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"DAMN CROSSWINDS," THOUGHT JOEY, TRYING TO LIGHT HIS KAMEL.

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"That it ultimately stands as a huge achievement and a record that could well appeal to the masses is not only testament to their tenacity, but near-confirmation of their regular claim to being the most important band of the decade." — Q

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HERE: Donnas
photographed by
Jay Blakesburg
ON THE COVER:
Chemical Brothers
captured by Dennis
Kleiman

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ON THE COVER CHEMICAL BROTHERS: BROTHERS ON ANOTHER PLANET 40

"Surrender wasn't as easy to put together as it sounds. It was the most torturous thing we've done," Ed Simons told Editor-At-Large Kurt B. Reighley. Hey, we never said it sounded easy—assembling a third studio disc that surpasses previous accomplishments such as "Block Rockin' Beats" and "Setting Sun," and that includes cameos from Bernard Sumner (New Order/Electronic), Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval, and Bobby Gillespie of Primal Scream. Actually, it sounds like a real pain in the ass.

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"That's what a lot of our songs are about: You better make the most of life because you have truckloads of fate coming your way and you never know when it's going to hit you." Losing a key member to suicide has only made Pennywise more committed to staying the course. David Simutis finds out how the Cali punk band keeps moving, to echo its fifth album, *Straight Ahead*.

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"Pavement is always going to be coming from indie-rock. We're part of the Built To Spill/Sebadoh/Sonic Youth indie pedigree. Nobody's going to drop us in with Marilyn Manson and Smashing Pumpkins, or with ska or swing." Matt Ashare helps consummate indie-rocker Stephen Malkmus define his place in the music world, and sheds light on Pavement's fab new album, *Terror Twilight*.

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"We don't really consider ourselves just a band. The band is obviously the biggest part of it, because it's making the money and it's what people latch on to in the first place, but we're still interested in what we've always been interested in, and that's everything." Everything, as Managing Editor Lydia Vanderloo learns, includes making films, paintings, and fanzines; DJing, and evading interviewers' questions. Welcome to the quirky psych pop of London's Beta Band.

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"Anybody who thinks we can't write, well, I don't get it. Because if they really knew us, they'd know we've been writing songs since we were 14." Donnas A., C., F., and R. gab with Tom Lanham about the crucial elements in their young lives: sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll! These themes pervade their third platter of Kiss-inspired retro-rock, *Get Skintight*—the first featuring mostly Donnas-penned tunes.

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Haiku you

I've just written a little haiku for all you fine people at CMJ New Music Monthly:

I love CMJ
I always get mine for free
Wife works at a newsstand

Heavy stuff. Keep up the fine job.

-Paul Richardson

Ft. Collins, CO

*Extra syllable
In your last line, freeloader
Taken from mine?
—Ed.*

The smell of the greasepaint

I have a few ideas for your next mag. It would be totally awesome if you did a cover story on Insane Clown Posse, maybe a few posters, a song on your next CD, and do a personality page on Shaggy 2 Dope and J. I'm sure a lot of people (especially me) will be buying this issue.

-Elizabeth Spitzer

*Insane Clown Posse
Eagles diving in the wind
Pecking out my eyes
—Ed.*

A case of the Bens

Let me apologize in advance to all those Ben Folds Five fans who can't get enough of their "funky stuff." Wow, are they bad. What I find shocking is that Ben Folds Five was offered an album deal in the first place. Someone should offer them a one way ticket to Wesuckville, USA. Listening to lead singer Ben Folds voice is like listening to a classmate's public speech in grade seven when you never knew when the kid's voice was going to crack, but you damn well knew it was going to happen sometime. Ben should do us all (at least me) a favor and fold himself and his playmates into a suitcase and pack it in. No, I'm not bitter, just slightly irritated.

-Greg Raikes

Montreal, Quebec

Irritated man

*The squeaking of Ben Folds' voice
No Kool And The Gang
—Ed.*

Five style

Thanks for being one of the only music magazines that pays attention to the brilliant Ben Folds Five. They are without question one of the most original and talented bands I have ever heard. My only question is, how on earth did you manage to spell Darren Jessee's name wrong throughout the entire article? I think you owe the poor guy an apology! Anyway, keep up the good work featuring real music by talented artists.

-Jill Kent

thekents@sprint.ca

Carly Simon song

*"Jesse," drives editors nuts
Darren's name misspelled
—Ed.*

We conjugate verbs for you

Your magazine is great. The April issue was my first and marks a new beginning for me. I had the chance to see plenty of progressive rock bands in the '70s and was convinced that none of today's artists would ever match the greatness of those early pioneers. You have proven me wrong. I will always have a bit of the old acid rock blood in me, but now my King Crimson, Gentle Giant and Hawkwind CDs, to name a few, are giving way to new sounds. Thanks for bringing me into the present tense.

-Kevin G.

*My heart skipped a beat
Kenny G: bad hair, worse sax?
A different guy
—Ed.*

Correction:

We must've been blurry-eyed: In the Blur cover story in the April issue, we incorrectly referred to the band's new album, *13*, as its fifth. It is actually Blur's sixth album.

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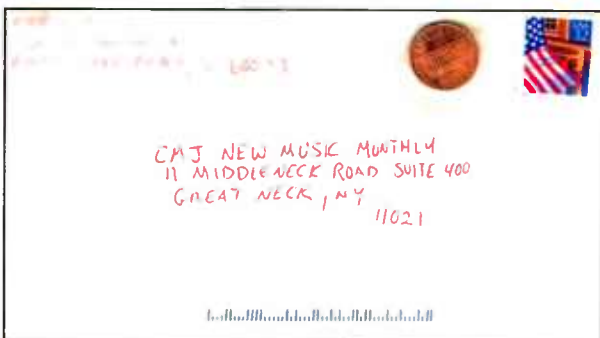
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THE *PLAY*'s THE THING

Story: William Werde

Photo: Kim Apley



Techno poster guy **Moby** has a new album, and a new outlook. ★

"There were lots of people making better records than I was making and people doing more interesting stuff," recalls a modest Moby. He's remembering the early-to-mid '90s, when magazines such as *Rolling Stone* and *Details* were looking for people to associate with an emerging—and relatively faceless—electronic scene. "But I was one of the only people who was doing more conventional stuff. I made records under my own name, where a lot of electronic artists would make records under 20 different pseudonyms. I would go on tour and I did photo shoots and I made videos and I did interviews. I don't believe myself to be techno's first star or whatever. I just think I was the only one willing to do interviews."

Moby (né Richard Hall) demurs at being the face of electronic music, even as he releases an album that may well reclaim that role for him. *Play* (V2) has the feel of a masterpiece: soul, blues and

breakbeats meld with Moby's vocals and carefully layered production. Sound like a familiar Fatboy formula? It may be, but it's one Moby pioneered years ago, with genre-hopping and -blending albums such as 1995's *Everything Is Wrong*. And where Fatboy Slim's albums have the party vibe of James Brown or Sly & The Family Stone, *Play* reveals Moby to be more in the mode of a craggy, back-porch Southern bluesman, achieving a certain serenity and joyousness by crooning the hurt away.

The analogy is both literal and figurative. *Play* can be broken into thirds: one part based on Moby's vocals, one part instrumental, and the third part—the one that most resonates—sampling heavily from Alan Lomax's field recordings of the deep South in the earlier half of this century. "He just recorded people singing and playing," Moby marvels. "Playing in prisons and in churches and on street corners and wherever."

(continued on page 12)

Moby (continued from page 11)

These bittersweet vocal morsels of love, loss and the Lord flavor Moby's already-emotive music. Some of the tracks are placid pools of piano rivulets and leap-frogging guitar licks; others conjure cosmic atmospheres with string crescendos and his whispered vocals. And still others—his thin voice straining over flailing bass lines—make plain Moby's affinity for hardcore punk. But even as he skips from genre to genre, Moby never really loses the poignant melancholy of the blues.

At 33, Moby shares a worldliness—or perhaps a world-weariness—with the good folk that speak that tongue. He's been through a world of controversy, and he's wiser for it. Moby was never shy, standing on the first public soapbox of techno. He gave lengthy interviews about his beliefs, including his Christianity, veganism and wavering views on substance use. And while he was working on *Everything Is Wrong*—a critical and commercial success—he soured on the dance scene, and was very public about those feelings, alienating some fans and critics. In particular, a published letter to the editor of dance culture magazine *URB* raised some eyebrows.

"I started DJing in 1984," recalls Moby calmly. "I just loved dance music. And then around '93 or '94, I kind of felt that the things I had been in love with weren't there anymore—the tolerance and the excitement and the open-mindedness. I felt a little bit betrayed. Now I just feel like I was being reactionary. Now in my life, I think, 'Far be it from me to make sweeping judgments about something as broad as culture.'"

Moby pauses, and the corners of his mouth turn up, an impish admission to lessons learned. "A lot of the particularly vitriolic stuff that I've said in the past, I'm kind of glad that I did it. It's so humbling. I can't imagine what state my ego would be in if I was always right." **NMM**



Man Or Astro-Man? casts human annihilation aside and seeks help from a supercomputer.

Playing rock 'n' roll is hard work when you're from space. While surf-inspired American bands can simply bang out variations on reverb-drenched Dick Dale-isms, Grid Sector 23B61's Man Or Astro-Man? has to lug around a nine foot-tall supercomputer, dress in elaborate costumes, search for pieces of a wrecked spaceship, send out teams of meticulously bred touring clones, and adjust to life as gaseous beings in a world of solids. Rolling up hundreds of feet of carefully exposed cable and disassembling the towering *EEVIAC* ("Electronically Embedded Variably Integrated Astro-Console") mainframe computer, drummer and spokesman Birdstuff laments his band's place in this world.

"Earth is a very small planet in terms of thinking, size, shape, and everything," he says. "We've had to bring our set down to a level of a lot of normal rock bands. You should see the show in outer space: It's flawless and technical, like Yngwie and Bozzio together in one room jamming. Here, we have to actually travel around in a van, and when we play live, we have to make mistakes sometimes. Because otherwise, people are just too intimidated. That's the hardest thing about being here: Having to lower our standards to be received by Earth people is very saddening for us, especially when you consider our unstoppable prowess."

That prowess is all over Man Or Astro-Man?'s new *EEVIAC: Operational Index And Reference Guide, Including Other Modern Computational Devices* (Touch And Go), which adds even more quirks and electronics to the group's familiar template of late-'50s/early-'60s surf guitar and B-movie samples. By the end, it makes perfect sense that the credits exist in the form of an encore performance by the *EEVIAC*, which reads off a chillingly emotionless "automated liner-notes sequence." The album itself never lags despite a tumultuous couple of years that have included a confusing all-clone Astro-tour, in which an assortment of band-sanctioned Man Or Astro-Men and Women toured the country playing the group's songs, and the replacement of longtime guitarists Dexter X and Star Crunch with Blazar The Probe Handler and Trace Reading.

"Blazar and Trace Reading have always been in Man Or Astro-Man?," explains Birdstuff. "There was a phase-shift continuum where, basically, poor Trace and Blazar have been playing along to all the records, adding their parts and counter-harmonies and what-not to the Man Or Astro-Man? sound. But they've never been in phase. And when Star Crunch and Dexter got knocked out of phase, Blazar and Trace Reading got knocked into phase. It's all about waves and peaks and valleys."

With new members, the continued involvement of Birdstuff and bassist/singer Coco The Electronic Monkey Wizard, and the cooperation of a helpful mainframe computer, Man Or Astro-Man? has even softened its stance on human annihilation. "Generally, when you crash-land on the planet Earth, the idea is that you're hostile and trying to invade," says Birdstuff. "But we've gotten beyond that. We're a little more adroit with, no pun intended, our human side. We're trying to integrate somewhat."

>>>Stephen Thompson

GOOD VIBRATIONS



Neo-Aquarians **Kula Shaker** embrace the new Millennium.

British pop in the '90s in all its diverse forms has usually shared one thing: a compulsion to nick bits of the past, whether it's Fatboy Slim sampling hip-hop grooves for his big beats or Oasis borrowing a melody or phrase from the Fab Four. Kula Shaker certainly fits that profile, with its Grand Funk Hammond organ vibrato and turgid Zeppelin-esque guitar riffing. But the band, led by singer/guitarist Crispian Mills, is one of the decade's few Brit-pop exports that's been willing to set irony aside and embrace more than just the stray sounds of a bygone era. Kula Shaker's 1996 debut *K* didn't just reference the late-'60s/early '70s with its Eastern-inflected psychedelic rockisms; it came steeped in the communal feel-good spirit of those times.

As if chanting in Hindi and name-checking Krishna weren't enough to drive home the nostalgic point, Mills and co. hooked up with veteran Pink Floyd producer Bob Ezrin for the new *Peasants Pigs And Astronauts* (Columbia) and went on a recording journey that took them from Ray Davies's demo studio to the scene of Brian Wilson's *Pet Sounds* triumph (Ocean Way in California) to London's Abbey Road, with a long stop in the middle to record the bulk of the album on a houseboat studio owned by none other than David Gilmour.

"It was a trip," says Mills, who's inherited his good looks from his '60s film-star mom Hayley Mills. "It was a beautiful little boat on the Thames, and there was a swan sanctuary nearby. So when people ask what the main influence on the album was, I always say swans. The only problem was doing angrier songs like 'S.O.S.' That song was written in a totally different environment, and it was hard to get in the right state of mind to sing it when there were all these swans gently swimming by on rippling waves. We had to shut the curtains."

Mostly, though, for all its rocky edges and occasional noisy outbursts, *Peasants Pigs And Astronauts* is an album at peace with itself, facing the dawn of a new millennium with a wide-eyed grin rather than a wink and nudge. "Sometimes you don't want to open up too much, especially if you are British," Mills reflects. "Shit, the last thing you want is for someone to find out how you really feel. But we went for it this time. I mean, why not? It's 1999, for god's sake. We couldn't just ignore the fact that people want to find something positive and change the world." Sorta feels like the dawning of the Age of Aquarius all over again.


>>>Matt Ashare



MILLS, SECOND FROM RIGHT

JULIE FURMONOVSKY

Label Profile

Rephlex, the London label co-founded by Aphex Twin's Richard D. James, was conceived to "put an end to pointless and unfulfilling record buying and to bring people braindance music," says label spokesman Matthew Prigg. The label is responsible for launching the UK careers of many prominent electronic experimenters, including Squarepusher, Luke Vibert and µ-ziq, and for releasing the *Analog Bubblebath* series, which was produced by James, himself. The label has just started US distribution via Caroline, making its discs available at domestic prices. "Our records were always available in America," says Prigg, who notes that Rephlex has tended to its American following via a website and an email list. "You just might have had to do a bit of detective work to find them." The first album to be worked in America is Bogdan Raczynski's *Boku Mo Wakaran* , a collection of spastic beats and sporadic melodies that will get right to the heart of, unsurprisingly, any Aphex Twin fan.



Tours We'd Like to See

Dollar Dollar Bill, Y'All Tour:

Pennywise, Sixpence None The Richer, Cash Money, Johnny Cash, 10¢, Eddie Money, Money Mark, Buck-O-Nine, Nickel Bag, Dimebag, Doughboys, Bread.

Random Quotes

"Look **I ain't a fucking role model.** It should be so obvious to you. **Don't do what I'm doing, don't try this at home. I'm fucking with you,** especially with 'My Name Is.' But there's a couple other cuts on the record that are **really, really, really fucking with you.**"

>>>Eminem, on keeping it really, really real



"**God, wouldn't that be a horrible thought?"**

>>>Mötley Crüe's Nikki Sixx, responding to whether or not his band is "responsible" for Poison

Weird Record Of The Month



Everyone knows that Stephen King is one of the best selling authors of all time, but did you know that he can sing, too? No? Well that's because he can't. But that doesn't stop him and more than 40 other literary types from attempting to croon their favorite songs—tunes like "Bo Diddley," "Hot Rod Lincoln" and "Chain Gang"—on the two-CD set, **Stranger Than Fiction** (Don't Quit Your Day Job-Oglio). It's hard to say how this idea ever made it past the point of conception (likely during some bacchanalian writers' fete), but, as Tennyson would say, ours is not to reason why. Ours is just to enjoy the absurdity of hearing Amy Tan sing "These Boots Are Made For Walkin'."

Random Quote

"This record, think, is going to change rock 'n' roll this year... the way Jane's Addiction did with *Nothing's Shocking*. The way Pink Floyd did. I don't blow smoke up my own ass, but we really are bringing hip-hop to rock and alternative to hip-hop and melody to phat grooves."

>>>Limp Bizkit's Fred Durst, on taking care of his orifices



"I'll probably be undressing constantly toward the end of my career."

>>>Rufus Wainwright, on showing off his strongest assets



JUNE CARTER CASH

Q&A



The United States might not be a monarchy, but when it comes to our music, we sure as hell have a queen. A member of country music's pioneering clan, the Carter Family, and wife to its most inimitable star, Johnny Cash, June Carter Cash is also an author and actress, most recently drawing raves for her performance in *The Apostle*. Her new solo album *Press On* (Small Hairy Dog-Risk) is a tender-hearted scrapbook of homespun tunes, from the Carter classic "Diamonds In The Rough" to "Ring Of Fire," the sensuous love song she wrote for her husband. *Press On* is an album as gentle and natural as the woman herself.

>>>Lois Maffeo

Q: What is a standout moment in your life with the amazing Carter and Cash families?

A: My family and I had gone with John to Czechoslovakia. It was still behind the Iron Curtain at that time. We didn't know—would they be singing Johnny Cash music or singing Carter Family music? Would they know any of our music? But 44,000 people came to see us in Prague! They sang every word of "Ring Of Fire." They sang every word of "Wabash Cannonball" and "Will The Circle Be Unbroken." That was an unforgettable time.

Q: Was your family an influence on your decision to take up music?

A: When Mother came home from the Texas border stations she said, "Okay girls. You're coming back with me to play on the radio. I know Helen and Anita can play something. I know they can sing. June, can you play? June, can you sing?" And I said, "No, Mother. I can't sing. I can't play or sing." But within a week's time I had learned to play the Autoharp and the tenor guitar. I learned 11 songs by heart. I couldn't play as well as my sisters could, but I had a weird, wild rhythm on the guitar.

Q: You've always been a career woman, as well as a wife and mother. Would you call yourself a feminist?

A: Yes, I guess I would. I've always felt that way. I've always made money. I've been given checks since I was nine years old. I've been able to do anything that I thought was really dear to my heart. Maybe it comes from Mother Maybelle Carter. She was the most liberated woman I ever knew. She was born liberated.

Q: Your song "Tiffany Anastasia Lowe" warns your granddaughter off from movie director Quentin Tarantino. Do you think he'll put you in his next movie?

A: I have no idea! I wrote that song because my granddaughter moved to Hollywood and I just didn't want her to run into him! But I have a great respect for his ability as a director and I hope he's not offended by this little song.

Q: Your new album is so warm and refreshing. It's a far cry from the slick Nashville sound.

A: When we started working on it, I thought, "Well, I'll just do this album the way I really am. And if they like me, they'll like me, and if they don't, I couldn't care less. I'll just press on."

DOUBLE EXPOSURE



L. R. SASHA DIGWEED

A powerhouse pair of UK DJs, **Sasha and John Digweed**, are successfully infiltrating America's clubland.

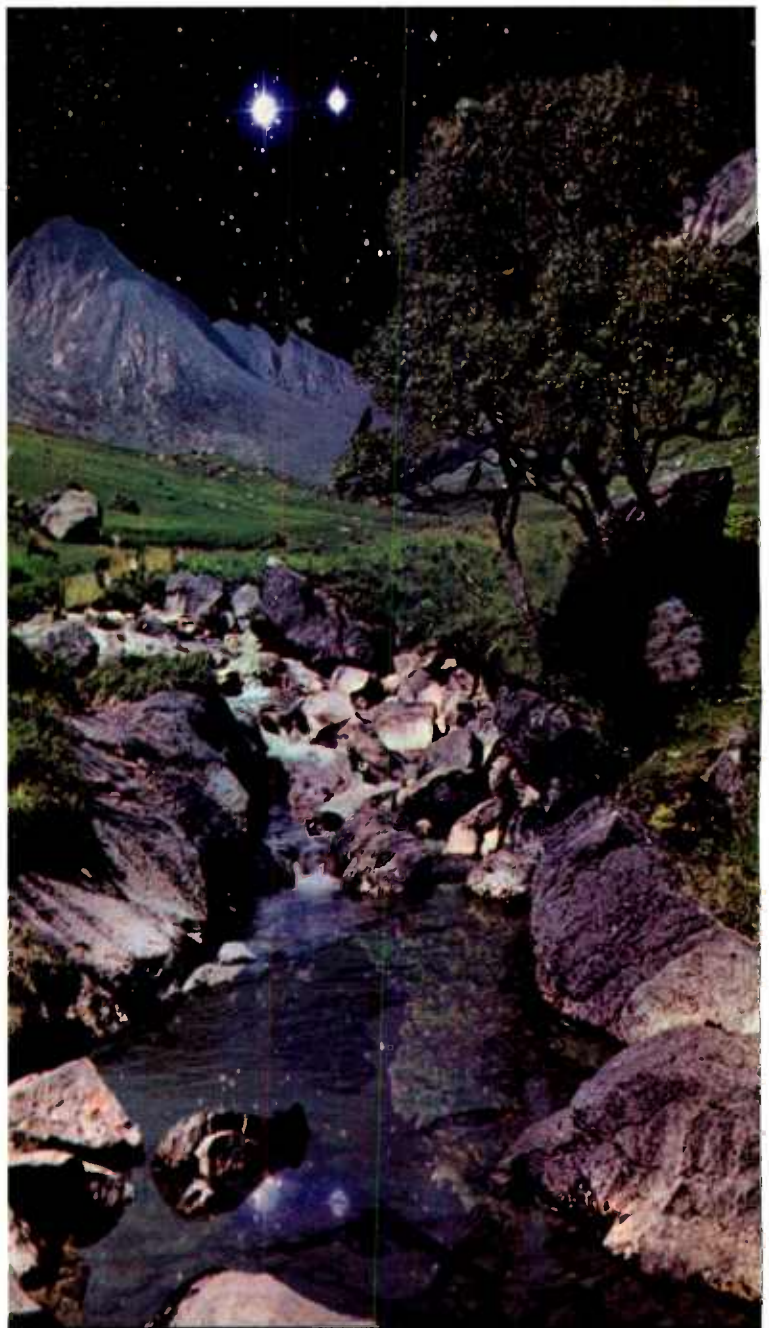
"I'd always get really nervous before playing Twilo," says UK trance/progressive house DJ Sasha. "[I'd] think, 'What if it's empty this month?' It wasn't until six or seven months into it that I realized our night had kind of established itself."

If Sasha held any lingering uncertainties about the strength of his and partner John Digweed's once-a-month Manhattan club residency, they were ceremoniously laid to rest on April 30, when the duo celebrated two years of holding court at the world-renowned nightclub. Sasha and Digweed, who released their third *Northern Exposure* mix CD the same month, are the first significant European DJs to hold a club residency in America, making them the underground British dance scene's most effective missionaries on the mainstream US club circuit.

"I could see that the youth culture scene over here was really ready for it," says Sasha of America's newfound appreciation for the UK's brand of melodic, emotional, trance-inducing tunes. "We finally cracked into New York and now Twilo's the jewel in our crown. It's the favorite gig that I do. Every month, Washington, DC, Boston, and Philadelphia run buses that bring hundreds of people [to Twilo]. I haven't heard of anything like that since... [Manchester's] Hacienda."

While the pair achieved overwhelming success in areas such as San Francisco and Miami when they began playing America in 1993, they, like their counterparts, struggled to break the stronghold house DJs such as Junior Vasquez and Danny Tenaglia had held on Manhattan since the early-'90s. And while most US clubs remain faithful to traditional, vocal-oriented house music, the success of Sasha and Digweed indicates that the States may be ready to inject its nightlife with more progressive and varied global sounds, a belief reflected by the addition of European talents, such as Carl Cox, Paul Van Dyk, and the UK drum 'n' bass imprint V Recordings, as Twilo residents.

"New York City is the melting pot of the world, so it was kind of strange that it didn't have that broad sort of sound in clubland," reflects Sasha. "I guess we really opened the doors for that. It just seems that [every European DJ] is playing here now, and it's... healthy. It's just exposing people to different types of music. I really feel like we're at the start of a really important and crucial part of the scene over here and we're really... breaking ground." >>>M. Tye Comer



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Teen Idols

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Pat Califia
(book) Macho Sluts

WILD STYLE DONE TOKYO STYLE



DJ Krush puts his own spin on hip-hop.

The hip-hop documentary *Wild Style*, made in 1983 and recently re-released by Rhino on home video, has gotten shouts from the likes of Grandmaster Flash and Big Daddy Kane. The film's soundtrack has been sampled by Beck and the Beastie Boys. But perhaps no musician was as influenced or inspired by the film as Japan's DJ Krush.

Wild Style portrays all aspects of B-boy lifestyle—the music, the breakdancing, the graffiti—but it was the men on the wheels of steel that captured the interest of a teenaged Hideaki Ishi, a.k.a. DJ Krush. "It just amazed me to actually make good music from turning the vinyl," says Krush, now 36 and several records into his career. "The characters in the movie were my examples, as well as my musical influences. There was no other source for hip-hop music at the time. There were very few records available."

With a scarcity of blueprints, Krush innovated. Released only months apart, his two recent projects *Ki-Oku* (Instinct), recorded with Japanese trumpet player Toshinori Kondo, and *Kakusei* (Red Ink), are prime examples of Krush's musically complex, but eminently chill, sound. On the moody *Ki-Oku*, he fuses slow, thumping drum kicks and thick, echoing bass lines with melodies and instrumentation more commonly found in downtempo jazz. He borrows even more directly from jazz on *Kakusei*, where Kondo's horn adds a consistently soulful accompaniment to Krush's laid-back beats. "I wanted to express something that is more internal," said Krush of the two albums. "I wanted to see what a DJ can 'paint.'"

Krush is already back in the studio working on his next album, and is thinking about using more vocals than his mostly instrumental discography has lead fans to expect. "But unfortunately," says Krush, "today's rappers in Tokyo aren't very interesting." Don't expect an Americanized Krush, however. "Lyrics to rap music comes from everyday life," he says. "We can't all be a gangster."

"Hip-hop was born in the United States," he continues. "But I believe it's not an exclusive music to the US. At times I find European hip-hop music more attractive than American, in the sense that Europeans are more experimental. We are all moving on to coming up with something that is original. I'm looking forward to what will come from this movement." >>>William Werde



PROFITS OF DOOM

Summer festivals have become key targets for campaigns by not-for-profit organizations to spread the good word. Here are some causes we'd like to see represented at this season's glut of 'paloozas.



Event: Lilith Fair.

Organization: Anti-Bra Burning Coalition.

Mission: Informing women that undergarment incineration burns holes in the ozone layer.

Motto: "An uncomfortable underwire still hurts less than skin cancer."

Stop by: For a free copy of national spokesperson Jewel's videotaped "Give Your Support To Support" speech.

Event: Ozzfest.

Organization: Society For The Cultivation Of Long, Luscious Locks.

Mission: Bringing old school metal aesthetics to the dangerously short-haired new school.

Motto: "Size may not matter, but length sure does."

Stop by: To hear tearful readings from Samson Agonistes.

Event: Tibetan Freedom Fest.

Organization: Brotherhood Of Righteous Elocutioners (B.O.R.E.).

Mission: Giving you a social conscience, even if it means bleeding all of the fun out of rock 'n' roll.

Motto: "We're making politics fashionable, one hipster at a time."

Stop by: Because everyone else is doing it.

Event: Warped Tour.

Organization: National Association For Breaking The Chain.

Mission: Convincing chain-wallet wearers to convert to a more sensible billfold.

Motto: "It's not The Man that's weighing you down; it's that 20-pound wallet-chain."

Stop by: To see kids throwing off their chains like some scene from *Amistad*.

Event: H.O.R.D.E.

Organization: Society Promoting Long Instrumental Forays (S.P.L.I.F.).

Mission: Getting Congress to approve the Gone Phishin' bill, allowing for workers to claim six weeks unpaid leave in order to follow their favorite jam band around the country.

Motto: "Even a long, strange trip could stand to be longer and stranger."

Stop by: For the contact high.

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A Clear Complexion

The Farm

All Together Now

Deftones

Be Quiet & Drive (Far Away)

Pavement

Shoot The Singer

Wilco

Red-Eyed & Blue

Urge Overkill

Dropout

SIDE TWO:

Morphine

Buena

Replacements

Leit Of The Dial

Figgs

Slow Down

Johnny Cash

Rusty Cage

Son Volt

Catching On

Dinosaur Jr

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Into The Pink

Capitol

Grunge died five years ago under the weight of its own pretensions and commercial aspirations, and no one's lamenting its loss or clamoring for a nostalgic revival. So Verbena's *Into The Pink* has no right to be as exciting as it is. The familiar Nirvana pieces are here: the descending minor-key guitar lines and power chords, the slack moan and sneer in the vocals, the vague nihilism (with titles such as "Submissionary," "Bang Bang," and "Depression Is A Fashion"). And, with Anne Marie Griffin switching from second guitar to bass, the Alabama band has slimmed from a quartet to an archetypal power trio. And Dave Grohl produces. Yes, it sounds like a recipe for disaster we've all tasted before, but it's not. Instead, from the moment the piano-based opening overture of "Lovely Isn't Love" fades with a "hey hey hey yeah" that reappears seconds later as the rallying cry at the beginning of the title track, the album's in a metallic punk overdrive that barely pauses to refuel. Assisted by concise song structures (most clock in under three minutes), crafty sequencing, and chanted choruses (which often benefit from the gender interplay between guitarist Scott Bondy and Griffin), the songs rarely succumb to the ponderousness and self-importance of lesser Nirvana disciples. Rather than being an anachronistic grunge album, *Into The Pink* is just galvanic rock 'n' roll.

>>>Steve Klingle



OUT:

July 27.

