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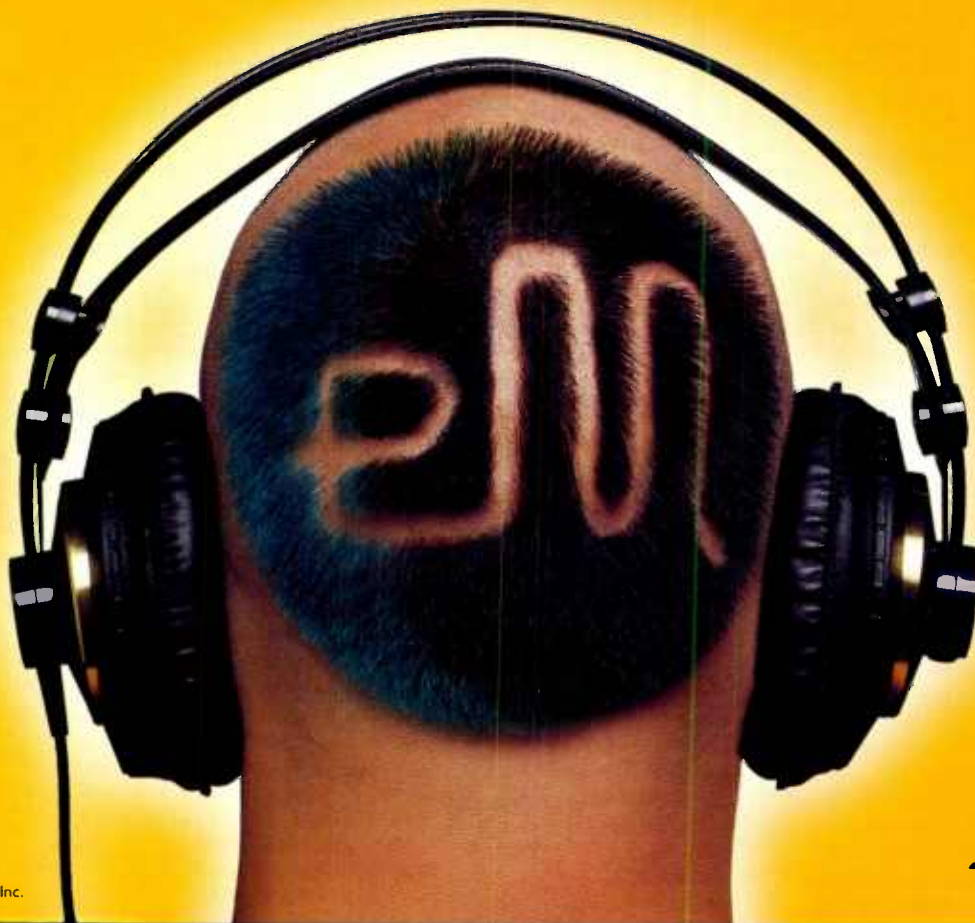
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ON THE COVER: RUN DMC photographed by Chapman Baehler and Henry Rollins photographed by Charlie Langella.

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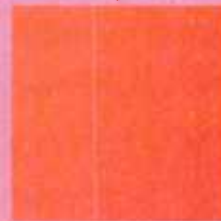
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OLD FANG'S WHINE

Finally, a music journalist writes an article worthy of his comic book collection. ("Does Music Matter Anymore?" Jan '00) Those pictures of the psuedopimp almost scared me away, but Michael Azerrad took Kid Rock as just the starting point and turned it into one of the best music articles I've ever read. Anyone who's tired of the "what's-wrong-with-kids-these-days" arthritic whine should appreciate it, as will all those aspiring musicians out there trying to figure out where they fit and what they want to say.

D.J. Wright [jwasdj@yahoo.com]

CHOCOLATE-COVERED GRANOLA BAR?

Kudos on Michael Azerrad's amazingly intuitive "Does Music Matter Anymore?". The story really pulled it together for this ex-alterna-teen-mainstream-hate-machine. You just disintegrated 24 years worth of musical self-pity and contempt.

Ben Haines Daigneau [Bdaigneau@aol.com]

BARSTOOL COWBOY

Michael Azerrad's cover story, "Does Music Matter Anymore?" reads like a fun barstool soliloquy. But if I were his bartender I'd have cut him off earlier. Of course recorded music is a commodity. To suggest that it was ever else is to be naive. No matter what you produce in American culture, someone makes money from your labor. So, either create a perfectly fair and altruistic distribution system for music or be quiet. My guess is that musicians who agonize over the balance of commerce and art in their work would soon Cobainize themselves, which would be a horrible loss for us all.

Anyway, thanks for the provocative story. And tell Mr. Azerrad I'll buy him a beer the next time he's in Ann Arbor, but if he mentions "tool of The Man" even once I'll take him straight back to the airport.

Eric Touchberry, Ann Arbor, Michigan

SLAPPY WHITE

I must give you a congratulatory slap across the face for writing a very ballsy and for the most part lame article on the face of American music as we usher in the next millennium. Now, I cannot even start to scratch the surface of all the aspects of music that you cover in the sprawling manifesto of the faults of bands and pseudo-bands in the musical limelight right now. So, I will just ask you about the one section where you attack Pavement and Beck for their glibness and "wink-wink" inside jokes that Moby thinks are "uncourageous."

Now I know that Pavement is not a voice of our generation, but I think that as a whole, the songs give a person a feeling of "I've been there and I know what it's like." They are not just a bunch of inside jokes and witty comments. The songs have a sense of sincerity that people connect to on a personal level. It is not necessarily important for every band that exists in this diverse spectrum of music to either have a strong political stance or have happy lyrics set to an annoying beat. There is a golden mean in the

middle. There is an exception to stupid meaningless lyrics and simple chord progressions. That middle ground is Pavement—or any other band that addresses the listener on a personal level and doesn't just throw out some generic song that helps them sell 30 million records. If it weren't for these bands I'd be very disillusioned instead of only slightly disillusioned.

Joshua Borger [jcborger@mindspring.com]

TEENAGE RAMPAGE

When the teenager was invented in the 1950s, rebellion was disguised as Elvis and listening to—gasp—black music. The defining factor in the divine creation of teens was the eruption of music we love to label today as "rock." Now, the teenager, like any other organism, has naturally evolved and our definition of rebellion has been milked down to middle-schoolers knocking off their schoolmates, lawsuits concerning STDs and chronic binge drinking. I found it particularly icky, though, that Kid Rock in "Does Music Matter Anymore?" has boldly deemed himself the national spokesguy for teenage politics; it's hardly fair that the man who gets to suck it up for us teenagers is also the monkey who's deciding which one to schtup after the show.

We can't apologize for the fact that the kids who rape chicks at Woodstock and cruise the strip with 12" woofs, flippin' off the Fuzz are dumber than a box of hair. All I can say is, Hey, we're working on it. But generations to come might take some smart pills and eventually realize that mooks who brandish the bird and clothe themselves in the American flag are silly and need to take the same friggin' pills.

Katie Hasty, age 17, Overland Park, Kansas

NOTHING'S SHOCKING

Azerrad stated that "music can still scare older generations" and uses canceled concerts by Marilyn Manson and the Indigo Girls as examples. Generations? Mark that down more to conservative assholes who run things. Most people who have teenagers now lived through Black Sabbath and Alice Cooper; Marilyn Manson is like Bozo The Clown in comparison. We're reaching a point where "older generations" is going to start meaning aging hippies who fucked in the mud, did more drugs than any kid in the '90s will ever do and might have thought for a moment or two while the ROTC building was burning down on campus that things really were going to change. Why use parental fear in any sense to define a musical generation? Is that the point? I thought it was more identity, and having something for one's self. Parents aren't even an issue. Another problem with the '90s: "shocking" music that's about as shocking as a grandmother blowing on a kazoo at her 75th birthday party.

Bill Repsher, Astoria, New York



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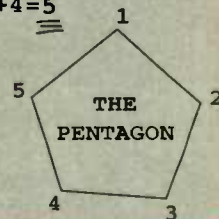
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It's a new dawn, the thought police are at the door and all they want you to do is visit a nice little web site called Live365.com. Just type in the URL and what at first seems a pleasant diversion is soon an all-consuming sonic passion. Your night, your day, Your wrong your right. And before you know it, you're hypnotized in front in your computer speakers for the umpteenth day in a row and little Joey and Jane America are pledging allegiance to the Canadian flag. Resist temptation! Read on!



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Intelligence sources will "neither confirm nor deny" the so-called insidious insidious Brain-Devolution associated with repeated exposure to said "broadcasting" procedure (Live365.com.)

+**Ignore the following at your own peril**;

MYTH 1

"All you're gonna feel is good." Sure, the "tunes" seem good, the DJs seem good, it's all good. !!!!AT FIRST!!!! But then you're hooked and the turntables turn. Just how "good" are you gonna feel when you have to move what's left of your belongings into a box car???

MYTH 3

"Free music on the Internet is good." That's just what the Trilateral Commission (aka the Illuminati aka the Bilderbergers) wants you to believe. Wake up, Nancy! Free music leads directly to Free Love... and next thing you know you're keeping time to the music with a big dose of the Clap!

MYTH 2

"I can quit listening any time I want." Nail biting, slouching, "close" dancing--these are things you can quit. Live365.com is not. Pretty soon, you'll be skipping work. Kids will be playing hooky. And who's that sitting in your barcalounger? Why it's Saddam Hussein!



Darryl Jackson aka DJ Darryl aka

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- *University of Missouri Maneater/Erika Peterson*

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“We were assholes and my personal life was a mess with drinking and drugs. You’re drawn to the promise of sex, drugs, and rock ‘n’ roll—it was great at the time, but looking back it was fuck-all.”



ru de boy

OASIS'S ★ Noel Gallagher on his new record, bratty brother, shitty albums and flighty critics.

QuickFix

An interview with one half of Britpop's notorious Oasis is the kind of assignment a reporter will snatch up, then instantly regret taking. With more mainstream cred than God and the multi-platinum record sales to prove it, the group's seven-year career has been a minefield of coke busts, pub brawls, lawsuits, sketchy romances, botched concert appearances (remember *Unplugged* without lead singer Liam?) and aborted tours. More immediately important, though, Oasis has been known to eat journalists and critics for lunch.

But setting eyes on the pint-sized, floppy-haired, furry-browed Noel Gallagher, clad in simple cords and a "think green" T-shirt and engulfed by an oversized couch, the nightmares brought on by reading past press clippings fade. The notoriously snippy rocker even starts with an *apology*.

"I regret everything between the end of *Morning Glory* and the beginning of writing this new record. We were assholes and my personal life was a mess with drinking and drugs. You're drawn to the promise of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll—it was great at the time, but looking back it was fuck-all," Gallagher says.

For this Gallagher brother, the multi-million-unit drop in sales between the band's sophomore set and its follow-up is no mystery. "The fact of the matter was the songs [on *Be Here Now*] weren't the greatest, and fans could tell our heart wasn't in it. I got lazy. I was always at the pub. I only wrote songs because the label said, 'Quick, we need 10 songs for a follow-up.' We were making plain party albums because life was a big party."

Anxious to avoid another hangover album, elder brother Noel had to distance himself. "Liam fucking thinks he's John Lennon and he takes that behavior far too seriously. It takes a toll on the band," he explains. "I couldn't keep going like that, I'm getting old. So I stopped partying and started to write. I wanted to show what was inside. It's the best work we've done."

The result, *Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants*, is just enough of a sidetrip from Oasis's career homage to the Beatles and The Kinks to register. Psych-rock effects

"I already have enough money, so it's fine if critics and indie rock brats want to write us off."

signal that the band may have left its heart in late '60s San Francisco, and the lyrics are indeed more intimate. Accessible is still the word, though, and several songs are ripe for pop radio.

While Noel's about-face did the act some good, he felt early sessions for the album dragged with the addition of two new members, former Heavy Stereo guitarist Gem Archer and former Hurricane #1 and Ride bassist Andy Bell. Their influence matured the band a bit—perhaps too much.

"The rest of the guys are fantastic players, but they aren't current," allows Gallagher. "They don't go to clubs or shop record stores. It's frustrating to be in a studio when no one is on the same wavelength." But producer Mark "Spike" Stent, known for his work with U2 and Massive Attack, understood. "Having a like mind around made recording a much healthier process. If I heard something on the radio and wanted to do something like it, he knew exactly what I was talking about. *Standing* is not a radical departure from what we normally do. Just a little more psychedelic. We needed a new producer for dynamics' sake."

Okay, the new record is hip. But is it the kind of hip that feeds frat boy followings and grocery store airplay, or are the brothers headed toward appealing to college radio and cardigan-clad vinyl collectors? Will artier songs like "Fuckin' In The Bushes" (a textured instrumental with *Isle Of Wight* film samples) or gritty numbers like "Little James" (Liam's first lyric-writing effort) bring down the wonderwall separating the two camps? Finally, Gallagher cracks a warped smile and whips out the attitude.

"Fuck 'em. I already have enough money, so it's fine if critics and indie rock brats want to write us off. You can't busy yourself with pleasing others, because you never will. The only real goal is to make music the band is proud of," he challenges. "If someone would have said while I was writing 'Wonderwall,' 'It's going to be big in America. Mums are going to know the words.' I would have laughed. I didn't even like the song. But it's nice to be popular, to have people excited by your music, to be nominated for Grammys. And I don't believe that selling a lot of records equals selling out. Just because we sell a lot of records and The Backstreet Boys do, it doesn't mean we are the same band. Generally, people who use that cliché are those who don't sell millions. They can't understand why we can and they can't. They believe there's some sinister conspiracy between the band and Satan. Truth is, we got lucky. There's no recipe."

MM

LABEL PROFILE:



When Skint Records founder Damian Higgins gingerly approached Norman Cook (a.k.a. Fatboy Slim) five years ago and asked him to make a record for his fledgling label, he didn't foresee the day he'd be at London's Arsenal Stadium listening to "Praise You" pounding over the PA. "When it came on, I rang Norman right there from the football game and said 'I can't believe it!'" remembers Higgins. He was grasping what Cook's bank balance already reflected—Skint, known for inciting the big beat invasion, is a mainstream success. Offspring of UK house label Loaded, Skint (that's Brit for "broke-ass") recently released the compilation *Brassic Beats USA* (Skint-Sony), the first disc in its well-known Brassic Beats series made specifically for the US market. "The majority in America don't realize our connection with Norman and that we first signed the Lo Fidelity Allstars," says Higgins, whose diverse roster (Super Collider, ethereal rock act Electrelane and his own alter-ego Midfield General, among others) is licensed to several labels Stateside, including Astralwerks and Columbia. Higgins doesn't expect Brassic's other artists to break through "Rockefeller Skank" style, but he allows, "Nothing surprises me. As long as people don't expect more Normans. We couldn't have more than one of those." —Dylan Siegler

WEIRD RECORD:

From 1980 to 1995, the German anti-music gremlin known as Trickbeat devoured copyright laws and dumbfounded Berlin clubgoers, mutilating samples of jingoist answering machine messages, automatic weapons, porno movies and famous pop songs, then spitting out the masticated remains over absurdly distorted drum tracks. Rising above the din, an endearingly evil, acidic voice puked up, grunted and gargled such disorienting slogans as "KILL! KILL!" or "Holy Moses! Heavy metal!" Works such as the Human Wreckords-released *Vietnashville* (a 1993 10" of combat country 'n' western pressed on "Vietnam-colored" green vinyl) and the 1988 LP *Nena Menstruationsbrigade* (Nam & Schwitz) are landmarks in modern surrealism, from their hallucinatory cover art collages to their impenetrable, trash-culture manifestos-cum-tantrums. To create the recently-issued, posthumous *Musik Wird Überflüssig—The Freemixes* (Human Wreckords), a host of ear-drilling notables, among them Melt Banana, Merzbow, Shizuo, and Cristoph De Babalon, further deconstructed Trickbeat's back catalog. Packaged with a vaguely gynecological CD booklet, this delightfully obnoxious slice of strangeness basically sounds like, um, another Trickbeat record.

—Jordan N. Mamone

MY FAIR SHORTEE

When **FAUST** met his turntablist partner, the beats were just the start.

story: OLIVER WANG photo: MATT HARTENSTEIN

Partners in every sense of the word, DJs Shortee and Faust are not your average turntablist team. For five years, the 24-year old Shortee (Shannon Burke) and 27-year old Faust (Bobby Bruno) have lived and worked together as sound manipulators and soulmates. Currently based in Atlanta, the two do everything together—even release albums simultaneously. Shortee's debut *The Dreamer* and Faust's third release, *Inward Journeys* are both on Bomb Hip-Hop.

Contrary to the Pygmalion myth that follows the duo, Faust didn't simply "discover" Shortee and turn her into a DJ. True, Faust did introduce Shortee to scratching, but when he first met her in Richmond, Virginia, she wasn't just any babe in the woods. "She was in a punk rock band and had been playing drums since age seven," recalls Faust. "She had the rhythm of scratching already so she picked it up fast. She's really just gifted."

Indeed, Shortee quickly absorbed turntable techniques into her data bank of musical expertise, and it became just one of the many inspirations for her sonic syncretism. Eschewing the standard scratch orgy that many DJs indulge in, Shortee's concept album *The Dreamer* (which traces an unusual character's experience as an experimental subject in a dream research center) paints a lavish soundscape, haunted by echoes of dub, showers of jazz riffs and an ethereal swirl of ambient tones and tabla rhythms.

"I have a really short attention span," admits Shortee. "I have so many influences, and I wanted to touch on all my favorite types of music."

In contrast, Faust's *Inward Journeys* crafts a hip-hop-inspired pastiche—Faust's trademark style. Having mastered this realm and developed an appetite for something new, he picked up a few tips from Shortee's command of computer-based sound editing. "I'm a total moron on the computer," admits Faust, "but she's really brought me a long way." A surprise to no one, the two are embarking on a new joint album, bringing both of their respective insights to the (turn)table.

It's been whirlwind relationship in more ways than one—"He moved in after a month of dating and so did the turntables," reminisces Shortee. "We've been together ever since and now we're just riding the waves."

SHE JERKS HARD FOR THE MONEY

New York City dominatrix and **UNBAND** manager Erin Norris explains that to make it in the music biz, you have to remember: "No pain, No gain."

Is it any surprise that the members of The Unband—three lads who've been arrested for indecent exposure and have an affinity for public drunkenness—play big, stupid rock riffs with a very particular sense of humor? Their debut, *Retarder* (TVT) boasts tracks called "Cocaine Whore" and "(Sure Do Feel Like) A Piece Of Shit."

The pièce de résistance in this version of any parent's worst nightmare is their manager, Erin Norris. A former music industry publicist turned full-time dominatrix, she plies her trade in her Soho dungeon, **ABASEMENT**. "There is an assertiveness that comes when necessary," says Norris of her work with Unband, "that is certainly honed here." Recently, Norris starred in a video for Brit-band Ash. You probably never saw it; MTV declined to air its frontal nudity and sex acts (one of them sounds a bit like "Horatio") between Norris and Ash frontman Tim Wheeler.

Norris banks \$250 an hour, and says there's one important difference between sexual role-playing and the music industry: "In S&M, people don't usually get fucked in the end." Still, Norris's two jobs have a startling amount in common. Here is her quick list of tips to keep in mind whether subordinating slaves or satisfying industry demands:

story: BILL WERDE photo: JOHNNY GUINTA



Erin Norris "manages" The Unband

TAKE PRIDE IN YOUR WORK: "If you go to big commercial S&M houses, it's a McDungeon. Get 'em in, get 'em off, get 'em out. There's a 59 minute knock on the door. I want to develop rapport. 'This guy's into heavy bondage? Great! I love heavy bondage.'"

HAVE THE RIGHT TOOLS FOR THE JOB: "My candles have a high beeswax content. It burns much hotter. It's not as pleasureable. Beeswax is for the serious wax enthusiast."

BE EFFICIENT IN THE STUDIO: "I use practical things like clamps, scissors, tweezers. Some of [my other medical instruments] are purely aesthetic. I like the horrific sense of aesthetic, though. It all serves a purpose, but I don't use them all the time."

UTILIZE THE WEB: "Have a web site if you're a professional [Norris's is at www.nadinesdiscretion.com]. It's anonymous and so easy. You can just have a conversation. Someone can send you a detailed letter of what they're into. You can set something up."

RELY ON FAMILY: "My brother made my torture chair. He made all these steel things for me—he's a metal fabricator and an artist. My mom actually bound the cross to the pole."

KNOW WHEN TO PARTY, AND WHEN TO WORK: "I don't like it when clients arrive inebriated. If they're sloppy, they can't gauge what they're capable of taking. Likewise, I can't go in too fucked up. I'll smoke pot. But as a general rule, I don't like 'em fucked up, and I don't go in fucked up either. That's what the rock shows are for."

BE YOURSELF: "During a session, I try to get away with listening to as much rock as possible. I just can't stand it when someone comes in and says, 'Do you have any Enya?'"

BE OPPORTUNISTIC: "For the [Ash] video, there was a little storyboard. But then it was like, 'We want to get a shot of you guys goofing in the bathtub.' Then it was like 'Oh, you're going to cut your chest open? Okay. Well, suppose I tie your hands up here, so you're kind of dangling.' It was just circumstance and positioning. What else are you going to do when you're sitting there with a cock in your face?"

SPECIAL-K



Few labels have made such an impressive statement with an underachieving attitude as K Records. In *The Shield Around The K*, Heather Rose Dominic's new video documentary about the influential DIY label, Ira Robbins of *Trouser Press* holds up Beat Happening's album *Jamboree* and comments on the spare, line-drawn strawberry cover art by label co-founder Calvin Johnson: "This doesn't exactly reek of ambition." Dominic shows how Olympia, Washington's gift to lo-fi helped redefine motivation as a cultivated happy accident. Hear Lois and others testify to the inspirational, anything-can-happen vibe at K headquarters, and witness Gerard Cosloy, *Matador* co-founder and renowned curmudgeon, come up with nice things to say. If this weren't enough to have couch potatoes swelling with can-do spirit, check out the footage from the 1991 International Pop Underground Festival: here's Johnson, that string-bean with a bullfrog voice, shimmying for an adoring crowd. Look for its straight-to-video release this spring. >>>Carlene Bauer

IN MY ROOM

ALAN VEGA OF SUICIDE

As one half of the avant-punk duo Suicide, Alan Vega first made a name for himself in the '70s brandishing chains and challenging audiences. Some 20 years later, the first two Suicide albums have just been re-released by Mute and Vega has to sneak a cigarette in his own bathroom. "I don't want the kid to get any smoke," he explains with a laugh, referring to his new son. "It's like being back in high school again." Generally, he likes to spend time in the living room of his apartment in the New York financial district, which he describes here.



Light sculptures "I've been doing these for 20, 25 years. I've had shows in New York and had some pieces in museums and stuff."

23-foot ceilings "It helps the sculptures breathe. And I get a great view. The windows are 18 or 19 feet tall. I can see Brooklyn from where I'm standing. The East River is a block and a half away."

Dante Vega Alan's 16-month-old boy was named after the writer Dante Alighieri. "One of the things in my room? He's everything now! It's like having a tornado that comes into your house and never leaves. It's great though."

George Orwell's *Homage To Catalonia* "It's about the Spanish Civil War before World War II. I read *1984* a long time ago. I read two of his books that he wrote before *1984*. He's just a great writer, this guy. And he's totally right on with the way I'm thinking."

Golden oldies "I've been listening to a lot of old stuff. Mark Knopfler's band, Dire Straits. There are certain songs that always got me. I remember 'Skateaway,' I remember being in Hamburg, Germany, really depressed. It was like the late '70s or something and my promoter was driving me back in his car. And remember the band Hot Chocolate? 'Every 1's A Winner' and 'You Sexy Thing.' Earl Gardner, man. Great voice. I just buy the greatest hits records. I've been looking to get *Bitches Brew* from Miles Davis again. And I've been listening to Edith Piaf again."

NEIL HANNON OF DIVINE COMEDY

Neil Hannon hit a road block when deciding the track sequence on Divine Comedy's greatest hits package, *A Secret History...The Best Of The Divine Comedy* (Setanta-Red Ink). "I racked my brains for a new and devastating way of doing it, but I came up with a blank," says Hannon. He contemplated the direct route: "When I stick on my Elvis Costello 'Best Of,' it just goes straight in with 'Watching The Detectives,' and then '[Oliver's] Army.'" But eventually he settled on the definitive method: "We went in order of declining record sales. There's no better way to do it." Here, Hannon describes what's in his studio.



Moby Play "He obviously had a brainstorm: 'I'll take these old recordings and stick them in an modern, almost heresy-type feel.' Every record I've ever heard has made me think about whether I should be doing it that way or not. It's quite sweeping, I know. But I can't help it. Instantly, the next song you write will be very much like what you just listened to."

Pop artist Jeff Koons' limited edition sculpture, "Balloon Dog" "It's on a silver plate, dinner plate sized. On it is mounted this strange, pinkish-red porcelain shiny balloon dog. His whole thing was glorifying the pointless. I can relate, taking subjects that people generally wouldn't write songs about. People generally wouldn't think of a balloon tied in the shape of a dog as anything shattering. But I think it's quite beautiful."

Beck *Midnite Vultures* "I worship everything he does. Over here, they complain that he hasn't any heart, it's too much irony. But that's sort of me. This record gives off a huge feeling of energy, release. Getting off on the music."

A mobile "I'm not sure who it's by. But I got it in the Guggenheim in New York. It's this discs-on-spindles idea. It wanders aimlessly around the ceiling. The biggest disc on top, it spins very slowly, but all the different discs go in different directions. It's red and white and black. Very soothing."

Three gold record plaques: *Casanova*, *Fin De Siecle* and *The Best Of...* "Everybody always puts them in their toilets. That's the kitsch thing to do. But frankly, I care a lot. So I'm going to sick them on my studio walls. So they can inspire me to do another one."

A LAMBCHOP'S PLACE IS

Nashville's most sedate rockers pen lullabies for the worki

story: NOEL MURRAY photo: BRYDGET CARRILLO

Lambchop frontman Kurt Wagner grants that the kin-focused tunes on his band's new album, *Nixon* (Merge), are not very punk rock. "The Clash didn't write too many songs about kids," he allows. The Clash did, however, try to write honestly about their lives. And in Wagner's life, it's a simple fact: "A lot of Lambchop babies are popping out."

That helps to explain why *Nixon* features so many songs about kids and lush, elegant tunes about home and family. On the dreamy "Nashville Parent," Wagner sings about the "little creatures in the fields of our love." The anthemic "Up With People" is spurred on by the chant "Come on, progeny!" And both "The Distance From Her To There" and "The Book I Haven't Read" are sung from the perspective of a man on his front porch, either waiting for his wife to come home or wandering what she's up to inside the house.

Perhaps what Lambchop really has in common with The Clash is being out of step with the music industry. The guiding aesthetic of this massive, Nashville-based country-soul orchestra moves in pace with the daily grind, instead. As Wagner explains it to his bandmates, "You can have a normal life, and that includes a job, kids...we'll work around it"—even if working around it means touring for only about a month out of any given year (a couple of weeks in Europe, a couple in the states), and plowing any profits into making ever more elaborate records.



The Mamas And The Papas of Lambchop; Wagner, fourth from right

IN THE HOME

ng class...family.

"We've been working on this for almost a year," Wagner says. "The idea was to make the record. It had to be to a certain level to justify the expense. Every dollar, we put up—money that should've gone in these guys' pockets." Just how many Lambchop babies went without formula to make the expansive *Nixon* is unclear. It's hard to worry about it, though, when the album is so sweeping, lovely, and emotionally charged—more so than any of the band's previous five releases. Surprising musical flourishes (a string section, a gospel choir) decorate Lambchop's already formidable 13-member lineup, and Wagner admits, "I wrote the songs for the record I had in mind." It's easy to imagine him *hearing* strings and choirs even as he plunked his guitar quietly in the basement of his Nashville home after working a full day shift in construction.

While Wagner is very sure of his material, he's less adamant about the album's title, despite press material that attempts to match each of *Nixon*'s songs to the career of the ex-president. The theme came "sort of post-writing," Wagner says. "I wanted this guy Wayne White to do the cover, and when he told me what paintings he had, I picked the one with the Nixon slogan. It felt right, though." He chuckles meaningfully. "I wouldn't have picked it if there weren't something about it."



World Radio History

QuickFix

ROCK 'N' POLS

In these days of media packaging, a strong theme song is as important to a presidential candidate as a well-articulated platform—maybe more. Who wants to discuss single-payer health care when a Springsteen anthem can suggest that you're both idealistic and down with the working class? Yet, for every winning "Don't Stop Thinking About Tomorrow," there's a tumble off the dais like "Dole Man." As a public service, *CMJ New Music Monthly* offers these suggestions. Amen, and God Bless America (or at least Kate Smith). >>>Neil Gladstone



BILL BRADLEY- Considered a reformer because he left the Senate saying "politics doesn't work anymore," the real reason everyone loves this former Knicks star is because he can dunk Al Gore. Robert Plant's "Tall Cool One" might work with Baby Boomers and Schoolhouse Rock's "I'm Just A Bill" would be a big hit with Gen X-ers, but why not go for the gusto and play KRS-One's "Squash All Beef" with every entrance (floppy pimp fedora—borrowed from teammate Walt "Clyde" Frazier—is optional).

PAT BUCHANAN- A Washington insider who plays himself as an outsider, Nazi sympathizer Buchanan has a history of making anti-Semitic remarks and several of his aides have ties to white supremacist organizations. To quell these accusations, he can crank 2 Live Jews' "Young Jews, Be Proud" and Kid Rock's "Black Chick White Guy" or revel in his honkitude with numbers like Danny Williams' "White On White," Deep Silence's "The Gift Of The White Man" and Minor Threat's "Guilty Of Being White."

GEORGE W. BUSH- Did you ever think the father of art rock, Frank Zappa, and George W. Bush, the toot-loving son of a former president, would be kindred spirits? Not one, but two of Zappa's tunes would be perfect: "Cocaine Decisions" and "The Idiot Bastard Son." Okay, so those two might not attract exactly the biggest voting demographic, but there's always Kansas' "Carry On My Wayward Son" for that.

STEVE FORBES- He's a rich kid who's probably running because it's a nice tax write-off. That Ivy League pedigree obviously appeals to the old boys, but Forbes can use his campaign music to get in touch with "fringe" demographics. Picture him hitting slacker bars to the tune of Liz Phair's "Shitloads Of Money," gay discos with The Pet Shop Boys' "3 Opportunities (Let's Make Lots of Money)" and thumping through the hood on Nas' "Money Is My Bitch."

DICK GEPHARDT- Oh sure, he's flip-flopped from being an anti-abortion conservative to a lefty populist, but what politician hasn't jumped ship like Kate Winslet? The man's name is Dick and the people need to hear it a lot if they're going to remember it. What can it hurt to crank Blink 182's "Dick Lips," Golden Smog's "He's A Dick" and Schoolly D's classic, "Mr. Big Dick"?

AL GORE- No one's really sure what Mr. "You Can Call Me Al" stands for, but his censorship-happy wife Tipper ain't helping things. The best way for Gore to let everyone know that the PMRC won't be a part of his presidency: Guns N' Roses' "Back Off Bitch."

JOHN MCCAIN- This Vietnam vet and former P.D.W. has taken impressive bipartisan approaches to legislation on smoking and campaign finance issues, but that won't help him shake his vitriolic image. What better way to show you're cool when you're taking to the podium than with Blue Oyster Cult's "Make Rock Not War"? Um, then again, maybe it would just be better to throw people off the track with Funkadelic's "Electric Spanking Of War Babies."

DONALD TRUMP- The author of *The Art Of The Deal* is also the only candidate working a major pompadour on this year's campaign trail. With a little help from a classic pomp man such as Elvis, people will see Trump as an everyman. Can't you see the Donald shimmying by the bonfire to a couple of tunes from the *Clambake* soundtrack—"Big Boss Man" and "Who Needs Money"?

BOTTLE EXCHANGE

MARY LOU LORD trades a drinking problem for motherhood and a new set of covers.

story: RICHARD MARTIN photo: DIANE COLLINS

Two years ago, a pixie-like busker and indie rock heroine from Boston stood poised to enter the pop mainstream with the release of her major label debut *Got No Shadow* (Work). Then a not-so-funny thing happened to Mary Lou Lord on the way to superstardom.

"The record came out, and it was doing pretty good," recalls Lord in her New England brogue, sounding like she could be relating this tale of woe from a barstool at Cheers. "Then the second month into the tour, I was basically fucked up every night. One morning, I just couldn't get up."

Aware of her drinking problem, Lord's friends insisted she go into rehab. Around the same time, the singer discovered she was pregnant. "It was like a double whammy," Lord says. She packed her bags, returned home to her boyfriend, and gave birth to her daughter Annabelle in early 1999. Despite the presence of a solid pop record, which included several collaborations with The Bevis Frond's Nick Saloman, guest appearances by Shawn Colvin, Elliott Smith and The Byrds' Roger McGuinn, and a forceful reworking of Lord's indie hit "Some Jingle Jangle Morning," *Got No Shadow* failed to conjure anything but a silhouette. Her label cut short a marketing blitz and waited out her return.

"I threw every wrench into their system that I could—unintentionally, but I did—and they said, 'Get back to us when you're ready,'" she says. Now sober, and with her family life secured, Lord's taken another strange turn, albeit a musical one. Rather than hurry into a studio and record a major label follow-up, she's releasing a split-EP of cover tunes with indie-pop act Sean Na Na, on her old label home Kill Rock Stars. Lord enlists her boyfriend's band, The Raging Teens, for a spirited cover of a Janice Martin rockabilly tune; she plucks out a version of Lucinda Williams' apropos "High Road"; and returns to Saloman's songbook for a take on The Bevis Frond's "Aim Low."

Sean Na Na singer/songwriter Sean Tillman and drummer Chris Wilson met Lord on tour and expressed mutual admiration. Tillman and Lord eventually settled on the idea to work together, then produced a separate-but-equal record; Sean Na Na's three melodic indie-pop songs close out the EP. Now Lord must face the task of returning to her star-crossed solo recording career. She hopes to form a band prior to entering the studio, and is still more inclined to play others' songs than her own. "I'm a better listener than I am a writer," she says. "I think it's an art to pull off [covers]. It's very important to me that great songs don't go unnoticed."

?&A: JIMMY SOMERVILLE



Brandishing one of the most distinctive falsettos since '70s disco queen Sylvester, diminutive Glaswegian Jimmy Somerville became an overnight icon in 1984, when Bronski Beat dropped their classic synth pop singles "Smalltown Boy" and "Why." Amidst the maddeningly ambiguous don't-ask-don't-tell UK pop scene, Somerville was unabashedly out of the closet and politically active. Though he split after the group's acclaimed debut *Age Of Consent*, Somerville was soon back in the charts as one half of The Communards; their 1987 cover of Thelma Houston's "Don't Leave Me This Way" even cracked the US Top 40. Since going solo in 1989, he's continued to push stylistic boundaries, making left-of-center contributions to the *Red Hot + Blue* Cole Porter tribute, the *Oriando* and *Postcards From America* soundtracks, and even the Low remix project *Dwl*. His new album, *Manage The Damage* (Instinct-Gut), is a collaboration with his housemate Sally Herbert (ex-Banderas). >>>Kurt B. Reighley

To what do you attribute the especially rabid devotion you've inspired in many of your fans over the past 16 years?

