traci), and here he lays out one marvelously twisted Oscar Wildean aperçu after another: "In a world motivated by the lie of success, the true artist must always endeavor to fail." And he saves his harshest (and most dead-on) words for those in my line of work: "Beware—the odious critic will not only scarf the rose but will also devour the shit it grows in."

A few quick drops of the needle: **BERNHARD GÜNTER** specializes in

nearly silent recordings, where every flicker above digital black is significant; **JEPH JERMAN** works with the quiet but undisciplined acoustic sounds of non-musical objects. Their collaboration, "Buddha With The Sun Face/Buddha With The Moon Face" (Digital Narcis), is a departure for both of them: impossible to hear except at blistering volume, with the sounds of objects from the desert mutated into alien clicks and scrapes... The **SPINANES'** Memphis recording sessions for *Arches And Aisles* produced a couple of covers of songs from the Rolling Stones' *Between The Buttons*, and they've just turned up on a Sub Pop single. They're uneasy, vague takes on little-known songs, and though "She Smiled Sweetly" gets a confident vocal from Rebecca Gates, that's not her singing "All Sold Out"—wonder who it is?... The **TENTACLES** are a one-off band of K Records all-stars (with members of Sleater-Kinney and Marine Research, evidently, and Lois Malfeio for sure). The A-side of "The Touch" is Lois's stab at writing a '60s garage song, complete with every line ending in "bay-beh" and a grimy but chipper guitar break. The B-side has another mystery vocalist and another neo-garage original, "Louie Louie Got Married," this time with Farfisa-ish organ and a variation on that immortal riff.



## ALEXANDER "SKIP" SPENCE

Oar

Sundazed



SUNZAZED

Some people made it through the '60s; others didn't. Some flamboyantly crashed and burned like Janis Joplin, Brian Jones or Jimi Hendrix; others just took a little too much of everything, flaked, and dropped out. One of the decade's enigmas, Alexander "Skip" Spence falls into the latter category, and like his British counterpart Syd Barrett, he was one of the era's most compelling and intriguing figures. After playing in the original Jefferson Airplane lineup, Spence helped form the cult group Moby Grape, which roared through the psychedelic '60s as one of its freakiest and most surreal groups (at one point, a purple elephant was paraded around the Sunset Strip to promote one of the band's LPs). Spence himself suffered something of a "freakout" and departed the band in July 1968, and wound up in the

decidedly un-groovy environment of New York's Bellevue Hospital. In December, he checked out, traveled to Nashville and recorded *Oar*, an entirely solo LP that's one of the most mysterious discs in rock. The sound of *Oar* is fragile, cracked country-rock, wiggled-out folk, and psychedelic music for after the drugs have all run out. Spence overdubbed all the instruments himself, giving his songs a shambolic, shuffling feel much like Barrett's work; at other times, *Oar* has a muted, hushed, somnambulant quality that's downright haunting, as if Spence were baring what's left of his gentle, sad soul through his spaced-out music and incoherent lyrics. "I took every bit of stuff from A to Z/And now you hear me," Spence sings on "Dixie Peach Promenade," summing up *Oar*'s weird mood quite nicely. Spence died this past summer, making this reissue bittersweet and timely. Even more importantly, *Oar* serves as a poignant reminder of all that was simultaneously good and terribly sad about the '60s.

>>>Before Rod Stewart was rock 'n' roll's most famous rooster, before Ron Wood was a Rolling Stone playing bum notes alongside Keith Richards, there was the **FACES**, a blaring British hard rock band that trashed hotel rooms, emptied fifths and stormed the arena stages of the 1970s. The band also wore some crazy clothes, but that pretty much came with the territory back then. Rhino has just released *Good Boys... When They're Asleep*, the first-ever Faces CD collection, gathering 19 tracks from the group's classic '70s albums. If you're looking for a current reference point, it's simple: The Black Crowes lifted every darn lick they've ever played straight from the Faces. They were damn good, and this retrospective is overdue. Now if somebody would only dig up the Faces' mind-blowing live BBC and King Biscuit tapes...

>>>The tiny record label Old Hat has released an amazing little compilation called **Violin, Sing The Blues For Me: African-American Fiddlers 1926-49**, which spotlights the role of the violin in the music of the early part of the century, including such

must-hear artists as Bo Carter, Jack Kelly, the Tennessee Chocolate Drops and the Mississippi Sheiks. Bordering on blues, touching on swing, even hinting that these players had heard a hillbilly fiddler or two, the album showcases the depth and diversity of early African-American music in general. But don't let that kind of musicological talk scare you off: It's damn fun, too. If you're in one of those R. Crumb kind of moods, where you just want to dress up in musty old clothes and hear something squawky that sounds like it's blaring out of the gilded cone of a gigantic antique Victrola, then this is the record for you.

>>>In 1938 and '39, folklorist Alan Lomax staged two concerts under the historic title **From Spirituals To Swing**. The idea was to showcase African-American music in all its history and glory, and present it in a serious performance context. It's been said that the most important thing Lomax ever did with blues musician Leadbelly was to put him onstage in a sharp-looking suit rather than in the usual ragged overalls and straw hat that white people were accustomed to seeing black musicians

wear in those pre-integration years. Vanguard Records has released a three-CD box set of recordings from these historic concerts, along with some related studio tracks from the same era. Featured are artists such as Count Basie, Lester Young, Charlie Christian, Fletcher Henderson, Lionel Hampton and a host of others.



>>>In addition to the aforementioned concert box set, some other Alan Lomax recordings have seen the light of day, this time in Rounder's "River Of Song" series. **Mississippi Saints & Sinners** includes work songs, badman ballads, ragtime, spirituals and shouts of rural Mississippi, recorded by Lomax in the '30s and '40s. Another volume, **Mississippi: The Blues Lineage**, spotlights even more early, raw recordings by some of the finest bluesmen of the South, including Son House, Muddy Waters and Honeyboy Edwards, as well as the haunting, hard-fought songs of near-forgotten unknowns like Lucious Curtis and Frank Evans.

>>>In one of the more low-key but rewarding reissue series, Koch Records has been licensing vintage titles from the voluminous five-decade catalog of Atlantic Records. Two wonderful releases jump out of the stack: First, there's *Lee Konitz In Hi-Fi*, an early audiophile recording of the jazz musician from 1957. Through the magic of primitive photographic effects, the cover photo features a shot of bespectacled saxophonist **LEE KONITZ** peering out from inside a vintage vacuum tube of the sort that powered hi-fi equipment. The music is sophisticated and contemporary, even by today's standards, with some beautiful and very futuristic guitar playing by Billy Bauer. Then, the pièce de resistance: **JOE HARRIOTT DOUBLE QUINTET's Indo Jazz Suite**, a trailblazing 1966 mind-meld that joins a '50s cool jazz quintet with a group of Bombay-cocktail-lounge Indian musicians furiously pinching away at sitars, tapping on tablas, and droning on tambouras. *Indo Jazz Suite* is the best of all worlds: It's interesting enough as a serious jazz experiment, and just cheesy enough to be enjoyable in an Austin Powers/retro kitsch mood. You simply have to hear the thing to comprehend it—the sitars are droning, the piano tinkling, and suddenly, bandleader John Mayer busts out with some seriously wicked electric harpsichord flourishes that would surely make Lurch crack a grin.



1	PAVEMENT	Terror Twilight	Matador
2	MOBY	Play	V2
3	CIBO MATTO	Stereo Type A	Warner Bros.
4	APPLES IN STEREO	Her Wallpaper Reverie	spinART
5	TOM WAITS	Mule Variations	Anti-Epithaph
6	DONNAS	Get Skintight	Lookout!
7	BEN FOLDS FIVE	The Unauthorized Biography Of...	Epic-550
8	CHEMICAL BROTHERS	Surrender	Astralwerks
9	LONDON SUEDE	Head Music	Nude/Columbia-CRG
10	JUNE OF 44	Anahata	Touch And Go
11	OS MUTANTES	Everything Is Possible!: The Best Of...	Luaka Bop-WB
12	FREESTYLERS	We Rock Hard	Freskanova-Mammoth
13	PROLAPSE	Ghosts Of Dead Aeroplanes	Jetset
14	DIDO	No Angel	Arista
15	ART OF NOISE	The Seduction Of Claude Debussy	Universal
16	ATARI TEENAGE RIOT	60 Second Wipeout	DHR/Elektra-EEG
17	ATOMIC FIREBALLS	Torch This Place	Lava-Atlantic
18	BEVIS FROND	Vavona Burr	Flydaddy
19	ORBITAL	The Middle Of Nowhere	London
20	SPAIN	She Haunts My Dreams	Restless
21	JAMIROQUAI	Synkronized	WORK
22	TORTOISE & THE EX	In The Fishtank	Konkurrent-Touch And Go
23	BLINK 182	Enema Of The State	MCA
24	ME FIRST & THE GIMME GIMMES	Are A Drag	Fat Wreck Chords
25	KULA SHAKER	Peasants, Pigs And Astronauts	Columbia-CRG
26	UNDERWORLD	Beaucoup Fish	V2
27	FROGPOND	Safe Ride Home	C2/Columbia-CRG
28	RACHEL'S	Selenography	Touch And Go
29	FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE	Utopia Parkway	Atlantic
30	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Return Of The Grievous Angel	Alrno Sounds
31	TO ROCOCO ROT	The Amateur View	Mute
32	ORANGE 9MM	Pretend I'm Human	Ng
33	FLAMING LIPS	The Soft Bulletin	Warner Bros.
34	SOUNDTRACK	Austin Powers: The Spy Who...	Maverick
35	LUSCIOUS JACKSON	4 Tracks From Electric Honey (EP)	Grand Royal-Capitol
36	MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?	EEVIAC: Operational Index...	Touch And Go
37	GUS GUS	(This Is Normal	4AD-WB
38	MANIC STREET PREACHERS	This Is My Truth Tell Me Yours	Virgin
39	ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN	What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?	London
40	JOAN OF ARC	Live In Chicago, 1999	Jade Tree
41	LEN	You Can't Stop The Burn Rush	WORK
42	CAPTAIN BEEFHEART & HIS MAGIC BAND	Grow Fins	Revenant
43	PENNYWISE	Straight Ahead	Epitaph
44	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Where Is My Mind? — A Tribute To The Pixies	Glue Factory
45	ADD N TO (X)	Avant Hard	Mute
46	RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS	Californication	Warner Bros.
47	DJ RAP	Learning Curve	Higher Ground/Columbia-CRG
48	FUGAZI	Instrument	Dischord
49	ANI DIFRANCO/UTAH PHILLIPS	Fellow Workers	Righteous Babe
50	MENDOZA LINE	I Like You When You're Not Around	Kindercore
51	MINISTRY	Dark Side Of The Spoon	Warner Bros.
52	KATHARINE WHALEN	Katharine Whalen's Jazz Squad	Mammoth
53	BANCO DE GAIA	The Magical Sounds Of Banco De Gaia	Six Degrees
54	OLD 97'S	Fight Songs	Elektra-EEG
55	VERBENA	Into The Pink	Capitol
56	KID LOCO	Prelude To A Grand Love Story	Atlantic
57	BOOM BOOM SATELLITES	Out Loud	Epic
58	PIZZICATO FIVE	Playboy & Playgirl!	Matador
59	CHEVELLE	Point #1	Squint
60	LIMP BIZKIT	Significant Other	Interscope
61	GO-BETWEENS	Bellavista Terrace: Best Of The Go-Betweens	Beggars Banquet
62	CRANBERRIES	Bury The Hatchet	Island
63	MOGWAI	Come On Die Young	Matador
64	MUFFS	Alert Today Alive Tomorrow	Honest Don's
65	SISSY BAR	Songs For Peeps	Mootron
66	FANTASTIC PLASTIC MACHINE	Luxury	Emperor Norton
67	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Shanti Project Collection	Badman
68	PUSH STARS	After The Party	Capitol
69	U.S. MAPLE	Talker	Drag City
70	KISSING BOOK	Lines And Color	Magic Marker
71	LABRADFORD	E Luxo So	Kranky
72	SHOOTYZ GROOVE	High Definition	Reprise
73	ANGRY SALAD	Angry Salad	Blackbird-Atlantic
74	BETH ORTON	Central Reservation	deConstruction-Arista
75	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Bleeker Street: Greenwich Village In The '60s	Astor Place



### #1 PAVEMENT Terror Twilight

### FIVE YEARS AGO

#### 1. BEASTIE BOYS

ILL COMMUNICATION (GRAND ROYAL-CAPITOL)

#### 2. LUSH

SPLIT (4AD-ELEKTRA)

#### 3. HELMET

BETTY (INTERSCOPE)

#### 4. VELOCITY GIRL

SIMPATICO! (SUB POP)

#### 5. REVEREND HORTON HEAT

LIQUOR IN THE FRONT (INTERSCOPE)

### TEN YEARS AGO

#### 1. BOB MOULD

WORKBOOK (VIRGIN)

#### 2. LOVE AND ROCKETS

LOVE AND ROCKETS (BEGGARS BANQUET-RCA)

#### 3. PIXIES

DOOLITTLE (4AD-ELEKTRA)

#### 4. THE CURE

DISINTEGRATION (ELEKTRA)

#### 5. PUBLIC IMAGE LTD.

9 (VIRGIN)

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.



