

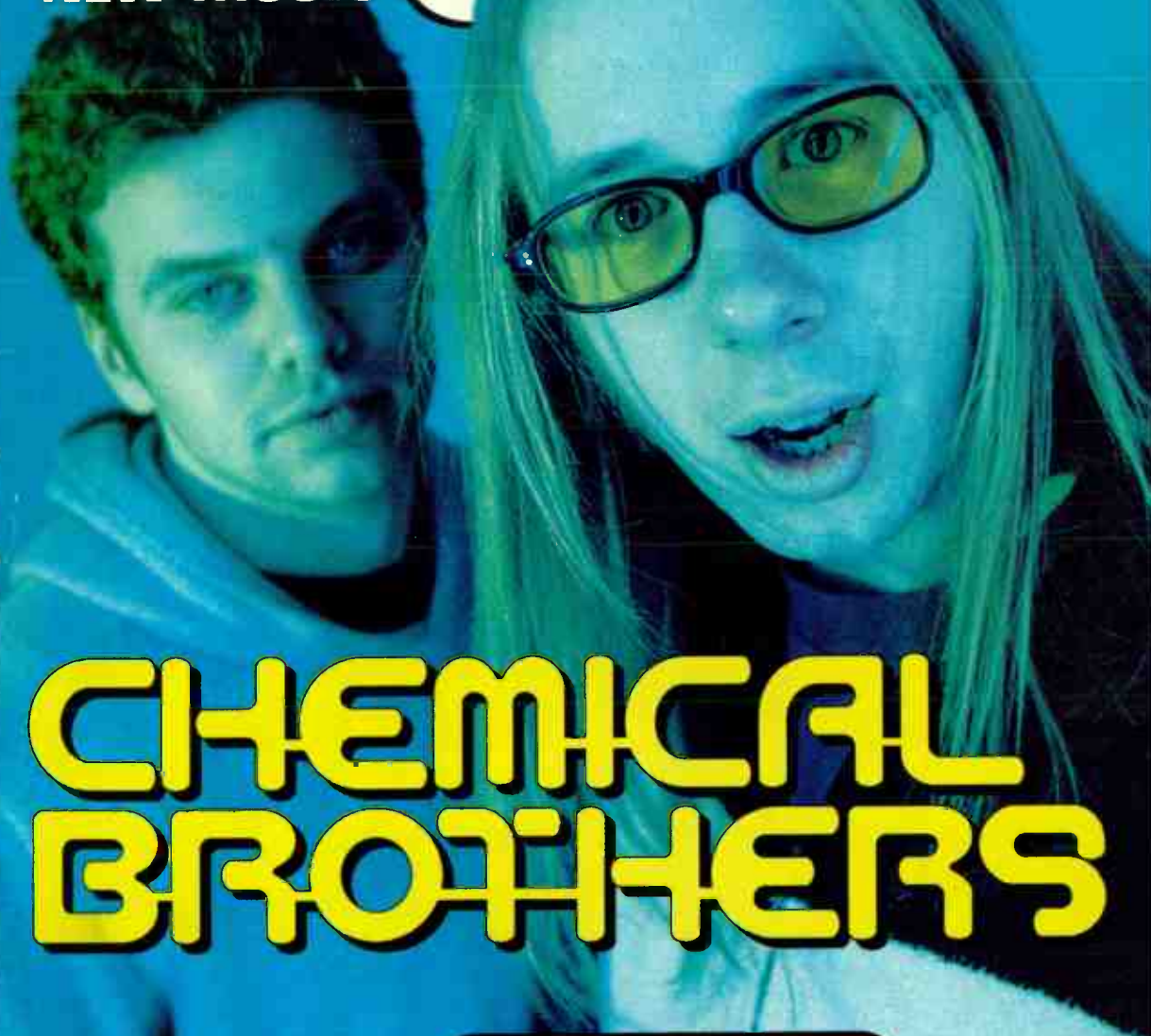
# CMI

NEW MUSIC

ELLIOTT SMITH

# BLUR

THE LONDON SUEDE



# CHEMICAL BROTHERS

BEST NEW MUSIC

PANASONIC

MORPHINE

ERYKAH BADU

INTERNATIONAL TALL DWARFS

HI-FIVES

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OVER 30 REVIEWS INCLUDING:  
HELMET . NICK CAVE . RED RED MEAT . CRANES  
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# helmet



## AFTERTASTE

VINYL IN STORES MARCH 4, 1997

CD/CASSETTE IN STORES MARCH 18, 1997

produced by d. sardy and helmet

ON TOUR NOW



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## FEATURES

- 16 ELLIOTT SMITH**  
The singer/songwriter tentatively prepares for the release of his new album, provisionally called *either/or*. Interview by Kurt B. Reighley.
- 18 BLUR**  
As far as they're concerned, Britpop is yesterday's thing. Interview by Tom Lanham.
- 20 THE LONDON SUEDE**  
Everyone thought they'd drown, but they didn't. Interview by Tom Lanham.
- 22 ON THE COVER**  
Somebody's got to make electronica conquer the world, and the Chemical Brothers might be that somebody. Interview by Andrew Beaujon.

## DEPARTMENTS

- 4 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**  
Mixmaster E. I. C. segues one letter to the next.
- 6 QUICK FIX**  
White Town, the Danielson Family, Sneaker Pimps and other sample-sized swatches.
- 14 ON THE VERGE**  
Out like a lamb: Space, Ida, Peabody and, uh, Lamb.
- 52 MIXED MEDIA/MULTIMEDIA**  
Movies, comics, 'zines, web sites and books, or what to do on days when you have excessive ear-wax buildup.
- 55 JUST OUT/DIRECTORY**  
A list of forthcoming releases, and addresses of labels whose records appear in this issue.
- 56 TOP 75**  
75 records played a lot on college and alternative radio, in convenient numerical order.
- 57 ON THE CD**  
Just think of it as your confidential background dossier or something.
- 59 FEEDBACK**  
Mail, fax or email and let us know your opinion.
- 61 LOCALZINE**  
Brendan Doherty gives us the grand tour of Albuquerque, New Mexico.

## MUSIC REVIEWS

- 12 BEST NEW MUSIC**  
April's best: new albums from Morphine, Erykah Badu, the Hi-Fives, Panasonic and International Tall Dwarfs.
- 26 REVIEWS**  
Cheaper than a stack of 25 potentially good new CDs, and a lot faster to get through, too.
- 46 SPECIALTY PAGES**  
Flashback Pick: Serge Gainsbourg; Metal Pick: Venom; Singles Pick: World/Inferno Friendship Society; Dance Pick: Rockers Hi-Fi; Hip-Hop Pick: KRS-One.

# LETTERS

## Crisis In American Education

Did the CMJ writers all fail geography in high school? There are three glaring errors in the January issue: Neil Hannon is Irish, not English; Carl Cox is American, not English; and though you got the country right, Nick Cave is from Victoria, not Brisbane! Sorry to be so pedantic, but details matter. Of course, music matters more, of course, and you've almost always come up with the goods on that score.

*Padraig Collins  
Dublin, Ireland*

*For the record: According to his label, Carl Cox was born in Manchester to parents who moved there from Barbados. Neil Hannon is, alas, Irish (though now living in London) and Nick Cave is indeed not a "fellow Brisbanian" of Robert Forster. But really, these are more factual errors than a faulty sense of geography. Hey, speaking of which... —ed.*

## Habs Exodus

In reference to the "Localzine" article on Montreal (Jan. 1997), it would seem that you competently documented all that need to be known about the beautiful city of Montreal... with the single exception of its location. On the North American map featured on the top of page 61 you highlighted our beautiful capitol city, Ottawa. Ottawa is quite a distance away from Montreal, and I'm concerned that any Americans that share your distinctly American sense of geographical prowess may get lost on their way to cultural fulfillment.

*Mark Broadworth*

*What with the Canadiens playing more and more like the Senators these days, our sense of Canadian geography is all screwed up, especially since someone didn't double-check the map like I, er, he was supposed to. Anyway, speaking of our unlimited power...—ed.*

## Foiled! If It Weren't For You Meddling Kids...

I am so glad that you focused your last issue on "The Future of Music." If it wasn't for your magazine I would have no idea on what records to purchase in the future. I am so glad that you can predict when I will give up on the music I've been listening to for years and pick up records containing music that was conceived in a microchip. Why don't you guys just let the music flow and whatever is popular will be popular in the future. Don't try and tell me what I will be listening to. Because you have no clue. And neither do I. The fans will decide the "Future of Music," not your magazine.

*Jeff Breakdown*

*Well, that's egg on my face. Just as I was ordering the matching jumpsuits for our legion of henchmen, too. Anyway, speaking of eggs...—ed*

## The Quotes Mean He's Being Ironic

The Marilyn Manson article was pretty funny. Imagine, a mainstream Goth/industrial-wannabe "band-leader" thinks he's the Antichrist. Gee willikers, I hate to burst his bubble, but he's just another shallow, egotistical "musician." Hootie and the Blowfish goes alterna-shit for the adolescent goat. Not to mention a lot of logical inconsistencies in his "theories." GWAR would eat Marilyn Manson and his hormone-rampant radio band for breakfast. Go suck an egg, Marilyn Monroe, I mean Manson. What a waste of flesh.

*John Busenitz  
West Lafayette, IN*

*Um, er, speaking of logical inconsistencies... This segue thing is getting out of hand.—ed.*

## Did Someone Say MAINSTREAM?

CMJ said that Jazz is dead. I felt that the article was a bit of a contradiction—go ahead, read it again. Jazz will never die. There is a new wave of Jazz coming around in case you have not noticed... take a listen! See, if all you guys got off your pedestals, you would see beyond this mainstream "alternative" crap (stop fighting about it... knowing three chords doesn't mean anything) and see some excellent musicians—not only in Jazz but with Home Grown Network Bands, <http://fantasia.vr.clemson.edu/tatum/hg.html>. You might want to check that out, 'cause we are the real next big thing.

*S.E. Platanitis*

*Well, the piece on jazz on the "Future Of Music" article was sort of about a new wave of jazz that we'd noticed... But what the hell, enjoy S.E.'s shameless plug of his own band anyway. We're magnanimous up here on the pedestal. And now, our letters column comes to... an awkward climax.—ed.*

## Things To Do In Denver When You've Had A Little Death

The Localzine on Denver was a hoot. When not doing our Air Force thing at the now-defunct base, we girls attended many cinema classics at the Bluebird Theater (*Behind The Green Door*, *Deep Throat*, etc.). I hope the music lovers have as good a time as we did when the little old man in the raincoat fell down in the balcony. Yow.

*Sparky Allen  
via email*

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Eight Arms to Hold You

the new album  
produced by bob rock



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# QUICK FIX



## danielson family

comfort food

The locals who rushed in from the blustering cold to see the Danielson Family's first New York performance could not have known exactly what to expect. Ensnared in a sizeable corner of the record store were six people, ranging in age from pre-teens to twenties. Two young boys sat on the floor with their drums and xylophones, a woman stood at a microphone holding bells, two other people had synthesizers, and a blond man in the middle tuned a guitar. All wore old-fashioned doctors' and nurses' uniforms, complete with white shoes and pert white hats. But instead of red crosses, the uniforms bore three-lobed hearts on the sleeves. The guitarist's reedy tenor kept spiking into a falsetto as it spooled out oracular visions of hearts, birth and rebirth, tightie-whitie underwear, fear, emptiness, love, and death.

Over coffee some days later, Danielson founder and songwriter Daniel Smith remembers how it looked from his end. "When we look out, all we see are teeth, 'cause people are smiling, everybody—it's just teeth there. On a spiritual level, I think needs are being met—through us,

not by us. And I think there's healing taking place, comforting, peace, inner peace." He explains, in tones as forthright as his singing, how five Smith siblings and one longtime friend became the Danielson Family.

"Vulnerable music is what I call it," says Smith of this recent work. "Pertaining to healing wounds." He thinks it's rooted in the folk-gospel music their father played and taught the family while they were growing up in out-of-the-way Clarksboro, New Jersey. On visits home from Rutgers University, Smith taught his songs to his brothers and sisters. His first goal was to perform together at his senior thesis exhibition. Tooth & Nail released tapes of their practice sessions as the first Danielson Family album, *A Prayer For Every Hour*, in 1995. The label has just released their second (and first professionally recorded) album, *Tell Another Joke At The Ol' Choppin' Block*.

There's a tenderness to Smith's lyrics that's strange to encounter, and even stranger to hear expressed through the mouths of his siblings. He worries about "fleshly" matters, dreams of making babies, recalls his own birth and calls his mother "Mommy," and plays it all as a family pageant. "I write the songs by myself, but then I present them to the only people I would feel secure enough to share with... and they give support," he says. Without talking about it, "they discover things" in the songs, he adds. "I think it's in the blood."

For Smith, the point of this effort is to "give comfort" to his listeners. He is vague about what that might mean, particularly to an audience not in tune with the deeply Christian themes the songs convey. Nonetheless, he saw what he was hoping for in the uplifted spirits and grinning teeth of the crowd at the record store. "Of course we all have our wounds, so it's individual in that sense," he says. "It's up to the person. If they're willing to receive, then it's going to take place." **ANDREA MOED**

## weird record of the month

*The Answering Machine Solution* (Staalplaat) is just what its name suggests: a disc of very, very strange answering outgoing machine messages by experimental artists both known (like Kingdom Scum and A Small Good Thing) and unknown—many of which are unsettling enough that you might want to think twice before actually putting them on your machine. Then there are a dozen or so short tracks of peculiar sounds for anyone who wants to do answering-machine karaoke, as it were, and finally something that purports to be a field recording of "shamanic songs of Yemani upon installation of telephone equipment, to bring good luck." We're a little suspicious.



## in my room

artists' personal picks

**ALL/ DESCENDENTS**  
Bill Stevenson

Lemons  
Sturdy

Zeke  
Super Sound Racing

Shades Apart  
Seeing Things

Pollen  
Peach Tree

Hagfish  
Rocks Your Lame Ass

< QUOTE >

"The wood they use is so cheap. It won't burn in the fire."—Wynton Marsalis, on the Grammy Award

< /QUOTE >

## tours we'd like to see

Alternating Currents:  
A.C. Acoustics, A.C. Temple,  
AC/DC, ACR, Aceyalone  
and A.C.

## random fact

Action Figure Digest reports that McFarlane Toys has secured the rights to make KISS action figures.





# ENDTRODUCING..... DJ SHADOW

"A REDISCOVERY OF HIP-HOP'S ORIGINAL ARTISTIC STRENGTHS — INNOVATION AND EXPERIMENTATION." - RAP PAGES

"\*\*\*\*\*" - ROLLING STONE

"9 OUT OF 10 (NEAR PERFECT)" - SPIN

"ENDTRODUCING... TAKES HIP-HOP INTO THE NEXT DIMENSION. A-." - ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

"STUNNINGLY FUTURISTIC" - REQUEST

"A BEAT CONNOISSEUR'S WET DREAM" - TIME OUT NEW YORK

# QUICK FIX



JEFF REIDEL

## the sneaker pimps

new boots and ranties

It's another typically gray, drizzling London morning, and keyboardist/arranger Liam Howe is nursing a friendly hot chocolate to quell his wicked hangover. Ironically, the weather mirrors the bleak, foreboding music of his synth-pop/trip-hop combo Sneaker Pimps, and their dour debut album *Becoming X* (Clean Up-Virgin). As sung by deceptively chirpy chanteuse Kelli Dayton, "6 Underground" and "Low Place Like Home" suggest being buried alive in some Godforsaken small town, while "Tesko Suicide" proposes supermarket-sold suicide kits for a legion of whining slackers. And, yes, smirks key songwriter Howe, there is a correlation between his rainy-day musings and the cloud cover that perpetually shrouds Britain.

"Me, Kelli and Chris [Corner, the band's spooky guitarist] all come from more Northerly parts of Britain," he explains. "And it's particularly dark and oppressive there in these weighty industrial towns. That's one of the reasons there are so many bands in England—the sky's so heavy, everyone just wants to shout about

something and make music. So music is still the youth culture's greatest voice." Dayton, who's starting to write her own songs for the band, adds that she's happy to sing her partners' words. "We all have a sort of grim humor to us, which really works," she swears.

Remix duo Howe and Carter discovered Dayton crooning in a Birmingham nightclub and invited her into the studio. When she read the lyrics, she was worried: "The stuff I wrote was *much* darker! But I thought

'Don't be precious about it—just do it and experience it.' And I realized that a song has to mean what it means to you, and that's the only way you can come to grips with it. So that's the way I sing it—I invent my own stories to these things."

The name "Sneaker Pimps" is a wry reference to roadies who are sent to purchase tennis shoes for stars. It's one of the group's many little in-jokes, according to Howe. "Certainly, we're not *all* about doom and gloom. We're looking at the heaviness of living in the '90s, of living in England, but at the same time there's an attitude of 'fuck it' and all sorts of witticisms and puns. For instance, in the first line of 'Low Place,' it says 'You walked all over in your Blunderstones.' Of course, Blunstones are those big Australian boots which were quite fashionable about two years ago—girls wear 'em with little skirts. But we turned it into 'Blunderstones,' so there's this image of these big boots just walking all over everybody. And that's the joke, and a good way of getting out of the cliché of just being moany and gloomy.

"It's all pretty sarcastic. But it's our way of dealing with it." More irony. Outside, it's really starting to pour. **TOM LANHAM**



## apex twin

explains why he's a twin

**Q:** What's the story behind the gravestone [in your new CD's booklet] reading "Richard James—Nov. 23 1968"?

**A:** That's the gravestone of my brother. He died at birth, so I never knew him or anything. He was called "Richard James" before me. When he died, my mom didn't want to accept his death, so she called her next baby "Richard David James." I've always had the picture since I was little, and always thought about putting it on a record sleeve. I used to see it in my mom's room and I always liked it. I remember the period where I realized what it was and I wanted to know why it was there, so I asked my mum and she told me. Loads of people just go, "Oh yeah, that's wicked. Where did you find that? You must have spent ages looking in the graveyard." But from my point of view, [he's] the original... and that's the reason why I'm a "Twin." **M. TYE COMER**

## mix tape

by Allison Shaw  
Houston, TX  
"Very Flash, Vol. IV"

### SIDE ONE:

**Television Personalities**  
I Was A Mod Before You Was A Mod  
**Blur**  
One Gets Born Every Minute  
**Reuben Wilson**  
Hold On I'm Comin'  
**Duffy**  
London Girls  
**The Sussed**  
I've Got Me Parka  
**The Jam**  
Billy Hunt (live)  
**These Animal Men**  
Jobs For Boys  
**David Bowie**  
I Dig Everything  
**Saint Etienne**  
Nothing Can Stop Us Now  
**Unrest**  
London's Theme  
**Pizzicato Five**  
Twiggy Vs. James Bond  
**The Makers**  
Selling Purple Hearts

### SIDE TWO:

**Archie Bell & The Drells**  
Tighten Up  
**Pulp**  
His 'N' Hers  
**Edd Byrnes**  
Kookie's Mad Pad  
**The Impression**  
The Young Mod's Forgotten Story  
**Henry's Dress**  
The Way She Goes  
**Astrobrite**  
Overdriver  
**Rocketship**  
Your New Boyfriend  
**Boyracer**  
Too Good Too Ignore (version 1)  
**The Field Mice**  
Quicksilver  
**The Softies**  
Lambretta Boy  
**Superdrag**  
Slot Machine  
**Otis Redding**  
Try A Little Tenderness  
**My Favorite**  
Absolute Beginners

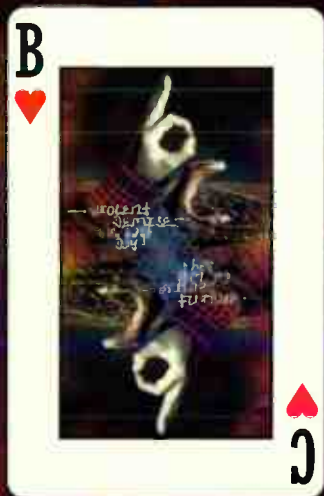
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Tell us about it. Just mail, email  
or fax us the track listing.





# PLAYERS' GUIDE

**BODY COUNT**  
**"VIOLENT DEMISE:  
 THE FINAL DAYS"**  
 Music to kick people's ass to.



**BLUR**  
 the new album  
 featuring  
 "Song 2"



**SILVER JET**  
**"PULL ME UP..."**  
 featuring "Plastiga"  
 On tour forever.



**SNEAKER PIMPS**  
**"BECOMING X"**  
 featuring  
 "6 Underground"

## RULES OF "THE GAME" continued

**The Shuffle and Cut (a)** Any "Player" on demand may shuffle the pack before the deal. The pack should be shuffled three times in all, by one or more "Player". The dealer has the right to shuffle last and should shuffle the pack at least once.

**(b)** The dealer offers the shuffled pack to his right-hand opponent, who may cut it or not as he pleases. [When two packs are used, he offers the pack for a cut to his left-hand opponent.] If this player does not cut, any other player may cut. If more than one player demands the right to cut, the nearest the dealer's right hand shall cut. Except in case of an irregularity necessitating a new cut, the pack is cut only once.

**(c)** The "Player" who cuts divides the pack into two or three portions, none of which shall contain fewer than five cards, and completes the cut by placing the pack that was originally bottom-most on top. [If a card is exposed in cutting, the pack

must be shuffled by the dealer and cut again. Irregularities requiring a new shuffle and cut are covered in future editions of "The Players' Guide."

**The Joker** One or more jokers may be added to the pack. Each joker is a wild card.

**Wild Cards** A Joker or any other card or class of cards may be designated as wild in advance by the "Players" of "The Game." Any wild card may represent any other card, whether or not the holder of the wild card also has the card designated

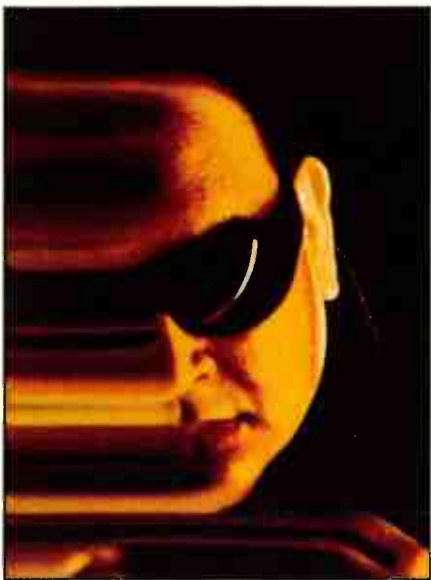
to be continued

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# QUICK FIX



## white town

the seven-year overnight sensation

For about seven years, England's Jyoti Mishra has been putting out records—singles, flexi-discs, and an album called *Socialism, Sexism And Sexuality*—under the name White Town. Last spring, the Urbana, IL, label Parasol released a White Town CD EP called *Abort, Retry, Fail?* It met with the usual polite inattention from the world at large.

Then, one night at the end of October, BBC DJ Mark Radcliffe played the EP's lead track, "Your Woman," a neat, catchy groove that Mishra had recorded at home on an eight-track, built on a sample of Lew Stone's 1932 record "My Woman." ("I wanted to do a song that had all my favorite elements," Mishra says, "'20s and '30s pop and '80s synth-pop and '70s funk—a bit like a magpie, really.") The

next morning, Radcliffe filled in for another DJ, and played it again. And all of a sudden, "Your Woman" was the most wanted song in England.

"Within a few days, Jyoti was being courted by many of the major labels," says Parasol's Jim Kelly. "People were driving up to his house with checkbooks." Mishra made a deal with Chrysalis-EMI; Parasol gave him the rights to the EP, "pretty much for Jyoti's well-being... This all happened within the space of a week."

"Your Woman" came out in England in mid-January, and went straight into the charts at #1, with 68,000 reorders its first day of release. A copy of the reissue made its way to KROQ in Los Angeles, where it caught on immediately—"People are hailing it as one of the big hits of the decade already," said the station's Diana D'Amato at the end of January. And other L.A. stations? "So far, they've had trouble getting a hold of it, so we're really stoked. It's like old-time radio!"