FILE UNDER:

Grunge without pretensions.

R.I.Y.L.:

Nirvana, Hole, Foo Fighters.

GARMARNA

Vengeance

NorthSide

Bleak, sunless climates and gloomy yet powerful music have always gone hand in hand—northern England, the Pacific Northwest, and Scandinavia have all been the birthplaces of creepy and brooding musical visions. In Scandinavia, though, the tradition goes way beyond the latest wave of black-metal grumblings, all the way back to their folk music of the Medieval era. Maybe it's the rough Viking heritage, maybe it's the product of living in a land of darkened forests, but the traditional mode is minor-key songs about evil spirits, revenge and violent deaths, told in a creepy sing-song that sounds by turns vaguely Celtic or Middle Eastern. Garmarna harnesses all the darkness of Swedish folk music, but gives the medieval murder ballads a thoroughly modern treatment. Emma Härdelin's sensuous and slithering vocals are still the emphasis, backed up by droning violin and lute. But the background of most tracks is fleshed out with low keyboard washes and gentle drum machine pulses. And some of the faster tracks are full-on ethno-techno workouts, with floor-rattling bass and a pounding beat—the warblings shift from being the centerpiece of the song to adding more surreal texture to the mix. *Vengeance* is a terrific example of what modern music based on indigenous sources can be: It's too future-forward to get bogged down in historical reverence, but it's way more grounded in its culture than the usual techno dressed up with a few samples of authentic sounds.

>>>David Jarman



OUT:

April 6.

FILE UNDER:

15th/21st century collision.

R.I.Y.L.:

Värtina, Le Mystere Des Voix Bulgares, Bel Canto, Transglobal Underground.

JUNO

This Is The Way It Goes And Goes And Goes

PacifiCo/DeSoto

Juno's debut long-player is not the kind of record you can put on as background music while you're lubing your car or listen to on your Walkman while trotting the treadmill. That is, it is not the kind of record you can easily ignore. The Seattle punk rock outfit, which had so far only released a few singles since its formation in '96, makes music so emotionally intense that just listening to it is exhausting. Whether it's the fast crunchy numbers like "Venus On 9th Street" or the lushly textured ballads like "A Listening Ear" (which boasts a beautiful vocal duet with guest singer Jen Wood), Juno's songs are unmitigatedly gut-wrenching. In his deep, raspy bedroom voice, vocalist/guitarist Arlie Carstens croons melancholic lyrics about loneliness and futility. On "The Young Influentials," nearly whispering, he warns, "Swallow hard against your inner horror—knowing you'll be alone forever." And even though the theme of desperation is unrelenting, the lyrics are sufficiently intelligent that they never sound overwrought. Best of all, these guys are fucking amazing musicians: With three guitarists and plenty of odd noises and found sounds (Glockenspiel, Farfisa, short-wave radio), Juno crafts moody, elaborate soundscapes that make you feel as if its songs were dark clouds thundering rain down onto your head. Set aside an hour, lay on your bed and just let it pour.

>>>Jenny Eliscu



OUT:

April 19.

FILE UNDER:

Achey-breaky art.

R.I.Y.L.:

Seam, Fugazi, Sinti, Sugar.

CIBO MATTO

Stereotype A

Warner Bros.

On their debut album, 1996's *Viva! La Woman*, singer Miho Hatori and multi-instrumentalist Yuka Honda could afford to get by on the sheer novelty of two cool downtown New York Japanese chicks dabbling gleefully in everything from hardcore noise punk to soft-focus hip-pop. The concept itself was the hook so it didn't matter that, upon repeated listenings, the tunes weren't necessarily all that compelling. This time, however, it does, and *Cibo Matto* rises to the challenge with help from full time bandmates Sean Lennon (bass, guitar, and other assorted noises) and Timo Ellis (drums, bass, and still more assorted noises). Hatori and Honda appear to have matured musically, but they haven't lost their sense of adventure, their eclecticism, or their obsession with food. *Stereotype A* comes across as the work of a gang of dabblers who have become virtuosos, as it segues from hip-hop rap snacks to soulfully sung candy-pop to meaty guitar metal, sometimes within the span of a single song. And it's littered with references to various culinary pleasures, from sweet seedless grapes to stromboli and ravioli to the sci-fi wasabi of the song of the same title. Most surreal moment: the smooth-groovin' chorus of "Moonchild," which sounds polished enough to compete on contemporary R&B radio.

>>>Matt Ashare



OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Fusion cuisine.

R.I.Y.L.:

Pizzicato Five, Luscious Jackson, Buffalo Daughter.

FLAMING LIPS

The Soft Bulletin

Warner Bros.

The Soft Bulletin follows on the heels of *Zaireeka*, the Flaming Lips' landmark four-CD simultaneous-play album, and one of the great sonic-sociological experiments in pop music history. *Zaireeka* opened a creative Pandora's box that inspired the Oklahomans—and shook them to their core. *Bulletin* further explores the new possibilities suggested by its predecessor, but more crucially, it confronts the demons that beset the band in its wake. The biggest casualty of this confrontation is rock's ultimate symbol, the guitar. With the departure of guitarist Ronald Jones, and an obvious need to move beyond the amplified (though indisputably fun) bombast of their previous work, the Lips have completely resculpted their sound. There's scarcely a lead guitar line to be heard here. Instead, the Lips have created a rich palette of delicate sound—a palette that demands and delivers their most inventive playing to date. At times a chimerical kindergarten daydream, at others a plea for deliverance from a very grown-up world, *Bulletin* ultimately seeks lucidity. It is a therapeutic exorcism in the tradition of John Lennon's *Plastic Ono Band* album. And like that album, it marks a crucial turning point for the Lips—the moment when they transcend their own identity. After 15 years, the Flaming Lips are still bleeding their art, but they've finally gained some peace of mind from the process.

>>>Matt Hanks



OUT:

June 22.

FILE UNDER:

Come-down psych.

R.I.Y.L.:

Mercury Rev, the Elephant 6 collective, early Pink Floyd.

DANIELLE HOWLE

Catalog

Kill Rock Stars

There's no other performer quite like Danielle Howle. Her style is rooted in traditional country, blues and folk, but is much too pliable and spontaneous to concede to any such categorizations. Her voice is a warmly resonant Southern thing, boasting a purity of tone not unlike that of Patsy Cline or Loretta Lynn, plus a slyness only an ornery, back porch beer-drinkin' kook like Howle could possess. If she were only half the songwriter she is, her unique charm would make up for any deficit in talent. Fortunately, Howle's strengths as a musician and writer effortlessly match the endearing idiosyncrasies of her person. *Catalog* finds Howle going the straightforward girl-and-her-guitar route (she also sometimes records and performs with a full band, the Tantrums), but the results are hardly predictable. Her song perspectives contain an oddly childlike sense of wonder and playfulness; comfortably resting behind her bright-eyed delivery, though, is a deeply melancholic wisdom. While her guitar playing is simple and economical, her singing sways and dips as she finds her way to each word's inherent poetry. Her songs are lullabies, old hymns and quirky fairy tales all rolled into one. Howle's really in her element when performing live, but *Catalog* captures the breeze of her spirit with surprising accuracy.

>>>Colin Helms



OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Idiosyncratic, quasi-folkie.

R.I.Y.L.:

Vic Chesnut, Indigo Girls, Spinanes, Ani DiFranco.



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JOSEPH CULTICE

BUCKCHERRY

MTV may be too chicken to play the unforgettable "I love the cocaine, I love the cocaine" chorus of the Buckcherry clip for "Lit Up" without stifling each narcotics mention with a very obvious and stodgy silence, but the snub is only further proof of the band's irresistible, rebellious toxicity. Fronted by Joshua Todd—a wiry, explosive, tattoo-clad hardbody with what band bassist J.B. deems "the ultimate rock 'n' roll voice"—the Los Angeles quintet has been blowing the doors off every place it's played since it formed last year, stopping only to commit a dozen near-flawless anthems to tape for its self-titled debut (DreamWorks). And just in time, too: Posed as a reaction to too many contrived alternative pop hit-makers and obtuse electronica releases, Buckcherry is the kind of band built to thrive in the giant swaths of the US that lie between its urban centers. Simply put, everywhere you go, the kids wanna rock, and Buckcherry delivers the goods, mixing the balls-out fire of old heavy metal with the nihilistic bent of punk rock. "We want [ed to] make a record where kids are gonna be packed in a car driving to a party, just freaking out to the music," explains Todd. And they sure did. >>>Cheryl Botchick



VIVIANE OH

QUANNUM

Quannum isn't exactly new to the scene. In fact, the members of this hip-hop super-group have already achieved quite a bit: Latryx and Blackalicious have released acclaimed hip-hop albums, and you might have heard of DJ Shadow? But whether or not you know their history and talents, you'll be hearing about Quannum; the last time this much hip-hop talent combusted in front of the tables, the instigators came straight outta Compton. The men in Quannum come straight outta UC Davis with a whole new style of hip-hop, layering airtight and creative production with ultra-smooth lyrical stylings. Those innovative sounds laid the sonic blueprint for their earlier Solesides label, tastemaking imprints such as Mo' Wax, and now their own newly formed label, also called Quannum. This summer, Quannum the group will be touring extensively. "We just thought it was time to take it to the next level," says Lyrics Born of Latryx. "The label was always just an offshoot of our interests as a collective. But we never put anything out as a group." *Spectrum* (Quannum) is the first release for the label and group, and is a worthy correction to that oversight. >>>William Werde



MARY SMALLING

CHEVELLE ★

"We love Helmet! They inspired us. Just look at our CD booklet with the drop of water," exclaims one of the three Loeffler brothers—Pete, Sam, and Joe—who comprise Chevelle. While the artwork for the Chicago trio's pulpy debut, *Point #1* (Squint Entertainment), echoes the elongated splash emblazoned on Helmet's *Meantime* disc, the music it contains wages its own earsplitting assault, combining Helmet's chunky, stop-and-go-styled riffing with the soft-loud vocal dynamics of Tool and a side of Nirvana's rawness. Despite the easy-to-spot touchstones in its sound, Chevelle is not grunge redux, but its own formidable beast. Knob-twiddler Steve Albini helped tame that beast by recording *Point #1*, and according to the brothers, the services of top-of-the-wish-list Albini were not as difficult to obtain as one might think—he was into Chevelle's sound. The album is pregnant with anxious tension that resolves itself with guitar explosions. At press time, the group was about to secure a booking agent; our guess is once this Chevelle hits the road, there'll be no roadblocks slowing down its high octane-fueled ride. >>>Amy Sciarretto

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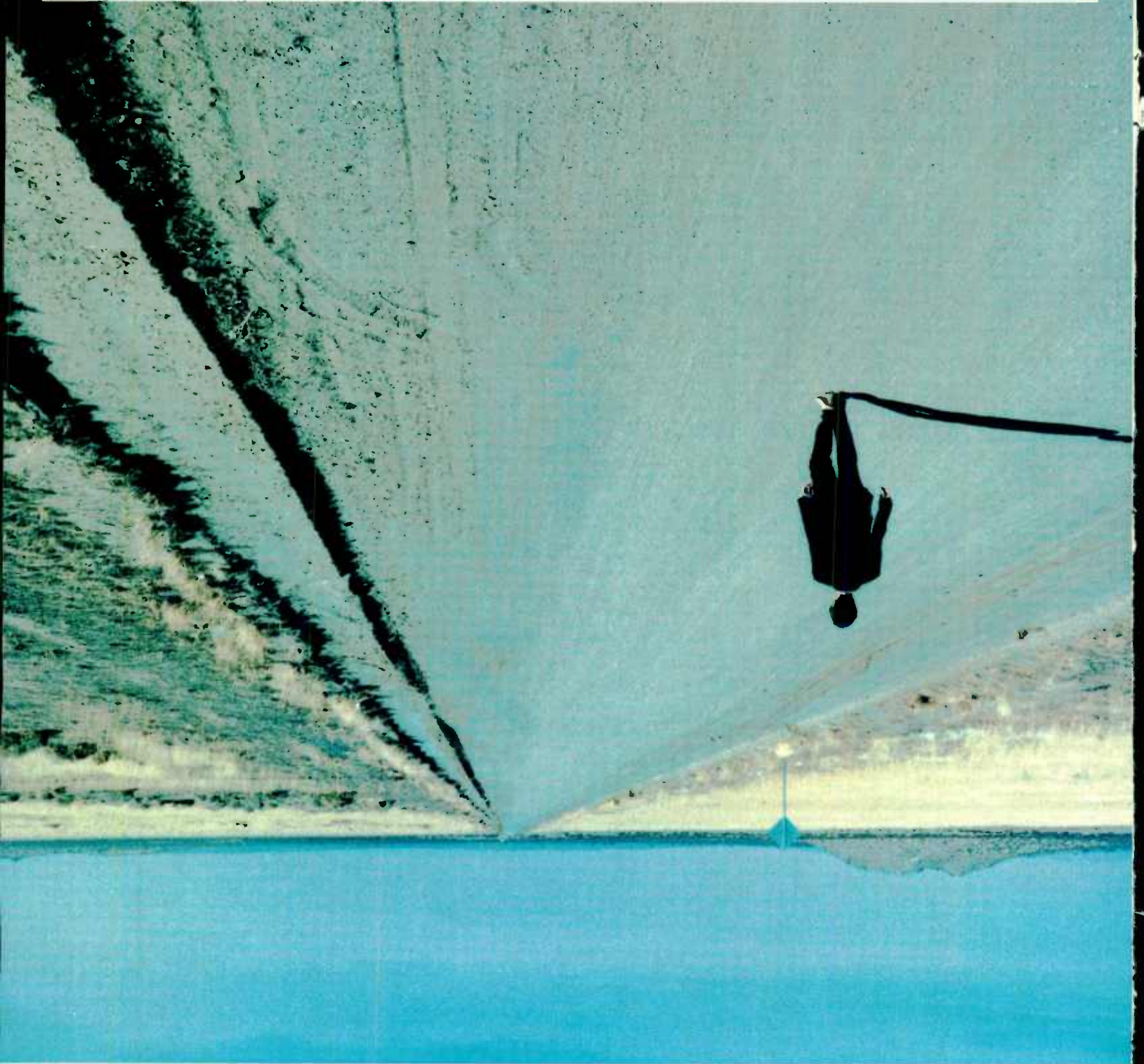


Photo: DAVID SIMUTIS

Photo: CHAPMAN BAEHLER

SMALL CHANGE

PENNYWISE stays the course on its new punk crowd-pleaser, *Straight Ahead*.



Pennywise is probably the most pleasant, friendliest band that sometimes pukes on people. The quartet does come from Hermosa Beach, California, which according to guitarist Fletcher Dragge, is party capitol of the world. It's Dragge who is the band's resident projectile vomitter, once aiming for—and connecting with—Dr. Drew, host of MTV's advice show, *Loveline*.

Slugging it out for 11 years in the underground has paid off for Pennywise. The band has co-headlined the Vans Warped Tour four years running; has sold 175,000 and 220,000 copies, respectively, of its last two records, *Full Circle* and *About Time*, and routinely sells out bigger clubs on its own. The group's success is a textbook example of how perpetual touring can win over fans. Still, Pennywise is almost a stealth success; the band is on a well-known indie label, but it isn't the flagship band (that'd be Rancid), and in lieu of radio or MTV airplay, the band's profile has been boosted largely by appearances in skate and snowboarding videos.

Much of this success, unfortunately, has come without original bass player and band co-founder, Jason Thirsk, who committed suicide in 1996 while battling a substance abuse problem. It was Thirsk who originally wanted Pennywise to be a positive force in a sea of musical negativity. Singer Jim Lindberg says that the band continued after Thirsk's death as an extension of the bassist's philosophy of succeeding in the face of misfortune.

"I get tired of people who complain about being bored or not liking their life; it's up to the individual to make it happen for themselves, not sit around and complain all day."

"It affects you every day for the rest of your life," acknowledges Lindberg. "That's what a lot of our songs are about: You better make the most of life because you have truckloads of fate coming your way and you never know when it's going to hit you. I get tired of people who complain about being bored or not liking their life; it's up to the individual to make it happen for themselves, not sit around and complain all day. That's going to sound cheesy or lame and maybe it doesn't get us played on the radio all the time, but it works for us. It just naturally comes out of who we are and what we want to accomplish."

Aside from being a party capitol, the small ocean-side city of Hermosa Beach was also the original home to Black Flag, the Descendents, and the Circle Jerks. Pennywise's drag-racing punk clearly stems from its members having spent their teen years at parties where those seminal groups regularly performed. Pennywise's fifth record, *Straight Ahead* (Epitaph), is steeped in those influences, with rough-and-tumble melodies on top of briny torrents of guitars. Swift tempos, a healthy bottom end and pummeling drums keep it heavy, but Lindberg deftly wraps his voice around the hooks. He never just screams, never growls too hard, making Pennywise's music urgent and damn catchy.

The album stays with the quartet's longtime touchstones—personal responsibility and resisting conformity—but Pennywise has matured past dogmatic sloganeering, offering more metaphorical lyricism. The standout track, "Alien," builds to a pensive climax,



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PENNYWISE (cont.)

highlighted by muted guitars and Lindburg, backed by his own double-tracked harmonies, repeating the line "We're the aliens" as Dragge peels off a quick, repetitive riff.

Pennywise connects with its audience because it nails down specific emotions and feelings. By consciously depicting specific problems faced by average people, and by putting it in terms as plain as "it's your fucking life" ("Straight Ahead"), the band encapsulates something universal. It's vitally important to the band that "the kids," as they are frequently called, get it.

By way of example, Dragge recounts how an employee at Epitaph recently called and told him how much she related to *Straight Ahead*. "She was proofreading the lyrics and she goes, 'It was funny because I've never met you guys, but I'm reading your lyrics and this is my life right now.' That's one thing that a lot of kids can relate to, because they're real life issues, pretty easy to grasp."

The band's refusal to change much beyond the four-chord attack also stems from an effort to maintain this ongoing connection. The foursome doesn't want to risk alienating its hard won audience by getting soft or throwing something unexpected into the mix. "It's hard," admits Dragge, "because you want to progress. With the new album we've kind of explored some new regions a little bit, but not much, trying to keep it [sounding like] Pennywise, because we know it's what the kids like. When we're out playing the same songs for ten years it kind of gets tedious. [But] to me there's nothing worse than putting on your favorite band's album and having them sound totally different."

According to drummer Byron McMackin, however, doing the same thing for a decade makes it nearly impossible for them to do things differently. "This is the style that I was raised on. If I were to [try to] play something else now, I'd [still] be doing what we do," he chuckles.

That said, all four guys laugh when asked if songwriting and the recording process has gotten easier over time. Just the opposite, they say, characterizing the making of *Straight Ahead* more like a battle, something that contributes to their less-than-prolific output.

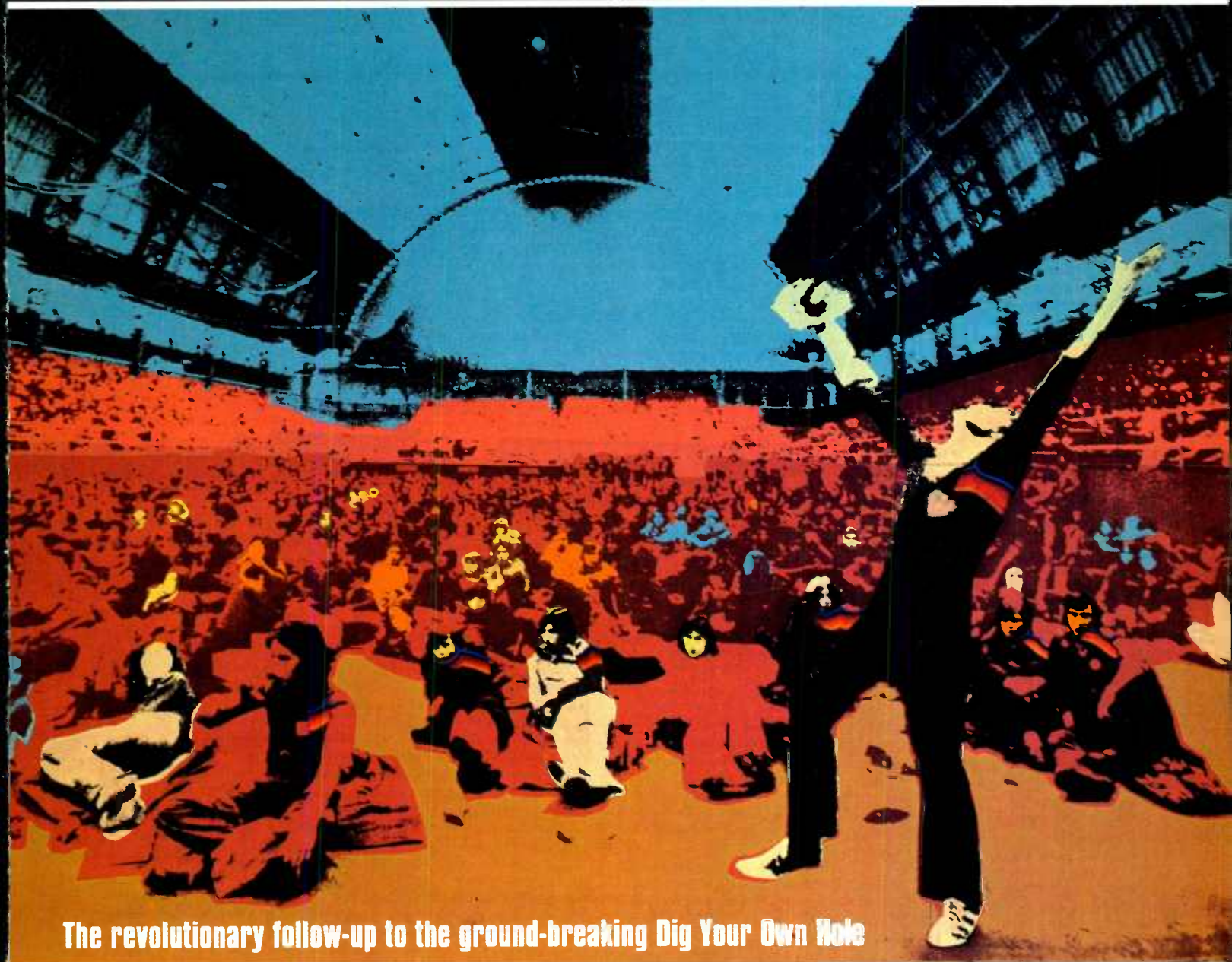
"We're not a band with one main songwriter, we're a band where everybody collaborates. That's where the brutal part of writing comes in," explains the burly Dragge. "Jim wants to do [a song] one way, I want to throw my two cents in. [Bassist Randy Bradbury] brings in a song, I want to change it right when I hear it and he goes berserk. It's really hard. If I had a machine gun, [the rest of the band] would be dead. The more that everybody learns [about songwriting], the worse it gets. Byron's even bringing in guitar parts now.

"You've got all these four people who think differently and you have all these ideas coming together," he continues. "In the end we're all stoked by what comes out of it, but it's definitely a hell trip. Afterwards I'm just like, 'It's done. We don't have to do it for another 16 months.' It's kind of a cleansing process because you get out all the fucking bullshit [between band members]. At the end of it you're like, 'Okay, I got all of that shit off my chest and now we've got a killer album.'"

NMM

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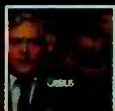
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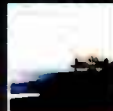
THE BETA BAND
The Beta Band



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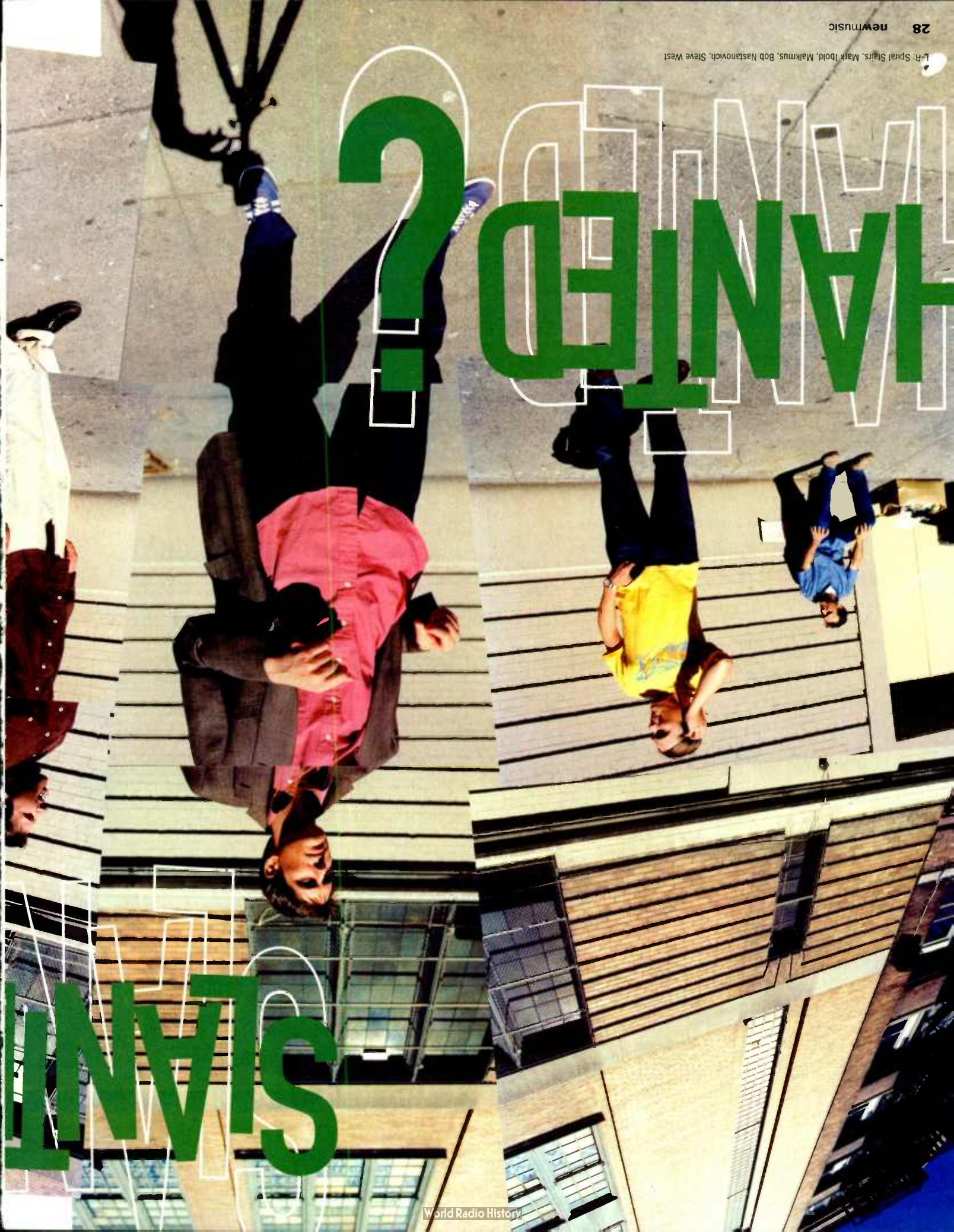


VARIOUS ARTISTS
Source Material



ALSO ON ASTRALWERKS IN '99

L-R: Spiral Stairs, Mark Ibold, Makmus, Bob Nastanovich, Steve West



HANTED?

SLANTS



ED AND DISENCH

PAVEMENT'S Stephen Malkmus keeps his band's day in the sun, and the new *Terror Twilight*, in perspective.

Story: MATT ASHARE
Photos: DENNIS KLEIMAN

Last year, after R.E.M.'s 11th studio album in almost two decades had become the object of some rather lukewarm reviews, singer Michael Stipe hypothesized that if *Up* had been released by some band nobody had ever heard of, people would have greeted it as the best thing since the Beatles, or something like that. Perhaps he was right. Or maybe it would have been viewed as an album by a band trying way too hard to sound like R.E.M., only without enough good songs. Who knows? Stipe, though, was certainly right about one thing that even U2 has had to accept in the '90s: The difference between a great album and a good one often comes down to how it gets heard. Not every murmur is a *Murmur*.

"You sort of expect when you make an album that people are going to go, 'Yes, this is just the shit. This is exactly it. This is what we were looking for,'" explains Pavement singer/songwriter/guitarist Stephen Malkmus. It's a Saturday afternoon in New York City, two months before the release of what we've both agreed to refer to as Pavement's fifth studio album in ten years—not counting admittedly crucial EPs and compilations like 1993's *Westing (By Musket And Sextant)*—and Malkmus himself has brought up the Stipe anecdote to illustrate, as he puts it, that "Context is important. Good or bad is not really the main issue. I mean, what's better, *Slanted And Enchanted* or *Crooked Rain, Crooked Rain?*" he asks, referencing Pavement's first two full-lengths. "What matters is which one you bonded with more. *Slanted And Enchanted* came at the right time. I think there was also talent and good songs on that album—you have to be confident about that too. But for the fans it had that zeitgeist thing. And that really worked out for us."

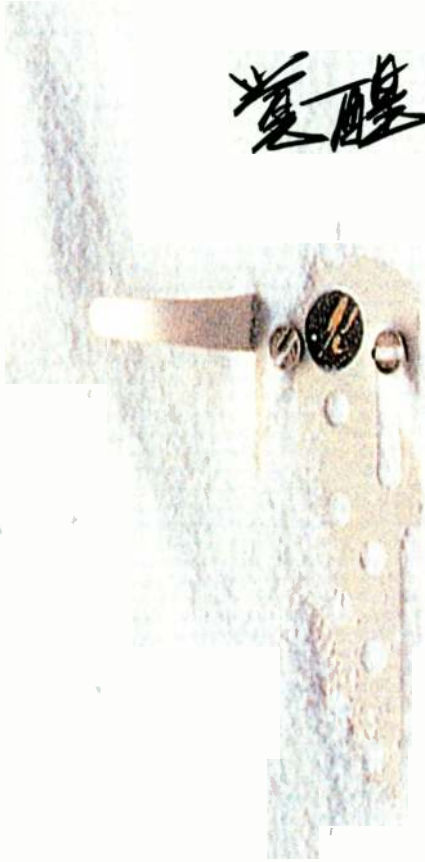
Crooked Rain had some of that zeitgeist thing as well, along with talent and good songs. The deadpan shots Malkmus took at Smashing Pumpkins and Stone Temple Pilots in "Range Life," the "no big hair!" line in "Cut Your Hair," and the skewed classic-rock guitar riffs all seemed to signal, if only for a month or two in 1994, indie-rock's arrival as a plausible commercial alternative to the "phony" alt-rock of STP. Pavement was still in the moment. But moments pass, relevance fades, and what you're left with, if you're as lucky as Pavement, is talent, good songs, and a core audience that appreciates what you do outside of any zeitgeist.