# FULL STREAM AHEAD

THE BEST MUSIC YOU CAN  
HEAR ISN'T ON YOUR RADIO,  
IT'S ON THE INTERNET.



**STORY:**  
**RICHARD MARTIN**

Call it a coincidence or call it cause-and-effect: At the same time that Internet radio blazes forward, traditional radio stations are losing young listeners at an alarming rate. Reports indicate that those 25 and under are bored with the shrinking options on their FM dials, and that they're looking for an alternative way to listen to and find out about new music. Enter the Internet. In the last year, technological advances have made listening to radio on the World Wide Web an experience that rivals traditional radio, and which surpasses it in terms of choice.

A computer user can now access thousands of local stations that have gone international by simulcasting on the Internet, as well as many others that appear exclusively online. With this increase in the number of stations comes a virtual explosion of programming choices; folks bored with their hometown's modern-rock station can now click on a site that caters to their musical whims—be they goth, punk, indie-rock, hip-hop or drum 'n' bass. (See sidebar on p. 83.) Does this

mean that you should toss out your tuner and yank out your car stereo? Not yet. But it does suggest that technology is kicking the music industry in the ass, and that the logical extension of the digital download/MP3 craze is a radio revolution.

"Everything has changed in the media because of the Internet," says Ken Freedman, station manager of New Jersey freeform station WFMU, which went online in 1997. "Now it's radio's turn."

Other would-be visionaries have looked past radio to predict that we'll soon be watching TV or movies on the Web, but the technology isn't widely available yet. Unless you've got a T-1 line or cable modem and other high-tech toys, the experience of viewing even a 30-second video clip is choppy at best, and usually about as satisfying as staring at a bug zapper. Radio, however, is already viable, not to mention potentially exhilarating. Because so many stations in local markets are owned by monstrous media conglomerates like CBS and Entercom, traditional stations face a

*(Continued on page 82)*



## ALL THE LITTLE ANIMALS

(Lions Gate)

Christian Bale continues to choose diverse, interesting roles. And you probably know that he stars in the upcoming *American Psycho*. (Ooh, controversial!) Lost in the *Psycho* hubbub, though, is Bale's strong performance in *All The Little Animals*, one of those small movies that deserve attention. Having never fully recovered from a childhood car accident, Bobby (Bale) is a 24-year-old man with a boy's mind. Bobby's sinister stepmonster Dad, dubbed "The Fat" (Daniel Benzali, the baldy from *Murder One*), threatens to institutionalize him. So Bobby flees his family's suburban London home and eventually meets Mr. Summers (John Hurt), an oddly appealing nomad who takes it upon himself to bury—you're reading this correctly—road kill. Like Bobby, Summers is escaping an awful past. There's certainly plenty to admire, including the better-than-*National Geographic* shots of wildlife and classic good-vs.-evil plotting. The treat here is to watch the trio of actors. Bale, in particular, shows his stuff. In a difficult role, Bale has to, for instance, bang his head and fists on the ground and make baby talk with a mouse without looking ridiculous. He manages to do so with quiet dignity.

>>> John Elsasser

## BANDITS

(Stratosphere Entertainment)

Once in a blue moon, a movie with a cheesy title, relatively unknown actors, a farfetched story line, and subtitles comes along, is way better than you expect, and reminds you that you can't always judge a book by its cover. This lunar cycle's rewarding risk is *Bandits*, a German film about four girls in prison who just wanna rock. The Bandits—Emma, Luna, Angel, and Marie—get invited to play the Policeman's Ball, which provides a chance to escape. While hiding out before fleeing the country, the girls indulge in the things they were denied in jail like men and booze, becoming friends along the way. Their fugitive status also turns them into Germany's next big thing—not too handy when you're wanted. Directed by Katja von Garnier, it's equal parts chick flick and edgy music video. While the dialogue is touching and realistic, the girls look like they walked off the pages of a magazine instead of out of a jail cell. The soundtrack is also a worthwhile investment with its early Bangles feel and Jasmin Tabatabai's Kim Deal-style vocals.

>>> Carrie Bell

## THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT

(Miramax)

Disco fever lives in *That's The Way I Like It*, a hollow, hoked-up comedy set in 1977 Singapore. This low budget, English language film finds an underachieving grocery clerk named Hock yearning to win a disco dance contest. With the \$5,000 prize money, he'd buy that motorbike he longs for. In addition to annoying covers of chestnuts like "Rock The Boat" and "Kung Fu Fighting"—songs that may have provided grins among hipsters in, say, 1994—there's a nagging familiarity to the story line. Hock's stern parents prefer his younger brother, a medical student, to him. Hock's childhood gal-pal has an obvious crush on him, but he's oblivious to her affections. He's busy pursuing a hot dancing queen, who just so happens to have a rich, bullying boyfriend out to degrade Hock. Need we continue? Writer/director Glen Goei, a Singapore native, aspires to reveal the impact that Western influences—in this case, disco—had on traditional Asian culture in the 1970s. While that's a worthy premise, Goei's semi-autobiographical tale is hamstrung by obvious plotting and cardboard characters who couldn't even get a guest shot on *That '70s Show*.

>>> John Elsasser

## WHITEBOYS

(Fox Searchlight Pictures)



**F**lip thinks he knows how to be a rap superstar. Taking cues from music videos, the recent high school graduate imitates his idols by drinking 40 ounces of malt liquor and smoking Philly blunts, among other stereotypes. Oh, did I mention that Flip (performance artist Danny Hoch) is white and from a farming community? *Whiteboys*, based on Hoch's one-man show "Jails, Hospitals And Hip Hop," takes a humorously observant look at rap's influence on America's youth. Flip truly believes that he's black on the inside. "Even though I live in Iowa, the ghetto is in my heart," he says. In another scene, he chastises one of his equally clueless, uh, homeys. "You wouldn't last a minute in Compton, fool." Never mind that he's never even been there. "Yeah, but I know what it's like." Highlights include scenes in which Flip raps ("I got so much juice/You could call me Bruce Willis") and dream video sequences where he stars alongside Snoop Dogg, Fat Joe and Dead Prez. Eventually, reality bites when Flip, whose dorky street credibility puts him in a league with Vanilla Ice, Jar Jar Binks and Al Roker, visits an actual Chicago housing project. Although several recent movies, including *Go* and *10 Things I Hate About You*, have addressed the white-guy-who-thinks-he's-black theme, Hoch is able to—as Flip would say—"keep it real" by providing a consistent comic spark.

>>> John Elsasser



## LITTLE LABELS, BIG SOUNDS

By Rick Kennedy and Randy McNutt  
(Indiana University Press)

With all the hubbub these days about the explosion of home studios and vanity record labels, you might think this trend is some sort of revolution. But since the arrival of vinyl a century ago there have been shoestring-budget studios and tiny labels owned by "record hustlers." Both are the subject of *Little Labels, Big Sound*, a tip-of-the-hat survey of early independent record labels. The book examines the history of labels such as Ace, King, Dial, and Delmark, providing snapshots of the early workings of the record industry. In this sense, it could be seen as a companion piece to Nick Tosches's *Unsung Heroes Of Rock And Roll*, were the writing here more inspired. But it's not. Facts are presented dryly, one by one, hardly doing justice to the related music. It is, however, a fantastic reference guide if you're a jazz and R&B aficionado, though that seems to be the writers' only concern: The chapter on Dial devotes deserving pages to Charlie Parker but, frustratingly, barely touches on the phenomenal 20th century classical music the label released (they don't even mention John Cage). Nitpicky, sure, but histories are supposed to be nitpicky.

>>>Randall Roberts

## THE HEART OF ROCK & SOUL: THE 1,001 GREATEST SINGLES EVER MADE

By Dave Marsh  
(Da Capo Press) — 2nd edition

When Dave Marsh's favorite-singles tome first appeared in 1989, the hubris of the project was almost palpable. Sure, Marsh is as acclaimed as a critic gets, but baby boomers were coming off a decade of nostalgia, and *Rolling Stone* had just canonized 100 singles in 1988. Now that our generation's own attempt at guitar-rock domination has failed, Marsh's ode to the 45 takes on a newfound wistfulness. He confessed then and reemphasizes now that not only is his list personal—unlike the recent glut of supposedly authoritative 100-best lists—but also that it shouldn't be read as a list at all: "You could probably reverse the order of the first 250 songs here, and I wouldn't have much objection." He's after the story of rock as told through its songs, a worthy aim. This reprint enhances the original only with a new preface, but that preface goes a long way toward humanizing the list. Plus, he offers a list of 101 '90s singles, and they're smart, if predictable, choices. The reasons to plunge into this book, besides Marsh's fine writing, are its occasional quirky picks and its credible doctrine that the single, not just the song, is rock's true artistic statement.

>>>Chris Molanphy

## THE STARS DON'T STAND STILL IN THE SKY: MUSIC AND MYTH

Eds. Karen Kelly and Evelyn McDonnell  
(New York University Press)

Based on a conference held at New York's Dia Center of the Arts in 1996 on music and myth-making, this compelling volume collects essays from a wide range of commentators, journalists, and musicians: people like Bikini Kill's Kathleen Hanna, Paul D. Miller (a.k.a. DJ Spooky), Simon Reynolds, Paul Gilroy and others. The questions raised here go the heart of debates about popular music and the way it either gets turned into frozen monuments or disappears from the historical record forever. In her preface to the book, Ann Powers, former *Village Voice* senior music editor and current *New York Times* music writer, explains the importance of sustained dialogue about rock and pop at a moment when music criticism exists in two warring camps: the puff piece unhinged from any polemical content or the needless, bitter trashing handed out by mean-spirited critics. Anyone interested in taking music—and music criticism—seriously, while enjoying it at the same time, will find this a worthwhile read.