Mishra's pretty stoked himself at the prospects of having a hit—partly for the sake of the ideological agenda that's always been part of White Town. "I want to connect with as many people as possible and say things that I don't think are being said about sexuality, about politics—and I don't think you can do that for three or four thousand people who all already agree with you... This is what I've always wanted." A new White Town album will be coming out in April, and Mishra's being careful to help out the people who've inspired and supported him: he's covering a song by the Magnetic Fields, and working on a licensing deal with Parasol for his older records. "I hope I have a long-term career and I'll be making records forever, but at least I want to do the most possible for the people I love." DOUGLAS WOLK

## label profile

quango

"We live in the world of DJ culture, 12" remixes, Indian rugs and fat spliffs," declares Jason Bentley. Founded two years ago by Bentley with fellow DJ Bruno Guez and manager George Ghiz, the Quango imprint—the name is an acronym for "quasi-autonomous non-governmental organization"—has released 20 compilations of dance and world music, as well as records by Bomb The Bass, Kruder & Dorfmeister, and others. "Our ambition is to represent world dance music culture," Bentley says, "and that's largely electronic. But that's only because the key of technological culture is that it creates the possibility to be global, whereas 10 years ago a kid who was in a bedroom producing a track maybe wouldn't have been aware of sounds and rhythms and instrumentations from around the world—techno is a way to empower that. The DIY ethic is now most relevant and alive in international electronic music, simply because of the sampling and the technological possibilities." The next few months will see Quango releasing the soundtrack to Harvey Keitel's new movie *City Of Industry*, as well as new volumes in their ongoing series *Abstract Vibes*, *Dub Mission*, *Dimensions In Ambient*, *Journey Into Ambient Groove* and *Island Outpost*, and large-scale live events in Europe and the U.S. DOUGLAS WOLK



in my room  
artists' personal picks

## WAYNE KRAMER

Fred Goodman  
(Book) *The Mansion On The Hill*

Snoop Doggy Dogg  
Doggy Style

Nels Cline Trio  
Chest

Was (Not Was)  
What Up Dog?

Andy McNab  
(Book) *Immediate Action*

## THE BIZ

music industry  
parlance, explained

"engineer"

An audio technician generally involved in the hands-on aspect of sound recording, including operation of signal processing equipment (compressors, effects devices, noise reduction, etc.), selection and positioning of microphones, operation of the mixing board, maintaining proper voltage (volume) levels through the signal path, and sometimes the operation of the recording device.

## random fact

The theme to Comedy Central's "The Daily Show" was composed by Bob Mould.

## inspirational verse

"As slim a chance as Michael Jackson getting his black fans back"—Dr. Dre, from "Puppet Master" on DJ Muggs' *Soul Assassins*

THIS IS NOT A TEST...

***automatic***

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World Radio History

# best new music

[ the five best releases this month ]



## MORPHINE / *Like Swimming* / Dreamworks

Fans of Morphine will likely sigh with relief to hear that the band's move to a megalabel hasn't changed its raunchy sax-bass-drums sound at all. Then again, they might worry a bit. There are limits to what a band can do with those three instruments, and you have to wonder if Mark Sandman and co. are getting just too efficient at their spooky, after-hours blues. They've toyed with their sound precious little in the past—going unplugged on a couple of cuts on 1994's *Cure For Pain*, and ratcheting up the rhythm on 1995's *Yes*. But looking on the bright side, boy, are these guys consistent, as in consistently good. *Like Swimming* is the band's grooviest album since its 1992 debut *Good*, swaggering enough for your next 3 a.m. bender.

Standouts include "French Fries With Pepper," a bop-and-grind so dirty you'll feel obligated to strip to it; "Murder For The Money," a hopped-up gangland jitterbug dripping with cool machismo; and "Early To Bed," a little funk number made even cooler by the addition of Prince-like

keyboards. Adding his barfly's statement of purpose to George Thorogood's classic "I Drink Alone," Sandman offers "11 O'Clock," with this basic life philosophy: "Every night about 11 o'clock/I go out." Reliable music, simple dreams; the Morphine ethos may be a dead-end existence, but it's *their* dead end. Pull up a bar stool and make it a double. CHRIS MOLANPHY

DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 11.

FILE UNDER: Just your basic sax-bass-drums.

R.I.Y.L.: Squirrel Nut Zippers, Girls Against Boys, Dick Dale.



## ERYKAH BADU / *Baduizm* / Kedar-Universal ©

R&B's malaise has been such that the genre has almost ceased to exist, little more than lite hip-hop bumps and grinds and tepid quiet storm ballads—the lowest-common-denominator sum of black music's parts. That's why Erykah Badu has emerged as such a big deal; equal parts innovation and reverence. *Baduizm* is a thoroughly modern R&B record. In her own way, Badu is every bit as distinctive as Me'shell NdegéOcello and Cassandra Wilson, but her debut draws inspiration from classic pop and R&B sources, flavoring the mix with her Billie Holiday-accented vocals and her overt, self-styled spirituality. ("Baduizm" is her personal religion.) Badu's voice is a nimble instrument, navigating her jazzy phrasings with rare personality. Most impressive is her ability to give her vocals a sense of character

particular to each song: "Certainly" teases a lover with Betty Boop-like inflections, while "See You Next Lifetime" casts her as a slurring chanteuse à la Mary J. Blige, and "No Love" in the classic role of a take-no-guff soul queen. The sound of

*Baduizm* is resolutely spare, subsisting on little more than fat kick drum beats and fatter basslines, but it's undeniably melodic. With R&B reduced to just a spot on the radio dial, Erykah Badu gives hope that there's room for artistry amongst its artisans. SCOTT FRAMPTON

DATALOG: Released Feb. 11.

FILE UNDER: Modern R&B.

R.I.Y.L.: Carleen Anderson, Me'shell NdegéOcello, Cassandra Wilson.



## HI-FIVES / ...And A Whole Lotta You! / Lookout!

The Hi-Fives know what makes '60s-style garage rock exciting: energy and immediacy, not some kind of backwards-looking authenticity. Even though they aren't below recycling Kinks riffs for the thousandth time ("You Can"), they also aren't above copping "Should I Stay Or Should I Go" (probably for only the fiftieth time) on the opening "It's Up To You." Of course, you can only stray so far from '60s formulae without becoming another kind of band entirely, but within that framework, The Hi-Fives aren't afraid of the changes that make the purists cringe and the kids dance. Though the instrumental attack is on the clean, thin side, what's lost in heaviness is made up in tempo, with drummer Danny Seelig responsible for much of the breakneck pace—

you can bet these Berkeley kids hung out with Gilman St. punks before they picked up their three-button suits. The 'Fives offer the occasional breather, but their heart is in frantic, minute-and-change rave-ups, mostly in the form of direct-

address invitations to teen romance. Despite a few inspired flashes ("Smart and Dumb have been known to do lunch," the nautically themed "Peaquod" [sic]), though, the words here aren't quite up to the freshness of the music. At least the band seems aware of these lapses: With the second-person pronoun, always referring to the love-object, appearing in fully seven song titles, this is the most accurately titled record in recent memory. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 21.

**FILE UNDER:** Energetic, youthful garage-pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Nuggets/Pebbles compilations, Troggs, Dave Clark 5.



## PANASONIC / Kulma / Blast First-Mute

Panasonic is the hardest, coldest electronic group in the world. The Finnish duo's second full-length album, *Kulma*, is concerned exclusively with beat (not rhythm) and physicality. There's little that even approaches normal music, or even normal techno, here; instead, we get endlessly repeating patterns of thumps and clicks, occasionally with tones that refuse to coalesce into anything recognizable. When you speed up a series of clicks fast enough, though, it turns into a buzz, and eventually some pitch or other; on the rare occasions when a note is identifiable on *Kulma*, that's where it comes from. "Aines" ("Matter") and "Teurastamo" ("Slaughterhouse") both work a single tone over with a blackjack, altering its timbre until it becomes a swarm of

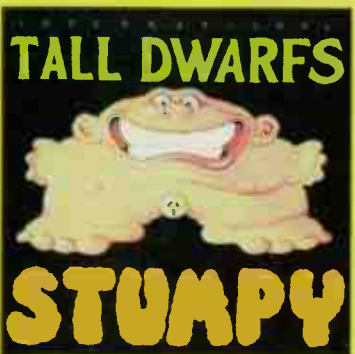
little mechanical death-bees. *Kulma* represents some kind of aesthetic terminus—music can't go any further in this direction than this. It's at the end of a line of particularly single-minded electronic music that begins with Suicide and the

intro to "Blue Monday," and continues through Polygon Window's "Quoth" to ever-more-minimal extremes. The murderous, abrasive regularity of these tracks can be oppressive at first, but when you assimilate it, it's invigorating—it's cleansing and somehow purifying, and after a while, it even becomes comforting. *DOUGLAS WOLK*

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 25.

**FILE UNDER:** Electronic harshness.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Oval, Polygon Window, late Samuel Beckett.



## INTERNATIONAL TALL DWARFS / Stumpy / Flying Nun

The Tall Dwarfs may have changed their name just for this release, but they've always been international in soul—perhaps more than any of New Zealand's noisy horde. Who else would come up with the wonderfully one-world, interactive project of soliciting taped rhythms from their worldwide fandom, and using them as the basis for an album full of new songs? Count on Chris Knox and Alec Bathgate to handle the received sounds brilliantly, setting them like gems within tracks ranging from 37 seconds to almost 20 minutes long. Each rhythm is a catalyst, setting the mood of the song and sometimes suggesting a theme. Some are fairly consistent with the Dwarfs' usual approach. Their pal Lester's "scraper factory and shortwave shit" gives rise to a deliciously blasphemous vision of "Jesus The Beast." Other tracks give the material a more imaginative stretch. "Honey I'm Home" cranks up a disco beat and plugs in the Atari (courtesy of Marcel Herms' "'70s Fuzz Synth Space Invaders"

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 11.

**FILE UNDER:** Mad scientists of pop.

**R.I.Y.L.:** The Residents, Tom Waits, weirder Beatles.

loop) in an affectingly cheesy/sinister setting for an evening at home with a miserable couple. In each case, the noise of the world is subjected to the duo's twisted take on emotional properties of sound. To paraphrase another multinational, "wouldn't you like to be a Tall Dwarf too?" *ANDREA MOED*

# ON THE VERGE

[ compiled by Lydia Anderson ]

## SPACE

Space doesn't quite fit in with the other bands participating in rock 'n' roll's latest British Invasion. The Liverpool quartet has more in common with the Happy Mondays than "Ruby Tuesday," and "Brit-pop" is hardly the proper tag for its funky debut full-length, *Spiders* (Universal). That wasn't the case, however, when guitarist Jamie Murphy (then 14!) met vocalist/bassist Tommy Scott and drummer Andy Parle in 1990. It was only after those three met electronica-enthusiast Franny Griffiths that Space morphed from a typical Liverpool guitar band into a groovy lounge/trip-hop band. "If it weren't for Franny," says Scott, "it'd be like two different bands in one group." Griffiths introduced the band to the many weird samples and effects heard on *Spiders*. The album has produced a few Top 40 hits (in the U.K., where it was originally released on a small indie), but the incredibly catchy "Female Of The Species" (with its "Walk On By"-derived melody) is what has had people uttering the names Burt Bacharach and Space in the same breath. *JENNY ELISCU*



PETER ASHWORTH

## LAMB

It's been three years since British duo Portishead blew away American music fans and TV viewers with *Dummy* and "Sour Times," linking the latest in studio trickery with a wistful take on white soul and rich, cinematic textures. Now that it's 1997, the ante has been upped by technological/musical innovations from artists such as Björk, Tricky and Everything But The Girl. Next in line is Lamb, another British duo joining a pastiche of sounds and styles into wondrously breezy, yet memorable, tunes. Recalling Portishead's moody soundscapes, but injecting a bold dose of skittering breakbeats and unexpected, imaginative touches, Andrew Barlow lays down a solid, kinetic musical foundation on the group's self-titled debut, released late last year in the U.K. and poised for domestic release on Mercury in May. Vocalist Louise Rhodes doesn't so much sing over the top as mold her soulful, breathy voice to interlock with each song. The results marry techno-inspired clanks and rubbery bass lines with an undeniably human element. *(LA)*



## IDA

Ida is not one person, but three New Yorkers who craft wistful, emotional folk-pop not usually associated with their native city or their label, Simple Machines. In addition to recording two Ida albums, 1994's *Tales Of Brave Ida* and last year's *I Know About You*, singer/guitarist Dan Littleton plays in Liquorice (with Tsunami's Jenny Toomey), while Ida's other singer/guitarist, Liz Mitchell, honed her skills playing in an acoustic duo with Lisa Loeb. The spare songs on Ida's two albums gain their understated power from Littleton and Mitchell's hushed voices, which intertwine seamlessly, each taking the lead on a few songs, and their crisp playing, bolstered by drumming from Michael Littleton, a bit of piano or violin accompaniment, and occasional bursts of noisy guitars. The trio focuses as much on the poetic value of words and their delivery—taking cues from forebears like Joni Mitchell and hinting at the work of newcomers like John Davis—as atmosphere, which all of Ida's recordings boast in abundance. Look for Ida's newly recorded third album on Simple Machines to be released later this spring. *(LA)*



## PEABODY

Sometimes things happen in places you wouldn't expect. In the case of the New Orleans-based quartet Peabody, it seems that while everybody else is out funk'n' it up and jazzing down, Peabody is playing smart, literate, gently-strummed rock reminiscent of Fiona Apple or Edie Brickell. While 10,000 Maniacs is an obvious comparison for the quartet, Peabody really sounds more like a non-Goth but still bookish Siouxsie & The Banshees, or the results of what would have happened if Stevie Nicks had collaborated with Johnny Marr instead of Tom Petty. To date the band has sold several thousand copies of its two self-produced CDs, gotten substantial local radio play, and done everything short of build its own components to furnish its home studio. *Heroine*, Peabody's most recent disc, features strings and horns, ambitiously recorded in the aforesaid home studio last year. Though so far Peabody has yet to be snapped up by a larger label, the foursome will once again be taking matters into its own hands, as it begins touring regionally later this year. *JAMES LIEN*



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# ELLIOTT SMITH

## Indecision Time

BY KURT B. REIGHLEY

Portland, Oregon, singer/songwriter Elliott Smith has ensnared the hearts of America's indie-rock cognoscenti. Over the course of two solo albums (1994's *Roman Candle* and his eponymous 1995 breakthrough), framed by three with his band Heatmiser, he's balanced on a tightrope between intimacy and ferocity, as his fans stood transfixed below, holding their breaths as he grows increasingly surefooted. So how does he elect to repay our adoration? By fleeing to France.

At least until the release of his third album, which he thinks will probably be called *either/or* (on Kill Rock Stars), dictates he must return. But as "Elliott Smith" and "tentative" are pretty much synonymous, neither that title nor Elliott's travel plans are carved in stone (though the title is later confirmed). Regardless, on the eve of Thanksgiving, the next-to-last date of a cross-country Heatmiser tour in support of the band's latest (and purportedly final) record, *Mic City Sons* (Caroline),

that I'm able to hear music well enough to know when I'm not measuring up to what I would like to. Which is an unrealistic goal."

Elliott's ascension from obscurity to modest visibility hasn't aided the cause of releasing *either/or*. "I went from going 'Wow, I get to make a record' to 'Wow, people think that I'm good somehow and are expecting me to be good,'" he explains. Far more interested in the processes of making music than the consequences of the final outcome, he finds it distressing that most folks are fixated only on the latter. "When people like something that you do, and you don't see that coming, it throws you for a loop. They expect you to be good, and you start putting yourself in the role of a judge of what's good or bad that you do. That's not in my vocabulary, and I don't want it to be, either."

Which isn't to say that Elliott completely disregards the music after the album comes out. That's when he

"IT'S A DREAM FOR ME TO THINK THAT I'M GONNA BE REALLY SATISFIED WITH SOMETHING THAT I DO."

Elliott is sure of a few things. He simply must finish up *either/or* in the next two days, and then he'd really like to skip town for a while.

Although bits and pieces of *either/or* have been circulating on cassette for months, and Kill Rock Stars issued a single of "Speed Trials" towards the close of last year, the album has been a while in coming, at least in the eyes of Elliott's rabid fans. He insists the hold-up doesn't lie in extended studio sessions; recording goes smoothly for him. "It's only after it's done, and I'm supposed to be deciding what to release, that I get picky," he confesses. Next time Elliott swears he'll be less hesitant, kick the album out of the nest sooner, and *c'est la vie*.

"It's a dream for me to think that I'm gonna be really satisfied with something that I do," he admits. Elliott suffers from the curse of many great artists: He loves his medium so much that he constantly questions the validity of his contributions to the canon. "As far as being happy with what I do, I get bummed out by a number of things, which eventually lead back to the fact

learns the most about his craft. "One time when I'm listening to something that I've done, I'll only hear what are, to me, mistakes, which might be what's good or bad about it. Another time I'll listen to the whole shape of it. I don't think anybody can really take in every aspect of a full thing, all at once, whether they did it or somebody else did. Any time that you listen to something, or look at a painting, it's impossible to take in the whole thing. And you get sidetracked down into the one thing you're paying attention to."

Although he undoubtedly understood this notion prior to the success of *Elliott Smith*, countless interviews have, unfortunately, driven it home. "I would think that most people with half a brain would be interested in [ideas] like that, instead of the stuff that people usually write about rock 'n' roll," he complains. In their quest to get closer to the artists who inspire them, fans and critics alike often trample the direct route to the inspiration's source, long after the artist has tired of answering the same questions. Hence Smith's reputation as a cagey subject.



# ITH

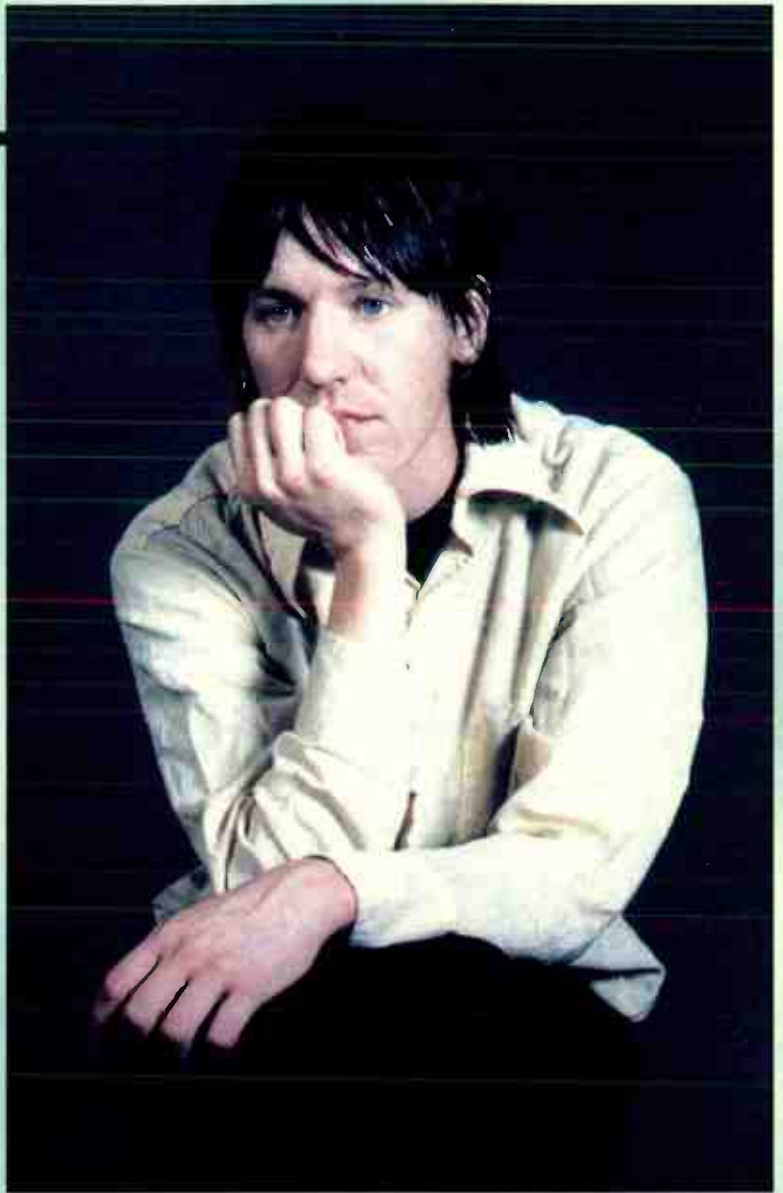
"Most people want you to say something that will fit [an agenda]," he continues. "'What is this song about? What is that song about?' Well, if I could put it into words, I wouldn't write a song! It's not a speech."

But he appreciates why people want to dissect his fragile creations. "Sometimes I think it's interesting when Elvis Costello says what he thinks a song is about, which is not necessarily what I think the song is about." But he gets tired of listeners making the same assumptions about his lyrics, like that all the situations depicted are lifted straight from his diary. "But it's confusing to everyone, including me," he adds. "They're not fictional, like a short story. They didn't come out of nowhere. But on the other hand, they're not exactly true."

"People always think songs are autobiographical. Or, on the other hand, they think you just made 'em up out of nowhere and they don't really have anything to do with you." He concurs that the first theory does make some sense, in light of the fact that the proposed alternative is completely ludicrous. "Even Stone Temple Pilots can't pull a song out of thin air. There is a little bit of them in there. You want to think that they're full of shit, but he's not dumb as a box of rocks, he's a person just like everybody else."

So where do Elliott's songs come from? "I make up most stuff either when I'm walking around, or when I'm watching TV with the sound off," he blurts out, unexpectedly. "TV is just like a dream. Especially commercials." Images flash on the screen, triggering a slew of associations that go unresolved as the next picture suddenly appears. Lather, rinse, repeat, *ad infinitum*. "It's exactly like having a dream while you're awake," Elliott claims. "And if you turn the sound off, it's even more so."

No matter how much some people would like to pigeonhole Elliott and his muse, the world that informs his art is a lot broader than a couple of second-hand Nick Drake LPs and sleepless nights



huddled in the corner with his guitar. New tracks like the jaunty pop of "Pictures Of Me," and the cuts recorded with a full band, will surprise folks who assuredly had Elliott pegged. "There's lots of people playing the same kind of music over and over," he explains, "and there's other styles that are just as good that aren't popular right now. I'm drawn to that. Can I move in on this territory that's discredited and make something out of it that I like?"

The impact on Elliott of ceaseless Eurodisco and French *chansons* is intriguing to consider. Hopefully, the relative isolation of a few months in a country where his command of the language is tenuous at best ("I'll be able to get coffee, find a bathroom, ask directions," he says of his lingering high school French) will provide a chance to collect himself before his next turn on the carousel.

"I used to read a lot, and in the last year I've hardly read a thing. I've just been playing music all the time. I actually have a life, just like everybody else," he says, a touch defensively. "And it's gotten whittled down to one thing. And that makes you feel like a freak, and sort of ridiculous. There's lots of things to be interested in, and doing any one thing all the time is just not where it's at." ★

# BLUR

## DISUNION JACK

by Tom Lanham

It's not that he's been excessively worried of late, sighs Damon Albarn, the brazen Britpop icon who challenged and defeated Oasis in a single-to-single chart contest a little over a year ago. "I've just been reconsidering my place and realizing I'm... I'm..." Sinking lower in his chair at a London photo shoot, Blur's usually talkative mouthpiece is suddenly at a loss for words, strangely humble. "I did start off this journey believing I was very special. And I think that's something that you *do* grow out of, in the same way you grow out of being scared of the dark. It does leave you, that sort of... of... *drive*. It doesn't leave some people, but I think they're the lesser people for it."

Albarn looks the same. He's still wearing his customary painter's pants, scuffed Adidas and a sweater that clings to his wiry frame like sails to a ship's rigging. Still, there's something different about him, a sense that the conflict is over. That may not be the backstabbing reality of the competitive Britpop beast, which Blur had actually tamed by its fourth brainy salvo, *The Great Escape*, and that Oasis faceoff. But it's reality for Albarn. Britpop is finished, he's declared. And Blur, with a surreal new sonic experiment on the shelves, called simply *Blur* (Virgin), is starting over again at square one.