I suppose it's because I'm kind of specialized. Is that the right word? That's what they used to call homosexuals in the '40s and '50s: "specialists." I suppose some of my audience would be quite specialized, too. And I know from what people tell me that a lot of it's because of my honesty and politics.

Have you ever felt that kind of fanaticism about a public figure?

No. As a teenager I was obsessed with Donna Summer, but not to the point where I went running after her everywhere she went. I was never in the fan club. But then again, I was a 15-year-old, red-haired, Scottish male homosexual who thought he was a black, American disco diva half of the time. So perhaps I did have a problem.

Why does your new track "Lay Down"—a fairly explicit paean to fellatio—give a songwriting credit to French pop legend Serge Gainsbourg?

The very beginning of the track is from the Serge Gainsbourg/Brigitte Bardot song "Contact," this sci-fi pop record from the '60s. I think Gainsbourg's fantastic, one of the greatest composers of the second half of the century. He was a genius, and the only thing that stops anyone from knowing about him is the language barrier, the fact it's all in French. His productions were very radical, modern, and definitely influential on a lot of pop. If it hadn't been for "Je T'aime...Moi Non Plus," there'd have been no "Love To Love You, Baby." It's kind of an homage to Serge Gainsbourg, too, because there was a lot of sex and sexuality in his tracks.

***Manage The Damage* is dedicated to Matthew Shepard, the victim of a violent anti-gay hate crime last year in Wyoming. Do you feel gay men and women are becoming less politically charged?**

Everybody thinks we've achieved some big freedoms, because we can dance and drink as much as we want, where we want. There's a false sense of security. You don't have freedom until you're recognized within society. Until there are laws that protect you in the workplace and in the streets, then there is no security. The Matthew Shepard episode showed that there is still so much homophobia and evil and violence out there. What happened to that young man should never happen to anyone, but it's happening all the time. We're so advanced as a race in so many ways—America can send probes to Mars—but sadly, the majority of us are still living in the 15th century.

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Cars
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Alie
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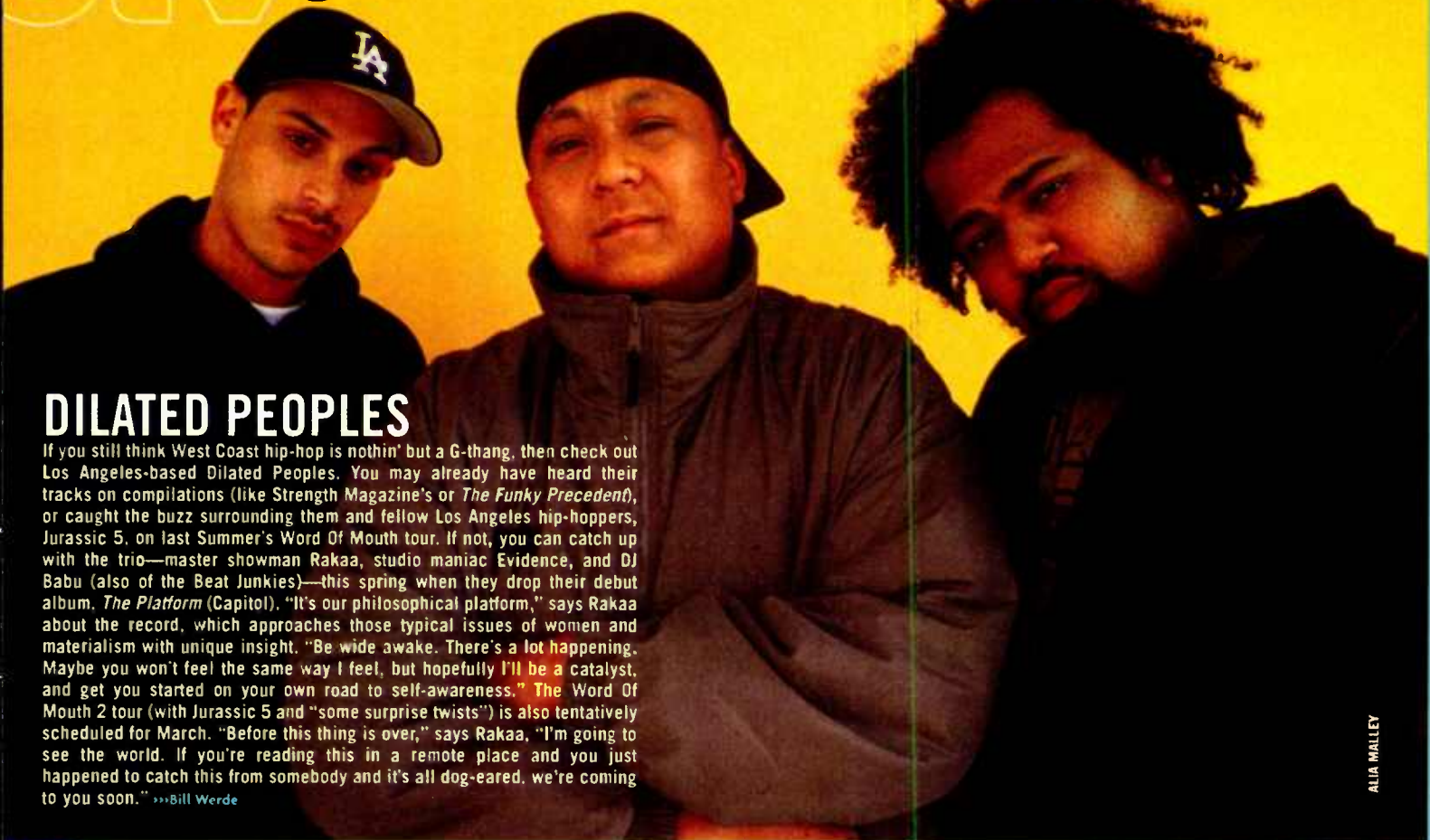
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DILATED PEOPLES

If you still think West Coast hip-hop is nothin' but a G-thang, then check out Los Angeles-based Dilated Peoples. You may already have heard their tracks on compilations (like *Strength Magazine's* or *The Funky Precedent*), or caught the buzz surrounding them and fellow Los Angeles hip-hoppers, Jurassic 5, on last Summer's Word Of Mouth tour. If not, you can catch up with the trio—master showman Rakaa, studio maniac Evidence, and DJ Babu (also of the Beat Junkies)—this spring when they drop their debut album, *The Platform* (Capitol). "It's our philosophical platform," says Rakaa about the record, which approaches those typical issues of women and materialism with unique insight. "Be wide awake. There's a lot happening. Maybe you won't feel the same way I feel, but hopefully I'll be a catalyst, and get you started on your own road to self-awareness." The Word Of Mouth 2 tour (with Jurassic 5 and "some surprise twists") is also tentatively scheduled for March. "Before this thing is over," says Rakaa, "I'm going to see the world. If you're reading this in a remote place and you just happened to catch this from somebody and it's all dog-eared, we're coming to you soon." >>>Bill Werde

ALIA MALLEY

AMEL LARRIEUX

Dusky diva Amel Larriex swears her crooning was first captured on tape when she was a mere 18 months old. By grade school, she had immersed herself in chorus, music study, and musicals (*Oliver!* is still her favorite). "I guess some people are just born with a kind of innate sense of music, or a real love for it," reckons the 26-year-old. After one-off projects with Groove Theory and Sweetback, the singer is finally releasing a steamy solo disc, *Infinite Possibilities* (550-Epic). Like fellow soul sisters Macy Gray and Angie Stone, Larriex mines classic Stax/Volt territory with a gentle, techno-toned pickaxe. "Even If," for example, coasts on the soft winds of one keyboard, finger-pop percussion and Larriex's gorgeous, gospel-warm phrasings. From its title track on down, *Infinite Possibilities* accentuates the positive. The remarkably optimistic Larriex explains: "I'm married, I have two kids, and I have to set a certain example. I don't have time to mess around anymore. My kids look to me as the person who's gonna help form what kind of human being they're gonna be. So, without being preachy, I like to set a good example in my music as well." >>>Tom Lanham



CHRISTOPHER MICAUD

NEKO CASE 

"Working on a record is harder than breaking up with your boyfriend," says Neko Case. "Because it makes you realize that you're the only thing you really have." Like the most seasoned country frontwomen (Patsy Cline, Loretta Lynn, and Emmylou Harris come to mind), Case sounds like she knows from grief and gritty self-reliance. Even the upbeat, whiskey-swiggin' saloon anthems on the 29-year-old's second record, *Furnace Room Lullaby* (Bloodshot), seem an elaborate cover-up for a core curriculum of lost love and sorry luck. Although Case has doubtless suffered plenty of heartbreak over the years, she hasn't always expressed it through country songs. The art school grad cut her teeth as drummer for the Vancouver punk duo Meow. "I grew up with rock, but there was something that seemed more religious about country," she says. Two years ago, that interest bloomed into Case's debut solo album, *The Virginian*. Don't dare to call this a honky-tonk phase, though, or a conscious decision to follow a trend. "This is not a period any more than punk was," she assures. "These things don't go away, they just blend in." —Dylan Dwyer



Photo credit: Sheryl Lee by Robert Sebree. Hair & body makeup: Nancy Von Ger Launitz/Cloutier

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World Radio History



JULIE DOIRON AND THE WOODEN STARS ★

Julie Doiron And The Wooden Stars

Tree

Nova Scotian Julie Doiron's last couple of solo records have featured guest appearances by members of Ottawa's Wooden Stars. This time, they're all along for the sleigh ride. It's a wise move on Doiron's part; unaccompanied, her voice and modestly scaled songs often threaten to float off on a wave of self-absorption. Some of this collaboration is just what you'd expect from someone who once recorded under the name Broken Girl: 4 a.m. sketches of isolation ("Don't bother calling back/ No really, don't bother") and domestic upset ("You didn't even say goodnight"), set against a backdrop of brushed drums and warm-toned six-strings. What you wouldn't expect are moments like the full-blooded pop song the band finds hiding inside "Dance Music" (which isn't), or "The Best Thing For Me," which features a brilliantly dissonant guitar solo that evokes Marc Ribot fronting The Sea And Cake. The musicianship is excellent throughout, but ultimately, this is the frontwoman's show: her vocals, slightly husky and inventively phrased, are better than ever, and her oddly proportioned melodies, which owe something to jazz-era Joni Mitchell, show up to better advantage than in the past. Doiron's always written songs worth hearing; the Wooden Stars just make them harder to ignore. >>> Franklin Bruno

OUT:

January 25.

FILE UNDER:

(Mostly) quiet desperation.

R.I.Y.L.:

Edith Frost, Mary Margaret O'Hara, Suzanne Vega.



DAVE DOUGLAS

Soul On Soul

RCA Victor

Dave Douglas was the trumpet player of the late '90s. And if this major label debut is any indication, he could become the jazz guy of the '00s. Douglas has a brilliant tone, technical prowess, and is a restless, exuberant improviser. What's more, he's an agile conceptual visionary, playing as sideman in any number of contexts (including John Zorn's Masada) and leading a handful of ensembles, each of which maintains a distinct identity. *Soul On Soul* is a kind of homage to the influential, if under-recognized, composer/pianist Mary Lou Williams (1910-1981), who contributes four of the 11 tunes here, and whose wide-ranging aesthetic could be a model for Douglas's own. The tracks are familiar in their broad outlines, but soon reveal themselves as complex, multi-part ensemble workouts. The rolling piano figure in Douglas's "Blue Heaven," for instance, announces Blue Note hard bop, but the band takes the piece beyond the hooky songforms that label made famous. Reed players Chris Speed and Greg Tardy alternate saxophones and clarinets for timbral variety, and Douglas likes juxtaposing different subdivisions of the band—bass and piano, trumpet and drums. By the last third of the disc, he's mixing "free"-era Coltrane with Williams's early swing. >>> Jon Garelick

OUT:

February 8.

FILE UNDER:

End-of-the-century jazz.

R.I.Y.L.:

Ron Horton, Woody Shaw, Lee Morgan, Miles Davis.



MARAH ★

Kids In Philly

E-Squared-Artemis

Bruce Springsteen sent *Greetings From Asbury Park*, Lou Reed walked the wild side of New York, X examined the mess of Los Angeles, and now Marah places Philadelphia on the map of great city-life albums with *Kids In Philly*. Marah's Philadelphia is no tourist attraction; it's filled with dumpsters and alleyways, Vietnamese barbers, Rocky Balboa, suspicious catfishermen, abandoned 'Sixers caps and dead bodies. It's a seedy perspective that finds its romantic salvation in the joys of rock 'n' roll. As if he were a young, caffeinated Springsteen fronting The Faces, Marah's Dave Bielanko spills his vocals in a rush of Philadelphia images while his brother Serge cries harmony lines and the band leans to the rock side of roots-rock. The band's signature Mummers-style banjo strum remains, augmented by bluesy slide guitar and all-too-brief guitar rave-ups. *Kids In Philly* quotes Phil Spector (the "Be My Baby" chorus in "Round Eye Blues") and the aforementioned Faces ("Barstool Boys," which is more "Ooh La La" than "Barstool Boys"), and the songs make their point and get the hell out, perhaps too quickly. I'd love a few more bars of "sha na na na" at the end of the two-minute "Point Breeze." *Kids In Philly's* 37 minutes is too brief a visit to Marah's City Of Brotherly Love. >>> Steve Klinge

OUT:

March 21.

FILE UNDER:

Urban roots-rock.

R.I.Y.L.:

Early Springsteen, Steve Earle, Bottle Rockets.



MAZARIN

Watch It Happen

Victoria

As drummer for Philadelphia psych-rock band Azusa Plane, Quentin Stolfus has no doubt played his share of frantic fills and aggressive beats. But as a first-time singer/songwriter, Stolfus shocked even his friends when unveiling his thoughtful, gently nuanced pop songs. Working with fellow Philly musicians such as Sean Byrne, drummer for the smartly melodic band Lenola, this percussionist-turned-frontman has recorded a mellifluous, concise debut. Such side projects rarely aspire to greatness, and often falter when the newbie songsmith gets tangled in obvious hooks and glib lyrical sentiments. But almost accidentally, Stolfus has created a gem; he threads Mazarin's fuzzed-out songs with four-track loops from previous experiments he'd recorded under the name Therisphere, and the murky background noise counterbalances his airborne pop. Varied tunes, from droney, My Bloody Valentine-influenced fare to a hushed, Nick Drake-style folk, make *Watch It Happen* a perpetually stimulating record. The noisier tracks, like "Chasing The Girl" and "Deed To Drugs," nearly overpower Stolfus's breathy vocals—the only shortcoming here. On most songs, however, he compensates with a creative mix of harmonies, string section samples, and electronic trickery, bolstering his guitar-based pop songs and marching this side project into the limelight. >>> Richard Martin

OUT:

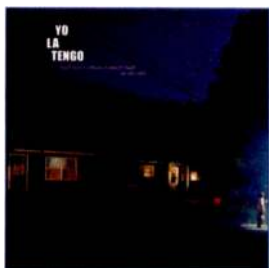
February 1.

FILE UNDER:

Space-pop experimentalism.

R.I.Y.L.:

Citizens' Utilities, The Lilys, Granddaddy.



YO LA TENGO

And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out

Matador

After 13 years and nine albums, most bands would have either packed it in or fallen into a rut. But Yo La Tengo keeps getting not only better, but more adventuresome. On opus ten, the Kaplan/Hublely/McNew ensemble attempts to discover how much space can be let into the rock-trio balloon before it bursts. Quite a bit, it seems: what grounds "Our Way To Fall" isn't the loose pulse of Georgia Hubley's drumming, or the tremulous outline of Ira Kaplan's guitar, but the latter's intimate vocal delivery of an "I remember" list tracing a courtship's early awkwardness. (This song borders on sentimentality, but others give equal airtime to the downside of long-term relationships.) "Saturday" is even riskier, with a dub-tweaked drum program and guest percussion by free-jazzer Susie Ibarra. After their obligatory obscure cover (George MacRae's "You Can Have It All"), the second half is more conventionally song-oriented, ranging from the bittersweet "Tears Are In Your Eyes" through "Night Falls On Hoboken," an acoustic epic with plenty of solo space. Only the feedback-and-maracas raver "Cherry Chapstick" revisits the louder territory of songs like the band's "Sugarcube." On most albums this subdued, such earthiness would be a relief; the fact that it's almost a distraction demonstrates just how fine the rest of *Nothing* is. >>> Franklin Bruno

OUT:

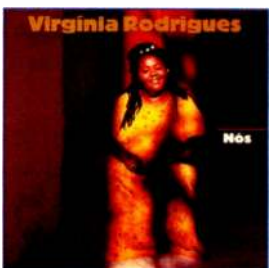
February 22.

FILE UNDER:

Quiet storms.

R.I.Y.L.:

Low, Big Star's Sister Lovers, Jonathan Richman.



VIRGÍNIA RODRIGUES

Nós

Hannibal-Rykodisc

Brazilians may make the most subtle and sophisticated pop in the world, but many American ears still recoil slightly at the way it embraces everything gentle and genteel, from smiley-faced nursery rhymes to bombastic art songs, refining away the grit of the music's basic rhythms and political roots with smooth sentimentality. Virginia Rodrigues, a 35-year-old manicurist-turned-national-sensation, doesn't quite escape this generalization, despite the fact that her pure contralto is a strikingly unique instrument, and her second album seems designed to highlight both the rhythms and sociopolitical concerns of her native Bahia. Her mentor, Caetano Veloso, has aptly described her voice as "neutral, almost impersonal," achieving "a sound that almost sounds like a castrato." Though her tone is as rich as Cesaria Evora's, its perfect polish tends toward ethereal meditation rather than sensual melancholy. Here, this hint of new age religiosity is counteracted by a sprightly pop tunes like "Áfrekêté" and "Ojú Obá," by touches of Carnival-esque drumming, and by biting lyrics on racism and other injustices which beg for full translation. But in their absence—and in the presence of too many tinkling background effects—the music is like a large, somber-colored balloon, a foreign body borne off our local radar screen by the wind. >>> Franklin Soultis

OUT:

February 1.

FILE UNDER:

Brazilian pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Cesaria Evora, Caetano Veloso.



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STORY: MATT ASHARE PHOTOS: CHAPMAN BAEHLER

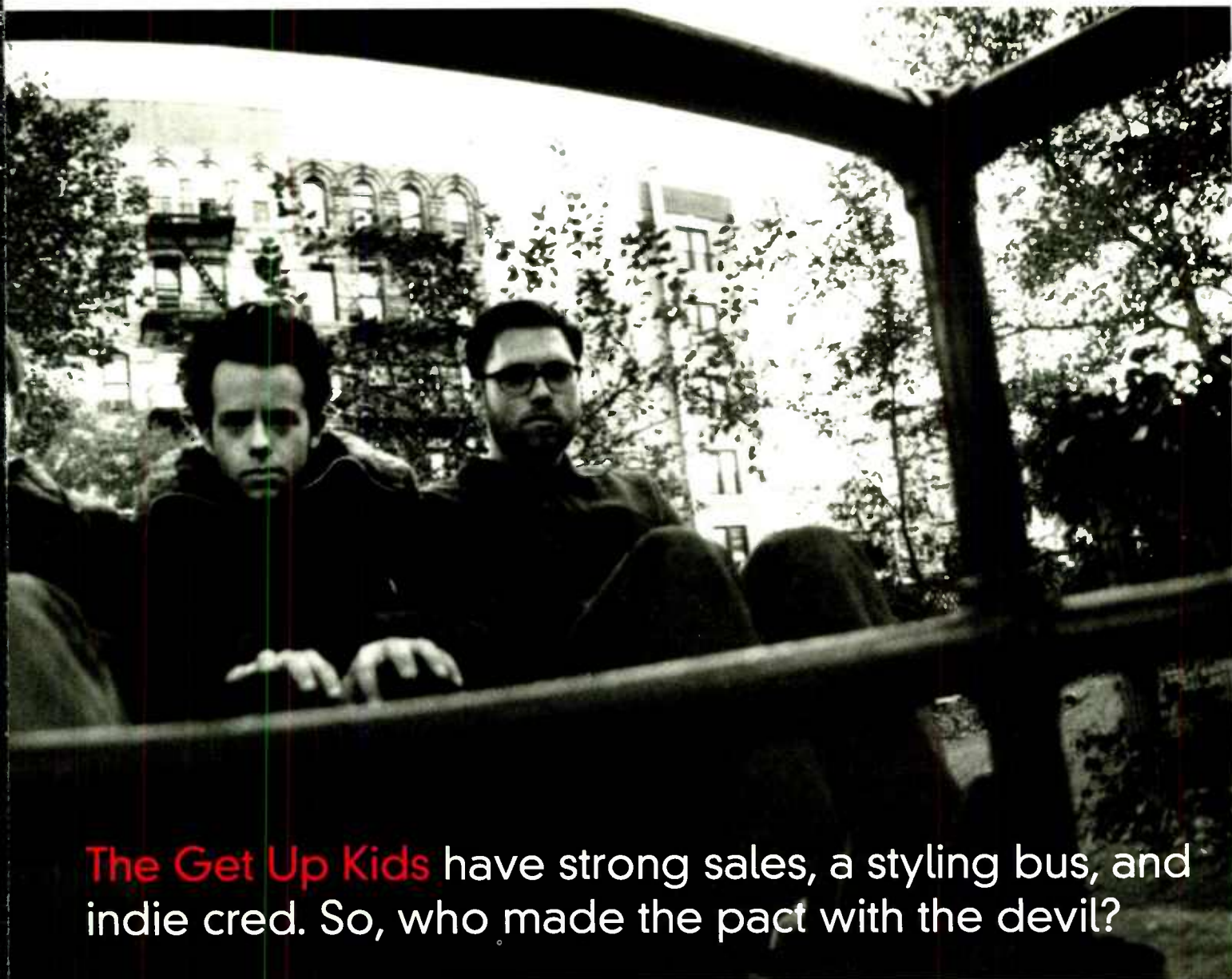
"Hello?"
"Hi. This is Matt, the guy who's supposed to interview The Get Up Kids this afternoon before their show."
"Great. They're ready now. Where are you?"
"I'm about 10 minutes away from the club. Where are they?"
"We're all here on a silver tour bus parked right outside the club."
"A real tour bus? Not a van or a school bus, but a big tour bus?"
"Yeah."
"Okay, I'll see you in 10..."

The Get Up Kids is not a band you're likely to hear on the radio any time soon. You're not likely to see the band on MTV anytime soon, either, unless you tune in for *120 Minutes* on a Sunday night and get lucky. And they're not a bunch of independently wealthy smartasses from New York's Upper West Side. No, The Get Up Kids is a group of five guys in their early 20s from Kansas City (of all places) who started playing together four years ago and who now have an album out on the modest-yet-stable Santa Monica, California indie punk label Vagrant and, yes, a big silver tour bus that they're spending two and half months crossing the country in. And for those of you unfamiliar with the often punishing economics of touring, that last little detail—replete with a TV/VCR setup, sleeping quarters, and a nice little

lounge in the back with a decent stereo system—is one that doesn't quite fit with the rest of the picture. Bands without a generous tour support budget from a major label aren't supposed to be riding around in big silver tour buses: they're supposed to be crammed into a broken down old Ford Econoline van littered with McDonald's wrappers and crushed styrofoam coffee cups and jam packed with amps, guitars, drums, and a big box of T-shirts and CDs to sell at gigs for gas money.

The Get Up Kids, though, aren't your typical young band of indie-punks from Kansas City. They may, now that Boys Life has broken up, be the only young band of indie-punks from Kansas City right now, as they point out to me. More importantly, though, The Get Up Kids is a band which quietly sold close to 40,000 copies of its 1997 Doghouse debut, *Four Minute Mile*. Which accounts for the tour bus. And for the hundreds of kids lined up to get into the Karma Club in Boston on this Saturday afternoon, occasionally peering into the big silver tour bus as they pass by and I sit with brothers Rob (bass) and Ryan (drums) Pope, listening to them finish each other's sentences as they try to account for succeeding at the post-indie rock dream.

Ryan, age 20: "We did it with touring. This is like our 15th tour or something. I mean we went from playing basements to where we're playing in front of hundreds of kids like this. It's all because of touring..."



The Get Up Kids have strong sales, a styling bus, and indie cred. So, who made the pact with the devil?

Rob, age 21: "...and word of mouth. We came along at the perfect time."

Ryan: "Yeah, when we started we were hanging out with our friends' bands, like Braid, Mineral, Jimmy Eat World, Boys Life—all these bands who had been around since like 1993 or 1994. They were bands who were only playing for like 15 kids a night or whatever, at that time."

Rob: "And then it suddenly grew into this whole emo rock scene."

Ah, emocore—the lone wing of indie-rock that truly seems to be thriving—and invariably, a touchy subject with just about every band associated with the subgenre. As with most labels, nobody really wants to be known as "emo."

Ryan: "Getting labeled emo? We're over it. Call us whatever you want to call us."

Rob: "Yeah, it doesn't matter. But we think we're a rock band. You know, since when was two guitars, bass, and drums anything other than a rock band? If Smashing Pumpkins were on an indie label they'd be an emo band."

Ryan: "Same with U2."

Rob: "And look at Radiohead. If they were on Jade Tree people would be calling them emo too."

But Radiohead isn't on an indie, and The Get Up Kids are—though at times, that status has been up in the air. Plenty of major labels have come to The Get Up Kids' table.

Ryan: "We talked to probably every major label you can name."

Rob: "We were ready to go. We were completely ready to sign."

Ryan: "Yeah, we had the contracts in front of us, we had the lawyers hired..."

Rob: "And then the more we thought about it, the more we realized that we wanted our band to have a career, not just one big shot where you put everything into one record."

So the Kids signed to Vagrant, created their own Heroes & Villains imprint, and recorded an album of sharply tuneful, earnestly introspective, buzzing guitar-driven anthems (the kind that will forever be associated with emo), and lyrics that speak to the band's largely teenage audience. Subjects like losing one's innocence ("Holiday"), romantic confusion and alienation ("Ten Minutes"), and the urge to run away from it all ("I'm A Loner Dottie, A Rebel") are hot. It's called *Something To Write Home About*, and if the size of the queue in Boston is any indication, the record should be well on its way to moving another 40,000 units.

Most young bands would be thrilled at that prospect, yet 20-year-old Ryan has a new concern. "We're getting older," he admits. "When we first started, the kids who came to our shows were all older than us or maybe our age. And now," he says, motioning out the bus window to the fans lined up in front of the club, "look at this: the kids all look so much younger."

NMM

SHARP AS A PISTOL

Smith & Mighty brings the Bristol stomp to Hollywood.

STORY BY JOSH KUHN

Smith & Mighty are from Bristol, an insular half-million strong Brit city on the banks of the Avon known for its multi-racial working class, ghetto uprisings, and cool churches. Tonight, the trio is thousands of miles away in Hollywood, a city on the banks of the 101 Freeway, best known for its actors, addicts and agents. Making matters worse, they're on stage at a Hollywood party, which means none of the usual sweat-rinsed bpm rats or herb-glazed dub tweakers are ear cuddling with the woofers. Just Hugh Hefner cutting it up with his latest batch of bunnies, Leo holding court in a back room, and Leelee Sobieski doing her best breakbeat head rock.

When Heidi Fleiss is drinking in the milky jungle euphoria created by Smith & Mighty's future-shocked, slow-mo kinky reggae, you just know we're not in Bristol anymore. Like Detroit and Motown, Seattle and grunge, Bristol has its own sound—a glistening trans-Atlantic broodcore smelt of studio-wrecked Jamaican riddims, US hip-hop beat booms, and pulse-jacked British jungle that's shaped the style of virtually all '90s club music. Big names like Massive Attack, Soul II Soul, Tricky, Roni Size, and DJ Krust are all Bristol spawn, but know this: Smith & Mighty were there from the '80s get-go, the trailblazing poppas who gave birth to Tricky and Reprazent, the humble genre hybridizers who all Bristol new schoolers claim as an inspiration.

"Bristol is small enough that people can connect up quite quickly," attests Rob Smith, one third of the Smith & Mighty posse (Peter D and Ray Mighty finish it out). "Plus, it's far enough away from London that it doesn't have to chase the latest thing going on. It's got the attitude that you can just do it, you don't need a big studio. You just need a four-track. You don't even have to leave Bristol. The only thing you can't do is cut dub plates. Apart from that, everything else is in town and in walking distance."

Most Bristol heads point to 1987 as the year that the sound was born, when Smith & Mighty locked horns with Pop Group punk eccentric Mark Stewart on "Stranger Than Love." They cut up Erik Satie piano twinkles over dusty rhythm cakes of hip-hop and reggae. Then, just to keep it interesting, Smith & Mighty unleashed a pair of ragga-jungle makeovers of Burt Bacharach and Hal David, "Walk On By" and "Anyone (Who Had A Heart)," the beginning of the band's interest in bringing the form of the pop song to bear on experimental dance music.

"We all have a thing about female vocals," says Smith. "It's from our parents, the kind of stuff they were listening to—strings-oriented things, Dionne Warwick. It's a desire to keep the thick, crusty beats but also have the sweet, melodic side of things as well, and then slamming them together."

Smith & Mighty's underground success led to an unfortunately notorious major label deal that produced nothing but a five-year wait and a contractual divorce. By the time their lusciously dubby first full length, *Bass Is Maternal*, finally dropped in 1995 on their own More Rockers label (it's due for a reissue this year on Stud!o K7), the trip hop-jungle-reggae world they helped make had left home without them.

Suddenly everyone knew Bristol and nobody knew Smith & Mighty, a situation they seem to have reconciled with.

"The stuff we ended up recording for the label was a bit watered-down, a bit compromised," Smith reasons. "So when we got out of the deal, we said, 'Fuck it, let's go back underground a bit, slap our kind of thing together and have fun with it.' So if *Bass Is Maternal* had come out five years earlier, it wouldn't have been the same album. By the time we did it, we did it for us."

The crew's latest, *Big World, Small World* (Stud!o K7)—which follows in the wake of their standout entry into the label's *DJ Kicks* mix series last year—keeps *Bass Is Maternal*'s dub roots nice and nourished but sprouts them into emotionally sprawling hedges of crackling, conscious jungle tended to by MCs and vocalists hand-picked from the Smith & Mighty friendship circle (sinewy soulstress Tammy Payne, Rockers Hi-Fi resident Louise DeCordova, veteran Bristol belter Rudy Lee). *Big World* is a pure Bristol opus, a glowing, techno-polished collection of rhythm-rotated songs full of lingering melodies and rhymed verses that sound borrowed from '60s and '70s Jamaican "lover's rock" records. More than anything, it's a cohesive and welcome break from jungle's ongoing rush toward the soulless drudgeries of hardcore instrumental scientology.

"We've had some complaints from other DJs about doing stuff with vocals on it," admits Peter D. "A lot of DJs turn it into an elite sort of thing where DJs won't play anything with vocals on it. But we don't follow the trends thing. There's space to incorporate the vibes of the half-tempo stuff, reggae basslines, vocals, musical melodies. There's space for that kind of musical experimentation within drum 'n' bass."

Much of Smith & Mighty's experimentalism can be traced back to Jamaican sound system culture and dub production techniques. Growing up in the Jamaican immigrant community of Bristol's Eastern St. Paul's neighborhood, the band has long thought about music in terms of rhythmic recycling and remixing, two elements at the core of the dub tradition of recording vocal A-sides and then cutting instrumental dub B-sides ripe for improvised MC chatting.

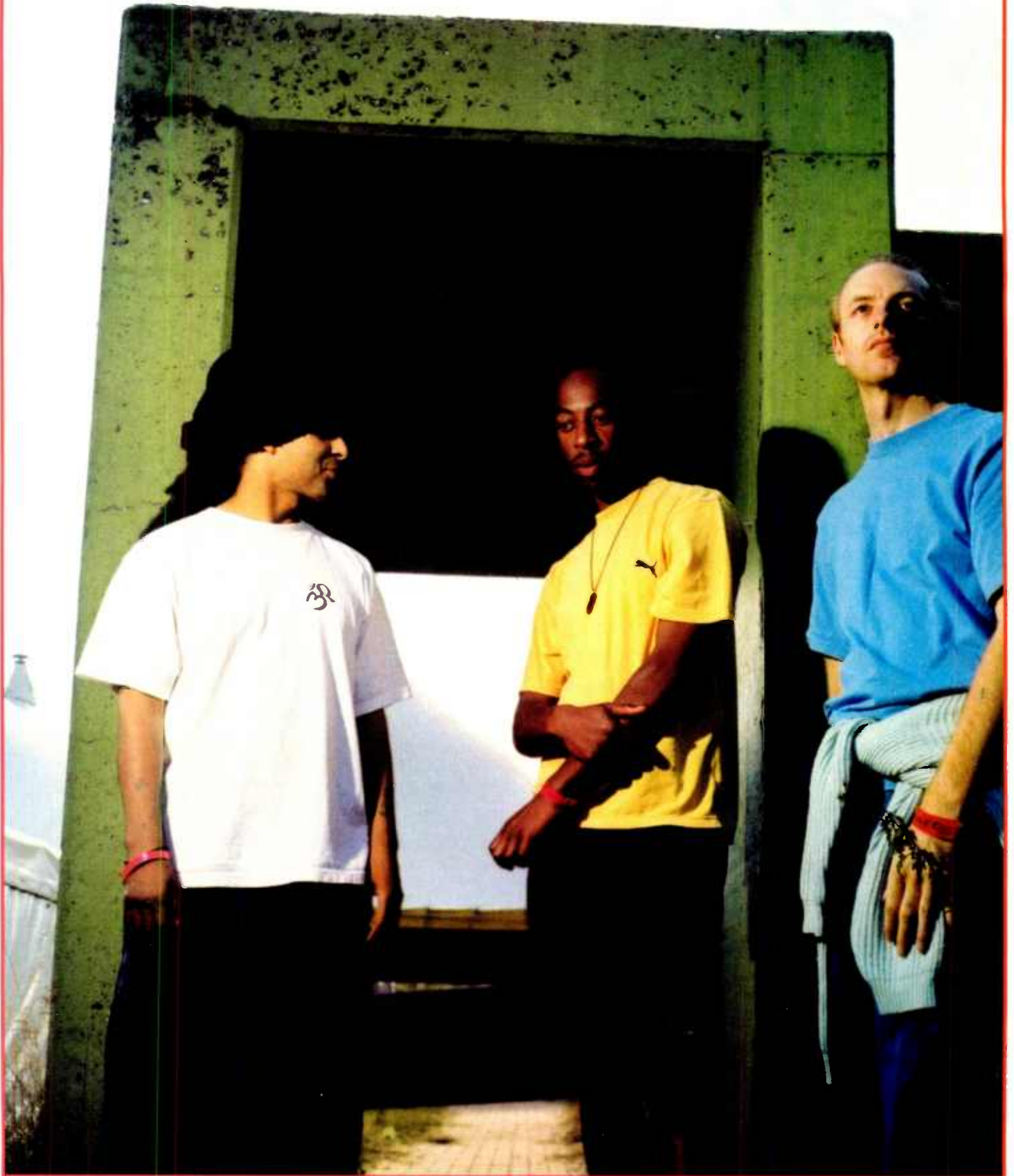
"That was a major contribution to how we think about our music," says Smith. "You'd have the same dub rhythm on four or five different songs and it didn't matter. It was the same tune and you'd just rewind it and do something more with it."