"Everything has a certain subculture that it goes to," Malkmus reflects. "Pavement is always going to be coming from indie-rock. We're part of the Built To Spill/Sebadoh/Sonic Youth indie pedigree. Nobody's going to drop us



PAVEMENT

PAVEMENT



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PAVEMENT(cont.)

in with Marilyn Manson and Smashing Pumpkins, or with ska or swing. And I guess, from my point of view, it's better to be related to Built To Spill than, I don't know, some other alternative rock band that's on the radio. I mean if we were going on tour and we had a choice of bringing James Iha's solo project or Modest Mouse from Seattle, we'd pick Modest Mouse because they're on an indie label and we have more kinship with the band in terms of the spirit and how they started."

Though it was produced by Radiohead studio guru Nigel Godrich, Pavement's new *Terror Twilight* (Matador) basically sounds like another solid collection of Malkmus tunes with cryptic lyrics sung in that unmistakably unsteady voice, and vaguely familiar melodies (including a little cop from "Brown Sugar" in "Platform Blues") skewed by odd guitar tunings. It's a lot like Pavement's more recent *Wowie Zowie* or *Brighten The Corners*, only with more acoustic guitars (because Malkmus finally bought an acoustic guitar when he moved to Oregon last year) and slightly less of a zeitgeist factor. In fact, between the country-tinged mood of "Major Leagues," the Beefheartian blues of "Platform Blues," and the folk-rock lilt of "Ann Don't Cry," *Terror Twilight* comes closer to classic rock than Pavement ever has before. And that's not something that seems to bother Malkmus.

"When you're at home and it's midnight and you're drinking with your friends, you don't put on some Live Skull album. You want to listen to like, *Beggars Banquet*. Because there's something going on there. The band was on a roll. Our goal is to be like that."

"When you're at home and it's midnight and you're drinking with your friends, you don't put on some Live Skull album. You don't want to listen to that. You want to listen to like, *Beggars Banquet*. Because there's something going on there. The band was on a roll. And that's what you want to hear. Our goal is to be like that. And, you know, you never really know until many years after which are the special ones. You may have just sort of played an album once or twice when it came out, but years later you start going back to it again and again. You just really can't tell. I mean, I loved Big Black at one time, but I don't really listen to those albums anymore."

In other words, Malkmus and Pavement have had their fleeting moment in the cultural spotlight—their 15 minutes of cool. And now, like Sonic Youth, the Stones, or maybe even the Grateful Dead, they're in it for some form of the long haul. And maybe, ten or 15 years from now, when VH-1 is doing a "Where Are They Now?" segment on Eminem and Britney Spears, *Terror Twilight* will have joined the ranks of *Beggars Banquet* and who knows, maybe *Up*, as one of those midnight-with-your-pals albums.

"We didn't sign a three-album deal just to score one big single and retire to our penthouses," jokes Malkmus. "I mean, I think that even if there was no interest in the group we might still make records. Because we do have ambition to have people find out about us. It's just not the kind of ambition that makes you sacrifice your values. We've just never felt like we have to lie with our sound to get more votes."

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World Radio History



"ROUND THE BEND" BY THE BETA BAND APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD.

MOTLEY STEW



Robin Jones

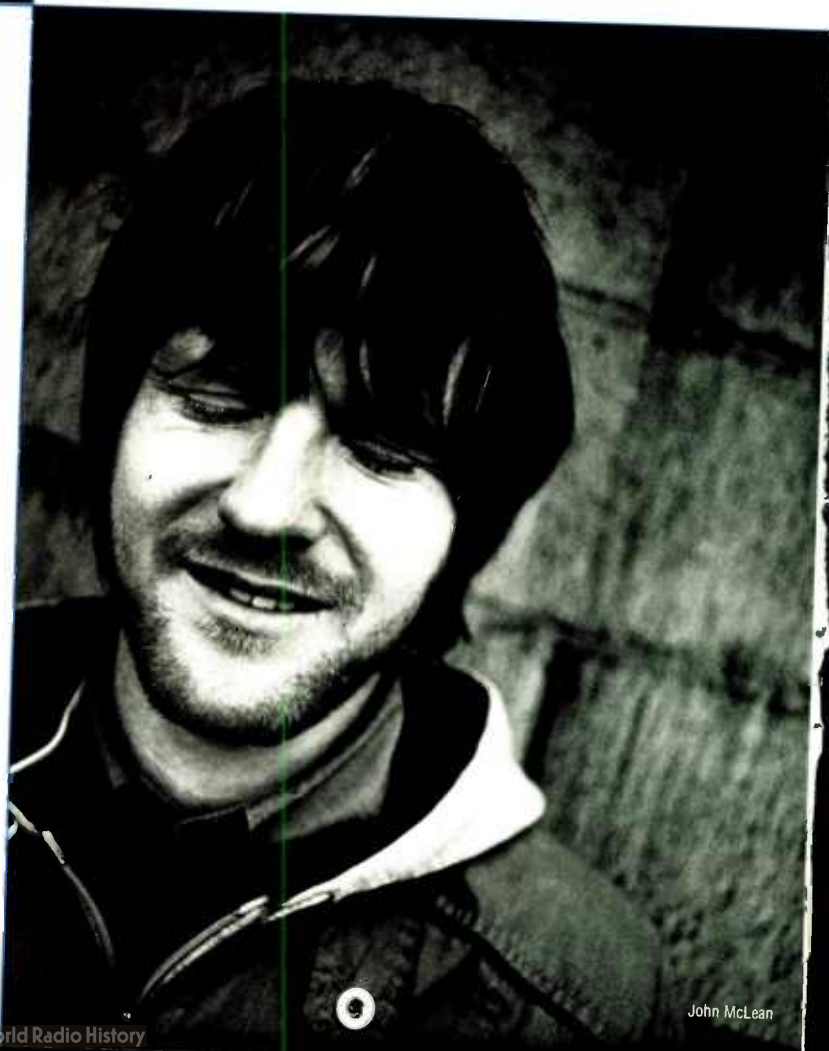
THE BETA BAND cooks up a baffling mix of sounds and styles. Just don't ask them to explain it.

Story: LYDIA VANDERLOO
Photos: CHARLIE LANGELLA

"Sometimes we do talk, sometimes we lie. Sometimes we talk and tell the truth," shrugs Beta Band member John McLean, commenting on my first, less-than-revealing interview session with the tight-lipped British quartet. "We don't like doing promotion at all, so we're not that interested." So why bother talking with people in my profession? "Well, the trip to New York, that was the main thing. And DJ-ing that night [at a party thrown for the band by its label, Astralwerks]. That was brilliant. We don't get a chance just to DJ for that long, and just play what we want." When it comes to musical expression in general, these four lads get pretty excited—McLean gushes as he tells how this press trip has yielded vintage vinyl from Kool & The Gang, the Meters and Method Man. But when it comes to helping me pin down their own music, well, that's another story.

And to be honest, help is what I was looking for. The Beta Band's self-titled debut traverses a wide stretch of musical terrain, making it difficult to locate exactly where the foursome is coming from. Take the album's introductory cut, "The Beta Band Rap," which skips through three segments, each drawing on a different style of music: A nursery rhyme-styled bit with lots of whistles gives way to a slowed-down hip-hop portion overlaid with a languorous rap, which morphs into an Elvis-styled rockabilly romp. Welcome to the schizophrenic world of the Beta Band.

But before you start shrugging your shoulders, recalling that Beck has



John McLean



Steve Mason

“We’re not really into pastiche or irony. That’s a huge difference with Beck. We’re not so scared that we hide behind the irony.”

already achieved both mainstream and artistic success fusing diverse genres, be forewarned that the Beta Band has its own agenda. “We’re not really into pastiche or irony or anything,” says McLean, who infuses the quartet’s psych-pop with samples, percussion and turntable manipulation. “I think that’s a huge difference with Beck, because I think he’s slightly more into that sort of thing, and we’re definitely not into any of that. Everything’s very serious and honest, hopefully. We’re not so scared that we hide behind the irony that a lot of folks seem to hide behind these days.”

So “The Beta Band Rap” isn’t a pastiche? “We just try different things,” he continues. “That song was different because it was really obvious, the different sections. The rest of the album, I hope the inferences are a bit more subtly involved, if you know what I mean.”

McLean’s lofty goal bears out on the Betas’ sprawling self-titled album. Each of the ten songs relies on a nugget of a melody, generally strummed out and sung by Steve Mason, but beneath his vocals—in fact seemingly surrounding his vocals—are not just guitars and drums, but samples, sleigh bells, spoons, xylophones, hand claps, and a variety of bird whistles, including one of a cuckoo. “It’s like a bird without all the fleshy bits and feathers,” chuckles bassist Richard Greentree in a rare, semi-revealing moment. In an even rarer moment, vocalist Mason elaborates on his lyric-writing technique. “Usually I just follow the rhythms of the songs, more like a percussionist. They don’t really tell a story, it’s just words that go in there. They mean something, but they don’t mean... anything.”

Like most of what these four say about their music, Mason’s comment seems elusive but is actually somewhat revealing. His suggestion that percussion is paramount to the Betas’ songwriting makes sense. Many of the tracks on *The Beta Band*, and on *The Three E.P.s*, last year’s collection of the group’s earliest recordings, take the listener on a jaunty roller-coaster ride that’s notably rhythmic. Although they’re centered on rock ‘n’ roll—recalling the trippy psych of early Pink



Richard Greentree



Floyd, or tracks from recent experimenters like Olivia Tremor Control—the songs are also informed by many styles, especially hip-hop: Samples, splicing, rhymed raps, and vocals with a hip-hop intonation figure prominently. In one of the Betas' many homemade videos, Mason is even spotted breakdancing.

The Beta Band's all-inclusive, kitchen-sink approach gives its music an art project flavor. And while the band jokes that "art student wank" is one of the more off-base journalist-penned phrases its music has inspired, the word "art" does figure heavily in the band's overall aesthetic. "We have always been interested in other things," notes McLean, who has earned a degree in art, has held exhibitions of his work, and has edited a visual art-based fanzine called *Flower Press*. "It's not [that we're] making the band multi-dimensional; it's bringing music into something we've always done, so music is one aspect of a larger thing. We don't really consider ourselves just a band. The band is obviously the biggest part of it, because it's making the money and it's what people latch on to in the first place, but we're still interested in what we've always been interested in, and that's everything."

The band's interest in "everything" has turned its live performances into spectacles. On stage, the quartet toys with a variety of genres

(including occasional pre-show DJ sets by the band) and McLean works all kinds of unexpected whirrs, buzzes and silly samples into the sonic hodgepodge, helping to create a circus-like atmosphere. Moreover, these former art students make the most of the visual possibilities (if on a somewhat limited budget). With a smug laugh, Greentree notes this includes "videos, projections, dressing the stage in various items, dressing up in something silly, [such as] a skin-tight suit of human hair. Once we were dipped in Latex."

It's not up to chance, however, which items and costumes turn up on stage. "We [had a theme] for the last shows," explains McLean. "It was an 'organic' theme, so the video projections were of us dressed up and running about in fields and mountains. And we had a lot of plastic plants on stage, so it was like playing in undergrowth. And we would introduce ourselves with a sort of circus song and there was a general sort of carboot theme—anything goes. But I think that will be abandoned for the next tour," he says of the band's first cluster of US dates. "We'll just try something else. I think we'll try more of a light theme or something more minimal. I'm not sure, but you've got to keep doing the opposite of what you've just done."

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SMOKIN' IN THE



L-R: Donna R. (Allison Robertson), Donna A. (Brett Anderson), Donna C. (Torry Castelono), Donna F. (Maya Ford)

THE DONNAS are barely out of their teens, but they're ready to *Get Skintight* about sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.

Stomping through the streets of Berkeley, California, in their flared jeans, pastel tank tops and Converse All-Stars, the four giggly girls of Palo Alto power-chord rawkers the Donnas are behaving like... well, four giggly girls. It's official: They've all quit college to pursue rock 'n' roll full time. And gleefully, they rib each other about the decision, ogle some hunky male students (they're only a block away from the UC campus), fawn over the latest Choco-Cat swag from the Sanrio toy store, and chatter in a dialect so teen-idiomatic it borders on Bart Simpsonese. "Hey! You flat-tired me!" yelps singer Brett Anderson (a.k.a. Donna A.), when someone accidentally steps on the heel of her sneaker. "Awwwww!" her pals empathetically moan in unison.

Arriving at the offices of their label, Lookout, the Donnas—still cackling to themselves—grab a patio table and order a round of soft drinks from an adjacent cafe. They're itching to discuss their new riff-happy album *Get Skintight*, which maps out a Donnas lexicon where guys are fresh meat ("Well Done," "Searching The Streets"), malls are real neat ("Zero"), pot smoking is sweet ("Hot Boxin'"), and chicks all have rap sheets ("Hyperactive," "Doin' Donuts," "Party Action"). Produced by fellow '70s-obsessed Kiss-hounds Jeff and Steve MacDonald (of Redd Kross renown), the disc signals the band's first bold step away from songwriting Svengali Darren Raffelli. Three years and two albums ago, Raffelli invited the then-teenaged kids, who called themselves the Electrocutes, to record a couple of one-off

BOYS ROOM



Story: TOM LANHAM
Photos: JAY BLAKESBURG

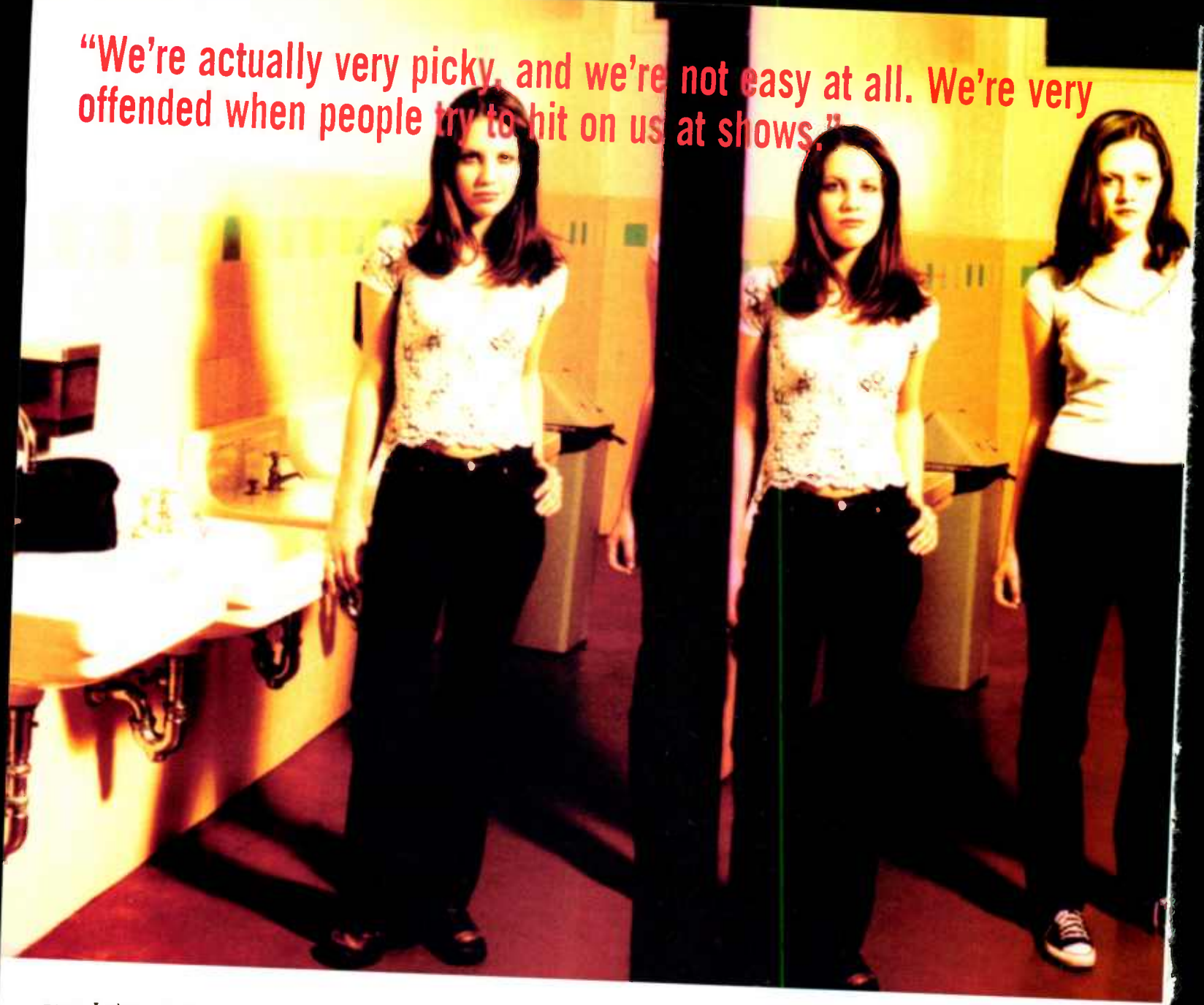
singles of his tunes under the Donnas flag. But having recorded two albums under Raffelli's direction, the Donnas have since grown into their steamrolling sound as nicely as they've grown into their steamy cool-kitten image. Which, the four agree, is summed up on the *Skintight* cheerleader-chant chorus of "Zero": "Let's go! Six-five-oh!"

"Six-five-oh is where we live, it's the area code of our phone numbers," explains mascaraed guitarist Allison Robertson (Donna R., to you). "So 650 is like, the gang, man. And if you're not down with 650, then you just don't understand." The MacDonalds—who captured Robertson's Ace Frehley/Angus Young-ish solos in all their firebrand glory—weren't hip to "650" at first. "They wanted to know all the slang for drugs now," snickers 20-year-old Donna R.,

"because it had been so long since they'd done it. They were, like, 'So whaddaya call pot now anyway?'" Wrapping up an intense ten-day recording and mixing session, adds Donna A., also 20, the Donnas asked Redd Kross to purchase some celebratory champagne. "And they were, like, 'You want us to pimp you some champagne?' And we had to tell 'em, No, that's called 'Shoulder Tapping.' From that point on they kept asking us, 'What's that thing called again? Shoulder *whatsit*?'"

The MacDonalds helped the Donnas to achieve an undeniably fiery, punk-fueled sound for *Skintight* that matches the gals' vocal vitriol. The album opens with the sound of a fly unzipping, then Robertson's static, stuttering axework sets up a frantic, hip-grinding

"We're actually very picky, and we're not easy at all. We're very offended when people try to hit on us at shows."



pace; Anderson's slacker-alooof sneer only underscores the hunter-versus-prey vibe: "I wanna take you home with me/Wine and dine you with some cable TV/C'mon now, don't be so shy/In those skin-tight jeans you're my kinda guy." Only a few tracks later, and the Donnas have already turned praying mantis, biting the head off their intended with "I didn't like you anyway—I was just looking for fun... B-O-R-I-N-G!/ Too bad you're not the boy for me!"

But don't get the Donnas wrong, fellas. "It's how we make jokes," sighs blonde bombshell drummer Torry Castelono (that's right—Donna C.), "but guys think 'Ohmigawd! They're writing about a boy! That means they wanna do stuff with *all* boys!' But usually, we're writing about one specific boy."

"Or a hot boy!" Donna R. chimes in, her eyes flashing devilishly. "Not just any boy. We're actually very picky, and we're not easy at all. We're very offended when people try to hit on us at shows."

"It never works out," adds Donna A., shaking her head sadly.

"We're friendly," Donna R. continues. "But if guys think we're like that, then they don't get the humor, because I think most of our songs are silly, and all of 'em reflect the stuff that we joke about together as four girls."

Castelono considers this before adding, "But I think that we also do a lot of the stuff that we sing about, as well."

Robertson is already nodding in agreement. "Hot Boxin'" is a pretty true story! It's when you roll up the windows of your car when you're smoking pot. And I am the person in the song who has to learn 'how to talk to the dude,' because I'm never very nice to the police. I don't have any experience with them, so when I do talk to them, I freak out and get all defensive. Then they know something's up, and I get everyone in trouble."

"I have my own dumb way of dealing with the cops," interjects Anderson, extending her arms, wrists pressed together. "I'm always like, 'Okay, just take me away! I'm baaaaad!'"

This technique didn't help the Donnas on their European tour last year. They were tooling through France in a rented van—marked "escort service," unbeknownst to the band—when they were nearly arrested for hashish possession. Robertson squirms uneasily in her seat at the recollection: "Uhh... that wasn't *ours*, just to set the record straight. But it was someone's in the car—they forgot they had it and made Maya carry it." Clad in a Ratt jersey, bassist Maya Ford (uh huh, Donna F.) shrugs it off.



French police confiscated all of the Donnas' passports. "And then the dog came in," shivers Castelono. "But the dog was really stupid and didn't seem to know what pot was. All it wanted to do was eat the grass on the side of the road and smell my cymbal bag." She flicks her wrist dismissively. "Whatever! The dog didn't even find the hash in the van—the policemen did. And then they stuck their hands in all our pockets, opened all of our makeup, looked in all our lip gloss, and even trampled Brett's sunglasses." Happily, the incident ended with just a fine.

Back in the US, the Donnas were quickly snapped up by film director Darren Stein, who cast them as the school band for his bitchy teen flick *Jawbreaker*. No sooner had the shooting wrapped, than the group scored another Hollywood role, playing the key character's fave-rave outfit in the upcoming Melissa Joan Hart film *Next To You*. Currently, they're working on a version of Kiss's "Strutter" for the *Detroit Rock City* soundtrack. In keeping with the Donnas' penchant for vintage hard rock covers (e.g. AC/DC's "Shot Down In Flames"), *Get Skintight* sports a punchy send-up of Mötley Crüe's "Too Fast For Love"; the gals are also considering adding Tommy Tutone's "867-5309" to their repertoire. It may not be 650, but it'll do.

Despite their respect for rock 'n' roll's history, the Donnas are increasingly concerned with backing their own image with the goods. Last year, when their second album *American Teenage Rock 'N' Roll Machine* started to attract a lot of attention, Robertson says she realized that this playful Donnas deal "was now a much bigger thing. That's when we decided to put all our effort into the Donnas and actually change things to sound like our style." Everything you hear on the record, she boasts, "was our idea. There was nothing that anybody else added. It's really lame for anybody to knock us girls because they think we can't write. When really we can. We'd already written 30 songs before we started working with another writer."

At interview's end, the Donnas look momentarily puzzled. It's a beautiful spring day; everywhere UC students are hurrying off to class. But these gals' main responsibility is to approve *Skintight*'s saucy cover photos. Everything they need to know they've learned from constant touring. Namely, giggles Anderson, that "French boys all smell like body odor!" Oh yeah, one more thing: "All of us now know how to get in and out of a gas station bathroom without touching anything with your hands!"

NMM

CHEMICAL BROTHERS



BROTHERS ON A

Rowlands left; Simons, right

Tom is all right, Ed is all right, they just seem a little weird—*Surrender* is a record made not just for the dance floor, but your life. Is this the Chemicals' brave new world, or just a cheap trick?



NOTHING BUT PLEASURES

Story: KURT B. REIGHLEY
Photos: DENNIS KLEIMAN

 "LET FOREVER BE" BY CHEMICAL BROTHERS APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD.
World Radio History

Long-limbed Tom Rowlands, the blonde half of UK duo the Chemical Brothers, ambles into the hotel room and curls up on the floor. Almost immediately, he spies my in-flight reading, lying discarded at partner Ed Simons's feet: the English edition of a ponderous German tome entitled *DJ Culture*. He snatches it up and opens to the back.

"Don't bother," quips Ed. "I already checked... we're not in it."

Tom chuckles, makes a cursory flip through the text-heavy pages, and tosses the book aside. I assure them that, upon further perusal, they'd have found themselves in very esteemed company: "Jellybean" Benitez, Mantronix, Mixmaster Morris, and Invisibl Skratch Piklz are just a few seminal figures absent from the index. The Prodigy, Underworld and Fatboy Slim are all MIA, too.

But where you won't find the Chemical Brothers these days is inconsequential compared to where you will since the release of their 1997 LP *Dig Your Own Hole*: on MTV, where "Setting Sun" (a collaboration with Oasis's Noel Gallagher) and "Block Rockin' Beats" garnered Buzz Clip status; at the Grammys, where the latter track snatched the Best Rock Instrumental Performance prize; and playing sold-out live shows and DJ gigs around the globe. Should you wind up in a remote corner of Newfoundland or Nevada with nary two breakbeats to rub together, a visit to any record store should turn up a Chemical Brothers title to ignite a fire under your sorry ass.

Where the Chemical Brothers are right now feels pretty damned exciting, too, albeit not in a flashbulbs-and-champagne way. It's more of

Unfortunately, the Pet Shop Boys already nabbed Liza Minnelli, and Tiny Tim has left the building; Noel, conveniently, had some free time. "It just happened that we saw him out with the Beta Band, and he offered his services. We felt that having two people who'd appeared on the last record was nice, for a sense of continuity. Beth [Orton] had been on the last two."

But while the roster of guest stars is dazzling, *Surrender* isn't just dance music's answer to *The Love Boat*. Musically, it covers wider ground than any of their previous releases have. The burbling "Orange Wedge" recalls Stereolab's funkier moments, while the title tune falls somewhere between the classic Joe Meek production on the Tornados '60s hit "Telstar" and the moodier moments of Newcleus's old-school early '80s electro. Climbing behind the wheel while playing the tweaked-out "Under The Influence" is likely to result in a speeding ticket, charges of reckless driving, or both. And yet despite the diversity of timbres, tempos, and vocal styles, *Surrender* also feels remarkably integrated.

"It wasn't as easy to put together as it sounds," admits Ed. "It was the most torturous thing we've done. So much effort went into every track."

The proof is in the pudding. The emotional tug of these 11 new cuts outshines everything in the Chemical canon to date. Not that their early work has aged poorly—cuts like "My Mercury Mouth" still sound fantastic, even six years later. But the first two albums were more like landmarks than touchstones. One slapped them on because they

"In the big beat scene, the way people get responses from a crowd is by relying on a certain set of clichés. And there will come a time when you don't get that response. We wanted to be out of that before it happened."

an "If My Friends Could See Me Now" vibe, as we're sitting around in a tight circle, picking at room service snacks, and basking in the sunlight filtering into a suite at Hollywood's luxurious Chateau Marmont. The boys are courageously fending off jet lag from yesterday's flight back from Japan.

But the most amazing place to find Tom Rowlands and Ed Simons this afternoon? In a reflective, talkative—and yes, almost giddy—headspace when it comes to discussing their third studio album, *Surrender* (Astralwerks).

"We really want to talk about the record, probably more than we've ever felt like doing before," announces Ed. Now that's a refreshing change of pace. In the past, interviewers typically found the amicable Brothers entertaining to chat with, but not especially illuminating on the topic of their music.

"We're not getting any better at it," Tom quickly adds. "But we want to do it. Revolutionary zeal."

Very well then. To quote the Chemicals' current UK single "Hey Boy Hey Girl"—"Superstar DJs... here we go!"

Quite simply, *Surrender* is the Chemical Brothers' most impressive record yet. Before you even hear the music, you'll be wowed by the stellar line-up. Some collaborators are new: Mazzy Star's Hope Sandoval, Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie, and that grand old man of Manchester, Bernard Sumner (New Order/Electronic). Others have returned to reprise roles from the last album: Jonathan Donahue of Mercury Rev and the aforementioned Gallagher.

"The track Noel appears on is something we were really keen to find the right person for," says Ed, as if the obvious similarities between "Setting Sun" and the new "Let Forever Be" had escaped their attention. "We were thinking of really weird names, plucking them out of the air."