A feather-ruffling move? You bet. Chiselling the epitaph to such a beloved (and lucrative) cottage industry hasn't made Albarn a national hero. "And I'm always getting in trouble for saying things like that," he admits. "I think I said it in the *NME*, just in a news piece, and I was just saying that I don't feel very sympathetic to what's going on at the moment in Britain." Why? Don't get the poor guy started. "I don't find [Britpop] very stimulating, and it's not very bright—there's just not a great deal of intelligence in it. Bands jump on the bandwagon and fall off rather quickly." Which is why Blur took such a radical departure, he adds, with a record that "doesn't lend itself to this perpetual rise of... *Britishness*. At least not in that

cartoon sense, where everyone's either the Beatles or the Rolling Stones. I feel less concerned with Britpop than ever, really, and it's nice to be disentangled from the whole mess."

Call it turning the other cheek. Call it a new beginning. But the whirring, clanking *Blur* finds Albarn and company miles away from Limey jangle, machete-chopping their path through a dense textural undergrowth of sounds and skewed rhythms. There's nothing straightforward about it: Melodies lurk within melodies, dissonant guitars give way to moments of pure keyboard beauty, Albarn's vocals, once normally miked, warp and distort kaleidoscopically via an arsenal of technical tricks. The singer's lyrical focus has also expanded considerably. Formerly content with droll character studies/assassinations, Albarn now speaks in larger metaphors.

Much of the album was tracked in Iceland, where Albarn owns a chilly little retreat. He's sick of doing battle with the English media machine, he says; it's a no-win exercise. "And I've definitely done a bit of kowtowing to it—I was caught slightly off my guard when the tabloids realized that the media as a whole had been having a bit of a joke with us about... Well,

**"I think any kind of genuine change is a success. That means you have the strength to actually take control of your life."**

I mean, my characters were not particularly complimentary characters. They weren't celebrating Great Britain, didn't stand up and cheer. And when the tabloids first got hold of us as an entity, they sort of went along with that—they didn't pick up on the cynicism in the music. They thought 'Hey! These are songs about British culture, and they're great!'

"But then when Oasis came along and we squared off and you had the tabloids totally having the opportunity to take sides, they kind of caught onto the fact that we weren't really on their side—we were against them and we didn't even buy them. And once that happened, it was a totally different ball game. They turned on us, to a great degree. They just portrayed Oasis as this really authentic, soulful band and us as these middle-class pretenders who were taking the piss out of everyone. And it's divided into so many different parts. The *NME* and *Melody Maker* and their glossier versions deal primarily with the music and the in-fighting between the bands. And then the tabloids deal with what you do at night. In bed. So basically, your whole life is covered in England, on a weekly basis."



L-R: Alex James, Graham Coxon, Dave Rowntree, Damon Albarn

Blur bassist Alex James has been lounging on the studio floor for several minutes, reading about himself in the latest rock rag and fending off the amorous advances of an oversexed fox terrier that's eager to make his forearm its mate. Tiring of the game, the dog scampers over to Albarn and stares up at him, hopefully. Albarn scratches its head. The moment he knew Blur was a different band, he says, "was when we finished our European tour last March. Actually, the last date was my birthday—we played on my birthday, then we stopped. And from that point onwards, we severed our [Britpop] links. The group just wouldn't have carried on if we'd continued like that—it would have imploded. We had to change, we had to look at ourselves and try and find some new reason..." Again, the right phrasing eludes him for a few seconds. "Well, not new *reason*, actually, because the reason for being in a band basically stays the same. But it's down to how much of your soul you're prepared to exhibit. And when you're sort of in a crisis, you have the choice of either becoming completely detached or really opening up. They're the two ways we deal with crisis, really."

Goodbye, commercial hooks. Hello, lyrical introspection and a sense of discovery and adventure—what Albarn smoothly terms a "conscious effort to feel natural." Ergo, *Blur* offers oddball tidbits such as "Country Sad Ballad Man," which tempers a serious acoustic-blues shuffle with the singer's tinny, processed ramblings and off-key synth notes. "That was sung through something as small as this," explains Albarn, picking up the nearby microcassette recorder. "Then we miked it up. But it gives it some sort of different

vibe, and for me, it's just a pleasure to hear things like that. I get a lot more joy out of listening to my voice when I can hear it from a slightly different perspective... Whatever we do, it's always gonna be balanced with some sort of signal to the initiated that there's something else going on."

In the States (which Albarn celebrates in his tour travelogue "Look Inside America"), Blur is still an unproven commodity. In England—and much of Europe, even Japan where a new live CD is circulating—Albarn is a bona fide superstar. Bic-flicking arenas sway to signature Blur anthems. The artist can't leave his home or hotel without donning at least a baseball-cap disguise. That kind of huge-scale fame can push a man to such a rash creative decision as the new record. How does Albarn (who's also taken on his first acting assignment in a new British gangster flick called *Face*) stay normal? He chuckles. "Well, you *don't*, do you? For that period of time when you're onstage, you're *not* a normal person. And afterwards, it's advisable to return to reality, really."

"So I have an *idea* where I am these days. I'm in one of those positions that only people who've become hugely successful will know, where they truly change. And some people make changes and other people..." Pause. Sigh. Albarn, it appears, is still reconsidering his place in the Britpop scheme of things. Then a Blur credo of sorts: "I think *any* kind of genuine change is a success. That means you have the strength to actually take control of your life. So this was a healing record—we needed to feel more at peace with ourselves and our music." After all, he grins, "that's really what music should be about." ★

# The London Suede

## Breaking The Surface Again

STORY BY TOM LANHAM

Spotlights slice through the London chill in daggers of indigo, purple and aquamarine. Hundreds of pop fans huddle together for warmth, eyes fixed on a single figure. It's another December concert at the Roundhouse on Old Chalk Farm Road, a surreal stone venue that resembles a medieval castle turret and is currently as cold as your average igloo. Onstage, clad in skin-tight black shirt and trousers, Brett Anderson doesn't seem to notice the cold as he leads his chart-topping ensemble Suede—for legal reasons, still known Stateside as the London Suede—through its paces. With serpentine grace, he wraps himself around a mic stand only a tad thinner than he is, flicks lopsided Oscar Wilde bangs from his forehead, and proceeds to jog through the rock posturing manual, page by preening page.

Voice wheezing with nasal *Diamond Dogs* aloofness, frontman Anderson launches into "Trash," the opening track from Suede's new LP, *Coming Up*: "Maybe, maybe it's the clothes we wear/The tasteless bracelets and the dye in our hair/Maybe it's our kookiness... But we're trash, you and me/We're the litter on the breeze..." Teenage guitarist Richard Oakes—who replaced founding member Bernard Butler last year, amid a flurry of tabloid controversy—lays down nettle-sharp riffs, throwing his entire body into every chord. At stage left, the latest band addition, keyboardist Neil Codling, conjures tandem ethereal passages—again—straight out of the Bowie catalog, this time circa *Heroes*.

The best way to summarize the evening? Two words: Suede's back.

And when Anderson sits down to discuss the record a few weeks earlier, you can tell by his sly smile and assured manner: He's confident that he's just completed a modern-rock masterpiece. "Trash" is merely the first whiff; the rest of the album follows suit, centering on the seedier aspects of London street life in gorgeous, flowery anthems such as "Lazy," "Filmstar," "Beautiful Ones," and the subtle drug allusion "The Chemistry Between Us." "And the decadence I celebrate is quite ordinary, I suppose," he notes, never having shied away from his own hard-partying lifestyle in the press. "This whole record was meant to be an ordinary celebration of low-rent life, really honest, quite unglamorous, and very much based around England. Most of the songs are

about my friends and the way I see life, and coming from a much more ordinary perspective than the last record [*Dog Man Star*], which was written from an estranged, sort of ivory-tower perspective. This was written in a London flat with a couple of friends around me and a cat and stuff like that—it wasn't this big sort of paranoid pseudo-rock star thing."

Anderson has had reasons to be paranoid, however. Suede's fey self-titled debut in '93 set the band up as overseas chart saviors; a year later, critics slavered like hungry jackals around *Dog Man Star*, gnawing the gossipy bones of Butler's departure. Butler had co-written all the material with Anderson, they reasoned, so this surely must foretell the end of the outfit. Recalling those predictions, Anderson leans back in his studio-couch seat and chortles. "The whole build-'em-up, knock-'em-down thing in Britain—everyone knows about it, it's a shitty thing that happens, but the one good thing you can say about it is, if you can survive its difficult machinery, actually avoid the knives and daggers that are thrown at you, it actually makes you stronger. And I'm a strong believer in the power of change—the band, in its previous life, had gone as far as it could. I think it just changed naturally, and I'm glad it has."

In the next room, engineers are polishing the final mixes of several B-sides, to beef up the latest U.K. single (as well as the long-delayed U.S. release of *Coming Up*). Anderson—again dressed in all black, bangs drooping dangerously over one eye as he puffs a customary Silk Cut cigarette—cocks an ear, nods to the beat, then continues on the paranoid theme. Late one evening a few months back, he relates, a gaggle of Suede boosters discovered where he lived and came knocking. Apologizing, he turned them away and stumbled back to bed. "And the next day, there was graffiti up and down the street with my address written on it," he shudders. "The local tube station had my address on it, and they even handed out flyers giving my address out, saying 'If you wanna hassle this guy, this is where he lives.' So you sometimes get fucking lunatics and fucking pricks, and it was a real pain in the ass—I had to move because it was so difficult.

"The thing is, you mustn't let things like that fuck you up, because that's all too easy. I've been through phases of



PHOTO BY MITCH IKEDA

L-R: Simon Gilbert, Neil Codling, Richard Oakes, Mat Osman, Brett Anderson

paranoia where I basically walk 'round London in a disguise—a baseball hat, a pair of sunglasses and a beard. But I thought 'Hang on! I'm *not* going to live my life like this, running away from everyone.' People have a problem with you, then fuck it—let it get to you and that means you've got a problem with yourself, and you've got to get over that kind of crap." And now that Suede has fallen into favor again, Anderson is regularly invited to this or that A-list soiree, begged to join this or that secret stars-only club. "But I don't consider sitting around with a couple of people from some indie band a particularly privileged position," he sneers. "I don't hang out with those sort of people—I could, if I wanted to, but it's not my sort of scene. I hang out with *real* people—that's why the songs I write have a touch of reality to them."

For *Coming Up*, Anderson often strolled through his hometown *sans* disguise, microcassette recorder in hand to track his thoughts as each journey progressed. And when he sings about "the kids getting out of their heads" who are "high on diesel and gasoline, psycho for

drum machine, shaking their bits to the hits" on *Coming Up*, it isn't intended to have any negative connotations. "It's not supposed to be a fucked-up record at all," Anderson wants to clarify. "It's not supposed to be like 'Oh my God, I'm so fucked up and isn't the world a fucked-up place' thing. It's actually meant to be a quite *happy* record, but quite a realistic record as well. And it's saying that it's too easy to say life is shit, and that the key to life is to try and be optimistic about it no matter what shit is thrown at you."

"There's a lot of shit going on, a lot of sadness in the world, and to actually get something out of it, I think, is the key to life. So trying to find a community within a fucked-up world is quite a goal for me. Lots of the songs are about other people, because I find the warmth of other people quite a commendable thing to strive for." And the 'diesel' he mentions? Sounds like fuel for decadent thought. Anderson takes another puff and grins wickedly. "Lots of it is in kind of an altered state, maybe. But that doesn't make it any less valid!" ★



BY ANDREW BEAUJON | PHOTOS BY JOSEPH CULTICE

# BLOCK ROCKIN' BEATS

Of all the revolutions you're supposed to brace yourself for in 1997, electronic music going mainstream is right up there with WebTV and Digital Video Disc. Locked and loaded (sometimes quite literally), bands that would at one time have been dismissed as "just more techno" now have the hands and wallets of record-company executives in the air. Madonna, who once said "Techno = Death," just signed British dance-music stalwarts the Prodigy to her Maverick label for a reported \$5 million. Graying rock critics who haven't been to a nightclub in ten years begin reviews with sentences like "Ever since I started taking English dance music seriously..." The race to break electronica in America is on, and no act bears as many expectations on its sloping shoulders than the Chemical Brothers, Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons, the two young men sitting before me at the Time Cafe in New York City.

Simons and Rowlands met in 1989 at Manchester University. Taking cues from the city's club and indie-rock history—which includes the likes of the Stone Roses, New Order and the famed Hacienda club—they dubbed themselves the Dust Brothers and began spinning records at parties, mixing breakbeats, mid-'80s hip-hop, and weird noises at a time when slow, hypnotic music was the m.o. of most DJs. "We were into instrumental hip-hop like Renegade Soundwave," says Simons. "All the people were into trance."

"That's when we stepped in," Rowlands adjoins.

In time-honored indie fashion, the Dust Brothers released their first single, 1992's "Song Of The Siren," themselves, and were soon signed to the scene-king label Junior Boy's Own. The records that followed—the *Fourteenth Century Sky* EP (featuring "Chemical Beats," the duo's first dance-floor anthem), the "My Mercury Mouth" single, and the "Leave Home" 12"—saw the pair further hone their sound. Distorted guitar-like noises, funky drums, and daffy samples became the watermark of their stop-and-start, bass-heavy music. Remix work for Leftfield, the Charlatans U.K., and Primal Scream followed, and soon the Dust Brothers weren't just making soundwaves in Great Britain.

"Actually, our third-ever gig was in Florida, in 1994," says Rowlands.

"They just rang us up and said, 'You know, you're popular here. Come and play,'" Simons explains. "Having never been to Florida, we were quite happy to go, you know, have a week's holiday."

"But when we got there," adds Rowlands, "we saw a scene where our records were kind of central. When we played 'Chemical Beats,' the place just exploded."

Back home, their scene was exploding, too. The Dust Brothers relocated to London and began playing larger and higher profile gigs. To let down their hair a bit, they also began hosting a movable club night called the Social, which gave them and other DJs a chance to have fun, spin some records, and dance. After a couple of weeks the club was turning away hundreds of people each week.

Not too long afterward, an "arrangement" was soon made to release the album the Dust Brothers had been planning to make for Junior Boy's Own through Virgin Records' much larger framework. The plan hit a snag, though, when the band was confronted by the American Dust Brothers (Mike Simpson and John King, whose major credit to date was the Beastie Boys' LP *Paul's Boutique*, but who've since produced Beck's *Odelay* and the Eels' *Beautiful Freak*), who made it known through their lawyers that they were a bit protective of their trademark. Luckily, they'd unwittingly contacted probably the only two guys in England who had bought *Paul's Boutique* in the first place. Simons and Rowlands kept their fraternal surname and christened themselves after their Gator State-busting single. And, of course, called their just-finished album *Exit Planet Dust*.

That album, released in 1995, is a landmark in electronic music. It was the first record that allowed one to play air guitar to a techno song and not look like a complete dip. From its opening sample of Detroit techno progenitor Blake Baxter saying "the brothers gonna work it out," *Exit*, as the surfers say, rips. A nonstop party engine (with even a little chill-out time thrown in at the end), its genius is that it works perfectly well as pop, rock, and hip-hop. It also works because of the recognizability of the duo's sound: While most electronic groups sound indiscernible to outsiders, even the most committed No Doubt fan can recognize a Chemical



Brothers song or remix. Collaborations with the Charlatans U.K.'s Tim Burgess and trip-hopping folk singer Beth Orton made for pithy, radio-ready tunes in a genre not usually known for brevity.

Radio, however wasn't quite ready. No matter, though, because *Exit Planet Dust* sold over 100,000 copies in the U.S. pretty much by word-of-mouth, becoming the biggest seller ever for the Chemical Brothers' U.S. label, Astralwerks, and one of the biggest sellers (after the Smashing Pumpkins' *Gish* and Primus's *Frizzle Fry*) for Astralwerks' parent company, Caroline Records. Remixes for Method Man, Dave Clarke, and even Republica followed. The Chemical Brothers had become techno stars.

Whatever commercial expectations were raised for a second album by such an auspicious debut, however, were completely dwarfed by the late-1996 release of "Setting Sun," a collaboration with Oasis's Noel Gallagher that went to No. 1 in Great Britain and has hit the U.S. charts as well. (At press time, the single was no. 75 on the *Billboard* chart; its video was a Buzz Clip on MTV.) To have a techno record do so well in the U.K. is one thing, but here in the meat 'n' potatoes U.S. of A.? Is it really possible that this summer, you'll be able to hear massive breakbeats blasting alongside Bush from the cars cruising the strip? Moreover, are Americans used to verse/chorus/verse song structures and stadium-rock posturing going to accept a couple of guys who look like systems analysts as rock stars?

The Roxy, New York City, November 1996: Outside, the line snakes around the block in sub-zero weather. Inside, Kool DJ Herc, one of the acknowledged founders of South Bronx hip-hop, and the frankly amazing DJ Squiggles are opening for the Chemical Brothers, old-schooling the predominantly white crowd in the music's history. They demonstrate different techniques and grooves, even bring up Grand Wizard Theodore, the cat who invented scratching. After an hour-long set,

the fans politely watching and mildly supportive, Herc begins saying, "We showed you hip-hop of the past! We showed you hip-hop of the present! Are you ready for the future? Are you ready for the *Chem-i-cal Brothers*?" The crowd goes nuts, but its din is quickly eclipsed. Air-raid sounds blast the cavernous space, bass of Olympian volume vibrates the internal organs of thousands of overprivileged youth, and as the lights go up, you can just see the bobbing heads of two guys behind a passel of black boxes and cables. The audience turns into the beast of a thousand backs—hey, maybe there is a bridge to the 21st century after all.

Live, the Chemical Brothers rock as hard as any accomplished guitar band. The only real differences are that they don't have a frontperson and that, well, there aren't really any songs per se. The zaftig bass line of "Leave Home" tunnels under a different neighborhood, samples that used to live on "In Dust We Trust" seem to have moved down the street a piece, and the music doesn't let up once for 90 minutes ("And you don't stop!" Herc would say). Even the old-guy section, where I'm standing, is pulsing. Next to me, I clock one of the most powerful lawyers in the music industry making a bizarre attempt to dance, swinging his arms back and forth like Shirley Temple's stand-in on *Good Ship Lollipop*. Suddenly, the dance floor seems to make a bit more sense.

Two months later, however, with an advance tape of the Chemical Brothers' new album *Dig Your Own Hole* cemented to my Walkman, what doesn't make sense is where a couple of white history majors from England fit into the coming chapters of hip-hop's history. "Hip-hop," Rowlands tells me, "used to be about people dropping in breaks of Donald Duck records and stuff like that. Taking all these cool influences and putting them into records—that's the cool thing about it."

"I mean, everything's up for grabs," Simons says. "It's not that we're hip-hop in this or that. We love that early





# "IT'S NOT THAT WE'RE HIP-HOP IN THIS OR THAT. WE LOVE THAT EARLY HIP-HOP CULTURE."

hip-hop culture."

"You read about Grand Wizard Theodore playing weird shit with Africa Bambaataa in nightclubs, it's totally exciting," Rowlands adds. "That's kind of gone out of hip-hop completely. You just get this slow, head-nodding music. But we're not quite sure where we fit into it."

But it's not really the spiritual future of hip-hop

whether *Dig Your Own Hole* is a bong's-eye view of the future of rock, just a new album from one of the more interesting acts in popular music these days, or the *Tusk* of the '90s. And, like everything the Chemicals do, the answer is by no means clear.

Drop the needle, and a sampled Schooly D represents: "Back with another one of those block-rockin' beats." And though the easiest thing in the world would have been a pop turn, the record's first side almost exclusively comprises long, funky, psychedelic numbers. The beats are as heavy and undeniable as before, but the breaks are spaced out and the overall mood is a lot darker. "Elektro Bank," which features a distorted minute of Kool DJ Herc's

introduction of the band from the Roxy show, is a case in point. "We could have put three ID points on it," Rowlands says, "but we didn't want to." Side one ends with "Setting Sun," still totally kick-ass no matter how many times you've seen its video on MTV, but in the context of the album, suddenly a "How the heck did something that weird ever get played anywhere?"-type mystery. Side two more or less disposes of track spaces entirely, gathering speed for the first three songs, braking somewhat for "Lost In The K Hole," an Art Of Noise-ish number that's the most accurate (and extremely pleasant) musical representation of a drug-inspired solipsism since *The Wall*. Beth Orton's guest spot this time, "Where Do I Begin?," is another tricky customer, an initially folksy ditty that

#### Selected Discography:

- "Song To The Siren" (U.K. Junior Boy's Own, 1992)
- Fourteenth Century Sky EP* (U.K. Junior Boy's Own, 1994)
- "My Mercury Mouth" (U.K. Junior Boy's Own, 1994)
- "Leave Home" (U.K. Junior Boy's Own, 1995)
- Exit Planet Dust* (Astralwerks, 1995)
- "Life Is Sweet" (Astralwerks, 1995)
- Loops Of Fury EP* (Astralwerks, 1995)
- Live At The Social Volume 1: Mixed by the Chemical Brothers* (U.K. Heavenly-DeConstruction, 1996)
- "Setting Sun" (Astralwerks, 1996)
- Dig Your Own Hole* (Astralwerks, 1997)

#### Some Important Remixes:

- Primal Scream, "Jailbird" (U.K. Creation, 1994)
- Saint Etienne, "Like a Motorway" (U.K. Heavenly, 1994)
- The Charlatans U.K. v. the Chemical Brothers EP* (U.K. Beggars Banquet 1995)
- Dave Clarke, "No One's Driving" CD (U.K. DeConstruction, 1996)
- Method Man, "Release Yo'self" (Def Jam, 1996)
- The Prodigy, "Voodoo People" (Mute, 1996)

at stake here. Like most important music scenes, the rave/techno/dance community developed completely outside normal music-industry channels. There was no press coverage, no A&R presence, not even any real stars. That all started to change, albeit clumsily, in the early '90s. U.S. major labels began

signing some of the more successful European techno acts—Utah Saints, Altern 8, Armageddon Dildos—but generally had no idea how to market them. With the explosion of grunge and then alternative rock, most of the dance-music bands were dropped as the music industry once again put all its eggs in one basket. Then market elasticity brought about a soft 1996. Alternative rock was a rare bird: a next big thing that lasted for a couple of years. But there's always got to be the morning after, and like pie-eyed luses wandering around town looking for an open bar, labels and pundits are casting about for the *new* big thing. Articles in mainstream music publications, which regarded electronic music as so many bleeps and bloops even a year ago, now position this broad and varied genre as the "next grunge."

And record labels are taking a piece of the action. Caroline itself, which put out the first albums by both the Smashing Pumpkins and Hole, recently dropped most of the rock bands on its roster to concentrate on its dance artists. MTV now has a late-night electronica video show, *Amp*. You can bet that the SoundScan figures of Astralwerks catalog number 6180 are going to be watched very closely by any music-industry employee with an eye on the key to the executive washroom.

So the question that might turn your little brother and his sampler into the next bidding-war subject is

turns into *Revolver*-ish psychedelia. Which quantity is not in short supply on *Hole*, anyway: The last song, the seemingly hours-long "The Private Psychedelic Reel," is a work of such majesty and beauty that the skies should be full of accidental astral projectors for the next couple of decades.

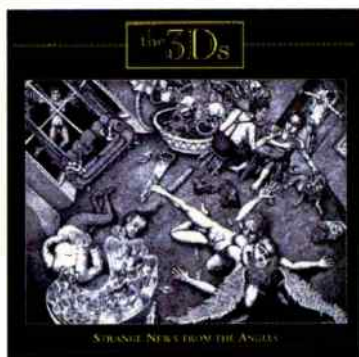
*Dig Your Own Hole* is a far more uncompromising record than *Exit Planet Dust*, whose long shadow it neatly sidesteps. By no means more of the same, it's something of a masterpiece in its own right, which, like a David Foster Wallace novel or a *Simpsons* episode, isn't entirely evident until you've revisited it a few times. "We do like to do things a bit weird on albums," says Simons. "Keep them tucked away so it's a surprise." If on *Dust* the Chemical Brothers were a genius baby just discovering its hands, on *Hole* they're the same baby finding out the world seems to have no limits. With only the barest concession to pop singles this time around, it's clear that as far as the Chemical Brothers are concerned, any revolution is going to happen on their own terms. Questions about the selling of electronic music don't really concern them as much as the selling of *their* records. "The English press keeps asking, 'Who are the next Chemical Brothers?'" says Rowlands. "Quite weird, that, 'cause you know, we are still here." ★

# reviews

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

"I'm very surprised I won this. To be honest, I don't know what it's supposed to mean. I hope the only reason I got this isn't because of what happened at the Brits [Award Show] last year with Michael Jackson. That's been the bane of my life. Every day for the last year every time I walk down the street people have been shouting 'How's your mate Michael?' That's not musical, is it? I thought these were musical awards. That's what I regret about picking this up. In some ways, I wish I hadn't won it. That whole Jackson thing wasn't about music, which means it really isn't worth anything." —Pulp's Jarvis Cocker, on winning the "Godlike Genius For Service To Music" award at the NME Brat Awards.