>>>Tim Haslett

## A CHANGE IS GONNA COME: MUSIC, RACE & THE SOUL OF AMERICA

By Craig Werner

(Plume)



**L**ike the excellent Civil Rights documentary, *Eyes On The Prize*, Craig Werner's smartly written account of music and race entertains and provokes as much as it informs. Werner, a professor of Afro-American studies, knows his Chuck D as well as his Malcom X, and writes with the passion of a music fan and the insight of a historian with an uncanny, street-wise perspective. Beginning with Mahalia Jackson's performance at the same Washington, DC, gathering where MLK gave his "I have a dream" speech, Werner follows the path of race and socially-relevant music through the years, fleshing out his historical accounts with well-researched quotes from those who were there. By drawing parallels between Duke Ellington and Prince, Berry Gordy and Suge Knight, Werner shows off his ability to write compelling text simply by putting things in context. When Werner writes: "In 1979, the South Bronx, the most destitute corner of Babylon, looked like ground zero," he's setting you up for the inevitable hip-hop explosion that burned long into the Reagan years, which Werner calls "the worst period in racial relations since the 1890s." The way Werner ties together so many different styles of soul music (even Springsteen gets a shout-out here) and cultural twists and turns makes his book a fitting answer next time someone asks you "what's goin' on?"

>>> Steve Ciabattoni



## HOLY ARCHETYPE!: ALAN MOORE'S LITERARY COMICS

No. 1 of a GRAND NEW PICTURE PAPER



Vol. 1 No. 1 of 6 | MAR \$2.95 \$4.70 CAN

by ALAN MOORE & KEVIN O'NEILL

Published for the proprietors by America's Best Comics



**A**lan Moore revolutionized comics writing in the '80s with *Watchmen* and *V For Vendetta*, giving comics a literary sensibility that developed symbol-systems and subtextual themes through images as much as through words. And though he's spent the better part of the '90s starting projects that were never finished for one reason or another (and completing one more classic, *From Hell*), he's finally got something he can sink his teeth into—an entire line of his own, America's Best Comics. After almost a year of rumors and anticipation, the first ABC titles have finally been rolled out, and they're wonderful. **THE LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN** is a marvelous "steampunk" twist on the idea of the superhero team—Moore's group is made up of heroes of classic Victorian fiction (Captain Nemo, Dr. Jekyll, Auguste Dupin, and so on), along with one Wilhelmina Murray, whose name will be familiar to close readers of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, and the mysterious "M," who seems very likely to be Sherlock Holmes's brother Mycroft. The stories are packed with allusions to 19th-century literature, and though it's not set in the 1898 we know—Edison and Tesla's electrical innovations have already transformed the British Empire—the stories' obsessions with "foreigners," opium, and the assaulted virtue of ladies are very Victorian, complemented by Kevin O'Neill's woodcut-inspired illustration. **TOM STRONG**, drawn by Moore's old *Supreme* collaborators Chris Sprouse and Al Gordon, is another clever twist on a couple of familiar archetypes, in this case Tarzan (the Anglo guy of noble birth raised in the wild) and the "science heroes" of pulp fiction who could think their way out of any jam with the help of their ingenious inventions. The coolness factor is very high: The stories are set in "Millennium City," whose dazzling towers, in Moore's alternate history, were designed by legendary architect Winsor McKay (in our world, he was not an architect but the cartoonist of "Little Nemo In Slumberland"). Tom Strong is abetted by his daughter Tesla (there's that Croatian inventor's name again!), talking gorilla King Solomon and the 1920s-vintage robot Pneuman. And Moore's plotting is spot-on, tight and more-or-less science-based, taking after '50s kids' adventure comics. The best of the ABC line so far, though, is **PROMETHEA**, which, rather than drawing on familiar archetypes, concerns the idea of archetypes themselves—its tag-line adapts Voltaire's quip about God into "if she did not exist, we would have to invent her." *Promethea* is a fifth-century Egyptian woman who became a "living story," and she's brought into the real world through a human host when people create art about her. This is pretty head-spinning in itself, but the story is really driven by its setting of an alternate world's 1999 New York City—with police flying saucers, a wildly popular surrealist comic book called *Weeping Gorilla*, and "science heroes" on patrol—and by J.H. Williams and Mick Gray's superbly chaotic artwork, which makes the scenery look both plebeian and futuristically alien.

"No comics anthology has ever really sold well—they tend to be more influential than successful," editor Robert Boyd confesses in the first issue of **MONA** (Kitchen Sink Comix), his new entry into that field. *Heavy Metal* notwithstanding, he's basically right as far as the American comics world is concerned, but the anthology format is hugely important in the history of art comics. A fat hundred-page newsprint item, *Mona* includes long, solid stories by a handful of rising stars, as well as a lovely cover by *Love & Rockets*' Jaime Hernandez and three 25-year-old pages by scene forefather Harvey Kurtzman. The biggest name attraction is probably Tom Hart, who's returned to the style (and protagonist) of *Hutch Owen's Working Hard* for "Hutch Owen: Emerging Markets," a long, heavy-handed but very funny piece of satire attacking big soda companies' tasteless marketing campaigns. Italian cartoonist Lorenzo Mattotti's nearly wordless "The Thinker's Secret" has an ailment common to European art comics—the pen-and-ink work is exquisite and fluid, but it makes no sense at all. His American counterpart, Matthew Guest, contributes a loose 30-page piece called "I Sold My Soul To Satan," centered on his teenage experience working at a Texas hot dog stand and having to wear a stinking corn dog costume. His cross-hatched caricatures get more and more grotesque with each scene, and twice the piece gets so intense that it cuts to a full-page abstraction of crossing lines blurring into a black mass. Best of all, though, is Brad Johnson's three-pager. Johnson may be best known to *New Music Monthly* readers as the guitarist of Virginia Dare, but his "King Bee" is a sick, hilarious look at the culture of the hive as bee-government conspiracy theory.

NMM



## CLICK AND MOAN: GRIPING ON THE NET



**W**hen you've got a complaint, you don't just want to tell a friend—you want the whole wide world to know about it. The Web includes hundreds of places where you can vent to anybody with a browser.

The biggest and most engrossing complaint set on the Web seems to be the **Dick List** at **Disgruntled Housewife** ([www.disgruntledhousewife.com](http://www.disgruntledhousewife.com)), a terrifyingly huge set of documents by women complaining at length about the men that have treated them badly, from childhood onward, and naming names (at least first names, and last initials, and locations). *Thousands* of names. The list includes, for instance, 12 Dougs and Douglases ("I was pacified on Prozac when I married the little sexless twerp. Beware to all who follow me and don't forget that he is guilty of whatever he accuses you of, and he will accuse you of everything. My only regret is that I didn't sleep with his brother and friends before I kicked his happy, warty little ass out"), 23 Scotts ("Talked me into dropping out of college and going to live with him in South Carolina. A week after I got there, he dumped me in a motel in the warehouse section of town and left me with no money. I was eighteen and pregnant, and my parents had cut me off"), and 35 Roberts ("Sleeveless black T-shirts of long-dead computer games are his idea of a fashion statement"). It's worth mentioning that there are a few sites of men's complaints about women, but none of them are anywhere near as extensive. Whew.

In a much less painful vein, there's **Bitter Waitress** ([www.bitterwaitress.com](http://www.bitterwaitress.com)), a site for food-industry workers to complain about their most annoying customers. There are categories for cheapskate celebrities, horrid non-famous diners and dreadful restaurateurs. It's been in an unfinished state for months, but the word is that it'll soon be open for business—if you want to find out what Madonna did at Babbo, this is the place to look.

From the same people who invented [www.fray.com](http://www.fray.com), **KVETCH!** ([www.kvetch.com](http://www.kvetch.com)) is a never-ending litany of complaints about... well, everything. It's divided into kvetchlet categories for unhappiness of all sorts, from the obvious (love, work) to the less obvious (driving, family, "everyone"). The scariest category is "yourself," broadcasting self-loathing that's sometimes well-merited: "I like to punch people, and I whine and scream too much. People think I'm an airhead, when really I would give anything to erase who I am and start all over." You can also set Kvetch! up as a tiny little console that you can hit for a new complaint any time you like. Naturally, you can submit your own complaints, though it's wisest to keep them short—if you want to go on at length, well, there's always GeoCities.

Surprisingly, **YOUR FAVORITE BAND SUCKS** ([www.paradise-serve.com/gb/book.cgi?who=bandsux](http://www.paradise-serve.com/gb/book.cgi?who=bandsux)) doesn't have all that much traffic—it's an open forum devoted to denouncing people's least favorite bands, but most of it has deteriorated into low-key grumbling ("fucking Shawn Mullins—not only does he suck but he looks like a bleached, drowned rat... he doesn't even sing, he mumbles..."). For real anti-band vitriol, you have to go to sites devoted to particular bands—there are at least half a dozen devoted to Oasis alone. Try the **ANTI-OASIS PAGE** ([www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Amphitheatre/1560/](http://www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Amphitheatre/1560/)), which includes an animated "Oasis soap"—pictures of Liam and Noel with captions of them talking about how awful they are. The best part of it, though, is the proprietor's guest book, which has hundreds of indignant comments by Oasis fans that have stumbled on the site by accident: "You are clearly a dick head who knows nothing about music. They are the best thing since the Beatles. Show a little respect you wanker. Noel is god. Even though they are not getting much critique acclaim i am still a devoted fan and will be till the day i die, now piss off." (sic.)

No matter how innocuous something is, of course, there's somebody who's got a complaint about it. The **Anti-Tomato Web Site** ([www.antitomato.com](http://www.antitomato.com)) is exactly what it sounds like—extensive discourse about why tomatoes are the worst food ever. The page of letters from fellow tomato-haters is pretty startling: "I will not even touch the ketchup bottle. I could never be a waitress due to the fact that I would have to touch food with ketchup... My boyfriend is a ketchup lover. I can't even kiss him after that disgusting substance has entered his body. Thorough brushing and flossing must take place before I will consider even getting within ten feet of him." In fact, the anti-tomato movement has spawned a splinter group, **Ketchup Is Philosophically Unsound** ([users.aol.com/delemos/ketchup.htm](http://users.aol.com/delemos/ketchup.htm)). You can't please anyone, evidently.

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# HIPTRONIC STYLIN'

STYLING: MICHELLE ZACKS PHOTOS: DENNIS KLEIMAN HAIR & MAKEUP: STACY SONG FOR CAMERON MANAGEMENT

Old school hip-hop looks are comin' back, but with a '90s flair: updated versions of head-to-toe logo tracksuits, Kangol hats, Cazelle-style glasses and flashy gold accessories. The Jungle Sky crew—which brings old school hip-hop styles and new school electronic beats together under one roof—models these eternally funky threads.

**Ghettoblaster:** I-Cue wears a black, red and gold Trefall tracksuit by ADIDAS (jacket, \$65; pants, \$45, sold separately), a matching ADIDAS T-shirt (\$22), black and white PUMA Grand Prix shell-toes (\$60) and DOUBLESIDE's oversized glasses (\$120).

Catch I-Cue's new double vinyl album *Ingenious Creations & Unique Experiments* (Home Entertainment-Liquid Sky) and check his "hip-step," sound which blends hip-hop beats with New York-style drum 'n' bass.





Break it down: del Mar gets jiggy in PUMA's blue-and-white tracksuit (jacket, \$52; pants, \$35, sold separately) with matching GV Special sneakers (\$60), and KANGOL's fuzzy white hat (\$42).

DJ and producer del Mar, a.k.a. the River Of Action, can be heard on the recent Liquid Sky compilation CD, *Funk: This Is Jungle Sky Vol. 6*, as well as live at weekly NYC parties *Konkrete Jungle* and *Abstrakt*.

New styles: DJ Soul Slinger updates PUMA's "China Red" Agile II track pants (\$35) by wearing them under blue shorts (\$30) and adding his own LIQUID SKY T-shirt (\$25).

Soul Slinger is the founder of NYC's Jungle Sky Records and Liquid Sky store, and the designer behind both companies' logos and merchandise. He's currently working on a track with Afrika Bambaataa, to follow up the track they collaborated on for *Funk: This Is Jungle Sky Vol. 6*. His latest CD is *Upload: A Continuous Mix*.