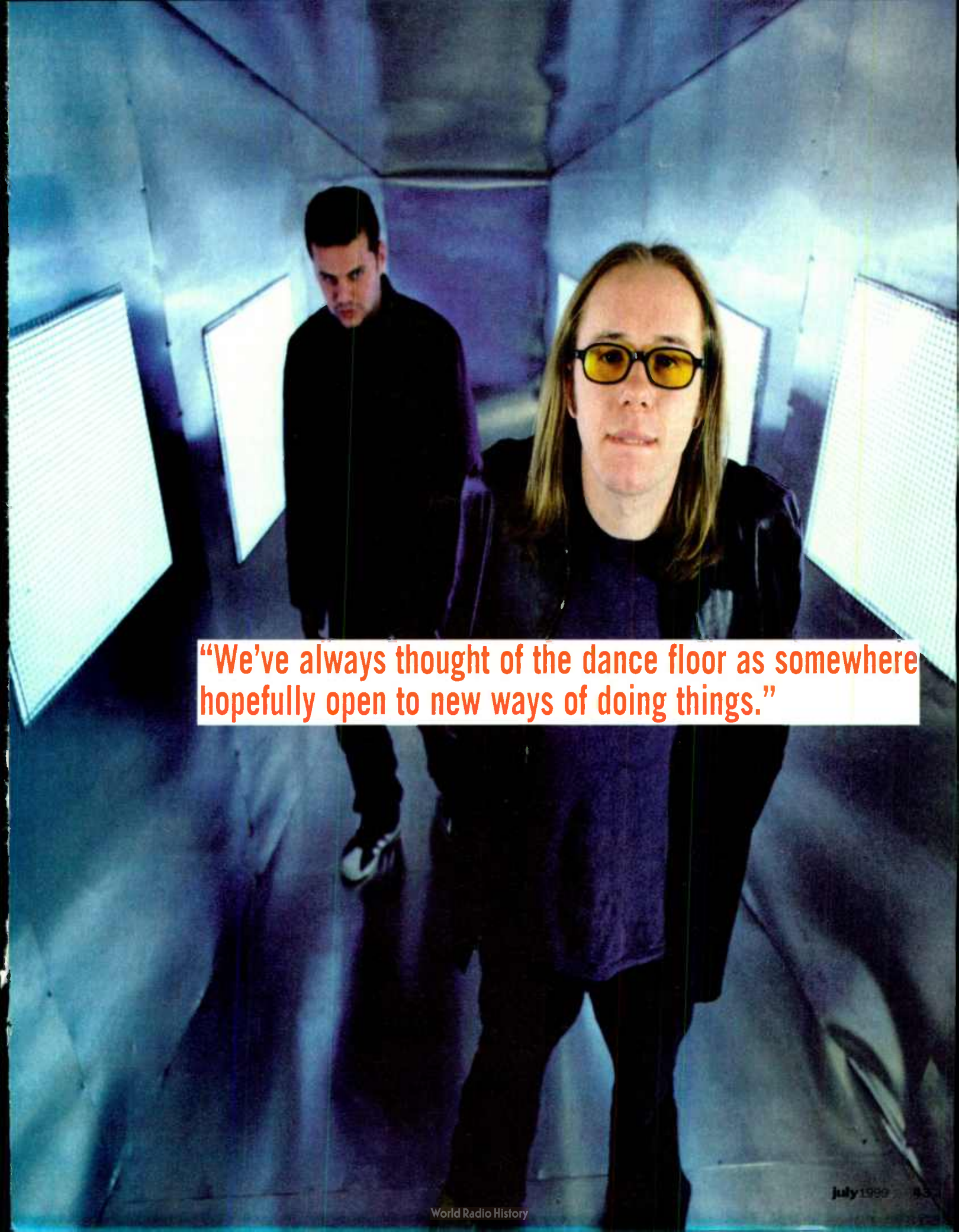
complemented a pre-existing mood, usually of the party-hearty variety. Bacchanalian nights spent dancing with friends to the Chemicals sweetened repeated spins, but in general they prompted a fairly narrow range of responses. They were roller-coaster rides not in terms of highs and lows, but simply in their power to make you throw your hands over your head and scream. *Surrender* is a much more sentimental affair.

"I've gotten the vibe that people listen to what we do with the breakbeats and think, 'Oh, it's heavy,'" confesses Ed. "Like it's all a big barrage of sound. We like the idea that this record is something you can really cherish, and not just admire for its technique, and go, 'Wow, that bass drum sounds wild!'"

"Although they were still hard work, *Dig Your Own Hole* or *Exit Planet Dust* were easier to make, because it felt like the music was part of something we were getting into," he continues. Whether it was striking out against the tyranny of interchangeable house acts that glut the European charts, or just trying to create the perfect track to augment their raucous DJ sets at London's Heavenly Social club, "there was always a natural arena for that music. Whereas this time, we had to really sit down and dream it all up, and work out what we were going to do."

Don't think that the transition from peddling an established sound to creating something new and intangible wasn't a nerve-racking experience. It was. "At first, not having an environment for the music to work in was daunting," recalls Tom. But eventually they took inspiration from the challenge. "It really reminded us of how we first started making records, when we'd try to sell them out the back of Ed's car. We'd be going into shops and people were saying, 'Oh, no... this won't work. It's too slow.' It didn't fit in with the fact that most DJs were playing trance music at 130 BPM."

Back in 1992, the thundering hodgepodge of Liz Fraser samples and eardrum-piercing wails that composed "Song To The Siren"



“We’ve always thought of the dance floor as somewhere hopefully open to new ways of doing things.”



afternoon snacks. They worked very hard forging *Surrender*, and they're willing to log in the promotional hours to make sure listeners understand how special it is to them.

With all this talk of new approaches to music and a guest roster that reads like the jacket flap for *The Trouser Press Guide To '90s Rock*, diehard Chemical Brothers fans are probably gnashing their teeth. Fear not, denizens of the dance floor. Tom and Ed have not sold their samplers to the junk man. "We love sample culture," reiterates Tom. "It's where we come from, the postmodern idea of taking this and this and that."

But the year spent recording involved a lot of experimentation, striking the right balance between timbres electronically generated from scratch, live performances on traditional instruments, and doctored

"We like the idea that this record is something you can really cherish, and not just admire for its technique, and go, 'Wow, that bass drum sounds wild!'"

found sounds. "It's all three mixed in," says Ed.

"There are more organic sounds. Now when we sample things, sometimes you hear the tone of the original sound a bit more." If you bother to shell out the union wages to have a brass section come in and blow, as they did on a couple tracks, you want the investment to be semi-recognizable on the finished product.

"People will say there are a lot fewer samples on this record, but samplers are still at the core of our music. It's just that the way they're used is more integrated, not just bolting things on." Rather than triggering "Oh, that bit sounds like..." reactions, the songs of *Surrender* strike the ear as distinct entities. "Things don't ride on top of each other," concurs Tom, "they come together and mesh."

"We went through quite a lot of different phases," he elaborates of the governing aesthetic. At the time, Rowlands was buying lots of records by electronic innovators like musique concrète pioneer Pierre Schaeffer. "That gave us the idea to have sounds your eyes can follow. Technology is able to provide you with whole new sounds that you'd never heard before. We were enthused about the notion of making those."

That revolutionary zeal is really starting to simmer now. "I've had enough of music that's bland and formulaic," he announces. "One basic thing about this record, there's a lot less obvious breaks. There are so many of those records now, where you hear"—and he bursts into an impromptu beat that's probably programmed on a million keypads—"that it's empty. You don't even hear it any more."

But if that's the sound that pays your rent, and keeps you in milkshakes and biscuits in posh LA hotels, why turn your nose up at it? Because the returns that really matter, the aesthetic ones, were diminishing rapidly. "We've always thought of the dance floor as somewhere hopefully open to new ways of doing things. But we felt that, particularly in the big beat scene, the way people get responses from a crowd was by always relying on a certain set of clichés," says Tom. "And there will come a time when you don't get that response. We wanted to be out of that before it happened."

Even the sequencing of *Surrender* represented a step back from their DJ instincts. Listen to the way the opening trio of tracks—"Music: Response," "Under The Influence" and "Out Of Control"—escalate in excitement. But then, rather than maintaining that dizzy threshold of excitement, they dip back down with "Orange Wedge," a scoop of sonic sorbet before the grinding "Let Forever Be." It's a programming approach more suggestive of old school DJs like Paradise Garage's Larry Levan,



sounded revolutionary. The patented Chemical formula cleared a path for acts including Crystal Method, Death In Vegas, and Fatboy Slim. Nowadays, TV commercials hawking everything from soda to sneakers boast a "big beat" soundtrack; it's impossible to even conceive of ESPN2 without the sound.

"Obviously we've carved out a place for the music to exist," observes Tom of where their legacy fits into the pop culture spectrum today. "The records we made had quite a large impact on a hell of a lot of music. And now, making this record, we feel much the same way: We've had to invent a new place for it."

"It's shaped our attitudes towards all this as well," says Ed, gesturing at my tape recorder, the posh hotel room, the overpriced

who used records to create a narrative of peaks and valleys, rather than the current vogue for non-stop thrills.

"We were talking about how our previous records were put together by their BPM," Tom reveals. Using that approach, the "logical" order was easy to establish. "But this one was more put together by moods, the tone of the record and where it could take you."

"It's less of a DJ record," Ed chimes in. "It's more of emotional. *Brothers Gonna Work It Out*, from last year, was our DJ record." Taking a two-week break to assemble that compilation helped them purge traditional impulses from their system, and resume the odyssey of making *Surrender* with fresh perspective.

If any single track on the new album illustrates the Chemical Brothers mindset circa 1999, it's the record's centerpiece, "Sunshine Underground." Blissful and flute-strewn, it lifts the listener aloft in concentric swirls of colored smoke. "It works in a different way," says Ed of the final product (which went through countless incarnations, periodically road-tested at DJ sets). "That's what we felt was important, using different rhythms, lots of different drums. We wanted to use a whole new variety of sounds that we hadn't used before, but still keeping the power, energy, and vitality of our music."

Easier said than done. "We'd shied away from our own sound too much at one stage in the record, and the music had become almost bland," Tom claims. "Energy's nothing to be afraid of. It made our records work, so we moved back. Sometimes you feel a bit forced into a corner, but you've got to celebrate what you've done, what you do best."

Tom and Ed do such an astonishing job of condensing the magic of *Surrender* into reasonable, succinct explanations, it's hard to believe they went through hell creating it. But when phrases like "forced into a corner" start being bandied about, the obstacles seem more believable.

"Making the record was always exciting and fun, but we got very discouraged at one point," Ed admits. "It just seemed so epic. All the collaborations were a lot of work to get together. Tom had a more single-minded view that somewhere along the line it was going to be a great record, but it seemed so diverse I couldn't see how it was all going to have any thread to it."

Ed was doing the doubting, not Thomas. "We haven't really had to struggle," he points out. "There's a fear that once you've done pretty well as a band, plowing your own course, always getting good critical notices, that you'll get very self-indulgent. It's happened to so many bands that I was trying to be our conscience, trying to think 'Maybe we got it wrong.'"

As any artist worth his salt will tell you, thinking closely about your art is often the worst thing you can do to further its creation. Time and again, as they were trying to get closer to achieving something new, the

boys felt their goal slipping out of reach.

Mercifully, at this juncture, past successes pointed towards the way out. Sort of. Having a huge smash with "Setting Sun" (a #1 single in England) didn't mean the Brothers had carte blanche to repeat their previous hits. But if being a big pop sensation isn't good for much besides getting into clubs with a minimum of hassle, it certainly did make ringing up the man who would help Tom and Ed stop chasing their own tails—Bernard Sumner—a heck of a lot easier.

Oddly enough, close encounters with new wave icons form a thread that's long run through the Chemical Brothers story. They bought their first flight cases from Martin Fry of ABC ("The Look of Love," "Be Near Me"), and Boy George has been their hero ever since they read his autobiography *Take It Like A Man*. When "Out of Control" (which also features Gillespie's backing vocals) started to take a decidedly New Order-ish turn, they thought, "Why muck about? We should go to the top!"

Wisely, they scripted their pitch before ringing Sumner up. "We've still got the piece of paper," says Ed. "Dear Bernard... Hi Bernard... Hi B..." he rattles off, in a variety of enchanting tones. "We were very lucky, because he was on the radio just before we phoned him, and he was going on and on about how he hates that [New Order bassist] Peter Hook calls him 'Barney.' But I think of his name as Barney. So it could've been a lot worse: 'Awright, Barney?' Click."

In the beginning, the boys were intimidated by their illustrious collaborator. "The first time he came in, he picked up his guitar to tune it, and was playing 'Love Will Tear Us Apart,'" recalls Tom. "I was star struck." Both the boys take on a glow as they reminisce. "It was amazing to work with him. He's made so many records and had a lot of experiences. But then he was so dedicated to [our project]. It would be half-five in the morning and he's going, 'Do another vocal!'"

Ed snickers. "He's the only person I've ever seen who wanted to stay in the studio longer than Tom. We called him the Little Devil. He's got a real thirst for making the best music he can."

"It was such an education, talking to someone like that," he concedes. "He taught us about being open to music. We're always quite hung up on *The Concept*, thinking, 'It would be a brilliant idea to put something like this with that.'" The original bass line for "Out of Control" was completely different; not because it necessarily sounded fantastic, but because it fit their preordained agenda. Barney didn't buy that. "He kept saying, 'You can't listen to music like that. Don't listen to *The Concept*, just listen to the music.'"

"The only approach is using the double-think trick, all along," Tom decides. "But then you have to just trust what you like about music."

"We've always made records that we liked, but this one's... personal," he concludes. "It's like a record you love."

NMM

"The first time Bernard Sumner came in, he picked up his guitar to tune it, and was playing 'Love Will Tear Us Apart.' I was star struck."



APPLES IN STEREO ★
Her Wallpaper Reverie Elephant 6-spinART

The track listing and CD readout for *Her Wallpaper Reverie* indicate 15 selections, but the Apples In Stereo's new mini-LP actually consists of seven "proper" pop songs interspersed with eight brief sonic vignettes. The resulting package clocks in at 27 minutes and falls a tad short of the band's lofty standards. On too many of the tracks, the Apples engage in willful imitation of laconic '60s stoner pop, rather than use it as a palette for their own brand of revisionist history as they've done so effectively on previous

OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Revisionist '60s psychedelic pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Dukes Of Stratoshear, Olivia Tremor Control, Yellow Submarine.

releases. It's impossible to hear a song like "Strawberryfire" (or even read its title) without thinking Beatles. The Apples do connect on two gems, though: "Ruby" is an irresistible British music hall confection riding a wave of piano and alto sax, and the similarly peppy "Questions And Answers" is this outing's contribution from drummer and secret weapon Hilarie Sidney, who seems good for one ace melody on each release. Elephant Six fans will be satisfied with *Her Wallpaper Reverie*, especially if they treat it as a killer EP with some diverting B-sides and bonus doodles. Newcomers should consider starting with the Apples' more fully realized works, *Tone Soul Evolution* and *Fun Trick Noisemaker*.

>>>Glen Sarvady



BIOHAZARD
New World Disorder Mercury

Brooklyn's Biohazard has been a fixture on the New York hardcore punk/metal scene for nearly a decade, but has kept a notably low profile since 1996's disappointing *Mata Leao*. The band should reclaim its title as champion of the metal-core ring with *New World Disorder*. The Brooklyn stompers combine social consciousness—the lyrics focus on life in warzone-like Brooklyn—with choppy, metallic riffs. The authenticity of Biohazard's street upbringing has been questioned and the band has dodged sell-out bullets for signing to a major label, but while such

OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Metal-edged urban hymns.

R.I.Y.L.:

Sepultura, Rage Against The Machine, Downset.

criticism might have crippled another band, it's only made Biohazard stronger and angrier. The result is an album of mid-tempo, testosterone-amped anthems. The vocal tag team of adenoidal guitarist Billy Graziadei and barksy bassist Evan Seinfeld creates gruff harmonies with a distinct hip-hop flavor, beefing up the overall urban vibe. The majority of *New World Disorder* treads familiar Biohazard territory, with military cadet-style cadences, although the group experiments a bit on "Switchback," with guitars so down-tuned, they sound like gifts from Korn. While the lyrics' "a-b-a-b" rhyme scheme tends to bubble like a pot of aged Velveeta, Biohazard fans aren't really in it for the poetic commentary. For those about to rock, Biohazard sure salutes you with *New World Disorder*.

>>>Amy Sciarretto



BLUE RAGS
Eat At Joe's Sub Pop

If North Carolina's Blue Rags were a whiskey, they'd be a blend, not a single malt. The band is blessed with three separate but equal young songwriters, united in their love of old time music and bar band fervor, and *Eat At Joe's* sounds like a juke joint's jukebox (or, given the album title, maybe a diner's): some barrelhouse piano, some twangy guitars, some blues riffs, a lot of jug band attitude. While their debut album split covers and originals, *Eat At Joe's* is all Blue Rags (aside from a hidden cover), and they've taken the flavors of

OUT:

May 4.

FILE UNDER:

Rollicking roots.

R.I.Y.L.:

Southern Culture On The Skids, Squirrel Nut Zippers, Jennyjanykind, Supersuckers.

their heroes and distilled them into their own compositions. Guitarist Aaron Wood's songs lean toward Appalachian country; his voice has the most twang of the bunch. Scott Sharpe, who plays an archtop guitar, favors rockabilly and blues; his songs feature catchy melodies and sweet vocals. Jake Hollifield, whose piano defines the band's sound, is responsible for the ragtime in the Blue Rags, and his Professor Longhair homage "High Down Low" is one of the album's highlights. If that sounds like a formula for a series of genre exercises, rest assured that the divisions aren't so crude or clearly defined or restrictive; the styles intertwine like kudzu on a telephone pole. *Eat At Joe's*? Sure, with a shot and a chaser.

>>>Steve Klinge



BOSSA CUCA NOVA: REVISITED CLASSICS
Various Artists Six Degrees

These days, American and European DJs can't get enough of vintage Brazilian wax. Part kitsch and plenty cool, the erotic rhythms, horn charts and vocals in classic Brazilian music can go a long way in a remix. Three Brazilian DJ/producers, finally realizing what's been in front of them for years, exploit the hip swank of Rio's pop on *Bossa Cuca Nova*, a record that reworks classic tracks with help from a few new singers and also legends like Carlos Lyra. It helps that one of the nouveau

OUT:

April 27.

FILE UNDER:

Boys and girls from Ipanema.

R.I.Y.L.:

Los Amigos Invisibles, Red Hot + Rio, Belezza Tropical.

nova remixers, Mario Menescal, is the son of old-school bossa nova songwriter and record executive Roberto Menescal. Thanks to pop's archive, the young Menescal and his gang have some real treasures to work with, though some tracks remind you how quickly bossa nova can congeal into flavorless cheese if not simmered properly. The "remixes" are never too drastic, just punchy, often funky updates on the already solid grooves, much like what Brand New Heavies and others did with vintage soul. Two original versions of the remixed tracks are included for you to compare. Plus, if you wanted to take a stab at remixing yourself, the producers have included six minutes of "Beats For DJs" at the end of the disc.

>>>Steve Clabottoni



ADAM DANIEL ★

Blue Pop

APG Music

OUT:

May 18.

FILE UNDER:

Warm, versatile solo guy.

R.I.Y.L.:

Elliott Smith, Fountains Of Wayne, James Iha.

Matthew Sweet. Opening with an incongruous synth blast, *Blue Pop* sticks close to doo-wop, power-pop and gentle guitar ballads without sounding ironic or self-conscious. Daniel's songwriting skills are impressively limber: He shifts from the punchy "Guess I Got A Girl" to the whispered, wounded "You Wrecked Me" as if he's been writing exclusively in each style all along. Like Nick Drake, he sounds most at home on the heartsick ballads—the acoustic-to-orchestrated "Why I Can't Be Beside You" and the gentle "Lovebug." *Blue Pop* sounds merely nice on first listen but makes a greater impression over time, as the melodies imprint on the brain. What Daniel shares with the aforementioned brooding guys is that mix of lyrical vulnerability and sonic mastery—as if the sound of a perfectly crafted track can fortify a tender heart. >>>Chris Molampy



JULIA DARLING

Figure 8

Wind-up

OUT:

June 15.

FILE UNDER:

Lilith fare.

R.I.Y.L.:

Kate Bush, Beth Orton, Tori Amos.

stylings, *Figure 8*'s biggest strength is its remarkable stylistic eclecticism: Darling is able to shift from electronic drum tracks to lush, orchestral arrangements to straight-ahead pop songs to cello-tinged ballads with commendable ease, and she does it all with a self-confident poise that is infectious. The disc, which is the native New Zealander's first, does trip over a frustrating lack of emotional complexity. Lines like "I want you to deepen my life," "My thoughts are out to get me," and "I remember everything" pepper *Figure 8*. But if you can ignore the specifics of Darling's subject matter and look at the bigger picture, this is an admirable debut.

>>>Seth Mnookin



DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND

Buck Jump

Mammoth

OUT:

May 25.

FILE UNDER:

Greasy and groovy funk.

R.I.Y.L.:

Medeski Martin And Wood, James Brown instrumentals, Meters.

of styles, from the Louis Jordan cover "Hey Joe" to the township jive of "Pet The Kat" to the World Saxophone Quartet-like fanfare of "Time," but the rhythm section connects them. Relative newcomers to the DDBB clan, drummer Terence Higgins and sousaphonist Julius McKee propel the music directly to the feet, and in songs like "Nuttballus" and "Dead Dog In The Street," McKee's sousaphone produces lines as funky as you'll hear on any hip-hop album this year, and twice as deep. Even when the Dirty Dozen strikes a second-line pattern in the aptly named "Old School," the result feels funky rather than traditional. And though the arrangements allow for hard-blowing solos that will appeal to the brain, *Buck Jump*'s feat is the funk. >>>Steve Klinge



FRED EAGLESMITH

50-Odd Dollars

Razor & Tie

OUT:

June 15.

FILE UNDER:

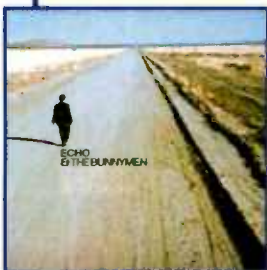
Canadian country chronicles.

R.I.Y.L.:

Steve Earle, John Prine, Georgia Satellites.

One of North American music's more colorful characters, Fred Eaglesmith travels the continent peddling his self-released albums and inviting congregations into his misfit world of big-haired women and crooning cowboys. Now with two indie-label records under his thick leather belt, this Native American farmboy from Guelph, Ontario, is looking increasingly legit, although his style hasn't budged. Without apologies, Eaglesmith draws on every country cliché known to Nashville on *50-Odd Dollars*, then twists the familiar scenes of betrayal, lost love and automotive adventure into narratives that draw on humor and despair more colorfully than the type of one-dimensional fare passed off by the commercial cowboy hat crew. The caterwauling guitar and steady stomp of "Rodeo Boy" bridges rock and country like the late-'70s work of another Canadian maverick, Neil Young. Eaglesmith's sidekick Washboard Hank adds a peculiar clatter to tracks like the crawling "Steel Guitar" and the hilarious romp "Mighty Big Car" (sample lyric: "Elvis had one/So did Hank/They don't look like money/They look like the bank"). Because the themes and basic musical structure sound familiar, Eaglesmith could be dismissed as trite, but a careful listener will find gems like "Carter," a lilting acoustic and slide tune pleasantly reminiscent of Townes Van Zandt.

>>>Richard Martin



ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN ★

What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?
London

When Echo & The Bunnymen reformed two years ago, it was easy to be skeptical of their motivations. After all, here was a band that hadn't released a great album since 1984's opus *Ocean Rain*. It was a band that dragged on in name only on *Reverberation*, the echo of the Bunnymen that Will Sergeant and Les Pattinson made with a new singer after Ian McCulloch departed for a solo career. And they reclaimed the Bunnymen mantle only after everyone yawned at the McCulloch/Sergeant collaboration

Electrafixion. But Echo's second album back is nothing less than glorious. This is the record that should have followed *Ocean Rain*, a passionate set of lushly orchestrated songs supposedly intended as McCulloch's tender apology to his wife for having strayed. McCulloch's voice sounds marvelous, and he hasn't written such revealing, intimate songs since his solo debut, *Candleland*. Sergeant's invigorating guitar shimmers as ever, but it's the orchestrations that bring a sense of timelessness and grandeur to the dreamy "When It All Blows Over" and the gentle epic "Fools Like Us." They've delivered on the promise of a decade ago with an album of such maturity and spine-tingling emotional sweep that here's hoping the Bunnymen have found exactly what they're going to do with their life. >>>David Daley

OUT:
June 8.

FILE UNDER:
This guitar says sorry.

R.I.Y.L.:
Echo's *Ocean Rain*, Lloyd Cole's *Love Story*, Tower Of Song: *The Songs Of Leonard Cohen*.



FLORALINE

Floraline
Minty Fresh

Sure, plenty of artists are resurrecting lounge pop these days. Some bands, like Pizzicato Five, deconstruct it into a post-modern bachelor pad soundtrack; others, such as the Aluminum Group, feature indie rockers stretching the boundaries of their musicianship, recreating the lido deck grooves with tongue firmly planted in cheek. Atlanta's Floraline, on the other hand, charms with its innocence, sounding like the type of fluffy new wave combo you'd stumble upon late one night in France circa 1982. Linda Sharp's icy swoon,

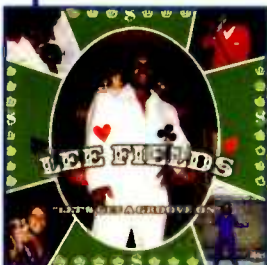
layered in a puffy cloud of chorus, recalls the last days of disco's golden era. Jesse Atchinson's beats come off like a Casio on simmer, and as cheesy as they are, there's something infectious about those faux-samba rhythms. The keyboards whistle and purr, hinting at, but never attempting to recreate, lush arrangements. Guitarist Jason Winter-Jarnigan stays neatly in the pocket, carefully balancing funk and jazz influences. What enables Floraline to succeed where others have failed is that the band members are well aware of their limitations as musicians and know there's no need for a barrage of horn triplets when a four-note synthesizer lick will do. Close your eyes and you'll feel like you're back at the Café Bleu.

>>>Neil Gladstone

OUT:
May 4.

FILE UNDER:
New wave lounge pop.

R.I.Y.L.:
Stereolab, Style Council, Komeda.



LEE FIELDS
Lets Get A Groove On
Desco

Winner of the Genre Most Frequently Bastardized Award for over two decades running, funk, as a concept, is a shadow of its former self. This once vital and visceral form has become the province of tepid frat row grooves and multi-culti political correctness. Lee Fields, for one, has had just about enough of that weak-ass shit. He's on a mission "to remind you how soul music used to be back in The Day... when it was all rough, yeah, and nasty, and genuine," and baby, he delivers. Since the late-'60s Fields's name has

commanded hallowed reverence among true funk believers. In 1999, he's an impossible anomaly: a man who's still shakin' the same funky-butt that filled the britches of old school giants like James Brown and Dyke & The Blazers, long after those cats have either cashed in or cashed out. More than the Squirrel Nut Zippers, more than the Black Crowes, and certainly more than all that swing nonsense, Fields's music is utterly transportive—to such an extent that you'll have a hard time believing this album was recorded any time in the last 25 years. But if you're willing, Fields will take you back to the days of funky 45s and Chitlin Circuit Revues. And his band, the Soul Providers, will lay a funky full nelson on your brain, and never let go.

>>> Matt Hanks

OUT:
May 10.

FILE UNDER:
Full-on funk.

R.I.Y.L.:
James Brown, the Muscle Shoals Sound, Chuck Brown And The Soul Searchers.



FUNKSTÖRUNG
Additional Productions
Stu!o K7

The deeper you delve into *Additional Productions*, the first full-length from Germany's Funkstörung, the more elusive the beat. It's pretty simple at the start: thumpthum thumpthum thumpthum thumpthum. By the end, though, the beat is sporadic and stupid: thuthumthp thump thp thp thmptph. Really, how can you dance to that? *Additional Productions* compiles remixes the duo has fudged for Björk, Wu-Tang Clan, East Flatbush Project, Fini Tribe and others, but to call them remixes would be to suggest you could hear the

original buried within. Mostly you can't. Rather, you hear their signature frayed fizzle beats, static electricity and delicate melodies, a signature that often envelops entire canvases, leaving only a skeletal melody as a faint reminder that something else was once here. Within their bursting presence is a beaming personality, one that transforms others' work into something related to, but not derivative of, the original. And although it's often tough to nod your head to their rhythm (you'll feel compelled to try because they fool you into thinking it's going to stick in one place for the duration, only to pull a Three Card Monte on you), it's much less difficult to keep track of melody. And herein lies their beauty: Melodies stick, beats orbit and roam.

>>>Randall Roberts

OUT:
April 27.

FILE UNDER:
Static elasticity.

R.I.Y.L.:
Autechre, Boards Of Canada, Squarepusher.

Think Amplitude. Think Samplitude. Think Beatitude. **Think Licking 110 Volts.**

Boom Boom Satellites **OUT LOUD**



The US debut album. A furious hybrid of rock, techno, drum 'n bass and jazz.
Featuring the tracks "Push Eject," "4 A Moment Of Silence" and "On The Painted Desert."

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FUTURE PILOT A.K.A. VS A GALAXY OF SOUND



OUT:

May 18.

FILE UNDER:

Scrub dub from a Scot.

R.I.Y.L.:

Lee "Scratch" Perry, the Pastels' Illuminati, Cornershop remixes.

FUTURE PILOT A.K.A.

A Galaxy Of Sound Beggars Banquet

There's a lotta world covered on *A Galaxy Of Sound*, a jet setter's paradise of a record: Sounds of Kingston rub against beats from Detroit and Bombay, and London mixes with NYC and Berlin vibes. Case in point: Created in Glasgow, Scotland, Future Pilot's "Japan" samples Arkansan Pharoah Sanders's transcendent "Japan," which was recorded in New York, re-imagines its melody, and redefines its boundaries. Arkansas to Japan to New York to Glasgow, all in the span of five minutes. This transglobal merger is the brainchild of Sushil K. Dade (ex-Soup Dragon and

Telstar Pony, current BMX Bandit), and features collaborations with (take a breath) legendary LA producer Kim Fowley (the Runaways), Suicide member Alan Vega, ex-Fall guitarist Brix Smith, Cornershop, Orange Juice's James Kirk, satellite fisherman Scanner, the Pastels, and a host of equally impressive others, all of whom supplied seeds of ideas for the Future Pilot to sow. Phew. A lot of info to digest, for sure, all of which ends up useless in the face of the jaw droppingly expansive music within. You can talk new fusion all you want, but you've yet to fully experience it until you check *A Galaxy Of Sound*, a visionary, beat-based mess of ganja bliss that, despite its Scottish-Indian roots, sounds like Lee "Scratch" Perry uprooted, reconfigured and downloaded.

>>>Randall Roberts



OUT:

May 18.

FILE UNDER:

Uplifting hardcore.

R.I.Y.L.:

Murphy's Law, Bad Religion, Sick Of It All.

H2O

F.T.T.W.