3DS / *Strange News From The Angels / Flying Nun*  
NATACHA ATLAS / *Diaspora / Nation-MCA*  
JZ BARRELL / *Here's The Surprise... / Ng*  
BEATNIK FILMSTARS / *Phase 3 / No Life*  
BETTIE SERVEERT / *Dust Bunnies / Matador*  
CARLA BLEY BIG BAND / *Goes To Church / Watt*  
NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS / *The Boatman's Call / Reprise*  
CRANES / *Population Four / Dedicated*  
DEUS / *In A Bar, Under The Sea / Island*  
GLASS/BOWIE/ENO / *"Heroes" Symphony / Point*  
HELMET / *Aftertaste / Interscope*  
HUMPERS / *Plastique Valentine / Epitaph*  
HUUN-HUUR-TU / *If I'd Been Born An Eagle / Shanachie*  
KNAPSACK / *Day Three Of My New Life / Alias*  
LADYBUG TRANSISTOR / *Beverly Atonale / Merge*  
LONG HIND LEGS / *Long Hind Legs / Kill Rock Stars*  
MOLOKO / *Do You Like My Tight Sweater? / Warner Bros.*  
VAN MORRISON / *The Healing Game / Polydor*  
GEOFFREY ORYEMA / *Night To Night / Real World-Caroline*  
RED RED MEAT / *There's A Star Above The Manger Tonight / Sub Pop*  
SHUDDER TO THINK / *50,000 BC / Epic*  
SOFTIES / *Winter Pageant / X*  
SPEARHEAD / *Chocolate Supa Highway / Capitol*  
ANDY STATMAN QUARTET / *Between Heaven And Earth / Shanachie*  
CHRIS WHITLEY / *Terra Incognita / WORK*



## 3DS / *Strange News From The Angels / Flying Nun*

*Strange News* finds the 3Ds not so strange this time around, having somehow managed to mellow even the usually volatile combination of David Mitchell and David Saunders' dizzying (and odd) guitar playing and Mitchell's genuinely spooky voice. The 3Ds' subtle ease into a less frenetic groove isn't damaging, though; the eeriness of their "pop" songs is only heightened more by the drawing out. "Riding The Whale" balances its musical herky-jerk and spiraling on Saunders' halting vocal delivery, a marriage of noise and word resulting in an unlikely pop song not far off in theory from juxtapositions heard on recent Pavement LPs. And while the band's kinetic energy seems more harnessed than usual this time, there are true breath-holding moments where one really does expect the song to take flight and never fall back down. The 3Ds are slightly tongue-in-cheek, but pay no dues to irony (and it wouldn't seem right anyway if they did), and the only thing really lacking on *Strange News* is bassist Denise Roughan's vocals, usually one of the high points of any 3Ds offering. For the rest of the differences, though, one can hardly complain of the relaxed pace when the result is that the pleasure is prolonged. LIZ CLAYTON

DATALOG: Released Feb. 4.

FILE UNDER: Rough-edged, noisy music, evocative of monsters.

R.I.Y.L.: Noisier Neil Young, early Sonic Youth.



## NATACHA ATLAS / *Diaspora / Nation-MCA*

The debut solo album by Transglobal Underground's vocalist, *Diaspora* is a statement of purpose, not just the next global novelty. Natacha Atlas is a gifted singer interested in forging innovative new fusions. A taste for Middle Eastern scales and microtonal modulations may be a prerequisite, however, for enjoying her biggest gift: a liquid, plaintive voice that cascades over melodies which evoke a complex cultural history—Atlas is sprung from a Sephardic-Jewish father, an Arabic mother, and the eclectic club culture of London. *Diaspora* displays an agile artist developing: Singing mostly Arabic lyrics, Atlas swings from hymns of feverish intensity ("Leysh Nat'arak") to deep dub explorations ("Diaspora," "Dub Yalil") to ecstatic danceability ("Yalla Chant"). Most of the songs are built on keyboards, beats, and bass, but several use Arabic-style harmonium and thick strings that swoop dramatically. The record works in almost all of its moods. If some of the remixes are a little sluggish, all of the songs evoke different shades of her expression. "Duden" is an absolutely hypnotic and uplifting song, with Atlas' voice gently soaring into her upper registers. Many listeners will wish they could follow. DANNY HOUSMAN

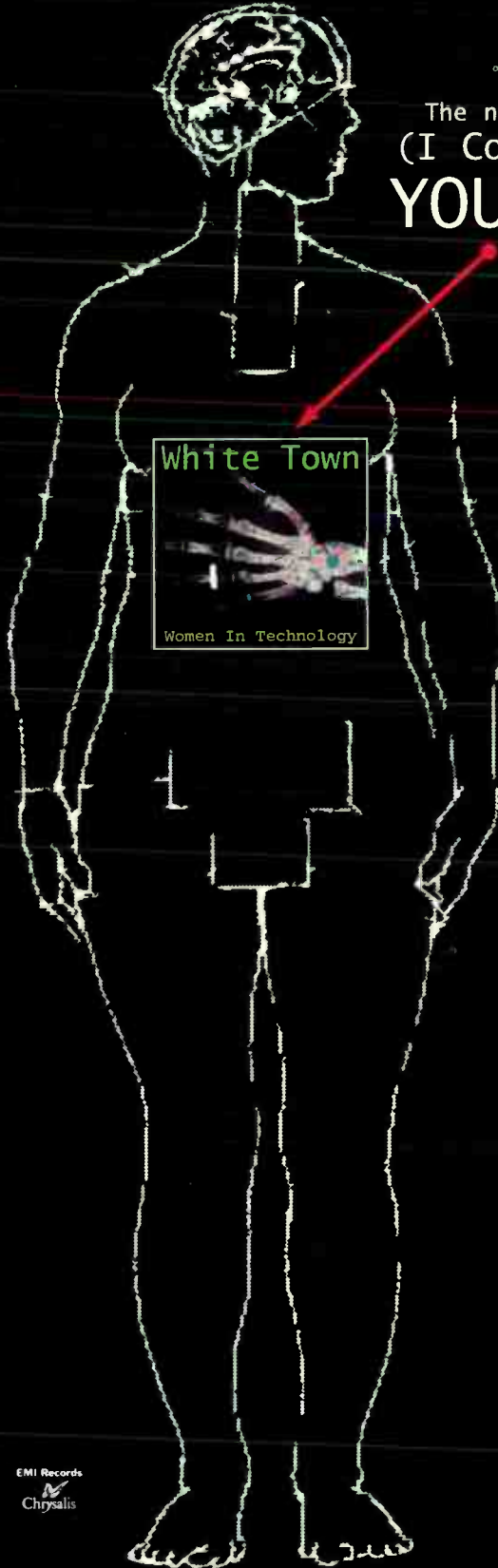
DATALOG: Release date: Mar. 11.

FILE UNDER: Middle-east vocals and global dub.

R.I.Y.L.: Arabic vocals, Sheila Chandra, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

# White Town

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# Women In Technology

World Radio History



**JZ BARRELL / Here's The Surprise... / Ng**

The opening track of this collection of solo-with-guests recordings by New York scene fixture JZ Barrell bodes ill: a pre-programmed Casio rhythm, a dribble of piano, and some mic-out-the-window rain-sounds in the background, presaging yet another home-recorded collection of dribs and drabs. Get past that to the eager, brightly tuneful "Chamomile Tea," with its layers of trumpets and guitars (and rather precious kissing noises) and you've got more than the eponymous "surprise"—you've got a fully fleshed-out, lovingly arranged collection of songs. What sets this record apart from recent "orch-pop" contenders (the overrated Richard Davies/Eric Mathews axis), in addition to Barrell's above-average gifts for solid melodies and tone color, is the fact that he's not afraid to allow his sometimes delicate songs to be played with a healthy dose of abandon, with special credit going to drummers Hamish Kilgour (Mad Scene) and Martin Blazy, who make even two-minute throwaways vivid and forceful. Another nice touch: With

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 14.  
**FILE UNDER:** Well-wrought psych-pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Neutral Milk Hotel, the Apples In Stereo, Brother J.T.

the sweetest pop clustered in the album's first half, the listener is willingly pulled along for the ride when Barrell and company get 'trippier' on the last few songs (the whimsical "Mr. Softy," the harsher guitars of "Tree"). After a few spins, even the diffident opener seems an acceptable gateway for the candyland ahead. *FRANKLIN BRUNO*



**BEATNIK FILMSTARS / Phase 3 / No Life**

Sometimes the Beatnik Filmstars are a punky, obscurely political, and very English one-riff-per-song guitarpop band, in the spirit of their northern soulmates Boyracer. Then, without warning, they're a backs-to-the-crowd, tape-loop-centered, eardrum-scouring Experimental Art Distortion Noise Chamber Group, like their more serious Bristol neighbors Flying Saucer Attack. But most of the time, the Filmstars try to be both at once. They're quick domestic architects and vigorous demolition artists, building durable one-riff, one-lyric, four-chord shouty-boy songs, then bulldozing them into mounds of feedback or burying them under yards of effects. Some tracks clearly cop other bands' tricks: "Favourite Stuff"'s grainy ragga could be a Cornershop boot, and "White Bloke With Skin" is hardly the only song that owes everything to late-1970s Fall. Compared with the Filmstars' two previous full-lengths, these 15 songs and songlets sound much simpler, less contrived; there's less that's really new, but more sharp bits

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Prole art threat.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** The Fall, Boyracer, Guided By Voices, Huggy Bear.

you'll find yourself humming unexpectedly in public places, like the buzzing, seesawing vocal riff that proclaims "You've got it all wrong!" With all these halves and quarters of good songs, the Filmstars might be the most frustrating band in Britain: they were never the most novel, and they're certainly still among the most exciting. *STEPHEN BURT*

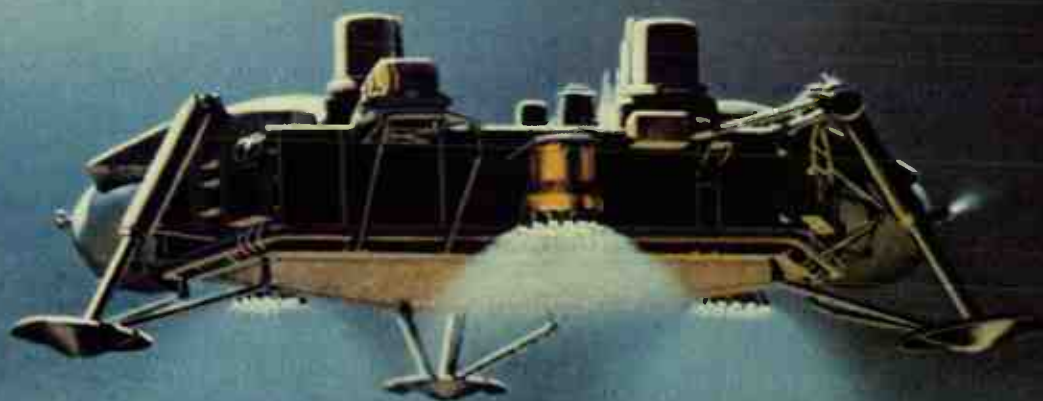


**BETTIE SERVEERT / Dust Bunnies / Matador**

*Dust Bunnies* is very much in the style of the first two Bettie Serveert records, with Carol van Dijk's intense singing matched by guitarist Peter Visser's twisty manipulations of simple chords—at times you can't tell whether it's his guitar or her voice holding those high, languorous notes. The band succeeds at playing its lyrics off music of a different mood. The sing-along tunefulness of "Rudder" sets an uplifting tone, but listen carefully and you'll hear van Dijk sweetly screaming about the kind of hype the band survived early on: "The record seems to do so well and everybody loves a band that sells." Likewise, the fast-rolling garage-rock rhythm of "Story In A Nutshell" belies the simple romance of its words: "The average guy who lived next door, he's never been in love before... now that I finally found you, there's no way around you." Besides the harder-edged songs at its core, *Dust Bunnies* finds Bettie trying out a variety of styles, from the danceable beats of "Geek" to the drumless "Dust Bunny." Still, the group has changed little since that first LP with the little doggie on it, and there's strength in that kind of consistency. *BRENDA LINGUITI*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 25.  
**FILE UNDER:** Crazy guitar girl-rock.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Juliana Hatfield, Throwing Muses, Fuzzy.

# Matthew Sweet



## Blue Sky On Mars

featuring  
WHERE YOU SET LOVE

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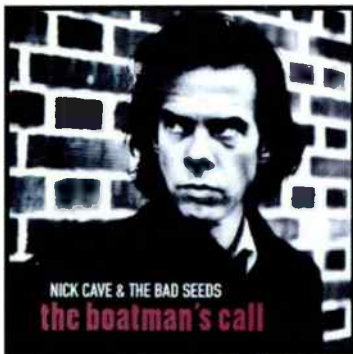


**CARLA BLEY BIG BAND / Goes To Church / Watt**

Like Duke Ellington or Sun Ra, Carla Bley leads a big band while playing a piano. But her compositions don't swing—they walk, calmly, from the brass ensembles of Mozart's Salzburg forward to the decadent bebop of 1960, and there they stop. She plays like a sloth (slowly, two fingers), but her grandeur has a basis in fact: with Charlie Haden, Bley wrote one of the popular classics of recent jazz, "Ballad Of The Fallen." Her success here hangs from her recruiting talent. In the bebop tradition, she limits herself to mapping the chord changes that will rule each song; soloists then take the tunes and run. Bley's control-freak megalomania keeps them from running too far, and the result is accessible, traditional jazz, though the harmonic crescendos

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** Big-band jazz.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Miles Davis, Duke Ellington, liturgical music.

between solos sometimes make you look around for Ed McMahon. The highlight here, "Setting Calvin's Waltz," spends 24 minutes changing three chords. In the end, they've changed, and the effect is one of patient victory. "Religious Experience" makes use of Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus"—not exactly subtle, but all the irony comes from the soloists. Carla seems tickled to be recording live in a church, and probably had to be restrained from breaking into "Faith Of Our Fathers." **NELL ZINK**



**NICK CAVE & THE BAD SEEDS / the boatman's call / Reprise**

There's not much in the way of surprise when you're dealing with Nick Cave. Not that he hasn't grown or progressed, but as time has gone by, Cave has increasingly stylized himself into a mood musician for people who own too many books and have few colors other than black in their wardrobes. *the boatman's call* is no different: morose, somber, low-key in tone. The major developments this time appear to be tripartite: 1) The violence of *Murder Ballads* is now only implied, and his usual Jimmy Webb/Scott Walker-derived tones now meditate on the meaning of love, responsibility and spirituality; 2) e.e. cummings seems to have become a major influence on Cave's capitalization habits; and 3) Cave's voice is beginning to sound eerily like whitebread Canadian folkie Gordon Lightfoot. Not that his material isn't far meatier than Lightfoot's (how can you fault anyone who'd pen

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** Isn't "Nick Cave" a category of his own by now?  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Leonard Cohen, Simon Bonney, the Old Testament.

"brompton oratory," an ode to a vintage pharmaceutical thrill?), but you still can't help but feel as *the boatman's call* unspools that Nick's gonna bust out into "Wreck Of The Edmund Fitzgerald" at any moment. Thankfully, he never does, and Nick Cave's empty-umth LP ends up a fine addition to his long string of late night records for absinthe drinkers. As should the next one, and the next, and I'd dare gamble even the one after that. **TIM STEGALL**



**CRANES / Population Four / Dedicated**

Cranes aren't nearly as creepy as they used to be. The band's first few albums were art-school pretension at its most affecting and well-conceived: a stark canvas of heavily reverbed piano, hot guitar squalls and some skeletal percussion, upholding the little-lost-girl exhalations of frontwoman Alison Shaw. The sound was both gothically imposing in its grand bleakness and minimal in construct, providing ample drama for black-clad fans weaned on Bauhaus and The Cure (for whom Cranes opened on an early tour). *Population Four*, the English outfit's fifth album, marginally holds to the ominous, shadowy character of its earlier work. The departure of guitarist Matt Cope seems to have minimized the more extreme, existentialist sonics of the band, here replaced by the warmer, pop-structured elements of acoustic guitar and almost light-hearted melody. Shaw's helium-soaked vocals can't help but remain ghostly and a little disturbing, but even on the album's more caustic moments, it doesn't produce the forbidding atmospherics that made their earlier stuff so richly unsettling. This new direction should certainly make Cranes' icy persona more palatable to some audiences, but for those who like their gloom cut from the darkest of cloths, *Population Four* is a bit too sunny. **COLIN HELMS**

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Goth-pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Sundays, Cocteau Twins, later Swans.

# driver

*Eight*



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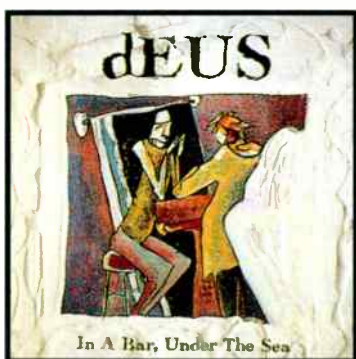
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**dEUS / In A Bar, Under The Sea / Island**

Being a band from Belgium is a mixed blessing. The good thing is there aren't a lot of big-name bands making up some bogus scene into which you will no doubt be lumped, no matter what you sound like. The bad thing is... there aren't a lot of big-name bands there. Perhaps that's why dEUS (don't ask, that's how they spell it) is so schizophrenic; the quintet speaks for bands that never were or might be. *In A Bar, Under The Sea* follows an equally disarming debut and a string of singles and EPs designed mostly to throw pigeonholers off the trail. There is no set dEUS sound; one moment they'll convince you they're doing an edgy bohemian thing with fragments of sounds, as in "Shocking Lack," only to follow it up with something twisted and pithy like "Supermarketsong," which wouldn't sound out of place on a Ween record. Other moments find them creating a demon-lounge atmosphere ("Theme From Turnpike") and a flat-out rock uppercut ("Memory Of A Festival"). Also, watch out for some sweet little ballads and pop songs between all of this shapeshifting. dEUS occasionally employs the overused Tom Waits bullhorn/cheap-microphone gimmick, but offers up enough nuance, invention and lunacy that it can easily be forgiven. *STEVE CIABATTONI*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Speaking in tongues.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Nick Cave, John Cale, John Cage.



**GLASS/BOWIE/ENO / "Heroes" Symphony / Point**

A few years back, neo-classical luminary Philip Glass took *Low*, the first of David Bowie's trilogy of collaborations with Brian Eno, and did the seemingly unthinkable with it: converted it into a symphonic work. Spurred on by the success of the venture, as well as a commission from choreographer Twyla Tharp, Glass has now set his sights upon 1977's "Heroes." In Glass's hands, very little of the Kraftwerk-with-guitars, electromechanical rock 'n' roll undertow that was the base of Bowie and Eno's vision is present. In fact, there's hardly anything recognizable in Glass' 20-years-on view of "Heroes." The "Heroes" Symphony finds him barely retaining even the slightest thread of the album's original melodies, writing new pieces using the same mood as their namesakes. And while it works, the "Heroes" Symphony comes across perceptually as "Heroes" only in tone and name. Still, even if you received it blind as a new symphonic work, with no awareness of its rock lineage, you'd hear it as a piece of great power and majesty. And in that sense, the "Heroes" Symphony shines, and possibly makes a better Bowie record than the former Mr. Jones' recent stab at that newfangled jungle stuff. *TIM STEGALL*

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** String-along-with-Bowie.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Philip Glass, Brian Eno, David Bowie.



**HELMET / Aftertaste / Interscope**

Despite Page Hamilton's public adulation of John Coltrane, you don't become a Helmet fan if you're searching for musical breadth or diversity. After all, the boys have been pounding it out for a good six years now, and still only manage to squeeze about three or four distinct riffs into their agenda. No, you become a Helmet fan because you need to be rocked. And when this NYC-bred crew kick it out, they slam your poor bones like no one else can. *Aftertaste*, the group's fourth album, is exactly what you want it to be: rough, masochistic guitar grooves that pummel with jackhammer intensity, set against a funky, rhythmic bounce that makes you want to shake your booty. While tracks like "Driving Nowhere" and "It's Easy To Get Bored" hint at the melody-conscious outfit we saw on 1994's *Betty*, *Aftertaste* is a more direct, more focused and less "adventurous" outing (i.e. there are fewer tracks to skip over). "Insatiable" is a testosterone-driven fury that's echoed by highlights like "Crisis King," "Harmless" and "Exactly What You Wanted." For those with expectations above the primordial level, Hamilton spouts intelligent, emotional venom throughout the release like a sensitive savage, earning extra points for finally perfecting his screaming-in-key technique. But make no mistake: Helmet's best kept for moments when only an angry, omnipotent guitar-riff will get you through. *M. TYE COMER*

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** Groovin', bone-shattering riff-rock.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Barkmarket, the Jesus Lizard, Quicksand.





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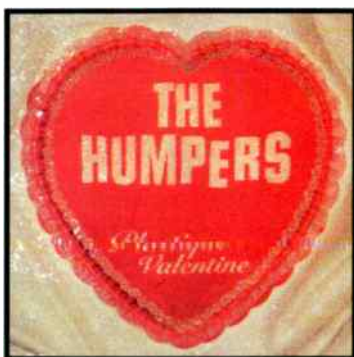
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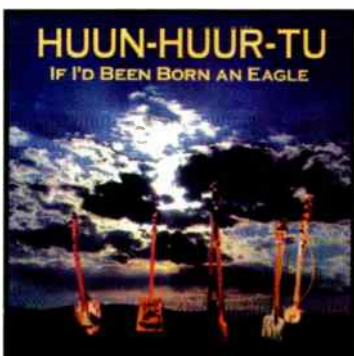
**AND OCEAN**



**HUMPERS / Plastic Valentine / Epitaph**

Long Beach, California's Humpers are the single most explosive band extant, and their fourth album contains the most vicious music the band has committed to tape. In line with the your-ugly-mug-is-Hellbound sentiments of the title track, at least half of this 13-track pipebomb appears to be a treatise on poisoned romance, doubly odd in the face of singer/lyricist Scott Drake's happily-married status. And if it ain't Cupid's follies that have Drake venting at 110 dBs over the most furious pogo screech of the '90s, it's the modern world's lack of substance ("Here Comes Nothing"), fake friends ("Dummy Got A Hunch") or the workaday world ("Chump Change"). The drums, the guitars, the bass, the whole damned shooting match rampages like Harlan Ellison if you tanked him up on cheap crank and ripple and told him Johnny Depp had been cast as his Presley-alike Stag Preston in a film version of his immortal rock opus *Spider Kiss*. *Plastique Valentine* displays a band eyeball-deep in punk tradition that's so thoroughly absorbed its influences that comparisons and parallels are moot. This is truly two-fisted stuff, with both fists made of iron, bucking to be the *Raw Power* of the '90s. **TIM STEGALL**

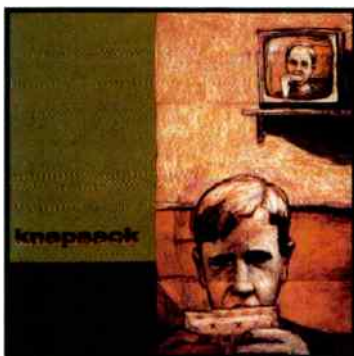
**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Fierce, post-Detroit punk.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Iggy And The Stooges, Red Aunts.