For information on Adidas, call 1-800-448-1796; Puma, call 1-800-662-PUMA; Kangol, call 1-800-431-1802; Doubledown, call 212-941-0261.





## INTERNET RADIO (continued from page 75)

reliance on the bottom line that prohibits DJs and music directors from taking chances. For the moment at least, making money isn't the primary goal of most Internet enterprises; as sites vie for traffic, they're more likely to be adventurous. In the case of Internet radio, this has spawned a wealth of music sites that don't need to play 25 hits and a bunch of commercials. Here, DJs are free to experiment with playlists.

It's the type of radio that many had thought was a thing of the past, yet as the quality and accessibility of Internet radio progresses, music fans have responded. Already, 20 percent of traditional radio listeners have tuned in to check out what's available online, according to the ratings company Arbitron. Even users with a 28.8 modem and a basic computer set-up can download software such as the RealPlayer or Microsoft Windows Media 4.0 and listen to streamed broadcasts, live or taped, from a continually blossoming field of stations. Some are online versions of local stations, like WFMU or San Francisco's commercial alternative KFOG; some are Internet-only broadcasters like Spinner.com; and some, like the one-man operation Invisible Radio, offer today's digital version of pirate radio. They all share one quality: If you're willing to listen from your computer, or at least with a computer hooked to your stereo, these stations usually sound as clear as what you'd hear in your car.

"We've made dramatic changes," says Gary Schare, lead product manager for Windows Media at Microsoft. "Prior to the release of Windows Media 4.0, which has only been out a few months, the audio quality you could get to your PC over a modem connection was really AM-style radio. Now, we're able to deliver FM stereo over those same connections."

### How Do I Get Started?

To become an online radio listener, don't touch that dial! Instead, log on to the Internet and point your Web browser to a site like Broadcast.com or even to our own CMJ.com. Here, you can link directly to hundreds of stations, or if you don't already have a player installed, link to Real Networks or Microsoft to download one for free. The player will appear in a window on your screen when you click on a station's "listen" button, and you may hear a brief advertisement before the streaming begins, but then you're free to surf the Web while you listen. Oh yeah: Make sure you have a soundcard in your computer. If you can't play .wav files on your PC, then you can't tune in to Internet radio.



## Where Do I Go Now?

Before you start wandering around in search of stations that suit your tastes, it helps to know a bit about the history of Internet radio—in part because the pioneers aren't necessarily the best.

NetRadio.com, which went live in 1996, now offers 120 channels spanning all sorts of music, from alternative rock to Delta blues. Like most of the early success stories of the Internet, the site was bought out (by the record distribution company Navarre) and subsequently became increasingly commercial, selling CDs alongside its virtual radio dial. MTV parent Viacom gobbled up Imagine Radio, which was also among the first to spin records online. And Spinner.com, the second Internet-only site, in June became part of America Online as part of a \$400 million deal involving two other companies.

Such massive deals don't necessarily alter the programming philosophy. At San Francisco-based Spinner.com, DJs known as czars and czarinas program songs, sometimes with the help of consultants, for 120 genre-specific formats, from post-riot grrrl to all-goth to deep house. This, according to programming director Jim Van Huysse, allows Spinner.com to direct pinpointed playlists to demanding listeners. "There's a lot of people who have a passion solely for ska or dance music, but they can't get what they want [on the radio]," he says.

In part because of the response to Internet-only music broadcasters like Spinner.com, many traditional radio stations have jumped online in the past year, providing listeners with a dazzling selection that makes the FM dial look barren in comparison. WFMU, which beat much of the pack by launching its live Internet broadcast in '97, has staked out a spot as one of the Internet's favorite sites for off-the-wall, freeform programming. During the past couple of years, the station has drawn audiences from all over the world—Freedman says one listener, an Israeli soldier, sent an appreciative email from a foxhole in Lebanon. "A station like ours has translated well because we're a niche," he explains.

Because the technology on both sides has become more user-friendly, individuals with a basic knowledge of computers and DJing can also become broadcasters—with as much power at their fingertips as the big boys. Mike Vago, a 24-year-old ex-college radio programmer, runs Invisible Radio out of his Manhattan apartment. While he doesn't have the resources to secure ads on portals like Yahoo or Excite—both of which have rejected listing his site on their radio page—he's used his music industry contacts to spearhead attention-grabbing promotions that appeal to the indie-rock crowd he caters to. Invisible received permission to broadcast Pavement's *Terror Twilight* in its entirety a week before it hit record store shelves (or Amazon.com and CDNow), and guests such as Two Dollar Guitar have played his living room for live broadcasts. Like the quickly proliferating hip-hop and electronic music Internet radio sites, Invisible aims for a "tighter format and more professional sound than college radio and a more indie format than commercial radio," according to Vega.

## The Future Sound Of The Internet

The primary and possibly insurmountable obstacle for Internet radio is what's known in the biz as "portability." With 40 percent of the population wired to receive Internet access, only a small percentage of those users take advantage of this wealth of choices, mostly while sitting at their work computers. The technology exists for users to link their PCs to their home stereo, but it's still somewhat complicated and expensive. The preferable way to tune in to a radio station is in the car or on the run, thus for Internet radio to become seriously amped, an affordable and portable alternative needs to be developed.

WFMU's Freedman is skeptical. "If you look at how crappy the cell phone connections are," he notes, "I don't think wireless Internet access is going to work all that great."

But others, such as Microsoft's Gary Schare, are confident that it will happen eventually. "To get a sustained Internet connection to a car going 60 miles per hour is something that will happen," he asserts. "I just can't predict when."

Both Freedman and Schare, as well as everyone else involved in Internet radio, say that the more immediate improvement to look forward to is the introduction of broadband connections, which will ratchet up sound quality and make maneuvering the Internet smoother than TV channel surfing. This will provide listeners with a staggering variety of radio options, and present programmers with daunting challenges.

"We're in for a huge overhaul in radio [over] the next five or ten years," Freedman quips. Then, reciting the Internet mantra about all things futuristic, he adds: "I'm excited about it."

## RECOMMENDED RADIO.COM

"We play the music that you wanna hear!" How many times have you encountered this declaration from a slick on-air DJ, only to get bombarded with shallow alterna-dreck or worn-out classic rock songs? Most serious music fans can't even pinpoint a favorite station anymore, as the repetitive and unimaginative nature of the current soundscape leaves such listeners with only the occasional tolerable one.

But on the Internet, thousands of new stations have bloomed, and some of the best from the traditional world have made the jump online, leading to a virtual supermarket of new radio. All you'll need to get started is a couple of downloads: the RealPlayer G2 from Real Networks ([www.real.com](http://www.real.com)) and the Microsoft Windows Media Player 4.0 ([www.microsoft.com](http://www.microsoft.com)). (You'll also need a soundcard for your computer, and some headphones or speakers.) Next, you'll want to find a station that suits your taste. It's probably best to start at Broadcast.com. Here, you'll find links to hundreds of traditional stations from around the country, arranged by genre, location or call letters. To skip ahead to more alternative and underground stations, check out the links at our own CMJ.com.

Below are ten of the most exciting Internet radio spots, with imaginative, knowledgeable DJs spinning music you won't find anywhere else.

### WHO: WFMU

What: The granddaddy of all freeform stations  
Where: Jersey City, NJ; online at [www.wfmuo.org](http://www.wfmuo.org)  
When: Streaming live 24 hours

Sample playlist: Sebadoh, Dead C, Butthole Surfers, Alastair Galbraith, Donovan, Caetano Veloso (from the early Saturday morning show *Inflatable Squirrel Carcass*).

What else?: Station Manager Ken Freedman warns that anything goes at WFMU, which means that great music can sometimes yield to unlistenable noise. "If you're not mentally ill, you have to turn it off sometimes," he says.

### WHO: RADIO NOVA

What: Freeform radio with an emphasis on classic soul, hip-hop, and new electronic music  
Where: Paris, France; online at [www.planetnova.com](http://www.planetnova.com)  
When: Streaming live 24 hours

Sample playlist: Gang Starr, GusGus, Big Red, Alex Gopher, De La Soul, MC Solaar, Air

What else?: The between-song samples and dialogue, in French and English, is worth the trip alone, and the DJing is masterful at all times.

### WHO: KCRW

What: A NPR station known for its taste-making program *Morning Becomes Eclectic*  
Where: Santa Monica, CA; online at [www.kcrw.org](http://www.kcrw.org)  
When: Streaming live 24 hours

Sample playlist: Cibo Matto, Kula Shaker, Badmarsh & Shri, Mercury Rev, Moby (from *Morning Becomes Eclectic*)

What else?: Hosted by Nic Harcourt, *Morning Becomes Eclectic* airs from 9 a.m.-noon PST each weekday.

### WHO: GROOVETECH

What: An Internet-only spot for underground electronica  
Where: Seattle; online at [www.groovetech.com](http://www.groovetech.com)  
When: Streaming live and taped shows

Sample playlist: CJ Bolland, Paul Oakenfold, Fatboy Slim (from taped show archive)

What else?: This site offers live DJ sets as well as archives of entire sets from Seattle clubs, plus links to international electronic music sites.

### WHO: SPINNER.COM

What: An Internet-only site with 120 specific channels  
Where: San Francisco; online at [www.spinner.com](http://www.spinner.com)  
When: Streaming live 24 hours

Sample playlist: Varies widely, with alt-'80s (the Feelies), alt-'90s (Built To Spill), modern girl rock (Sleater-Kinney), indie-rock (Bettie Serveert), and many other genres.

What else?: Spinner.com Director of Content Jim Van Huysse says this type of station is the future. "Radio is kind of a bad word to us," he explains, "given the negative connotation of traditional radio."

### WHO: UNDERGROUND HIP-HOP

What: An Internet-only source for up-and-coming hip-hop  
Where: Boston; online at [www.undergroundhiphop.com](http://www.undergroundhiphop.com)  
When: Streaming, with archives

Sample playlist: Q-Tip, Beatnuts, Jungle Brothers, Arsonists, Company Flow

### WHO: INVISIBLE RADIO

What: An Internet-only indie-rock site run out of Mike Vago's living room  
Where: New York City; online at [www.invisibleradio.com](http://www.invisibleradio.com)  
When: Archived shows

Sample playlist: Pavement, Modest Mouse, Roots, Ani DiFranco, Helium

### WHO: ROLLING STONE RADIO

What: The magazine's 13-station radio network, through Tunes.com  
Where: Online at [www.tunes.com](http://www.tunes.com), or at [www.rollingstoneradio.com](http://www.rollingstoneradio.com)  
When: Taped shows

Sample playlist: Blur, Chuck Willis, Dandy Warhols, Goldie (from the David Bowie-programmed channel)

### WHO: IMAGINE RADIO

What: A 24-station Internet-only site, with hundreds of user-programmed stations; now owned by Viacom/MTV  
Where: Online at [www.invisibleradio.com](http://www.invisibleradio.com)  
When: Taped shows

Sample playlist: Depth Charge, Massive Attack, Radiohead, Spiritualized (from London channel)

### WHO: KCMU

What: A listener-supported music station with a popular weekly alt-country show, *Swingin' Doors*  
Where: Seattle; online at [www.kcmu.org](http://www.kcmu.org)  
When: Taped shows

Sample playlist: Clodhopper, Tex Ritter, Connie Smith, Big Sandy & His Fly-Rite Boys, Old 97's (from *Swingin' Doors*)