Classic dub was also always about leaving mistakes in the mix, a lesson that Smith & Mighty learned well the night Hef was in the house. A DAT jam ground things to a halt but it didn't shut them down: DeCordova grabbed the mic and flipped snippets from *Big World*—a line from "Rescue Me," the chorus from "Seeds"—and a chunk of "Walk On By" like she was battling in a Kingston tenement yard.

"That's that sound system style of doing things," says Smith. "It's not regimented in any way. If things do fuck up, then you roll with it and totally improvise. When dub was being invented, a lot of effects were probably mistakes, people pressing the wrong button and thinking shit sounded really good. Hopefully some of our mistakes have stayed with us too."

NMM

“When we got out of the deal, we said, ‘Fuck it, let’s go back underground a bit, slap our kind of thing together and have fun with it.’”





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SONGS OF LOVE & PING-PONG

Members of Yo La Tengo debate the powers behind their marriage-minded new album.

STORY: LISA GIDLEY PHOTOS: DENNIS KLEIMAN

Georgia Hubley and Ira Kaplan of Yo La Tengo just found out they've made a concept album. It's about their marriage and the rhythms of domestic life. And they learned about it from reading a press release, that most reliable of news sources. "We read that the same place you did," shrugs Kaplan, who along with Hubley and their bandmate James McNew will be spending a lot of time denying these charges in the next few months.

Clearly, no band that builds a 10-album career on frenetic, flailing guitar solos and other Big Rock Moments wants to admit they've settled down. That's tantamount to selling out. But how else to account for this indie rock national treasure's new album, *And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out* (Matador)? Not even the band's new-found appreciation for chilled-out jazz can explain away all these whispery love songs about committed relationships. Even when the band throws in a disco cover (an easy-flowing interpretation of George McRae's "You Can Have It All") to liven things up, the album's overall vibe remains a long-term love fest.

"I'm right now in the process of going song-by-song down [1993's] *Painful*, and

practically every song there is on that topic as well," defends Kaplan. "I think the lyrics might be a little clearer this time, so maybe people are noticing that." Frankly, it's hard not to notice the largely spoken track "The Crying Of Lot G," in which Kaplan intones, "You say that all we do is fight/ And I think, 'Gee, I don't know that that's true'/ And then I wonder/ Am I right, or is that part of our problem?"

The fact that most of the album's Ira-and-Georgia-sittin'-in-a-tree lyrics are beautiful, touching, and sincere does help ease this album's switch from guitar-driven rock to lilting ballad. And the album's overall vibe is far from static; it's flush with hushed vocals, spiderweb guitars, and multiple variations on the band's signature pillowy pop drones. But all this beauty doesn't relieve the average indie rocker's sinking feeling that all his heroes are suddenly *in loco parentis*. The listener must make do with just one real rock track on the new album: the rolling, fuzzed-out "Cherry Chapstick." And many of the other lyrics veer toward "Lot G"'s refrain: "You don't have to smile at me, you don't have to talk/ All I ask is that you stop and remember it isn't always this way."

For Hubley, the concern is not that she's becoming a typical parent, but that she's becoming her own. John and Faith Hubley ran their own artsy animation studio, using their lives (and their daughters) as subject matter. "I didn't want to do exactly what my parents did," says Hubley. "There was an element of surprise that I was falling into similar patterns."

"They've inspired me more than you!" Kaplan jumps in.

"We don't fight as much as they did," counters Hubley.

"I hope your mom doesn't get *CMJ Monthly*," Kaplan replies.

Beyond his in-laws, Kaplan says that watching anyone blend their art and their relationships affects him. He cites the first time he saw brothers Hamish and David Kilgour play in the legendary New Zealand pop band The Clean. "I remember watching the interaction between the two brothers and finding it mesmerizing," he says. "They didn't seem to be looking at each other, and yet they seemed so in tune."

The group later got to know David Kilgour, who, along with Superchunk's Mac McCaughan, will join YLT this spring for a tour of plush sit-down venues. The five will switch off instruments onstage, a prospect that intrigues the band. Notes Kaplan: "The three of us work together so much, to the exclusion of everyone else, that to bring in people and say, 'Alright, get telepathic' is unusual." Unusual, but not unprecedented. In

recent years, Yo La Tengo has gradually let other musicians into their corner of the world; one past collaborator was the inimitable Jad Fair. In late 1999 YLT self-released the double 7-inch "Now 2000"/"Excaliber 2001," which featured Sue Garner and three jazz musicians: trumpeter Roy Campbell, Jr. and saxophonists

"You say that all we do is fight/ And I think, 'Gee, I don't know that that's true'/ And then I wonder/ Am I right, or is that part of our problem?"

—"The Crying Of Lot G"

Daniel Carter and Sabir Mateen. Kaplan says one side effect of working with the horn players "was getting past that feeling of 'They're too good for us,' which is a terrible feeling to have."

That confidence carried over to the sessions for *Nothing*, which involved a host of guest players. But Kaplan says jazz has seeped through more covertly than just in the arrangements. "We've spent a lot of time dancing around these songs, finding the way they sort of sat right with us...which I think is not unrelated to our listening to jazz."

Yeah, jazz, that's it. Perhaps the most eager to dismiss the marriage myth in favor of playing the jazz card is YLT bassist James McNew, the potential third wheel at this particular couples-only night. "We were presented with a lot more options when making this album," he explains, citing the influence of downtown percussion darling Susie Ibarra, who contributes to the mix. "We also de-emphasized the guitar a lot," says Kaplan. That's not much of an editorial hook, though. "Well, we certainly don't want to steer anyone away from the hook!" he says.

So here's one: The band says it might attribute the new album's relaxed character to an even more subtle force. Ping-Pong. For the *Nothing* sessions, they returned to the same Nashville studio where they recorded 1995's *Electr-O-Pura*. "They don't have a TV," says Kaplan, "but they've got a Ping-Pong table, which is really different. Where we did *I Can Hear The Heart Beating As One*, every time we weren't needed, we'd rush downstairs where the TV was. Now, we've decided we prefer Ping-Pong to cable TV."

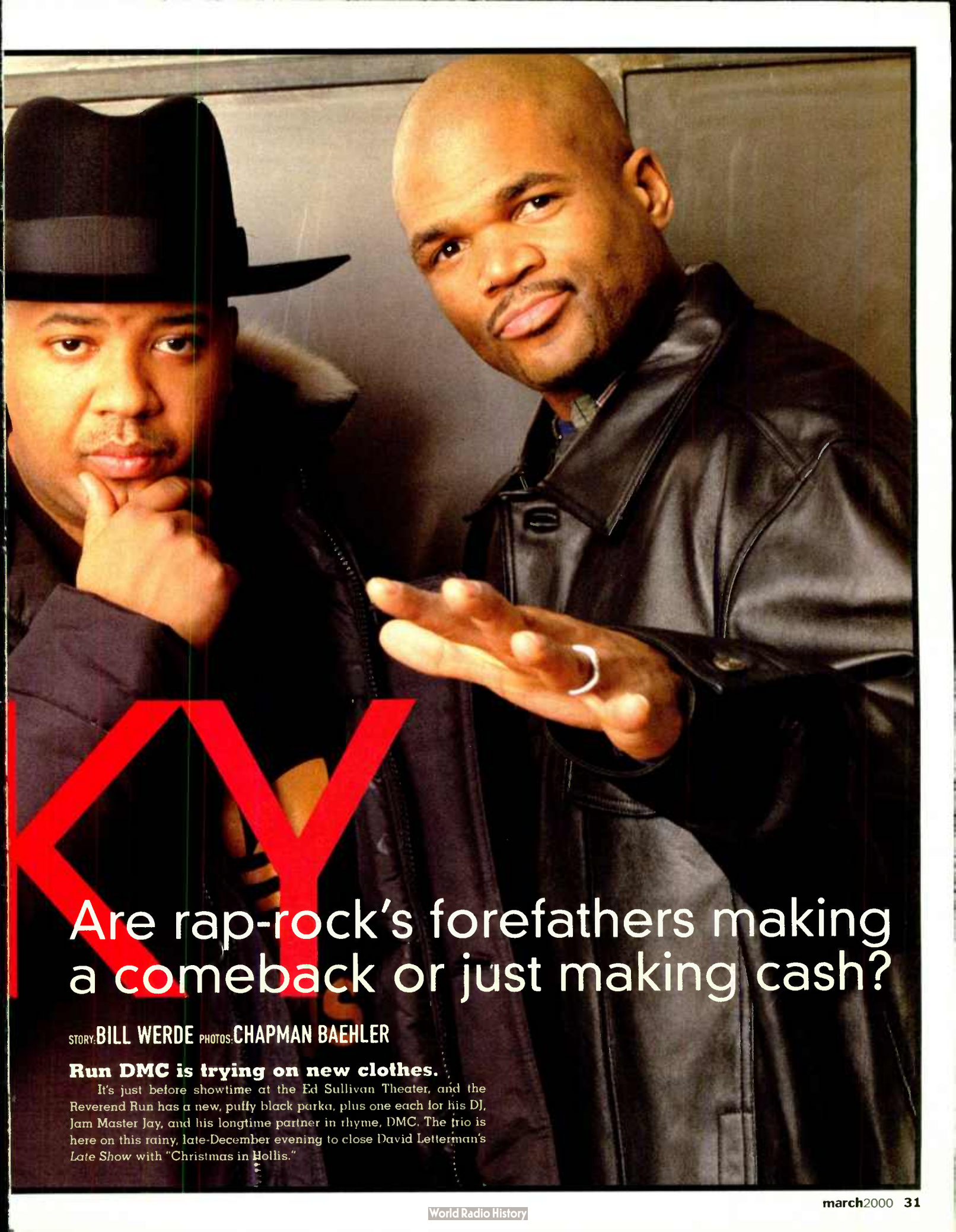
NMM





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TRICK



Are rap-rock's forefathers making a comeback or just making cash?

STORY: BILL WERDE PHOTOS: CHAPMAN BAEHLER

Run DMC is trying on new clothes.

It's just before showtime at the Ed Sullivan Theater, and the Reverend Run has a new, puffy black parka, plus one each for his DJ, Jam Master Jay, and his longtime partner in rhyme, DMC. The trio is here on this rainy, late-December evening to close David Letterman's *Late Show* with "Christmas in Hollis."

No doubt, they look sharp. But it's difficult to see Run (Joseph Simmons), DMC (Darryl McDaniell) and Jay (Jason Mizell) looking so chic, and not think of the three Adidas jumpsuit-clad teenagers who busted out of Hollis, Queens in the early '80s with their raw, new hip-hop sound.

Their rise was swift: They scored a hit with their first single, "It's Like That," in 1983, and rapped over a guitar riff on "Rock Box" in 1984. Their self-titled debut album came later that year, stacked with singles they'd already released, and thrust Run DMC to the forefront of the burgeoning hip-hop community. The group's first movie, *Krush Groove*, was released in 1985, and featured Run as a money-hungry rapper, also

"I'm on TV every minute now, whether it's 'Walk This Way' playing, or it's Method Man or Fred Durst saying 'Well, I started because of Run DMC.' I just read a quote from Puffy that said Run DMC's Raising Hell album defines what hip-hop is."—Run

named Run, who sold out his brother for a shot at the big time. One year later, the threesome could boast ownership of rap's first platinum record, *Raising Hell*, which included "My Adidas," "It's Tricky," and the monstrously popular Aerosmith collaboration, "Walk This Way."

They were barely in their twenties then. So even though a hip-hop eternity of Niggas With Attitudes and Public Enemy's, Hammers and Ices, Biggie's and Tupac's have come and gone since the group was innovating anything, Run, D and Jay are just 35. Underneath the all-black get-up, Run seems to have been on the body-by-Dre program—striking a thoughtful pose often helps hide the extra chin—but is still spry in front of a crowd. He's also an ordained minister, but says it doesn't impact his rapping. ("If you're a plumber and you rap, you don't rap about plumbing, do you?")

DMC no longer sports the trademark Cazal specs, and his voice has noticeably deepened. The Adidas are still in the house, rubber shell-toes and spotless white leather with three black stripes, looking fresh out of the box, just like always.

The big news is the March release date set for *Crown Royal* (Arista), their first album of new material since 1993's *Down With the King*. (Arista purchased Run DMC's old label, Profile, and now owns the group's catalogue.) It may be the perfect time for the founding fathers of rap-rock to capitalize on the road they paved with *Raising Hell*. Take away the Backstreet Boys, Britney and N Sync—there's a nice little fantasy—and

practically all that's left at the top of the pops is rap-rock and hip-hop. But do Run And Co. have anything to add to that equation today? Back in the Letterman studios, they rock the party chicken-and-collared-greens-style, and the shit goes off—with a track they first released in 1987.

Reinvention is nothing new for Run DMC. They leaned gangsta on *Back From Hell*, (1990) when gangsta was first in style. Just three years later, in the video for "Down With The King," the trio rapped the gospel and adorned their gold chains with large crucifixes, a testament to their rededication to Christ. With *Crown Royal*, the transformation doesn't involve aesthetics as much as market placement; as they claim on track after track on the new album, they are the kings of rock, and they've come to reclaim their throne. Their assertions of historical

importance (especially when they're clever, as they sometimes are on *Crown Royal*), won't draw any argument. But when Run insists they're still number one, that they still got the skills, and that they can still blow away young wanna-bes, it sounds more than a touch wishful.

Their gig on Letterman is far from an isolated appearance. Until they started recording the new record, they played upwards of 200 shows a year, making good money and selling out venues ranging from small clubs and universities to stadiums. In the past 12 months, they've shown up everywhere from Gap commercials to last fall's Family Values tour

to the intro for cable station TBS's NBA broadcasts. "I'm on TV every minute now," says Run. "Whether it's 'Walk This Way' playing, or it's Method Man or Fred Durst saying 'Well, I started because of Run DMC.' I just read a quote from Puffy that said Run DMC's *Raising Hell* album defines what hip-hop is."

Last September, they stole the show at the MTV Video Music Awards as guests of Kid Rock, performing a "Walk This Way" medley with Aerosmith's Joe Perry and Steven Tyler. Kid Rock, who says he's a star today because of Run DMC, later told MTV that being on stage with the group was one of the three most exciting moments of his life (along with playing Woodstock and the birth of his son).



RUN

Crown Royal is a measure of that influence, as well as the influence of the marketplace. Marquee guests including Kid Rock, Limp Bizkit's Fred Durst, Sugar Ray and Everlast worked on tracks for *Crown Royal*, though label obligations and sample clearances may keep one or more off the final product. Hip-hop is equally well represented, with Method Man, Nas, Prodigy from Mobb Deep, and Slick Rick seeing major mic time. All of which positions Run DMC as the rare innovators who stick around long enough to reap what followers have sown.

Backstage at Letterman with some label types, Run speaks of first-week sales for new records by Biggie and Q-Tip. With a little hesitation, he'll admit that he cares—that he wants his record to succeed. But press him, and you get the party line: "Our livelihood is performance. We don't care if we don't have a hit record. The important thing is that we can come do shows and be considered a group that'll get busy in the midst of anybody."

"You can look at the album and see the thought in it. 'Hook em up with the populars.' I don't care what Arista is saying. I don't care about selling records no more. I didn't want to do an album with guest appearances."—DMC

Darryl McDaniel stands at the door, bags packed.

The rain pours down around the Ed Sullivan studios, and D is about to head to a waiting car. At the curb, a gaggle of onlookers gets very wet, hoping for a glimpse of someone, anyone famous. "It's important to me that people know the real story with this record," he says, and then he's gone.

Onstage, at photo shoots, in the commercials, the look has evolved. Life has been good to these three and their trappings of wealth has moved with the styles, but the iconic image is in place. Who John and Paul or Mick and Keith are to one generation, Run, D and Jay are to another. But listening to the record, with all the conspicuous guest vocals, one voice is conspicuously absent: DMC's. "D is not as vocal as usual," acknowledges Jay in a wild understatement. "He's there, though. His vibe is there, enough to make it ill. D's going through stuff, doing other things."

Jay is being nice, just like Run, when he talks about D. And understand, D loves Run DMC. He says he still loves to do shows, and the pride in his voice when he talks about their longevity and the barriers they've broken is apparent. "We've seen 'em all come and go," he muses. "People make records, [then] you don't hear from them any more. Things change within hip-hop. Through all the mist, when the smoke clears, it's 'Damn, them niggas still standing there. Run, D and Jay.'"

But if D's vibe is on the album, it's no intention of his. On the eight tracks made available prior to the interview, D has one short rap solo and an occasional backing spot. True, D's voice has deepened. It's a touch nasal on the Latin-inflected "I Poppi." But his baritone resonates well on "Since You Went Away," their remake of Diana Ross's "Missing You."

There are the "other things" Jay mentions. D is working on a solo album with former Kurtis Blow DJ Davy-DMX, and writing an as-yet-untitled book. He's a little vague on the contents, but he says it's about everything from hip-hop to food to being a parent. "The main theme is responsibility," he says. "Just because hip-hop is a billion dollar industry makes it seem like everything is okay in the world, and that's not right. I'm addressing those issues. It's going to make some people mad."

But it's the "stuff" that Jay says D is "going through" that is most significant to Run DMC. D has grown apart from the group. Run and Jay still live in Queens, and D now lives in New Jersey. Run and Jay keep up with the latest, hottest hip-hop, while D talks about making his solo project a lot like a Neil Young album. Run and Jay (and Arista) are clearly committed to having a hit record, and D says he'd rather not have made the record at all. "Run is, and always has been, that character in Krush Groove," says D. "I'll leave the fortune and fame. That's not eternal. What's eternal is me, my thoughts, and my happiness."

"I didn't even want to be a part of this album," says D, "because of the direction they wanted to take us, musically. My thing was making more of a Rolling Stones, Neil Young, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Seger type of album," says D. "I turn the radio on, I hear Jay-Z and DMX. But all I listen to is classic rock. That's what I'm in tune with. I'm 35 years old. I drive a pick-up truck. I go down to the corner store. I'm still the most illin' b-boy in the world. But I can't do what I was doin' in the '80s. I gotta rap about what I'm doin' now."

When D speaks of *Crown Royal*, it's in resigned tones, betraying his disappointment in the whole process. "I'm happy that Run and Jay and Arista and Russell Simmons and everybody was able to complete what they set out to do. My



DMC

endorsement is the same as if I'm talking about this Rolling Stones CD in my hand. I love it. It's good. But it's not me.

"You can look at the album and see the thought in it. 'Hook em up with the populars.' I don't care what Clive [Davis, Arista chief] is saying, what Arista is saying. I don't care about selling records no more. I didn't want to do an album with guest appearances. You can trash me, and I might flop and fail, but at least it's Run DMC."

When we come out, you want to see Run DMC, and I'm gonna give you the ones you loved. When it's time to be Run DMC, when me, Jay and D go to the stage, we can be Run DMC. Every time."

Run DMC may have learned a lesson or two from new labelmate Carlos Santana.

Last year, the '60s guitar hero revived his career with *Supernatural*, an album of collaborations with current pop stars. The Grammy-nominated record went to number one, thanks to the hit "Smooth," featuring Matchbox 20 frontman Rob Thomas, who was still four years away from being born when Santana played Woodstock. Sure, it was contrived, but when some teeny-bop chop shop in Florida manufactures much of what's currently propping up the music industry's bottom line, the record-buying public's tolerance for contrivance may be at an all time high.

Pete Ganbarg, the Arista A&R rep responsible for many of the successful collaborations on the Santana record, coordinated the rap-rock pairings on *Crown Royal*. "Both Santana and Run DMC are icons," says Ganbarg. "They've influenced a generation of musicians who've come after them. It wasn't a question of mapping it out in some grand record company scheme, but more like, 'Hey, is this a natural fit?'"

With all these collaborators, and D's marked absence, *Crown Royal* often sounds like a tribute album, with Run and friends taking turns praising the group in the various hip-hop and rap-rock styles of the moment. It's more Run DMC the brand name than the Run DMC you might remember and love.

On the hip-hop tracks, Jay's cuts and Run's flow fit neatly with the efforts of his guests. "Queens Day" features piano riffs floating above rumbling bass and Run at his lyrical best, trading rhymes with a pair of MCs from the borough, Prodigy from Mobb Deep and Nas. "I Poppi" taps Fat Joe and gives props to all the Latinas who love Run-DMC ("Got señoritas/ In A-di-das). Ol' Dirty Bastard cops the chorus of Steam's high school football chant, "Na Na Hey Hey (Kiss Him Goodbye)" for "Goodbye." If Reagan was president the last time you listened to Run DMC, you'll be shocked how smooth the record sounds.

But today's rap-rockers, and the record sales they're generating, may be closer to the record company's idea of a natural fit for the music Run DMC pioneered. "I couldn't recite for you nothin' but 'Nookie,'" says Run, and not even the words to 'Nookie.' Just the fact that it is called 'Nookie.' Korn? I couldn't tell you none of their records. If I seen 'em, I'd be like 'Oh, that's Korn. They're big.' But if you ask me what's goin' on now with Nas or on the Funkmaster Flex show? I know it well."

The Sugar Ray track is the most ill-conceived of the pairings, carwrecking rock, rap and Mark McGrath's lightweight vocals in an over-produced mess. Still, the line between *Raising Hell* and Kid Rock's *Devil Without A Cause* is a straight one, and so—the protests of hip-hop purists aside—it's tough to criticize Run DMC for cashing in on something they essentially invented. "It's like saying 'Oh shit, Elvis is playing a guitar now,'" says Jay. The point may be moot if label squabbles and clearance

issues prevent the more-promising Kid Rock, Everlast and Fred Durst tracks from making the album. [At press time, the Kid Rock and Durst tracks were set to appear, while Everlast's seemed dubious.]

But Run is adamant that—despite the collaborations, besides the label politics, and aside from the group's personal problems—Run DMC continues to mean Run, Jay, and D. "I'm not saying I'm not a dope rapper alone," says Run. "I'm not saying D's project ain't dope. But if we don't give you Run DMC, you're not going to like it. I think that if this first single ends up being one with me and D together, you're gonna be satisfied. If we kick one of those joints—did you see the Gap commercial? How happy was you? That's Run DMC."

A Gap commercial? It's like that.

NMM



JAM MASTER JAY

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Cductive.com is the leading distributor

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Surviving at the rap game is a science of marketing, rhymes and mayhem. See if you can walk a mile in Run DMC's Adidas, from Hollis High to Run's phat crib.



1985: Run DMC makes Kid Rock's year by guesting with him on the MTV Awards.

2000: Run DMC joins the VH1 Behind The Music pantheon. Skip ahead one space.

1997: Hard Times for Run DMC. Run pawns his gold chains for cash.

1984: Christmas in Hollis' charity single helps Run DMC rack up the good karma. Advance one space.



1988: Perhaps inspired by Purple Rain, Run DMC films the rap opera Tougher Than Leather and releases it to empty theaters everywhere. Critics hail it as "vile, vicious, despicable, stupid, sexist, racist and horrendously made." Lose a turn and boys? Don't quit your day job.

DMC moves to Jersey to be closer to Springsteen. Skip turn and ponder.



1973: Run and DMC start rhyming for Jesus. Their fire and brimstone Christian comeback, Down With The King delivers a top ten hit. Advance an extra space for the Lord. And can I get an amen?

At A Great Day In Hip-Hop, Run is mistaken for a member of the Fat Boys. Lose A Turn.

1987: "Back From Hell" fails to sell; Darryl hits the sauce. "You be illin'!" Stumble back a space, then lie down and watch the ceiling spin.



Run DMC helps write and produce Boyz n the Hood. License to ill, only to watch the lit take the hip-hop crown. Lose all your money for the next 14 years.



R U N

1986: Run tells Washington Post "I tell 'em to wear Adidas, they wear Adidas. We're role models for sure." Run neglects to get stock options from Adidas. Moonwalk back one space.





FINISH

Run House



START

1982: After tripping over their unlaced Adidas while running to class, Run and DMC first get the idea for "It's Tricky" by getting rock around. To rock around on time! That's right, it's tricky. They get detention, but write a classic. Advance one space.

"It's like Thelma Houston M.C.'s, except. Get out of obscurity free."

v.meola

1991: Run accused of rape. Lose a turn. No wait, she dropped the charges! Advance 2 spaces.



1984: Little Bobby Ritchie (aka. Koolhaq) tells to show his 8th grade classmates "mindset" for reacting all the time to "My Adidas." But everyone do thank in 1984. Lose a Turn.



DMC loses his specs, after deciding those x-ray lenses were a hoax. Advance one space and don't trip.



Run DMC kinfolk and music industry mogul Russel Simmons gets an earpiece for his cell phone. Skip a space in the name of progress.

The Beastie the white boys four turns for



Free Adidas for life. Advance one space.

1986: Run DMC and members of Aerosmith successfully drive the rock/rap hybrid onto the Billboard charts with "Walk This Way," allowing Limp Bizkit and Korn to "invent" it again a decade later. Advance two spaces for each of Steven Tyler's lips...

DMC

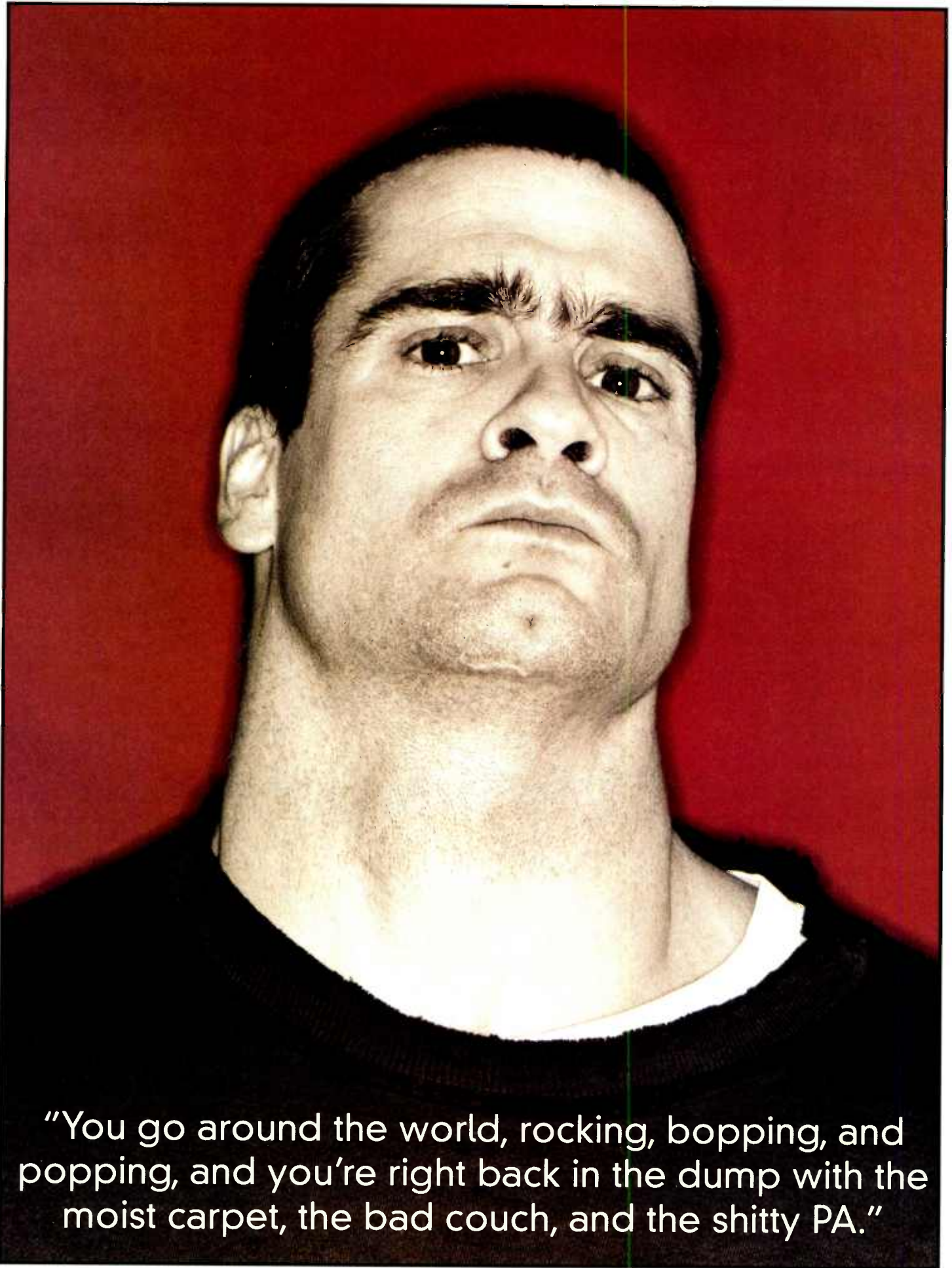
DJ Jam Master Jay ponders how his name ever got left out of Run DMC. Lose a Turn.



"It's Tricky" makes Run DMC friends believe them. "I want to show N..."

1996: Jason Nevins "really big in Europe."

1986: A Long Beach, California concert date leaves 40 injured in a gang-related Krush Groove. The hells angels are impressed, but for all the wrong reasons. Deck back one space.



"You go around the world, rocking, bopping, and popping, and you're right back in the dump with the moist carpet, the bad couch, and the shitty PA."

MOTHER, CHUGS, AND SPEED

HENRY ROLLINS ★ REVS BACK UP WITH LOS ANGELES BLUES ROCKERS MOTHER SUPERIOR AS HIS NEW PIT CREW.

STORY: LORNE BEHRMAN PHOTOS: CHARLIE LANGELLA

"Man, I will beat you like a mail-order bride. I will run you around my front yard."

Fortunately, Henry Rollins is not talking to me. No, at age 38, the old man (he said it) is expressing his feelings about the current crop of heavy rockers. Hank (as he's known) has realized if he wants a record to "turn up loud and break furniture to," he'll have to make it himself. That's how *Get Some Go Again* (DreamWorks) was born. It's a feast of firsts: Rollins' first music recording in two years, his first straight-ahead rock record, and the first recorded document of the new Rollins Band, featuring the Los Angeles-based blues-rock trio Mother Superior.

Now, besides throwing his coffee table or desk around the living room, the multi-faceted Henry Rollins does everything one can do in the entertainment "biz." He's recorded 18 music records in as many years. Seven fronting the seminal '80s California hardcore punk band Black Flag and 11 on his own and with the Rollins Band—best known for "Liar," a slinky jazz monologue-over-music outing (similar in formula to Weezer's "Undone: The Sweater Song"), with Rollins gruffly yelling the refrain "I'm a liar." He's been in six films—Dolph Lundgren crucified him in *Johnny Mnemonic* and Al Pacino kicked his ass in *Heat*. He's also written 11 books that offer up a combination of apocalyptic, Black Sabbath-like visions, Henny Youngman-like zingers, Beat-poet musings and Henry Miller travelogues. He popularized spoken word with his "talking" tours and recordings—stand-up performances that mix poetry-slams, stand-up comedy, and storytelling (he's amassed a 10-title catalog of such records). Rollins has also been on VH1's *Before They Were Rock Stars*; *Politically Incorrect With Bill Maher*; done commercial endorsements for The Gap and Mac Powerbooks; voiceovers for the *Batman Beyond* cartoon (that's him as Mad Stan); and written liner notes, most notably for Jane's Addiction's live record *Kettle Whistle*.

Oh, and like überentertainer Madonna, Hank's also an entrepreneur—he runs 2.13.61, a publishing company/record label that

puts out books (his titles, among others) and records by cult acts like The Birthday Party and The Gun Club. Not only is Henry a multi-media personality like the Material Girl or Courtney Love, he also shares their "don't fuck with me" public personae. He has the bulk to bench press you and your mama, he out-tattoos most bikers, and his records offer a badass/sensitive badass juggling act. As a band frontman, he screams about crushing the weak like insects, and by himself, he speaks about spitting in a kid's face (the boy asked Rollins to do so, saying it would be an "honor"), and then lecturing the little dude about degrading himself.

Sitting across the table (width-wise, thankfully—the table is one of those long wooden jobs people sit at in movies during those uncomfortably silent meal scenes) Henry doesn't look intimidating, he just looks tired. There are some take-out cartons of Chinese food which he nibbles from periodically. After two days of press and a six-day talking stand at New York City's Westbeth Theatre, the bags under his eyes hang down like pinkish pleats in puffy curtains. His hair is gray, and he wears it in a crewcut—little, silver bristles of hair prickle up from his head like iron filings on a magnet. An oversized, faded black sweatshirt sags over his tattoo-and-muscle-toned body.

Hank begins, choosing his words carefully about his previous record: "It was really hard to make *Come In And Burn*." That was the last record with the old band which recorded seven albums and spent 10 years on the road together with only one lineup change. "Recording and writing wasn't easy—me and the guys were diverging in musical paths. Live, some of the mid-tempo songs were difficult for me. By the time I got to the end of the '97 tour, I thought we had realized our thing, we were done. I wasn't getting the kind of excitement I needed—I missed that raw crunch that comes from handling your instruments roughly. I didn't want to fire anybody, but I didn't think there was anything more to do in that equation."

And the critics agreed—panned virtually across the board, many



felt Henry was stagnating. Commercially, *Come In And Burn* wasn't what it should have been. It came out three years after *Weight*, and even though it took 16 months to write and had the big-buck backing of a new label, DreamWorks, it offered nothing to satisfy "Liar"'s promise, let alone capture the single's quirky, concise intensity. The songs were less songs than slippery jazz vamps swimming in studio wizardry and instrumental chops, fitted with Henry's signature talking/singing style. The tempos were down in the dirge groove range, and with the exception of a few moments, there just wasn't that cathartic blast people expected from the Rollins Band.