**HUUN-HUUR-TU / If I'd Been Born An Eagle / Shanachie**

While not yet recognized as an independent nation, the republic of Tuva (sandwiched between Russia and Mongolia) has been put on the map by its curious and disarming music. For their third recording, Tuva's chief musical ambassadors Huun-Huur-Tu looked outside and inside the region for inspiration. In addition to employing some Russian musicians and instruments (squeezebox and flute), the group traveled throughout Tuva, learning songs new and old, and nuances of rhythm, melody and singing technique. Considering that Tuvan music often entails producing two to four notes in the same breath, and is accompanied by a fretless one-string horse-hair fiddle, there's plenty of room for nuance. The song lyrics (thankfully translated) are simple and imagistic odes to mighty rivers, waving grains, birds and horses, and the music deepens that imagery. The steady, yet skittish rhythms are unmistakably that of a galloping horse, while the alternately guttural and soaring melodies take the listener from earth to sky, as if one were standing in an open field, head thrown back, spinning around, trying to track the dizzying path of an eagle overhead. The lasting power of this record doesn't lie in the unique singing styles, but in the music's humble spirit and pastoral resonance. **STEVE CIABATTONI**

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 12.  
**FILE UNDER:** Central Asian blues.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** *Deep In The Heart Of Tuva*, Native American chanting, Appalachian blues.



**KNAPSACK / Day Three Of My New Life / Alias**

Something strange happened in the year between Knapsack's promising debut single, "Trainwrecker," and its disappointing first full-length, *Silver Sweepstakes*. It seemed that the band had completely quashed the spark that made its first 7" so exciting. Two years later, it's clear that Knapsack left a few embers smoldering and those embers have erupted into a noisy, post-punk bonfire on its second album, *Day Three Of My New Life*. Listen carefully to the first 20 seconds of the album and you can almost hear the twigs being rubbed together: Guitars sputtering out the same dissonant riff over and over again, vocalist Blair Shehan gently blowing on the orange glow until the song bursts into a blaze that tears through the rest of the album. Shehan's breathy, raspy voice isn't so great, and it's sometimes hard for him to reach his note, but it's in the reaching that he's most affecting. Even if it means he'll be hoarse for days—gargling with salt water and coughing up blood—Shehan is determined to hit that note. It's almost tiring to listen to the trio huffing and puffing its way through these songs, but it's precisely that kind of passion that makes *Day Three* so good. After all, it's the seventh day that's meant for resting. **JENNY ELISCU**

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 25.  
**FILE UNDER:** Melodic post-punk.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Thirty Ought Six, Archers Of Loaf, Garden Variety, Superchunk.

# second thoughts

A look back at an album that came out a while ago, now that we've had some time to think about it.

## COMET / *Chandelier Musings* / Dedicated

Comet sounds as if it wanders around Dallas in a sluggish, woozy, but still ambitiously exploratory state. Like its Texas neighbors Bedhead, Comet starts with drowsy vocals and



a shuffling beat, but it uses that slow-rock drone as a platform for launching the occasional salvo of psychedelic protechnics.

The guitar lines have a disorganized and recently-awakened feel, but they leap off the page and unfurl in colorful, effects-laden hues, usually cresting and subsiding before the songs are over. Mercury Rev alum David Baker's production features his former band's characteristic combination of weirdness and sonic ambition, as nearly all of the songs are dressed up with additional layers of gently colliding guitar parts and hissing background noise, often with extra instrumentation, ranging from the quiet saxophone accompaniment on "She's A Mastermind" to the epic string arrangements and backing chorus of nasal falsettos on the Flaming Lips-derived "Day At The Races." *Chandelier Musings* combines skilled songcraft with lovely and meticulous sonic detail. Just don't put it on while operating heavy machinery, lest you be lulled by its entrancing grooves. *DAVID JARMAN*

**DATALOG:** Released Oct. 29.

**FILE UNDER:** Stoner daydreams.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Flaming Lips, The Verve, Spiritualized.

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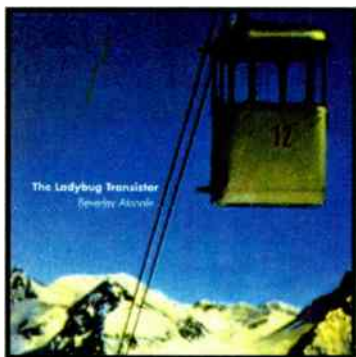
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**LADYBUG TRANSISTOR / Beverley Atonale / Merge**

The main force behind Ladybug Transistor (named for a plastic '70s kiddie radio that sits atop the guitarist's amp during gigs) is said guitarist Gary Olson, who comes across somewhere between Doug Yule singing Lou Reed's songs and Dean Wareham, with a hint of Kermit the Frog's nephew Robin. In Ladybug Transistor, he's augmented by a brother/sister duo, Jeff and Jennifer Baron (Jennifer also doubles in drone-rock band Saturnine, while Jeff plays bass in a Vermont-based band called Guppy Boy). Like its predecessor, *Beverley Atonale* was recorded at Marlboro Farms, the rather optimistic name of a studio built in the basement of a big old house in Brooklyn, New York. Perhaps because of all this, the whole thing has an aura about it suggesting

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Homemade pet sounds.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Bongwater, Luna, Vic Chesnutt.

fun and playfulness: between the band's gentle Velvet Underground/Galaxie 500/Sebadoh-styled songs, there are little interpretive bits like "Forest Marching Song" or "Music For Tennis Courts," a minute-long wash of synthesized sound that would indeed sound intriguing being piped through a

tennis club sound system. There's something really delightful about the idea that four people can create their own little *Pet Sounds*; it's not essential that every song recorded be as big and bold a production as recordings by the Beatles or the Beach Boys, but it'd sure be fun to try. *JAMES LIEN*



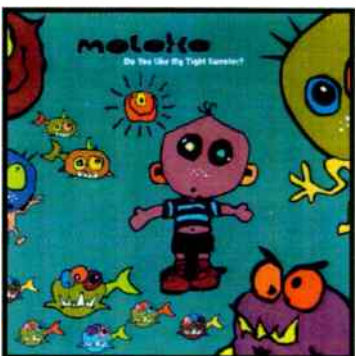
**LONG HIND LEGS / Long Hind Legs / Kill Rock Stars**

Last year, debut albums by Seattle's Satisfact and Olympia's Mocket paid tribute to Joy Division and Wire (respectfully) and made it clear that anything can be a source of nostalgia, even if it happened just 10 or 15 years ago. Olympia's Long Hind Legs (which, though its members operate under pseudonyms, is known to include Unwound bassist Vern Rumsey) fit comfortably alongside those bands, but narrowing down its decade-old influences is substantially more difficult. LHL's songs run the gamut from dark goth numbers to upbeat, pop tunes with almost no ground left uncovered. You'd never guess that it was all done by two guys (three, if you count producer John Goodmanson, whose contribution to *Long Hind Legs*

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 20. A 12" dance remix (by Steve Fisk) of "Open Wide" is also available.  
**FILE UNDER:** New wave revival.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Joy Division, Blur, early Cure, Berlin-era Bowie, Associates.

is no small potatoes). Haunting vocals turn even the cheeriest pop songs eerie, and wry, wicked lyrics reveal a sneering face behind the smiling mask. "Numb" is a love song about emotional paralysis. "Open Wide" expresses a desire to embrace life's painful experiences ("I want to lay

open to joy and monstrosity/Like two eyes that see things/But sometimes get rained in") and "What Are We Doing?" follows the question "Can I drive you home?" with a surprising request to "X you off my list of romantic options." By undermining expectations, albeit subtly, Long Hind Legs has taken familiar music and made it sound fresh again. *JENNY ELISCU*



**MOLOKO / Do You Like My Tight Sweater? / Warner Bros.**

If you're looking for a band that will segue your swank dinner party into a dance shindig, Moloko is the way to go. Even though *Do You Like My Tight Sweater?* was originally released in the U.K. over a year ago, the mix of ingredients still sounds fresh. Your chef Mark Brydon, alum of the industrial funk outfit Chakk Frush, lays down a glistening drum 'n' bass soundscape comprised of gurgling analog synths and stark beats; hostess Roisin Murphy tops things off with playful vocals that can be alternately sensuous and silly. In "I Can't Help Myself," she cooks up rhymes like a hip-hop poet on a beatnik tip: "Martinis/white beard man/an artisan/down at the Can-Can." The lyrics are so goofy that they're endearing, rather than annoying. Much

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Cabaret trip-hop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Björk, Everything But the Girl, Money Mark.

like a complex menu, the album has its outstanding entrees and less memorable dishes that simply cleanse the palate. "Fun For Me" has a bouncy groove akin to P-Funk's "Flashlight," guaranteed to get your backside twitching. "Day For Night" is more minimal and ambient, with a structure

that emphasizes Murphy's breathy swoon. It's rare to find a 17-course album that accompanies both dinner and dancing so effortlessly. *NEIL GLADSTONE*

# mixed signals

Canada's Ninja Tune label maintains a roster of artists specializing in groove manipulation and audio experimentation, reinterpreting music of the present to foretell the sounds of the future. Under the guise of **Coldcut**, label founders Jonathon More and Matt Black present *Coldkrushcuts: Coldcut Food Fight* (Ninja Tune),



the first of a two-disc series that highlights the label's talent, and also stretches the task of the DJ far beyond mere beatmatching. Featuring cuts by Funki Porcini, DJ

Food, London Funk All-Stars, and several others, the disc is a 21-track sound-trip that deviates between slow and devious trip-hop, bouncy hip-hop breaks, soulful jazz grooves and drum and bass flirtations. The other disc comes from the revered **DJ Krush**, who brings forth his turntable interpretations on *Coldkrushcuts: DJ Krush Mix* (Ninja Tune). While many of the same artists are represented, the style and execution of Krush's mix is on a completely different plane, with a vibe distinct from its companion. Unlike Coldcut, who eclectically change pace and direction after every few tracks, Krush cruises down a one-way alley of dense hip-hop rhymes and rhythms that grows more dark and sinister with each additional track. Both sets, however, are given the freedom to breathe and grow under the unwavering and able hands of their creators, embarking on sonic journeys that force you along for the ride. These are prime examples of what can be done with a couple of turntables and a clear vision... Some folks are too serious and cynical to enjoy the hyper-speed, breakneck bounce of happy hardcore. But for those with a soft spot for frenzied 180 BPM breakbeats, joyous piano rhythms, hand-raising techno riffs and ultra-happy shout-outs to peace, love, and happiness ever after, check out *Happy 2B Hardcore* (Moonshine), the ninth offering in Moonshine's three-year-old "Speed Limit 140 BPM Plus" series. Canada's **Anabolic Frolic** is at the decks, mixing up an unrelenting set that would be right at home in a Sesame Street after-hours venue, or in the UK, where the scene has garnered the most appeal. Some listeners will continue to scratch their heads at this crazed, underground phenomenon. But for those who get off on chipmunk-esque choruses as they twitch and twist off into the sunrise, this collection is your inspiration. *M. TYE COMER*



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**VAN MORRISON / *The Healing Game*/ Polydor**

*The Healing Game* is like a well-worn fedora: it might not be the hippest thing in your closet, but it's still got a certain timeless cool—and in the hands of an old pro like Van Morrison, it succeeds without seeming forced. If you haven't heard the songwriter's last few offerings, he's been favoring arrangements that harken back to early '60s-style smooth R&B, with punchy horns and harmonizing backup singers. The cast of contributing musicians includes Hammond organ maestro Georgie Fame, Pee-Wee Ellis of the J.B. Horns, and ex-Them keyboardist Phil Coulter. "Piper At The Gates Of Dawn" (an allusion to Crowley, not Pink Floyd) resurrects *Astral Weeks*' strummy guitar and gentle piano noodling. Chieftan Paddy Maloney adds Celtic flavor to the track with a Uilleann pipe solo. "Burning Ground" is the show stopper, with its instantly hummable doo-wop groove and King Curtis-style saxophone. The lyrics center mostly around romance and redemption. Even though they're far from the

**DATALOG:** Released Mar. 4.  
**FILE UNDER:** Blue-eyed soul.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Sam Cooke, Ray Charles, Van Morrison.

best Van has written, he still delivers lines like "Sometimes we live/sometimes we die/sometimes we cry" with enough visceral conviction to make them emotive. *The Healing Game* won't change anyone's life, but it'll certainly get you through a long night or two. **NEIL GLADSTONE**



**GEOFFREY ORYEMA / *Night To Night* / RealWorld-Caroline**

Like many pop stars from Africa, Uganda's Geoffrey Oryema left his home (concealed in the trunk of a car) for reasons both political and personal. Now living in Paris, Oryema has had 20 years to dwell on his new life and his father's execution by Idi Amin's regime. His third disc, *Night To Night*, plays like an hour in Oryema's head, with his thoughts drifting between his modern European existence and his African memories. Opening with a breezy Mediterranean number featuring just voice and accordion, "Sardinia Memories," *Night To Night* has room for all of Oryema's influences—he follows that track with "Medieval Dream," which sets its rhythm with an African *lukeme* (thumb piano), and then gives way to thunderous waves of prog-rock keyboards. Oryema's lyrical conviction and talent have won the favor (and collaborative assistance) of Peter Gabriel and Brian Eno, but the noble Brits have done little to allow Oryema to create his own character.

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 11.  
**FILE UNDER:** Adult world alternative.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Toni Childs, Peter Gabriel, Robbie Robertson.

One of the most moving songs on the record, "At My Window," is marred by the fact that it sounds so much like a Gabriel track, right down to Oryema's voice replicating Peter's soulful strain. There are worse artists to sound like for sure, and some of the ambient moments on the record are very nice indeed. It's just that you could never guess it's Geoffrey Oryema. **STEVE CIABATTONI**

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# various artists

England's eclectic Touch label has released the superb, surprising *Touch Sampler*, which isn't really a sampler of its catalog—there are a few previously released tracks, and some outtakes from albums of electronica, field-recordings and experimental music.



The rest of the disc is filled up with random cool stuff they had lying around—like a 1948 recording of a controller trying to keep a runaway train from derailing,

the Hafner Trio doing a "short piece for answering machine," and New Order's original demo of "586."... The Reznor-centric soundtrack to David Lynch's *Lost Highway* (Nothing-Interscope) flows in lots of little bits and pieces, very much like the *Natural Born Killers* soundtrack of a few years ago. Besides the new Nine Inch Nails song it's baited with, "The Perfect Drug," there are appearances by Trent solo and members of both his circle (Marilyn Manson, David Bowie) and Lynch's (Angelo Badalamenti, Bowie again)... Speaking of David Lynch movie alumni, Julee Cruise turns up on the *Scream* soundtrack (TVT), collaborating with Deee-Lite's Supa DJ Dmitry on the forgettable "Artificial World."

The disc also includes a lot of tracks that have seen better albums, by the likes of Moby and Nick Cave, as well as the usually respectable Soho doing an amazingly pointless cover of the Icicle Works' "Whisper To A Scream."... *Dutch Harbor: Where The Sea Breaks Its Back* is a documentary with a gorgeous soundtrack (Atavistic). The music is credited to "the Boxhead Ensemble," a group of Chicago improvisors—only a few of whom play on any one track—including members of Tortoise, Gastr Del Sol and Eleventh Dream Day, as well as the underappreciated reedman Ken Vandermark. Honorary Chicagoan Will Oldham, of Palace, gets in on the act with "Ebb's Folly," on which he's accompanied memorably by Jim O'Rourke's tape/electronics/guitar trickery... *Japan: New Psychedelic Underground* (Manifatture Criminali) compiles tracks by five groups that are exactly what it sounds like. In the case of Mainliner and Ohkami No Kijan, "psychedelic" means Blue Cheer: long, bludgeoning jams. Tatsuya Yoshida (of Ruins) also appears on his own and with the grunge-Beefheart-ish Musica Transonic, and Toho Sara is a less rock, more chamber-music ensemble. **DOUGLAS WOLK**



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**RED RED MEAT / There's A Star Above The Manger Tonight / Sub Pop**



DATALOG: Released March 25.  
 FILE UNDER: Deconstructive folk-rock.  
 R.I.Y.L.: Beck, Doo Rag, Neil Young.

What do you do when you're an indie band that's deconstructed '70s folk-rock to the point where it almost sounds new again? If you're Chicago's Red Red Meat, you weave a little hifalutin' technology into the mix (i.e. samplers and sequencers) and deconstruct things a little more. *There's A Star Above the Manger Tonight* starts off sounding a lot like the quartet's previous album, *Bunny Gets Paid*. The first cut, "Sulfer," has that trademark languid twang reminiscent of a Neil Young barn-burner played at half-speed. But towards the end of the tune, a dub influence takes over. The beat that was once lumbering is now hypnotic; the brittle, scratchy guitar flourishes are awash in delay and echo. "Chinese Balls" borders on Beck-style folk-funk, with a booming drum machine pattern and megaphone vocals. By the time "Second Hand Sea" and "Paul Pachal" roll around, *There's A Star* has practically turned into the indie-rock version of *Altered States*, taking pop back to its prehistoric roots. The murmured thuds and shrieks found here approximate an ultrasound of the primordial soup. This uncharted territory is disconcerting at first—there are neatly packaged pop tunes here. But for a band that had seemed almost set in its ways, it's a commendable step into much more intriguing territory. *NEIL GLADSTONE*

The Numbers came into being when band founder & singer/songwriter Tim McHugh's house burned down destroying his drum set. Two years later he immediately bought an electric guitar and amplifier. Not too long after that, he put together his band... —from an email press release for the Atomic Numbers

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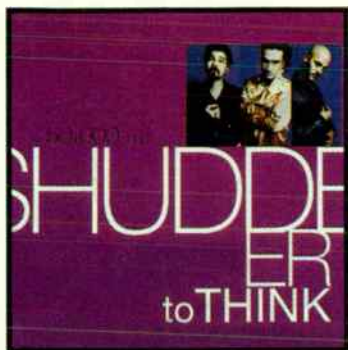
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SHUDDER TO THINK / 50,000 BC / Epic ●

Shudder's lead singer, Craig Wedren, would be perfect on Broadway, in the role of the aspiring rock 'n' roller in the boho musical *Rent*. Not only does he have a soaring, tremulous voice that could follow Ethel Merman's all the way back to the cheap seats, but like the ballad-wailing *Rent* character, he's associated with a bare-bones underground scene that doesn't really reflect his own grander aesthetic. In the confusion of intentions surrounding STT's previous album, *Pony Express Record*, it was possible to believe they still held on to some of the punk sensibilities of their Dischord days. *50,000 BC* puts the kibosh on that theory, with its smoothed-over guitar sound and drums about as heavy as a paper clip. Recast as a terse-but-suave pop-punk band, Shudder's trump card is its fairly unconventional songwriting. Unfortunately, it doesn't play that card too often. The band backs into a hook or two now and then, as on "Resident Wine," but doesn't come up with anything as riveting as the 1995 breakthrough single "X-French Tee-Shirt." At least when the band gets going with a strong 4/4 and Wedren sings off at an angle to it, there are some good moments, as on "Kisses Smack of Past Action" and some other tracks on the album's muscular second half. They tilt at the wordy, ironic style of an Elvis Costello & The Attractions gone hardcore, but they're best off when Wedren forgets to enunciate so hard. A re-recorded version of 1990's "Red House" is a case in point. At the end of each careful chorus, Wedren tilts his heads back in a monosyllabic croon—a refrain with more staying power than the whole rest of the album. *ANDREA MOED*

**DATALOG:** Released Feb. 25.  
**FILE UNDER:** Suave pop-punk.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Caulfields, Queen, Feargal Sharkey.

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**SOFTIES / Winter Pageant / K**

The worst thing that could happen to the Softies is that they could be accidentally dismissed as “pleasant,” then ignored. The simplicity and ease with which all of *Winter Pageant* skates along isn’t an accomplishment lacking in depth—in fact, part of the band’s craft is making its craft easy to overlook. What the Softies are doing, they are doing *very* well. The duo’s guitar parts are as soft and strummy as the listener anticipates, but the guitars make themselves felt not just as accompaniment but as *instruments*. Rose Melberg and Jen Sbragia’s voices are complementary, but there’s a cool space between them: a graceful austerity that creates some of the record’s most sublime moments. The subtle and light “Tracks And Tunnels” and “Splintered Hands” are two of their best. Both songs flow so smoothly that they almost obscure their own catchiness—inside all of the breeziness, there’s a gorgeous hook. The wonderful “Make Up Your Mind” ends the album with a knockout peck on the cheek. Its epigram “I’m just another disaster/you managed to avert” elevates even the song’s class-ring scenario to a more meaningful level, and it encompasses the Softies’ best qualities: gracefully executed song, and guileless sentiment. *LIZ CLAYTON*

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 21.  
**FILE UNDER:** Cool-edged, warm-bodied pop.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Lois, Zombies, Chris Stamey.

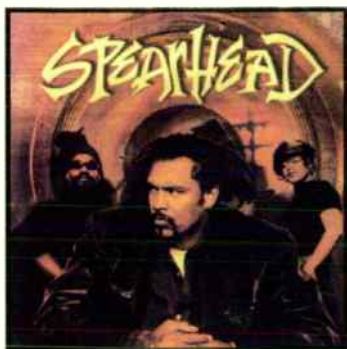
“My goal was to reach 100,000. Now I’ll be bummed if we sell less than that in a week.”  
 —No Doubt’s Adrian Young, on the sales of the band’s *Tragic Kingdom*

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**SPEARHEAD / Chocolate Supa Highway / Capitol**

After disbanding his avant-hip-hop-funk group Disposable Heroes Of Hiphoprisy, Michael Franti regrouped and retrenched, emerging into the early '90s with Spearhead. The concept was strong: combine Franti's brilliant, topical, Chuck D-inspired raps with live funk, reggae, and soul music to create a multi-racial, multi-culti, Sly Stone-like aggregation. At Spearhead's early shows, the group seemed more like some kind of extended family or musical commune than a typical band. The album was warmly received by the kind of critics and audiences who like that sort of thing, and *Chocolate Supa Highway* continues the evolution. Unfortunately, such an ambitious agenda is excruciatingly difficult to sustain, especially musically, and *Chocolate Supa Highway* lacks the immediacy and punch of the earlier effort; it's just as dense, and more subtle, but less catchy and less fun. The concepts are still good, but the music isn't as nearly as fresh. But there's still some ambitious ideas to keep folks guessing, such as when Franti presents a funky take on country ("Wayfarin' Stranger") that sounds like Emmylou Harris being backed by the Bar-Kays, or when he does a Barry White-sounding jam about condoms. Consumer advice: if the concept intrigues you, go back and check out the first CD. If you bought the first one and dug it, you'll like this one, too, but you'll probably end up pulling the other one out of your collection and listening to it more. *JAMES LIEN*

**DATALOG:** Release date: Mar. 25.  
**FILE UNDER:** Educational hip-hop funk, level 201.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** Sly Stone, Arrested Development.