## X-PLANE 5.0

(Laminar Research) Mac/PC



**L**aminar Research's *X-Plane* isn't a game, it's flying, pure and, well, not so simple. It will take you some serious studying and practice, and a few wild crashes, to earn your wings. Accuracy and detail are what makes this sim so much fun (a flight from NY to LA will take you six hours!), yet endlessly challenging. Taking a flight isn't as simple as jamming the throttle and pulling back on the joystick. You will need to think like a real airline pilot: Contact the tower, set your takeoff and destination airports (there are over 6,000 airports spread across the entire globe), and then follow orders from the air traffic controllers. Did you file your flight plan? Set your DME and transponder code? To make it to your destination, you will need (and this is where it gets challenging) to learn all this, plus figure out how to navigate using your plane's instrument panel. If you don't understand shorthand such as HSI, VOR, HDNG, CDI, OBS, GPS and ADF, or know how to turn to 105 vectors, you will learn. Once airborne, you can take advantage of auto-pilot, but watch the weather patterns, and never lose contact with the air traffic controller or you could suffer a mid-air collision. With beautiful 3-D graphics, you can fly nearly any type of aircraft, from vintage fighters to heavy 747s. Plus, *X-Plane* is infinitely customizable. Create planes, landscapes, even 3-D objects. But first just see if you can reach your destination in one piece. >>>Glen Sansone



## PAC-MAN WORLD 20TH ANNIVERSARY

(Namco Hometek) PlayStation

It was only a matter of time before the most popular arcade game of the '80s got a makeover à la Frogger or Pitfall. As the title suggests, it's been two decades since Namco first unleashed that dot-gobbling yellow circle of a man on the world. Still, whenever you play the game's distinct opening theme song, anyone over the age of 25 will get an uncontrollable twitch in their joystick hand and start fishing around for a quarter. It may be a simple premise, but Pac-Man's frenzied maze challenge remains truly addicting. So it's a good thing that the original version of Pac-Man comes bundled with the "new and improved" Pac-Man. The formulaic treatment of Pac-Man Quest Mode, where a 3D-rendered Pac-Man (he even has hands—the blasphemy!) trots around Ghost Island's vast terrain gobbling fruit, solving basic puzzles and blasting cartoonish villains, targets those who grew up playing Super Mario World, not the stand-up arcade classics. Maze Mode recreates the original Pac-Man with a 3D spin, a little closer to what flashback fanatics crave, but it's still not as fun as the real thing. This is the complete family package though, offering engaging game-play for all age groups. And though it makes me feel old to say this, I enjoy baffling my nieces and nephews by opting for the "boring" version when we play. So for all the bells and whistles, I'll take the lo-fi version, thanks. And hey, would it have killed them to throw Ms. Pac-Man on there as well? >>>Sam Cannon

## RAILROAD TYCOON II

(PopTop) Mac/PC

The last few months have seen the emergence of some fantastic world-domination strategy games, and now you can add *Railroad Tycoon II* to the list of titles that are sure to delight would-be megalomaniacs. True to the spirit of the rail industry in the late 1800s to early 1900s, *RTII* involves more than joining cities, arranging train schedules and building accompanying infrastructure. The railroad's early days were filled with more backstabbing than you could shake a golden spike at, and a lot of this activity took place in the white-collared world of the stock market. Buying and selling stocks and bonds are vital to making a profit and outsmarting the competition on *RTII*. Play your cards right in world of finance and you just might get the upper hand on Cornelius Vanderbilt. For those who prefer less micro-management, the "sandbox" mode allows access to many extra tools for landscape and city creation, along with free access to all the trains available. As with all decent strategy games, a multiplayer mode and scenario editor are included so you can play with others or craft your own challenges. One important note: You'll definitely want a higher-end computer to play *RTII* as game-play lag quickly takes hold even after building only a moderate rail network. >>>Aaron Clow

## SPORTS CAR GT

(Electronic Arts) PC

It seems as though the ripples from Sony's ubiquitous *Gran Turismo* have traveled so far throughout the gaming industry that they've affected even the computer gaming platform. While Electronic Arts has—at least temporarily—relinquished the title of "King Driving Simulator of the Consoles" to the aforementioned Sony title, it has distinctly filled the void on the computer gaming scene with *Sports Car GT*. And man, has it filled that void. Not only is every exotic car enthusiast's dream car available (more can be obtained from the EA website), but you have almost endless control over the workings of your car, from gear ratios to brake and weight balance to exhaust equipment choices. You'll probably want to leave the settings alone at first and just get used to the way the car handles, as keeping the car on the track is an achievement in and of itself. *Sports Car GT* is billed as a simulator, after all. Luckily, there are variable assist settings for braking and steering to help you ease into the process. After building your reputation as an expert driver and mechanic, you might even get to look around at the crisply rendered scenery and take notice of the excellent ambient sound while cruising down the track. >>>Aaron Clow



# IN MY LIFE

## THIEVERY CORPORATION

Photo: PAT GRAHAM

Eighteenth Street Lounge isn't just the name of the Washington, DC, record label owned and operated by down-tempo electronic-jazz duo Thievery Corporation. It's also... well, a lounge located on 18th Street in the nation's capital, where club co-owner Eric Hilton met his soon-to-be Thievery partner Rob Garza. The swanky, low-key trip-hop club serves hip DC socialites with a stylish assortment of mellow vibes and retro tunes.

>>>M. Tye Comer

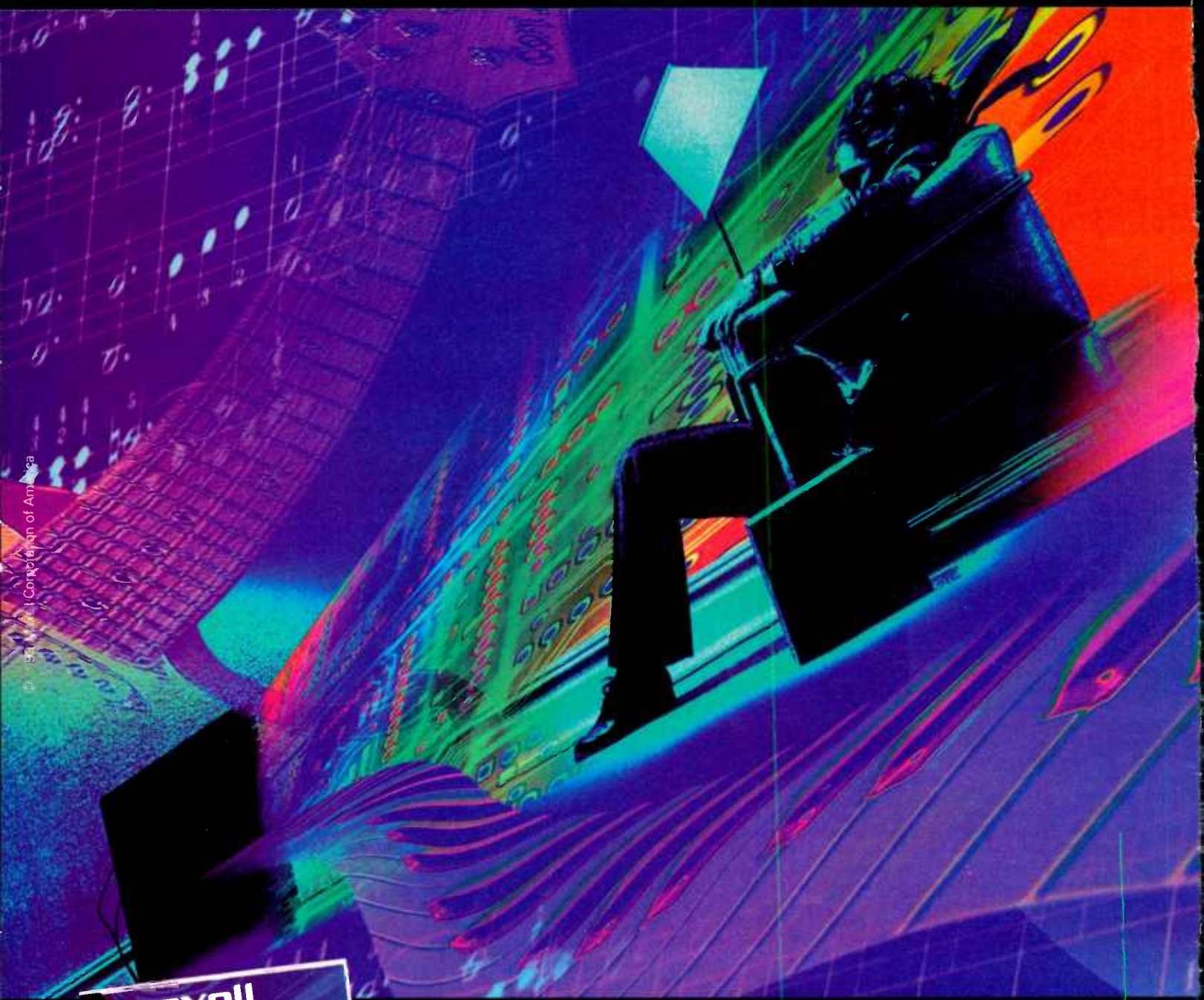


"There's no other clubs in [DC] that play the selection of music that we play. We're really into old bossa nova and '60s jazz soundtrack music, so we'll play a lot of that early in the night, and then later on move into more electronic, sample-based [trip-hop]. There aren't too many people who run clubs who are into what we're into. There's a good vibe here. It's very low key. We don't have ropes outside and all that crap. We don't even have a sign on the door. Unless you know where you're going, you wouldn't know it's there." >>> Eric Hilton



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DRAIN 5TH



AIR



DR. DOP

**16** "Our songs have always been very heavy and melodic, but I think this album takes both elements to the extreme," says guitarist Flavia Camal of the Swedish metal quartet **DRAIN 5TH**. "Like the first album, we also used a few loops and samples here and there, but this time made them a little more prominent in the mix. The combined results made the overall sound that much bigger." "Enter My Mind" is from the band's second domestic release, *Franks Of Nature* (Mercury-Island Def Jam). (See On The Verge, p. 24.)

**17** "Air. There are three letters in it," says Jean Benoît Dunckel, keyboardist for the French duo **AIR**. "The 'A,' in French, [stands for] amour, which means 'love.' And the second letter is 'i,' which is 'imagination,' and the third letter is 'r,' and in French this is 'rêve,' which means dreaming." "Le Soleil Est Pres De Moi" (The Sun Is Close To Me) is from the upcoming domestic release of *Premiers Symptomes* (Astralwerks), a collection of rare tracks and B-sides originally released between 1995 and 1997. (See Reviews, p. 50.)

**18** *Y2K: Beat The Clock* (Columbia) is a compilation featuring electronic miscellany, and centered around the premise that if it's too late to do anything about potentially lethal Y2K problems, we might as well party like it's... well, you know. "Beat The Clock" is **DR. DOP**'s contribution, but the album also hosts tracks from the Propellerheads, Orb, Prodigy, Fatboy Slim, Chemical Brothers and other techno mainstays. (See Quick Fix, p. 14, Aug. issue.)

**19** "The underground scene [in Los Angeles] is very diverse," says **DR. DOP**. "There's a lot of rappers who all have a certain style, and then some gangster stuff, and then I represent the outsiders of the LA underground scene. Blacklove, the Have Nicks, the Out Soul'. I'm cool with everybody. People do a lot of clips' up out here and ego trippin' and rich kids think they're tough 'cause they got access to shit. I represent the opposite of that." "Deep Respect" is from *Nommo Warfare Vol. 1* (PUTS-Blacklove Music). (See cover story, p. 35.)

**1** How does **MOS DEF** keep his unique perspective? "I'm pretty insulated," he says. "I live in a pretty controlled environment in terms of media. I don't play bad music in my house. I refuse to subject myself to certain forms of media. Videos or the five o'clock news—I just stay clear. I try to give myself good data, you know? If you listen to good music, you'll end up making good music. If you hear positive things, you'll end up doing positive things." "Speed Law" is from Mos Def's solo debut, *Black On Both Sides*, due in September on Rawkus. (See cover story, p. 38.)