Get Some Go Again is very different. "I've never really been in a rock band," figures the industry veteran. "Early Rollins Band stuff was more rockin' than the later stuff, but even that was a little skewed in time signature. And Black Flag, Greg [Ginn, guitarist and founder] wasn't really disposed to that kind of music. I'm on the same page with the Mother Superior guys," Henry says, smiling devilishly, referring to the new lineup's shared affection for the Sabbath-Thin Lizzy-Stooges-and-MCS hard rock canon. "What we're doing here is slamming 4/4, in keys my voice can get to. I sit in this music very naturally, where as I used to feel like I was skating on top, unable to get in."

"This is Henry Rollins. I'm part way through the record, and you guys are smokin'. Here's my number, call me if there is anything I can do."

From the album's first two minutes it's clear—*Get Some Go Again* is Rollins's *Achtung Baby*, his chance at reinvention. The opener, "Illumination," has a spare, creeping intro more suited to lean and meaty rock 'n' roll than the jazzy art-metal the old Rollins Band was known for. Doo-doo, to-do, to-do, do-do-do is followed by a wall of power chords. Then, the same old Rollins talking, "I walk through miles of jungle/ I walk through yellow miles of pain/ I bought starvation's desert/ Watched dead rivers swell with rain." The guitar and drums join in, filling out the bass's groove with simplicity and arresting immediacy. This is different from the old lineup's tendency to flood every song with playing, the guitarist suffocating the music with notes and the bassist and drummer pelting it with rhythms. But the most striking thing happens a minute and a half into the track. Henry steps up to the mike and sings (and does it well, like a fuller Ian Asbury only without the Cult guy's whiney overtones), continuing to do so for the album's entirety.

You could say, What a difference two years made, what a difference a post-tour regrouping trip to Africa made, but when it comes down to it, What a difference *luck* made. Rollins met guitarist Jim Wilson a few years back at Aron's Records in Los Angeles, where Wilson worked. One day Wilson approached Hank with a disc by his band, Mother Superior, and asked Henry if he would listen to it. Rollins agreed and put it on when he got home. "Three songs in, I called Jim's house, which was the Mother Superior hotline, and said, 'This is Henry Rollins. I'm part way through the record, and you guys are smokin'. Here's my number, call me if there is anything I can do.'"

Soon Rollins became, as he says, "the fourth Mother, as their producer and friend." He produced their last record, *Deep*, and mastered and wrote the liner notes for the previous record. "They got me excited, and I wanted to be part of that. So I said, 'Would you guys help me? I have some riffs in my head, and I need someone to help me put them on tape.' I didn't know what to expect the first night of band practice. We wrote 'Get Some Go Again,' 'Monster,' and 'Summer Nights' in one night. It was so exciting."

The record took 17 days to compose. Henry says he interacted musically with the guys by communicating the vibe in his head. "On 'Illumination' I said here's the basic riff," he says, singing the bassline, "Now Jim [guitar], you're the high plains drifter walking in the desert, seeing the heat waves come off the highway. You have no name. No one knows you, so epic intro to a Sergio Leone movie." That's how Rollins translated the power chord intro he envisioned—he got the high-pitched, lead guitar squeals by asking Jim to give him "the loneliness of the desert." "They get me, even when they're laughing," Rollins says with a hoarse chuckle. Other ideas came together spontaneously in the practice room which, oddly enough, was the same room he practiced in with Black Flag 18 years ago. "I said 'Fellas, I was in this room when

you guys were like eighth graders or something,'" he says, laughing. "You go around the world, rocking, bopping, and popping, and you're right back in the dump with the moist carpet, the bad couch, and the shitty PA. I learned 'TV Party' in that room. It was hilarious."

What's almost more hilarious, or at least more surprising, is listening to Mother Superior's own record *Deep*. Henry wrung *Get Some Go Again* from these guys? *Deep*'s understated soul is very different from the Motörhead-like racket Henry and the boys make together. "I didn't want it to be Mother Superior with Henry Rollins singing," says Rollins. The band still exists and practices, tours, and makes records whenever its members want.

(As for the old Rollins Band: Guitarist Chris Haskett was last seen rocking with David Bowie—he played rhythm guitar on "If I'm Dreaming My Life," the first track on Bowie's *Hours*. Bassist Melvin Gibbs is pursuing various jazz and funk projects, most notably Project Logic. And drummer Sim Cain is behind the kit with the J. Geils Band.)

The new Rollins Band has managed to write a record with a flowing consistency, where all songs sound like they belong on the same record without sounding exactly alike. Every tune is cut from a similar blues-based cloth—blues progressions with steel-girded riffs substitute for

lazy shuffle patterns—but they're stitched together with just enough ornamentation to distinguish them. "Get Some Go Again," "Monster," "You Let Yourself Down," and "I Go Day Glo" differ in tempo and instrumental breaks, but all rely on a similar type of seesawing interplay between the riffs and vocals. Things get soulfully sophisticated on "Love's So Heavy," which is Thin Lizzy's "Still In Love With You" run through with a Red Hot Chili Peppers thrash and groove. More Lizzy appears four tracks later, as the band, armed with former Thin Lizzy guitar slinger Scott Gorham, rip through a cover of "Are You Ready." And things get just plain drab with the blues crawler, "Brother Interior."

If you stick around for the hidden track, the limber, J.B.-styled "L.A. Money Train," may just be the only 14-minute jam worth listening to in '00. Ex-MC5 guitarist Wayne Kramer sounds the greasiest he's been on record in years, and Rollins is more like his spoken word alter ego, at first freestyling about people with stars in their eyes heading west and spiraling north once they arrive. Later on, his rhymes become broader and more visceral, fixating on what he deems an "evaporating culture" citing "that new visionary turned big spender, taking all those musical genres, and putting them in a blender" and the Offspring as symptomatic of music's current ills. There's a vague bitterness to it all.

"They're more cynical-observational," Henry counters. "There's a song on the record called 'You Let Yourself Down,' about bands I've watched get their major label dough and blow it. Drug addiction, divorce, marriage, or the band wasn't all that good and they got dropped. There's always an excuse why it didn't work."

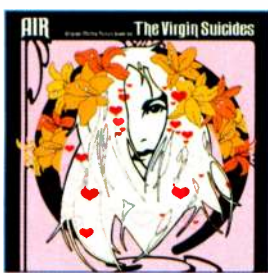
"The second verse of 'Thinking Cap' is about critics. 'You set your sights to shoot me like a pigeon made of clay/ You hit me...'" He explains, "Like yeah, it hurt, 'but you miss me, you don't get me...' You're not getting me, you don't understand where I'm coming from. 'You can't catch me, there's no way.'"

Though poor reception hasn't stopped Henry, it's definitely jaded him. He set his expectations low for how he thought fans would receive his new band and sound. "I figured they would stand there," he says, crossing his arms then extending his middle finger. "I figured they'd be really mad. I told the guys, 'There might a few reactions that you might not like.' So we went out and played. I introduced the band. The crowd went 'Yeaaaaahhhh!' 'And we're going to play a whole bunch of music you never heard before.' And they were like 'Yeaaaaahhhh!' After the shows I'd hang out and talk to people—I was interested in their reaction. They all came up and said, 'When's the new album out? Man these guys rock.'"

As for the critics, he says. "Take your best shot, and you might hurt my feelings—I'm not made out of iron—but are you going to stop me? No."

NMM





AIR ★
Original Score: The Virgin Suicides
 Astralwerks

Fulfilling their destiny, the French retro-electro duo Air make their inevitable move into film scoring with *The Virgin Suicides*, and the result is as polished as fans of *Moon Safari* would expect. What's surprising is how dark a film they've chosen: the first feature length project by director Sofia Coppola, *The Virgin Suicides* is based on a creepy 1994 novel by Jeffrey Eugenides. On paper, the notion of matching Air's fluffy Moog-based lounge tunes with a story set in early '70s suburbia might seem rather odd. But it proves to be a worthwhile challenge for Air, who use the opportunity to

OUT:
 February 15.
FILE UNDER:
 Dark Side Of The Moon Safari.
R.I.Y.L.:
 Angelo Badalamenti, *Lost Highway*, *The Truman Show*; Music from the *Mo'Nisn* Picture.

demonstrate that they can do the dark stuff just as well as they do lighter fare. When the group released its early-recordings EP *Premiers Symptomes* last year, you could hear fans collectively sigh; it was so pleasantly, eerily similar to *Moon Safari*, Air's ethereal debut, that we began to suspect Air ran a divine assembly line. The *Suicides* score defies those biases while touching on Air's signatures—reverb-laden keyboards, wind-tunnel vocals, organic sounds popping up unexpectedly. Fans expecting a coherent album will be disappointed; film scores demand randomness and this one is peppered with bits of dialogue and repetitive background noises that beg for context. But taken on its own merits, *Suicides* haunts you with its unremitting gloom and suggests that Air's eventual followup to *Moon Safari* may very well bewilder us.

»»Chris Molanphy



THE AMERICAN GIRLS
Like The Movies, Only Slower Trauma

In fact, *The American Girls* are five 20-something guys from Portland, Oregon whose name has fooled more than a few people: namely, the drunken loggers who've turned up at their gigs expecting a strip show featuring lots of, well, American girls. Instead, what they discover is an all-male pop group who likes to sing about American girls. Quite a lot, actually. On the band's major label debut, girls are everywhere—as subjects of adolescent crushes ("Two Speeds"), adult sorrow ("Blackest Gray"), and full-blown romantic euphoria ("Heavy And Struck"). What ultimately lifts *Like The*

OUT:
 February 29.
FILE UNDER:
 Songs 'bout girls.
R.I.Y.L.:
 Fountains Of Wayne, Matthew Sweet, Mayflies USA.

Movies above what could have been just another album dealing with pop's most shopworn clichés (love, sex) is the prominent presence of trumpet, which carries the lion's share of melodies on nine of the disc's dozen tracks. The brass—which belongs to former school marching band member Gus Baum—lends both moody drama and a playful, tangible sensuality to the theme of romantic yearning that's at the heart of this album. The only missteps here are the disc's generic opening ("Simply Most Loved") and closing ("Evil") numbers, both of which feel like overanxious bids for modern rock radio. Chalk it up to first-date jitters.

»»Jonathan Perry



HORACE ANDY
Living In The Flood
 Melankolic-Astralwerks

Although he's been recording for almost thirty years, it's only in the last decade that Horace Andy's been recognized for the great reggae vocalist he is, thanks to his work with Massive Attack. Much of his older material has now been reissued, but this is his first new work in more than 10 years. The album features 13 tracks of real roots reggae, very smooth one-drop grooves that hearken all the way back to Bob Marley, not the digital stuff that Jamaica seems to relentlessly spew out these days. The disc also proves that, along with being

OUT:
 February 22.
FILE UNDER:
 Roots reggae.
R.I.Y.L.:
 Bob Marley, Toots And The Maytals, Massive Attack.

one of the best roots vocalists around, Andy's also a very good songwriter. His Rasta faith dictates conscious lyrics in which he preaches love and berates gossips, but he's not afraid to get a bit funky, as with a bright retooling of a song by Massive Attack's 3D, "Doldrums," and "Right Time," with its wailing, Junior Parker-style sax intro. Of course, there are Rasta anthems, but even they have a loping beauty that transcends preaching on its way to the dancefloor. *Living In The Flood* has been a long time coming, but it was worth the wait.

»»Chris Nickson



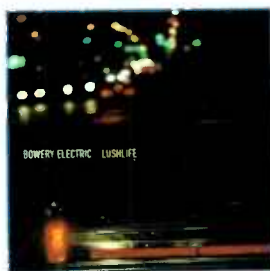
APOLLO FOUR FORTY
Gettin' High On Your Own Supply Epic

Although this credentialed Liverpoolian trio's remixing credits include work on Puff Daddy and Jimmy Page's "Come With Me," U2's "Mysterious Ways," and Manic Street Preachers' "Everlasting," Apollo Four Forty's most memorable prior effort might be "Ain't Talkin' 'Bout Dub." Featured on the group's second full length, 1997's *Electro Glide In Blue*, the track married an Eddie Van Halen guitar riff to big beat accessibility and a memorable vocal hook. It was smart stuff, if a little obvious, but Apollo Four Forty—still fascinated with rock-techno permutations (they also covered Blue

OUT:
 January 24.
FILE UNDER:
 Big beat rock 'n' roll.
R.I.Y.L.:
 Fatboy Slim, Aphrodite, Hardknox.

Oyster Cult's "Don't Fear The Reaper" in 1995)—expands its palette with *Gettin' High On Your Own Supply*. Hard-hitting guitars and ass-shaking beats still form the backbone of the group's sound—check "Yo! Future" (drum 'n' punk), "Cold Rock The Mic" (sci-fi turntablism meets metal), the raga-rocker "Heart Go Boom," and the vocoded, Farfisa-and-guitar-driven anthem "Stop The Rock"—but A440 incorporates trancier vibes in "For Forty Days" and "The Perfect Crime," often uses more organic, analog elements like Moog synthesizers, and gets Bond-like with the brassy, cinematic "High On Your Own Supply." As schizophrenic as the group can be, Apollo Four Forty is effective, infectious, and leading a new progression of rock-techno hybrids that appeal more to the rock side of the equation.

»»Mark Woodlief



BOWERY ELECTRIC

Lushlife

Beggars Banquet

Twelve years ago, My Bloody Valentine released a 7-inch single that grafted gliding guitars to a hip-hop rhythm track and seemed to predict the eventual emergence of bands like Bowery Electric. *Lushlife*, the NYC-based duo's third album, brings to mind the direction Kevin Shields might have taken MBV in the post-Portishead, hip-hop-savvy world. *Lushlife*, recorded at Bowery Electric's own high-tech digital studio in Brooklyn, is less heavily indebted to MBV sonic dazzle than 1996's *Beat*, but the torch the band still carries for Shields shines on the band's basic m.o.:

juxtaposing Martha Schwendener's dreamy, monochromatic intonations ("In a crowded room, I looked for you," "A thousand days have passed me by") against lulling yet edgy backdrops of sluggish electronic beats and hip-hop fragments. In the opening track, "Floating World," Schwendener's cooing voice glides gracefully over a synthetic beat, fleshed out with turntable scratches and eerie keyboard tones. The more densely layered "Freedom Fighter," with its synthetic string arrangements, offers the disc's most overt hook in the form of a bright guitar line that winds its way around Schwendener's drowsily singsongy vocals. Like the rest of *Lushlife*, it's a song that evokes seductive images of after-hours cityscapes, devoid of people but rife with possibility.

>>> Lydia Vanderloo

OUT:

February 22.

FILE UNDER:

Post-millennium tension.

R.I.Y.L.:

Portishead, Seefeel, My Bloody Valentine.



THE BUSY SIGNALS

Baby's First Beats

Sugar Free

Most indie rock bedroom recordings of the early '90s featured an introspective singer/songwriter strumming a guitar while mumbling a gloomy tale of love gone wrong. Maybe it's the soaring economy, but today's lo-fi freaks 'n' geeks sing a happier song. The Busy Signals' Howard Hamilton III, resident of Minneapolis, sounds so giddy he could be composing music for a children's TV show. His sample-heavy electronic pop is trippier than a *Teletubbies* episode. Perhaps not coincidentally, he's cheekily titled his debut *Baby's First Beats*, though it's more than just fun and games. Hamilton's meshing of De La Soul-like hip-

OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Time for Tubby lo-fi! Time for Tubby lo-fi!

R.I.Y.L.:

Sukpatch, Land Of The Loops, Volume AllStar.

hop beats and flitting synthesizer runs proves malleable: the effect is cushion-y and soft on the more lofty tunes ("88's and 73's," "Futon Hopper"), yet it allows for peculiar experimental pop elsewhere. The snappy "Headphoneworld" works like one of Lou Barlow's bedroom anthems, albeit with a shinier disposition. "Birds on High" floats from Hamilton's subdued vocals to a looped hook to a chorus of sampled backing vocals to a sharp breakbeat. The perky horn sample and piano figure that drive "Clogged Airways" sound like pure Bacharach until a bemused Hamilton slides in and drops nearly nonsensical lines about kissing babies, bumpy highways, and unfriendly clouds. Such a pastiche approach rarely succeeds as high art, but as a pleasant pop distraction The Busy Signals are a blast.

>>> Richard Martin



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Brassic Beats USA

Skint/Sony

When he's not producing hard knockin' tracks under the Midfield General alias, Damian Harris is busy dropping bombs on the worldwide dance scene via his Skint label—quite possibly the world's finest source for infectious, radio-ready electronic music. Sometime stomping ground of Fatboy Slim, Lo Fidelity Allstars, Bentley Rhythm Ace, Cut La Rock, and the Hip Optimist, Skint has not only helped bring big beat to the forebrain of the American consciousness, but it's kept the sound alive in England via its "Big Beat Boutique" dance club. *Brassic Beats USA* brings the best of Skint

Stateside. Twelve cuts deep—including a bonus Fatboy mix of Midfield General's "Devil In Sports Casual" to close things out—*Brassic Beats* moves from the gritty sounds of Lo Fi's "Puppy Phat Number One" and Req's "Train Jam" to more ethereal, rock-oriented musings of Electrelane's "Film Music." Though it makes for a fine party compilation, the album is also a directory for fresh, noteworthy talent, like Indian Ropeman (a.k.a. Sanj Sen), who fuses languid beats with sitar twang and airy vocals. The Space Raiders also show a lot of promise with their own brand of cheeky, disco funk. For Skint, the only formula for success is having no formula at all, and that's definitely a good thing.

>>> Richard Thomas

OUT:

February 22.

FILE UNDER:

My beat is bigger than your beat.

R.I.Y.L.:

Fatboy Slim, Lo Fidelity Allstars.



COYLE & SHARPE

Audio Visionaries

Thirsty Ear

This album of pioneering put-ons by radiomen Jim Coyle and Mal Sharpe will probably be filed in the humor section, but it has a significance that goes beyond comedy. In 1963, Coyle and Sharpe took the absurdist art of the prank to new extremes with their "man on the street" interviews for San Francisco radio station KGO. Approaching strangers along crowded Market Street, the pair would launch into elaborate sketches designed to prey upon human gullibility. In "Airport Fishing Rod" an amiable Catholic seminarian is nearly persuaded to give up his life in the pursuit of

OUT:

January 18.

FILE UNDER:

Pranks and put-ons, '60s-style.

R.I.Y.L.:

Allan Funt, Lenny Bruce, the book Pranks.

helping airline pilots avoid birds. In "Microphone In The Brain" a man is introduced to the duo's new invention: a device that allows phonograph records to be made from thoughts. But one young man nearly gets the best of the duo in "Maniacs In Living Hell" when he's asked if he'd be interested in "working in a pit of fire with four maniacs." When Coyle asks if he fully understands the job, the young man answers, "You want me to work in some kind of a pit, a living hell, and I'd wear a uniform and there's a lot of flames. I have to work with maniacs and there's bats flying around. I get one meal a day and I have to work for 12 hours. Yeah, I'd like to try it."

>>> Lois Maffeo



DEATHRAY

Deathray

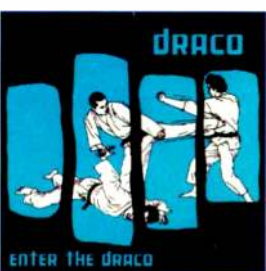
Capricorn

It's hard to believe that it's been four years since "The Distance," Cake's playfully snide slam on the rat race, became a novelty smash. As imprudent as it might have seemed at the time, the songwriter behind the hit, guitarist Greg Brown, left Cake in the wake of MTV darlings, took the band's bassist Victor Damiani with him, and assembled Deathray with singer/keyboardist Dana Gumbiner and drummer James Neil. The new outfit's concocted a debut that makes it easy to see why Brown and Damiani wanted out of their old jobs. *Deathray* is a hooky, synth-spiked blast from the new-wave

OUT:
February 29.
FILE UNDER:
Pop fanboys with Casios.
R.I.Y.L.:
Cake, Possum Dixon, Nada Surf, Rentals.

past (i.e. The Cars) that nods in the direction of '90s acts like Possum Dixon, Nada Surf, and the Rentals—other bands who appreciate the Cars. The first single, "My Lunatic Friends," buzzes out of the (fuzz) box with edgy bluster, bringing with it all manner of ringing alarm clocks, effects-happy guitars, spiffy vocal treatments and, most importantly, the detached, dry humor that fueled Ric Ocasek's best writing. Sure, we've heard this kind of thing before. But ultimately, it's the band's cracked perspective and skewed non sequiturs that give these songs such an appealingly warped kick.

>>> Jonathan Perry



DRACO

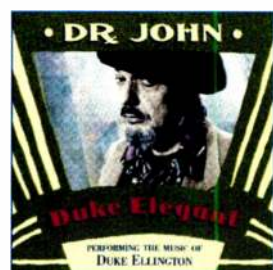
Enter The Draco

Slabco

A Japanese voice-and-beats duo with a penchant for Brazilian pop. Sound familiar? While similarities between Draco and Cibo Matto are apparent, *Enter The Draco* bears more in common with Luscious Jackson's 1992 debut *In Search Of Manny*, especially when the gently distorted vocals of Miyuki Osawa (a.k.a. Mimi) are multi-tracked in tight, dissonant harmonies. Meanwhile, Naoki Morimoto serves up lots of lo-fi loops anchoring whimsical instrumentation—the wah-wah ukulele intro to "If You Want To Mek It"—that never errs on the wrong side of cutesy. (To fully appreciate Morimoto's

OUT:
February 15.
FILE UNDER:
Lo-fi loops with nice surprises.
R.I.Y.L.:
Cibo Matto, Luscious Jackson, Sukpatch, Soul Coughing.

skills, spend a few minutes with the "bonus beats" for "Dracomedown" and "Buttercup," far more engaging than the average DJ tools.) The duo prove especially adept at curtailing pointless repetition via abrupt juxtapositions within tracks, like the rapid electro coda that caps the ersatz bossa nova of "V-A-C-A-N-T." "First Buckaroo Vs. Summer Alien" pits LA '70s soft rock riffs against slo-mo metal textures. Although the truly inspired moments here (Mimi's bittersweet vocals on "Noise And Light," a rubbery drum 'n' bass reworking of Caetano Veloso's "Lost In The Paradise") are few, this 37-minute CD consistently delivers another fun variation on the playful fare fans of the Slabco stable (Sukpatch, Land Of The Loops) have grown to expect. >>> Kurt B. Reighley



DR. JOHN

Duke Elegant

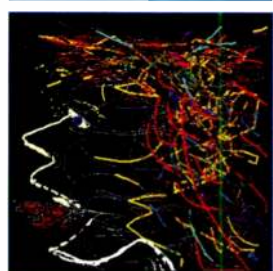
Blue Note

Leave it to Dr. John (a.k.a. Mac Rebennack) to cash in on the Ellington centennial year with a work that's as true to himself as it is to the Duke. It's not surprising that the Doctor can tackle Ellington with authority; both are pan-stylistic omnivores, constantly in search of a music that, in Ellington's phrase, goes "beyond category." What's more, Ellington the master jazz composer was also a great pop songwriter, and the expected chestnuts—"It Don't Mean A Thing," "Solitude," "Don't Get Around Much Anymore"—are all here. But Rebennack has also dug up some

OUT:
January 11.
FILE UNDER:
Dr. Instrumentalist.
R.I.Y.L.:
Duke Ellington, Ray Charles, Professor Longhair.

rarities. He brings a classic Hammond B-3 and R&B piano feel to "On The Wrong Side Of The Railroad Tracks" (besides singing the hell out of it), gives a strong New Orleans backbeat with thumb-slapping bass to "I'm Gonna Go Fishin'," and unveils the Professor Longhair-style calypso roots of "Flaming Sword." His piano playing on the latter is so rhythmically and harmonically sure that it might make you regret that Rebennack and Ellington never faced off across the keyboards at one of the fabled "Piano Night" marathons in New Orleans's Tipitina's. *Duke Elegant* is as close as we'll get.

>>> Jon Garelick



EDDIE THE RAT

Eddie The Rat

Seeland

Eddie The Rat is the kind of album where when you hear a phone operator's voice reciting numbers, you just know that it's not going to be long before you hear it cut up to say "6-6-6"; this, in fact, happens three minutes into the disc. Originally self-released by its creator Pete Martin, it's now been reissued courtesy of Negativland, who do the same sort of non sequitrial cut-and-paste jobs, but generally have some sort of political point in mind. Martin splices together kitschy bits of found dialogue, stoned giggling and overheard noise in no particular order, with some distorted easy-listening

OUT:
January 11.
FILE UNDER:
Pointless sound collage.
R.I.Y.L.:
Negativland, Jerky Boys, early-'70s Frank Zappa.

records and tedious instrumental doodles thrown in and the odd bit of deliberately off-key singing in funny voices. The only connecting factor is his "dude that's so bizarre" sense of humor. The big problem, though, is that *Eddie* won't commit to any of its ideas, even the bad ones, long enough to make a deep impression. Even when the disc's attention-span problems ease up long enough for promisingly strange pieces like the gurgling instrumental "Thorazine Shuffle," the playing seems tentative or distracted, as if Martin can't wait to get on with the next bit. But the function of good collage is that its disparate sources add up to something, and *Eddie*'s mound of fragments is just that: an undifferentiated, undigested pile.

>>> Douglas Walk



EUREKA FARM
The View

Loosegroove

Bellingham, Washington's Eureka Farm is a strange animal—a rock band in spite of all the post-rock influences they've desperately tried to assimilate. The group writes meandering compositions with fleeting hooks and tons of texture, uses organs and saxophones as prominently as guitars, and builds its rhythms on staccato beats and syncopation. All of these elements would seem to put the group in a cozy camp with their avowed influences, Tortoise and Can. But Eureka Farm is also a band of impassioned jammers, capable of a certain slow bombast that elevates tension over

melody. The key to the band's split personality seems to be drummer Jason McGerr, who loves to ride a groove in the style of John McIntire, but can just as easily become an adrenalin-hepped skin-pounder, freeing singer Arman Bohn to explore his prog side. Tracks like "Spare," with its skewed clockwork rhythms and shuffle, seem opposed to ones like "The Mule," in which Bohn's swooping vocals work in weird counterpoint to Charles Keller's minimal bass riffs. Then there's "Escalations," which leaves the gate as a light instrumental only to be gradually transformed into a heavy, eight-minute jam. It ends in an explosion of big rock drumming as Bohn leans into the lyrics, evoking visions of Roger Dean dreamscapes and light shows galore.

>>> Andrea Moed

OUT:
February 15.

FILE UNDER:
Indie prog.

R.I.Y.L.:
Olivia Tremor Control, Tortoise, Supertramp.



VARIOUS ARTISTS

Fire And Skill: The Songs Of The Jam
Epic

After the squabbles over who gets to play what, the main struggle on any tribute album is the one between the original and the artist paying homage. If a song is beloved, why mess with it? And yet, if a contributor doesn't interpret freely, why bother with a cover version at all? That's the conflict faced and, to a large extent, failed on this salute to the Jam. Perhaps the late-'70s neo mods were simply too recent a phenomenon; perhaps primary songwriter Paul Weller's voice is just too distinctive. Either way, most of this tribute is rife with missed opportunities. Reef

blasts through "That's Entertainment" without alterations: the falsetto backing, the staccato strumming of the original, even Weller's trademark snarl are all there. Similarly Ben Harper's facile "Modern World," and "Carnation," done by Liam Gallagher and Steve Cradock, present the modern boys doing their best to bite off Weller's sharp cynicism. The exceptions, such as an ethereal version of "Start!" by the Beastie Boys with Miho Hatori of Cibo Matto and an utterly Garbage-ized "Butterfly Collector," stand out by comparison, if not because of any particular excellence. Only a few subtle remakes, notably Buffalo Tom's wistful, half-speed "Going Underground" and a refreshingly direct new-punk take on "Art School" by Silversun, truly merge interpreter and material for something new.

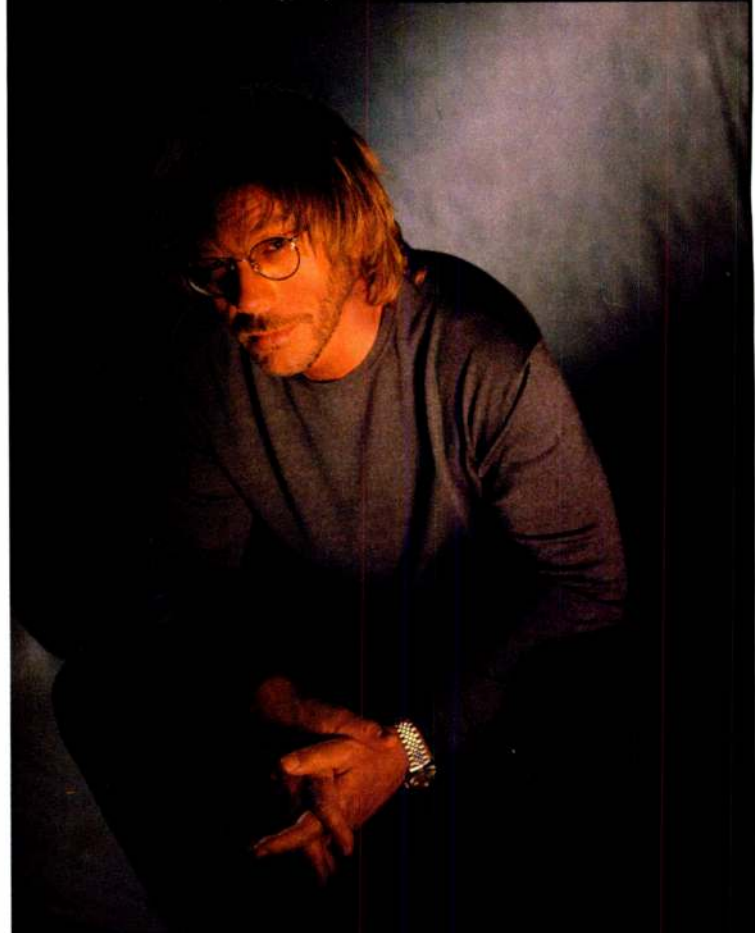
>>> Clea Simon

OUT:
January 25.

FILE UNDER:
Cover me.

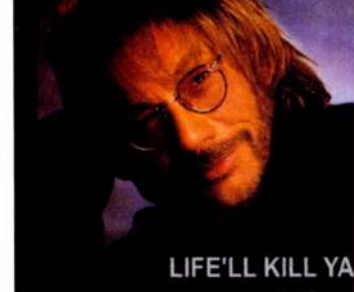
R.I.Y.L.:
The Jam, The Rutles, Oasis.

WARREN ZEVON
LIFE'LL KILL YA



12 new tracks for 2000
featuring
"I Was In The House When
The House Burned Down"

WARREN ZEVON



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LIFE'LL KILL YA



FLYING SAUCER ATTACK

Mirror Drag City

An argument could be made that contemporary space rock began in 1993, when Bristol, England's Flying Saucer Attack released its first singles. Winking a bleary eye at prog-rock pioneers like Can and Popul Vuh, the duo blanketed their muffled vocals with gauzy webs of guitar distortion. Although down to one member, Dave Pearce, FSA's music hasn't changed radically since its early days. *Mirror* throws a few curves into the pathway, mainly by varying the rhythmic patterns, but the vibe of the trip remains consistent. Whereas 1997's *New Lands* was a

seamless, organic affair, *Mirror* is a collection of distinct tracks. And while the songs are shaped primarily by Pearce's distant-sounding vocals and peels of guitar noise, they're defined by the beats. Spare acoustic songs like "Tides" and "Suncatcher" lack rhythm tracks and thus come across as meditative laments. On the other hand, "River" pulses over live drums with a ragged, rockin' guitar sound, "Rise" is shaped more by synthetic beats than the decorative guitar work, and "Winter Song" actually incorporates breakbeats. The gloomy track "Chemicals" sounds like what might have happened had Joy Division done a Chemical Brothers remix. Pearce may not be covering much new ground here, but as he has proven with FSA, the journey is of its own merit, regardless of where it takes you.

»» Lydia Vanderloo

OUT:
January 17.
FILE UNDER:
Dissonant space rock.
R.I.Y.L.:
Spiritualized, Third Eye Foundation, Godspeed You Black Emperor!.



SERGEANT GARCIA

Un Poquito Quema'o Higher Octave World

Sergeant Garcia has Spanish, French, and Algerian blood in his veins, and his music's lineage is even more complex than that. He came up in the French alternative rock, punk, dub and raggamuffin scenes, but then decided to make Afro-Cuban music—from the sensuous son to the rowdy timba—the center of his sound. On *Un Poquito Quema'o*, he leads a 11-piece outfit rich with horns and percussion, and adept at delivering slamming grooves. "Llevale Mi Canto" begins in rocking Latin mode, then shifts on a dime to equally aggressive reggae, and then back. "Hoy

OUT:
January 25.
FILE UNDER:
Latin playboys.
R.I.Y.L.:
Mano Negra, Les Negresses Vertes, P-18.

me moy" is a straight, tuneful Cuban son. The playful "Acabar Mal" rides on brisk ska rhythms. And "Afro Cuban Orishas Underground" blends boogie-woogie piano and hip-hop beats and tops it all of with Spanish rap vocals. The seasoned ensemble even pulls off two rumba percussion blowouts. Overall, *Un Poquito Quema'o* is a spirited 17-song collection with fresh, lively arrangements played by a remarkably versatile group of musicians who are as comfortable with son and ska as they are with funk, and hip-hop. Garcia goes out on a limb to help advance the Latin invasion of the US into the realm of alternative dance pop, but the fusions he pulls off never seem silly or gratuitous.

»» Banning Eyre



FU MANCHU ★

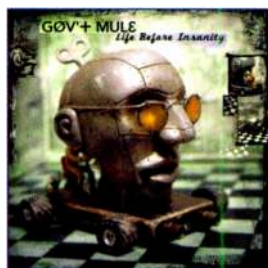
King Of The Road Mammoth

Fu Manchu are like the action kids you might see in a *CHiPs* episode—freestylin' with skinny skateboards on the street, dashin' to the checkered flag during dirt bike showdowns, and hugging the turns with go-karts on the track—only all grown up. But they play with too much conviction to be part of the retro-ironic, "we're just pretending we really mean it" rock 'n' roll attitude, though their lyrics and artwork do make them a wee bit cartoonish. These stoner dudes mean well, and what they mean to do on *King Of The Road* is to somehow retain the tunefulness of 1997's

The Action Is Go without jettisoning the heaviness they amassed on their 1998 Man's Ruin EP *Eatin' Dust*. The Fus got their start in 1990 churning out maximum density fuzzed out hard-rockers that were 100 percent sugar-free. But on this ode to the road—true to its title, most of the tunes are automotively inspired—they keep it sweet and sweaty. There's the ringing power-chord bliss of "Hell On Wheels" and the funk-rock "Low Rider"-style boogie riffage of "No Dice," each sporting a well-wrought hook in its pelvic-thrusting/head-banging molten-metal groove.

»» Lorne Behrman

OUT:
February 15.
FILE UNDER:
Stinky skateboards and checkered Vans slip-ons.
R.I.Y.L.:
Foghat, Queens Of The Stone Age, Blue Oyster Cult.