"We were playing this whole album [*Odelay*] on Lollapalooza. And we were getting these terrible reviews, like 'what the hell is this crap.'" —Beck

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**ANDY STATMAN QUARTET / Between Heaven And Earth / Shanachie**

When a record is subtitled "Music of the Jewish Mystics," you know it's going to be a little introverted, but mandolin/clarinet virtuoso Andy Statman's *Between Heaven And Earth* is more meditative than anything else. There's a touch of klezmer in the melodies, but more than anything, the disc recalls, believe it or not, John Coltrane, in the exchange of ideas between Statman's clarinet and Kenny Werner's piano. And then you get the duet between Statman and Bela Fleck, a gorgeous, lulling piece, and, finally, Statman playing mandolin with David Grisman, a sort of country/MittelEurope smile to end it all. The mysticism may be Jewish, but the spirit behind it is universal in the way it can touch. It doesn't pull you in as such, but after a little while you find yourself following along of your own accord; by the time each piece is done, you feel as if you've been on a journey that leaves you satisfied and fulfilled. And that is exactly the effect Statman was trying to achieve. So maybe you won't end up wearing a yarmulke; it really doesn't matter. This is the music of nurture, not nature. *CHRIS NICKSON*

**DATALOG:** Released Jan. 21.  
**FILE UNDER:** Cabalistic jazz.  
**R.I.Y.L.:** John Coltrane, Klezematics.

up wearing a yarmulke; it really doesn't matter. This is the music of nurture, not nature. *CHRIS NICKSON*

"Jerry does not live physically on this plane, but I think of him all the time. I see him here and there, images that look like that little bearded Santa Claus. And physically, I hear that guitar in my left ear—the ear that he partially deafened." —*Mickey Hart on his late Grateful Dead colleague, Jerry Garcia*

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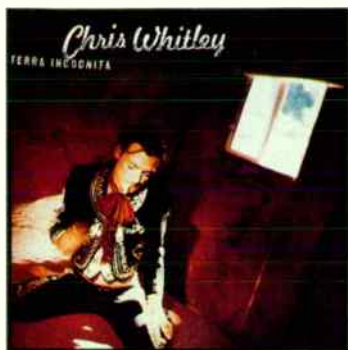
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CHRIS WHITLEY / *Terra Incognita* / WORK ●

When you see Chris Whitley, sleeveless shirt hanging off his shoulders, his bare arms a knot of vein and scant muscle, he seems both so tough and so vulnerable—trouble and troubled. His voice is just as thin and sinewy as his frame, and when it stretches out of the warmth of his bluesy introspection, bending and then cracking, it lends an affecting credibility to songs about people “lonelier than God” (“Weightless”) and lyrics like “Down down down/All is revealed when you hit the ground” (“Power Down”). Whitley has a facility for making heartbreak seem life-taking, elemental, but in the past, it’s gotten twisted up in others’ visions for his records. *Terra Incognita* starts with the scraping of his left hand against the strings of his acoustic on the plaintive “As Flat As The Earth,” a reassuring sound to fans of his first record, *Living With The Law*, many of whom had trouble with the fractious follow-up, *Din Of Ecstasy*. As the Neil Young-like distortion of “Automatic” kicks in shortly thereafter, and the record proceeds to combine dobro picking with waves of feedback, it’s clear that *Terra* effectively combines the folksy acoustic blues of *Law* with *Din*’s wash of anxious electric guitar, reintroducing Whitley the vocalist to Whitley the guitar player. Fittingly, the sound is lean and taut, and packs an emotional wallop. *SCOTT FRAMPTON*

DATALOC: Released Feb. 18.

FILE UNDER: Taut blues-rock.

R.I.Y.L.: Neil Young & Crazy Horse, Kevin Salem, Tom Petty.

“We just got treated like a wet food stamp.” —Raphael Saadiq, of the band Tony Toni Toné, on the group’s experience touring as the opening act for Janet Jackson



“WE CAN BE HEROES,  
JUST FOR ONE DAY...”

“HEROES”  
SYMPHONY

by PHILIP GLASS from the music of David Bowie & Brian Eno



Philip has put more of himself in this new album, but the irony is that I believe that he’s actually put his finger on more of my original voice.

David Bowie

In February 1993, Philip Glass broke new ground with the release of “*Low*” *Symphony*, a mesmerizing tribute to the pioneering music of David Bowie and Brian Eno.

Now, Glass turns to the progressive 1977 Bowie/Eno album

*Heroes* for inspiration

for his next symphony.



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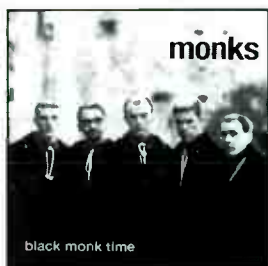
[ by James Lien ]

## IN THE BINS

A hip to the hop to the hippety hop... The roots of hip-hop are celebrated on Rhino's *The Sugar Hill Records Story*, the most ambitious single-label box set since the Stax/Volt boxes. This lavish five-disc, 55-cut set (it even includes a bonus disc on 12" vinyl!) tells the tale of the legendary Bronx-based Sugar Hill Records label, where some of the most awesome early hip-hop recordings were made. Grandmaster Flash's "The Message," Sugarhill Gang's "Rapper's Delight," and cuts from original old-schoolers like Busy Bee, The Treacherous Three and Spoonie Gee are all here. It's also nice that the box set includes the lesser-known tracks from the same time period as well as the mega-hits, assuring that it will provide indispensable block-rocking fare for years to come.



And ya don't stop: in another musical realm, Rhino has also released *Yardbird Suite*, a near-definitive two-disc portrait of **Charlie Parker**, the legendary saxophonist who pretty much wrote and lived the book on playing jazz back in the '40s and '50s. Whether soaring high or smoldering low, the energy and honesty in these recordings are so pure it's hard not to be blown away. Sometimes the recordings are a little rough, but the grainy quality somehow adds to the mood—it's music that's absorbing to listen to. In a way, hearing this music is kind of saddening, if only because it makes 98% of the jazz being played today seem so pale and pathetic in comparison with Parker's mind-blowing bands. Today's jazz guys may look sharp in their smart suits, but most of them probably couldn't last 15 minutes on the bandstand beside Parker and his awesomely talented sidemen. If you like your bop to really *bop*, then this is for you.



The **Monks** were American servicemen stationed in Germany sometime in the late '60s, who formed a band, shaved their heads tonsorially to resemble their namesake, and released *Black Monk Time* to a bewildered German audience. Of course, it didn't do much at the time, but somehow, in the way that things always seem to work so weirdly in this world, it went on to become a seminal, vastly influential record amongst underground, "alternative" and forward-thinking people. To wit, The Fall has covered *three* Monks songs, and in fact, Mark E. Smith has frequently borrowed liberally from their original musical approach and sound. It's been available as an import for years, but now Infinite Zero-American has re-released it, and it's still a lot of fun. If you're really feeling Monkish, check out the sometimes-hard-to-find book also called *Black Monk Time*, written by one of the group's members, presumably to get some kind of money or infamy out of the whole thing.

One of this writer's personal favorite life moments occurred late one night about five years ago: I fell asleep with New York radio station WBAI on in the background, and woke up at about 4 a.m. listening to three Jamaican DJs yakking away in the studio, spinning a late-night salute to Curtis Mayfield & the Impressions. Hearing three heavily-accented Jamaicans talk so reverently in Kingston patois about all those classic '60s soul records made me suddenly realize that nearly all the great reggae artists first came to fame as part of vocal trios: the Wailing Souls, Black Uhuru, the Congos, even Bob Marley's original Wailers. Shanachie has released a wonderful little compilation called *The Power Of The Trinity*, spotlighting roots harmony vocal groups from the early '70s, and it's wonderful, wonderful stuff.



## SERGE GAINSBOURG

Comic Strip/Couleur Café/Du Jazz  
Dans Le Ravin

Mercury

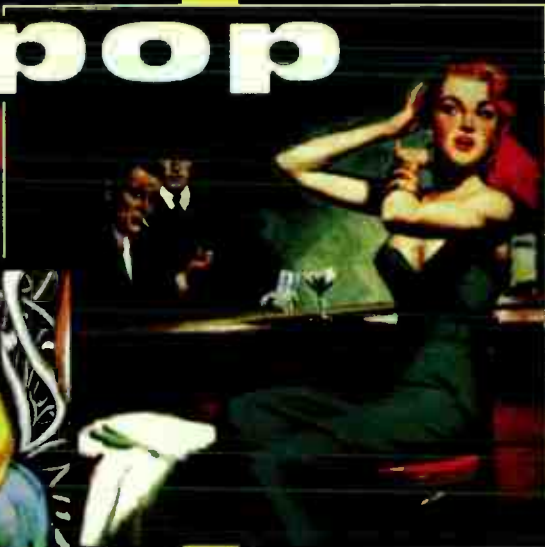
Sigh. For French pop legend Serge Gainsbourg, life is a great and meaningless blur of existential malaise and endless, often near-anonymous, amorous affairs. He stubs out a Citanes and looks pensively over at the bartender. If you are female and beautiful, the three-day stubble on his chin, his designer leather jacket and the scotch amidst the unmelted ice in his glass all scream for you to get into bed with him, even if you don't speak French. These three albums are some of the most deliciously decadent music ever made, with Serge mumbling and moaning atop a combination of jazz, pop, Beatles music, and French cabaret tunes. *Comic Strip* and *Couleur Café* are my favorites of the three here, although fans of space age bachelor pad music will enjoy the instrumental passages of *Du Jazz Dans Le Ravin*, which sounds like a sexy version of *Pet Sounds* set on the boulevards and back alleys of Paris. Of course, it's not all moody couplings and partings: the French can also be extremely silly people, as in "*Comic Strip*"'s whooped chorus: "Zip-she-bang! Pow! Blop! Whizz!" Gainsbourg's music perfectly complements a lot of current favorites from the techno-pop of *Stereolab*, to the bubblegum dance music of *Pizzicato Five*, to the Euro-dance of *Komeda*. Hear it and sigh.

Strange Love



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## RIFFS

**Anal Cunt** is as rude, shallow, disturbing and wretched as ever on its latest album, *I Like It When You Die*. Lead howler Seth Putnam and co. will never change, and who would want them to? No matter how politically incorrect, vile or juvenile a subject may be, nothing is off limits to this band. Over the years, Anal Cunt has stuck to what it does best: making fun of the music industry and all its participants, while causing fans to wet their pants laughing along with the hysterical, short-'n'-stinging tunes. Some of my faves from the band's latest offensive 52-song outing are "311 Sucks," "No, We Don't Want To Do A Split Seven Inch With Your Stupid Fucking Band," "You Went To See Dishwalla And Everclear (You're Gay)," "You're Old (Fuck You)," "Ha Ha, Your Wife Left You," "Your Best Friend Is You," and "You Look Adopted..." It's "make-out music for metal heads"! Compiled by the "women of Rhino Records," ***Feel Like Makin' Love: Romantic Power Ballads*** not only contains some of the best power ballads around, but also brings back many fond memories! Some of the highlights include **Skid Row's** "I Remember You," **Tesla's** "Love Song," **Cinderella's** "Don't Know What You Got (Till It's Gone)," **Winger's** "Headed For A Heartbreak," **Cheap Trick's** "The Flame," **Whitesnake's** "Is This Love," **Bad Company's** "Feel Like Makin' Love" and **Foreigner's** "I Want To Know What Love Is." Don't miss out on this record because you're too cool to admit that you once sniffled along with all of these emotional rockers when you were just a pimply-faced teenager nursing a broken, love-torn heart. And we *know* that you played these very tunes while trying to "create the mood" for your significant other in the back seat of a car or in your bedroom while your parents were out for the night! C'mon, admit it!



## VENOM The Second Coming

Nuclear Blast America

Before Slayer, Metallica, Megadeth and Anthrax, there was Venom. Before thrash, death and power metal became household words, there was Venom. Almost two decades ago, these originators of thrash/black/power metal began their rabid worldwide assault from Newcastle, England. Venom's live shows were filled with enough lasers and pyrotechnics to melt your retinas, and the volume was pumped up loud enough to blast out the eardrums of even the toughest metalheads. Over the years, internal friction caused the departure of guitarist Mantas and eventually singer/bassist Cronos, leaving drummer Abaddon to ponder the future of the band. But, to everyone's surprise, seven years later, the original bile-spewing threesome joined forces once again to headline last year's Dynamo Festival in Holland. That night, Venom was reborn in front of 89,000 rabid fans, backed by 17 tons of staging, 120,000 watts of light, 80,000 watts of PA, two-and-a-half 40 foot trucks of pyro, two giant screens and a 47-person crew. Recorded live during this legendary performance, *The Second Coming* contains a full-color booklet, a one-hour video of the now legendary performance and a one-hour CD with bonus tracks included. After all these years, Venom still sticks by its original philosophy: "If you can't do it big, don't do it at all!"

## METAL TOP 25

- 1 KORN Life Is Peachy *Immortal-Epic*
- 2 TOOL *Ænima Zoo*
- 3 CORROSION OF CONFORMITY Wiseblood *Columbia-CRG*
- 4 VISION OF DISORDER Vision Of Disorder *Supersoul-Roadrunner*
- 5 DOWNSSET. do we speak a dead language? *Mercury*
- 6 MARILYN MANSON Antichrist Superstar *Nothing-Interscope*
- 7 STUCK MOJO Pigwalk *Century Media*
- 8 ACID BATH Pagan Terrorism Tactics *Rotten*
- 9 BRUTAL TRUTH Kill Trend Suicide *Relapse*
- 10 SICK OF IT ALL Cool As A Mustache (EP) *EastWest-IEG*
- 11 BROKEN HOPE Loathing *Metal Blade*
- 12 VARIOUS ARTISTS Mortal Combat: More Combat *TVT*
- 13 CARCASS Wake Up And Smell The Carcass *Earache*
- 14 EARTH CRISIS Gomorrah's Season Ends *Victory*
- 15 DANZIG Blackacidevil *Hollywood*
- 16 SIX FEET UNDER Alive And Dead (EP) *Metal Blade*
- 17 CATHEDRAL Supernatural Birth Machine *Earache*
- 18 NEFILIM Zoon *Metal Blade*
- 19 PIST-ON Number One *Fierce-FLG*
- 20 TYPE O NEGATIVE October Rust *Roadrunner*
- 21 DEADGLY Screamin' With The Deadguy Quartet (EP) *Victory*
- 22 FLOODGATE Penalty *Roadrunner*
- 23 HANDSOME 'Needles' (5) *Epic*
- 24 NOTHINGFACE Pacifier *DCide*
- 25 SOUNDTRACK Beavis And Butt-Head Do America *Geffen*

Compiled from the CMJ (New Music Reports) weekly *Local Rock* charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio stations.





## WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY

"Our Candidate" 🎧

Gerrn Blandsten

The World/Inferno Friendship Society—a Brooklyn, New York, duo that will reportedly soon be performing live as a nine-piece group—is what you call a high-concept band: the idea is, as its name suggests, to build a bridge of common understanding between Earth and Hell. With its third single, whose lyrics outline Dante Alighieri's putative Presidential platform, the band has committed the world's first marching-band/new wave/Dixieland/indie-pop hybrid. Backed by howling crowds, banjo, tuba, bleeping synthesizers, John Philip Sousa samples, scratching, rock guitars and what sounds like every other instrument in the store, whoever's singing Dante's part declaims his campaign promises: "Eyes and teeth will fill the streets and you and me we'll be able to sleep!" The other side is called "All Of California And Everyone Who Lives There Stinks," and the lyrics are pretty much what you'd expect. Again, though, they're transformed by bizarre, mannered singing—the Human League's Philip Oakey is probably the closest reference point—and by an arrangement that incorporates more stuff than the song can easily handle, including a guitar line that very nearly quotes *some* Californian classic or other.

(by Douglas Walk)

# singles

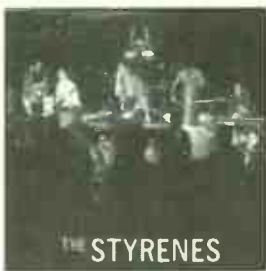
HISS & CRACKLE

**Cibo Matto's** long-delayed "Sugar Water" single has appeared as an EP, *Super Relax* (Warner Bros.), just in time for the (amazing) video. It's got four versions of "Sugar Water," including a nice acoustic remake, plus "Crumbs" (an improv from their first EP) and covers of the Stones' "Sing This All Together" (what, no food reference?) and Antonio Carlos Jobim's "Aguas de Marco." The reasons to check it out, though, are the two genuinely new Cibo Matto songs: "Spoon," with its classic funk bass line, and the Beastie Boys-ish live jam "BBQ"—that, of course, would stand for "Brooklyn-Bronx-Queens."

The amazing Boston hardcore band **Fat Day** appears on a couple of essential new records. Its side of a split single with Ohio's punk veterans **Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments** (on Ratfish) has four tiny jolters, averaging 40 seconds each, with thick, savage guitar parts chopped into mincemeat by the band's wildly jittery rhythms. TJSA, for its lower-fi side, comes up with the pounding "Petty Thief" and a scuzzy little free-form rant called "I'm Too Old For This Shirt." Then there's *The Guide To Your Demise*, a label-less 7" hardcore compilation with seven Boston bands from the scene that centers on the communal Fat Day house. Some of them are awfully silly (like the Pissed-Officers, who are responsible for the title track, or Gerty Farish, maybe the only band ever to attempt Casio hardcore), but they all rock, and you can't make out any of the words anyway.



**Vehicle Flips** have two new singles' worth of leader Frank Boscoe's sweet, weedy songs about mild incompetence and everyday despair. "Ompompanoosuc" (Numeric) concerns getting lost on the road in the middle of nowhere; its sleeve helpfully includes a few lines designated for "Notes." "Salad Bar," the flip side of the long, slow "Terminus" (Harriet), finds the singer at a restaurant with a sign advertising "meaningful opportunities": "I'm up for meaningful, yes I am/Meaningful is my one demand."



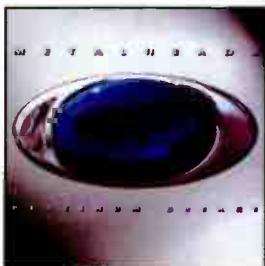
STYRENES

The classic Cleveland art-punk band the **Styrenes** never really went away. They just got artier, weirder, more interested in combining classical composition with rock intensity, and more sporadically productive. The "One Fanzine Reader Writes" 12" (Drag City) has two lengthy spoken-word-plus-music pieces recorded four years ago, settings of stories by vocalist Mike Hudson. Best of all, the record comes with actual sheet music for the A-side, including notation for the rhythms of the words Hudson speaks. Tempo indication: "Fast Rock."

A few quick drops of the needle: **Melt-Banana's** "\$10 A Pile" (Gentle Giant) has radically different remakes of two songs from last year's spazzcore gem *Scratch Or Stitch*. These are basically the meatier arrangements the Japanese quartet played on its American tour a few months ago, with the significant addition of cluster-bashing, Cecil Taylor-ish lead piano by guest Onotetsu—half of each track is a piano solo... Heavy Vegetable broke up last year, but main songwriter Rob Crow and singer Eléa Tenuta have a new band, **Thingy**, whose debut is a 7-song, 12-minute EP, *Staring Contest* (Headhunter-Cargo). Recorded before they'd found a drummer, it mostly recalls the little-heard acoustic side of Heavy Veggie, but Crow's knack for tiny, sharp songs and contrapuntal vocal harmonies is intact.

## THESE ARE THE BREAKS...

You've heard about Goldie's Metalheadz organization and the cadre of devotees who scour the import racks for the label's every release. After too long a wait, a collection of the label's heart-stopping breakbeat hymns now sees an American release with the enormous **Platinum Breakz** (ffrr-London), designed for both enthusiast and neophyte. If you think drum-and-bass is one monolithic block of torrential beats and indistinguishable artists and tracks, this compilation will change your mind. The first minute of Lemon D's claustrophobic, paranoid "This Is Los Angeles" will give you chills. Suturing samples from Run-DMC, Todd Terry, Roy Ayers, and Tom Brokaw (of course!) into a nightmarish vision of modern L.A., this is a track you won't soon forget. Hidden Agenda brings Earth, Wind & Fire into a hailstorm of competing percussive effects on the murderous "The Flute Tune," hardly as tranquil as its title suggests. Alex Reece's now canonized "Pulp Fiction" is included here, with 19 more tracks that will allow your mind and body no respite... Eric Hilton and Rob Garza are two low-key dance producers from D.C. who toil under the name **Thievery Corporation**. The duo has released a clutch of highly praised singles in the past 18 months, and its debut long-player, *Sounds From The Thievery Hi-Fi* (18th St. Lounge Music), is a floor-slammer of uncommon proportions. Tracks like "Shaolin Satellite" have a rhythmic momentum that requires a deep head-nod at the very least. These folks revel in erasing the distinctions between house and experimental hip-hop. "A Warning" is a deep, yawning, digital-dub exercise with a toaster running across the surface of the bassline (rumor has it that Thievery Corporation is planning to collaborate with legendary dub producer Scientist in the near future). There's even a hint of a bossa nova influence towards the album's conclusion, which demonstrates that things are just getting going down in the Thievery Corporation labs.



## ROCKERS HI-FI

Mish Mash

Warner Bros.

With the renewed interest in dub's spectres, collectives such as Birmingham, England's Rockers Hi-Fi are moving to the forefront of contemporary electronic dance music. The group cut its teeth on the sounds of Lee Perry and King Tubby as young clubgoers in Birmingham in the mid-'80s. By the early part of this decade, they had formed their own Different Drummer stable to release the work of other Birmingham dub crews. An early single, "Push Push," gained the group a record deal in the U.S., and its debut album won high praise on this side of the Atlantic. The single was a hypnotic, dense mixture of swollen acid bass lines and gorgeous, plaintive vocal samples from Jamaican legend Johnny Osbourne. With their sprawling, ambitious second album, *Rockers Hi-Fi* retain the power of dub's fluid and angular textures while moving into new territory, pushing back dub's boundaries and manipulating new implements of sound in a way that makes its music difficult to refuse. Full songs like the lilting "90 Degree Fuzzwalk" and "Queen Of The Chetto" appear next to such elongated dub symphonies as "One With Another," peppered with snippets of Martin Luther King speeches, and the thick, swirling "Copycat."

## DANCE TOP 25

- 1 APHEX TWIN Richard D James Album *Warp/Sire-ETG*
- 2 VARIOUS ARTISTS Hardhop & Trypno V2 *Moonshine*
- 3 JB3 Close Grind *NovaMute-Mute*
- 4 DJ SHADOW Endroducing *Mo Wax/ffrr-London*
- 5 FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON Dead Cities *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- 6 VARIOUS ARTISTS Macro Dub Infection Vol. 2 *Gyroscope-Caroline*
- 7 TRICKY Pre-Millennium Tension *Island*
- 8 SPRING HEEL JACK 68 Million Shades *Island Independent*
- 9 VARIOUS ARTISTS Metalheadz Presents Platinum Breaks *ffrr-London*
- 10 BT Ima *Perfecto Kinetic-Reprise*
- 11 ENIAC "In Your Face" (5") *Logic*
- 12 BJORK Telegram *Elektra-EEG*
- 13 PAPERCLIP PEOPLE The Secret Tapes Of Dr. Etch *Planet E*
- 14 VARIOUS ARTISTS Incursions In Illibent *Asphodel*
- 15 ONEIROID PSYCHOSIS Fantasies About Illness *Decibel*
- 16 VARIOUS ARTISTS Breakbeat Science *Volume (UK)*
- 17 INDEX Black Light Twilight *COP International*
- 18 CIRRUS "Break In" (12") *Moonshine*
- 19 CHEMICAL BROTHERS "Setting Sun" (5") *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- 20 MARDEN HILL Hijacked *Stepping Stone*
- 21 VARIOUS ARTISTS DJ Mark Farina - Mushroom Jazz *OM*
- 22 VARIOUS ARTISTS Wipeout XI *Astralwerks-Caroline*
- 23 VARIOUS ARTISTS Noomrise *State Of Mind-UCMG NY*
- 24 MY PSYCHOTIC MOTOR The You EP (EP) *Suburban Dance Music*
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS Cop Compilation *COP International*

Compiled from the CMJ New Music Report weekly RPM charts, collected from CMJ's panel of progressive radio listeners.



## KRS-ONE

### I Got Next

Jive

In his historic career, KRS-One has worn many hats: teacher, philosopher, egoist, madman. Whatever your feelings are for our charismatic protagonist, Kris Parker continues to be one of the strongest forces in hip-hop. *I Got Next* is similar to his last few releases, and it's got its fair share of brilliant material. The instructive "The MC," the Blondie-inspired throwback party gem "Rapture's Delight," and the vivid lyrical wordplay of "Blowe" are all sure to satisfy BDP devotees, but as always, Kris can be too damn experimental. Questions begin to arise, like why is he sharing mic time with Hot 97's hot-shot Latina DJ Angie Martinez, why is R&B crooner Joe on the overtly commercial tale of domestic abuse "Stop Schemin," and what's up with the be-bop backdrop on "You Must Be Crazy"? Epitomizing one of the titles on this album, Kris has a tendency to go "Over Your Head." Thankfully, when he comes back down to Earth, the results can be phenomenal. Over "A Friend"'s searing strings, Kris gets personal and expresses his real-life difficulties in finding genuine confidants. "I hope I am what you've expected," he concludes, and for the first time in a long time, you'll feel empathy for the man whose longevity continues to continue.