MOS DEF

**2** "Everybody knows that 2000 is the year when the computers are supposed to crash and the world is gonna go through a 30-day chaos or whatever it's supposed to be. We feel like we been sayin' that the world is screwed up for years," says **SCREWBALL**'s RL, explaining why the Queensbridge crew named its new album *Y2K* (Tommy Boy). "Also, we feel like shit ain't been right for us. It's gonna be the new millennium and instead of us getting the short end of the stick, that's instead gonna be the terror... for us gettin' everything we asked for." "F.A.Y.B.A.N." is the album's first single.



SCREWBALL

**3** "Hip-hop is a part of my history. I feel my musical stance brings a different perspective to an artform that I love and respect," says **TRICKY** of his collaboration with DJ Muggs (Cypress Hill) and producer Grasee (Ruff Ryders, DMM) on his latest album, *Juxtapose* (Island Def Jam), from which "For Real" is taken. "I'm not trying to be a tough guy or a pimp, and I feel that *Juxtapose* can bring a different way of thinking about hip-hop." (See Reviews, p. 63.)



TRICKY

**4** "If you keep sayin' and doing the same thing in the same way, people get bored. And when they get bored they stop listening," says **SKUNK ANANSIE**'s outspoken frontwoman, Siân. "Our songs are still from a Skunk viewpoint lifted from the lives we directly see; we just took a different approach to the way we express ourselves. Hopefully it's much more thought provoking even if it is a bit less obvious." "The Skunk Heads" is from the band's third long-player, *Post Organic* (Chill Virgin). (See feature, p. 26.)

**5** "It sounds so cliché when people say, 'You get up on stage and you can't believe people are singing your songs,'" says **SOUVENIRIST**'s Morgan Romo. "I heard this a million times, I was so tired of hearing it! But musicians who've been on the road for a while, everybody has the same mentality. If you have success, you freak out over it. I can't believe anybody likes us! I can't believe we said a good record! I like our stuff, and I like what we do, but that's just my opinion. You get up on stage and they're screaming for you, and... wow!" "Denial" is from the band's new record, *Name* (TVT). (See feature, p. 34.)

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NATURAL ELEMENTS



PUBLIC ENEMY



BLINKER THE STAR



SNOWOFF

**11** **THE HIGH & MIGHTY** are childhood friends from Philly, MC Mr. Eon and DJ/producer Mighty Mi. "B-Boy Document," taken from the pair's album *Homefield Advantage* (Rawkus), is a reconstruction of a song they originally put out on their previous label, Eastern Conference. "It's old school, rhythmic in the playground, freestyle battle rhymes," says Mighty Mi. *Homefield* features guest appearances by Mos Def, Eminem, Evidence (from Dilated Peoples), Kool Keith, Mad Skillz, and Defari. "It's just underground, non-commercialized music," says Mi. "We rhyme about anything. Sports. Girls. Drugs."

**12** "It's kind of scary to just blow up," says **NATURAL ELEMENTS'** Mr. Voodoo. "Then the immediate pressure is on you to follow up and stay on top of the game, whereas with us, we've developed and came up gradually." Agreeing, bandmate A-Butta says, "It's like being drafted [by the NBA] straight out of high school... whereas Felipe Lopez stayed all four years in college. We've spent our four years. Now we're ready to get drafted. We're going to be prepared when the time comes to go to the All-Star Game." "2 Tons" is from the recently released *Blink Mask* soundtrack (Tommy Boy).

**13** **PUBLIC ENEMY** is back with "Do You Wanna Go Our Way???" which appears on its eighth full-length, *There's A Poison Goin On* (Atomic Pop). "The music is significant," says rap icon Chuck D., "but the record itself is more significant, because of how it's going to come at the public. It's going to come at the public in non-conventional means; it's going to enter the marketplace like shrapnel with the use of software on the Internet. These are bold ventures into a bold new world." (See cover story, p. 38.)

**14** "It's about sex in the last weekend of August," says **BLINKER THE STAR** frontman Jordan Zadorozny about the title to his band's third album, *August Everywhere* (DreamWorks), which includes "Below The Sliding Doors." "Late summer/early fall is my favorite time of year. I love walking around late at night. It lets me enjoy the full experience of the season. I can smell the dying leaves and school starting up. I can smell Sunday night at seven o'clock." (See Quick Fix, p. 13.)

**15** "My mom says I was singing before I talked," says **SNOWOFF** vocalist Chris Emy. "In church, I would always sing. I loved to sing and talk in front of people. When I was a kid, I had a cardboard box that I would stand on, in front of anyone, and preach." Since the Chicago quintet's formation, its members have become virtually inseparable. Guitarist Graham Jordan says, "We do everything together, the band is just part of it. We're brothers." "Falling Star" is from the band's self-titled debut album (Maverick).

**6** "Fans of **FILTER** are fans because I am my own person," says the band's mastermind, Richard Patrick. "They don't give a shit about what I'm wearing, or what I think is cool. My life is about Filter. If the kids dig it, great; if they don't dig it because I'm not wearing a gold chain, I don't care. I've never had a plan. All I believe in is writing music and articulating my own opinion out of millions of opinions and seeing if anyone agrees." "Welcome To The Fold" is from Filter's second album, *Title Of Record* (Warner Bros.). (See Reviews, p. 54.)

**7** "We had this great idea that we'd form a heavy metal band and get famous," says bassist Mark Hamilton of his grade school years with Ash vocalist Tim Wheeler. "We used to mime playing bass and guitar with tennis rackets, with boxes for drum kits. Finally, we begged our parents to get us proper instruments. Within a week, we'd written our first song—on one string. We taught ourselves how to play. We wrote our own material from the start because we weren't good enough to do covers." "Jesus Says" is from the Irish band's second full-length, *Au-Clear Sounds* (DreamWorks). (See Reviews, p. 51.)

**8** "It's kind of a no-win situation, because if ska hadn't become more popular, then there [would be] a lot of bands out there that wouldn't be able to play, and there wouldn't be bands putting out new records as much," says **PIETASTERS** singer Steve Jackson. "And at the same time, a lot of people complain because they go to shows and there's two thousand people there, when there used to be 150 really good friends. Now there are a bunch of guys punching people, and not dancing correctly and stuff like that." "Yesterday's Over" is from the Washington, DC, group's new album, *Awesome Mix Tape #6* (Epitaph). (See Quick Fix, p. 18.)

**9** Glaswegian trio **101** has been plenty busy in the two years since it released its Stateside debut, *New Transistor Heroes*. Sci-Fi Steven has been putting out records by Scottish acts like Lugworm and Pink Kross on the band's Teen-C Recordingz label; John Disco recently remixed Shonen Knife; Manda Rin has been working on her fanzine *Funky Spunk*; and together, the band recorded the theme song for the Cartoon Network's *PowerPuff Girls* and helped Casio design a new G-Shock watch model. Along the way, they also managed to record a new album, *Social Dancing*, from which "Detour" is taken. (See feature, pg. 30.)

**10** "I like Dave Matthews," says Carlos **SANTANA**, contemplating today's mustelans. "I like Primus. Definitely Prince. But there's too many guitarists who play a zillion notes per minute. And I don't like people from Seattle too much, because they still sound white to me. I don't like bands that sound black or white. I like bands that sound like a rainbow." Santana's latest album, *Supernatural* (Arista), reflects that rainbow by featuring collaborations with acts like Everlast, Lauryn Hill, and Maná. "Wishing It Was," meanwhile, features modern roker Eagle-Eye Cherry.



FILTER



101



SANTANA

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<input type="checkbox"/> 5. SEVENDUST	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. FILTER	5	4	3	2	1
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<input type="checkbox"/> 8. PIETASTERS	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. BIS	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. SANTANA	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. THE HIGH & MIGHTY	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. NATURAL ELEMENTS	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. PUBLIC ENEMY	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 14. BLINKER THE STAR	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. SNOWOFF	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 16. DRAIN STH	5	4	3	2	1
<input type="checkbox"/> 17. AIR	5	4	3	2	1
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## LABELS OF ARTISTS WHO APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

### Artist (label) where covered, website

**Sive Style** (Sub Pop) Reviews p. 50  
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**Air** (Astralwerks) Reviews p. 50, On The CD p. 87  
www.thadonline.com/air/index.html

**American Analog Set** (Emperor Jones) Reviews p. 50

**Appendix Out** (Drag City) Reviews p. 50  
www.cee.hw.ac.uk/~ceedge/appendixout/index.html

**Ash** (DreamWorks) Reviews p. 51, On The CD p. 87  
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**Asleep At The Wheel** (DreamWorks Nashville) Reviews p. 51  
www.delafont.com/music Acts/Asleep-at-the-Wheel.htm

**Bahamadia** (unsigned) cover story p. 48

**Andrew Bird** (Rykodisc) Reviews p. 52  
members.xoom.com/TMExorcast

**Bis** (Grand Royal-Capitol) feature p. 30, On The CD p. 87  
www.bisnation.com

**Black Army Jacket** (Deaf American) Metal p.69

**Blinker The Star** (DreamWorks) Quick Fix p. 13, On The CD p. 87  
www2.crosswinds.net/~sotll/bts

**Bows** (Too Pure-Beggars Banquet) Reviews p. 52

**Brokenback** (Thrill Jockey) Reviews p. 52

**Café Tacuba** (Warner Bros.) Best New Music p. 21  
www.lamusica.com/tacuba.htm

**Billy Childish** (Kill Rock Stars) Singles p. 72  
www.psychogarage.demon.co.uk/childish/index.htm

**Company Flow** (Rawkus) cover story p. 49  
www.rawkus.com/coflow.html

**Computer Cougar** (Gern Blandsten) Singles p. 72

**Catie Curtis** (Rykodisc) Reviews p. 52  
www.teleport.com/~tyburski/index2.html

**De-Phazz** (UMG) Reviews p. 53

**DJ Craze** (Bomb) Hip-Hop p. 70

**DJ Krush** (Red Ink-Columbia) cover story p. 47

**Sarah Dougher** (K) Reviews p. 53  
my.voyager.net/~jimmysarah.html

**Drain STH** (Mercury-Island Def Jam) On The Verge p. 24, On The CD p. 87  
www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Lounge/3031/index.html

**Dr. Dop** (PUTS) cover story p. 38, On The CD p. 42

**EPMD** (Def Jam) Hip-Hop p. 70  
www.worldconglomerate.com/epmd/menu.html

**Evil Tambourines** (Sub Pop) Reviews p. 54

**Cesaria Evora** (RCA Victor) Best New Music p. 21  
www.caboverde.com/evora/evora.htm

**Faces** (Rhino) Flashback p. 73

**Filter** (Warner Bros.) Reviews p. 54, On The CD p. 87  
www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Palace/8706