GOV'T MULE

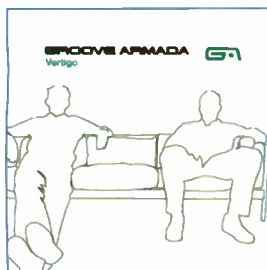
Life Before Insanity Capricorn

If Gov't Mule is shameless about its retro psychedelic blues-rock, it's because the trio has earned the right to be proud. The Mule's members may worship at the altar of the holy guitar trinity: Jimi Hendrix, Cream, and Led Zeppelin. But unlike Lenny Kravitz, Gov't Mule is recycling a style, not songs. And it is sonic invention that keeps the band sounding fresh even when lyrics fall into quasi-mystic claptrap. One listen to the dreamy swirl of ex-Allman brother Warren Haynes' shimmering guitar chords on the eight-minutes-plus "No

OUT:
February 1.
FILE UNDER:
Freedom rock acid blues.
R.I.Y.L.:
Jimi Hendrix, Cream, Blindwyrn Pig.

Need To Suffer," as bassist Allen Woody makes like Jack Bruce in the background, has the intoxicating potency of a drag of sensi. Then, of course, the solo kicks in: a screaming testament to the power of a Les Paul and a Marshall stack. This trio's fifth headlong leap into the Woodstock generation's acid-laced gene pool is their best. Employing multi-tracking for the first time, they're built a new architecture for their songs. Layers of electric and acoustic six-string (plus guest Ben Harper's lap steel) put stained-glass shadings on tunes like "In My Life" and "Tastes Like Wine." Haynes has also grown as a vocalist, packing apt gospel fervor into "Tastes Like Wine" and his duet with Harper, "Lay Your Burden Down." As they sing in the latter, "it's heavy."

»» Ted Drozdowski



GROOVE ARMADA 
Vertigo Jive Electro

Underground house music fans sick of recycled disco snippets, endless peaking drum fills and divas wailing pointlessly about "pride" and "joy" often find themselves starved for fresh sounds. British labels like Nuphonic and Paper regularly come through with tracks bursting with warm, organic timbres and subtle percussion, but complete albums in this vein are rare indeed. Well, sing hallelujah for *Vertigo*, the latest from UK duo Groove Armada, which balances ecstatic floor-fillers with laid back head-noddors for a cohesive, refreshing 12-track romp. Longtime jazz-funk fans Andy

OUT:
February 22.
FILE UNDER:
House Is A Feeling.
R.I.Y.L.:
Basement Jaxx, Propellerheads, Morcheeba, Faze Action.

Cato and Tom Findlay round out the subtle grooves of "Chicago" and the funky "Pre 63" with real guitar, brass and woodwinds. And though the pair aren't averse to sampling, the use of pilfered bits feels playful; the soft-focus "At The River" sways like a hula dancer on codeine, while "Blue Skies" mates an Irving Berlin lick with spacey hip-hop beats for a dreamy conclusion. In the midst of these subdued proceedings, the booty shakers sound doubly uplifting. The British hit "If Everybody Looked The Same" (featuring a prominent bite from A Tribe Called Quest) is good, but the minimalist rhythmic workouts "I See You Baby" (which also appears remixed by Fatboy Slim) and "In My Bones" are even better.

»»Kurt B. Reighley



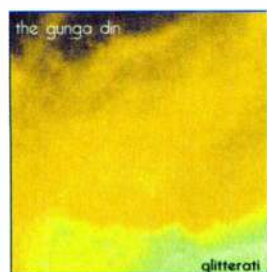
HOME
XIV Arena Rock

Home's fifth proper release (the inflated Roman numeral of the title counts several cassette-only basement projects) marks their first dalliance with an outside producer. Dave Fridmann should consider patenting the shimmering, melodic melancholy he lends his productions, especially his own Mercury Rev and his pals the Flaming Lips (whose Michael Ivins also lends a hand here). Fridmann's influence is apparent on these New York via Florida transplants. The opening tracks of *XIV* display a cohesion and sheen heretofore absent from Home's

OUT:
February 8.
FILE UNDER:
Lo-fi goes hi-fi.
R.I.Y.L.:
Flaming Lips, Mercury Rev, Pavement.

work, and could seamlessly mesh with Rev's *Deserter's Songs* or the Lips' *The Soft Bulletin*. A Fridmann prerequisite seems to be an earnestly adenoidal vocalist, and both Eric Morrison and Andrew Deutsch of Home fit that bill. Morrison's plaintive twang on the standout "Burden" suggests spirits of The Band wafting over these neighboring upstate New York sessions. Before regaining its footing for less adorned winners like "Coming Up Empty Again," *XIV* descends into a series of faux symphonies and meandering prog-rock exercises, exposing the fact that what passes for playful basement noodling in a lo-fi setting can become pompous wankery when abetted by a studio budget. Despite its occasional art-rock dead ends, though, Home manages a high enough hit rate to make *XIV* a success.

»» Glen Sarvady



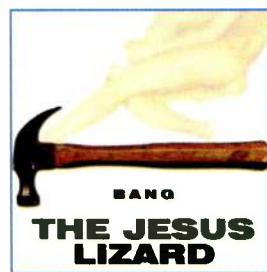
THE GUNGA DIN
Glitterati Jetset

Steeped as they are in slinky, red-light cabaret decadence and naked-city noir, it was perhaps inevitable that the Gunga Din would end up on Jetset, a label that has, of late, cultivated a fine crop of similar Transylvania-via-the-Lower-East-Side ghouls (think Firewater and Congo Norvell). A breathy, sullen femme fatale with a penchant for Weegee-like snuff portraits ("I'll find you lying in a pool of anti-freeze/ A grimace on the face of your lifeless body," goes one of her less menacing come-ons), singer Siobhan Duffy gets typecast early on as a chic(k) Nick Cave. On the opening "Brave New

OUT:
February 8.
FILE UNDER:
Sprockets from the crypt.
R.I.Y.L.:
Nick Cave, Gun Club, Congo Norvell.

World" she nails the dark one's vampiric phrasing perfectly, and keyboardist Maria Zastrow, pilfering the Bad Seeds' tip-toeing horror-organ punctuation, gets caught red (right) handed. But former Bad Seeds drummer Jim Sclavunos makes the song swing instead of lurch, and guitarist Bill Bronson, former Swans/Norvell sideman, plucks a skeletal Ennio Morricone lick—more theme-park stroll than funeral march. By and by, though, Duffy gets to stretch her batwings. She injects a little venom into the otherwise Jesus And Mary Chained "Mama," flits playfully on the disc's sci-fi dance number "Paradoxia," and bears strange fruit on "Love Has Another Slave," where she waltzes black widow-like and trades forlorn verses with Bronson, the latest flyboy to get tangled in her web. Spooky.

»» Carly Carioli



THE JESUS LIZARD
Bang! Touch And Go

The Jesus Lizard was a great live band. Armed with a rhythm section that could crack open the gates of Hell, a guitarist (Duane Denison) who had some inventive takes on the idea of heaviness, and a larynx-torturer (David Yow) who bravely exposed his scrotum time and again in the name of rock, the Lizard left audiences whimpering for more. But their records were rarely more than mementos of their performances, and this farewell collection of singles and rarities (almost all from the early '90s) reveals the big gap in their armor: for all their charisma, style, and

OUT:
January 18.
FILE UNDER:
The gran sound of the underground, early-'90s style.
R.I.Y.L.:
Shellac, Don Caballero, The Fluid.

instrumental chemistry, they didn't have much in the way of songs. It's a bad sign that the sharpest compositions here are covers of songs by Chrome, The Dicks, and Trio; otherwise, it's pretty much the band whacking away at a minor-key riff or two and Yow shrieking and gargling like he's being molested by a bear. And it doesn't help that the thudding production on most of these tracks screams "Chicago, 1991." Approach Bang as Denison's project and it gets more engaging, especially when he comes up with stuff like the spider-bite harmonics of "White Hole" and the single-string torture of the previously unreleased "Blockbuster." Otherwise, though, it's mostly for old fans who find they just don't pull out the 7" box very often anymore.

»» Douglas Wolk



KID DYNAMITE
Shorter, Faster, Louder

Jade Tree

Eighteen songs in 25 minutes can only mean one thing—hardcore! Without a trace of post-punk artiness, Philly's Kid Dynamite play by loud, fast rules that haven't changed since the heyday of Social D. and Minor T., besides increased studio punch and liberal infusions of near-pop melodicism. Steve Evetts' clear production favors David Wagenschutz's kick drum and Jason Shevchuk's throaty, Rancid-esque vocals over Dan Yemin's guitar, but the combination handles equally well on the band's speed trials and pacing laps. The most effective songs ("Death And Taxes," "Living Daylights")

OUT:
February 15.
FILE UNDER:
Punk for purists.
R.I.Y.L.:
Sick Of It All, Youth Of Today, Gorilla Biscuits.

combine the two, skidding from breakneck intros into chugging, mid-tempo choruses. As for the lyrics, Kid Dynamite seems a well-intentioned lot (though elocution is hardly a priority); "Rufus Wants A Hug" finds the whole gang admitting, "We care/ We don't want to see the world die." Still, the band's "hey"s and "whoa-ho"s are generally more eloquent than anything they manage to put into words. Overall, this is an unpretentious, well-paced punk platter that's over before the genre's limitations—lack of dynamic range, indistinguishable chord progressions—can wear thin. It's clear why lots of folks have tired of making (or listening to) this kind of music, but it's strangely comforting to know that someone hasn't.

»» Franklin Bruno



KINGSBURY MANX
Kingsbury Manx Overcoat Recordings

Chapel Hill's Kingsbury Manx embraces a number of styles (slow rock, alt-country, folk) on its debut album, but shades each with a distinctive gesture that becomes integrated into the band's overall sound. The group's signature is its three-part vocal harmony. Its chords adorn the cool melodies of graceful songs that equate love and loss with the patterns of the seasons. Avoiding the exacting rigors of traditional harmony, they take a somewhat lo-fi approach to this. The distinctive chorus of "Piss Diary" echoes the idiosyncratic harmonic choices made by The Roches in their early-'80's heyday.

OUT:
February 23.
FILE UNDER:
Alt-barbershop indie rock.
R.I.Y.L.:
Low, The Beta Band, Palace.

"Cross Your Eyes" employs the kind of laid-back Floyd-isms that have made the Beta Band such a cuddly favorite. And "Hawaii In Ten Seconds" is an a cappella ditty that employs the structured singing you'd expect to hear from a barbershop quartet. The disc is the first full length from Overcoat, the new imprimatur of Howard Greynolds, whose series of All City singles has provided some of the most beautiful off-beat indie music of the last three years. Kingsbury Manx follows in the delicate tradition of the All City series, but takes the aesthetic to a new level of attainment. Perhaps it is a Utopian vision that fuels these jewel-like songs—or maybe it is simply the band's elegant reappraisal of 'less is more.'

»» Lois Maffeo

Virgínia Rodrigues

Nós

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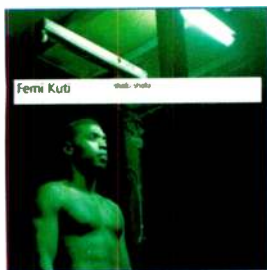


Nós



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FEMI KUTI

Shoki Shoki

MCA

When he wasn't languishing in Nigerian jails, Fela Kuti lived like a king: lord of his self-made Kalakuta Republic, husband to 27 dancers at once, and leader of his own political party. By the time of his death in 1997, his legend threatened to obscure the music—with songs that ranged from sparse party tunes to extended no-wave jams, Fela unleashed James Brown-style grooves, chanted lyrical provocations, and ham-fisted keyboard playing on a Nigerian public accustomed to the more decorous pleasures of highlife music. And now his son, Femi—a less outlandish character,

by all accounts—is seeking to lay claim to that musical legacy. *Shoki Shoki* is the younger Kuti's first stateside release and it's less powerful than his late father's work. The arrangements are more conventional, the songs less ambitious, the political rants more pedestrian. But Femi's approach offers some pleasant surprises: his quavering, high-pitched voice conveys a tenderness that was absent from most of Fela's music, and "Beng Beng Beng"—a hit single in Britain—is the kind of pop masterpiece that Fela so perversely avoided. >>> Kelefa Sanneh

OUT:

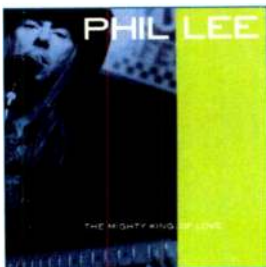
February 1.

FILE UNDER:

Afrobeat progeny.

R.I.Y.L.:

Fela Kuti, The JB's, Cassius.



PHIL LEE

The Mighty King Of Love

Shanachie

Phil Lee's voice is etched with his life's travels; it's a hoarse, nasal and utterly pleasing road map running from Durham, North Carolina to New York City to Los Angeles and back. During a cross-country trek that spanned the better part of three decades, Lee played drums with Dylan sideman Rob Stoner, worked on movie soundtracks with legendary producer Jack Nitzsche, drove a truck for Neil Young, and briefly joined the Flying Burrito Brothers. His debut album, *The Mighty King Of Love*, reveals all the influences he soaked up along the way—roots rock, country, rockabilly, and Cajun music redolent with

Keith Richards riffs and Dylan-esque vocal tones and phrasings. From the tube-amp-toasted riff of "Nobody But You" to the roadhouse-verberbed, harmonica-blasted "Blueprint For Disaster" to the bayou swing of "Les Debris, Ils Sont Blancs" (The Trash, It Is White), Lee creates the perfect backdrop for his Americana-steeped, occasionally lovesick character sketches. Whether he's being wistful ("Seems like every girl I meet/ Has got those green eyes, or something of yours") or comical ("She's kinda plump and slightly lame/ But with her I can be my sorry self"), Lee gives each song a beat that's great for dancing or driving. >>> Meredith Ochs

OUT:

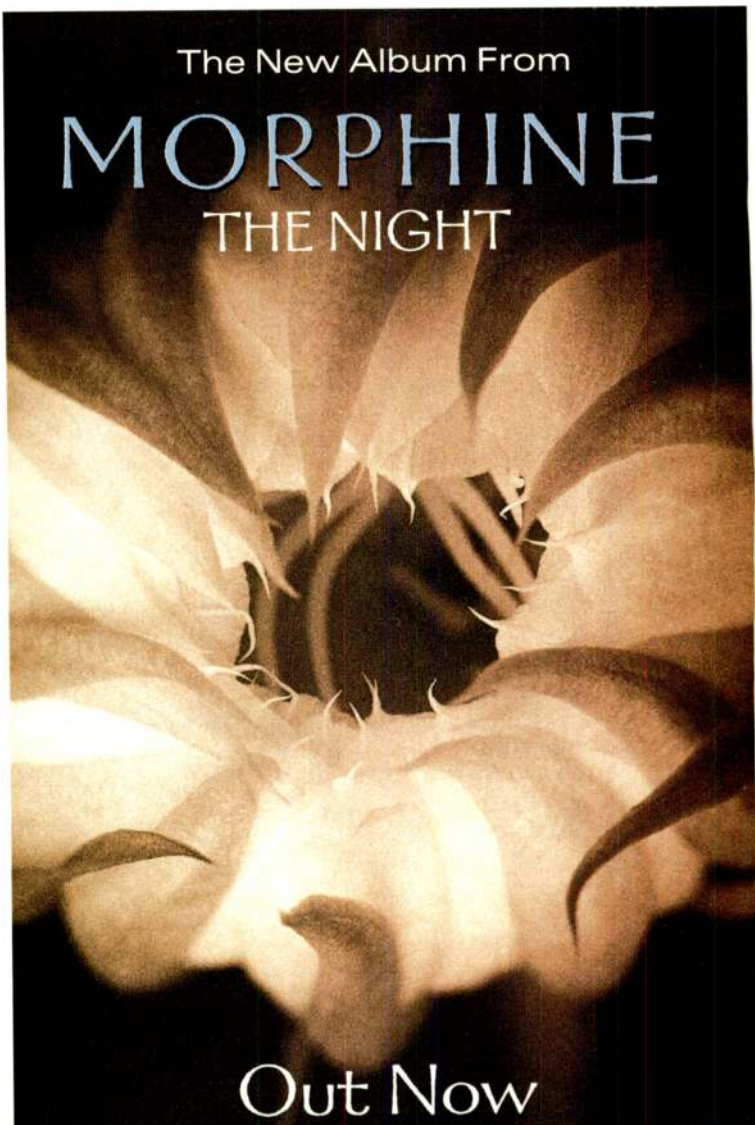
January 11.

FILE UNDER:

Roadhouse Rock.

R.I.Y.L.:

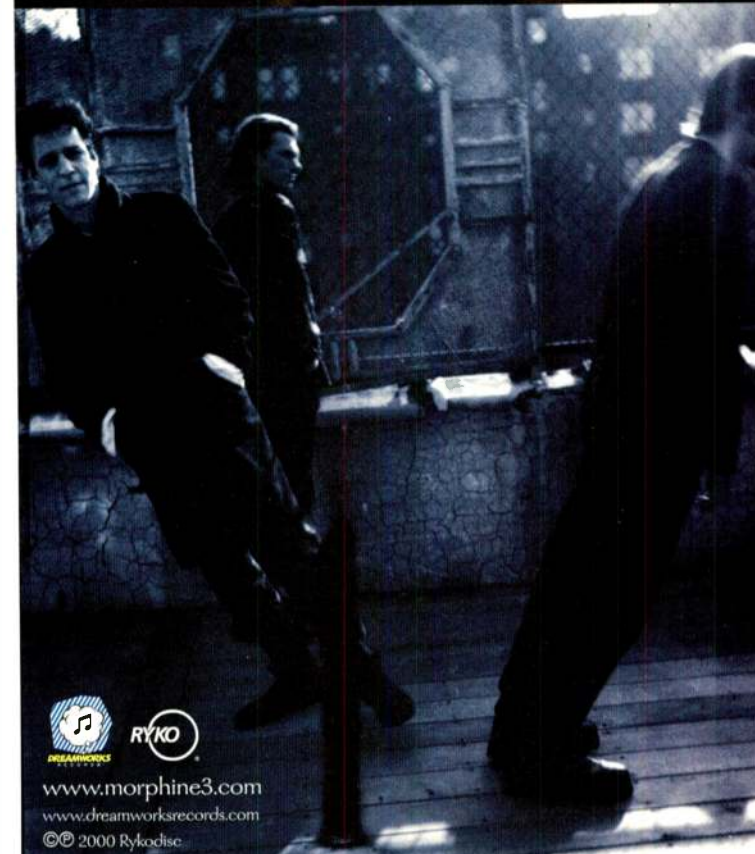
Tom Petty, Lucinda Williams, Duane Jarvis.



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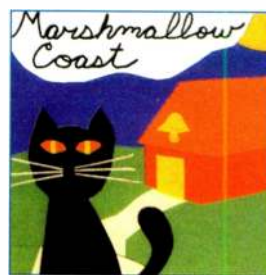
CHEIKH N'DIGEL LÔ
Bambay Gueej World Circuit-Nonesuch

The vanguard Senegalese singer Cheikh Lô's second international release fulfills the promise of his much-heralded 1996 debut *Ne La Thiass*. Lô's metier is a personalized blend of Afro-Cuban sensuousness and the tough attitude of Senegalese pop, especially the percussion-driven *mbalax* style. Acoustic sounds, starting with Lô's ubiquitous guitar, keep the soundscape light on *Bambay Gueej*, but the music seethes with restless drive and Lô's vocal delivery never misses. On "M'Beddemi," he crows like a *salsero*. On the album's funky title

OUT:
 March .
FILE UNDER:

Afro-pop.
R.I.Y.L.:
 Youssou N'Dour, Baaba Maal, Africando.

track, he channels Smokey Robinson and Nigeria's late musical icon Fela Kuti. Elsewhere, he wails with the force of his famous countrymen Youssou N'Dour, who co-produced this release, and Baaba Maal. Aside from great arranging instincts and a mean set of pipes, Lô can write. His melodies are strong and natural, steering clear of old formulas without seeming forced or clever. A guest spot from Malian Wassoulou star Oumou Sangare on "Bobo-Dioulasso," a moody invocation of Lô's hometown in Burkina Faso, is one of the highlights of this set, but with *Bambay Gueej*, Lô claims his own spot in the top echelon of African pop. >>> Banning Eyre



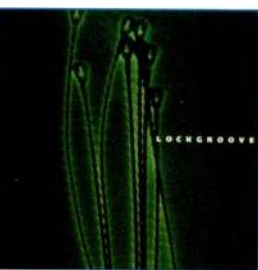
THE MARSHMALLOW COAST
Seniors & Juniors Kindercore

OUT:
 January 18.
FILE UNDER:

Faux-naïf la-la-la.
R.I.Y.L.:
 The Music Tapes, the New Originals (pre-Spinal Tap), the Whos down in Whoville.

Okay, the new-generation-of-psych-pop thing has officially gone too far. Neutral Milk Hotel writing ultra-simple songs and reaching for psychedelia's lyrical surrealism for the sake of an emotional power-grab—that was great. NMH associate Julian Koster starting Music Tapes to do even spacier, simpler la-la-tunes for the sake of sheer trippiness—that was okay too. But Music Tapes associate Andy Gonzales starting the Marshmallow Coast to dumb things down even further with the aid of gruesomely out-of-tune piano, melodica, and bells (as well as a couple of stray Of Montreal

members)...well, Elephant 6 enthusiasts might want to draw some kind of line. *Seniors & Juniors* is unforgivably dippy and affected, the equivalent of an adult who won't stop talking baby-talk. The album's peculiar chord progressions (and the muted pluck of "Broken Comb") are the sort of thing sandbox-era Brian Wilson used to come up with. But the Beach Boys could sing. Gonzales's voice is nasal and tentative, in a way that's supposed to pass for "artless" but ends up being maddening. The instrumentals that pad out the album might have been a better idea—he keeps the arrangements spare and unusual, though he seems to be groping for each note—but they're called "Bizzare Classical I" (sic) and "Bizzare Classical II" (sic), an emblem of the entire project's ineptitude. >>> Douglas Walk



LOCKGROOVE
Sleeping On The Elephant Fog Krave

Twin brothers Martin and Ryan Rex do not disavow the notion that they share a sort of womb-wired musical telepathy, and the long-overdue debut album by their quintet—which released a minor masterpiece of an EP, *Rewired*, in 1998—at times seems to bear the fingerprint of some unseen hypnotist's hand. On *Rewind* they established themselves as the heirs to the elegant, elliptically dreamy legacy left by fellow Bostonians Galaxie 500, but also to the sprawling, majestic feedback-drone suites of Spacemen 3. And over the sweeping course of *Sleeping's* 67 minutes, the band both expands and contracts its

OUT:
 February 29.
FILE UNDER:

Space-psych.
R.I.Y.L.:
 Spiritualized, Galaxie 500, Yo La Tengo.

scope, pulling the grainy, Byrdian acid-folk of "Slow Motion Ocean" into sharp focus, and on the 20-minute closer "Never Satisfied," chasing a single chord through cascading turbulence and endless on-the-spot revision. Whether building a somber moment out of piano and drum machine on "Chinese New Year," or working "Blues And Reds" from sleepy shimmer into pulverizing rave-up, there's a guiding emotional and melodic authority keeping their astral projections on track. As massive and ambitious as *Sleeping* is, its brilliance is mostly a product of that simplicity—in well-crafted songs infused with the spirit of casual and persistent reinvention. >>> Carly Carioli



METABASS 'N BREATH
The Life And Times Of A Beatboxer Bomb Hip-Hop

OUT:
 February 15.
FILE UNDER:

Beatbox prog-rock.
R.I.Y.L.:
 Rahzel, Fat Boys, Doug E. Fresh.

I own enough James Brown records (with the original Godfather of Noyze busting a move, a rhyme and a hernia on the microphone) to comprehend how funk's uncompromisingly ejaculatory vocal rhythms evolved into the unique splatter-patterns of human beatboxing; enough Disco 3 records to recognize the beatboxer's privileged Special Guest Star role in hip-hop history; and enough Roots albums to understand how mouth-farts, gravel-gargling phlegm-grinds, and speaking-in-hydraulic-tongues wicky-wicky noises can humanize sober-sided hip-hop with jazzbo pretensions (and

how those pretensions can dignify said wicky-wicky noises). But this is ridiculous. On *Metabass n' Breath's* debut, Australian rap dudes spit thick 'n' chunky lip-smack rhythms in your ear for 50 minutes. Cranking the bass and reverb to wind-tunnel volume, they spar with turntablists (including DJ Faust, Shortee, and Vin Roc, all apparently lending hands because people used to pooh-pooh the idea of all-scratching albums, too), run through some by-now-dog-tired sci-fi/transforming-Decepticon routines and kick the occasional freestyle, but never achieve anything as compelling songwise as Biz Markie's "Make The Music With Your Mouth, Biz," on which Biz sprayed violent gastrointestinal upheaval and monkey sounds over a classic Isaac Hayes beat. Instead, they've invented beatbox prog, vox-cussion way too artistic to pick boogers. Proceed with caution. >>> Alex Pappademas



RUSSELL MILLS/UNDARK
 Pearl + Umbra
 Instinct

Not many people with as low a profile as Russell Mills can get help on their albums from the likes of Brian and Roger Eno, Peter Gabriel, Michael Brook, Hector Zazou, Bill Laswell, and a raft load of others. But Mills, who is primarily a visual artist, has done design work for lots of famous folks. In return he asked for sound samples, which were generously contributed and have become part of his sonic "sculptures," a much more apt term for what Mills does than songs. They mutate and metamorphose, taking rhythm as a foundation, then adding and stripping

away layers of sound. On the couple of occasions something does approach a traditional songform, the effect is quite gauze-like, especially on Mills' version of "Goldenhair" (words by James Joyce, music by Syd Barrett), featuring the translucent vocals of Clodagh Simonds. Otherwise, this is essentially an album of textures, ranging from the ominous to the airy. And, if not for the credits, you wouldn't even know that any famous names had anything to do with it, though Robin Guthrie's familiar Cocteau Twins guitar does peek through briefly. This is auditory art taken from Russell's personal and uncompromising view of the world. It's not always easy listening, but that's a good thing and a big part of its appeal.

>>> Chris Nickson

OUT:

January 18.

FILE UNDER:

Sound sculpture garden.

R.I.Y.L.:

Bill Laswell, Eno, Michael Brook, Scanner.



OASIS ★
 Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants
 Epic

More widescreen pop from England's favorite scar-knuckled rock punters, the Gallagher brothers, here punching up their sound (rather than each other) with an even brighter sheen of multi-layered vocals, acoustic and electric guitars, whip-crack drumming, and tastes of flute and keyboards than on their earlier studio albums. Most of these 10 songs are sonically and lyrically ambitious, chasing the Summer of Love's spirit along a trail of phase shifters, backwards guitars, and mellotrons into songs like "Fucking In the Bushes" (an overture

nicked from Spencer Davis' "I'm A Man"), the tongue-in-cheek hippie paean "Who Feels Love?" and the "Nowhere Man" revision "Sunday Morning Call." "Gas Panic" provides a groovy little side-trip to paranoia, with acid-eater guitar lines that build to Oasis's trademark six-string snarl. Singer Liam Gallagher makes his debut as a lyricist in "Little James," revealing his sweet side in a ballad for his stepson. And he turns in a nicely cutting John Lennon imitation in the finger-pointer "I Can See A Liar." Otherwise, things go pretty much as expected: meticulous production finds a happy medium for big guitars, great vocal melodies, subtle sonic filigrees and enough hooks to spin off a handful of smash singles. In 20 years, this will be the stuff of classic rock radio, if it isn't already.

>>> Ted Drozdowski

OUT:

February 28.

FILE UNDER:

Pop flashbacks.

R.I.Y.L.:

Blur, Radiohead, Beatles.



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reviews



PAPAS FRITAS
Buildings And Grounds

Minty Fresh

OUT:

March 7.

FILE UNDER:

Slightly serious indie pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

The Aluminum Group, Fleetwood Mac,
 The Ladybug Transistor, Cinerama.

Papas Fritas leader Tony Goddess worships at the always-respectable Brian Wilson Altar Of Arranging And Producing. But the songs on the trio's 1997 album *Helioself* were as calorie-free as unbuttered popcorn, and its well-crafted guitar pop suffered from a bad case of the cutes (i.e. goofy distractions like a tapdance solo, a Go-Go's homage, and trivial lyrics about sailors). *Buildings And Grounds*, the Boston trio's third release, has its lightweight moments (the power-popping "What Am I Supposed To Do?" and the bouncy "Questions"), but it also

finds Goddess making a promising move in the direction of melancholy mid-'70s. Prominent keyboards, thickened production, and plaintive melodies lend welcome substance and diversity to the seasoned mix. "Far From An Answer," the album's seductive highpoint, opens with keyboard washes and a light disco rhythm interrupted by a quick two-beat climax. You half expect to hear Boz Scaggs or Christine McVie start singing; instead, it's sweet-voiced drummer Shivika Asthana. And "I Believe In Fate" features Goddess singing as if he were Daryl Hall's little blue-eyed soul brother. Silliness still occasionally overshadows the songs, but *Buildings And Grounds* reflects a new maturity that increases the permanence of its pleasures.

>>> Steve Klinge



PARKER PAUL
Lemon-Lime Room

Jagjaguwar

OUT:

January 25.

FILE UNDER:

Erratic voice-and-piano troubadour.

R.I.Y.L.:

Randy Newman, Damien Jurado,
 John Cale.

The music of pianist-singer Parker Paul (no relation to mustachioed Hi-NRG disco vet Paul Parker) is definitely an acquired taste. As with goose-liver paté or aged whiskey, once you grow accustomed to the powerful impact of initial sensation, the 11 songs of *Lemon-Lime Room* reveal myriad subtleties that invite further exploration. Paul's playing incorporates elements of stride and honky-tonk alongside classical dance and art song forms (a tango anchors "Time, Time, Time"), and his fluid style allows him to navigate angular melodies and theatrical harmonies without sanding away their

distinctive character. Evocative images ("Your throat is unraveled mittens, guttural and feral") distinguish poetic turns of phrase, and a cover of Silver Jews' "Pet Politics" slots in neatly alongside Paul's own wordplay. But what truly illuminates his artistry, especially on emotional set pieces like "We Miss Our Lady" and the morality meditation "Sin, Sin," is his warts-and-all singing, which often creates the impression that he's warbling in a different key than the piano accompaniment. His quieter phrasings recall the vocal intonation of They Might Be Giants' John Flansburgh, and he does go after certain high notes like he's hunting a bug with a flyswatter, but once the ear grows accustomed to such irregularities, Paul's lack of polish only reinforces his apparent sincerity.

>>> Kurt B. Reighley

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NICHOLAS PAYTON

Nick@Night

Verve

OUT:

January 25.

FILE UNDER:

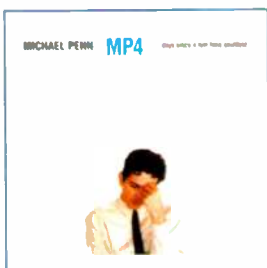
Straight-ahead jazz.

R.I.Y.L.:

Clifford Brown, Freddie Hubbard, King Oliver.

Twenty-six-year-old New Orleans trumpeter Nicholas Payton has a big, fat sound, monstrous articulation, and aggressive energy. He's been music director for Elvin Jones's band and released an album of duets with the late grand old man of the trumpet Doc Cheatham. On *Nick@Night*, his third album as a leader for Verve, he revels in the easy intimacy of his formidable working band (saxophonist Tim Warfield, pianist Anthony Wonsey, bassist Reuben Rogers, and drummer Adonis Rose),

testing them on a program of originals that offer plenty of rhythmic hurdles while echoing the open, modal arrangements of the '60s troika of Miles-Wayne-Herbie. Payton even varies the textures by asking Wonsey to play occasional harpsichord and celeste. The title track blues conjures the strut of Lee Morgan's "The Sidewinder," with Payton digging into fiery repeated figures and Rose bouncing snare patterns off his phrases. "Somnia" has a wandering, Wayne-wise quality, especially with Warfield's tenor sailing over the odd metrics. But most of the set fails to sustain either the mystery or the urgency of these two tunes. In fact, I wish they'd let the tape run on the two short "Interlude" pieces that kick up plenty of dust. Otherwise, it's a pretty album, well-played, but it rarely transcends the familiar. >>> Jon Garelick



MICHAEL PENN

MP4 (Days Since A Lost Time Accident)

57-Epic

OUT:

February

FILE UNDER:

Textbook popcraft.

R.I.Y.L.:

Matthew Sweet, Freedy Johnston, Aimee Mann.

Michael Penn's new CD is like a textbook of pop songwriting: from the crafty chord changes to the verses and choruses that slip and lock into place with the satisfying click of anticipation and resolution reflected in the lyrics. And they're all dressed up in an array of classic pop references. One of those big Springsteen fanfares of piano, electric guitar, and (it sounds like) glockenspiel rings in the opening "Lucky One." The female backing chorus comes in at just the right spot and so does the clever outro, with the jokey, doom-laden "She's

So Heavy" bass-and-guitar. There are moments like that all through *MP4*, and good variety too—the vaguely Celtic piano ballad waltz "Bucket Brigade" with its sunny/sad Brian Wilson harmonies; the mellotron, piano, and brush-on-snare of "Perfect Candidate"; the Beatles-esque bridge on "Beautiful." The lyrics have just the right weight of melancholy cleverness ("First she's going to relocate it to the Southland/ Stake her claim in Silverlake"). So why with all these goodies do I still feel hungry? Maybe it's Penn's thin, efficient singing, or maybe it's all that cleverness. Penn ultimately sounds distanced from his own songs. The hunger for craft is satisfied, but not the hunger for emotional expression. >>> Jon Garelick

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SCRITTI POLITTI

Anomie And Bonhomie

Virgin

You think My Bloody Valentine fans have it tough? Scritti Politti hasn't released an album in 11 years and it's been even longer since their *Cupid & Psyche 85*—one of the supreme pop music masterpieces of the '80's. Miraculously, the Al-Green-eyed-monster tenor of Scritti Politti's only member (and resident French literary theory fan) Green Gartside remains as light and airy as a Communion wafer—despite his new almost-rap-metal look. Also new is a no-keyboards policy, which means that danceable, disposable Wall of Synclavier sound is gone forever. So Green just lets his voice waft in and out of cameos by Me'shell

OUT:

January 25.

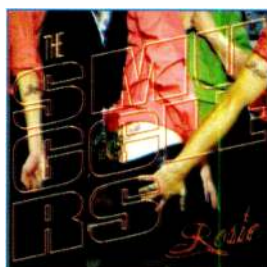
FILE UNDER:

Unprolific metapop.

R.I.Y.L.:

ABC, Me'shell Ndegeocello, Jacques Derrida.