[ by Elliott Wilson ]

# hip-hop

## BONUS BEATS

Also adding a new release to his already extensive resume is **DJ Muggs**. *Soul Assassins* is his Marley Marl-style compilation album, featuring rap heavyweights like Mobb Deep and the Goodie Mob rhyming over his dark, ominous grooves. Unfortunately, despite sharp lyrical performances by Dr. Dre, GZA, and MC Eiht, the production work of Cypress Hill's most mysterious member lacks the sonic punch of his past work. You'll miss his everything-but-the-kitchen-sink, Bomb Squad-influenced approach to beatmaking. Sadly, the modern-day sample laws have stripped this assassin of his strongest weapon... Equally unable to adapt to the times is club-rap champion **Chubb Rock**.



After a five-year hiatus (that's 35 in rap years), the big man has returned, hoping to capitalize off the current R&B/hip-hop trend. Although he was creating these type of tunes back when Puffy Combs was in high school, Chubb has visibly lost his hit-making touch in the art of moving butts. Like a big brown bear, the Chubbster needs to go back into hibernation. His comeback attempt, *Don't Sleep*, is one long bad dream... Thankfully sunny days are here as the Heavster shows us how it should be done. Rapper/CEO **Heavy D** maintains his loverboy rep with his seventh album, *Waterbed Hev*. Although he breaks no new ground, Hev delivers the soulful ear candy ("Keep It Comin," "You Can Get It" and "Shake It") that we've come to expect, and even throws in a few creative wrinkles for good measure. The Fugees ("Maxine"), Tha Dogg Pound ("Controversy") and promising new jack Herb McGruff ("Wanna Be A Player") all help keep the party live as the high yellow fella stays fresh like a ice-cold bottle of Cristal. "Forget Batman, I guess it's Fatman forever," he boasts. God bless your life.

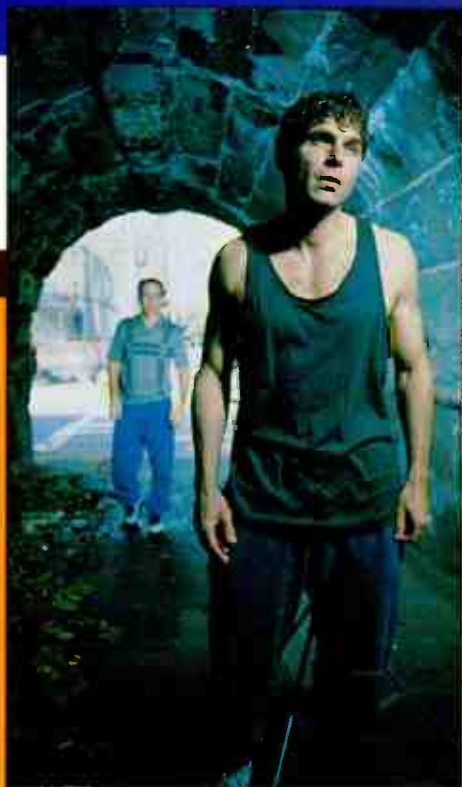


PHOTOGRAPH BY RANDY ST. NICOLAUS

## HIP-HOP TOP 25

- 1 REDMAN Muddy Waters *Def Jam* RAL-Mercury
- 2 KRS-ONE "The MC" (12") Jive
- 3 GHOSTFACE KILLAH Ironman *Razor Sharp-Epic Street*
- 4 ROOTS Illadelph Halflife *DGC*
- 5 MOBB DEEP Hell On Earth *Loud-RCA*
- 6 KEITH MURRAY Enigma *Jive*
- 7 CAMP LO "Luchini (This Is It)" (12") *Profile*
- 8 JERU THE DAMAJA Wrath Of The Math *Payday/Jfr-London*
- 9 FRANKIE CUTLASS Politics & Bullshit *Relativity*
- 10 FUGEES (REFUGEE CAMP) "Rumble In The Jungle" (12") *Mercury*
- 11 SNOOP DOGGY DOGG Tha Doggfather *Death Row-Interscope*
- 12 RAS KASS Soul On Ice *PatchWerk-Priority*
- 13 OUTKAST Aliens *LaFace-Arista*
- 14 MIC GERONIMO Blunt Special Blends *Blunt-TV7*
- 15 SOUNDTRACK Rhyme And Reason *Priority*
- 16 MAKAVELI The Don Killuminati/The 7 Day Theory *Death Row-Interscope*
- 17 NAS It Was Written *Columbia-CRG*
- 18 XZIBIT At The Speed Of Life *Loud-RCA*
- 19 FOXY BROWN III Na Na *Def Jam/RAL-Mercury*
- 20 J-LIVE "Can I Get It" (12") *Raw Shack*
- 21 MOTHER SUPERIA "Most Of All" (12") *Island*
- 22 AL TARIQ God Connections *Correct*
- 23 PUFF DADDY & MASE "Can't Nobody Hold Me Down" (12") *Bad Boy-Arista*
- 24 ICE CUBE "This World Is Mine" (12") *Jive*
- 25 LARGE PROFESSOR "I Justwannachill" (12") *Wild Pitch-Geffen*

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



FLICKS

## A BROTHER'S KISS

(First Look Pictures)

*A Brother's Kiss* deserves a lot of credit for its empathetic project: exploring the fragile motivations for violent masculinity. It could be tough to care about a male bonding movie that hinges on a primal scene in which the older brother saves the younger brother from a deranged buttfucking rapist cop, all to motivate the former's adulthood as a Puerto-Rican-wife-leaving, drug-gobbling, gun-shooting white guy. But the film's exploration of *how* these things happen is substantial, and substantially more interesting than the usual fantasies of the same "virile" activities, finding the breadth of culture in the depth of character. It's an exercise in empathy that feels like a relief, and like an interesting political antidote to the cheaper explanations for behavior that are normally offered by Congress or Hollywood.

The dead-on '70s locations and art direction, as well as the styling of the young versions of the two brothers, are likely to ignite some nostalgia in anyone who ever thought Shaun Cassidy was a fox. Justin Pierce's performance as the young Lex is strong, and his style is pure 1979 *Tiger Beat*. But in tone, the film seems like a subtle return to the teleplays of the '50s, where social consciousness, deep psychology, and really good acting met to contest reductive popular discussions of "ghetto" living. The socially conscious intentions of films like *Marty* and *Requiem For A Heavyweight* were realized through the type of nuanced performance the whole cast exhibits in *Brother's Kiss*. If the acting weren't as great as it is, the film would seem rather simple in its psychosocial intentions, but played out by the ensemble assembled here, its single point seems truly textured.

LIZA JOHNSON

READS

## A SUPPOSEDLY FUN THING I'LL NEVER DO AGAIN

by David Foster Wallace (Little, Brown)

David Foster Wallace's follow-up to last year's mammoth, amazing novel *Infinite Jest* is a collection of shorter essays on literature, television, movies, his beloved tennis and other forms of mass-culture recreation—the notorious title piece, originally published in *Harper's*, finds him on a cruise ship chafing at the constant infliction of fun. Wallace is a genius sentence-maker, one of the few writers who can pull off colloquial and academic language in the same phrase ("Hix's actual analysis of authority is way less sensible and way way less fun"). His real specialty, though, is building comedy like a logical argument: going for the cumulative effect rather than the punch line or the one-liner—by about halfway through any of these pieces, you'll likely be laughing helplessly, silently nodding in agreement, or both. *A Supposedly Fun Thing...* is also, in some ways, a skeleton key to *Infinite Jest*, a guide to the aesthetic theories (about film, fiction, tennis, entertainment) that inform it. The pieces here stand on their own, though, and Wallace's game/set/match explanation of why itony sucks is alone worth the price of the book. DOUGLAS WOLF

david foster wallace

## A supposedly fun thing

i'll never  
do again

essays and arguments  
by the author of *Infinite Jest*

## ▶ SUPERMAN'S METROPOLIS

(DC)

"Metropolis" as a proper noun has two important meanings: Superman's city and the futuristic city of Fritz Lang's movie. The conceit of this bizarre one-shot is that they're the same—it's a rather free adaptation of the movie using slightly modified versions of the *Superman* characters. (Hence, for instance, our hero is Clark, the son of Jon-Kent, the master of Metropolis.) Does this sound silly? It sort of is, and the pretentious, text-heavy script doesn't help—remember, it's an adaptation of a *silent* film. What makes *Metropolis* work is its extraordinary painted artwork by Ted McKeever (*Plastic Forks*, *Eddy Current*), who accomplishes the near-impossible task of making the characters look both like the familiar ones from the comics and like the actors from the film. McKeever's work here captures the spirit, if not the look, of Lang's movie while preserving the weirdly jagged linework he's known for; he turns this trifle into a magnificent performance. (DW)



PAUL LEVITZKY AND THOMAS TED McKEEVER

## ▶ I'M NOT FASCINATING

(w/o Peeling Eyeball Productions, P.O. Box 460472, San Francisco, CA 94149)

There's a peculiar strain of bands in San Francisco that *intentionally* suck. One such band is the dreadful but frequently amusing Icky Boyfriends. The video-only *I'm Not Fascinating* is Super-8 maestro Danny Plotnick's mock-rockumentary about them, chronicling the almost fictional band's entirely fictional journey from universally loathed, penniless scene fixtures to universally loathed scene fixtures with a big record deal, and their inevitable corporate screwing-over. Calling the screenplay and performances wooden would be giving them more credit than they even aspire to (the intentional-sucking aesthetic extends to every aspect of the movie), but there's something sweetly compelling about them anyway. Every rock rags-to-riches cliché gets played so straight it implodes from the pressure, and Plotnick has a sure grasp of the indignities suffered by less-than-famous bands (watch the Icky Boyfriends appear at a show they're supposed to play and get asked if they're on the guest list). You could say it's funny despite itself, but that's exactly what Plotnick wants you to think. (DW)

FLICKS

A SUPREMELY TWISTED  
ROCK & ROLL EPIC



A New Film from  
Danny Plotnick  
Starring the Icky Boyfriends

"Witch beautiful, Jan'nture done"  
—San Francisco Bay Guardian

## RESONANCE

### The Sampler on Trial

Bob Ostertag

"Why computer music sucks"

Tim Hodgkinson

"Sampling, Pong, Smokey collisions"

Interviews with

DJ Spooky  
David Shea  
Martin Tetreault  
Richard Barrett



## RESONANCE

(London Musician's Collective, The Leathermarket,  
Leathermarket St., London SE1, England)

For almost five years, *Resonance* has been chronicling the edges of musical culture with a nifty combination of the scholar's seriousness and the fan's enthusiasm. The latest issue leads off with a series of pieces on the legitimate uses of samplers, notably computer musician Bob Ostertag's incendiary "Why Computer Music Sucks." It also has interviews with and essays by avant-garde DJ Martin Tetreault, ethnic-music field recorder Ragnar Johnson and saxophonist Evan Parker, well-written reviews of experimental records that don't get much press elsewhere, and mail-order ads for even more not-much-advertised records. As of this issue, every *Resonance* will include a free CD: this time, we get to hear work by most of the contributors, as well as some field recordings from Papua New Guinea and a set of samples from Stockhausen and Walkman (there's a reader competition to come up with the most interesting use for them). (DW)

'ZINES

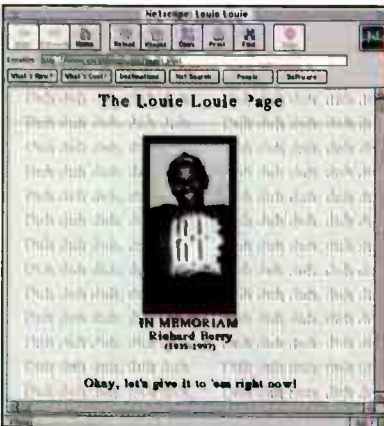
# MULTI-MEDIA

## OVI'S WORLD OF THE BIZARRE

([netmar.com/users/ovighor/ovi.htm](http://netmar.com/users/ovighor/ovi.htm))

It won't take much perusing to see what makes Ovi's World Of The Bizarre so unusual. This site compiles, quite frequently, the strangest, most bizarre news articles from around the world. This stuff is 100% real; this is where you can find the kinds of stories you're used to seeing Letterman or Leno wheel out in one of their post-monologue bits. There's more to do than just read one article after another, too (here's a taste: "Surgeon General's Warning: Eating Lead May Be Hazardous To Your Health"); Ovi's side-splitting site also showcases cartoonist Daryl Cagle, who serves up true, fact-a-day cartoons, a wacky fact generator that's just teeming with useless information, and interesting special lists, features and archives to literally keep you busy for hours. Perhaps the handiest highlight is the free update service the site offers, which automatically delivers the latest amazingly peculiar news items right to your email box. *GLEN SANSONE*

WEB SITE



## THE LOUIE LOUIE PAGE

([www.via.nl/users/tdg/loule1.html](http://www.via.nl/users/tdg/loule1.html))

CD-ROM

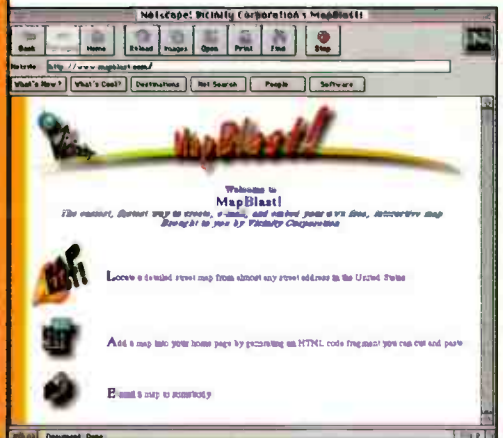
When Richard Berry died this past January, the world lost the man who gave it the quintessential rock 'n' roll song, "Louie Louie." This page chronicles every imaginable aspect of the song, its zillion covers, and its mysterious lyrics. A number of different transcriptions are offered, "dirty" and otherwise: decide for yourself if the line goes "At night at ten I lay her again/Fuck you girl, oh all the way" (as collected by the FBI in 1964), "Every night and day I play with my thing/I fuck your girl all kinds of ways" (a variant), or simply "Wente andayo afaildefee/kaykogorild ocontoflee" (a phonetic rendition by the page's author, Theo de Grood). There are also diagrams of the "Louie" chords, links to other "Louie" pages (!!), and translations into Afrikaans, Zulu ("Louie Louie, Oh s'thandwa, kufanele ngihambe") and Danish ("Ja, Louie, Louie, ah nej jeg ska' gå nu"), not to mention an alarmingly huge and detailed list of covers. *DOUGLAS WOLK*

## MAPBLAST!

([www.mapblast.com](http://www.mapblast.com))

WEB SITE

As advertisers discover that simply having a web site isn't enough to advertise a product, and that even having a really cool web site isn't enough either, they're starting to make actively *useful* web sites. Vicinity is a mapping-and-yellow-page-making service; to lure people to their site, they've come up with MapBlast. Feed almost any street address in America into it, and it'll generate a printable, e-mailable, zoomable map. (It couldn't find my parents' house in suburban mid-Michigan, but it managed to get within a block.) Even better, it can come up with fairly clear driving directions to get from any address to any other address within about 100 miles. Of course, it's all an excuse to draw your attention to businesses within driving distance of your house, and there are ad banners galore, but if you ignore them, MapBlast can save hours of fumbling attempts to describe landmarks over the phone. *(DW)*



## A LISTING OF LABELS WHOSE ARTISTS APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE

**550**  
550 Madison Ave., 21st Fl.  
New York, NY 10022

**4AD**  
8533 Melrose Ave., Ste. B  
Los Angeles, CA 90069

**A&M**  
1416 N. La Brea Ave.  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**Alias**  
2815 W. Olive Ave.  
Burbank, CA 91595

**American**  
3500 W. Olive Ave. #1550  
Burbank, CA 91505

**Atavistic**  
P.O. Box 578266  
Chicago, IL 60657

**Capitol**  
1750 N. Vine St.  
Hollywood, CA 90028

**Cargo**  
4901-906 Morena Blvd.  
San Diego, CA 92117

**Caroline**  
104 W. 29th St., 4th Fl.  
New York, NY 10001

**Columbia**  
550 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

**Dedicated**  
580 Broadway, Ste. 1002  
New York, NY 10012

**Drag City**  
P.O. Box 476867  
Chicago, IL 60647

**Dreamworks**  
100 Universal Plaza  
Bungalow 477  
Universal City, CA 91608

**EMI**  
1290 Ave. of the Americas  
New York, NY 10104

**Epic**  
550 Madison Ave.  
New York, NY 10022

**The Enclave**  
965 Broadway  
New York, NY 10010

**Epitaph**  
2789 Sunset Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90026

**Flying Nun USA**  
P.O. Box 9470  
Chapel Hill, 27515-3470

**Gentle Giant**  
P.O. Box 50013  
Kalamazoo, MI 49005

**Gern Blandsten**  
P.O. Box 356  
River Edge, NJ 07661

**Harriet**  
P.O. Box 649  
Cambridge, MA 02238

**Interscope**  
10900 Wilshire Blvd  
Ste. 1230  
Los Angeles, CA 90024

**Island**  
825 Eighth Ave  
New York, NY 10019

**Jive**  
137-139 W 25th St.  
New York, NY 10001

**K**  
P.O. Box 7154  
Olympia, WA 98507

**Kill Rock Stars**  
120 NE State #418  
Olympia, WA 98501

**London**  
825 Eighth Ave  
New York, NY 10019

**Lookout!**  
P.O. Box 11374  
Berkeley, CA 94712

**Manufacture Criminali**  
c/o Cargo Records America  
1525 W. Homer St  
Chicago, IL 60622

**Matador**  
676 Broadway, 4th Fl.  
New York, NY 10012

**MCA**  
70 Universal City Plaza  
Universal City, CA 91608

**Mercury**  
825 Eighth Ave  
New York, NY 10019

**Merge**  
P.O. Box 1235  
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

**Moonshine**  
8525 Santa Monica Blvd.  
W Hollywood, CA 90069

**Mute**  
140 W. 22nd St., Ste. 10A  
New York, NY 10011

**Ng**  
622 Broadway, Rm. 4B  
New York, NY 10012

**Ninja Tune**  
P.O. Box 373, Westmount Stn.  
Montreal, QUE H3Z 2T5  
Canada

**No Life**  
7209 Santa Monica Blvd.  
W. Hollywood, CA 90046

**Nuclear Blast America**  
P.O. Box 15877  
Iampa, FL 33684

**Numeric**  
411 William Pitt Union  
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

**OM**  
50 Minna St  
San Francisco, CA 94105

**Peabody**  
3428 W. Loyola Drive  
Kenner, LA 70065

**Point**  
825 Eighth Ave., 26th Fl.  
Hollywood, CA 10019

**Ratfish**  
P.O. Box 381869  
Cambridge, MA 02238

**Reprise**  
3300 Warner Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91505

**Rhino**  
10635 Santa Monica  
Los Angeles, CA 90025

**Shanachie**  
13 Laight St., 6th Fl.  
New York, NY 10013

**Simple Machines**  
P.O. Box 1290  
Arlington, VA 22210

**Sub Pop**  
1932 First Ave.  
Seattle, WA 98101

**Tooth & Nail**  
P.O. Box 12698  
Seattle, WA 98111

**Touch**  
c/o Dutch East  
150 W 28th St., Ste. 501  
New York, NY 10001

**TVT**  
23 E. 4th St.  
New York, NY 10003

**Universal**  
1755 Broadway  
New York, NY 10019

**Virgin**  
338 N. Foothill Rd  
Beverly Hills, CA 90210

**Walt**  
89 Fairview Ave  
Port Washington, NY 11050

**Warner Bros.**  
3300 Warner Blvd.  
Burbank, CA 91505

**WORK**  
2100 Colorado Ave.  
Los Angeles, CA 90404

**Zoo**  
1540 Broadway, 34th Fl.  
New York, NY 10036

### MARCH 11

**MAIN Firmament III/IV *Beggars Banquet***  
**COMET GAIN *Beggars Banquet***  
**SWELL Too Many Days Without Thinking *Beggars Banquet***  
**BLONDE REDHEAD Fake Can Be Just As Good *Touch And Go***  
**KEPONE Kepone *Quarterstick***  
**PORTASTATIC The Nature Of Sap *Merge***  
**STARFLYER 59 Americana *Tooth & Nail***  
**TUATARA *Epic***  
**BLITHE Verse Chorus Verse *Alias***  
**CROWN HEIGHTS More Pricks Than Kicks *American***  
**TEN FOOT POLE Unleashed *Epitaph***  
**R.L. BURNSIDE Mr. Wizard *Fat Possum-Epitaph***  
**ROCKERS HI-FI Mish Mash *Warner Bros.***  
**GUN CLUB Pastorial Hide & Seek/Divinity *2.13.CD-Thirsty Ear***  
**JOHN LEE HOOKER *Virgin***  
**BLUR Blur *Virgin***

### MARCH 18

**SATISFACT K**  
**SEDUCTIVE K**  
**CAULFIELDS L A&M**  
**AEROSMITH Nine Lives *Columbia***  
**OVERCOME When Beauty Dies *Tooth & Nail***  
**THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS Then: The Earlier Years (box set) *Restless***  
**LEFTOVER SALMON Euphoria *Hollywood***  
**HELMET Aftertaste *Interscope***

### MARCH 25

**HORACE ANDY Best Of Horace Andy *Melankolic-Caroline***  
**CHEMICAL BROTHERS Dig Your Own Hole *Astralwerks-Caroline***  
**TRANQUILITY BASS Let Your Freak Flag Fly *Astralwerks-Caroline***  
**SUPERSUCKERS Must've Been High *Sub Pop***  
**VARIOUS ARTISTS Some Songs *Kill Rock Stars***  
**LORI CARSON Everything I Touch Runs Wild *Restless***  
**DFL Grateful *Epitaph***  
**THINGY *Headhunter-Cargo***

### APRIL 1

**L.A.L K**  
**KARP K**  
**MODEST MOUSE K**  
**HONOR ROLE Album (The Recorded History) *Merge***  
**VERBENA Souls For Sale *Merge***  
**SEA AND CAKE The Fawn *Thrill Jockey***  
**BRAINIAC Electro-Shock For President *Touch And Go***  
**CASH MONEY Black Hearts And Broken Wills *Touch And Go***  
**SWANS Children Of God/World Of Skin (reissue) *Atavistic***  
**VANDERMARK FIVE Single Piece Flow *Atavistic***

### APRIL 8

**STELLA *Beggars Banquet***  
**ADOLESCENTS Return To The Black Hole *Amsterdamed-Triple X***  
**LONDON SUEDE Coming Up *Columbia-CRG***  
**UPSIDE DOWN ROOM *Tooth & Nail***  
**RADAR BROS Radar Bros. *Restless***  
**20 MILES *Fat Possum-Epitaph***  
**T. MODEL FORD Pee-Wee Get My Gun *Fat Possum-Epitaph***  
**HENRY ROLLINS Black Coffee Blues *2.13.CD-Thirsty Ear***  
**BURT BACHARACH What The World Needs Now Is Burt! *A&M***

### APRIL 9

**COLD COLD HEARIS *Kill Rock Stars***  
**SLEATER-KINNEY Dig Me Out *Kill Rock Stars***

All dates subject to change, so don't blame us.