**Folk Implosion** (Interscope) Reviews p. 55  
www.midheaven.com/fi/midheaven%20FI.html

**Guided By Voices** (TVT) Best New Music p. 21  
www.gbv.com

**Joe Harriott Quintet** (Koch) Flashback p. 73

**High & Mighty** (Rawkus) On The CD p. 87

**Robyn Hitchcock** (Warner Bros.) Reviews p. 55  
www.fegmania.org

**Immolation** (Metal Blade) Metal p.69

**Innerzone Orchestra** (Planet E-Astralwerks) Quick Fix p. 14, Dance p. 71

**Isotope 217** (Thrill Jockey) Reviews p. 56

**Jeph Jerman** (Digital Narcis) Singles p. 72

**Kool Keith** (Ruffhouse-Columbia) cover story p. 47, Hip-Hop p. 70  
www.thalanz.com/koolkeith

**Lee Konitz** (Koch) Flashback p. 73

**Alison Krauss** (Rounder) Reviews p. 56  
members.aol.com/dstalnaker/akus/akus.html

**L7** (Wax Tadpole-Bong Load) Reviews p. 57  
www.smell7.com

**Lamb** (Mercury) Quick Fix p. 16  
www.dancingpenguin.freeserve.co.uk/artists/lamb/index.htm

**Alan Lomax** (Vanguard) (Rounder) Flashback p. 73

**Lunar Drive** (Beggars Banquet) Reviews p. 57

**Macha** (Jetset) Reviews p. 58

**Machine Head** (Roadrunner) Reviews p. 58  
www.frontlines.com

**Madder Rose** (Thirsty Ear) Reviews p. 59

**Taj Mahal & Toumani Diabate** (Hannibal-Rykodisc) Best New Music p. 22  
www.taj-mo-roots.com/

**Marine Research** (K) Reviews p. 59  
www.users.globalnet.co.uk/~queenb/index.htm

**Melvins** (Ipecac) Metal p.69  
home.earthlink.net/~mikelm/melvins.htm

**Ming & FS** (Om) On The Verge p. 24  
www.madhattanstudios.com/artists/index.html

**Mos Def** (Rawkus) cover story p. 40, On The CD p. 87  
mason.gmu.edu/~dtursan/rammy

**Mr. Scruff** (Ninja Tune) Reviews p. 60

**Natural Elements** (Tommy Boy) On The CD p. 87

**Neckbones** (Fat Possum-Epithap) Reviews p. 60

**Obsessed** (Southern Lord) Metal p.69

**Steve O'Sullivan** (Mosaic) Dance p. 71

**OtherStarPeople** (A&M-Interscope) Reviews p. 60  
www.otherstarpeople.com

**Gram Parsons** The Scene Is Now p.66  
www.gramparsons.com

**Pavement** (Matador) Singles p. 72  
www.pavementtherockband.com

**Pietasters** (Hellcat-Epithap) Quick Fix p. 18, On The CD p. 87  
www.oncontact.com/anton/pietasters/main.htm

**P.O.D.** (Atlantic) Quick Fix p. 15  
www.payableondeath.com/main.html

**Iggy Pop** (Virgin) Quick Fix p. 19  
www.contrib.andrew.cmu.edu/~jacquez/iggy

**Poweman 5000** (DreamWorks) On The Verge p. 24  
www.5000volt.com/PM5K

**Public Enemy** (Atomic Pop) cover story p. 43, On The CD p. 87  
www.publicenemy.com

**Q-bert** (ISP) cover story p. 44  
www.skratchpiklz.com

**Quannum** (Quannum-Caroline) cover story p. 44, Hip-Hop p. 70

**Quickspace** (Hidden Agenda-Parasol) Reviews p. 60  
www.tkcc.freeserve.co.uk/quickspace.htm

**Santana** (Arista) On The CD p. 87  
www.santana.com

**Saukrates** (Serious) Hip-Hop p. 70

**Scanner** (Beggars Banquet) Reviews p. 61  
www.angelfire.com/ok/speedandpower/scanner.html

**Screwball** (Tommy Boy) On The CD p. 87

**Dave Seaman** (Container-Universal) Mixed Signals p. 65

**Sevendust** (TVT) Feature p. 34, On The CD p. 87  
www.sevendust.com

**Showoff** (Maverick) On The CD p. 87  
members.aol.com/showoff101

**Skunk Anansie** (Virgin) Feature p. 26, On The CD p. 87  
www.indian.co.uk/skunk

**Sparks** (Columbia) On The CD p. 87

**Speech** (TVT) Reviews p. 61

**Alexander "Skip" Spence** (Sundazed) Flashback p. 73

**Splnanes** (Sub Pop) Singles p. 72  
www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Mezzanine/1663

**Superchunk** (Merge) Reviews p. 62  
www.superchunk.com

**Tarwater** (Mute) Reviews p. 62

**Tentacles** (K) Singles p. 72

**Thievery Corporation** (Eighteenth Street Lounge) In My Life p. 85

**Richard Thompson** (Capitol) Best New Music p.22  
www.alphalink.COM.AU/~slyRT

**Tricky** (Island) Reviews p. 63, On The CD p. 87  
www.geocities.com/SunsetStrip/Alley/7530

**Turn-Ofs** (Paroxysm) Singles p. 72

**Verve Pipe** (RCA) Reviews p. 63  
www.thevervepipe.com

**Very Secretary** (Mud) Reviews p. 64

**Karry Walker** (Ubiquity) Reviews p. 64  
www.wco.com/~kawa

**Josh Wink** (Ovum/Ruffhouse-Columbia) Mixed Signals p. 65  
ovum-rec.com/josh.html

**Wiseguys** (Ideal) cover story p. 44, Best New Music p. 22

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## AUGUST 10

- ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL** Ride With Bob *DreamWorks*  
—Tribute to Bob Wills
- BARDO POND** Set And Setting *Matador*
- BIS** Social Dancing *Grand Royal-Capitol*
- KEN BOOTHE** A Man And His Hits *Heartbeat*
- DAVID BOYKINS OUTET** Live At The Velvet Lounge  
*Thrill Jockey*
- SARAH DOUGHER** Day One *K*  
—Debut from member of the *Lookers* and *Cadallaca*
- EAST RIVER PIPE** The Gasoline Age *Merge*
- G. LOVE & SPECIAL SAUCE** Philadelphonic *OKeh-550*
- BETH HART** Screamin' For My Supper *Atlantic*
- HELLCOPTERS** The Devil Stole The Beat From The Lord  
(7") *Sub Pop*
- HOT WATER MUSIC** No Division *Some*
- SONYA HUNTER** Expecting To Fly *Innerstate*
- ICU/MIRANDA JULY** Girls On Dates (EP) *K*
- ISOTOPE 217** Utonian Automatic *Thrill Jockey*
- MADDER ROSE** Hello June Fool *Thirsty Ear*
- TOMMY MCCOOK** Tribute To Tommy: The Best Of Tommy  
McCook And The Skatalites *Heartbeat*
- MING & FS** Hell's Kitchen *Om*
- MISHKA** Mishka *Epic*
- MOONSHAKE** Remixes (EP) *C/Z*  
—Includes remixes by John McEntire, Robin Guthrie of the  
*Cocteau Twins* and five others
- MURDER CITY DEVILS** (7") *Sub Pop*
- NAKED RAYGUN** Throb Throb, All Rise, Jettison,  
Understand, Raygun... Naked Raygun *Touch And Go*  
—Reissues of five albums from '80s Chicago punk band
- OTHERSTARPEOPLE** OtherStarPeople *A&M-Interscope*
- PSYCHOTICA** Pandemic *Red Ant*
- SKULL CONTROL** Deviate Beyond All Means of Capture  
(EP) *Touch And Go*  
—Features former members of the *Monorchid* and the *Delta 72*
- SKUNK ANANSIE** Post Organic Chill *Virgin*
- JIMMY STURR** Polkapalooza *Rounder*
- SUPERCHUNK** Superchunk, No Pocky For Kitty, On The  
Mouth (reissues) *Merge*
- SUPERSUCKERS** The Greatest Rock 'N Roll Band In The  
World *Sub Pop*  
—"Best of" collection that includes a few previously  
unreleased tracks
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Deeper Concentration 3 *Om*
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Woo Hoo Bank, Volume 1 *Yawn*
- WESTBAM** Beat Box Rocker (12") *Mute*  
—The German electronic musician who is responsible for the  
*Love Parade*, Europe's biggest annual techno festival

## AUGUST 17

- JIM CROW** Crow's Nest *Epic*
- OLU DARA** *Atlantic*
- JOHNNY DOWD** Pictures From Life... *Koch*  
—Second album from Ithaca, New York, singer/songwriter
- LEFTY FRIZELL** Sings The Songs *Koch*
- NECKBONES** The Lights Are Getting Dim *Fat Possum-Epiphany*
- PROZZAK** Hot Show *Epic*  
—US debut from animated Canadian pop stars
- RANKINS** Collection *Rounder*  
—Guests include Liam O'Maonlai (*Hothouse Flowers*) and  
members of the *Chieftains*
- STYLES OF BEYOND** 2000 Fold *Ideal-Mammoth*
- T-SPOON** T-Spoon *550*
- TRICKY WITH DJ MUGGS & GREASE** Juxtapose  
*Island*  
—The Trickster collaborates with Cypress Hill member and  
hip-hop producer
- HANK THOMPSON** Dance Ranch/Songs For... *Koch*

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Deep River Of Song, Mississippi: The  
*Blues Lineage* *Rounder*

—From the *Alan Lomax Collection*

**VARIOUS ARTISTS** Deep River Of Song, Mississippi:  
Saints & Sinners *Rounder*  
—From the *Alan Lomax Collection*

## AUGUST 24

- SIVE STYLE** Miniature Portraits *Sub Pop*
- AIR** Premiers Symptomes *Astralwerks*  
—US release of the French duo's early singles collection, with  
two additional tracks
- ARSONISTS** As The World Burns *Matador*
- ASH** Nu-Clear Sounds *DreamWorks*
- ANDREW BIRD'S BOWL OF FIRE** Oh! The Grandeur  
*Rykodisc*
- BOWS** Blush Too Pure-Beggars Banquet
- BURNING SPEAR** Calling Rastafari *Rounder*
- AARON CARTER** Lit Up *Moonshine*  
—DJ mix CD from Citrus bassist/DJ
- CHA CHA** Dear Diary *Epic*
- OLU DARA** *Atlantic*
- EL DESTROYO** The Latest Drag *Innerstate*
- FILTER** Title Of Record *Reprise*
- GUSTER** Lost And Gone Forever *Hybrid Sire*
- INNERZONE ORCHESTRA** Programmed *Planet E-Astralwerks*
- JIMMY LUXURY & THE TOMMY ROAM  
ORCHESTRA** A Night In The Arms Of... *WORK*
- L7** Slap Happy *Wax Tadpole-Bong Load*
- AMEL LARRIUEX** *550*
- LONG BEACH DUB ALL STARS** *DreamWorks*
- LUCY NATION** On *Maverick*
- LUNAR DRIVE** All Together Here *Beggars Banquet*
- MARINE RESEARCH** Sounds From The Gulf Stream *K*  
—Debut album from four-fifths of English pop band *Heavenly*
- MOPES** Accident Waiting To Happen *Lookout!*  
—Features members of the *Queers*, *Screaching Weasel*,  
*Squirtgun* and the *Riverdales*
- MUSHROOM** Analog Hi-Fi Surprise *innerSPACE!*
- ME'SHELL NDEGECELLO** Bitter *Maverick*
- PHOENIX** Heatwave *Source-Astralwerks*
- AARON SKYY** Skyy's The Limit *Red Ant*
- LUKE SLATER** All Exhale (12") *NovaMute*
- TARWATER** Silur *Mute*

## AUGUST 30

- SCREAMER** TeenBeat  
—One man takes on talk radio with his prank phone calls
- UNREST** Imperial f.l.t. (reissue) *TeenBeat*

## AUGUST 31

- P.O.D.** The Fundamental Elements Of Southtown *Atlantic*
- RAMMSTEIN** Live Aus Berlin *Island Mercury*
- CARL HANCOCK RUX** Rux Revue *550*
- SHACK** HMF Fable *London-Sire*
- SOUNDTRACK** King Kong *Rhino*  
—Composed by Max Steiner, the collection includes music  
cues from the 1933 RKO film's most memorable moments  
and features a nearly 25-minute suite consisting of  
previously unreleased material
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Central Avenue Sounds: Jazz In Los  
Angeles (1921-1956) *Rhino*  
—Four-CD box set
- MIKE VIOLA & THE CANDY BUTCHERS** Falling  
Into Place *Columbia*