Ndegeocello and Mos Def, surrendering entire chunks of song to them until you're not quite sure whose album this really is. The result is a comeback album with a big, out-of-whack identity crisis, one that sounds an awful lot like Me'shell Ndegeocello when she's on the mic and a Mos Def record when it's his turn. To be fair, though, Gartside's identity hasn't been in whack since he threw off his post-punk-funk chains in 1981. There's always been a hole in his whole and the beauty of this album is how blithely he skips over it with multi-tracked ether, bizarre puns ("Mystic Handyman") and obsessive double negatives ("It doesn't mean nothing"). He's not trying to come to terms with the soul revival or the Rawkus sound—he's merely networking. You're left with the sense that if Eddie Vedder had been available, *Anomie And Bonhomie* might have been a grunge album. >>> Kevin John



THE SMUGGLERS

Rosie

Lookout!

Garage-rockers from Vancouver, the Smugglers are legendary for their stupendous, stupefying live shows, performed in suits tucked into fishing boots and complete with synchronized stage moves and audience participation. The high-octane quintet is loaded with personality and spastic charm, but it has been difficult to capture that energy on record, as the band's prolific catalog reveals. Produced by Kurt Bloch of Seattle's Fastbacks, *Rosie* finally gets it right. It's a raw, loud and loose tribute of sorts to their labelmates on Lookout! Records, with songs about the Donnas and

OUT:

February 1.

FILE UNDER:

Canuck garagistas.

R.I.Y.L.:

The Woggles, The Fleshtones, Narduar the Human Serviette.

by Dr. Frank of the Mr. T Experience. North-of-the-border references abound: a "Booze Can" is a Canadian afterhours, and "Danko Jones' Pants" lauds the snazzy frontman of the great Toronto band Danko Jones. The Smugglers' usual guitar wankery, gang vocals, and goofball lyrics are all here, but they reveal their softer side with a Kinks tune, the jangly "I'll Remember," and a cuddlecore duet with Rose Melberg of the Softies on the title track. Midway through the disc, frontman Grant Lawrence breaks character during a cover of Brownsville Station's "Kings Of The Party" to say "Hope you're all enjoying this Smugglers' record!" On *Rosie*, just like at their gigs, the Smugglers prove that goofiness can be next to godliness. >>> Meredith Ochs



SIN ROPAS

Three Cherries

Perishable

There's an Appalachian dirt-road scent to the rustic, winsome melodies that run through *Three Cherries*, the debut from Chicago's Sin Ropas. But the songs are also encrusted in a thick layer of distinctly urban grit. This is all pretty much in keeping with the pattern frontman Tim Hurley has established for himself in Red Red Meat and Califone. Steel guitar and upright bass shape most of the woozy textures on *Three Cherries*, while Hurley mumbles like someone trying to rouse himself from a drunken slumber. A noisemaker akin to an ancient nickelodeon wheezes in the

OUT:

January 11.

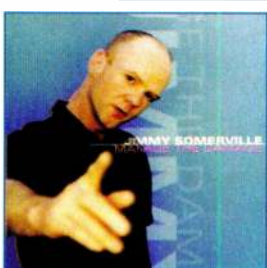
FILE UNDER:

Ambient Appalachia.

R.I.Y.L.:

Tom Waits, Red Red Meat, Califone.

background throughout, conjuring up a surreal parallel universe in the neighborhood of the twisted world Tom Waits created for himself on *Swordfishtrombones*. Hurley's not afraid to crank his amp on occasion, and the band leaves its back porch for "I Found Your Teeth," an off-kilter art school reinterpretation of Augustus Pablo's melodic-driven dub stylings. The result is also in keeping with the outré direction of Red Red Meat's recent releases (as opposed to the more straightforward Stones-y leanings of that band's early recordings), as well as with the twangier tones of Califone. And if the ambient gurgles drone a few seconds too long at the end of most tracks, it's a small price to pay for such an engaging ride. >>> Glen Sarvady



JIMMY SOMERVILLE

Manage The Damage

Instinct

The half-decade Jimmy Somerville has spent away from recording has seen dance music expand into multitudinous varieties. This gives Somerville a wider palette of sounds to work with on *Manage The Damage*, an album that's like listening to an artisan reclaim his craft. Any DJ or dance artist in the '90s who sought to move clubgoers' minds as well as their bodies owed Somerville a debt. After leading two '80s new-wave outfits, the iconoclastic Bronski Beat and the frothy Communards, Somerville applied his gorgeous falsetto to a proudly gay and pointedly activist solo career. His

OUT:

January 18.

FILE UNDER:

Operatic trance-dance.

R.I.Y.L.:

Pet Shop Boys, Moby, Bronski Beat.

intermittent output since has been a mix of trenchant covers and club anthems that has never quite achieved the coherence of, say, the Pet Shop Boys' career. The fine *Damage* at last jells all of his ideals and talents. It's telling that this is his first album to feature no covers. While Somerville's songs still reflect his influences (disco, technopop, opera), he doesn't need others' material, as his songwriting skills, now bolstered by a collaboration with Sally Herbert of Banderas, reach a new peak. Gliding from the howling aria "Here I Am" to the William Orbit-esque "Dark Sky," through the butt-shaking "Someday Soon," Somerville sounds at home in any style, and his voice is so supple that even when he's singing about "something rotting" it sounds tender. >>> Chris Molanphy

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STARFLYER 59

Everybody Makes Mistakes

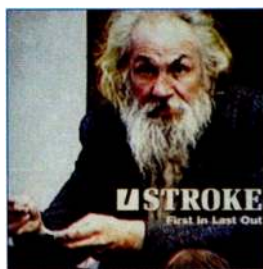
Tooth & Nail

The British shoegazer phenomenon—characterized at its peak by bands like Ride, Slowdive and Lush—may have been a great topic of conversation and/or ridicule in the early '90s, but it didn't result in many lasting careers. Of course, it doesn't necessarily matter how many people remember a particular band when the ones who do are inspired to form bands of their own. California's Jason Martin remembers the shoegazers, and his Starflyer 59 recaptures the soft-focus guitar textures and half-lidded vocalizing of bands like Chapterhouse and Slowdive.

OUT:
January 25.
FILE UNDER:
Shoegazing retreads.
R.I.Y.L.:
Slowdive, Ride, The Ocean Blue.

Having exorcised his My Bloody Valentine poltergeists on earlier recordings, Martin now seems content to craft his delicately gilded pop out of more varied instrumental embellishments: a distantly melancholic guitar line weaves through the tuneful fabric of "No New Kind Of Story"; heavily reverbed piano and synth-strings add grandeur to "20 Dollar Bill." Martin bathes nearly every track in some form of shimmering, instrumental luminescence that brings to mind the painstakingly produced Anglo-pop of a decade ago. The results sound wonderfully nostalgic, but tend to emphasize sonic stylings over songwriting substance. And that's one of the reasons that the shoegazers didn't last.

>>> Colin Helms



STROKE

First In Last Out

XL-Interscope

On their stroboscopic calling card, "I Wish I Had"—singled out on the *End of Days* soundtrack—Brit laptop-pop dude Jason Kelley pulls one of those crime-of-the-century jobs: there he goes, walking away untouched with the bass throb from Lou Reed's "Walk On The Wild Side" and the lyrics sheet to "Every Breath You Take," until now gone unrecognized as two halves of the perfect, placidly po-mo big-beat epic. But after the white light/white heatstroke of VU re-envisioned as populist synth bandits, Kelley and his cohorts end up engaging in the kind of stroking best done in private. It turns out Kelley fancies

OUT:
February 15.
FILE UNDER:
Laptop pop.
R.I.Y.L.:
Underworld, Jesus Jones, Ned's Atomic Dustbin.

himself a visionary—a rock-god singer with one foot on the dance floor and the other on the dark side of the moon—instead of, like all the best producer/musicians, a thief. We're treated to stoned ruminations and trippy/wasted "textural" atmospherics disguised as Floydian transcendence, searching for an Underworldly nirvana but taking way too long to get there, more Journey than journey. The disc culminates in an embarrassing spectacle called "Sob," in which Kelley lurches with passion through a line he would appear to find quite profound—"Everything gets clearer given time"—while the synthesized strings quote Coolio's "Gangsta's Paradise." Brought to you by the Brit label who gave us Prodigy and Basement Jaxx.

>>> Carly Caroli

THE COMP PILE (Our guide to compilation CDs)



TITLE: DJ Greyboy Presents Unda Attack Vol. 2 (P-Jays)	At Home With The Groovebox (Grand Royal)	Jet Society (Eighteenth Street Lounge)	Pop Till You Drop (S'more)	New World Party (Putumayo)	Choice Picks: Celebrating the 10th Annual... (International Bluegrass Music Association)
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CONCEPT: Groove selector extraordinaire DJ Greyboy presents tracks from his skaters-meet-hip-hop record label.	Superstars make tracks with ingenuity and a Groovebox—a compact, programmable synth.	From the liners: "A collection for those who appreciate intoxicating sounds from around the globe." It's world-lounge with a definite pulse.	Southern label brings you two CDs of southern pop bands.	In their words: "Putumayo welcomes 2000 with a forward-looking collection that blends tradition with a hip, cosmopolitan attitude."	IBMA presents 20 award-winning bluegrass songs.
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TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC: You know your boards and your beats. A full-blunted half pipe, anyone?	You're a tech geek with an ear for tunes, and you actually know what a 303, an 808 and a 909 is.	You know the best hotel bars in Paris, Rome and Lisbon, or pretend to.	"Pop" to you means the British Invasion, not Britney Spears.	A three-star hotel in the Bahamas is your idea of exploring the third world.	The title "Dobro player of the year" makes your thighs quiver.
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NAMES TO DROP: Rap Pages magazine's 1998 "new group of the year," Mood.	Beck, Sonic Youth, Air.	You won't know these names. Hell, you won't even be able to pronounce all these names.	Mayflies USA, Superdrag, Superchunk.	Wyclif Jean, Aby N'Dour (sister of Youssou), Miriam Makeba.	Ricky Skaggs, The Lonesome River Band, Vince Gill, Alison Krauss.
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SUMS IT UP: "Hidden Crate Remix" (A.G.).	"3D3+G06=ACID" (Buffalo Daughter).	"La Femme Fin De Siecle" (Louise Vertigo).	"Girls With Glasses" (Kenny Howes).	"Pata Pata 2000" (Miriam Makeba).	The word "lonesome" appears in 25% of the song titles.
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VERDICT: No jazzy, languid Greyboy all stars; this comp shows (bombastically) Greyboy's hip-hop roots.	Purists will whine that these aren't real 303, 808 and 909 synths and the compilation is a marketing gimmick. Kick the purists to the curb and enjoy the spacey grooves.	As long as Eighteenth Street Lounge and its proprietors, Thievery Corporation, are still putting out records, you can put "exciting" and "lounge" in the same sentence.	Pop. How do we love thee? Let S'more count the ways. There's power-pop, psychedelic pop, light, airy pop, mournful, happy...and it's all pretty good.	As consistent as McDonald's but without clearcutting the rainforest: The home to cheesy-but-with-redeeming-moments ethnic comps puts out another.	Skip the big name tracks, and enjoy the pickin'-a-plenty by those who do it just for the love of bluegrass. Look Ma, no inbreeding jokes. D'oh!
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SWEARING AT MOTORISTS

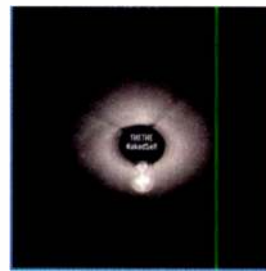
More Songs From The Mellow Struggle
Secretly Canadian

The title of Swearing At Motorists' full-length debut does an uncommonly good job of summing up the sensibility of this Dayton, Ohio-based band. The mellow struggle is the everyman's; it's one of long days, weary people, and car rides across distances demarcated only by the sound of the auto-reverse cassette deck flipping the tape over. Swearing At Motorists dwells in earthly themes—the romance of the road, the journey to the bar—and honors them with folksy, earnest laments. Borrowing heavily from the Built To Spill

OUT:
January 24.
FILE UNDER:
Midwestern melancholy.
R.I.Y.L.:
Built To Spill, Wilco, Gem.

approach to guitar (manage to be as noodly and as plodding as possible at the same time), the band wends its way from gently ambient instrumentals like "You're Still Here" to restlessly catchy melodic numbers (the irresistible "I'll Only Sleep"). Singer/songwriter Dave Doughman's seemingly un-rousable voice is propped up by sometime Guided by Voices extra Don Thrasher's sturdy, rocking rhythm-keeping. All in all, it's a simple rock-pop mix that's surprisingly effective. At its worst, *More Songs From The Mellow Struggle* is, well, too mellow. And a few tracks are overshadowed somewhat by overproduction (a little more "fi" than the songs can support). But at its best, this is a disc that reflects and projects all the purest frustrations and pleasures of Midwestern life.

»» Liz Clayton



THE THE NakedSelf

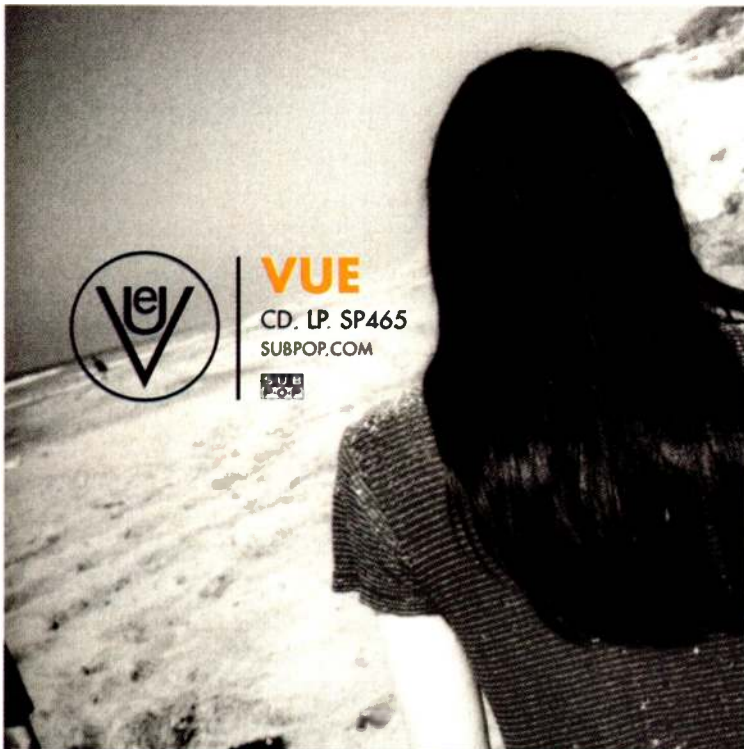
Nothing

Matt Johnson's always had a knack for writing about the interior life without flinching, probing dark thoughts and private lusts with the gusto of a gorehound coroner. But after a 10-year streak of smart The The albums (from 1983's pop wonder *Soul Mining* to the wisely mordant *Dusk*), Johnson hit a wall. His subsequent releases have been remixes and an atrocious Hank Williams tribute. *NakedSelf*, his first for Trent Reznor's label, is a return to form. It's full of tight-lipped lyrics about the ugliness we keep chained in our guts, tempered by the rare warmth of sunlight.

OUT:
February 29.
FILE UNDER:
Mood music.
R.I.Y.L.:
Death In Vegas, Flaming Lips, Depeche Mode, Swans, Angels Of Light.

"BoilingPoint" totals the small indignities and aches that add up to major freak-outs—the kind that turn nebbishes like Bernard Goetz into newsmakers. "VoidyNumbness" rattles the shackles of commuter wage-slavery. "SwineFever" skewers consumer culture brainwashing with its chant of "You don't even want it/ But you're gonna buy it." This darkness yields to "WeatherBelle," Johnson's ode to the fleeting nature of beauty. All the while his sea of sound churns. Electric guitars conjure storms of feedback, foghorns and digital delay grind. The waves of noise part for occasional gusts of acoustic guitar and banjo. And for Johnson's own husky intonations, exhaled with the weariness of a man who's bottled life's elixir and found it too bitter. Or just bitter enough.

»» Ted Drozdowski



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THIRD EYE FOUNDATION Little Lost Soul

Merge

Since splintering from Flying Saucer Attack in 1996, Matt Elliott has used the moniker Third Eye Foundation to record and release some of the eeriest music in recent memory. Ostensibly linked in some way to drum 'n' bass, Elliott's macabre shadings probably have more to offer to the goth crowd. The palpable aggression of Elliott's early FSA releases has continued to recede with each of his outings, and *Little Lost Soul* is actually rather serene in tone, though still unsettling. The drum-machine-programmed-into-overdrive rhythm tracks

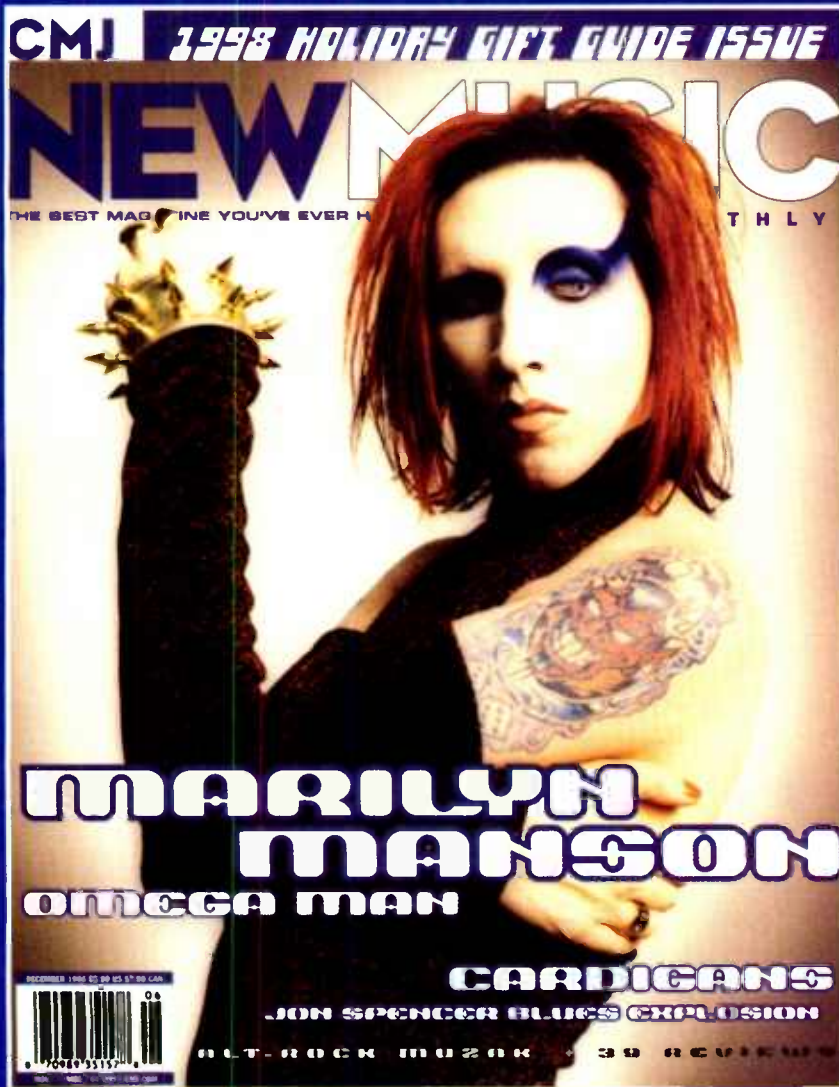
OUT:
February 8.
FILE UNDER:
Drum 'n' ?
R.I.Y.L.:
Squarepusher, Flying Saucer Attack.

are unexceptional. Of more interest are the disc's captivating array of operatic and Eastern-tinged female vocal samples. And, after spending the first half of *Little Lost Soul* mildly pushing the envelope of drum 'n' bass structures, Elliott makes an abrupt break from the genre in "Lost," an 11-minute song featuring gentle Spanish guitar, a mournful female voice, and virtually no percussion. It would fit in nicely at a church recital of 18th-century music, at least until bagpipes and feedback overwhelm the closing minutes. The disc then closes with a beat-free tape loop that segues into an impressive coda invoking a sampled loop of a lost Joy Division tune. Not easily classifiable, but definitely eerie.

»» Glen Savady



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World Radio History



TOSCA
Suzuki

G-Stone-Stud!o K7

The Austrian remixing team of Kruder & Dorfmeister has been a hot-ticket item in the DJ world for years, and they still haven't put out a full-length album of their own—just an EP and a couple of mix CDs. As if to bait their fans further, Richard Dorfmeister has come up with this full-length project in collaboration with Rupert Huber. It's a series of gelatin-smooth downtempo grooves, produced with the attention to detail K&D fans have come to expect. Every repetition of Tosca's simple beats and chords is graced with a new detail: a jazzy stand-up bass, an unusual synth

OUT:
February 15.
FILE UNDER:
Downtempo electronic dance.
R.I.Y.L.:
Kruder & Dorfmeister, Thievery Corporation, Red Snapper.

tone, a little fillip of live percussion or guitar. Human voices hover just outside the periphery of audibility, skimming the surface of the mix for a phoneme or two at a time without quite plunging into it. (The closest Suzuki comes to a lyric is in "Honey," where a half-evaporated voice mumbles "I want my 'oney/I want my dadada" repeatedly, like a Hail Mary, before it trickles off.) The duo's more concerned with suggesting rhythms than with spelling them out—"John Tomes" goes on for almost two minutes of purring atonality before its brushed-snare beat turns up. Still, Suzuki is often sort of dull, especially when its grooves keep rolling along aimlessly after they've made their point and then some. An actual K&D album would go a long way toward making amends, though.

»» Douglas Wolk



TURING MACHINE
A New Machine For Living Jade Tree

A touring machine is any band that spends more than seven months a year on the road. A Turing Machine is a theoretical model that forms the basis of all digital computing. This Turing Machine is closer to the former; they're a band, anyway. Specifically, they're an instrumental trio comprised of Justin Chearno and Scott DeSimon, both of defunct prog-punks Pitchblende, and drummer Gerald Fuchs. Pitchblende were as sloppy as they were loud, but this time out, hammerlock precision reigns. Fuchs is a technical powerhouse, executing elaborate patterns and fills

OUT:
January 18.
FILE UNDER:
Recursion-theory rock.
R.I.Y.L.:
Don Caballero, A Minor Forest, Trans Am.

with as much force (and as little soul) as Don Caballero's Damon Che. Turing Machine are fluent in math rock's established protocol of iterated riffs and how-high-can-you-count time-signatures, and sometimes they even have something to say in it: "4/13/72" is a free-form fragment that could have been recorded on its psych-era title-date, and several tracks include well-placed electronic touches. But others are old data: the main bass figure of "On Form And Growth" sounds as if it's traveled between Midwest avant-rock capitols Chicago and Louisville a few too many times. Still, if you own 50 records that sound exactly like this and you crave a 51st, *A New Machine For Living* is just your stretch of code.

»» Franklin Bruno

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WINTERBRIEF
Complaints From The Beauty Class
Hub City

The one good joke indulged by Winterbrief, a boy-girl duo from Philadelphia-by-way-of-D.C. identified only as Jan and Julian, comes on a song called "I Want To Be Sexy," a fragment of lo-fi Eurotrash in which Jan decries the French monopoly on amorous pronunciation. "It tries to make us non-Francophones believe that our language is somehow sexually inadequate," she chirps. The punchline: she's an all-American girl singing in a British accent over chilly, anemic, Anglophallic drum-machine punk. Armed with sharp, jerky

OUT:
February 29.
FILE UNDER:
The politics of dancing.
R.I.Y.L.:
Bis, Rondelles, Saturnine, Belle & Sebastian.

guitars and a basement full of Casios—like a cross between Huggy Bear and Gang Of Four, or a slightly more frigid version of The Rondelles—Winterbrief frames its dramas of sexual repression and cultural hegemony in the cold, harsh lights of the disco floor. Jan is unsparing in her unsentimental evisceration of simple lives based on static comforts and emotional inertia: the jilted housewife hooked on soap operas and tearjerkers who "wants to feel compassion even if she has to buy it"; the TV casualty who's "too bored to care that I'm being used." But the singer never forgets that these people are all aching to feel, and in the sudden roller-rink abandon of "abDC" and the simple, bouncy sadness of "Chick Flick" you hear not so much the underlying blankness of sexual deep-freeze as the loopy hope of a brief thaw.

»» Carly Caroli

What's left to say about the UK's **DJ SASHA** that hasn't been spewed across these pages already? Plenty, because like all pioneering musicians, the man (born Alexander Coe) continues to develop and hone his craft, taking the art of DJing into territories untouched by the majority of his peers. At one point, it would have been fair to refer to Sasha as simply a trance DJ. His first residencies at such revered UK locales as Shelly's and Renaissance helped to create and popularize the sweeping, symphonic style of dance music that is now embraced by countless jockeys the world over. But a change



has taken place during the three years Sasha has held residency in New York City. The demand placed on him at Manhattan's Twilo, where a six-to-eight-hour set by one DJ isn't unusual, proved to have a liberating effect on his artistic development. The lengthy sets provide him with the freedom to try different styles and energies—atmospheric house, disjointed breakbeat, banging techno, and ambient jungle, as well as euphoric trance—providing his audience with a musical journey that bobs, weaves and changes direction often, rather than traveling one predestined course.

With Sasha today, you must expect the unexpected. His CD offerings have begun to mirror his diverse style, and his latest, *Global Underground: Ibiza* (from UK label Boxed), is documentation of the eclectic energy he brings to the dancefloor. The first disc of the two-volume set is classic Sasha; a poignant progressive house expedition comprised of tracks by **Medway**, **Orbital**, **Space Manoeuvres** and others, driven by ethereal melodies, cosmic sound textures and hypnotic

rhythmic undercurrents. It's on the second of the two CDs where Sasha truly releases the reigns, launching dark breakbeats before making a dizzying ascent into squiggly acid, peak-hour progressive trance, serene ambient house and anthemic techno. Recently released and exclusive standouts from **BT**, **Junkie XL**, **Bedrock** and Sasha himself are meticulously placed in this mix, each baring the DJ's unmistakable stamp, despite the diversity of styles.

Soon after the doors of New York City's Strictly Rhythm opened in 1989, the record label emerged as the imprint for the deep house sound causing a stir in underground clubs across the Apple. The label's earliest singles—**Logic's** "The Warning," **The Underground Solution's** "Luv Dancin,'" and **Aly-U's** "Follow Me," among others—were transformed into classics by a host of now legendary DJ talents, including Tony Humphries, Frankie Knuckles, and Roger Sanchez. As the years progressed, Rhythm expanded its roster to incorporate acid kings like **Photon Inc.** (DJ Pierre) and **Wink**, garage divas like **Barbara Tucker**, and hard house mavens like **Armand Van Helden**. The label became renowned for its soulful, cutting-edge house music across the board and garnered a level of respect among DJs and dance aficionados that remains to this day. Under the guidance of respected New York house maestro "**Little Louie**" Vega, *10 Years Of Strictly Rhythm* (Strictly Rhythm) is a look back at a decade of dancefloor innovation, including many of the singles—old and new—that make the independent imprint such a formidable underground force. From **Ultra Naté's** "Free" to Van Helden's "Witch Doktor" to Wink's "Higher State Of Consciousness" to **Black Magic's** "Freedom," each cut on this 31-track, two-CD release is an uplifting classic in its own right, and Vega's velvet touch on the tables mixes these milestones flawlessly for non-stop body movement—the way they were meant to be heard.



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TAKE IT TO THE BRIDGE

The Bay Area's new generation of beat poets.

STORY: BILLY JAM

"The Bay Area is unlike any other place on the planet," says Blackalicious' Chief Xcel. "Most definitely," enthuses partner in rhyme Gift Of Gab, with whom he recorded the innovative new album, *Nia*. "The spectrum of Bay Area hip-hop is so broad it's impossible to define. You ask one person what Bay Area hip-hop is and they say Invisibl Skratch Piklz. Someone else might say Andre Nickatina or E40 and another might say Hieros or Peanut Butter Wolf or Quannum."

In many ways the Quannum collective (which includes Blackalicious, DJ Shadow, and Latoryx) is a microcosm of Bay Area hip-hop; musically diverse, self-contained, self-supported, artistically (as opposed to commercially) driven and most importantly, independent. "[The Bay] almost forces you to be independent," laughs Xcel.

Domino, of fellow Bay Area hip-hop collective Hieroglyphics, knowingly agrees. "All the big labels are in New York and L.A.," reminds the producer/manager/label boss who witnessed Hieroglyphics acts Del Tha Funkee Homosapien, Souls Of Mischief, Casual, and Extra Prolific get dropped by majors. Domino helped the hip-hop collective set up their own indie label, Hieroglyphics Imperium, and its web site, www.hieroglyphics.com. The label's recent single release by Del, "Phoney Phranchise," may only sell a fraction of the units he did when he was signed to Elektra, but the artist says he's better off. "You know I ain't never seen no royalties from 'Dobalina,'" notes Del, referring to his 1991 major label hit single.

"Being independent gives us more control on both a business and artistic level," notes Souls Of Mischief's Tajai. This includes freedom to collaborate with whom they want, when they want. Del's currently working with Dan The Automator, among others, while the Souls' long list of collaborations include an album project with the Pharcyde and a contribution to the 1999 Quannum record.

If there's any question that this community practices what it preaches, keep in mind that Quannum and Hieroglyphics, along with ABB Records and the Bay Area Hip-Hop Coalition (a collective of radio and club DJs), all share the same downtown Oakland office building.

"Obviously, it's much more of a community here in the Bay," offers DJ Mickey, who runs the Hieroglyphics office, is a member of the BAHHC, and DJs on Berkeley college station KALX. "People grew up here and they tend to stay here, so every time you go out you're bumping into people you know. Naturally that helps foster a creative environment." Zion, of hip-hop trio Zion I, who relocated to the Bay from Atlanta, fully agrees. "People out here come to check your shows at the Justice League or La Pena or the Maritime Hall, and the college radio shows are always down to support. Plus you can walk into [record stores like] Rasputin's or Amoeba and they'll take your indie tape," says the MC, whose new album *Mind Over Matter* (Ground Control) features a slew of Bay Area talent including Planet Asia, Rasco, Eclipse and the Grouch.

Living Legends, the Oakland and Los Angeles underground hip-hop collective that includes the Grouch and Mystik Journeymen, personifies the area's DIY ethic. Stubbornly independent yet internationally renowned, the Mystik Journeymen have proven since the group's formation in 1991 that it's possible to maintain artistic integrity in the dog-eat-dog record industry. When no labels would sign them, they created their own Outhouse Records. When no magazines would give them ink they published their own fanzine, *Unsigned & Hella Broke* and

set up their own web site (www.mystik-journeymen.com). They also organized tours of Japan and Europe, scraping together budget airfares and sleeping on fans' floors.

Back home in the East Bay they put on a slew of underground warehouse parties, including their appropriately titled "Hella Broke" shows where the price of admission was 99 cents and a packet of Top Ramen. The noodles fed them while the money paid off their overdue electric bills. And before record stores would carry their releases they walked up and down shopping areas such as Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley or Haight Street in San Francisco hawking their tapes; a marketing approach known as "dirt hustlin'" applied by numerous others, including the Hobo Junction collective that includes Saafir & The WhoRidas.

One consistent outlet for all of the artists mentioned is college and community radio. "Stations like KPOO, KZSU and KALX [in San Francisco, Stanford, and Berkeley, respectively] have always been down with local hip-hop," said DJ/producer J-Boogie, who hosts KUSF San Francisco's popular "Beatsauce" show. Jeff "Zen" Chang, hip-hop journalist and former DJ at UC Davis station KDVS, sees the Bay's radio network as a key factor. "Very few people buy records without hearing them. Here in the Bay you have 20 or more shows and that means that any given day you can hear the music on the radio and that all feeds back and translates into sales." At Amoeba Music, local indie artists regularly outsell national *Billboard* chart-toppers. At Amoeba's Berkeley branch, Various Blends' new CD, *Levitude* (Baraka Foundation) gets equal product placement with Rakim's *The Master*. A few doors down Telegraph Avenue, the windows of Rasputin's Records are graced with posters of both the Beatles and DJ Qbert.

Turntablism plays a very important role in the Bay Area's thriving hip-hop scene. San Francisco's Bomb Hip-Hop label almost single-handedly kick-started the movement back in 1995 with the release of the premiere *Return Of The DJ* compilation. And a majority of the global movement's top names hail from the Bay Area, including Qbert, Mixmaster Mike, Shortcut and The Invisibl Skratch Piklz, DJ Shadow, Peanut Butter Wolf, Dan The Automator, DJ Design, DJ Disk, and The Space Travelers (Quest, Cue, Eddie Def, Marz). So when Doug Pray, director of *Hype!* (the documentary on Seattle's grunge scene) recently began shooting his latest documentary about turntablists (under the working title *VINYL*), he found himself spending a lot of time in the Bay.

"Bay Area DJs will, without even trying, make up a big part of the film," says Pray, who has filmed and interviewed many of the aforementioned Bay Area DJs. He projects a late-2000 release of the feature-length documentary.

"Maybe there's so many DJs here 'cause the best selection of record stores is here," laughs Peanut Butter Wolf while crate-digging at Amoeba Music in San Francisco. Wolf, a self-described vinyl addict, is a big fan of the 7" single and has released a series of the 45 rpm formats on his highly respected Stones Throw label.

Meanwhile, over in the UK, Blackalicious and the rest of Quannum—ambassadors of Bay Area hip-hop—are busy between magazine interviews and concerts (including a high-profile live show on BBC Radio One), all the while representing the Bay and its indie hip-hop ethic. "Whatever you do, you have to be true to your art," says Gift Of Gab. "Yeah," adds Xcel, in true Bay Area hip-hop spirit, "it really is about controlling your own destiny."