Epitaph

F.T.T.W., the third album from NYC punkers H2O, contains enough classic hardcore elements to satisfy the purist: spontaneous spurts of furious energy accompanied by nostalgic outcries about beer and other joys of youthful life. Every single song would make great mosh pit material. And unlike a lot of hardcore bands dabbling in pissed-off punk rants against "the man," H2O uses wisdom and positivity as the central impetus for *F.T.T.W.* It's a collection of jolly, feel-good music. The songs are easy to relate to, thriving on

lyrics that speak universally about hard times, good feelings, learning lessons and staying strong. As soon as you hit play, H2O thrusts you right in. Listening to the title track, "Faster Than The World," you might feel like you're snowboarding down a steep slope in a flurry; the song would be a great anthem for the X-Games. But aside from a few short bass solos, *F.T.T.W.* lacks a musical variety that would give it more staying power. Unlike other hardcore bands, such as Murphy's Law, H2O doesn't break the heavy guitar riffs for pick-me-up ska ditties. And while H2O lead singer Toby Morse sounds a lot like Law's Jimmy Gestapo, he lacks Gestapo's sense of humor.

>>>Marisa Torrieri

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OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Stockholm Rock City.

R.I.Y.L.:

MC5, Kiss, Supersuckers.

HELLACOPTERS

Grande Rock

Sub Pop

It seems we Yanks have ignored our rock 'n' roll roots for one too many fiscal years. While The Man tries to pull the wool over our eyes with "active rock radio," the real stuff has defected to Scandinavia, where neutral-nation bands like Motorpsycho, Gluecifer, Turbo Negro and the Stockholm-based Hellacopters are delivering the rock 'n' roll fire, but good. Of all those groups, it's obvious that the 'Copters have their sights most squarely set on the brass ring. In three years they've evolved (gasp!) from mere garage Neanderthals to full-throttle MC5 White

Panther Party apostles, to their latest incarnation: populist gods of arena rock thunder. Though *Grande Rock* can't match its predecessor—the utterly skull-pummelling *Payin' The Dues*—for amphetamine licks and Bruce Lee kicks, the melodic cues it takes from proto-punk bands like Mott The Hoople, the New York Dolls, and most obviously KISS, are welcome additions to the 'Copters sound. Subsequently, *Grande Rock* is the first 'Copters album you could picture a 13 year old listening to. In fact, it might be the best underage drinking album of the year. So hoist a few, crank it up to 11, and toast the new kings of Swedish rock. But don't miss your curfew.

>>>Matt Hanko

**OUT:**

May 25.

FILE UNDER:

Cirque de so-lame.

R.I.Y.L.:

Eminem, Kid Rock, carnies.

INSANE CLOWN POSSE**The Amazing Jeckel Brothers** Island

In case you missed the amusing news flashes last year when Disney realized that a pair of brutally sexist homicidal white rappers in blackface weren't going to project the right image for a family-oriented business and pulled the plug on *The Great Milenko* the day it hit the streets, Insane Clown Posse is comprised of two one-trick bozos with attitude from the greater Detroit area. The duo's new label, Island, has apparently given ICP license to get nasty as they wanna be because, you know, it moves units. But Violent J and Shaggy 2 Dope had pretty

much taken their admitted brilliant bad joke as far as a bad joke will go. It's hard to top over the big-top, so, as the title *The Amazing Jeckel Brothers* suggests, the dysfunctional duo takes on a pair of new aliases this time around—specifically, Jake and Jack Jeckel, who, in yet another MENSA-qualifying twist, are a pair of brutally sexist homicidal white rappers in blackface. You'd think after cashing in on *The Great Fiasco*, Violent and Shaggy would have the clout and/or the cash to get someone of Dr. Dre's caliber to upgrade their gangsta goof. But bargain-basement beats, cheap circus sounds, and low-rent metal guitars are as much a part of the ICP shtick as deep thoughts like "I Want My Shit" and "I Stab People." Hey, why ruin a bad thing?

>>>Matt Ashcre

**KMFDM****OUT:**

April 27.

FILE UNDER:

Teutonic indus-tro-metal pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Ministry, Rammstein, Laibach, Pigface.

KMFDM**Adios**

Wax Trax!-TVT

Let's face it—you don't listen to KMFDM albums because you're expecting surprises; you know it'll give you your testosterone kicks (or scratch your itch for Teutonic kitsch). For more than a decade, every new KMFDM album has consistently meant jackhammer beats and martial rhythms, techno bleeps and overdriven metal guitars, disco diva shrieking and lots of German-accented anthemic sloganeering and sinister snarling. *Adios* ladles up a heaping helping of the KMFDM essentials, especially on the ass-kicking single "D.I.Y.," which is bolstered by huge

orchestral synths and much repeated shouting of the band's name. But it's not entirely KMFDM business-as-usual; for starters, main man Sascha Konietzko has stepped up his collaboration with Tim Skold (of Skold), whose Nine Inch Nails-inspired tendencies towards whispery, angst-driven synth-pop inform the album's slower tracks. And they're helped by a strange duo of guest stars who get two songs each: Ogre from Skinny Puppy (who sounds right at home on the queasy and loopy "Full Worm Garden," but way out-of-place against diva backing vocals), and bizarro raspy-voiced early-'80s chanteuse Nina Hagen. Unfortunately, as the name implies, *Adios* is the end of the line for KMFDM—Konietzko is planning to retire the mysterious acronymic moniker. KMFDM, we hardly knew ye...

>>>David Jarman

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LUSCIOUS JACKSON
Electric Honey Grand Royal-Capitol

These white girls can't really rap. Fortunately, though, Luscious Jackson stopped being the Beastie Girls a couple of albums ago, which sort of forced them to find a musical identity of their own. They succeeded best on 1996's *Fever In Fever* Out, on which they learned how to sound sexy and soulful instead of kitschy and coy. Now just a trio—with drummer Kate Schellenbach, singer/bassist Jill Cunniff, and singer/guitarist/keyboardist Gabrielle Glaser moving on in the wake of keyboardist Vivian Trimble's departure—the band seems to be running out of good

ideas. The "Car Wash" hand clap rhythm track of *Electric Honey's* opening cut sounds dated even for a disco homage, and the title's clunky play on words—"Nervous Breakthrough"—isn't nearly clever enough to carry the otherwise bland tune. There are a couple of strong singles—"Ladyfingers" has a nifty programmed drum track, Emmylou Harris backing vocals, and the kind of semi-sweet dance-rock chorus Madonna used to commission from time to time. Plus, Cunniff, who handles most of the songwriting this time around, sings it like she means it, which is nice. Same with "Devotion." But those are the exceptions on an album of lite grooves in search of hooks and pretty voices that are all dressed up with no place to go.

>>>Matt Ashare

OUT:

June 29.

FILE UNDER:

Dance-pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Kostars, disco Blondie, Pizzicato Five.



MAYFLIES USA
Summertown Yep Roc

What a difference a year or two makes. This Chapel Hill, North Carolina, quartet debuted in 1997 with a five-song EP of Superdrag-inspired guitar pop. Now the boys—with the help of producer Chris Stamey (dB's)—have sharpened their songwriting and turned that early promise into a confident, impressive full-length debut. *Summertown* is a delightful set of shamelessly melodic pop songs with an appropriately clean, warm production. Vocal and songwriting duties are shared by Matt McMichaels, Adam Price

OUT:

February 16.

FILE UNDER:

Instantly classic pop.

R.I.Y.L.:

Teenage Fanclub, *Revolver*-era Beatles, Posies, Superdrag.

and Matt Long, but that doesn't prevent *Summertown* from achieving a perfectly cohesive sensitive pop vibe. The Mayflies aren't afraid of being sentimental ("I had a dream and you made it a state of mind"), but their sharp lyrics also can be biting ("Your thoughts are pitiful, lucky you're beautiful"). None of these 14 songs are a letdown—"NYC" boasts cooing vocals (including some from Yo La Tengo's Georgia Hubley), "The Apple" displays the 'Flies rock-ier tendencies, and "I'm Down With Peter Green" is memorably melodic and adventurous. *Summertown* is one of the best debuts of recent memory; it's scary to imagine how great the Mayflies will be with a few more years under their belts.

>>>Wendy Mitchell

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MINISTRY
Dark Side Of The Spoon Warner Bros.

After another sabbatical for one of modern-rock's more legendary substance abusers, Al Jourgensen is back with yet another bad joke—namely, one of the funnier album titles since the Butthole Surfers' *Hairway To Steven*, or maybe Ministry's own *The Mind Is A Terrible Thing To Taste*. So, yeah, in one way the old pigfucker still has some magic left in him when it comes to turning a phrase. But, let's face it, techno-industrial death-metal has been moving forward in leaps and bounds since Jourgensen's jokers last

OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Techno-industrial death metal.

R.I.Y.L.:

Rob Zombie, Orgy, Rammstein.

knew the difference between the way to succeed and the way to suck eggs (the subtitle to the *Psalm 69* album—more Jourgensen jocularity), what with success of Rammstein's fascist firestorms, Rob Zombie's monster mashing, and Orgy's blackening of "Blue Monday." I mean, who knows if Trent Reznor's even gonna matter anymore when he finally gets around to releasing a new Nine Inch Nails album. As for *Dark Side Of The Spoon*, even its nastiest moments—like when Aggro Al takes the ball gag off and gives us a choice between, yikes, the "Whip Or The Chain" against a stock Fetish Ball backdrop of headbanging techno beats a black metallic guitar riff—sound oddly quaint.

>>>Matt Ashare



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"Frank Black is back with an album that recaptures the crazy beauty of his Pixies days. *Pistolero* is a homage to the kind of garage-rock blues that made Eric Burdon rumble back when Francis still wore diapers." - *Rolling Stone*, April 15, 1999



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OUT:

June 15.

FILE UNDER:

The Mississippi blues.

R.I.Y.L.:

Junior Kimbrough, Howlin' Wolf, Charlie Patton.

ASIE PAYTON

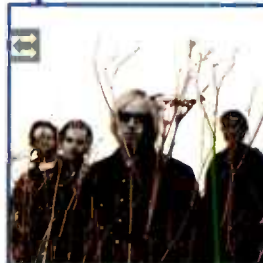
Worried

Fat Possum-Epitaph

Asie Payton is dead now—he was found slumped over his tractor in a Mississippi field—and this album stands as his legacy, one that makes you wish he'd recorded more in his 60 years. This is the real juke joint deal, where the best part of a century of blues comes together, even incorporating a '60s soul hit, a cover of Joe Tex's "Skinny Legs And All," that shows Payton could have been a soul contender. But on *Worried*, it's apparent that he was an unknown blues giant—"Worried Life" stands tall, its feel going back to the

Delta days of Charlie Patton, through Robert Johnson and Howlin' Wolf. Even with electricity, there's very little of the urban Chicago feel here. This is rawer, with Mississippi mud as its grounding—earthy and very, very real. The guitars moan, and even when Sam Carr's drums kick more than a backbeat, as on "I Love You," you're never going to think of this as influenced by hip-hop the way R.L. Burnside's recent remix album was. Perhaps the most poignant track is the solo reprise of "I Love You," just Payton and his guitar, the blues at its most basic and moving. In his voice and fretwork you can hear not just one lifetime of pain, but generations of it. Fat Possum is helping keep this music alive, and this might well be the little label's best release yet.

>>>Chris Nickson



TOM PETTY AND THE HEARTBREAKERS

Echo

Warner Bros.

OUT:

April 13.

FILE UNDER:

Pure American rock.

R.I.Y.L.:

Neil Young, Byrds, Wilco, Jack Logan.

Unfairly labeled a staunch traditionalist by baby-boom critics, Tom Petty keeps selling records to young folks because, like Neil Young, Petty can play in front of people half his age without condescending. Petty's story in the '90s encompasses remarkable highs (the sly single "Mary Jane's Last Dance," the adventurous *Wildflowers*, the underrated *She's The One*) and forgivable lows (*Into The Great Wide Open*) and 1985's *Southern Accents*—a fine addition to the catalog that will be better summarized

by a hits compilation someday. Petty doesn't sound as spry as usual here; with crotchety vocals and an abundance of mild tunes, *Echo* sounds like Petty's writing for the Wilbury crowd. Fans wonder why Petty bothers with "solo" albums (*Full Moon Fever*, *Wildflowers*) since half the Heartbreakers—particularly ace guitarist Mike Campbell—play on them. But for the past decade, Petty's ability to be undemocratic on the solo albums has made them his best, while "and the Heartbreakers" records like this one come out a bit muddy. Still, *Echo* manages a few keepers—the Beatlesque "This One's For Me," the howling "Won't Last Long"—and Petty's lyrics, wry as ever, celebrate the losers with empathy: "You need elephant balls/If you're not gonna crawl/On your hands through this world."

>>>Chris Molanphy

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Finally back in print, fully re-mastered and containing 5 previously un-released bonus tracks, Richard Buckner's 1994 debut established him as one of this, or any, generation's most important artists.



RACHEL'S

Selenography

Quarterstick

OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Contemporary chamber music.

R.I.Y.L.:

Ryuichi Sakamoto, Steve Reich's *The Desert Music*, Gastr Del Sol, Astor Piazzolla.

You're lying in the tall grass of summer, the Earth's cooling curve nestled in the small of your back, lost amongst the stars strewn in the night sky. Or watching afternoon sunlight streaming through the venetian blinds, as dust motes dance at the command of an unseen choreographer. What music do you hear? *Selenography*, the superlative fourth album from Louisville, Kentucky, unit Rachel's, will save you the time and expense of transcribing those fleeting daydreams on to orchestral scores and hiring a chamber ensemble to perform them. Mating the can-

do spirit of indie rock with the measured perfection of classical music, cuts like "A French Galleasse" and "Kentucky Nocturne" lay the album's foundation in slow, graceful pirouettes anchored by piano, guitar and viola. But elsewhere, Rachel's discretely introduce a wider palette of timbres and rhythms than showcased previously: café accordion on "The Mysterious Disappearance Of Louis LePrince"; spoken passages by Uzeda's Giovanna Cacciola; the minimalist pulse underpinning "An Evening Of Long Goodbyes." Despite the instrument's percussive rigidity and limited touch-sensitivity, Rachel Grimes elicits surprising fluidity from a harpsichord on "Honeysuckle Suite." Just under an hour in length, these 12 compositions unfold with deliberate relish, never racing impatiently towards the final cadence.

>>>Kurt B. Reighley



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World Radio History



BOGDAN RACZYNSKI

Boku Mo Wakaran ★
Rephlex

From the way his name and record title sound like something overheard on a broadcast of the Kosovo conflict, to the fact that his disc comes with an eight-page booklet of blank pages, to his unfathomable website, Bogdan Raczynski disorients the music fan accustomed to easily digestible icons. In comparison, even the Residents' secret identities seem like a great marketing gimmick. Although equally dense, his music is less unique. *Boku Mo Wakaran* presents 72-minutes of skittering electronica overlaid with chiming cosmic synths and video game-

style sound effects, occasionally giving listeners an off-kilter drum 'n' bass rhythm to regain their bearings. While Raczynski executes this formula with aplomb, it is one familiar to fans of abstract techno. Odder still are the vocal samples he favors: men gurgling and screaming melodramatically, English and Japanese voices pitch-shifted into registers not naturally produced by human beings, and teens talking about art. "We used to corrupt each other with art and coffee and late night talks about lack of noise in the area," a teen says on the third track. "We always had grand schemes but the area just wasn't ready." Right now, Raczynski is in the same place as these kids, not quite contributing something new to the vocabulary of drill 'n' bass, but doing a fine job of speaking this complex language. >>>Alec Hanley Bemis

OUT:

May 4.

FILE UNDER:

Playful abstract techno.

R.I.Y.L.:Autechre, Aphex Twin, Atari 2600
soundtracks.

RED KRAYOLA

Fingerpainting ★
Drag City

Red Krayola leader Mayo Thompson's frequently off-key warble, while a most distinguished instrument, has likely kept many people from indulging in the truly peculiar brand of art rock his band has pursued in spurts for the past 33 years. Fans, however, have learned to follow Thompson's muse wherever it takes him, from the Krayola's early albums, filled with noisy freakouts and fiercely intelligent psychedelia, to his more recent forays into melodic avant-pop. *Fingerpainting* is as messy and unfocused as its title indicates, alternating notably

fractured takes on the band's normally malformed pop with blasts of improvisatory clatter. (Perhaps the presence of fiction writer Frederick Barthelme, the band's original drummer in 1966, means Thompson is looking to revisit the acid drenched *Familiar Ugly* concept.) The "traditional" songs are loose and marked by bouncy, percolating electronic percussion. The noise songs may make it into the next Whitney Biennial: At one point quoting Joe Cocker's "You Are So Beautiful," they feature impossibly long titles like "Out of a trombone that is divided lengthways by a partition of gold sound seven violins of dynamite that are cut sideways into thin slices. They are played by the thrown out ex-members of a very bad band and blown up." An exhaustingly off-kilter effort. >>>Alec Hanley Bemis

OUT:

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Conceptual art rock.

R.I.Y.L.:Captain Beefheart, Hampton Grease
Band, Danielson Family, Jim O'Rourke.

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RED SNAPPER

Making Bones

Warp-Matador

It's tough to wrap your head around *Making Bones*, or to put a finger on Red Snapper, though superficially, it doesn't seem like it should be. The group harnesses the linear propulsion of breakbeat London, but uses organic instruments and slows the pace. Sounds like a recipe for your average lame-o acid jazz group, huh? That's where it gets confusing, because all the ingredients suggest acid jazz: the stutterstep JB beat, the occasional use of a diva (on the band's early EPs, said diva was Beth Orton) or MC, a touch of muted trumpet,

an occasionally annoying Weather Report-ish bass tone, a touch of sampled string sections. Could be kind of frightening. Enter confusion—it's not. *Making Bones* expands far beyond that into a realm of instrumental freedom that relies on a groove, but stretches and pulls at it with a curiosity and edge that rarely sacrifices hard funk for saccharine vibe. Which isn't to say that Red Snapper doesn't dance on that line every once in a while; it comes dangerously close to lapsing into quiet-storm mediocrity, especially when vocalist Alison David steps up to the mic (never thought I'd hear an overwrought disco chanteuse on a Matador release). But the music more often makes up for the missteps, providing enough instrumental rhythmic dexterity to undercut the occasional over-dramatics.

>>>Randall Roberts



RON SEXSMITH

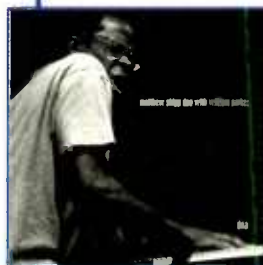
Whereabouts

Interscope

Ron Sexsmith's third solo record talks of love and loss, regret and hope, but the songwriter has no bones to pick. His grown-up pop songs have a sincerity and a directness about them that provide a "fresh air" alternative to the fiercely puffed cynicism that has seeped into the fabric of '90s pop and rock. Sexsmith favors writing songs that aim to set things right between two people—"How I hate to see you this way/I feel for you, love," goes the spry "Feel For You." Surprisingly, his tender, soft-spoken appeal never sounds naive

or simplistic and you can imagine Sexsmith winning over both balding James Taylor fans and hard-hearted indie-rockers with the craft of his songs. His compact, tuneful melodies play out just long enough for you to remember them fondly. Producer/keyboardist Mitchell Froom helps fold in a few more orchestrated details into the songs, giving *Whereabouts* a tasteful lushness that was so often lacking when soft-rocking singer/songwriters ruled the airwaves in the '70s. Sexsmith's 1997 release, *Other Songs*, has richer lyrical detail and more memorable characters, but *Whereabouts* is still a strong effort, if not one that makes you want to get to know this Sexsmith character a little better.

>>>Steve Ciabattoni



MATTHEW SHIPP DUO WITH WILLIAM PARKER

DNA

Thirsty Ear

Matthew Shipp is a prolific and lauded avant-garde jazz pianist, a serious student of improvisation and experimentation, who's been embraced by both the indie-rock set (Henry Rollins has released some of his albums) and classical "new music" patrons. But what makes his work vital to fans of alternative music of various stripes is that it's challenging, evocative, and engrossing. That doesn't make it accessible to all ears, but it does make it compelling. *DNA* favors quietness as much as it favors dissonance, space as

much as density, and it works well as both an entrée into Shipp's oeuvre and as another, and supposedly final, step in his development (Shipp will take a recording sabbatical after this release). Two traditional songs book-end the album: "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" becomes a dark, tense political statement; "Amazing Grace" receives a surprisingly straight reading from Shipp while William Parker's bass bows to sharpen the edges. The five middle compositions range from the quietly spacious and ruminative "Cell Sequence" and the rhythmic and deep "Orbit" to the 12-minute epics "Genetic Alphabet" and "Mr. Chromosome," both of which trace Shipp and Parker urging each other to explore the recesses and resources of melodic fragments and rhythmic shifts.

>>>Steve Klinge

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reviews

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

 ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



OUT:
 April 20.

FILE UNDER:
 Electro-future-funk.

R.I.Y.L.:
 Laika, electric Herbie Hancock,
 Aphex Twin.

SPACEHEADS

Angel Station

Merge

Andy Diagram can reach more worlds with a trumpet and a delay than others can with a studio full of black boxes, and when he gets together with the endlessly inventive percussionist Richard Harrison, a universe opens up. The duo's early recordings were restless romps through the beatbox and sampler fun house, but their live shows were a somewhat different story, favoring fat grooves and a streamlined quality. This is their mode on the new *Angel Station*, which begins with Harrison doing an accelerated Funky Drummer, and busts out in almost as many

directions as funk and electronics have taken us. Ancient video arcade sounds kick off "One Way System," a late '90s take on the sci-fi synth jams of Herbie Hancock. Next thing we know, the soundscape "Road Sweeper" takes us to a virtual swampland, with Diagram's flatted notes snaking between the croaking of frogs and a creaking like old chairs. Electronic esoterism is nothing new by now; what's unique about Spaceheads is the elegant restraint of their mixes. Some songs start with a sinuous horn line and add just enough digital counterpoint to throw it into relief. Others, like "Put Me Out," are pocket percussion symphonies, with Diagram adding clang to Harrison's bang. *Angel Station* combines the warmth of improv with the all-questioning posture of the best electronica. >>>Andrea Moed



OUT:
 June 1.

FILE UNDER:
 You got your acid in my jazz.

R.I.Y.L.:
 Carl Craig, Herbie Hancock's Future
 Shock.

SPACETIME CONTINUUM

Double Fine Zone

Astralwerks

Too many would-be electronic music maestros start talking about how "organic" their synthesized sound is before they even emerge from their home studios to release a recording. Jonah Sharp's career should be the blueprint that all these wankers must follow. The lone force behind Spacetime Continuum, Sharp was a drummer in his native Scotland, then a studio musician in London, before settling in San Francisco. Since he arrived in the States, he's issued an unsteady but always reliable flotilla of records under the Spacetime Continuum moniker,

sailing effortlessly between ambient and dance. His first full-length in three years, *Double Fine Zone*, sets a new standard. It's not the first to approach jazz from a synthetic context, but Sharp's obvious love of the genres and sub-genres of this American form shines through in expertly mixed tracks like "Manaka," which melts a swirl of manufactured sounds over Max Roach-style frenetic drumming. There are a few stunning freeform-like tracks, such as the warm and minimal "Beveled Edge," and the more complex "Spin-Out," which features tactile runs from guest saxophonist Brian Iddenden. As if to flaunt his prowess, Sharp slips a jazz harmonica solo into the otherwise techno-oriented "Micro Jam." Then again, maybe he's just showing us how tasteful, and organic, electronic music can be. >>>Richard Martin

**OUT:**

June 29.

FILE UNDER:

Hip-hop's in the house.

R.I.Y.L.:

Roni Size, Grooverider, DJ Krush.

TODD TERRY**Resolutions**

Astralwerks

Most of the artists who have had their songs remixed by Todd Terry consider the Brooklyn-born DJ a magician. What sets him apart from two-turntable mortals? In 1995, after Everything But The Girl's label had dropped the British duo, Terry turned its song "Missing" into a worldwide club hit that went on to sell three million copies. When he's not bringing dead-in-the-water tracks to the top of the charts, he's getting work orders from every chart topper in the book, from Hanson to Garbage to the Rolling Stones. For his latest trick, the house-spinning remix

master has recorded his first major US solo album, *Resolutions*, which sounds hell-bent on living up to its title. Peppercorned with furious performances by rappers Cash Money, MC Essential and others, the record strives to flex Terry's muscles and send a hip-hop-style dis out to all the sucka DJs who'd place themselves in his league. He puts on quite a show, pulling nearly every electronic sub-genre out of a hat from hard-charging garage to sharp-edged, jazzy drum 'n' bass. But Terry seems dogged by critics, who get a tongue-lashing from the DJ himself in the funk-ed-up "Tee's Jazz." Oddly, his defensiveness is the only thing that keeps this ambitious, nearly brilliant record from serving as a masterful demonstration of music's ability to challenge the senses while exuding a radiant glow.

>>>Richard Martin

**OUT:**

June 8.

FILE UNDER:

Teutonic tectonics.

R.I.Y.L.:

Mouse On Mars, Boards Of Canada, Tangerine Dream.

TO ROCOCO ROT**The Amateur View**

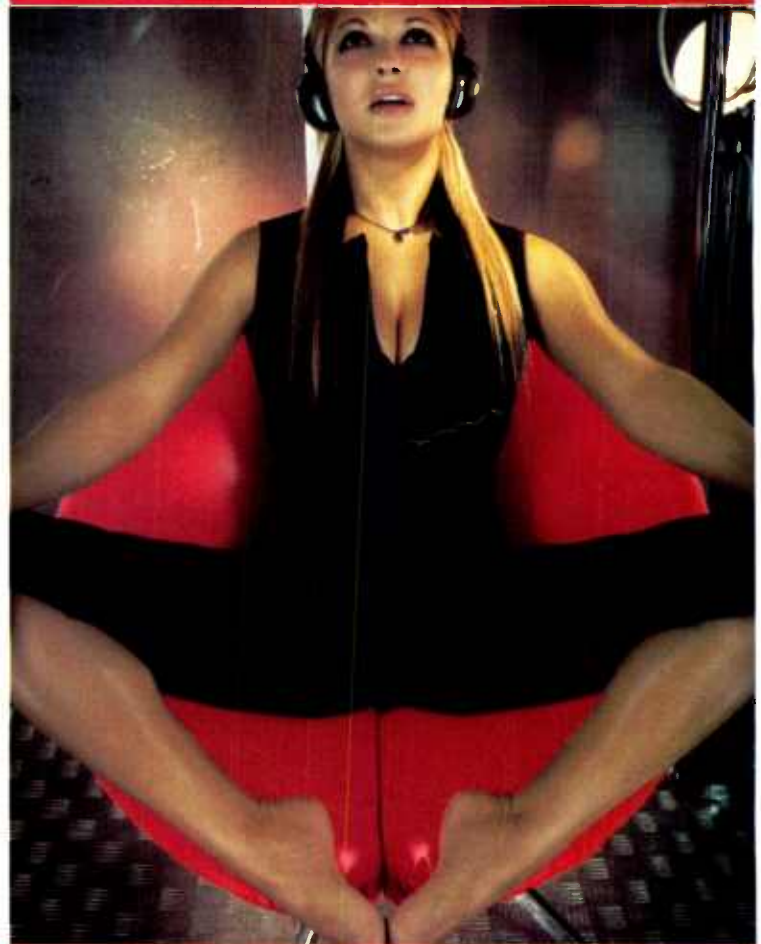
Mute

Formed four years ago in Berlin, To Rococo Rot has become a major force in Germany's burgeoning electronic music scene. Like its Rhineland compatriots Mouse On Mars, Gas, and Pluramon, To Rococo Rot makes listener-friendly electronica that combines the vanguard sensibility of Karlheinz Stockhausen with the dance floor accessibility of disco or commercial techno. Indeed, *The Amateur View*, the trio's third release and its first for Mute, is so accessible as to be innocuous and undemanding. Comprised of bassist Stefan Schneider

(also of Kreidler) and siblings Robert and Ronald Lippok (who handle guitar and drums, respectively), the band draws on the same sonic palette as Mouse On Mars: a marvelous array of squiggles, squelches, burps, and blips. But where the latter fashions these sounds into a dense, shifting and volatile texture, To Rococo Rot is content to state a thin melodic figure, loop it, and let it run, gradually draining its source material of edge and novelty. It's significant that the standout track, "A Little Asphalt Here And There," is one that adds New York turntablist I-Sound, whose bits of static and distortion help to restore the experimental spirit. This is perfectly pleasant music, but it takes no great strides forward or sideways.

>>>Christoph Cox

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in this world to be heard.

**DJ Rap "LEARNING CURVE"**

The futuristic pop debut album
featuring the tracks Bad Girl and Good To Be Alive.

Album in stores Tuesday, June 1

Produced by Doni T. / Additional Production by DJ Rap and Alden Lova
Management: Josh Clifford at Miami Union Management

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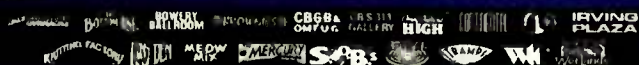
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R.I.Y.L.-RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE

★ ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD



KATHARINE WHALEN

Katharine Whalen's Jazz Squad Mammoth

Before those khaki-clad numskulls pranced across your TV screen, yet way, way after Glenn Miller and the Duke made swing the "in" thing, the Squirrel Nut Zippers scored a hit with "Hell" and got credited with (or blamed for) sparking a revival. Members of the North Carolina band, including vocalist and banjo plucker Katharine Whalen, would vigorously deny any complicity in the impending zoot suit riot, but their horns and natty attire suggested swing even when the music leaned toward ragtime jazz. Whalen leaves no room for such

OUT:

May 25.

FILE UNDER:

Greatest vocal jazz hits of the Prohibition Era.