## SEPTEMBER 7

- BLINKER THE STAR** August Everywhere *DreamWorks*
- FOLK IMPLSION** Folk Implision *Interscope*
- FREAKWATER** Endtime *Thrill Jockey*
- JULIO IGLESIAS JR.** Under My Eyes *Epic*
- MAGNETIC FIELDS** 69 Love Songs *Merge*  
—Three-CD set featuring—you guessed it—69 songs
- MEKONS** Where Were You Vol. 2 *Touch And Go*  
—Second volume of rarities
- NAKED RAYGUN** Basement Screams *Touch And Go*  
—Another reissue
- NO AUTHORITY** No Authority *WORK*
- RED STARS THEORY** Life In A Bubble Can Be Beautiful  
*Touch And Go*
- REDMON & VALE** Redmon & Vale *DreamWorks*  
*Nashville*
- ROYAL TRUX** Veterans Of Disorder *Drag City*
- SLICK SIXTY** Nibs And Nabs *Mute*
- SOUNDTRACK** The Blue Streak *Epic*
- SUPERCHUNK** Come Pick Me Up *Merge*  
—New album produced by Jim O'Rourke
- STEVE VAI** The Ultra Zone *Epic*
- PAUL VAN DYK** Avenue Of Stars (CDs) *Mute*
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** KCRW Morning Becomes Eclectic  
*Mammoth*
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Tektonics *Om*  
—Paris electronic musicians with turntablists
- WISEGUYS** The Antidote *Wall Of Sound/Ideal-Mammoth*

## SEPTEMBER 13

- A MINOR FOREST** So Were They In Some Sort Of Fight?  
*My Pal God*  
—Two disc collection of the band's singles, unreleased  
material and rarities
- MATT WARD** Guitar Duo #2 *Future Farmers*

## SEPTEMBER 14

- CHRIS CACAVAS** Dwarf Star *Innerstate*
- MR. T EXPERIENCE** Alcatraz *Lookout!*
- NON PHIXION** 12' *Matador*  
—NYC hip hop group releases first *Matador* 12"; LP  
forthcoming
- PLONE** For Beginner Piano *Warp Matador*  
—Stateside debut for electronic artist
- SOLE** Skin Deep *DreamWorks*
- SOLEX** Pick Up *Matador*
- SOUNDTRACK** Music of My Heart *Epic*
- SOUNDTRACK** Three To Tango *Atlantic*  
—The movie features Neve Campbell; the soundtrack includes  
*Duncan Sheik*
- JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION** Xtra Acme USA  
*Matador*  
—B-Sides and outtakes from the recording of his last LP
- SPLENDID** Have You Got A Name For It *Mammoth*
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Best Of The Dust Brothers *Ideal-Mammoth*
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Music Is Nice *Matador*  
—Two CD compilation commemorating the label's 10th  
anniversary; new material from *Matador* artists Yo La Tengo,  
*Pavement*, *Cat Power*, *Jon Spencer Blues Explosion*, *Helium*,  
*Pizzicato Five*, *Belle & Sebastian* and *Guided By Voices*
- VARIOUS ARTISTS** Woodstock '99 *Epic*



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## BUFFALO, NEW YORK

(continued from page 94)

**Amy's Place** (3234 Main, 832-6666). If you fancy a little Americana with your chow, stop by **Founding Fathers** (75 Edward, 855-8944) or hit the highway to **Earl's** (Route 16, 496-5125), where you can stroll through a mini-museum of country music as you digest your biscuits.

Moving upscale, **Mother's** (33 Virginia Pl., 882-2989), **The Metropolitan** (716 Elmwood, 882-0772), and **Le Metro** (284 West Utica, 885-1500) all offer international cuisine in intimate surroundings. Just looking for a cuppa joe? The coffeeshouse craze has hit Buffalo hard, so you can choose from at least two dozen contenders for that double latte, including the affable **SPOT Coffee** (227 Delaware, 854-7768).

### Nightlife

Bars don't close till 4 a.m., making it frighteningly easy to sip the night away among the dozen or so around Chippewa Street. Follow or avoid the weekend hordes as you choose, but pay homage to **Mark Goldman's Calumet Art Café** (54 W. Chippewa, 855-2220), which started the whole crazy thing with live jazz, reggae, folk, and klezmer from the Last Poets, Burning Spear, Dar Williams, and others. The **Kingsnake** (112 W. Chippewa, 856-3627) has nights devoted to '90s swing, lounge, and acid jazz, but their finest hour was a Combustible Edison concert with an oh-so-Buffalo cover of two bucks. Not far away is **The Continental** (212 Franklin, 842-1292), where punks, goths, and other black-clad types have danced the night away since the dawn of the Sex Pistols.

Also downtown is the cramped, irreplaceable **Mohawk Place** (47 E. Mohawk St., 855-3931), host to the Waco Brothers, Freakwater, the Geraldine Fibbers, and Buffalo's own Steam Donkeys and Irving Klaws. Plus there's the latest incarnation of **The Tralf** (622 Main, 851-8725), where recent acts included ¡Cubanismo!, the Cowboy Junkies, and Mike Ness.

Another venerable Buffalo institution is the dank bar everyone calls **The Old Pink**, although its legal name is its address, 223 Allen (884-4338). Great DJs, great steak sandwiches. Across the street is **Nietzsche's** (248 Allen St., 886-8539), an early stomping ground of Ani DiFranco's which now provides a regular venue for singer-songwriters Tom Stahl and Alison Pipitone and drummer Emile Latimer. **Tim's Rendezvous** (520 Niagara, 849-1349) seems destined for classic status, thanks to a fine jukebox, New Orleans-inspired food, the dulcet tones of Gretchen Schulz, and the cocktail groove of David Kane's Them Jazzbeards. **The Showplace Theater** (1063 Grant St., 447-1271) books national hardcore and ska acts (often with local faves Mexican Cession also on the bill), alongside Apples In Stereo and DJ Spooky.

### Other sights & sounds

The not-for-profit cultural scene is stronger here than just about any other city of similar size. **Hallwalls** (2495 Main, 835-7362) has a 25-year history of presenting visual art, film, video, performances, readings, and music from the likes of Karen Finley, Laurie Anderson, Christian Marclay, and Gastr del Sol, often in the early days of their careers. Upstairs neighbor **Just Buffalo Literary Center** (2495 Main, 832-5400) brings in people like David Sedaris, Maggie Estep, and David Foster Wallace. **Squeaky Wheel** (175 Elmwood, 884-7172) is a storefront media access center with workshops in everything from video editing to web design and DJ technique. **Redroom** (793 Elmwood, 885-7075) has been a whole new burst of energy, where live mixing often accompanies exhibitions by up-and-coming young painters.

### Shopping

Both **New World Records** (currently at 498 Elmwood, moving to 765 Elmwood in September, 882-4004) and **Home Of The Hits** (1105 Elmwood, 883-0330) are outstanding independent record stores with knowledgeable staffs, plenty of imports and used CDs, and the best bulletin boards in town. I've made nice finds among the dollar bins at **FrizB's CD Exchange** (2510 Elmwood, 447-9786). **Talking Leaves Books** (3158 Main, 837-8554) stocks magazines and books on music, politics, literary theory, and much more, while **Rust Belt Books** (235 Lexington, 885-9535) is the area's best used bookstore. **Mondo Video** (1109 Elmwood, 881-1953) specializes in stuff you won't find elsewhere, from vintage sexploitation to the complete works of Mike Leigh. **Terrapin Station** (1172 Hertel, 874-6677) is your one-stop (Dead)head shop.

Out-of-towners are invariably stunned by the local yard sale and thrift store scene. There are too many good ones to mention here, so start with the two-building **Salvation Army** at 1080 Military Road (875-2533) and the vast **Anvets** at 1833 Elmwood (873-7900), or try **don apparel** (1119 Elmwood, 886-5528) for ready-to-wear vintage threads.

*All phone numbers are in the 716 area code. Ronald Ehmke is a fiction writer and spoken-word performer who earns his dirt-cheap rent money as Minister of Communications for Righteous Babe Records.*



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NEW WORLD RECORDS

**T**he last time anyone vacationed in Buffalo—without friends or relatives in the vicinity—was during the Pan-American Exposition of 1901. That's when an anarchist assassinated President McKinley, inadvertently sending a keep-away message to the outside world.

Folks don't know what they're missing: beautiful living spaces with dirt-cheap rent, a thriving cultural scene free of big-city attitude, and four distinct seasons. The T-shirt slogan "City Of No Illusions" captures the vibe; you can do absolutely anything you want, because absolutely no one is paying attention. (Watch Vincent Gallo's locally controversial movie *Buffalo 66* for an expatriate's dead-on perspective.) It's no accident that some of the best-known musicians with ties to the area are renowned individualists: minimalist Tony Conrad, grassroots entrepreneur Ani DiFranco, neo-psychedelists Mercury Rev, even superfreak Rick James.

Someday journalists will scan that list—adding the Goo Goo Dolls, moe., and 10,000 Maniacs—and declare Buffalo the New Seattle. Bring on the armies of A&R men; there's plenty more where those bands came from! Only trouble is, as you may have noticed, they're a pretty diverse batch. There's no single sound or scene here; the excitement is in the mix.

### Mass (And Not-So-Mass) Media

To get your bearings, grab a *Gusto*, the entertainment supplement in Friday's *Buffalo News*, and the latest *Artvoice*, a free weekly with a staff that tirelessly nurtures homegrown culture through community events. You'll also need the latest issue of *Basta!*, Craig Reynolds's visually dense, theory-savvy 'zine.

At last count we were in listening range of four interchangeable commercial "alternative" stations. The oldest and most appealing is Toronto's **CFNY** (102.1 FM), which allowed us to tire of *Barenaked Ladies* before the rest of the US had ever heard them. Seek out **WBNY** (91.3 FM), the station at Buffalo State College which boasts long-running

specialty shows such as DJ Soma's drum 'n' bass night and Al Riess's wildly eclectic "Rooting About: The Folk And Roots Music Show." **WBFO** (88.7 FM) alternates between jazz and NPR news, with blues, reggae, '40s swing, polka, and bluegrass on weekends. True hipsters tune in to **WECK** (1230 AM) for vintage Mel Tormé or **WXRL** (1300 AM), a family-operated old-timey country station.

Public access television here is the usual rocky road, paved by dedicated activists (Tony Conrad among them) who championed the medium's artistic and political potential, and there are several diamonds among the gravel—"Axle Grease" and "Artwaves" air documentaries, experimental videos, animation, and unclassifiable stuff. "The Greg Sterlace Show" and "The Home Of The Future TV Show" originate from the living room of Warholian paralegal Richard Wicka. Jonathan Richman once found himself on Greg's demented talk show.

### Food

Carnivorous tourists flock to **The Anchor Bar** (1047 Main, 886-8920), birthplace of The Chicken Wing As We Know It. Renovations have smoothed over the funky charm, but you can still savor the antipasto and jazz diva DoDo Greene. Wingwise, the Anchor is only the beginning of the story; locals debate who's got the best and/or hottest, so let me cast a sentimental vote for **Gabriel's Gate** (145 Allen, 886-0602), where you can dine on the patio or by a roaring fire.

But there's more to Buffalo-born cuisine than wings. World, meet beef on weck: roast beef with horseradish on a salted hard roll. The not-so-health-conscious heart patient can find 'em all over town, but I'm partial to **Anacone's** (3178 Bailey Ave., 836-8905), a dark little dive where bikers and SUNY students blissfully coexist.

**Santasiero's** (1329 Niagara, 886-9197) offers immense servings of spaghetti in humble surroundings, **Nick's** (504 Amherst, 871-1772) has the friendliest staff in town and the best skillet breakfast, and **Andre's** (836 Niagara, 886-8663) is my favorite place to enjoy the traditional Friday fish fry. Wary of all this flesh consumption? Try the pancakes at

(continued on page 93)





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