NMM

BAY OF BEATS: 10 RECOMMENDED RELEASES

- Blackalicious** *Nia* (Quannum Projects)
- Del Tha Funkee Homosapien** "Phoney Phranchise" (Hiero Imperium)
- Invisibl Skratch Piklz** *Wash Your Trash* video (Turntable TV)
- Mystik Journeymen** *The Black Sands Ov Eternia* (Outhouse/Revenge)
- Peanut Butter Wolf** *My Vinyl Weighs A Ton* (Studio K7)
- Quannum Spectrum** (Quannum Projects)
- Space Travelers/Z-Trip** "Black Hole" double A-sided 12" (Future Primitive Sound)
- Various Artists** *Strength Magazine Presents Subtext*
- Various Turntablists** *Return Of The DJ* Vols 1, 2 & 3 (BOMB Hip-Hop)
- Zion I** *Mind Over Matter* (Ground Control)



INVISIBL SKRATCH PIKLZ



DEL

1	BECK	Midnite Vultures	Geffen-Interscope
2	CHARLATANS UK	Us And Us Only	MCA
3	ANI DIFRANCO	To The Teeth	Righteous Babe
4	FOO FIGHTERS	There Is Nothing Left To Lose	Roswell-RCA
5	PRIMUS	Antipop	Interscope
6	RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE	The Battle Of Los Angeles	Epic
7	HANDSOME BOY MODELING SCHOOL	So...How's Your Girl?	Tommy Boy
8	DAVID BOWIE	Hours...	Virgin
9	LUNA	The Days Of Our Nights	Jericho-Sire
10	SISTER SONNY	Lovesongs	Jetset
11	RUSTIC OVERTONES	Volume Up (EP)	Arista
12	MAKE-UP	Save Yourself	K
13	HIGH LLAMAS	Snowbug	V2
14	THE CLASH	Live From Here To Eternity	Epic
15	KID LOGO	Presents Jesus Life For Children Under 12 Inches	Atlantic
16	BAUHAUS	Gotham	Metropolis
17	MOGWAI	EP+2	Matador
18	GORKY'S ZYGOTIC MYNCI	Spanish Dance Troupe	Mantra-Beggars Banquet
19	LOW	Christmas	Chair Kickers' Union-Kranky
20	VIOLENT FEMMES	Viva Wisconsin	Beyond
21	MOS DEF	Black On Both Sides	Rawkus
22	BEASTIE BOYS	The Sounds Of Science	Grand Royal-Capitol
23	LE TIGRE	Le Tigre	Mr. Lady
24	DIVINE COMEDY	A Secret History... The Best Of The Divine Comedy	Setanta-Red Ink
25	SAVES THE DAY	Through Being Cool	Equal Vision
26	FOLK IMPLOSION	One Part Lullaby	Interscope
27	DISMEMBERMENT PLAN	Emergency & I	DeSoto
28	ZOOBOMBS	Let It Bomb	Emperor Norton
29	NINE INCH NAILS	The Fragile	Nothing-Interscope
30	INCUBUS	Make Yourself	Immortal-Epic
31	SHEILA NICHOLLS	Brief Strop	Essex Girl-Hollywood
32	JOE STRUMMER AND THE MESCALEROS	Rock Art And The X-Ray Style	Hellcat-Epitaph
33	SUICIDE MACHINES	The Suicide Machines	Hollywood
34	KORN	Issues	Epic
35	ZAP MAMA	A Ma Zone	Luaka Bop
36	VARIOUS ARTISTS	ESL Presents Easy Tempo	Eighteenth Street Lounge
37	MATTHEW SWEET	In Reverse	Volcano
38	SQUAREPUSHER	Selection Sixteen	Nothing-Interscope
39	JIM O'ROURKE	Halfway To A Threeway (EP)	Drag City
40	ALEX GOPHER	You My Baby & I	V2
41	STEREOLAB	Cobra And Phases Group Play Voltage...	Elektra
42	AT THE DRIVE IN	Vaya	Fearless
43	BEN HARPER AND THE INNOCENT CRIMINALS	Burn To Shine	Virgin
44	GET UP KIDS	Something To Write Home About	Vagrant
45	STONE TEMPLE PILOTS	No. 4	Atlantic
46	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Christmas Two	Kindercore
47	SALLY TIMMS	Cowboy Sally's Twilight Laments...	Bloodshot
48	HANG UPS	Second Story	Clean-Restless
49	AQUABATS!	Vs. The Floating Eye Of Death	Goldenvoice-Time Bomb
50	SONIC YOUTH	SYR 4: Goodbye 20th Century	SYR-Smells Like
51	CAUSEY WAY	With Loving And Open Arms	Alternative Tentacles
52	311	Soundsystem	Capricorn
53	GOMEZ	Liquid Skin	Virgin
54	LLAMA FARMERS	Dead Letter Chorus	Beggars Banquet
55	KRUST	Coded Language	Talkin' Loud-Mercury
56	DJ SPOOKY THAT SUBLIMINAL KID	Subliminal Minded The E.P.	Outpost-Bar/None
57	JOHN LINNELL	State Songs	Zoë-Rounder
58	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Everything Is Nice	Matador
59	COUNTING CROWS	This Desert Life	Geffen-Interscope
60	HI-STANDARD	Making The Road	Fat Wreck Chords
61	PAPA M	Live From A Shark Cage	Drag City
62	IDLEWILD	Hope Is Important	Odeon-Capitol
63	RX BANDITS	Halfway Between Here And There	Drive-Thru-MCA
64	RONDELLES	The Fox	Teenbeat
65	SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE	Live	Sub Pop
66	TOM JONES	Reload	Gut
67	DEADBOLT	Voodoo Trucker	Cargo
68	SHIVAREE	I Oughtta Give You A Shot In The Head...	Capitol
69	JAPANCAKES	If I Could See Dallas	Kindercore
70	JUNE OF 44	In The Fishtank	Konkurrent-Touch And Go
71	FOR STARS	Windows For Stars	Future Farmer
72	BRIGHT EYES	Every Day And Every Night EP	Saddle Creek
73	VARIOUS ARTISTS	I Made It Out Of Clay: A Hanukkah...	Little Shirley Beans
74	MAGNETIC FIELDS	69 Love Songs Vols. 1-3	Merge
75	APHRODITE	Aphrodite	V2



#1 BECK
MIDNITE VULTURES
Interscope

FIVE YEARS AGO

1. VERUCA SALT

AMERICAN THIGHS (MINTY FRESH-DGC)

2. LIZ PHAIR

WHIP SMART (MATADOR-ATLANTIC)

3. R.E.M.

MONSTER (WARNER BROS.)

4. JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION

ORANGE (MATADOR)

5. DEAD CAN DANCE

TOWARD THE WITHIN (4AD-WARNER BROS.)

TEN YEARS AGO

1. JESUS AND MARY CHAIN

AUTOMATIC (WARNER BROS.)

2. KATE BUSH

THE SENSUAL WORLD (COLUMBIA)

3. MINISTRY

THE MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING ... (SIRE-WARNER BROS.)

4. IAN MCCULLOCH

CANDLELAND (SIRE-REPRISE)

5. PSYCHEDELIC FURS

BOOK OF DAYS (COLUMBIA)



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. He says "Come here baby and kiss me like you mean it."

TOP 25

- 1 KITTIE
Kittie 3 Song Sampler NG-ARTEMIS
- 2 DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN
Calculating Infinity RELAPSE
- 3 DANZIG
6:66 Satan's Child EVILIVE-E-MAGINE
- 4 CANNIBAL CORPSE
Bloodthirst METAL BLADE
- 5 SLIPKNOT
Slipknot/Exclusive Metal Radio Sampler ROADRUNNER
- 6 KORN
Issues IMMORTAL-EPIC
- 7 ANTHRAX
Return Of The Killer A's (The Best Of) Beyond
- 8 RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE
The Battle Of Los Angeles EPIC
- 9 GRADE
Under The Radar VICTORY
- 10 S.O.D.
"Seasoning The Obese" (CD5) NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
- 11 SODOM
Code Red PAVEMENT
- 12 BANE
It All Comes Down To This EQUAL VISION
- 13 KOVENANT
Animatronic NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
- 14 METALLICA
S&M ELEKTRA-EGG
- 15 PRIMUS
AntiPop INTERSCOPE
- 16 CONTROL DENIED
The Fragile Art Of Existence NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA
- 17 DREAM THEATER
Scenes From A Memory EASTWEST/ELEKTRA-EGG
- 18 SNAPCASE
Designs For Automation 3 Song Sampler VICTORY
- 19 TYPE O NEGATIVE
World Coming Down ROADRUNNER
- 20 AMON AMARTH
The Avenger METAL BLADE
- 21 MISFITS
Famous Monsters ROADRUNNER
- 22 BRUCE DICKINSON
Scream For Me Brazil CMC INTERNATIONAL
- 23 GOOSEFLESH
Chemical Garden DIGITAL DIMENSION
- 24 BOTCH
We Are The Romans HYDRAHEAD
- 25 VARIOUS ARTISTS
The Hard + The Heavy REDLINE-RHINO

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



PICK!

Japan's **S.O.B.** Here, the masterpiece is rounded out by a second CD of gripping synthesizer lines, 70 minutes all told, which revisit its melody while resetting the parameters of your pacemaker. **Swans** and **Melvins**, farewell—a new standard has been set in utter defiance of our pitter-patter ephemeral society.



>>> The introductory piano dance to the latest symphony-length **Corrupted** song lasts 17 minutes, showing the ultimate respect for ringing decay while teasing out melancholic reduction. When the mood strikes, an excruciating stomp of 36 bpm doom noise plants its foot in the mix. Down-tuned beyond belief, **Corrupted** kills with straining neck muscles and religious intensity for 40 more minutes on *Llenandose De Gusanos* (HG). Brutal piano stabs return during the epic finale to join feedback and one mighty pounding drum. The hitter, **Corrupted** founder Chu, was the original drummer of Japan's **Boredoms**, the one who defected carrying an obsession with the desolate semiotics of Mexican brutality tabloids à la *Alarma!* Apparently, sections of *Llenandose* have been performed live on a few occasions, including a memorial show for Totsuan, the departed singer of

>>> It's fair to criticize German metal for being overly schnitzel-stuffed. But with *Accept Metal Or Die: A Tribute To Accept*, the shrewd minds at the Nuclear Blast label have issued a challenging wake-up call to the musicians of the Rhineland. Never mind that the **Scorpions** were the feelgood metal daddies who put Deutschland on the map; the oddly tense **Accept** is what sticks to the ribs. **Sinner** kicks off the compilation with a powerful version of "Balls To The Wall," as admirable an example of finely tooled German craftsmanship as the original. Ten songs later, the groove is still kicking true to form, thanks to **Grave Digger**, **Sodom**, and **Hammerfall** with **Udo Dirkschneider**. The production and mastering go far beyond expectation, proving that tributes can be more than mere marketing... **Swordmaster** has a new release and a new lease on life, courtesy of *Moribund Transgoria* (Osmose Productions). The Swedish band offers '80s thrash clichés without the fun irony of **Cranium**, which turns out to mean a post-**Emperor**, post-**Testament** smash that isn't as evil as it thinks it is... The latest **Napalm Death** side project, **Lock Up**, answers many questions as to the true identity of **Brujeria**. *Pleasures Pave Sewers* (Nuclear Blast) unveils a Jesse Pintado and Shane Embury riff surplus running near to 100, supplemented by the unexpected power of former **Cradle Of Filth** drummer Nick Barker and **Hypocrisy** vocalist Peter Tagtgren. Power meets power in this chunky recording, a study in slippery practice room guitar revelations.

NEWS



CELTIC FROST

Noise USA is embarking on a campaign of reissued albums by the influential '80s Swiss cult metal combo **Celtic Frost**, perhaps after noticing their records' \$35 price tags on eBay. Bypassing the egregious glam metal slip-up *Cold Lake*, all Frost titles will soon be available with lyrics and new photos, including *Morbid Tales* (with *Emperor's Return* EP in tow), *To Mega Therion*, *Into the Pandemonium* (and its **Wall Of Voodoo** cover), *Vanity/Nemesis* (the group's single major label outing on RCA), and *Parched With Thirst Am I And Dying* (a 'best of'). The reissues will coincide with debut efforts by Celtic Frost leader Tom Warrior's digitally savvy new group, **Apollyon Sun**.

>>> "That new **Jim O'Rourke** EP, *Halfway To A Threeway* is the sickest thing Drag City's released in forever—have you heard it?"



"Yes, I have, and what are you *talking* about? It's so pretty! He's gone from being Mr. Experimental Tapework Guy to writing these lilting, complicated pop songs that just sweep along forever, with gorgeous 1972 orchestrations. And he can sing, too!"

"Right, but are you listening to what he's singing? It took me about eight plays to notice the

words to "Fuzzy Sun": "A cigarette to brand a baby's arm/ A bit of ash in his face keeps him warm." Plus, "The Workplace" is all about how men and women look good in each other's clothes, and I'm pretty sure that what he's crooning about in "Halfway To A Threeway" itself is seducing somebody who's in a coma."

"I see what you're saying. And he's got that super-precise fingerpicking, and **Archer Prewitt** and **Sam Prekop** singing along with him, to keep it sounding like Nick Drake or Steely Dan or something. Diabolical."

"I'm actually thinking that the cute little stuffed frog on the cover is O'Rourke's way of saying this is his tribute to **The Frogs**—it's his refinement of their pretty music/completely twisted lyrics routine."

"Oh, c'mon. He's been using stuffed animals for a while. And besides, the back cover is a picture of a cute little stuffed beaver!"

"..."

"Oh."



>>> God bless **Rocket From The Crypt** for baiting the vinyl collectors who love the band for its steady stream of singles (they've collected recent ones on *All Systems Go 2*). "If The Bird Could Fly," their new 12" on Flapping Jet, has its label attached to the sleeve itself, so you have to destroy the package to play the record. Once you've ruined its future eBay value, you get five of the most

rambunctious rockers the band has done in a while. The winner is "Waste It," a sideways tribute to Black Flag's "Wasted" with RFTC's horn section blasting in full Vegas glory. Meanwhile, "Who Let The Snakes In??" starts out as their most new-wave moment ever, Toni Basil-style handclaps and all, before it erupts into their habitual barrage of distortion, whoa-oh-oh choruses and gold lamé.

>>> For a man who wears a giant clock around his neck, **Flavor Flav** has certainly taken long enough to get his solo act together,



and you'd be forgiven for wondering what he has to say in 2000. Surprise: his debut solo single, "Git On Down" (Mystic), is exactly the kind of chaotic fun that's been missing from the last couple of **Public Enemy** albums. Flav's got another where-has-he-been case, **Son Of Bazerk**, playing the **Chuck D** role, but check the a cappella version to get a sense of exactly how much is

happening on the mic—a crowd of Flavours breaking into snorts and giggles, chanting the hook, demanding that the track be stopped, and generally upstaging Bazerk wherever he can. The bonus song, "The Hot 1," is almost as goofy, especially in a remix with **Beverly Johnson** singing a come-on that appears to have nothing to do with the rest of the track's beat, key or mood.

>>> "I will find you, Lord, in the calcified love of three good women/ You are familiar with these terms, I trust?" Daniel Béjar, a.k.a. **Destroyer**, is not your average lyricist. Last year, he released a singular solo album, *City Of Daughters*, and though he's picked up a band along the way, "The Temple" (Endearing) is clearly the work of one very bright, very weird mind. Béjar's songs proceed haltingly from one unlikely phrase and chord to another, and he sings like a scholar blinking his eyes in the sunlight outside a library, but his erudite staggerings resolve themselves into memorable glam-rock cadences. The flip side, "Loves Of A Gnostic," is a full-band reworking of a song from the album, with Béjar chanting "Nothing does a body good like another body," seemingly unsure of whether he believes it or not.

A FEW QUICK DROPS OF THE NEEDLE



The Artist Who Used To Have An Actual Name also used to sneak eccentric funk jams onto his B-sides. Now he saves them for bloated triple-CDs, it appears, but "The Greatest Romance Ever Sold" (NPG-Arista) has three curious remixes: an awkward R&B recasting with **Q-Tip**, another featuring the Ruff Ryders' **Eve**, and **Jason Nevins'** utterly groovy disco-fication of the song, which comes out sped-up, dramatic and lush enough to have lit up the floor of Studio 54 back in the day... The renowned dance label Mo Wax has made its first foray into rock with **South's** single "Run On Time." Why? God knows: The band is essentially a third-generation **Oasis** clone with a little more of a **Led Zepplin** fixation (the A-side lifts a few changes from "Stairway To Heaven"). There are impressionable young baggy-pants kids who are going to grow up thinking this is what guitar music is about... For rock as it is rawked, though, feast your ears on the split 7" by **The Tight Bros From Way Back When** and **The Champs** (Ace Fu). The Tight Bros are ex-members of **Karp** whose singer has a metal voice of the "my head's about to explode" species; anybody who writes a song called "Fire" had better have the chutzpah to back it up, and they do. **The Champs'** "Summer Nights" is crudely recorded, but it's got knights-in-KISS's-service guitar tone and a beat that lets everybody flop their manes forward together. Two fingers up, specifically index and pinky.



SEE HEAR

Plenty of Timothy Leary disciples swear they've tasted colors or listened to objects speak, but what about seeing sounds? This conundrum is what drives Jeremy Boyle to create aural sculptures. "What is sound? Can you see it as opposed to just hearing it?" considers Joan Of Arc's multi-instrumentalist. In his quest for the answer, the University of Illinois studio arts major creates soundscapes. Literally. In Boyle's sculpture "Water," sub-audible sounds from a submerged speaker cause ripples and quakes in a shimmering pool of blue liquid. In "Autumn Landscape," a recorded thunderstorm threatens a small diorama as reverberations rattle the leaves and grass. His interests led him to create homemade instruments like experimental keyboards and a theremin-like device crafted out of a toy remote control, which supply some of the more interesting textures on Joan Of Arc's albums and Boyle's solo release, *Songs From The Guitar Solos* (Southern). "It's like being given a new instrument you've never heard before," Boyle says of his creations. "I have no foreknowledge of what types of sounds I'm going to end up with." He wasn't always as electronically savvy, though. His first electronic sculpture, a homemade lamp, short-circuited when its plug met the outlet, blackening the wall and the artist's hand. Remembers Boyle, "I didn't know what to tell my mom!" —Steve Gdula

THE FASHION OF O

PHOTOS
CHAPMAN
BAEHLER

STYLING:
ALEXANDRA
KEELING

GROOMING:
RONNA
LOREN

Los Angeles-based four-piece **Supreme Beings Of Leisure** is America's answer to Stereolab: all the crisp drum programming, sweet female vocals, rock edginess and simple melodicism dipped in a lush, dripping layer of capitalist excess. The members of SBL—Geri Soriano-Lightwood, Ramin Sakurai, Kiran Shahani and Rick Torres—first came together by chance while each recording separately at the same studio. One suggested they submit a song for the latest Bond flick. The band missed the deadline, but ended up with a moody self-titled debut, a come-down disc of chill organic beats laced with Streisand-meets-Bassey vocal phrasings and a real string section. So don't dance—join the leisure class and look sophisticated.



A-LA-CART: Geri keeps things downright upright in a vintage '60s black crop jacket (American Rag, 323-935-3154).



PAINT THE CLUBHOUSE BLACK: Geri goes Jackie O in a fitted '60s-style bodice and suit with contrasting-color buttons. Matching purse and pillbox hat by Lura Starr (323-933-4704).

THE PRINCESS AND THE TEA: Ramin and Rick scope out the green in Dita sunglasses and Costume National suits (all available from H. Lorenzo, 310-659-1432) while Geri gets swinging in a powder blue sheath crop jacket and Sonia Rykiel studded pink ankle-strap pumps (Diavolina, 323-936-3000).



OUT OF SECRET SERVICE. Geri loses her a cool book-depository-style in a vintage Asian gold lamé jacket (American Rag).





JUDY BERLIN

(The Shooting Gallery)

Set in a sleepy Long Island town, this bittersweet romantic comedy follows several alienated suburbanites over the course of one afternoon during a solar

eclipse. (To make things more eerie, the movie was shot in black and white.) Everyone seems to be running away from something or falling in love. In the title role, Edie Falco (you love her in *The Sopranos*) is a ditzzy dreamer with Hollywood aspirations. Aside from a few commercials for local furniture stores, her acting training consists of portraying a milkmaid—complete with period costume—in an historical village. With a nod toward the work of Woody Allen and Hal Hartley, this assured second feature from writer-director Eric Mendelsohn is delightfully engrossing. Despite the obvious influences, Mendelsohn creates a work most definitely his own. **—J.E.**



THE LIFESTYLE: GROUP SEX IN THE SUBURBS

(Seventh Art Releasing)

OK, we're all adults now, mature enough to view films that have the words "Group Sex" in the title. This funny yet

touching (if you will) documentary explores the phenomenon of suburban group sex parties hosted by friendly middle-class, middle-aged couples. "Swingin' is not really making love," opines one 73-year-old male participant. "It's sport fuckin'." Yes, sir! Filmmaker David Schisgall gets candid comments from nearly a dozen participants, who even allow cameras inside their homes for a party. Surreal moments abound as couples casually fondle one another and discuss, say, propane grills. By the way, if you're expecting a porn-ucopia of nudity, you may be disappointed—this tastefully-filmed piece is about as sexy as watching your grandparents do it. **—J.E.**



MIFUNE

(Sony Pictures Classics)

The day after Kresten (Anders W. Berthelsen) marries the daughter of his wealthy boss, Claire (Sofie Grabol), he receives the news that his estranged

father has died. Forced to leave his new bride, the young Copenhagen professional must revisit the sugar beet farm where he was raised and take care of the retarded brother he left behind long ago. *Mifune*, Denmark's entry to the 2000 Oscars, was the third picture made using back-to-basics Dogme restrictions, following *The Celebration* and *The Idiots*. Kresten hires a lovely young woman named Liva who, unbeknownst to him, is a prostitute on the run. "We three are a bunch of loonies," declares Kresten, and he's right. The movie's title comes from Japanese actor Toshiro Mifune, who Kresten mimics in an attempt to connect with his childlike brother. This tale of a makeshift family of outcasts is quite tender and cinematically brilliant, if a bit predictable. **—Jon Popick**



SHAOLIN SWORDS AND SCORES: TOGETHER, JIM JARMUSCH AND RZA FIND THE WAY OF THE SAMURAI.

When Jim Jarmusch sits down to write a screenplay, he collects the notes and assorted scraps of paper he has accumulated through the months. Then comes music. At this stage, it's integral to his creative process.

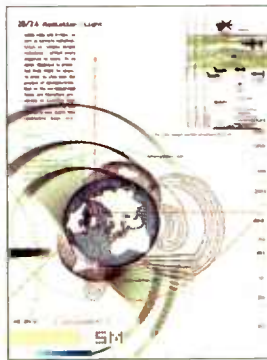
"The music helps get my imagination in the groove," says Jarmusch, the acclaimed director of *Stranger Than Paradise*, *Down By Law* and *Mystery Train*. "If the particular music I select doesn't work, I try something else." While in the early stages of his latest effort, the sly crime drama *Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai* (Artisan Entertainment), Jarmusch listened to instrumental hip-hop by several artists, including RZA, founding father of Wu-Tang Clan.

"My dream was to get RZA to do something," he says. "And it happened." Indeed, the instrumental grooves RZA composed for the movie add another dimension to Jarmusch's offbeat milieu. A separate, Wu-Tang heavy soundtrack is available on Epic Records.

Forest Whitaker plays *Samurai's* title character, a self-styled hitman who follows the ancient codes of the samurai while working for the mob. This clash of cultures—Eastern philosophy, Mafiosi and hip-hop—makes for several funny scenes, including one in which a mobster discusses his affinity for Flavor Flav. At first glance, Jarmusch and RZA seem like an odd pair of collaborators.

"Although we come from very different places, from the first time we met, we had a strong sense of each other," he says of RZA, who studies Eastern philosophies—a topic of great interest to Jarmusch. Jarmusch, meanwhile, has been a hip-hop fan since he first heard Kurtis Blow and Afrika Bambaataa. Music lover Jarmusch's films have featured musicians John Lurie, Tom Waits, Iggy Pop, Joe Strummer and Screamin' Jay Hawkins on screen and on the soundtrack. Has he ever tried his hand at playing tunes? Well, he admits to being something of a failed musician.

"When I was in a band in the late '70s and early '80s, it was a non-musicianship kind of thing. The beauty of that whole period was that you didn't have to be a virtuoso to express yourself," says Jarmusch, who won't divulge the name of the group he played in. "That inspired me as a filmmaker. It made me realize that I don't have to go make big, glossy movies in Hollywood. I can express myself just shooting on the street." **—John Elsasser**



GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

It may look like a prop from the set of *Battlestar Galactica*, but *Space Manual* (\$29.99, Die Gestalten Verlag) boasts many salient tips for traveling through the stratosphere, including hints on posture, eating out of vacuum sealed pouches and maintaining one's psychological well-being. Okay, you shouldn't hijack the Space Shuttle with this as your sole reference guide, but if you have a space age bachelor pad, you might as well have *Space Manual* on hand.

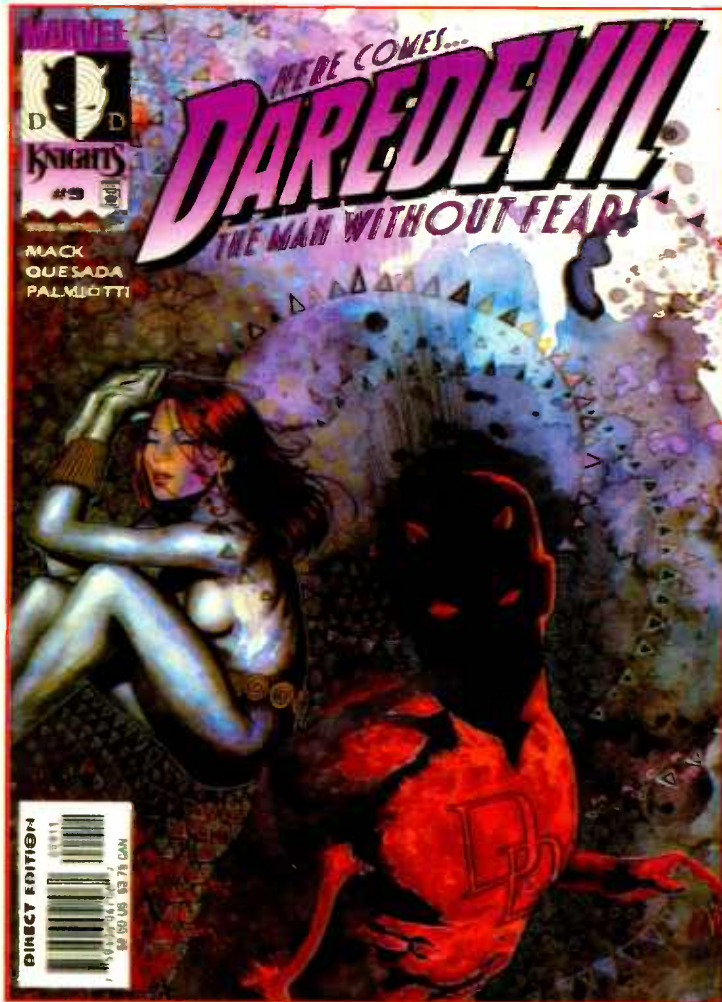
SPACE CASE

When Nick Wood started his label SYN, he wanted distinctive packaging to match the sounds on the discs. The dewy vocals, ethereal keyboard swells and simmering beats of Wood's album *Sound Virus* come wrapped in a smooth, donut-shaped piece of sculpted plastic that looks like more like a petri dish from Pluto than a CD box. Known as the Torus case, these babies are only sold with a CD and are available (for about \$40) from SYN at info@synpro.co.jp.



HOLD ON TO YOUR HEMP

Some prefer to explore outer space (as well as the space between their ears) from the comfort of their homes with a little help from that most earthly of plants. For those people, there is Computer Expressions' new Hemp CD Wallet (\$15, www.CompExpress.com), which holds those platters that get you high—and look! You can put yer weed in it.



EXACT AND INEXACT SCIENCE

Jim Ottaviani has been writing comics about famous scientists for a while (track down his *Two-Fisted Science* if you can). His new book, **Dignifying Science** (G.T. Labs), is a collection of stories about great



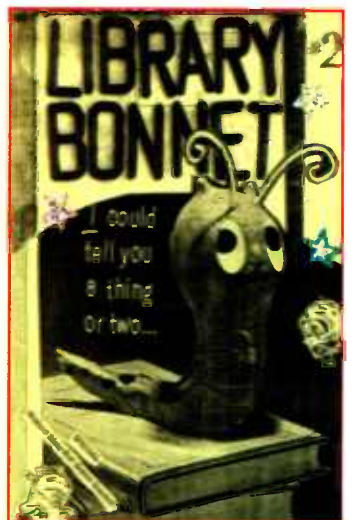
women in science—some well-known (like Barbara McClintock, whose studies of genetics in corn won her a Nobel Prize in 1983), some less so (like Birute Galdikas, who's been studying orangutans in the wild since 1971). All are drawn by women comics artists, including underground favorites Mary Fleener and Roberta Gregory and veterans Ramona Fradon and Marie Severin. A piece about actress Hedy Lamarr's lesser-known second career as an inventor is pretty surprising (she came up with one of the patents

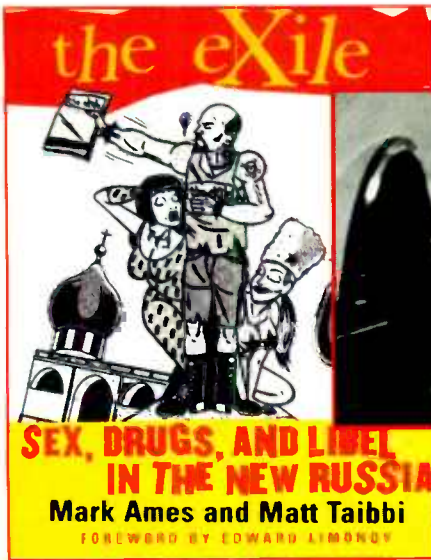
that led to wireless communication), but the best part of *Dignifying Science* is its centerpiece: a long, carefully researched biography of Rosalind Franklin, one of the prime movers behind the discovery of DNA's structure. Presented from a series of eyewitnesses' viewpoints, the story's artists change along with its point of view, and the result is an unsparing but fond portrait of a fascinating character.

Good zines don't have to be about anything in particular; they just have to be interesting. **Universal Citizen** (\$3.00 from P.O. Box 23151, Alexandria, VA 22304) is devoted to "literary non-fiction," and it's basically just a series of chatty, well-written essays by the editors and their friends, about whatever they like. In the case of Vol. 2, issue 2, that means an article about olives and olive paste, an endorsement of *Crime And Punishment* that includes a guide to interpreting the characters' long names, a description of how to make soap from scratch, and several pieces about the art of throwing away lots of things, one written by a woman who lost everything in a fire two weeks before she wrote it. The only thing that looks like it might be fiction is "Immaculate," part of a serial about an 11-year-old's crush on her teacher that leads to the two of them going out on a church revival tour—but a lot of the details that would ground it in reality are missing.

Library Bonnet (\$2.00 from 1315-I.N. Tustin Ave., #259, Orange, CA 92867) is another what-the-hell zine, and it sometimes reads like *Universal Citizen* with an attention disorder. It's got lots of fidgety energy and its pages are jammed with pasted-in visuals, but nothing lasts very long, and some pieces dissolve after only a few sentences. The writing is mostly stylish and funny, though, even when it's flying off-topic: a review of a Shirley Jackson book abruptly ends, "Now I'm all out of sorts and stewing in my office like a rump roast in an oily hate marinade." The editors allude to obsessive-compulsive disorders a lot—the best piece in issue No. 2 (which features an ongoing gag about naked mole rats) is an article on the importance of labeling every piece of food you eat with its name. Sunflower seeds, for instance: "It is acceptable to etch S. Seed onto each seed hull with a needle. Don't leave out the period."

Dogma director Kevin Smith's run as writer of **Daredevil** (Marvel) raised the series' profile, but it was marred by painful lags between issues. His successor is a welcome surprise: David Mack, best known for his experimental, sometimes nearly abstract independent series *Kabuki*. Mack's masterstroke is deciding that the conceptual focus of *Daredevil* is sensory perception, specifically how people who have lost a sense (like the series' blind protagonist) understand the world. When the story is told from Daredevil's perspective, the comic's visuals are fragmentary and chaotic, riddled with sound effects; sections from his deaf counterpart's point of view are overlaid with images in the style of a preschooler's drawings in place of noises. Drawn by Joe Quesada, an occasional *Kabuki* collaborator, it's adventurous storytelling, beautifully executed.





RUSSIAN ROULETTE: THE EXILE'S GONZO JOURNALISM TAKES SHOTS AT THE EASTERN BEAR'S POLITBURO, PATHETIC MAFIA AND PINHEAD EXPATRIATES.

"Psychologically, I could handle post-nuclear America better than the one we have now, which is probably why I'm in Russia," says Matt Taibbi, co-founder of *The Exile*, a hilariously malicious English-language tabloid published in Moscow. His partner Mark Ames is even more vehement: "I'll go back to America when the last tattoo is stripped from the flesh of the last Tower Records cashier—preferably stripped by means of an electric turkey meat carver."

Ames and Taibbi have a very low bullshit threshold, and they specialize in running exposés of what's really going on in Russia's economy, politics and media, the way the rest of the world ends up with a wildly distorted view of it, and how this has enabled a few people to take the entire country to the cleaners. Their new book, *The Exile: Sex, Drugs, and Libel In The New Russia* (Grove/Atlantic), includes some of the paper's reporting, along with details on its infamous hoaxes—like attempting to hire Mikhail Gorbachev as an assistant coach for the New York Jets, or publishing a fake issue of the *Moscow Times*, complete with a help-wanted ad for a Russian edition of *Juggs* and an op-ed piece excerpting the Unabomber's manifesto.

For the most part, though, the book is a rambling personal history of the paper: the story of how two American expatriates who despise pretty much everyone created the nastiest, funniest paper in Russia, offending every person, group and organization capable of taking offense, from the expat community to the Russian mob, and hoovering up mountains of drugs in the process.

They're still publishing *The Exile* biweekly (it can be seen online at www.exile.ru), and they're expanding into other ventures. Like music. In 1998, during the Russian economic crisis, Taibbi and Ames responded by writing a song called "Give Them Crack," to the tune of "Do They Know It's Christmas?" and recording it under the name Bandit-Aid with notorious expatriates and Russian pop stars. Taibbi explains: "It was a song calling for Russians to band together and send charity donations of crack to people in Washington to help dull the pain of their empty lives." (Hear it at www.exile.ru:8101/song/banditaid.html.)