R.I.Y.L.:

Squirrel Nut Zippers, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, piano bars.

discrepancy on her solo bow, from the *Jazz Squad* title to the straight-outta-'30s-Harlem song selection. A collection of exquisitely performed standards, the record spotlights Whalen's smoky, sophisticated voice, but also pays tribute to masterful American composers like Jerome Kern ("Yesterdays"), Walter Donaldson ("My Baby Just Cares For Me") and Sam Coslow ("My Old Flame"). Backed by her husband and SNZ cohort Jim Mathus and others, Whalen nearly flattens out a few times but mostly sustains an assured vocal swagger. She yields the banjo to Mathus, who spruces up the vaudeville number "After You've Gone" and the ragtime-y "Sugar," and she lets him contribute an original instrumental, "Badisma," but the album's focus remains Whalen's sojourn in classic vocal jazz territory. >>>Richard Martin



ROBBIE WILLIAMS

The Ego Has Landed

Capitol

In interviews, droll British pop star Robbie Williams calls himself "just a lad," which in trendy UK parlance means "charming rogue," of the soccer-hooligan variety. It's like Hammer claiming to be a gangsta. Robbie's got charm all right, but the only roguish thing about him is his peculiar rise to fame. A veteran of Brit boy-band Take That, loutish-voiced Robbie wasn't expected to amount to anything, living in the shadow of honeyed TT singer-songwriter Gary Barlow. Four years later, Barlow is forgotten, Robbie's a sensation, and Capitol has pledged to break him in

OUT:

May 4.

FILE UNDER:

Let me entertain you.

R.I.Y.L.:

Oasis, George Michael, Pet Shop Boys.

America. *The Ego Has Landed*, Williams's cheekily ambitious US debut, mixes cuts from two UK albums and is a paradise for pop fans. Williams proffers a guitar-and-pomp concoction heavy on gushy arrangements but (unlike most US boy bands) thankfully light on attempted hip-hop relevance. The towering "Millennium" samples a cinematic orchestral bit, while on "No Regrets" the Pet Shop Boys help Robbie dust off their pulsating '80s sound. "Angels" is the ordained, weepy ballad hit, but Robbie's aching cover of World Party's "She's The One" is even better. And the rockers are rugged enough that you could lie and tell your friends it's Oasis. Put it this way: The British anointed Robbie—lad or not—because of his shambling charisma. You'll surrender to him because he's the most irresistible thing you'll hear all year. >>>Chris Molanphy

For centuries, the rise of a full moon has been associated with the release of spiritual and mythical energies—a moment of unity and ritualistic celebration for the believers in its cosmic alchemy. In earlier times, these lunar disciples were referred to as heathens and pagans. Today, at least in Southern California, the devotees are known by a slightly less derogatory name: ravers. Five years ago, a collective of West Coast DJs—John Kelley, Brian, Treavor, Daniel, Brad and Petey—organized **MOONTRIBE**, an



outdoor, word-of-mouth dance event held in remote locations in the Californian desert, powered by moonlight and the utopian vibes of the area's thriving underground scene. Five years and more than 65 parties later, the events have become a bona fide tradition, assembling up to 4,000 stalwart attendees for their largest gatherings. Of course, there are those who view Moontribe as nothing more than unsafe

hedonistic drug orgies. But **Sound Without Walls** (Fragrant) brings the attention back to the real fuel of the raves: the music. Assembled by all of the Moontribe DJs (and mixed by DJ Brian), the 14-track CD is an abridged version of a typical desert gathering, moving from the driving electronic pulse of Eat Static, to the funky, breakbeat intensity of Gypsy (Kelly's alter ego), to Star Sound Orchestra and Pilgrims Of The Mind, whose gorgeous, entrancing atmospherics take listeners straight into the sunrise. The set, ranging from tribal to trance, is a vibrant, moving documentation of this unique collective of artists and their inspiring dedication to American rave culture... If you've attended a decent house music event during the past couple years, chances are you've been moved in some way by the music of **CEVIN FISHER**. Dance floor anthems such as "The Way We Used To" and "The Freaks Come Out" have made this New York DJ/producer the latest addition to the city's long list of dance music pioneers. The young artist's contributions have been honored and documented with his debut DJ CD release, the 11th volume of the **United DJs Of America** series (DMC). Keeping in tune with his DJ sets, original productions and remixes, the 12-track disc showcases Fisher's special brand of thumping, soulful house jam. The collection includes elements of diva, disco, deep and tribal styles, and weaves recent favorites by house royalties such as House Of 909, Danny Tenaglia, and Submission around several of the host's own productions. Expertly executed, Fisher's debut certainly warrants a listen from those endeared by the sensual atmospheres that have driven house music since its inception...

Along the same lines, househeads will also want to seek out **Groove Radio International Presents Global House** (Groove Radio/Egil Music-Priority), a slamming collection of some of 1998's most energetic and enthusiastic dancefloor anthems. Mixed together by Groove Radio figurehead **SWEDISH EGIL**, the 18-track disc contains a fiery assortment of wailing divas, bouncy bass rhythms and meaty, memorable melodies. A rich compilation of tracks that proves why garage house remains alive and well in American clubland. **NMM**



"Superb bass heavy melancholia, minimal dubbed electro and lo-fi meandering." - Wax

to rococo rot.
the amateur view.

"They effortlessly bridge late '60s Krautrock aesthetics with modern electronic soundscape technology." - Jockey Slut



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GARMARNA: WESTMAN, FAR LEFT

ELECTRONIC ROOTS: 21ST CENTURY FOLK

We live in a time when the fallout from rave culture—the sounds of samplers and beats—has become part of the musical vocabulary. While often thought of as the property of rock or dance music, its influence has reached into even roots music; in fact, it's helped reinvent the genre.

Now, traditional music gets reinvented by every generation. In the late '60s, it received a massive jolt when bands like Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span plugged it in and turned their amps to ten. In this decade it began with Mouth Music at the start of the '90s, but it's rapidly developed from there and grown far more sophisticated. In America there's Snakefarm and Greg Garing. In the UK, Martyn Bennett, Eliza Carthy, and Talitha Mackenzie have latched onto the possibilities of drum 'n' bass

mixed with fiddles and folk, while in Scandinavia, Garmarna and Wimme are exploiting the possibilities of past and future together. The roots are still very firmly in tradition, but the sound is decidedly club-friendly.

While there are some similarities to the global fusion dubbed "ethno-techno," the above-mentioned artists always maintain the integrity of the original music—that's the whole point. It's not so much a case of roughly grafting onto rootstock as it is of creating something new that hews to the traditional values.

"We do what we feel fits the music," explains Garmarna's Rickard Westman. The band's new album, *Vengeance* (NorthSide) ☆, is a prime example of the new music. "If that happens to be a programmed loop, that's fine with us. It's actually all a matter of taste: 'What can we do to this

tune and how far can we take that idea? What we do has to fit the music, which actually makes everything a lot more difficult, since we focus so hard on the melody, the lyrics, and the feeling you get from these."

Snakefarm's Anna Domino had made acclaimed solo records before turning to traditional American music, and before finding the inspiration to add beats and samples, which resulted in *Songs From My Funeral* (Kneeling Elephant-RCA). "It came out of the blue to take these old songs I'd grown up with and give myself an outlet for all this rhythm I wanted to use—beats I had lying around and the sounds I wanted to use—and put it to this other raw material. I had no idea if it would work; I didn't think it would. The things that work best are the things you don't think about." Her first night working this way, she finished three songs, and others came equally quickly. "The only thing that took an effort was that I'd pile things on and there'd be too much stuff."

Martyn Bennett approached this new fusion with a dual background in both traditional and dance music. A multi-instrumentalist, he first experimented with putting his two loves together on a self-titled debut, and then on *Bothy Culture* (Rykodisc). "For me, it was experimentation. I've always been interested in all times of music. As well as being a folk musician, I was also going to clubs, and I was interested in certain DJ names. So it just happened organically. And I was involved on the first Mouth Music album, which was an eye-opener. From there it was into the bedroom. I wanted to make folk music more accessible and commercial without compromising its heart and truth."

None of these artists aim to compromise. As Westman points out, "There is no contradiction in making 'old' music with modern instruments. There are always people who feel that what we do is wrong, but who cares about them?" For Garmarna, the electronic side has become "more integrated in our work. We tend to work with the loops

"I wanted to make folk music more accessible and commercial without compromising its heart and truth." —Martyn Bennett

before anything else is done," allowing the group to experiment with arrangements, and create a framework for the acoustic instruments. "What it has led to, in short, is simply a Garmarna which isn't just a modern folk music band any longer."

Whether traditional, or just traditionally influenced, folk songs and tunes have affected generations of people. Placing them in a new context brings them alive to another generation that might otherwise dismiss them. You'll find more blood, guts and killing on *Songs From My Funeral* than in the collected works of Trent Reznor. "I could just do a double album of he-takes-her-down-to-the-river-and-throws-her-in songs," Domino says. Much the same is true of *Vengeance*. Folk's dark side perfectly suits this new musical context, just as Bennett's instrumentals befit jungle beats.

Like a Zeitgeist, it's here, popping up independently in different parts of the world, an indication of both a global culture and the pervasive influence of dance music. Where will it go from here? How will it all develop?

"I think as it gets better known, there will be people who'll parody and dilute it, which is why I'm trying to get more credible with the dance music," says Bennett. "I've actually started to go more analogue, with old 303s and Prophets. But the next album will also have old, old tunes, performed in a very hardcore folk manner. But they'll be in among some pretty aggressive jump-up jungle and hard step, and straight-ahead techno. I just want to get as hardcore as possible from both angles."

Domino, frankly, has no idea how Snakefarm will continue to work in the studio (the group plans on touring with a DJ and visuals). "I won't know until I start it," she says. "It's the carrot dangling in front of me. I'm not even sure where we'll start. I'll just plug in the machines and start on something, doing my taxes or something, and before you know it I'll be working on a song."



Where Garmarna will take its music is equally cloudy. "Obviously we will go on working with modern technology," explains Westman, "but where that leads in the future is impossible to tell. It has always been like that in Garmarna. Even if I can see some connections between the albums now, they weren't apparent when we were doing them. But I have no idea whatsoever what we will sound like in the future, or if we will even exist as a band."

"It would be nice to see this music jump the gap into the dance

scene," suggests Bennett, "and that hasn't happened. I think maybe we're missing the point, or maybe folk music, when you stick it in among all that, sounds a bit soft. Dance music isn't generally about reaching complex musical heights; it doesn't care about the tunes in the same way." Sometimes, though, the two can come together very successfully, as on the new disc by Afro-Celt Sound System, *Volume 2: Release* (RealWorld), which manages both to be melodic and to have its beats explode out of the speakers.

Maybe the new folk won't manage to cross into the mainstream—neither Fairport nor Steeleye became massive, after all—but it's already created something whose influence will be felt for a long time. At least until a new generation comes along with something fresh, and recreates folk all over again.

NMM





RUSH

My dad is the nicest guy in the world, and nobody's happier about it than I am. I could reprise the thousands of generous gestures he's made throughout the years, but the one that's most meaningful is that he's never, ever reminded me of the ridiculous declaration I made sometime in 1982 as we sped down the road in his Fiat convertible listening to *Exit...Stage Left*. "Y'know what, Dad," I said, poised for a burst of adolescent hyperbole. "No matter what other band comes along from now until I die, Rush will always be my favorite." Dad listened patiently. I repeated myself: "Always!"

He indulged my fixation with Geddy Lee, Alex Lifeson, Neil Peart, and their methodical, vaguely philosophical prog-metal musings. He bought me the logo patches and album-cover pins for my denim jacket. He chauffeured me to record shops in tucked-away Long Island towns—Commack! Hauppauge!—to hunt down import 10" and the *Hemispheres* picture disc (which still graces my collection). He snagged 11th row tickets when Rush played the Nassau Coliseum on

the *Signals* tour; and yes, he bought me the jersey with the picture of the dog about to relieve himself on a fire hydrant.

As my obsession grew more and more alarming, to the point where tapestries depicting Rush album covers sprouted up on my bedroom walls like kudzu, Dad took it in stride. Others weren't so accepting. My ninth grade English teacher, for instance. Despite the fact that I'd done enough research to obtain a degree from some community colleges, and despite the trouble I'd gone through to outline and color in (pink with black borders) the bubble-lettered logo from Rush's 1974 self-titled debut as the cover page, Mr. Arnold slapped me with a damning B-minus on my year-end report, largely because my subject wasn't serious enough. Of course, this was before rock criticism became a prestigious line of work.

When I blossomed into a real, professional rock critic a decade later, my dad could have had a field day. During some of the best years of his life, I'd forced him to listen to the live version of "Closer To The Heart" so many times that he'd unconsciously sung along. I'd regaled him with my interpretations of the sociopolitical subtexts of Rush's musical tribute to the writings of Ayn Rand, "The Trees." I'd rhapsodized whenever "Tom Sawyer" blared from the car radio, or when the DJ announced that my favorite station was "Long Island's home of RUSH!"

Yes, Dad could have sought revenge for all those moments, writing letters to the editor of every publication to which I've contributed to inform them of their critic's early appreciation for *Caress Of Steel's* misguided metal or *2112's* muddled themes. But that's not Dad's style. He had simply indulged my youthful fascination with Canada's favorite power trio, and allowed it to plow along until it fizzled in late 1984, when the after-effects of the disappointing *Grace Under Pressure* sent me down other musical paths.

Without a word about the past, he watched and supported me as I chiseled out a career as a critic in the Pacific Northwest, latching onto grunge and indie-rock bands that had about as much in common with Rush as they did with Alan Alda. My dad, the one man who could have undermined my efforts, who had an arsenal of memories that could have brought me down like a South American dictator, remained silent. I'm not ashamed to say it: "I love you, Dad."

But now, as I look back on the mid-'80s era, I'm painfully reminded of the most disappointing moment of my youth—an event more disheartening than Geddy Lee's increasing use of the synthesizer on the new wave-tinted *Grace Under Pressure*. Dad had purchased a sparkling, brand new sailboat, and he was soliciting suggestions for the christening. In what I construed as the first flicker of my creative genius, I conceived of an apropos name accompanied by an image that would dazzle everyone on land and at sea. Barely able to contain myself, I told my dad the idea. "You should call it *Fly By Night*," I explained, "and you should have the midnight blue owl from Rush's album cover painted on the back!"

In my earnestness, I believed that he really considered this a possibility, but I'm aware now that he was just being nice. Instead, he went with "Lickety Split," a logical enough name for a sailboat, but a crushing blow to my ego nonetheless. Just thinking back to that time makes me ache with memories of the all-powerful feeling of youth. The only way to quell the pain is to recite the mantra that Geddy Lee made up just for me:

*Fly by night, away from here
Change my life again
Fly by night goodbye my dear
My ship isn't coming and I just can't pretend.*

NMM

Richard Martin is a staff writer at Seattle Weekly. In the space he invades he gets by on you.

metal top 25

NECROPHAGIA

Holocausto De La Morte

Red Stream



exists simultaneously in the solemn sway of Black Sabbath and the manic disorientation of Mayhem. Infused with the sick, propulsive guitar of "Anton Crowley"—the former Phil Anselmo of Pantera—*Holocausto De La Morte* is simply an inspiring eruption of total heaviness. Drummer Wayne Fabra and bassist Dustin Havnen also rule, in the reckless manner of bands such as Kislug. In particular, Killjoy's undulating shrieks vividly paint the emotions of spattered blood, swollen glands, and evisceration. He is a mouthpiece for the unspeakable, an articulate visionary for the silent suffocating darkness. The guy is clearly tapped into dread on a deep emotional level, and his band has a lock on all things that make you lose your mind over metal. Through a weird set of circumstances, he has had his second chance here, and it has turned out to be enchanted.

>>> The big-britched **EMPEROR** seems to be on parole from its senses, namely the spiritual depth that allowed it to create the evocative 1994 masterpiece *Into The Nightside Eclipse*. Given that the members have torched many a Norwegian church and been to prison and back, you'd think they could relate a slightly more exotic portrait of the human condition than what's found on *IX Equilibrium* (Century Media). Though garishly magnificent and masterfully musical, Emperor in 1999 has lost touch with the unspeakable qualities that made it the blueprint band for black metal... The self-titled debut from **FANTOMAS** (Ipecac) is a tidy little record that kind of misses the point, but that's okay because it deftly avoids ever being anywhere objectives are defined as a matter of practice. Fantomas is the recording project of Mike Patton, Buzz from the Melvins, Dave Lombardo, and Trevor Dunn of Mr. Bungle, but its computer-assisted heaviness is dim next to the shining examples of two related outfits: ex-Melvins bassist Joe Preston's the Thrones, and Mr. Bungle guitarist Trey Spruance's Secret Chiefs 3. Besides singing for Faith No More, Mike Patton has toured a little with John Zorn, and it's Zorn's dated attention-deficit post-modern fracture aesthetic that rules here. The key isn't in the playing—indeed most of these samples could have been nicked outright from Slayer and Faith No More records—but in the nifty elisions between loops. It's a quirky post-metal collage in which the faded, twisting, spliced Scotch tape editing is the most interesting element... Then again, the music of **MANOWAR** doesn't make much sense by conventional notions, either. The quartet has long pressed the rebel imagery of bikers, Vikings, and barbarians into a taut metal wafer, distributed by an unbelievably uptight Deep Purple-influenced vessel. For this band, every adversity faced is a battle, and every triumph is a supreme victory against all odds. The degree to which Manowar has made itself a living public statue is apparent on *Hell On Stage Live* (Metal Blade), an exhausting double-CD live document. Even within the austere world of traditional metal, Manowar is a sealed-in entity. As is written in the searing liner notes: "There is no 'I' in our world." It's all about blood, fire, steel, and patriarchy in absolute terms; impervious to ridicule, because there simply aren't any cracks in the armor.

- 1 NAPALM DEATH
Words From The Exit Wound *Estrade*
- 2 STATIC-X
Wisconsin Death Trip *Warner Bros.*
- 3 GWAR
We Kill Everything *Metal Blade*
- 4 AMORPHIS
Tuonela *Relapse*
- 5 PRO-PAIN
Act Of God *Nuclear Blast America*
- 6 FEAR FACTORY
Obsolete *Roadrunner*
- 7 SKINLAB
Disembody: The New Flesh *Century Media*
- 8 DIMMU BORGIR
Spiritual Black Dimensions *Nuclear Blast America*
- 9 GRIP INC.
Solidify *Metal Blade*
- 10 STAINED
Dysfunction *Flop/Elektra-EEG*
- 11 OVERKILL
Necroshine *CMC International*
- 12 MOTORHEAD
Everything Louder Than Everyone Else
CMC International
- 13 NEUROSIS
"Times Of Grace" (CD5) *Relapse*
- 14 LUNGBRUSH
Old School New School *Pavement*
- 15 LOUDMOUTH
Loudmouth *Sallywood*
- 16 HYPOCRISY
Destroys Wacken *Nuclear Blast America*
- 17 SOIL
Throttle Junkies *MIA*
- 18 SICK OF IT ALL
Call To Arms *Fat Wreck Chords*
- 19 BUCKCHERRY
Buckcherry *DreamWorks*
- 20 CLAWFINGER
Clawfinger *The Music Center*
- 21 TURMOIL
The Process Of *Century Media*
- 22 PUYA
Fundamental *MCA*
- 23 WITCHERY
Witch Burner *Neopolis*
- 24 COALESCE
There Is Nothing New Under The Sun
Eclipse/Hydrahead
- 25 MANOWAR
Hell On Stage Live *Metal Blade*

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

ISCHEMIC FOLKS

Various Artists

Schematic

Two months ago, I wrote about Baltimore's distinct form of electronic innovation. Further south in Miami, a nascent group of artists and independent labels are defining a new sound, a distinctly American electronic underground which draws on movements as diverse as Detroit bass, mid-'80s industrial dance and cold wave, electro-era hip-hop, classic Miami bass and the music of Britain's popular Warp stable. One such Miami group is the Schematic collective, comprised of Josh and Romulo, who formerly recorded for Astralwerks under the name Soul Oddity. Since that time, they've been working on music under a variety of guises, including Phoenecia, Metic, and Jeswa. Their highly collectible singles have already assumed cult status amongst the "intelligent dance music" crowd that dwells in the virtual world of Internet



listservs. The collective's first CD brings together some of the older singles as well as new material by familiar artists, and a host of new talent. It is Richard Devine's work that stands out here. While his music can be firmly located within the post-Apex/Autechre constellation of melody and cacophony, it employs a repertoire of sounds that's the aural equivalent of "automatic writing," a mode of prose allowing the spirits of ancestors to speak directly through the writer's pen. And it kicks like a soccer player. Devine, like Carl Craig or Thomas Brinkmann, is testing the mettle of his audience, just to see how far he can push the limits of sonic endurance while keeping a groove roaring beneath the surface, like fish twitching rapidly under a clear, frozen lake. Don't overlook the grainy, electro tricks performed by PBO (Push Button Objects), a.k.a. Edgar Farinas, who's been fed a steady diet of electronics since birth and is refashioning all he's heard in an unprecedented manner. In short, if you're the least bit interested in where electronic music is going and where it has been, you should get your hands on this exemplary collection.

>>> With the ever-widening interest in the so-called "ghetto-tech" sound from Detroit, comprised of artists such as Aux 88 and DJ D'ijital, there is a lot of activity that escapes even the closest scrutiny. I'm talking about some of Detroit Bass's most enduring figures: **DJ GODFATHER**, DJ Assault and Big Daddy Rick. This is not a simple claim of "who came first," but rather an acknowledgment that these folks are continuing to release some seriously bass-heavy tracks that work as well in the Pathfinder as on the dance floor. The latest release is Godfather's monstrous *Aliens Got My 808* EP, whose title is nearly self-explanatory. Beginning with "First Contact" all the way through to the six locked grooves that conclude the record, Godfather makes the bass respond to his commands like a skilled lion tamer—he knows when to drop it out and when to bring it back with incredible force—while the blips, bleeps and vocoders ride roughshod over the mix. Godfather finds what he needs, turns it inside out and gets the place jumping... The same can be said for the *Exterminate. Populate. Procreate* EP by **SEKTER** 17, a newcomer to the Detroit Bass scene who understands that if you can't induce at least a

head nod from your listeners, you might as well take it back to the studio and start all over again. Electro-bass is often misunderstood as simple, pre-programmed monotony that never varies, but nothing could be further from the truth. The music certainly has "more bounce to the ounce," as Zapp put it, but it also changes up when least expected, reversing direction and plunging back into oceans of sensation. DJ Godfather can turn drum machine edits without even blinking. Of course, this music is best heard at illegal volumes, but it doesn't lose of any of its power on a pair of headphones... Carsten Endrass is the artist better known as **MARKANT**. He's released nearly 20 records in the past two years—his latest two outings are simply entitled *Markant 19* and *20*. Now, this fact alone may not merit any acclaim, but his music certainly does: It's some of the most unsettling, iridescent electronic music being made in Western Europe. Though it often seems hard to distinguish one release from another, the records actually form a conceptual whole. Beautiful, heroic synth sweeps cut through the thick bass lines like a lighthouse beacon in a pea-soup fog, while the percussion darts away from the mix like a frightened mouse.

dance top 25

- 1 **UNDERWORLD**
Beaucoup Fish JBO-V2
- 2 **APHEX TWIN**
"Windowlicker" (CD5) Warp-Sire
- 3 **BADMARSH & SHRI**
Dancing Drums Outcaste-Tommy Boy
- 4 **WE**
Square Root Of Negative One Asphodel
- 5 **PAUL OAKENFOLD**
Global Underground: New York Boxed-Thrive
- 6 **DJ KRUSH & TOSHINORI KONDO**
Ki-Oku Instinct
- 7 **SASHA AND JOHN DIGWEED**
Northern Exposure III: Expeditions
INCredible-Ultra
- 8 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Old School Vs. New School Jive Electro
- 9 **HOWIE B**
Snatch Palm Pictures-Rykodisc
- 10 **MOCEAN WORKER**
Mixed Emotional Features
Palm Pictures-Rykodisc
- 11 **DJ WALLY**
The Stoned Ranger Rydes Again Jungle Sky
- 12 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Big Dirty Beats 2 Moonshine
- 13 **PRODIGY**
Prodigy Present The Dirtchamber Sessions
XL-Beggars Banquet
- 14 **SQUAREPUSHER**
Budakhan Mindphone (EP)
Warp/Nothing-Interscope
- 15 **ADD N TO (X)**
Avant Hard Mute
- 16 **KMFDM**
Adios Wax Trax!-TVT
- 17 **DJ RAP**
"Bad Girl" (12") Higher Ground/Columbia-CRG
- 18 **PLAID**
Peel Sessions Nothing-Interscope
- 19 **SOURCE DIRECT**
Exorcise The Demons Science-Astralwerks
- 20 **ATARI TEENAGE RIOT**
60 Second Wipeout DHR/Elektra-EEG
- 21 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Mephisto: San Francisco Plasmfunk Vol. 1
Mephisto-0m
- 22 **GUS GUS**
This Is Normal 4AD-Warner Bros.
- 23 **KODO**
Sai-So: The Remix Project Red Ink
- 24 **VARIOUS ARTISTS**
Planet V V-Ultra
- 25 **BATTERY**
AftermathCOP International

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

hip-hop top 25

- 1 NAS
Nas Is Like Columbia/CRS
- 2 ROOTS
You Got Me MCA
- 3 BLACK STAR
Respiration Elek
- 4 RAZZEL
All I Know MCA
- 5 COMMON FEAT. SADAT X
One-Nine-Nine-Nine Elek
- 6 LOOTPACK
Whenmoondamic Steins Throw
- 7 GANG STARR
Full Clip No Style/Virgo
- 8 NAS
Hate Me Now Columbia/CRS
- 9 MOBB DEEP
Quiet Storm Loud
- 10 PRINCE PAUL
More Than U Know Tommy Boy
- 11 TRICK DADDY
Nann Ruff-Top's/Blade
- 12 SWAY & KING TECH FEAT. DJ REVOLUTION
The Anthem Interscope
- 13 PRINCE PAUL W/XZIBIT & SADAT X
Handle Your Time Tommy Boy
- 14 EMINEM
My Fault Alternath-Interscope
- 15 DEFARI
Low Lands Anthem Tommy Boy
- 16 EMINEM
My Name Is Alternath-Interscope
- 15 ALL NATURAL
It's O.K. M. Richard
- 16 RUFF RYDERS
Ride Or Die Interscope
- 17 ROOTS
100% Dundee MCA
- 18 TLC
No Scrubs LaFace-Arista
- 19 GENIUS/GZA
Publicity MCA
- 20 UGLY DUCKLING
Fresh Mode (EP) (500-GRAM)
- 21 RUBBERROOM
Sector Rush 3-2-1-3-4-5-6-7-8-9
- 23 BUMPY KNUCKLES
A Part Of My Life Kilo-Fat Beats
- 24 NAUGHTY BY NATURE
Live Or Die Jitsu
- 25 PACEWON
I Declare War Ruffhouse/Columbia-CRS

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

DR. DOOOM

First Come, First Served

Funky Ass



bending and sometimes overly twisted voyage through the recesses of Kool Keith's psyche. For Dr. Octagon fans, he offers more of the same ilk of lyrical and musical work, although tracks like "Apartment 223," "Body Bag" and "Neighbors Next Door" push Keith's serial-killing/cannibal fetish further than before, with added help from new sicko sidekick Jacky Jasper. On the other side of the coin, there is much bile to be vented, and he does it marvelously. "Leave Me Alone" and "No Chorus" are two of Keith's most personal and angry invectives to date. The beats, woven by Keith and West Coast underground wunderkind Kutmasta Kurt, are perfect: minimal when needed, but continually dark and engaging.

>>> Thank the Lord, **SLICK RICK** the ruler has really returned. After admitted artistic and sales disappointments with the jail-time releases *The Ruler's Back* (1990) and *Behind Bars* (1995), which followed his classic debut from '88, his new platter, *The Art Of Storytelling* (Def Jam), shows us that Rick is still in top form. His style has changed since he first appeared on the scene 15 years ago—he's even more suave, controlled and relaxed in his delivery, to the point where he almost hypnotizes the listener with his flow. And he definitely hasn't lost any of his conceit or fire. Brag-tracks rule on *The Art Of Storytelling*, and he is aided by many MC admirers, from whom he steals the show, one by one: Nas, Snoop Dogg, Raekwon, Jermaine Dupri and Outkast's Big Boi all bow down to Rick's supreme style. The music overall is less than compelling, but who listens to Slick Rick for the beats? "Kill Niggaz," "I Own America," "Run This" and "Who Rotte 'Em" show us the Rick that we fell in love with back in the day. Let's just hope the dumbing-down of hip-hop these past couple of years hasn't made kids too numb to appreciate his genius... The California underground is exploding right now. Need proof? Check out two new compilations that more than prove this point: **Laid In Full** (Blackberry) and **Funky Precedent** (No Mayo-Loosegroove).

Kool Keith is at it again. Even with his major-label debut on Ruffhouse due this summer, he has mysteriously given us another distraction from his own label, in the form of a new persona: Dr. Doom, the man who killed Dr. Octagon. Apparently sick of the attention he received from his Octagon alter ego, Keith has reinvented himself again. One glance at the cover of this album—a No Limit/Cash Money Records graphic send-up, with baboons, cockroaches, dead rats and a slicked-down Keith in place of the usual Cristal bottles, jewelry, piles of money and half-naked women—and you know that you're in for a real treat. From the opening skit ("Who Killed Dr. Octagon?") through the ending hidden track ("Bald Headed Girl"), the album is a hilarious, acerbic, lyrically mind-

Laid In Full, assembled and mixed by low-key but high-props producer and DJ M-Boogie, is an incredible smorgasbord of underground spine shakers, showcasing some of the best MCs, producers and DJs in the country: Planet Asia, Iriscience & Babu, Kutmasta Kurt, DJ Revolution, Joey Chavez, Evidence, the Associates, Rasco, DJ Rhetmatic, Internationl, DJ Dusk and the Masters of Illusion. It's the best mix tape yet this year, even if it is in CD form. *Funky Precedent* has an equally incredible display and a much wider range, more specifically representing the Los Angeles urban music scene. From Styles Of Beyond's "Ambiguous Figures" and Dilated Peoples' brutal "Triple Optics" to the Breakestra's rare groove revival "Get Yo Soul Together" and Ozomatli's Latin get-down "Cumbia De Los Muertos," you can't go wrong with anything here... The **ISOLATIONIST** is an interesting combination: New York's visionary Anti-Pop Consortium MC crew and forward-thinking Russian DJ and producer Vadim. On *The Isolationist* (Jazz Fudge), this conglomerate runs through a series of 19 tracks that are sparse, futuristic, brilliant and refreshingly abstract, consciously swimming against the tide of the rap status quo. If you long for the days when hip-hop was more art than commerce, don't miss out on this.