# TOP 75

[ Alternative Radio Airplay ]



ARTIST	TITLE	LABEL
1	<b>BUILT TO SPILL</b>	<b>Warner Bros.</b>
2	<b>BJORK</b>	<b>Elektra-EEG</b>
3	<b>TRICKY</b>	<b>Island</b>
4	<b>DJ SHADOW</b>	<b>Mo Wax /Jrr-London</b>
5	<b>RED KRAYOLA</b>	<b>Drag City</b>
6	<b>APHEX TWIN</b>	<b>Warp/Sire-EEG</b>
7	<b>APPLES IN STEREO</b>	<b>spinArt</b>
8	<b>HI-FIVES</b>	<b>Lookout!</b>
9	<b>SNEAKER PIMPS</b>	<b>Clean Up-Virgin</b>
10	<b>WILCO</b>	<b>Reprise</b>
11	<b>LUSCIOUS JACKSON</b>	<b>Grand Royal-Capitol</b>
12	<b>TRANS AM</b>	<b>Thrill Jockey</b>
13	<b>HUMIDIFIER</b>	<b>Link</b>
14	<b>JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION</b>	<b>Matador-Capitol</b>
15	<b>SPRING HEEL JACK</b>	<b>Island Independent</b>
16	<b>JOHNNY CASH</b>	<b>American</b>
17	<b>SPACE NEEDLE</b>	<b>Zero Hour</b>
18	<b>STAR 69</b>	<b>Radioactive</b>
19	<b>MOBY</b>	<b>Elektra-EEG</b>
20	<b>JUNE OF 44</b>	<b>Quarterstick</b>
21	<b>TANYA DONELLY</b>	<b>4AD</b>
22	<b>SPACE</b>	<b>Gut-Universal</b>
23	<b>BILL DING</b>	<b>Hefiy</b>
24	<b>GUIDED BY VOICES</b>	<b>Matador</b>
25	<b>CHAVEZ</b>	<b>Matador</b>
26	<b>KULA SHAKER</b>	<b>Columbia-CRG</b>
27	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b>	<b>Gyroscope-Caroline</b>
28	<b>MAZZY STAR</b>	<b>Capitol</b>
29	<b>PUGS</b>	<b>Casual Tonalities-Klasky Cuspo</b>
30	<b>TRISTAN PSIONIC</b>	<b>Sonic Sunyon (Canada)</b>
31	<b>SOUNDTRACK</b>	<b>TVT Soundtrax</b>
32	<b>JAMIROQUAI</b>	<b>WORK</b>
33	<b>ENGINE 88</b>	<b>Caroline</b>
34	<b>TOOL</b>	<b>Zoo</b>
35	<b>NINE INCH NAILS</b>	<b>Nothing-Interscope</b>
36	<b>REDD KROSS</b>	<b>Mercury</b>
37	<b>ARCHERS OF LOAF</b>	<b>Alias</b>
38	<b>LIVE</b>	<b>Radioactive</b>
39	<b>LESS THAN JAKE</b>	<b>Capitol</b>
40	<b>THE CLEAN</b>	<b>Flying Nun</b>
41	<b>MXPX</b>	<b>Tooth &amp; Nail</b>
42	<b>SILVER JET</b>	<b>Virgin</b>
43	<b>THIN LIZARD DAWN</b>	<b>RCA</b>
44	<b>CRUMBS</b>	<b>Lookout!</b>
45	<b>TREBLE CHARGER</b>	<b>Sonic Sunyon (Canada)</b>
46	<b>CARDIGANS</b>	<b>Mercury</b>
47	<b>BLOODHOUND GANG</b>	<b>Cheese Factory-Republic</b>
48	<b>ATARI TEENAGE RIOT</b>	<b>Grand Royal</b>
49	<b>SCREECHING WEASEL</b>	<b>Fat Wreck Chords</b>
50	<b>CAKE</b>	<b>Capricorn-Mercury</b>
51	<b>MORCHEEBA</b>	<b>China-Discovery</b>
52	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b>	<b>Moonshine</b>
53	<b>HUEVOS RANCHEROS</b>	<b>Mint (Canada)</b>
54	<b>U2</b>	<b>Island</b>
55	<b>DEPECHE MODE</b>	<b>Reprise</b>
56	<b>FUTURE SOUND OF LONDON</b>	<b>Astralwerks-Caroline</b>
57	<b>FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE</b>	<b>Scratchie-TAG</b>
58	<b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b>	<b>Mercury</b>
59	<b>SEPTEMBER 67</b>	<b>The Enclave</b>
60	<b>JB3</b>	<b>NovaMute-Mute</b>
61	<b>NERF HERDER</b>	<b>Arista</b>
62	<b>BUSH</b>	<b>Trauma-Interscope</b>
63	<b>GHOST</b>	<b>Drag City</b>
64	<b>KORN</b>	<b>Immortal-Epic</b>
65	<b>764-HERO</b>	<b>Up</b>
66	<b>ROOMFUL OF BLUES</b>	<b>Bullseye Blues-Rounder</b>
67	<b>MARILYN MANSON</b>	<b>Nothing-Interscope</b>
68	<b>WHIRLPOOL</b>	<b>Revelation</b>
69	<b>SUKIA</b>	<b>Nickelbag</b>
70	<b>JOSEPHINE WIGGS EXPERIENCE</b>	<b>Grand Royal</b>
71	<b>JZ BARRELL</b>	<b>NG</b>
72	<b>MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD</b>	<b>Gramavision-Rykodisc</b>
73	<b>FIREWATER</b>	<b>Jetset</b>
74	<b>BT</b>	<b>Perfecto. Kinetic-Reprise</b>
75	<b>BOYS LIFE</b>	<b>Headhunter-Cargo</b>

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



HOW TO USE  
THIS PAGE

1. Cut along dotted line.
2. Fold in half.
3. Slip into our CD holder or a jewel box.
4. Check the location of the emergency exits nearest you.



KNAPSACK



ERYKAH BADU



ELLIOTT SMITH

compliment. But it's not something I'm trying to do," she says. "On & On" is a taste of R&B's past, and a look at its future. (See Best New Music, page 12.)

**17** **MUSHROOM JAZZ NAKED FUNK** is the combination of two distinct entities—one a San Francisco club, the other a U.K. acid jazz group—into one unique track mixed by superstar DJ Mark Farina. "Midnight Calling" appears as part of the double-disc enhanced CD *Mushroom Jazz* (OM), which sees Farina filtering hip-hop, down-tempo jazz and house through the club's breezy vibe, and then throws in a multimedia presentation that includes interviews, profiles and a chance to remix the tracks using an included database of beats and samples. (See Mixed Signals, pg. 37, February issue.)

**18** *Unpop* (Unpop Series-Nuclear Blast America) is not just the name of **PYOGENESIS'** latest album. It's also the word that the band uses to describe its combination of punk and dance music. The group—an "extreme music band"—formed in 1991, but it wasn't until its third album, *Tornaleblood*, that techno elements began to creep into its songs. "Love Nation Sugarhead" is *Unpops* first single.

**19** The members of **DRIVER EIGHT** met at college and, following a series of events including a school production of *West Side Story*, some acoustic sets at local coffee houses, and the realization that they were all really into Supergrass, Buffalo Tom and the Catherine Wheel, the boys began playing gigs around their Southern California hometown. The trio, named after an R.E.M. song, was signed to Tooth & Nail shortly after its formation, and has just released a self-titled record, filled with edgy guitar-pop songs like "Brown Paper Bag."

**20** **ELLIOTT SMITH** made his initial mark as one of the singer-guitarists in Portland, Oregon's Heatmiser. In the last few years, though, he's also become known for his delicate-sounding but emotionally brutal solo records. The newest one, on which "Rose Parade" appears, is *either/or* (Kill Rock Stars). For an interesting take on Smith's home-recording techniques, check out the interview with him in the new issue of *Tape Op* (\$2 from P.O. Box 15189, Portland, OR 97293). (See article, pg. 16.)

**21** **THE WORLD/INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY** would like you to know that it is a "finely organized mischief cult, and not a band." While the group's goofy manifesto doesn't provide any concrete information, it does offer the following: "It is very important that none of us ever work for Time-Warner. No reason I could give for this would be any more or less compelling than any of the over a dozen you yourself are already thinking of now." "Our Candidate" is the cult's recent 7" (Gern Blandstein). (See Singles, pg. 49.)

# CMJ

NEW MUSIC

VOLUME 44 • APRIL 1997

**1** So how do you follow up one of the biggest electronic dance debuts ever? If you're Ed Simons and Tom Rowlands, you take an old-school hip-hop groove and soup it up with enough juice to blow every woofer and tweeter it touches. **CHEMICAL BROTHERS** are back with the aural extravaganza *Dig Your Own Hole* (Astralwerks-Caroline), and the cut "Block Rockin' Beats" just about says it all. (See cover story, pg. 22.)

**2** **WHITE TOWN** founder/sole member Jyoti Mishra writes: "I formed White Town in 1989 after seeing a brilliant Pixies gig. My reasoning was that Black Francis was a porker and could get away with playing noisy pop music so maybe I could as well... [By] 1994, I was fed up with playing the guitar and trying to re-create a guitar band sound on my own. I started moving more into a sample-based synth direction." "Your Woman" (from the *Abort, Retry, Fail?*) became a smash hit in England, and a full-length album (on Chrysalis-EMI) is coming soon. (See Quick Fix, pg. 10.)

**3** Though he's known for making records with all-star bands, **MATTHEW SWEET** has taken a step in the other direction. For his sixth record, *Blue Sky On Mars* (Zoo), Sweet played almost all of the guitar parts himself. What's more, he didn't even leave his house to record the album. It was recorded in the studio that Sweet built in his new Los Angeles home. He's ready to go back on the road, but for now you've got "Where You Get Love."

**4** "It's more than notes, more than just playing," **CHRIS WHITLEY** says about his goal as a songwriter. "In the three-minute form with which I'm most comfortable, I want to convey as much expression as possible." With his third long-player, *Terra Incognita* (WORK), Whitley has achieved the even balance he's been seeking. Here he's joined by guitarists Daniel Lanois (U2 producer), Pat Place (Bush Tetras) and Louie Lapore (Cherry Vanilla). "Automatic" is the album's first single. (See review, pg. 45.)

**5** "At the moment, all the music in Britain is traditional guitar rock copied from the Beatles," says **SPACE** singer/bassist Tommy Scott. "We're bored with that. That was done in the '60s. Those bands were great, but



CHEMICAL BROTHERS



WHITE TOWN



MATTHEW SWEET



CHRIS WHITLEY



SPACE

why should bands have to copy them now? That's just about following fashion instead of using your imagination." "**Neighborhood**" is the latest single from the Liverpool quartet's funky debut full-length, *Spiders* (Universal). (See On The Verge, pg. 14.)

**6** Manchester's **BLUR** has made a point to change its focus with every album. But the boys have made such a leap with their forthcoming self-titled release (Virgin), even some of their dearest fans may not recognize them. They've changed their sound, exploring some grunge-inspired guitar licks they fooled with in '91, and they've dropped the attitude. Don't believe us? "**Song 2**" may begin to sway your view. (See article, pg. 18.)

**7** **SLOAN** isn't quite a household name in America yet, but in Canada, it's another story—the Halifax, Nova Scotia, quartet has multiple gold records there (released on its own label, Murderecords, which has also taken other local bands under its wing), and routinely sells out its shows on tour. "**The Good In Everyone**" is a two-minute blast from *One Chord To Another* (The Enclave), the band's latest stab at world domination, or at least domination of some more of North America. (See Quick Fix, pg. 8, March issue.)

**8** **SHUDDER TO THINK** has been through a lot in the last year or two—side projects, a new drummer, singer Craig Wedren being treated for Hodgkin's Disease. "**Red House**," from Shudder's new album *50,000 B.C.* (Epic), is a re-recording of a song that originally appeared on 1991's *Funeral At The Movies*, and later on the 1994 *Hit Liquor* EP. Of course, as Jimi Hendrix fans know, anyone who writes a song called "Red House" is doomed to record it over and over and over... (See review, pg. 41.)

**9** Many had written off **THE LONDON SUEDE** after the tabloid-fodder departure of original guitarist Bernard Butler, but singer Brett Anderson found some new songwriting partners and carried on, reveling in his newly sullied reputation with lyrics like "We're the litter on the breeze/We're the lovers on the street," from the out-crowd rallying cry, "**Trash**," Anderson's last laugh? *Coming Up* (Nude-Columbia), entered the British charts, where the band is known simply as Suede, at #1 and has been regarded as the band's finest work to date. (See article, pg. 20.)

**10** "He made a lot of suggestions and took a lot of time working with us, instead of us just playing and him saying, 'okay, I think you can do it better,'" says **STILLSUIT**'s bassist, Manny, of the band's working relationship with its producer, Don Fury. The quintessential New York hardcore producer, Fury has worked with Civ, Quicksand, Orange 9mm, Helmet and countless other NYHC bands, but Stillsuit's *At The Speed Of Light* is the debut release on his newTVT imprint, Building Records. "**Ring And Run**" offers an introduction to the young quartet's aggressive emo-core.

**11** **GUSGUS**, hailing from Reykjavik, Iceland, is an unusual bunch of trippop pranksters. A conglomerate of DJs, singers, poets, filmmakers, and photographers united for the sake of music, art, and a funky good time, the group runs nine members deep, and has more than enough creative juices to keep things flowing smoothly. The sly groove and smart pop styling of "**Polyesterday**" is the first peek at Gusgus's forthcoming debut LP (4AD).

**12** Daniel Smith—he's the guy with the voice above the hearing range of dogs—is the man behind the **DANIELSON FAMILY**. In fact, four of the group's five other members are his brothers and sisters. Their father is a gospel songwriter, and Daniel's carrying on the tradition, in a sense. The band also makes its own line of merchandise, including T-shirts (depicting tubes of "Great Comfort Creme"), pillowcases and—no kidding—blinders. "**Smooth Death**" comes from *Tell Another Joke At The Ol' Choppin' Block* (Tooth & Nail). (See Quick Fix, pg. 6.)

**13** "The biggest struggle is to try and make the music worth somebody's time," says **KNAPSACK** singer/guitarist Blair Shehan, echoing the humble work ethic of a man whose band played its first gig in June of '93 and by that August had already begun the endless touring that has seen the band hit the road with the likes of Pavement, Archers Of Loaf and Rocket From The Crypt. "**Thursday Side Of The Street**" comes from Knapsack's latest, *Day Three Of My New Life* (Alias) (See review, pg. 34.)

**14** "No one will ever say 'We can't do that, it doesn't sound like us.' We'll never tie ourselves down to a particular sound or style," says **AUTOMATIC** guitarist/vocalist Matt Fenton. The Australian quartet's early EPs were very poppy, but its first full-length, *Transmitter* (550) is a testimony to the band's willingness to change its sound. The album is much louder than those early records; Fenton explains that, by posing the question "What if you can be whatever you want?," "**What If?**" is a "statement of intent."

**15** "I started playing piano when I was four," says **FIVE FOR FIGHTING**'s leader, John Ondrasik. "I took those lessons every child hates until I was 13, when my mom finally let me quit. Two months later I wrote my first song," Ondrasik, who is also FFF's vocalist, guitarist and principal songwriter, says that he doesn't consider himself a pianist, but those lessons paid off, as you can hear on his band's debut album, *...Message For Albert...* (EMI). "**Bella's Birthday Cake**" is its first single.

**16** Even though **ERYKAH BADU** grew up listening to Stevie Wonder, dedicated a song on *Baduzm* (Kedar-Universal) to Phyllis Hyman, and to this day carries a photo of Marvin Gaye with her, the one comparison her music always seems to inspire is Billie Holiday. "People have always told me that I sound like Billie, that my phrasing is reminiscent of hers: It's the highest



BLUR



SHUDDER TO THINK



THE LONDON SUEDE



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## ▶ ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

[ by Brendan Doherty ]

Albuquerque has enough desert to be dirty, enough Rocky Mountains to have snow. It's the other mile-high city; the site of Neil Young and Partridge Family songs, home to Ozzy's drummer, and where Bugs Bunny messed up. Surrounded by Pueblo Indian reservations, and living on the site of a 400-year-old Spanish city, the 500,000 residents of this sunbelt town can't help but notice how Albuquerque was built out of village cultures. The Sandia and Manzano mountains seem bigger than life itself, and the chile here is hotter than hell. It was and is a must-stop for everyone going west to California, or east to Chicago, or to Texas on Route 66. They hone in on a strip five miles long, for the clubs, culture, coffee shops and bars.

If you come from the east or west, get off on the first exit that says "Central." In one swooping drive, depending on which end you start at, it goes from mountains to desert. Right in the middle are the Nob Hill, University and Downtown districts.

Inside **Fred's Bread and Bagel** (3009 Central Ave. NE 266-7323), a bustling hang-out, hang framed promo slicks from Judge Wapner, Dave Brubeck, Those Potatoes, Fabio, Nation Of Ulysses, Fugazi and Yo La Tengo, among locals who've moved away like Henry's Dress, the Rosemarys, and Tiny Little Help. Frank Zappa and James Brown murals oversee red and silver glitter booths, while Coltrane eternally blaes. Fred's is about the marriage of food and music. Their bagels are a must, and the turkey salad is excellent. They also have lots of veggie goodies and pastries. Traveling bands eat for free here, and half the staff plays at least one instrument. Everyone leaves a picture and takes the bread. Most members of local bands, and almost anyone at any show

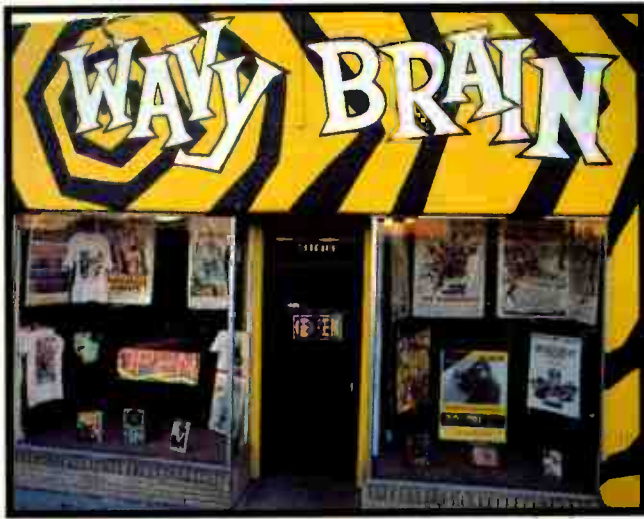


around here, has worked at Fred's, pushing coffee, delivering bread, mixing dough, or plotting world domination.

Within immediate walking distance are some groovy shops. **Wavy Brain** (3108 Central Ave. SE 256-3686) has obscure videos, posters and 'zines. Right next door, **In Crowd** (3106 Central Ave. SE 268-3750) is a great place to pick up Dia de los Muertos stuff, kooky postcards, or a sculpture of a motorcycle made out of toilet paper by prison inmates. **O'Neill's Pub** (3211 Central Ave. NE) features lots of brew and jazz on some nights (catch the John Lewis Quartet or Billie Morris). **Outpost Performance Space** (112 Morningside Dr. NE 268-0044) is the home of avant-garde jazz and world beat performance. Owner-proprietor Tom Guralnick plays the most way-out sax. Catch his trio for a near-alien experience, with tape loops, sound manipulation, and multiple-layered sax honks with maximum dissonance.

I always stop in at the **Buffalo Exchange** (3005 Central Ave. NE 262-0098) to see if they have a good sweater or cheap sunglasses. Don't mind the attitude the workers here give you—just remember that they're wage slaves. Cheap duds are for the pickin' at the enormous **DAV** (4820 Central Ave. NE 265-8100), where they aren't sold by the pound, but they might as well be. Don't forget to go to the second-hand department store, **Savers** (3300 San Mateo Blvd. NE 888-0116), with its extensive Pat Benatar "Get Nervous" T-shirt collection. While you're up there, stop by **Thrift Town** (5120 Lomas Blvd. 265-3787), where





overpriced bad art sits by underpriced '70s ski sweaters.

**Bow Wow Records** (3103 Central Ave. NE 256-0928) is the home of great and expensive jazz on vinyl. It's got a good selection of indie, used and local releases, and a "back room" of import vinyl and cut-outs. Another great store is **Natural Sound And Video** (3500 Central Ave. SE 255-8295), whose bathroom features a photo of the owner with Joey Ramone. Jeffrey, a drummer who played on Vic Chesnutt's *West Of Rome* and plays in Hazeldine, will be happy to point you toward a fine selection. Also worth your time is **Mind Over Matter** (1710 Central Ave. SE 842-5922), where the occasional all-ages show or poetry reading makes the scene. MOM is a piece of San Francisco in Albuquerque bricks. Peruse the well-chosen singles, hundreds of 'zines, comics and alt-culture artifacts.

After you get your anarchy dose there, stop in next door at **Mary Moon's** (1708 Central Ave. SE 244-3904), an organic hippie style coffee bar. They have a bunch of hemp clothes, and sometimes a vinyl-clad guy with enormous sideburns will break out a guitar and go through the Bread catalog. While you're into coffee, you may as well slack at one of three other cafés in the neighborhood: the bookish **Best Price** (1800 Central SE 842-0624), **R.B. Winning** (Harvard near Central) and **Silvertone Cafe** (2201 Silver St. SE 255-8728), home of decent eats and an open-mic Monday nights that ranges from the ridiculous (morose acoustic songs about "my old girlfriend") to the sublime (Norm, king of modern yodeling).

It would hardly be a trip to Albuquerque without a greasy Frontier roll, or a breakfast burrito, and any time is a good time for these. **The Frontier** (2400 Central Ave. SE) has served food seemingly since the beginning of time. Spicy green chile, cheesy yellow barn-style decor outside and western-themed art inside, and cheap eats 24-7 make the Frontier requisite among locals. If the thought of John Wayne watching you eat isn't appetizing, there are other rooms, with cow horns, jukeboxes, and cheesy paintings. Also in the compulsory category is the **66 Diner**. Painstakingly held in time like bugs in amber, this '50s malted diner has a good oldies jukebox, great mashed potatoes, and of course, a blue plate special. Vegetarians will have a tough time here, and that might be one of the reasons it burned down two years ago. Recently rebuilt, the blazing red and blue neon of the 66 is a welcome sight on East Central.

When you hit downtown, go first to **Anodyne** (409 Central Ave. NE 244-1820). Shoot pool, snooker, play pinball, or run your fingers through the CD jukebox in this atmosphere-y bar that doubles as a see-and-be-seen. Come early if you want to play. Zip into the **Freed And Co.** (415 Central Ave. NW 247-9311), a store that has been at the same location since WWII, for milagros, beads, tin toys and weird stuff. Don't miss taking a

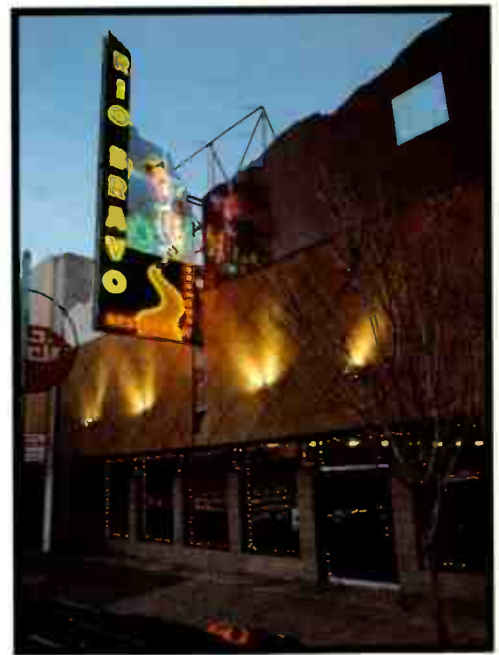
look at the **KiMo Theater** on the corner of 5th and Central, the crown jewel of the "Pueblo Deco" architecture that marries Art Deco with Native American elements. Any show here is worth it for the ambiance and decor.

Duck around the thick-neck and short-skirt set that trawl the sports bars and strip clubs until you find **The Fabulous Dingo Bar** (313 Gold St. SW 243-0663). The club features blues and punk rock, including Albuquerque's best polished touring bands: The Drags, Hazeldine, Naomi, Elephant, Flake, Scared Of Chaka, Selsun Blue, Bovine, Apricot Jam, and up-and-comers UV Transmission, the Eycliners and Blind Nine. For a relatively small population, Albuquerque has a surprisingly diverse and talented group of musicians. Also downtown is **Club UN** (211 Gold SW), an all-ages tri-room dance hall and showspace.

Unfortunately, within the last two years, two smaller venues have shut down or changed ownership. In their place has come ingenuity and spunk. Shows at coffeehouses, warehouses, sandwich shops and other unusual locations have been the standards, and the inventive change of contexts has been frustrating, but refreshing. Soon to open will be the **Launch Pad** (618 Central, being refurbished at press time), a space partially owned by Eric Kennedy of Elephant. This spot of hope in the desert hits like rain. The plants, musicians and bands that live here are hopeful and resilient.

*All phone numbers are in area code 505.*

*Brendan Doherty once pushed coffee at Fred's, helped run a singles label, Resin, and played drums for the Drags and Elephant, oh, so long ago. He writes about music for the Weekly Alibi, the Albuquerque Tribune, the Dallas Observer, the Phoenix New Times, and the Houston Press.*



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