Nowadays, the paper is continuing to run regular features like "Death Porn" (Russian serial killers classified into categories including "hunger-related murder" and "cries for help ignored") and a series of trading cards exposing all the dirt on the country's bigger political figures. Is there anything they actually regret having published? "Since nothing has got me killed," Ames says, "the answer would have to be 'no.'" —**Douglas Wolk**

BRIGHT MOMENTS: THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF RAHSAAN ROLAND KIRK

By John Kruth (Welcome Rain Publishers)

There are many "Bright Moments" in this long-overdue biography, which resounds with the recollections of Kirk's family members, bandmates and friends. They offer testimony to the late saxophonist's perseverance as well as his brilliance, and illuminate intriguingly concepts like the late '60s Jazz And People's Movement (Kirk's organized attempt to get jazz on television). Kruth's psycho-musical analysis contextualizes Kirk amongst the psychedelic rockers (Hendrix, Zappa) with whom he played. Strangely, though, he provides no similar comparisons in the jazz world. In fact, there's little objective examination on that end at all. Kruth employs a haphazard cut-and-paste approach that obscures the book's chronology and thematic development. Accordingly, *Bright Moments* is not so much a biographical document as a memorial collage; a hearty Rahsaanian stew. —**Nate Chinen**



A HEARTBREAKING WORK OF STAGGERING GENIUS

By Dave Eggers (Simon & Schuster)

For Eggers, erstwhile editor of pop culture skewer *Might* magazine and publisher of the more scholarly quarterly *McSweeney's*, glib, detached, irony has been a constant. So when it comes to sentiment—relating the true story of his parents' nearly synchronous deaths to cancer, caring for his younger brother, and his rise to quasi fame as a creator of the critically lauded/ill-fated *Might*—his ironic predisposition gets in the way. The self-effacingly self-aggrandizing title notwithstanding, Eggers airs most of his trademark pithy remarks in the near 40 pages of "acknowledgements." From there he details how he, a middle-class kid from an upper-crust Chicago suburb, moves to Berkeley and looks after his younger brother, Toph. He tells how he sought to make their existence "constantly entertaining, like some amazing, endless telethon" with hardwood floor sock-sliding contests, Frisbee tosses on the beach and laissez-faire housekeeping. Turns out the Toph account is more engaging than the tale of *Might*, and Eggers' parenthetical winks can, at times, make the memoir a choppy read. Eggers' voice, however, remains one of the more entertaining of his generation. —**Brian Howard**



CRUISE O MATIC: AUTOMOBILE ADVERTISING OF THE 1950S

By Yasutoshi Ikuta (Chronicle Books)

If you believe 1950s Madison Avenue, the perfect American family has a house, two kids, and two American-made cars. *Cruise O Matic* compiles a wide range of Eisenhower-era automobile ads in one neat portfolio. Unlike today's spots, these ad spreads aren't dominated by glam shots or finance figures.

The clean layouts are driven by Rockwell-inspired illustrations and copy that emphasizes the American auto's importance in social status. While this book doesn't have much to read (sample taglines: "Meet the Jeepster", "Shiftless...and very proud of it!"), the wonderful images remind one of a much simpler, albeit more homogenized time. —**Neil Gladstone**





L: QUAKE 3; R: UNREAL TOURNAMENT

QUAKE III ARENA

(Activision) PC/Mac

UNREAL TOURNAMENT

(GT Interactive) PC/Mac

Fans of *Quake*, *Quake II* and *Unreal* have spent countless hours creating free downloadable add-ons that dramatically increased each title's shelf life. "Quake Rally," for instance, turned *Quake*, a traditional first-person shooter, into a multiplayer racing game, while "Unreal CTF (Capture The Flag)" extended that game's basic multiplayer feature—deathmatching—into a true team sport.

These unofficial releases have been a godsend to developers, who offer their own editing tools to the online community in return. As long as the game's creators release patches on a regular basis to correct basic structural elements, users will continue to pump out new modes and levels. It was only a matter of time before major game developers would start to cash in on this synergistic relationship and release games that focus on the multiplayer experience, such as *Quake III Arena* and *Unreal Tournament*.

Resolute fans of either franchise will cordon off areas of their hard drive specifically for one or the other, regardless of what each final product features or which title promises the highest fun or value factor. But those new to either product line will have a more difficult decision. Straight out of the box, *UT* offers more game modes (including the fantastic "Assault" mode, where members of your team storm a fortress gate or attempt to break into a moving train's engine car) and more playable maps. For those who would love to join in on the fun but don't have Internet access, *UT* also offers seemingly human bots (computer-controlled opponents and teammates), all of which seem to know their goals and the methods to achieve them. That becomes increasingly important when playing games like Capture The Flag.

While *UT* seems to be the more refined game, one must never forget the massive contingent of *Quake* fans determined to make whatever wasn't initially offered in *Quake III* available for download at your favorite gaming site.

Technologically, both games will give your hardware a real workout. *UT* includes a separate disc containing over 500 MB of high-res textures to make your monitor smile (and your video card cringe), while *Quake III* offers the latest state-of-the-art gaming engine, capable of scaling the visuals higher and higher as computer technology improves and hardware drops in price. The deciding factors are how technically savvy you are, what kind of Internet connection you have, and how often you want to scan the gaming sites for new goodies. **»»»A.C.**

NBA LIVE 2000

(EA Sports) PSX/N64/PC

Playing the latest edition of *NBA Live 2000* is like rushing downstairs on Christmas morning hoping to see the shiny new, red bike you've been asking for only to find out it's green. It's certainly the model you wanted, it just doesn't look as good. *NBA Live* is haunted by his Airness Michael Jordan, whom you can battle in a playground pick-up game (along with dozens of stars



from the '50s through the '90s) in one of the game's many new features. Other "look and feel" improvements include better, more TV-like camera angles, and players who give each other knuckle-taps and handshakes before tip off. Once you get going, the game's intricate and challenging features become apparent—player skills are more accurate and the computer is a stubborn competitor. *NBA Live* suffers only aesthetically. The cartoonish and jerky motion of the players might be alleviated by more frames-per-second. That may seem nitpicky, but at this point in the game's evolution, small details make all the difference. **»»»Glen Sansone**

SEGA RALLY 2

(SEGA) Dreamcast

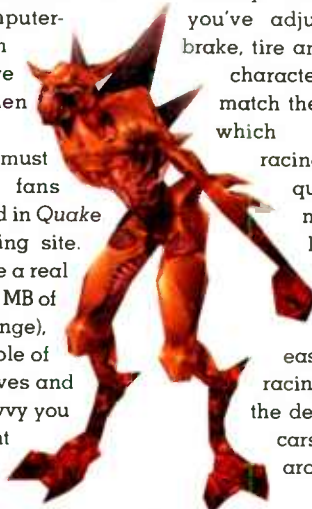
Any racing title that includes models of Italy's Lancia among its automotive offerings is already ahead of the pack. *Sega Rally 2* has a lot of other things going for it as well—namely the almost infinite combinations of tracks, weather conditions and locales. Unfortunately, this is where things go just a little wrong. Learning to control the automobiles in *Sega Rally 2* will quickly become an exercise in futility, even when you've adjusted the brake, tire and engine characteristics to match the track on which you're



racin. You can get used to it, but the cars never quite handle like in real life. *Gran Turismo* may have only featured a few circuit tracks, but the game sold like hotcakes because offered a lot of cars, and each one of them felt different. I really wanted to like *Sega Rally 2*, and it would've been easy. With a feature set rivaling all other racing titles (not to mention those Lancias), all the developers would've had to do is make the cars handle a little less like they were sliding around in soup. **»»»A.C.**



QUAKE CHARACTER HUNTER



QUAKE CHARACTER KLESK

>>> by douglas wolk <<<

LIAR, LIAR, PANTS ON FIRE: FUN WITH CYBER HOAXES

Everyone's got one: a friend or family member or (more often) a distant acquaintance who jams your e-mail inbox with messages that demand they be forwarded to everybody you know. Sometimes they claim that Microsoft is tracing the message and will send money to everybody who forwards it; sometimes they claim that Nina Totenberg just announced Congress' imminent destruction of NPR; sometimes they just want to warn you about cyanide on ATM envelopes. They're all hoaxes, of course, and they do nothing but waste everybody's time.

Now, instead of trying to persuade Aunt Eunice that the post office won't be selling e-mail stamps anytime soon, you can just refer her to **Stiller Research's comprehensive hoax list** (www.stiller.com/hoaxa.htm). It's got the text of everything that you've ever seen with 17 ">"s in front of it, along with indisputable reasons why it's not true. The most common one, naturally, is that e-mail chain letters are never a good idea, but even if that doesn't get through, you can comfort yourself with the knowledge that a message with the subject line "How To Give A Cat A Colonic" won't really erase your hard drive.

Back in the '80s, a generation of computer users were weaned on "interactive fiction"—the text-only games manufactured by the late, lamented Infocom, including the classic Zork series. There's an interactive fiction community that's still writing its own adventures in a style that will be familiar to any Infocom fan. (And the engine that drives them these days is small enough that it runs on a Palm Pilot!) They have occasional game-writing competitions, like the recently concluded one at www.textfire.com. The winner, "Winter Wonderland," plays entertainingly with conventions of lost-in-the-woods fairy tales, but the most striking entrant is Dan Schmidt's second-place "For A Change" (available through his own Web page, www.dfan.org/IF). Inspired by Ben Marcus's book *The Age Of Wire And String*, it demands its players to pay careful attention to the language they're reading and writing, where words and their meanings are just a bit different from the ordinary. Schmidt's page also features a small, hilarious game called "The Professee," written for a contest whose competitors had one hour to write a game set on top of the Eiffel Tower and involving a bathroom, an onion and Nostradamus.

If, after all of that, you want something a bit more grounded in reality, you can't get much more grounded than the **Encyclopædia Britannica** Web site, finally up at www.britannica.com (after a false start, when it was deluged by so many prospective users that its server collapsed). The site offers news analysis, e-mail newsletters and lots of ponderous, chin-stroking articles, but its real meat is the entire text of Britannica, complete with hyperlinks wherever relevant, as well as the occasional bit of multimedia enhancement. It's exactly the sort of reference tool that the Web promised from the beginning, much more

reliable than a search engine, and it's free. The links from every piece to all its cousins can be slightly too entrancing, though: a sample lookup of 19th century chef Georges-Auguste Escoffier produced more than an hour's worth of auxiliary information about the soprano after whom he named peach Melba, French restaurant and hotel development, the principles of classic sauce preparation, and world culinary history.

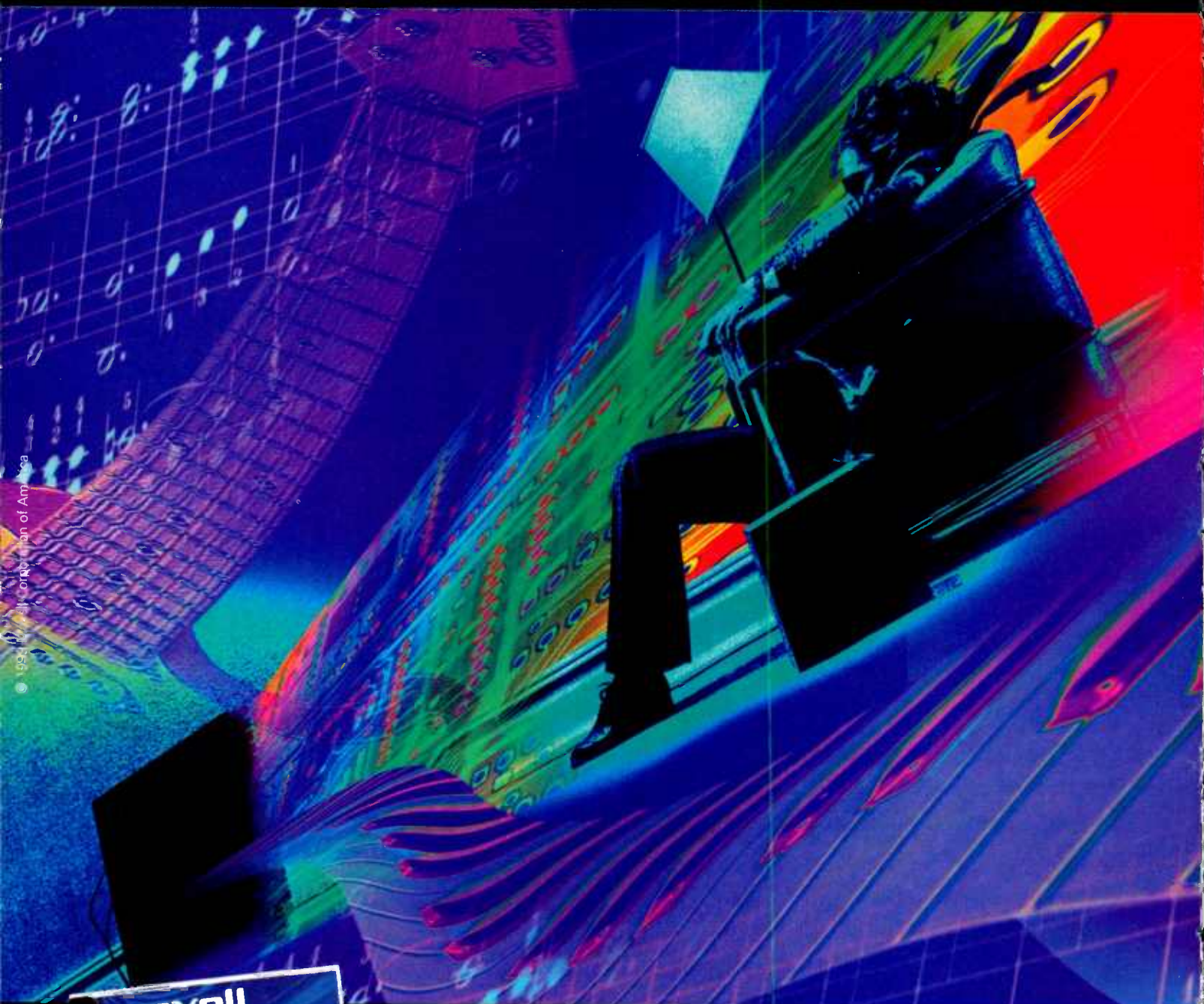
Perhaps, after all this, you want something that will, conversely, tear you away from your computer for a little while. Look no further than the **Death Clock**, www.deathclock.com. Enter your birth date and sex, select whether you want it to be "normal," "pessimistic" or "sadistic," and its Javascript will pop up a little window telling you exactly how many seconds you have left to live. Counting down. There are links to some other mortality-related novelties on the site, but it will very quickly give you the sense that you have something more important to do. Like enjoying the sunshine. While you still can.



Barbie, peppers, and a basset hound...some of the images you'll find on britannica.com

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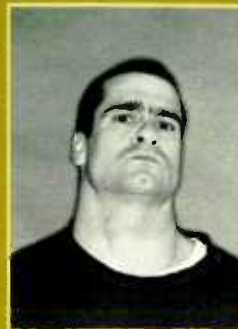
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NEKO CASE

- 15 "I got the second album jitters and became very doubtful as to whether or not I had developed enough material up to my standards," says Canadian singer and pianist **CHANTAL KREVIJAZUK** of *Colour Moving And Still* (Columbia). "While I was in this little depression, Jay [Joyce, producer] was just sort of schlepping around on the guitar, and I heard something. I asked him to play it again...and I wrote a melody and lyrics for this simple little feel-good tune about how love can change our outlook on life." That "feel-good tune" became "Before You."
- 16 "**ECTOMORPH** have come to destroy your power centers," says the Detroit act's "main conduit," Brendan M. Gillen. "The inequities of this system must be leveled. The power balance in your universe is wrong. We have come to right your many millennia of corrupt behavior. Our robots will destroy your way of life." If that doesn't frighten you, "**The Haunting (Adult Remix)**" (from the Intuit-Solar album *Comin From The D Installation #3: Ghetotech* remix compilation) will. It's inspired by Robert Wise's classic expressionistic horror film of the same name.
- 17 "Some of the things we sing about are considered taboo, but they're part of our culture, they happen," says **SLOWRUSH**'s guitarist and singer, Rob Daiker, about songs like "Junkie" from their major label debut, *Volume* (Epic). "Art is about real life, and if you can't show what's really happening in life, then what's the point?" Daiker's musical tastes aren't all wrapped up in seriousness though. He admits, "When I was in high school, it was the era of the hair bands—the Bon Jovis and the Ratts—so that was part of my time and I took some of that with me."
- 18 Fans of low-key Athens, Georgia instrumental septet **JAPANCAKES** probably wouldn't expect a lot of strip club references on the band's record. Sure, "Pole Dance" is obvious, but it turns out even the album title *If I Could See Dallas* (Kindercore) refers to bandleader Eric Berg's strip club history. "My old girlfriend used to bartend at a strip club, and there was a dancer there named Dallas," explains Berg. After opining one day that Dallas's boyfriend was rather sleazy, Berg had an epiphany: "The only thing that made me different from him was that he was seeing Dallas and I was just dating the bartender." (See review, p. 60, February '00 issue.)
- 19 **SIN ROPAS**'s *Three Cherries* (Perishable) brings together members of Red Red Meat, Califone, and the Chicago Underground crew for a lilting, gritty tour through some of rock's more desolate caverns. On "Daddy's Lamp," lyricist/singer Tim Hurley explores one aspect of his day job working for a Chicago landlord. "A lot of times, people leave all their stuff when they move, and it's my job to deal with it. This one guy, a yachtsman, left three or four different places full of the flotsam and jetsam of his life. A bag of rifles, old photographs, huge lamps. It's like you've come upon a shipwreck. That's what this is about." (See review, p. 54.)
- 20 **NEKO CASE** may not have picked up her seasoned country twang hanging around the Emily Carr College Of Art & Design in Vancouver, BC. But she must have found some heartbreak there to fuel tracks like "Twist The Knife," from her second album, *Furnace Room Lullaby* (Bloodshot). The US-born singer was recently shipped back to Tacoma, Washington when her student visa expired. "Canada is a very nurturing place if you're a musician, and people are less competitive," she says. "I can't wait to get back there on tour." (See On The Verge, p. 19.)

- 1 "The song "Illumination" is a lyric I've been writing for years," explains Henry Rollins, whose **ROLLINS BAND** has a new lineup and a new record, *Get Some Go Again* (DreamWorks). "I've been trying to sum up the experience of seeing a lot of things, good and bad, and traveling to remote corners of the world—the upside and downside of what that does. You could be sitting at home and wondering what's around the corner, and it might be the girl and it might be the tiger. So you have to go for it and find out—sometimes you come home with a great story, and sometimes you come home and you're missing an arm." (See feature story, p. 38.)
- 2 With lyrical inspiration ranging from Jeff Spicoli in *Fast Times At Ridgemont High* to "cars, motorcycles, vans and choppers," it's clear that **FU MANCHU** isn't looking to be perceived as an intellectual band. "I may be going out on a limb here," says drummer Brant Björk, "but the point of the band is to lay back and have a good time. It's not rocket science." The band's newest release, *King Of The Road* (Mammoth)—and the first with a new lineup—features "Over The Edge." (See review, p. 46.)
- 3 Fans of **OASIS**'s signature catchy pop tunes won't be disappointed by the band's fourth LP, *Standing On The Shoulder Of Giants* (Epic), featuring "Go Let It Out." And for those who only tune in for the band's nearly fratricidal interpretation of brotherly love: Don't touch that dial. "As long as he shows up for rehearsals and isn't drunk, I'll stay out of it," says Oasis songwriter Noel Gallagher of his pesky kid brother Liam's attitude. "But if it starts affecting work, then I'll get pissed and we'll have a royal brawl." (See Quick Fix, p. 10.)
- 4 "Mark wanted this record to be something—and then some. He was constantly pushing toward what he thought of as the new **MORPHINE** sound," says drummer Billy Conway of the band's singer and two-string bass player, Mark Sandman, who suffered a fatal heart attack on stage in Italy last summer. DreamWorks has just released the band's final album, *The Night*, which features "A Good Woman Is Hard To Find" and was recorded and produced by the late Sandman over the course of two years in his home studio. Contributors include founding drummer Jerome Dupree and John Medeski of Medeski, Martin And Wood, among others. (See Best New Music, p.19, February '00 issue.)



ROLLINS BAND



MORPHINE

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WOOD



UNBAND



THE CLASH

10 **THE UNBAND's** Matt Pierce fondly remembers the night that sealed the act's deal withTVT Records. "We were playing (New York venue) Ariene Grocery," he says. "I fell over drunk and knocked over my amp. Then Mikey lit his bass on fire and ran out the door with his wireless. The sound guy kicked us off the stage after three songs, and TVT said, 'Wow, that was great.'" The group approximates its inimitable live raunch-rock assault on its debut, *Retarder* (TVT), which features "Geez Louise." (See Quick Fix, p. 13.)

11 "We used to be called 'The Gift of Love,'" remembers Leicester, England's James Maddock—songwriter, singer and guitarist for **WOOD**. "We were talking one night about music and I said, 'On all the records I really love, like Dylan and The Band, you can picture the room they're playing in and you can hear the wood. And it suddenly hit me. Wood! That was the name I wanted for my band.'" "Stay You" (which is featured on the *Dawson's Creek* soundtrack) is from their debut full length, *Songs From Stamford Hill* (Columbia).

12 "Just how many more times can someone go to the '70s record collection and find the next bassline and filter it?" asks **GROOVE ARMADA's** Andy Cato. "It just becomes incredibly tedious," he told an Australian web magazine recently. Along with musical partner Tom Findlay, Cato makes jazzy-influenced breakbeats that challenge the stale house and Euro-influenced trance scenes to get funky. "I See You Baby" appears here remixed by Fatboy Slim—and Groove Armada promised to play the Funk Soul Brother's wedding reception in return. (See review, p. 47.)

13 When **THE CLASH's** Joe Strummer remembers the London street scene of the mid-'70s, he thinks of "Labor troubles, governments falling over, union problems and stuff," he told NPR recently. "Everyone had that feeling that chaos was in the air—and that's certainly what sparked off the UK punk scene." Amid Clash members' new projects, the band's five original studio LPs are now available reissued, restored and remastered on Epic Records. The classic anthem "London Calling" is found on the 1979 platinum album of the same name. (See Flashback, p. 77, February '03 issue.)

14 Quebec's **JULIE DOIRON** played bass in Eric's Trip before she was filed under Broken Girl. And when she decided it was time to put the Girl to rest, she contacted old friends **THE WOODEN STARS** (she contributed to their record, *The Moon*), and *Julie Daron & The Wooden Stars* (Tree) was born. The singer told *Exclaim!* Magazine recently, "I wanted to start a real band, and not just be Julie Daron. Collaborate on writing songs, and have it be a really heavy cool band. That was my goal." For the result, check out "Dance Music." (See Best New Music, p. 21.)

5 Five years ago, Afro-Brazilian singer **VIRGINIA RODRIGUES** was working as a manicurist and singing at weddings. These days, with help from caetano Veloso (who heard her sing with a theater group in her native Salvador de Bahia) she's left the nail salon behind to make her blend of gospel, samba and jazz a full-time endeavor. She told the *Los Angeles Times*, "When I go on stage, I feel that I become another person. You have to leave yourself and be with the gods. When I sing, I feel as if I am singing with the gods." Her second full length album, *Nós* (Rykodisc-Palm Pictures) features "Afrekêti." (See Best New Music, p. 22.)

6 "One thing I would hope that people would get from this song," says **AMEL LARRIEUX** of "I n I" from her solo debut *Infinite Possibilities* (Epic), "is that being individual and being yourself is fine. It's what God gave you and no one can take that away from you, and as soon as you try to live up to a standard, then you're doing an injustice to yourself and your creator. You are yourself for a reason, and someone telling you something different is just not cool." Larrieux previously lent her jazz/soul/R&B/hip-hop influenced voice to both Groove Theory and Sweetback. (See On The Verge, p. 18.)

7 "I am a very good boy because of our music," Jean-Benoît Dunckel, half of France's electronic ambient pop duo **AIR** told *Details* magazine recently. "If it wasn't for Air, I would be having dirty sex with dirty girls." To further distance themselves from that questionable fate, Dunckel and partner Nicolas Godin have just produced the score to director Sofia Coppola's film debut, *The Virgin Suicides* (Astraworks). The first track, "Playground Love," (the only non-instrumental) features former Red Kross drummer (and Air touring drummer) Brian Reitzel. (See review, p. 42.)

8 **DJ SHORTEE** gets high-concept on her ambitious debut *The Dreamer* (Bomb Hip-Hop), a sci-fi beats adventure. "It's a concept album about a girl who goes into a dream research center," she explains. "They hook her up to all these electrodes and find out that her brain waves are actually sound waves, and if they don't record them right now, her dreams will be lost forever." "Sound Wars" is a dream sequence in which the character—Shortee—uses the power of sound to fight evil. (See Quick Fix, p. 12.)

9 "As a band, we were feeling a bit different about the music we were listening to and what makes rock music exciting—what makes us want to listen to a record a second time," says Dave Bielancko, who sings in Philadelphia's **MARAH**. The band represents the hometown scene, calling their second longplayer *Kids In Philly* (E-Squared-Artemis) and penning songs like "Point Breeze," named after a South Philly neighborhood. Surprisingly though, their Philly rock roots weren't what inspired the music on *Kids*. "I was infatuated with Jackie Wilson and R&B stuff I hadn't ever really listened to at home before. It wasn't really my shit, so to speak, but it sort of pulled us in that direction." (See Best New Music, p. 21.)



VIRGINIA RODRIGUES



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KEY: Artist (label) /where covered/ Web site

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source.astralwerks.com/air

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<input type="checkbox"/> Jun '96	Everything But The Girl	<input type="checkbox"/> Dec '98	Marilyn Manson
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COMIN' ALIVE WHEN IT'S AFTER FIVE

Donuts, beer, Geddy Lee—no true Torontonian can live without them. But with a population surpassing the four million mark (ranking the fourth-largest North American city) and a cosmopolitan ethnic cross section comparable to that of New York or London, Toronto has much more to offer the cultural tourist than a box full of crullers, a six-pack of Molsons and *Kids In The Hall*...

LOCAL HEROES

Being the polite little Canadians we are, Torontonians have always spared a dime and lent an ear to the lonesome folkie, be it **Neil Young**



and **Gordon Lightfoot** in the '60s or the late-'80s roots rock explosion spearheaded by the **Cowboy Junkies**, **Blue Rodeo** and the pre-*90210* **Barenaked Ladies**. That legacy lives on—heartbreaking tunesmith **Howie Beck**, debonair pop fop **John Southworth** and major label bidding war survivor **Hayden** adhere to the somber troubadour tradition, while honky punk renegades (and Bloodshot Records signees) the **Sadies** carry the torch for Toronto twang—but the Toronto music community of today is defined only by its multiplicity.

If we must crown a king of the scene, the only man for the job is **Danko Jones**, whose smooth stage struttin' and Viagra-loaded raunch-rock boogie have made many an ass shake. Naturally, Jones digs Toronto's multicultural makeup because it means "you get every kind of beautiful girl, from all over the world—that's what keeps me here." Though his latest EP, *My Love Is Bold* (Sonic Unyon), has been picked up by local mainstream rock radio, Jones's roots stem from a deeply purist Toronto garage punk scene that rejects anyone without a six-inch pompadour. **The Deadly Snakes** (who released their '99 debut on Sympathy For The Record Industry) and the **Killer Elite** are the current toasts of the hookers 'n' hot rods set.

On a more soothing note, Toronto's burgeoning psych-rock scene boasts dreamy trance-popsters **Mean Red Spiders**, effects pedal junkies **South Pacific** (signed to New York imprint Turnbuckle) and drone-dubbers **Do Make Say Think**, who are what Tortoise would sound like if they were more in touch with their inner Pink Floyd.

The power-pop community is fortified by veterans **By Divine Right**, Halifax ex-pats **Sloan** and upstarts **Hershel Savage & The American Flag**, who, after years of stalking Guided By Voices kingpin Robert Pollard, had their '98 debut released on Pollard's Rockathon label. On the hip-hop tip, production wizards **Da Grassroots** lay down the beats for star local MCs like **Thrust** and **Ghetto Concept**.

CLUBS

With its glaring neon palm tree sign, **El Mocambo** (464 Spadina Ave., 968-2001) proudly announces its landmark status. Perfect for, as Danko Jones says, "the intimate big rock experience," the El Mo has been immortalized on live albums by the Stones and Elvis Costello, and today the two-story club is a thriving trash-punk paradise, bringing in indie oddballs from around the world (from Royal Trux to Japanese psychos Guitar Wolf) and hosting the ridiculously popular Blow Up, a weekly Saturday night Britpop soiree. Situated on the northern fringe of the downtown core, **Lee's Palace** (529 Bloor W., 532-1598) has been booking college radio perennials like Luna and Cibo Matto for 15 years. **The Horseshoe Tavern** (370 Queen W., 598-4753) has been a Toronto mainstay since the 1940s, with a spacious back room that hosts everyone from indie-pop heroes like Apples In Stereo to rockabilly legends like Dick Dale. A few doors down at the elegantly cozy **Rivoli** (332 Queen W., 596-1908), you'll find local singer/songwriters and avant-rock experimentalists; a similar sonic menu is served at **Ted's Wrecking Yard** (549 College, 928-5012) and **Clinton's** (693 Bloor W., 535-9541). **The Comfort Zone** (480 Spadina Ave., 975-0909) is building a rep as Toronto's premier venue for underground hip-hop, though be warned: you're just as likely to find hacky-sackin' Phish tribute bands there. **Roxy Blu** (12 Brant, 504-3222) is a wildly successful addition to Toronto's labyrinthine dance club scene, welcoming the Movement DJ collective's jam-packed monthly hip-hop/funk beat-downs.

ROCK 'N' SHOP

All it takes to blow your entire college fund in this city is a quick stroll past the record shops of Queen Street West. Starting in the west end, **Neurotica** (642 Queen W., 603-7796) is a treasure-trove of cheap vinyl, from classic rock and punk to obscure soundtracks. On the same block is Toronto's indie rock institution, **Rotate This** (620 Queen W., 504-8447), whose know-it-all staff has been deriding customers' questionable taste for over a decade. Beyond the requisite Matador/Touch and Go offerings, Rotate features an extensive selection of hip-hop and dub platters. **Record Peddler** (619 Queen W., 504-4041) is a prime source for UK imports, while a few blocks east at McCaul is **Penguin Music** (2 McCaul, 597-1687), whose selection rivals that of Rotate's, and whose used CD bins frequently yield gold. **Driftwood Music** (247 Queen W., 598-0368) and **Kop's & Vortex Collectibles** (229 Queen W., 598-8523) also have longstanding reps for choice used vinyl and CDs, though neither tops Vortex's uptown store (2309 Yonge, 483-7437) for turnover. Also off the beaten Queen West path is **Soundscapes** (572 College, 537-9612), a new arrival on the popular College Street restaurant strip whose immaculate, art gallery-style décor houses a select but well-chosen array of indie rock, roots, classic psychedelia and exotic pop.

For trainspotters, there's **Eastern Bloc** (224 Adelaide W., 593-4355), a white-label drum 'n' bass nirvana run by the local Vinyl Syndicate DJ crew; **Traxx** (427 Yonge, 977-4888) and **Play De Record** (357A Yonge, 586-0380), who serve up funk and hip-hop; **Metropolis Records** (162A Spadina, 364-0230), which caters to experimental techno heads; and **Full Blast** (605 Bloor W., 530-0512), a garage-rock mecca that is, appropriately, the size of a garage.

If you'd rather read than rock, pop into **Pages** (256 Queen W., 598-1447), an indie bookstore that's held its own against corporate chains for over 20 years. And no Toronto culture vulture's life is complete without a trip to **Suspect Video** (605 Markham, 588-6674 and 619 Queen W., 504-7135), where you can pick up the latest issue of *Bust*, Yellow Submarine action figures and the collected works of both John Woo and John Holmes in one stop. It sure beats an evening of donuts, beer and Rush.

All phone numbers are in the 416 area code.

When Stuart Berman isn't serving hacky-sackers the critical beatdown, he's a contributor to *The Eye*.



Jack Wagner

STORY: JEANANN PANNASCH ILLUSTRATION: NICHOLAS MEOLA



"I remember the night he serenaded Felicia with his heartfelt ballad 'All I Need.' Oh, the devotion...the longing looks...this was Love 101."

way the sweat made his skin shine. I was on my feet for the entire show, adding my screams to the rest of the hormonally high teenaged girls. This was emotional, from-the-heart rock 'n' roll, and I snapped away with my Keystone camera, nabbing a picture of the drummer looking right at me. Maybe if the venue's revolving merry-go-round stage had better timing, it would have been Jack.

When I went to my locker the following day at school, I found a note from a classmate, Andrea Desalvatore. She wrote that she had seen me at concert, snapping photos in the front row. I must have been "in heaven," she said—and she wanted to borrow my negatives. No way! I refused to relinquish my prized negatives to Andrea "I Don't Even Know You" Desalvatore. She had never talked to me before, and suddenly, my intimacy with Jack made me worth knowing.

Perhaps too soon, I forsook Frisco for the likes of Poison and Cinderella, throwing out my tape of "All I Need." He was out of my life and I wouldn't want anyone to know we had been together as I entered the next phase of my youth. Later, when I heard that Jack Wagner was getting together with Heather Locklear on *Melrose Place*, I thought fondly of our time together. Ah, Jack, he's always had a thing for blondes. He's happily married to Felicia (Kristina Wagner) in real life, too, and I'm OK with it. I know what we had.

Some older sisters get their siblings hooked on smoking or drugs. Mine got me addicted to *General Hospital*. My habit started innocently enough when Sis moved back into the family house while she was pregnant. My mom and I not only enabled her soap-a-holic ways, it wasn't long before we were both jonesin' for a fix as well. Each day at 3:15, I'd run in from school and grab some couch between my round sister and my mom. At 13, all I needed was a ride to nightly cheerleading practice, ample wax for the braces that grated my lip, and a seat in front of the TV for my favorite after school special, *GH*.

Frisco, played by Jack Wagner, was a short-tempered, immature and oh-so hot. He was the rock star on the show, desperately in love with a chirpy blond girlie-girl named Felicia. The sight of his '80s mullet profile bobbing as they kissed thrilled me. Most of all, I remember the night he serenaded Felicia with his heartfelt ballad "All I Need." Oh, the devotion...the longing looks...this was Love 101. I imagined myself in her place.

Of course, I was in no way close to any real action of my own. At the victory parties following the football games I cheered for, I was never asked to step into the dark, back room, from which grinning teammates emerged after visiting second base. No kisses, no feeling up, no nothing. But with Jack Wagner, I knew love. Jack brought drama and romance into my life.

By the time "All I Need" went from daytime TV anthem to heavy rotation on the radio (reaching #2 on the *Billboard* charts), I was a rabid fan. I bought the album on cassette and repeatedly sang "All I Need" behind my closed bedroom door, fueled by optimistic notions of love. The rest of the record's songs were hooky and melodic, their lyrics bubble gum sweet and Air-Supply-sappy: "No stars are out tonight/ But we're shining our own light...and it's never felt so right/ 'Cause babe the way I'm feelin'/ It's easy to believe/ That you're all I need."

By the time his concert tour came to Long Island's Westbury Music Fair, I was ready to leap into Jack's open arms. About that time, I learned the usefulness of the phrase "knowing someone in the business," even if that someone was just my older cousin Lorraine, who worked in the ticket booth. She scored me a set of tickets. Mint! I was in the front row!

I had a bad perm, definitely wore something fluorescent, and was convinced that Jack would fall for me, even though I wasn't a blonde like Felicia. Frisco and Jack Wagner, of course, were one man in my eyes: one sensitive, expressive man who looked so awesome in acid-washed gray jeans and a sleeveless black T-shirt. Oh, the

Jeanann "All I need is a cup of coffee" Pannasch is managing editor at Ms. magazine.

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