It's rare that electronic music is both as challenging and as purely beautiful as **NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA's** "Meteor" 12" (Thrill Jockey), his first American release under his own name (though he's done a couple of remixes as DJ Takemura, and he released a terrific CD as Child's View a few months ago). He works with the same kind of digital glitches and scrambled pitches for which projects like Oval and Disc have worked out the basic vocabulary. Takemura, though, is interested in melody and structure in a way that Oval only hinted at with early pieces like "Shop In Store." His splintered beats and seemingly random sprays of notes resolve into sweet little tunes, the way that fractal shapes look chaotic close-up, but organize themselves into gorgeous geometric forms from a distance. "Meteor" is as colorful and prickly as a jar full of Magic Rocks growing on a copy of New Order's *Power, Corruption And Lies*. It's backed by "Wax And Wane," a twinkling 15-minute lope sprinkled with tiny crumbs of Aki Tsuyuko's voice, which eventually boils down from its digital turmoil into quiet, glistening chimes.

The DJ magazine *Jockey Slut* has been releasing a series of 7" split singles under the imprint Slut Small—generally of somewhat more challenging dance music than there's room for in your typical DJ's repertoire. The latest is the **JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION's** flesh-ripping "New Year (Destroyer)," hardly your typical electronic fare—though remixer Alec Empire, of Atari Teenage Riot, augments the band's body-slam with some half-curdled drum 'n' bass rhythms, not to mention some extra distortion. It's one of the band's hardest tracks ever, and the only reason it hasn't shown up on one of its own albums may be that it's a little dated already (Spencer's howling about 1998). On the flip is **BARRY ADAMSON's** "The Crime Scene," a little drum machine workout with some detective-movie strings scrambled over the top.



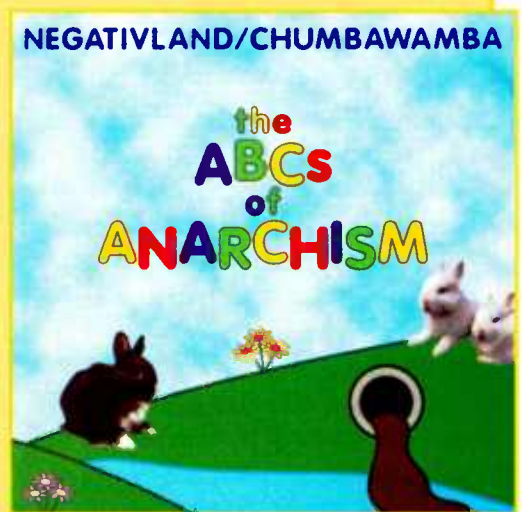
Isobel Campbell of Belle And Sebastian is now recording solo as the **GENTLE WAVES**, and though her album *The Green Fields Of Foreverland* has come out in the US, there's also a single with its two best songs, "Evensong" and "Weathershow" (Jeepster).

NEGATIVLAND/CHUMBAWAMBA

The ABCs Of Anarchism

Seeland

Here's a first: a band illicitly sampling itself. Almost two years after "Tubthumping" became an international hit for former underground-anarchist types Chumbawamba, it's still having peculiar fallout—in this case, a collaboration with the American cut-and-pasters Negativland. "The ABCs Of Anarchism" is only sort of a new piece; it's mostly a flipped-out remix of a chunk of Chumba's *Tubthumper* album, in the mode of Negativland's fabled, banned "U2" single, and it naturally shows no sign of permission being granted by the people who own the original recording—just the people who made it. The track convincingly conflates "Tubthumping" with those other rabble-rousing English exports the Teletubbies, the Spice Girls and (courtesy of an unmistakable cry of "Anarchaaaaaay!") the Sex Pistols—all of whom it samples ad lib, and interleaves with passages from Alexander Berkman's "ABC Of Anarchism." Chumbawamba is no stranger to clever incorporations of other people's records (most notably on the group's semi-legendary *Jesus H. Christ* sessions), and it's still at it here—"songs that remind him of the good times" gets cross-cut into Chic chirping "Good times!" A second piece, "Smelly Water," manipulates Chumba's "Drip Drip Drip" into a treatise on water pollution, and "© Is For Stupid" reworks "ABCs" into a slightly more coherent electro track that brings Ice Cube, the Cookie Monster and Tinky Winky into more intimate contact than they've ever had before.



Even better, the single version of "Evensong" is in French, and Campbell's breathy *ingenue* voice, its simple but clever riff, the lead flute part and the tight, bouncy playing consequently make it sound a lot like first-rate '60s French pop. And, given that she's been known to sing France Gall's Eurovision Song Contest winner "Poupée De Cire, Poupée De Son" at Belle And Sebastian shows, she's just the woman to do it.

A few quick drops of the needle: The latest funk marvel from the Soul Providers crew is credited to **NAOMI DAVIS AND THE KNIGHTS OF FORTY-FIRST STREET**, and it's called "Forty First Street Breakdowne" (Desco). As you might guess, its '69-style groove owes a lot to the Watts 103rd St. Rhythm Band ("Express Yourself"), which is a great thing. Davis reportedly made a couple of little-known funk blasters 25 years or so ago, and she's still got a hot, jagged voice... Cornershop's Tjinder Singh has released a very lightweight little beat-and-scratch piece, "David D. Chambers," as a 7" (Meccico) under the name "**CLINTON**," quotation marks *sic*. The title is pretty much the only lyric, a record-getting-up-to-speed murmur is the closest thing it has to a riff, and it basically sounds like the instrumental version

of something fun that might end up on the next Cornershop album... Another month, another **FALL** single—in this case, "Touch Sensitive" (Artful), the debut of the new super-electric-rockabilly lineup backing up Mark E. Smith. It's got Smith's silliest lyric ever ("Aaaaan' yer dyin' for a pee-ah! So you go behind a tree-ah!"), but it's also got a dance remix that loops the foot-stompingest elements of the song in a way that generally sounds like somebody in The Fall camp has been listening to lots of Fatboy Slim... Those who haven't been able to track down a lot of the neat singles on the eclectic London label FatCat should note that most of the early ones have now been collected on a solid CD, **Across Uneven Terrain** (FatCat). Among other gems, it's got Autechre remixing a piece by the cannily named Various Artists, Björk collaborating with German electro-whiz Funkstorung, and guitar-based dream music from Americans like Mice Parade and Transient Waves.



DUKE ELLINGTON

1927-73 Duke Ellington Centennial Celebration
At Newport 1956—Complete
Black, Brown & Beige

RCA Victor
Sony Legacy
Sony Legacy

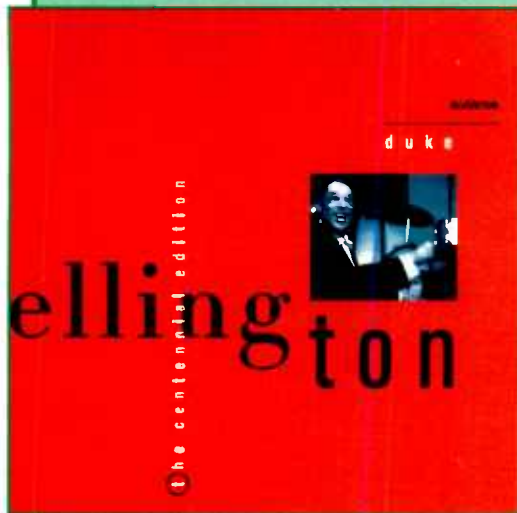
This past April marked the 100th Anniversary of the birth of jazz bandleader and composer Edward Kennedy "Duke" Ellington. Over his lengthy and august career, Duke

recorded for many different record companies, almost all of which have released wonderful music this year to help celebrate his centennial. The big behemoth is RCA Victor's phenomenal box set compiling virtually all of his works for that label. Spanning from the late '20s all the way to just before Ellington's death in 1973, it's a breathtaking look at one of jazz's greatest icons. Sony Legacy has released several key Ellington items from its voluminous catalog (the soundtrack to *Anatomy Of A Murder* was reviewed in these pages not too long ago). Amazingly, the label has also released a definitive edition of Duke Ellington's classic *Live At Newport* date from 1958. It turns out that Duke and his producers tinkered with the tapes a wee

Grateful Dead. And sure, you might scoff and laugh, but in earnest, they were a good band. In those youthful days, Mother McCreary's made a heartfelt stab at playing old-timey jug band music—harmonica, banjo, piano, mandolin, guitar, washtub bass and yes, somebody blowing into a big ol' brown glass jug. Heck, it almost sounds like the Squirrel Nut Zippers, so give it a shot. It's spirited, spry, a little naive, and a lot of fun. Years before he was a bloated, bearded basket case noodling his way through a 30-minute solo and sweating his way through a ratty pocket T-shirt, Jerry Garcia and his band were making music that was pleasant and enjoyable. I'm no Deadhead, at least not if I can help it, but I like this a lot.

>>> There was a time when country music was the music of the iconoclast, the outlaw, the misfit and the loner. Long before today's parade of air-brushed, line-dancing pinheads, country music really stood for something, an ideal very close to the famous old American motto, "Don't Tread On Me." Capitol has released **Rebels & Outlaws: Music From The Wild Side Of Life**, a compilation spotlighting classic recordings from the renegades of the country music world—universally loved rebels such as Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, and Johnny Paycheck, as well as harder, less-well-known honky-tonkers including Dick Curless, Dusty Chaps, Spade Cooley and the legendary Wanda Jackson. These were the days when the radio was filled with songs about robbery, pills, infidelity and even murder. This music is tough, mean and a lot of fun.

>>> The Coop is beheaded, long live The Coop! **ALICE COOPER** released a box set earlier this year, *The Life And Crimes Of Alice Cooper* (Rhino), which celebrated his legacy as one of the scariest—and/or funniest—figures in rock. Even today at 51, he definitely could teach Marilyn Manson a few things, whether it's the finer points of how to behead yourself onstage or innovative "how to" tips on properly raising hell in a hotel on an off-night of a rock 'n' roll tour. Listening to this music from 20-odd years ago with fresh ears, you'll appreciate it anew. If he ever comes off the golf course and decides to tour again, you should go see him.



bit after the live concert recording, "sweetening" a few of the parts on this milestone album with overdubs. This recording offers a never-before-heard version of the actual concert as it was performed—and, sheez, it's brilliant. There is still one much-talked about Ellington album that has not been reissued on CD, however, and we're patiently waiting: It's *The Drum Is A Woman*, which in addition to offering some great music, features one of the wildest album covers of the 1950s.

>>> In May 1973, there was a concert held at Overton Band Shell in Memphis, Tennessee. Some townie friend of a now-completely forgotten band named Leviathan decided to tape his pal's show. This person also taped the other band on the bill, a promising young local group called **BIG STAR**, which went on to, oh, make some of the greatest music ever made in the history of the world, and become one of the most influential rock bands of the ensuing couple of decades. Culled from these long-lost live tapes, *Nobody Can Dance* (Norton) is an archival Big Star release that also includes the sound check from a WLIR radio broadcast that had surfaced on bootleg a few years back. But the really groovy parts are, of course, the live tracks from the Overton Band Shell concert. The fidelity isn't quite up to the impeccable sheen of the group's studio work, but hearing a group like Big Star at work is something special. The band energetically rips through power-pop staples such as "Mod Lang," "You Get What You Deserve" and "September Gurls," throwing in an occasional eyepopper such as the cover of T. Rex's "Baby Strange," or a curt, perfunctory version of the

Box Tops' hit "The Letter." Even on an average day, one of the most important bands of the 1970s could be fairly transcendental. Wow.

>>> **TELEVISION** ★ was one of the few truly great new wave groups whose music rose above its initial era to become timeless. The twin guitar phalanx of Tom Verlaine and Richard Lloyd could spin out webs of intertwined guitar parts that were able to build a song up though peak after peak to a seemingly untoppable crescendo. The recently released double-disc *The Blow-Up* (ROIR) captures the band at its prime in 1978, electrifying an audience onstage

>>> Listen: You might look upon these pages and see me raving about the CD reissue of live tapes from the early '60s by **MOTHER MCCREARY'S JUG BAND** (Grateful Dead Records), the original pre-Warlocks, pre-Keysey Acid Test, pre-everything version of the



- | | | |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| 1 TOM WAITS | Mule Variations | Anti-Epithaph |
| 2 BLUR | 13 | Virgin |
| 3 BETH ORTON | Central Reservation | deConstruction-Arista |
| 4 UNDERWORLD | Beaucoup Fish | V2 |
| 5 OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL | Black Foliage: Animation Music Volume One | Flydaddy |
| 6 WILCO | Summer Teeth | Reprise |
| 7 RENTALS | Seven More Minutes | Maverick-Reprise |
| 8 MOGWAI | Come On Die Young | Matador |
| 9 SLEATER-KINNEY | The Hot Rock | Kill Rock Stars |
| 10 OLD 97'S | Fight Songs | Elektra-EEG |
| 11 FRANK BLACK & THE CATHOLICS | Pistolero | spinART |
| 12 BECK | Cold Brains (EP) | Bong Load/DGC-Interscope |
| 13 LOW | Secret Name | Kranky |
| 14 FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE | Utopia Parkway | Atlantic |
| 15 TRANS AM | Futureworld | Thrill Jockey |
| 16 GO-BETWEENS | 78 'Til 79 The Lost Album | Jetset |
| 17 MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? | Eeviac: Operational Index And Reference Guide... | Touch And Go |
| 18 BEN LEE | Breathing Tornado | Grand Royal-Capitol |
| 19 ELF POWER | A Dream In Sound | Elephant 6-Arena Rock |
| 20 LOOPER | Up A Tree | Sub Pop |
| 21 DROPKICK MURPHYS | The Gang's All Here | Hellcat-Epithaph |
| 22 BEULAH | When Your Heartstrings Break | Sugar Free |
| 23 RAINER MARIA | Look Now Look Again | Polyvinyl |
| 24 SEBADOH | The Sebadoh | Sub Pop-Sire |
| 25 EUPHONIE | The Calendar Of Unlucky Days | Jade Tree |
| 26 MAKE-UP | I Want Some | K |
| 27 BUILT TO SPILL | Keep It Like A Secret | Warner Bros. |
| 28 BUCK-O-NINE | Libido | TVT |
| 29 LADYBUG TRANSISTOR | The Albermarle Sound | Merge |
| 30 ATARI TEENAGE RIOT | 60 Second Wipeout | DHR/Elektra-EEG |
| 31 DELGADOS | Peloton | Mantra-Beggars Banquet |
| 32 LILYS | The 3-Way | Sire |
| 33 GUS GUS | This Is Normal | 4AD-WB |
| 34 ROOTS | Things Fall Apart | MCA |
| 35 ADD N TO (X) | Avant Hard | Mute |
| 36 OWSLEY | Owsley | Giant-WB |
| 37 SUPER FURRY ANIMALS | Radiator | Flydaddy |
| 38 SONGS: OHIA | Axxess & Ace | Secretly Canadian |
| 39 VARIOUS ARTISTS | Drinking From Puddles | Kill Rock Stars |
| 40 UGLY DUCKLING | Fresh Mode | 1500-A&M |
| 41 REGIA | The Art Of Navigation | spinART |
| 42 DIDO | The Highbury Fields EP | Arista |
| 43 KMFDM | Adios | Wax Trax!-TVT |
| 44 DJ KRUSH & TOSHINORI KONDO | Ki-Oku | Instinct |
| 45 MUSTARD PLUG | Pray For Mojo | Hopeless |
| 46 BADMARSH & SHRI | Dancing Drums | Outcaste-Tommy Boy |
| 47 FUTURE PILOT AKA | Future Pilot AKA Vs A Galaxy Of Sound | Sulphur-Beggars Banquet |
| 48 APHEX TWIN | "Windowlicker" (CD5) | Sire |
| 49 CRASH TEST DUMMIES | Give Yourself A Hand | Arista |
| 50 JIMMY EAT WORLD | Clarity | Capitol |
| 51 JIM O'ROURKE | Eureka | Drag City |
| 52 LATIN PLAYBOYS | Dose | Atlantic |
| 53 PIZZICATO FIVE | Playboy & Playgirl | Matador |
| 54 BURNING AIRLINES | Mission: Control! | DeSoto |
| 55 RYE COALITION | The Lipstick Game | Gern Blandsten |
| 56 WE | Square Root Of Negative One | Asphodel |
| 57 TEEN IDOLS | Pucker Up! | Honest Don's |
| 58 FUZZY | Hurray For Everything | Catapult |
| 59 SPY | Music To Mauzner By | Lava-Atlantic |
| 60 CAKE LIKE | Goodbye, So What | Vapor |
| 61 GROOVIE GHOULIES | Fun In The Dark | Lookout! |
| 62 PLAID | Peel Sessions | Nothing-Interscope |
| 63 WOLFIE | Where's Wolfie | Parasol |
| 64 DDT | Urban Observer | Elektra-EEG |
| 65 LIT | A Place In The Sun | RCA |
| 66 LONESOME ORGANIST | Cavaicade | Thrill Jockey |
| 67 KREIDLER | Appearance And The Park | KiffSM-Mute |
| 68 SEVEN PERCENT SOLUTION | Gabriel's Waltz | X-Ray |
| 69 VARIOUS ARTISTS | Post Marked Stamps | Tree |
| 70 MEKONS | I Have Been To Hell And Back... | Quarterstick |
| 71 OLD TIME RELIJUN | Uterus And Fire | K |
| 72 KID SILVER | Dead City Sunbeams | Jetset |
| 73 XTC | Apple Venus Vol. 1 | Idea-TVT |
| 74 SIX GOING ON SEVEN | Heartbreak's Got Backbeat | Some |
| 75 ROCK*A*TEENS | Golden Time | Merge |



#1 TOM WAITS Mule Variations

FIVE YEARS AGO

- 1. SONIC YOUTH**
EXPERIMENTAL JET SET, TRASH AND NO STAR (DGC)
- 2. HOLE**
LIVE THROUGH THIS (DGC)
- 3. ROLLINS BAND**
WEIGHT (IMAGO)
- 4. LIVE**
THROWING COPPER (RADIOACTIVE)
- 5. NINE INCH NAILS**
THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL (NOTHING/TVT-INTERSCOPE)

TEN YEARS AGO

- 1. XTC**
ORANGES & LEMONS (Geffen)
- 2. THE CULT**
SONIC TEMPLE (Sire-Reprise)
- 3. ROBYN HITCHCOCK & THE EGYPTIANS**
QUEEN ELVIS (A&M)
- 4. PIXIES**
DOLITTLE (4AD-Elektra)
- 5. FIREHOSE**
FROM OHIO (SST)

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.



story:
WILLIAM WERDE

photo illustration:
MERV (the perv)

PORN IN THE USA IS PORNOGRAPHY THE MAINSTREAM'S FINAL FRONTIER?

A woman by the name of Anna Chong had sex with 250 men in one 10-hour period. And while that feat might raise some eyebrows, what's really amazing is who watched her do it: the movie industry buzz-makers at last February's Sundance Film Festival. A documentary on Chong and another one on pimps were among the ski-or-be-seen event's most talked-about screenings.

From Super 8 to sex.com, porn has always lurked at the fringes of American culture, but lately it's been surfacing in more mainstream environs. Pop culture—with its emphasis on rebellion—is embracing porn and breaking boundaries in the process. The nudity and sexual frankness found in today's mainstream newsstand magazines like *Maxim* or *Details* is not very far removed from what you would have seen in *Playboy* or *Hustler* in the early '70s. Trendy club nights in places like Los Angeles and New York feature strippers or nearly nude dancers. And according to Internet specialists Forrester Research, "adult content" on the web generated an estimated one billion dollars last year, and its growth is not expected to slow any time soon. Porn, in one form or another, surfaces in

(continued on page 78)

BUENA VISTA SOCIAL CLUB

(Artisan Entertainment)

In 1996, Ry Cooder traveled to Havana to collaborate with a handful of legendary Cuban musicians. The result: *Buena Vista Social Club*, a record that went on to nab a Grammy. This disarming documentary, directed by Wim Wenders (*Wings Of Desire*), chronicles Cooder's musical journey. (FYI: Cooder composed the score for several Wenders movies, including *Paris, Texas*.) We get to meet the colorful codgers—extraordinary musicians long forgotten by modern-day audiences in Cuba or elsewhere—that Cooder assembled for the project. Wenders nimbly captures the camaraderie and passion these performers—now known in Cuba as “los superabuelos” (the super-grandfathers)—have for their craft. Meanwhile, instead of hogging the spotlight, Cooder, a media-shy fellow to begin with, wisely stays in the background. The movie ends with the super-group performing their exuberant, salsa-filled dirges during a sold-out concert at Carnegie Hall in July 1998. Beforehand, the Cuban musicians roam Manhattan, marveling at the city's size and beauty. Even the most mundane high-rise apartment building leaves the group awestruck. Their earnest outlook will rejuvenate the spirits of anyone sick of today's cynical, publicity-hungry performers.

>>>John Elsasser

DICK

(Columbia Tristar)

Compared to the seedy details of the Clinton controversy, the sneaky dealings of Richard Nixon may seem like Watergate under the bridge. In the light of our country's “now-I've-seen-everything” attitude, the whole '70s situation doesn't seem to offer enough scandal for even a very special episode of *7th Heaven*. But after one look at *Dick*, you'll agree that it's still ripe for mocking. Betsy (Kirsten Dunst) and Arlene (Michelle Williams) are ditsy best friends whose lives revolve around shopping, prank calls, and Bobby Sherman, despite the fact that they're living in the heart of Washington, DC, during the Vietnam War. After a school trip to the White House, where they see something they shouldn't, the girls wind up as the official dog-walkers to Tricky Dick (Dan Hedaya, in his best role since *Cheers*' Nick Tortelli). Despite some low-brow moments, courtesy of a cast that includes *Saturday Night Live* and *Kids In The Hall* veterans Ana Gasteyer, Jim Breuer, Will Ferrell, Dave Foley and Bruce McCullough, *Dick* isn't just another lame comedy full of body function jokes, but rather a grade-A spoof where it helps to know your history.

>>>Carrie Bell

DESERT BLUE

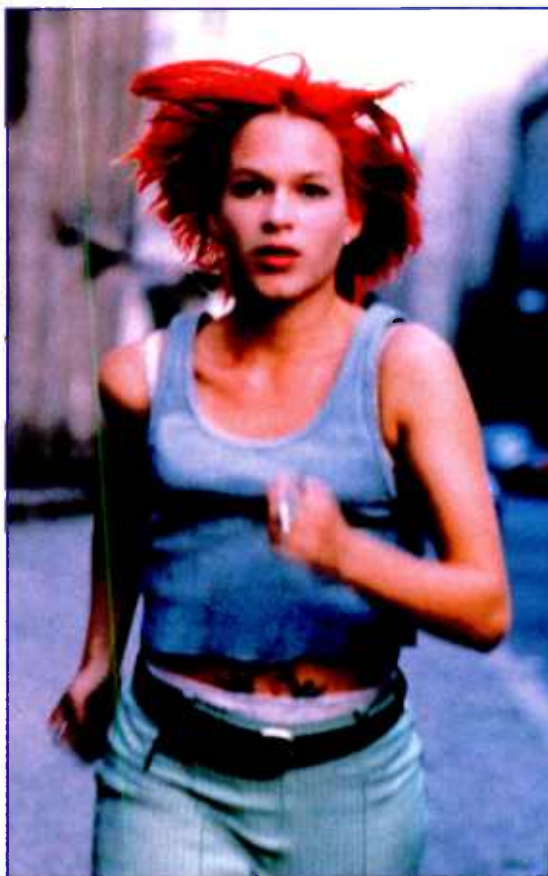
(Samuel Goldwyn Films)

Nothing ever happens in Baxter, an oddball California desert town of 89 people. In fact, the only reason people even stop there is to gawk at the world's largest ice cream cone on the way to somewhere else. This leaves the town's group of youngsters—played by the next-generation's who's-who in art-house filmmaking that includes Christina Ricci, Brendan Sexton III, Casey Affleck, and Sara Gilbert—searching for meaning in a land devoid of opportunity. When the town is quarantined by the FBI, stranding a snobby TV starlet (played sluggishly by Goldie Hawn's daughter Kate Hudson) and her father (John Heard), their world is thrown out of whack. The cell phone-loving, agent-needing, trend-conscious culture of Hollywood collides with the laid-back, timeless, non-cable-ready lifestyle of Baxter, as Sexton and Hudson fall for each other. Sexton stands out as the troubled Blue, a role written specifically for him by writer/director Morgan J. Freeman (*Hurricane Streets*). Although this film offers a fairly honest description of small-town life, the dialogue smacks of a college-educated filmmaker and the characters seem too hip for kids without so much as a shopping mall.

>>>Carrie Bell

RUN LOLA RUN

(Sony Pictures Classics)



What an accurate title! Lola (Franka Potente), the lead character in this wildly inventive German thriller, spends most of the movie sprinting through the streets of Berlin. She has 20 minutes to find 100,000 deutsche marks or her boyfriend Manni, a gangster's courier, will die. Don't worry about the hows and whys right now. After receiving the desperate phone call from Manni, Lola—wearing baggy, sea foam green pants, skimpy tank top (yes!) and black combat boots—rushes out of her apartment and attempts to get the cash. Her journey ends 20 minutes later. Fate has been determined. Or has it? What would have happened given a reversal of fortune along the way? How would this have changed the outcome? Well, we get to find out. The movie starts over. This time, however, her path to Manni is slightly varied. By the time the credits roll, we get three versions of the story, each with a different ending. Sure, it's gimmicky, but writer/director Tom Tykwer employs enough style and energy for five movies. Using different film stocks, still photography and animation, Tykwer, who also helped compose the boppy techno soundtrack, creates the exhilarating, freewheeling atmosphere of a big-screen video game. And Potente, with her raggedy, punk-rock hair dyed bright red, is a joy to watch. And not just because she spends all her time running.

>>>John Elsasser

>>> compiled by Jenny eliscu <<<

ELECTRO SHOCK!: GROUNDBREAKERS OF ELECTRONICA

By Greg Rule
(Miller Freeman Books)

It's tough to write a book about something as potentially nerdy as the making of electronic music. While rock stars get to "slash" at guitars and "wail away" at drums, electronicists "program" sequences and "initiate" drum machines; the truth is in the action words. But Greg Rule, an editor at *Keyboard* magazine, does a good job of explaining—for the layman—the contributions and functions of a slew of electronic instruments. And for every section dedicated entirely to a Moog, synclavier or Roland sampler, there is a spoonful of behind-the-scenes sugar, in the form of Q&A interviews with stars such as the Chemical Brothers, Trent Reznor and Aphex Twin and producers such as William Orbit (Blur and Madonna) and Mark Snow of TV's *The X-Files*. While recent books such as *Generation Ecstasy* and *Altered State* have focused on DJ culture, *Electro Shock* skips over the drugs, parties and name-dropping to provide a surprisingly impassioned history of the music through an examination of the technology used to make it.

>>>William Werde

THE BEATLES AS MUSICIANS

By Walter Everett
(Oxford Press)

Walter Everett, an Associate Professor of Music Theory at the University of Michigan, has written a well researched, painstakingly annotated and absurdly detailed musical account of the Beatles' most creative period, 1966-70. It's a noble work, but too often the trouble with *The Beatles As Musicians* is that it reads like a word-count inflated term paper. It may be great for a teacher trying to justify teaching "Hey Jude" to a high-school music class, but to the casual, or even rabid, fan, this microscopic look under the hood is a one-way ticket to Drysville. For example, take this entry regarding "She's Leaving Home": "The girl's increasing distance from home is symbolized in the methodical addition of pandiatonic voices against a three-bar phrase..." Really makes the song come alive for you, doesn't it? Yes, the Beatles were great musicians (aided immeasurably by the wisdom of producer George Martin), but this dram by dram distillation of their work says little about the Beatles' true musical appeal, much like an autopsy of Joe DiMaggio would hardly reveal what made him such a great ballplayer.

>>>Steve Ciabattoni

THE BLUES CD LISTENER'S GUIDE

By Howard J. Blumenthal
(Watson-Guptill)

Anyone who has ever been burned by buying a lousy CD with a cover that suggested it was going to be better than it was is probably aware of the potential pitfalls of blindly buying into a specialist genre. Blues is a fine example. There are literally thousands of blues CDs out there in the bins—some terrible and some masterpieces—so how do you tell the gems from the dreck? *The Blues CD Listener's Guide* is billed as "a reliable easy-to-use guide to 900 of the best blues CDs by over 100 of the best blues artists." Well, it is, but it also isn't. There are sadly no entries for any modern North Mississippi artists such as R.L. Burnside or Junior Kimbrough, author Howard J. Blumenthal misses quite a few key compilations, and the "links" recommendations too often point from a great artist to a largely forgettable lesser name. For a true beginner, it'd be fine—like as a gift for a 12-year-old, say—but for most readers of this magazine, this volume won't be a very helpful guide.

>>>James Lien

**THINK OF THE SELF SPEAKING:
SELECTED INTERVIEWS**

By Harry Smith (Cityful Press)

Think of the Self Speaking
Harry Smith—Selected Interviews

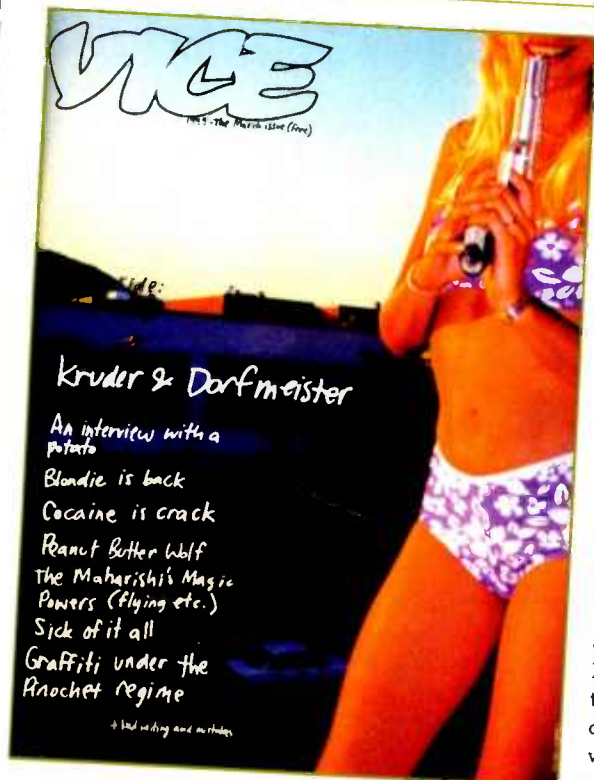


Harry Smith was a cantankerous, rabble-raising, brilliant, obsessive coot. He's best known today for having compiled the unerring Folkways collection *Anthology Of American Folk Music*. The 84 songs on these records not only are beautiful, but they led the way for the folk revival and deeply influenced more significant artists (John Fahey, Patti Smith, Bob Dylan, etc.) than most any record ever released. In his few published writings—but most often and importantly via argumentative banter with friends and interviewers—Smith drew connections between all manner of cultural ephemera with eyes and ears widely opened to the alchemical, anthropological, sacred and sublime.

Smith was also an accomplished painter and a splendid abstract filmmaker whose hand-painted, colorful early films anticipated by a good 25 years the psychedelic art of the 1960s. He also collected rare Native American artifacts (a Kiowa peyote ritual he recorded was released as a Folkways LP), hand-painted Ukrainian Easter eggs, string figures and paper airplanes. Editor Rani Singh has done a splendid job arranging these interviews conducted between 1965 and 1992. As you might guess, this book covers a lot of ground and in the process it shows a fabulously imbalanced, combative (sometimes cruel) and enthused mind let loose.

>>>Mike McConigal

'ZINES ABOUT 'ZINES; FREE STUFF!



Now that **Factsheet Five** has gone on sabbatical again, something had to fill the 'zines-about-'zines void—there has to be some way to find the 'zines you want, which can be awfully hard to do, considering that they tend to have very small press runs and not much in the way of distribution. Fortunately, *Zine Guide* (\$6 from P.O. Box 5467, Evanston, IL 60204) has jumped into the breach in a big way. The second issue lists more than 2000 'zines, arranged alphabetically. Unlike *FF*, it doesn't review anything; instead it simply lists the price, format, number of pages, and notable contents. What it does have, though, is a series of very useful, and sometimes deeply amusing, indexes. Not only are hundreds of bands indexed according to which 'zines they appear in, there's a list of the "375 Most Featured Bands." The Descendents, it turns out, are the biggest 'zine-whores, with features in *Absolute Hardcore Zine*, *Attention Deficit Disorder*, *Bad Stain*, *Boar Dome*, *Braincleanser*, *Crickets Seem Loud*, *Dee Dee's Kids*, *Dumpster Dive*, *Eugene*, *Fist City*, *Fizz*, *Great God Pan*, *Heights Kid*, *Hoolisp*, *Hybrid Moments*, *Ink 19*, *Jersey Beat*, *Lollipop*, *Motion Sickness*, *Muddle*, *No Rules*, *Punk Planet*, *Rigsby*, *RTR*, *Second Nature*, *Soft Roe Sodomy*, *Supplicant*, *Thora-zine*, *Under The Volcano*, *What Me Worry?* and *Wigout*. That's a prose-poem right there, pretty much.

Fugazi's Ian MacKaye ranks awfully high on that list, too—he's at #6—but it's hard to imagine that any of his interviews are as eye-opening as the one that appears in **Monozine #6** (\$3 from P.O. Box 598, Reisterstown, MD 21136). It's the special "rock issue" of the 'zine devoted to readers' accounts of their greatest health crises, and MacKaye tops everyone with the seven-page story of how he nearly died of pneumonia on tour in Australia. (Classic MacKaye: "I don't go to doctors... I don't take medicines. My whole concept has always been eat well, sleep and take care of yourself. I don't take an aspirin to break a fever, I don't even take vitamins. I take NO medicine. It's sort of a rule of thumb, I'm just not interested in it. I feel that our bodies are created to work.") Other highlights include the Spinanes' Rebecca Gates detailing a chain of events that started with a UTI and ended with a blood clot in her leg that had her in the hospital for a week; Steve Albini on a motorcycle accident he had when he was 18; Unsane's Chris Spencer on being beaten up so badly after a show in Vienna that his spleen was bleeding internally; and Superchunk's Jim Wilbur on the bronchial infection that had him coughing up blood on the band's first national tour.

There's a line between 'zines and full-fledged magazines, and Montreal's **Vice** is happy to straddle it. Distributed free at various urban locations (try writing to them at 124 McGill, Ste. 400, Montreal, Quebec H2Y 2E5, Canada), it's got the production values of a full-color hipster magazine, and the editorial perspective of a quirky little 'zine. The first interview in the most recent issue, for instance, is with a potato. There are a couple of nods to indie-rock culture (the obligatory interview with Sleater-Kinney; the less obligatory and more entertaining interview with comic Neil Hamburger, about doing English-language comedy in Malaysia, and an entirely non-obligatory piece by Bobby Conn about impotence as the road to rock 'n' roll stardom), and a few more to DJ culture (features on Kruder & Dorfmeister and Peanut Butter Wolf). The really fun parts, though, have nothing to do with music: a fashion photo shoot of a couple eating fast food in a barn (including a full-page picture of a small chicken perching inside a KFC container), an article speculating on whatever happened to the kids of *Degrassi High*, and several features that cannot be elaborated on in a family magazine.

While we're on the free-stuff front, *New Music Monthly* favorite **Tape Op**—the magazine for home recorders and the people who love them—has reappeared after a brief hiatus. It's a little bit bigger (regular magazine format), a lot thicker (augmented by lots of ads for recording gear), and from a new publisher (though Larry Crane is still editing it), but it remains free, which is always a good thing. For your subscription, write to pwestny@aol.com with your name and address, and indicate why you ought to have a subscription (qualifiers Crane suggests: "I saw Nirvana with 17 people," "I know what a ribbon mic is," etc.). While you're at it, if you'd like a free copy of Simon Grennan and Christopher Sperandio's one-shot comic book **The Invisible City**, they can be had (while supplies last) through www.publicartfund.org. It's the print version of a public art project that appeared on New York City's subways: comics adaptations of stories the artists collected from New Yorkers about working at night. The overnight cleaning woman, cable TV operations technician, stripper, subway worker and others who relate their anecdotes are drawn in Grennan and Sperandio's trademark decomposed-photograph style; it's lightweight but very entertaining.

NMM

(m ó a)

UNIVERSAL

Jazz-cabaret vocals blend with sampladelic club beats and cinematic orchestration on this Icelandic chanteuse's debut album.

IN STORES NOW

"It's truly rare to find a record as technically well-realized yet so thoroughly captivating from start to finish" —*SOMA*

"You will be told [Móa is] Portishead with a smile but their brand of trip hop is more challenging than that" —*Esquire*

"Impressive...jazztastic textures but with richly emotive soul pop tunes on top that seep into your consciousness so you end up dreaming about them" —*NME*

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SHADY CHARACTERS

STYLING: MICHELLE ZACKS PHOTOS: DENNIS KLEIMAN HAIR & MAKEUP: GABRIEL TRUJILLO AND JEFFREY FERNANDEZ

The boys of Chicago art-rock duo Euphone and the girls of newly reformed proto-riot grrrl band Bratmobile try on the slickest sunglasses for summer. All styles approved for stage-diving or sunblocking.



1. Nick Macri of Euphone wears "Robin" sports goggles by ADIDAS (\$90).

2. Ryan Rapsys of Euphone wears amber/red "Liquid Vista" sunglasses by DIESEL (\$120).

3. Molly Neuman of Bratmobile wears "Mob" black-on-black heavy-duty sunglasses by CIRQUE (\$80).



4. Erin Smith of Bratmobile wears black-rimmed glasses with blue lenses by GUCCI (\$160).

5. Allison Wolfe of Bratmobile wears CIRQUE's retro-styled "Natasha" sunglasses with white frames and red lenses (\$80).

Euphone recently released its second album, The Calendar Of Unlucky Days, on Jade Tree. (See review, pg. 39, May issue.) Bratmobile, which was one of the first and most influential riot grrrl bands, recently reformed, after having broken up four years ago. The band just finished touring and plans to record a new album later this year.



Vivid billboard on Sunset Blvd.

A still from Palm Pictures' *Suck It And See*

A still from Add N To (X)'s "Metal Fingers In My Body" video

(continued from page 71)

many people's everyday lives, and some of today's musicians are documenting that in sound and in show.

Libido is certainly nothing new to the music scene. It's the first ingredient in the classic trioka of sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll. It's as American as apple pie, baseball, and Pam and Tommy. Music videos draw from porn's lurid imagery. Many bands take musical inspiration from the vibe of porn's "golden era" of the '70s. And significantly, in the grand tradition of rock 'n' roll, rock stars are enjoying the most heated flirtation with sexual taboos since Gene Simmons's tongue wagged its way onto magazine covers and into parents' worst nightmares.

Not that porn stars are getting screwed in the deal. Some of pop music's top stars have become porn's best ambassadors, and the music industry provides porn with its hippest mainstream platform. Every time a successful mainstream recording artist speaks openly about porn, it becomes a little more ingrained in popular culture, a little easier to talk about. Porn's leading ladies get exposure through music videos, album covers and rock star fashion shoots. MTV blurs blunts and product logos, but porn stars make the cut; who needs more validation than that?

"Everyone watches porno," growls Kid Rock. "And if they say they don't, they're motherfuckin' liars!" Perhaps it's a response to the politically-correct '80s or the AIDS-induced sexual repression of the '90s, maybe it's because the story of our current president's highly publicized sexcapades itself reads like the plot to a B-grade skin flick, but sex is everywhere, and consumers are sucking it up. All of which makes it easier for artists of all stripes to capitalize on our increasing permissiveness: Music makers are tackling porn from artistic, gratuitous, erotic and comic angles and forcing a societal dialogue. In the process, both the porn and music industries reap the benefits—and the profits—of this slackening of taboos.

Kid Rock for one is not complaining. He's had porn stars in his videos, and he took porn star/girlfriend Midori (of such classics as *Anal Fever* and *Baby's Got Back, Part 9*) on tour with him. In a moment of stunning clarity, he had her fill in on stage for his height-challenged sidekick Joe C. "Joe C's line [of self-introduction in the title track from his album *Devil Without A Cause*] was 'three-foot-nine with a ten-foot dick,' and I made that 'five-foot-seven with some big-ass tits,'" explains Rock.

"I'm a freak like everybody else," says Rock. "I like to watch

people fuck. Sometimes it's funny, to watch the dialog. Sometimes it's just like 'Yeah, I want to wack off!' and pop in a porno." He wants to have professional pole dancers and booths with information about the history of porn on his next tour, and is very sincere in his desire to legitimize porn. "Porno is the last form of entertainment that is a multi-billion dollar business that doesn't take care of the people that create it. There are vocational schools for everything else; there ought to be one for porn."

The San Diego-based punk pop band Blink 182 isn't spearheading the formation of porn unions or educational institutions, but the group is contributing in its own small way: The cover of its new album *Enema Of The State* (MCA) features the 36-24-36 figure of porn star Janine, shown smiling in her skimpy nurse's outfit and pulling on a latex glove. She also stars in the video for the group's first single, "What's My Age Again?"

"We wanted to have a sexy nurse on the cover," says

singer/bassist Mark Hoppus. "And we were looking at models and *Playboy* girls, and we were like, 'If we're going to get a sexy girl for the cover, let's get a Vivid girl!'"

That Hoppus—who says his band watches "all kinds of pornos on the tour bus," and admits to watching porn because, "I really honestly enjoy masturbation and orgasms, and porno helps me to achieve that"—knows Vivid, a major porn production house, by name is indicative of porn's mainstream status. Like companies from Nike to Fubu to Snapple, porn businesses are establishing name-brand recognition.

Vivid, whose flicks feature such stars as Heather Hunter, Janine and Kobe Tai, has become a leading player in the \$4.2 billion game known as adult video sales and rentals. Brian Gross, who had worked for years in the music industry before becoming a publicist for Vivid, says that the music and porn industries are working together now more than ever. "They want to have porn stars portrayed in their videos or in magazines to portray that old rock 'n' roll image."

Perhaps such collaborations might even result in the end of the historically and comically maligned porn soundtrack. Gross says he recently got to hang with Mix Master Mike. "I mean there's nothing set in stone," he recalls. "But the cool thing was, he was like, 'I would love to do that.' Could you imagine?"

Certainly, plenty of electronic artists could. While rockers are flying the flag of porn, DJs and producers are re-imagining the porn aesthetic. There's an implicit sexuality in throngs of sweaty people wearing scant clothing and writhing to the rhythmic pounding of a bass line. And electronic music scenes have long been interested in exploring sexuality in dance culture and man-versus-machine scenarios. For years now, raves and clubs have been showing anime—a Japanese style of animation, often depicting the rape of defenseless women by towering machine monsters.

English post-industrial/electronic outfit Add N To X twisted that dynamic right around in the video for "Metal Fingers In My Body," from its latest album, *Avant Hard* (Mute). The animated video depicts—with graphic, anatomic precision—a woman who orders a

sex robot and then proceeds to wear out its thrusting pistons and still want more.

"I think there's something sexual about our performance, when we're on stage and battling

the machines," says Add N To X's Ann Shenton, referring to the inconsistent analog Moogs that she and her bandmates play. "It's just a certain energy that comes from wrestling with them."

Not all electronic musicians, however, take such a cerebral approach. When British breakbeat producer Howie B's Pussyfoot label released *Suck It And See*, a two-disc "ode to porn" compilation featuring smooth drum 'n' bass beats and orgasmic vocal samples from porn, it was because B. realized that catalog number 69 was forthcoming. "It's fucking hilarious, and hopefully, it has some good tracks, too," he says—and it does. Palm Pictures has just released the album stateside, along with a 30-minute video/CD-ROM of borderline hardcore pornography.

The video is set to seven tracks from the compilation. "In this culture... there's sex and violence," says Marne Lucas, a creative producer at Radius Pictures, who created the *Suck It And See* video. "Or sex and drugs. This film is really playful. It's young adventurous

"I'm a freak like everybody else. I like to watch people fuck." —Kid Rock

kids. There's no violence." And unlike the clichéd story lines of traditional porn where not swallowing is considered a plot twist, *Suck It And See* tackles the issue of porn in society, with an obsessive stalker character meant to represent a stereotype of the porn consumer. "He ends up with this prostitute that kind of reminds him of the girl he's stalking and he's still unsatisfied," explains Lucas. "There's still this empty consumer mode going on. And that makes you feel kind of bad for him but also kind of icky."

Under pseudonyms Gina Velour and Otto Wreck, she and partner Jacob (pronounced Yah'kub) Pander created and starred in *The Operation*, a 12-minute short, explicit erotic film. Shot entirely in infrared camera and eerily scored by San Francisco electronic artist Michael Gerard, *The Operation* has won accolades at a number of prestigious film fests, including a prize for best experimental film at the 1995 New York Underground Film Festival.

"I have debates constantly with porn editors," says Lucas. "I always ask them, 'What film should I see that I haven't seen? Is there something I might be missing?' and they all say no. I talk to them about writing scripts or directing, just trying to get porn to be a little more interesting. They always say the consumer dictates the market. I think that's a line of shit. But I mean, I have close friends in film, and whenever they get creative with the editing, or just make it interesting film-wise, all the newsgroups just go crazy. It's too distracting. You can't jerk off to it."

Electronic musician Khan (a.k.a. Can Oral, whose name sounds more like a porn star's than most porn stars') recently released the album *1-900-GET-KHAN* (Matador) and agrees that the concept of porn could stand further development. "It's still very much like 'hello,' fuck, then 'goodbye.' It's very linear."

Bands want to have porn stars in their videos or in magazines to portray that old rock 'n' roll image.

Khan got his first taste of porn as a child, from his father's collection, and it's influenced his artistic vision ever since. "I used to paint," says Khan. "With my father's Super 8 porn, I painted over the images while they were running and followed the movements. So in the end it's nothing but penises, clitorises, tits and mouths." Later, Khan designed what he calls a "locotronic," which translates any signal into a keyboard sequence. He fed it eight hours of porn and edited it down to four albums, *Orgien 1-4*, which may eventually be available through Matador.

But it's his current album that shows a polished, porn-influenced project that stands on its own artistic merit. The swanky album melds lounge-core with electronica. "The idea for the album was to be really sleazy, in a very classic way," says Khan. In one of the more unusual marketing ploys, the 900 number that doubles as the album's title reaches a daily message from Khan, phone sex operators or a chat line.

"What I'm doing is not an ode to porn," admonishes Khan. "It's more like an image. I see myself as an escort more than a DJ. I want to spend cool times in exciting cities and have sex and romance and all these things. That's way more interesting for me than to put out a well-produced album."

All this attention leaves porn stars adjusting to their newfound mainstream legitimacy. According to Janine, she gets recognized at malls, at grocery stores, at red lights—"any place where there is a line," she explains, "and people have time to recognize me." Janine and other Vivid girls have been featured in articles in *Time Out New York*, *George*, *Time* and *Paper* magazines, to name a few. She and her co-stars were featured on a huge billboard on Sunset Boulevard. She gets more press than Minnie Driver, and she didn't even have to sleep with a man to get it (women only—it's in her contract). Boosted by her role in the Blink 182 video, her celebrity status is growing, but she's not entirely comfortable with it. "Ugh!" She laughs. "I don't want that! I just want to have sex on film!"

Kid Rock says he gets noticed more than Midori when they go out, but that she definitely has her fans. "It's so funny to watch 'em," he says. "People see me and they run up they're like, 'Oh, I got your record and I love it!' Then people see her, and they're like, 'Are you...? Do you...?' and she'll be like, 'Yeah, that's me.' And they'll be like, 'I thought so!' and they'll never really come out with like, 'Oh, didn't I see you with a dick in your ass on TV?'"

Midori couldn't be happier with the attention. "I wanted to create some controversy to catapult my music," she says. "You know, like Madonna did?" To Midori, having sex on film was akin to upping the ante Madonna laid out with her sexually titillating videos and foil-wrapped *Sex* book. Midori recently inked a deal with Seattle label Will Records. Rap stars Big Pun and Juvenile, and probably Kid Rock, will guest on her album.

And in the pro-sex sect of female hip-hop she'd like to rule, her porn background actually brings her credibility: "As a performer, Midori is who I am, whether I'm singing, or dancing or rapping or in front of the camera," she says. "Who are you going to believe between me, Foxy Brown or Lil' Kim? I'm the real deal."

"People use the media to their best advantage," she explains. "I've always been business-oriented, and I found my niche with the adult industry and used it to my best advantage. It was a gamble because I wasn't sure. But it worked, and I'm going with it."

SEXCETERA...



Title: *Porn To Rock*
Label: Callner Music
Starring: Porn stars Madison, Midori, Ginger Lynn and many more
Plot: Faking orgasms is cake, musical talent more ambitious
Money Shot: Leading Man-cum-rapper David Burrill and his ode to a rabidly promiscuous wife with "Who's Normal?"
X Rating: XXX



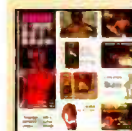
Title: *Cocktails In The Cantina*
Label: Oglio Records
Starring: Vibraphones, hi-hats and a whole lot of Star Wars imagery in lounge form
Plot: Clearly unendorsed by Mr. Lucas, the album is described by Oglio as: "Featuring stylings from that certain movie involving a war in space, between rebels & the side that was not so bright!"—it's the soundtrack to a Han and Leia porno.
Money Shot: Porn star Jasmin St. Claire on cover; "Theme To Yoda" sounds strangely like "Moon River"
X Rating: X



Title: *Suck It And See*
Label: Palm Pictures
Starring: Howie B. and assorted DJs, and the vocals of many an orgasm
Plot: Come 'n' bass? Breakbeat-off? Good jungle gets silly with porno samples.
Money Shot: Thirty-minute *Suck It And See* porno available on CD-ROM and video
X Rating: X [the music]; XX [the video]



Title: *Sex-O-Rama 2*
Label: Oglio Records
Starring: Half-decent funk guitar licks, porn star Jenna Jameson on the cover
Plot: Funk-core lounge inspired by the '70s golden era of porn; says Oglio rep: "Everyone wants to be a porn star! Now you can!"
Money Shot: Pop in the CD, prop up the video camera and decide for yourself.
X Rating: X



Title: *1-900-GET-KHAN*
Label: Matador
Starring: Can Oral (bonus: authentic porn star-like name) and his porn-inspired funky electronic jams.
Plot: Mr. Oral is a porn star trapped in an electronic musician's body.
Money Shot: Real NY sex workers pose with him on the front cover.
X Rating: X



Title: *Enema Of The State*
Label: MCA
Starring: Blink-182
Plot: Pop-punk by young men who love their porno
Money Shot: Porn star Janine featured on cover and in video for "What's My Age Again?"
X Rating: X



Title: *Deep Porn*
Label: HardCorps
Starring: Producers paired with porn stars, including AK 1200 and Kid Rock
Plot: Some damn good electronic and hip-hop tracks
Money Shot: CD-ROM track features sizzling "behind-the-scenes video outtakes" (masturbation as musical muse); AK1200 and his jungle track with porn star Raylene makes best use of heavy breathing since Darth Vader.
X Rating: XXX

NMM



MARTY KROFFT

The shows of Sid and Marty Krofft, including *Sigmund And The Seamonsters*, *Land Of The Lost*, and the original *Donny And Marie Show*, are as much a part of the '70s as shag carpet. Movie versions of three shows are now in development, the first being a silver screen *H.R. Pufnstuf*, due in 2000 from Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski (*The People Vs.*

Larry Flynt, *Man On The Moon*). Rhino will release a video box set of old episodes May 18, Interscope recently issued a collection of theme songs, and *Nick At Nite* has been running Krofft marathons. Plus, this summer, *Witchiepoo*, *Freddy The Flute*, and friends will receive the true '90s seal of pop-culture approval: a line of Beanie Babies.

Q: Where did the inspiration for your shows come from, which were your favorites, and why do you think fans have never lost interest?

A: I had a lot of nightmares, which is sort of a strange place to find inspiration for children's TV shows. My two favorites were *Land Of The Lost* and *Pufnstuf*. The shows, unlike the Disney shows, have something for all ages. We have Kroffties instead of Trekkies. People have stayed loyal to us because the characters were memorable and the stories were there. The Slestaks were ahead of our time technology-wise. We had some shows you couldn't kill with a baseball bat.

Q: Do you think the shows will transfer well to the big screen?

A: We're probably going to destroy our vision. But we are very hands-on and have good people lined up for these projects. We will not be copying our half-hour episodes and lengthening them to fill one and a half hours. The stories, with twists and turns and fabulous characters, will be there. We will stay pretty low-tech, although I'm sure we will utilize some of today's cool effects. We couldn't compete with *Star Wars* if we didn't. Of course, I'd like to remind Mr. Lucas that lots of technology doesn't always lead to a lot of heart.

It just leads to something that looks cool. I admit the kids these days, who we need to entice along with old fans to be truly successful, like effects; but you can't kill the spirit.

Q: Clarify the rumor on the drug references: really there or paranoid delusions?

A: The drug references are in the eyes of the beholder. I don't see how you can create something and work on it everyday while being high on drugs. My imagination is scary enough. But no one believes us when we tell them we weren't doing drugs. A few years ago, there was a questionnaire posted on the Internet asking people to vote on whether Sid and Marty Krofft were on drugs while making shows like *Lidsville*. There were 900 votes that said we did and one that said we didn't. The one vote was Sid and me voting on our innocence.

Q: How do you rate today's programming for youngsters?

A: I think the '70s shows were more interesting. But there are always a few standouts every couple of years. Can't argue with the *Rugrats* or *Doug*. And the folks over at *The Muppets* are still doing innovative stuff. I think the Teletubbies are on drugs and should take some heat. Creatively there ain't much there. But Jerry Falwell certainly made them an extra \$50 million by opening his fat trap.

Q: Any advice for those who wish to follow in your footsteps?

A: Be a doctor. The pay in children's TV isn't great. Now it is even worse than when we started. They offer you like \$3. How can you be creative for crap money like that? But if you must, you have to be patient. It takes time to find allegiances within the top ranks at networks. Our work in the '70s is just starting to pay off because the number one and two network guys are the right age to have grown up on *Horror Hotel* or *The Lost Saucer*. And you can't ever let go of the passion. Every day I get up ready to work. Even when I retire and turn the biz over to my daughters, I'm sure I'll still meddle. **NMM**

GAMING

NEED FOR SPEED: HIGH STAKES

(Electronic Arts)

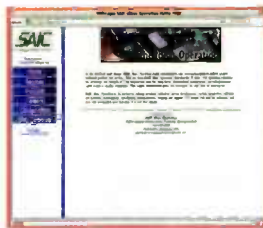
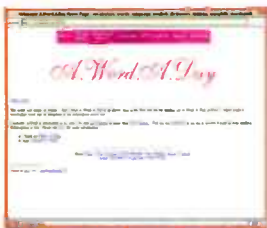
Even as last year's *Need For Speed III: Hot Pursuit* received accolades for its pure-fun appeal (who hasn't wanted to bust through a roadblock or two in his lifetime?), it was handily dissected by critics for its lack of features and realism. EA quickly responded by refining its cop/criminal racing entry into the more realistic-feeling and better-equipped *Need For Speed: High Stakes*. Learning the improved handling characteristics of each automobile becomes vital here, as you must pay for any damage to your car out of your winnings. If that thought doesn't bother you, consider this: In the all-new *High Stakes* mode, you race with a friend for pinks. How embarrassing will it be when you lose that Diablo you worked so hard for to your friend in the Pontiac because you were busy doing the sprint-and-crash around the track? *NFS:HS* may be named for its competition mode, but the most addictive addition is definitely its "be-a-cop" mode, where you get to chase criminals around tracks in different countries. Hell, you might even feel a sense of redemption when you ask your friend in the Diablo, whom you just caught speeding down the Landstrasse, to hand over his license and registration. >>>Aaron Clow



TRIPLE PLAY 2000 (EA Sports) MLB 2000 (989 Sports)

Electronic Arts and 989 Sports have been in a locked-horns battle for years, each pushing the sports game envelope. 989's *MLB 2000* is no bench warmer: It has unique batting and pitching controls, but stadium renderings are flat, sound effects are average, and, aside from Vin Scully and Dave Campbell's sharp commentary, it lacks the subtle nuances to make you feel like you're in the game. Meanwhile, in its latest incarnation of *Triple Play*, EA has responded to last year's long ball war between Sammy Sosa and Big Mac during the 1998 MLB season, using dramatic camera views like the soaring ball-cam. *Triple Play 2000*'s enhancements in both the game play and graphics help it retain its title as the undisputed king of baseball games. With enough stats to make you choke, close-up shots of the players chewing, smart camera angles, on-field shadows during day games, clouds of dust during slides, *TP 2000* is as close to a live telecast as you can get. Seattle fans will also notice that *MLB* plays in the Kingdome, but *TP 2000* plays at the new Safeco Field. >>>Glen Sansone

R U ILL?: SURFING A SEA OF WORDS



It's finally happened: The English language has run out of words that haven't been bought. Wired.com recently posted a list of the few hundred still-unregistered .com Internet domains based on common English words (a lot of which got snapped up by the next day anyway). Many of them are amazing—they're crying out for an unregistered-domain-name edition of Magnetic Poetry: waylaid.com (it *must* be a Gen-X sex site by now, right?), tousle.com, peppery.com, onrushing.com, mulligatawny.com, muezzin.com, infelicitous.com, lacunae.com, coyly.com, earsplitting.com, mollycoddle.com. In fact, your faithful Electromedia columnist was so impressed that he went out and bought himself lacunae.com.

What the dictionary's depletion suggests, though, is a whole new way to surf the Web: You can just pick a sentence (preferably one without a lot of tiny words), and stick each one of its words between a www. and a .com. Take, for instance, "Colorless green ideas sleep furiously"—Noam Chomsky's famous example of a sentence that's grammatically correct but meaningless. **Colorless.com** leads us, amusingly enough, to "Colorless Green Network," a site featuring a bunch of gaming links and web-design services. **Green.com** is, surprisingly, not up, though a quick who-is query reveals that it's owned by a Vermont company called Green Mountain Energy Reserves. **Ideas.com** is SAIC Ideas Operation, one of those Internet companies that specialize in, well, Internet stuff, though they don't make it clear exactly what it is they do. **Sleep.com** points you straight to Dial-A-Mattress, and **furiously.com** is under construction, but owned by MCA Networks; God only knows what they plan to use it for. Given that it only costs \$70 to register a domain for two years, though, there are plenty of people content to squat on more-or-less common words and wait for demand to outstrip supply. To find out if a particular domain name is available, or to look up the owner of an already claimed web address, visit www.networksolutions.com.

Still, this can be a fun way to scan for the unexpected—a new version of the old Web-bushwhacker's tool of clicking on the first off-site link on every page, no matter what it is. Typing in all the words in the song titles on Nirvana's *Nevermind*, for instance, yields a personal travel diary at **like.com**, a cooperatively run Toronto sex toy store at **comeasyouare.com**, Lithium Software's "Quake Object Oriented Level Editor" or QOOLE, and so on. **Nevermind.com** itself redirects to an odd little Discordian site called **duh.com**. Try it with your favorite album!

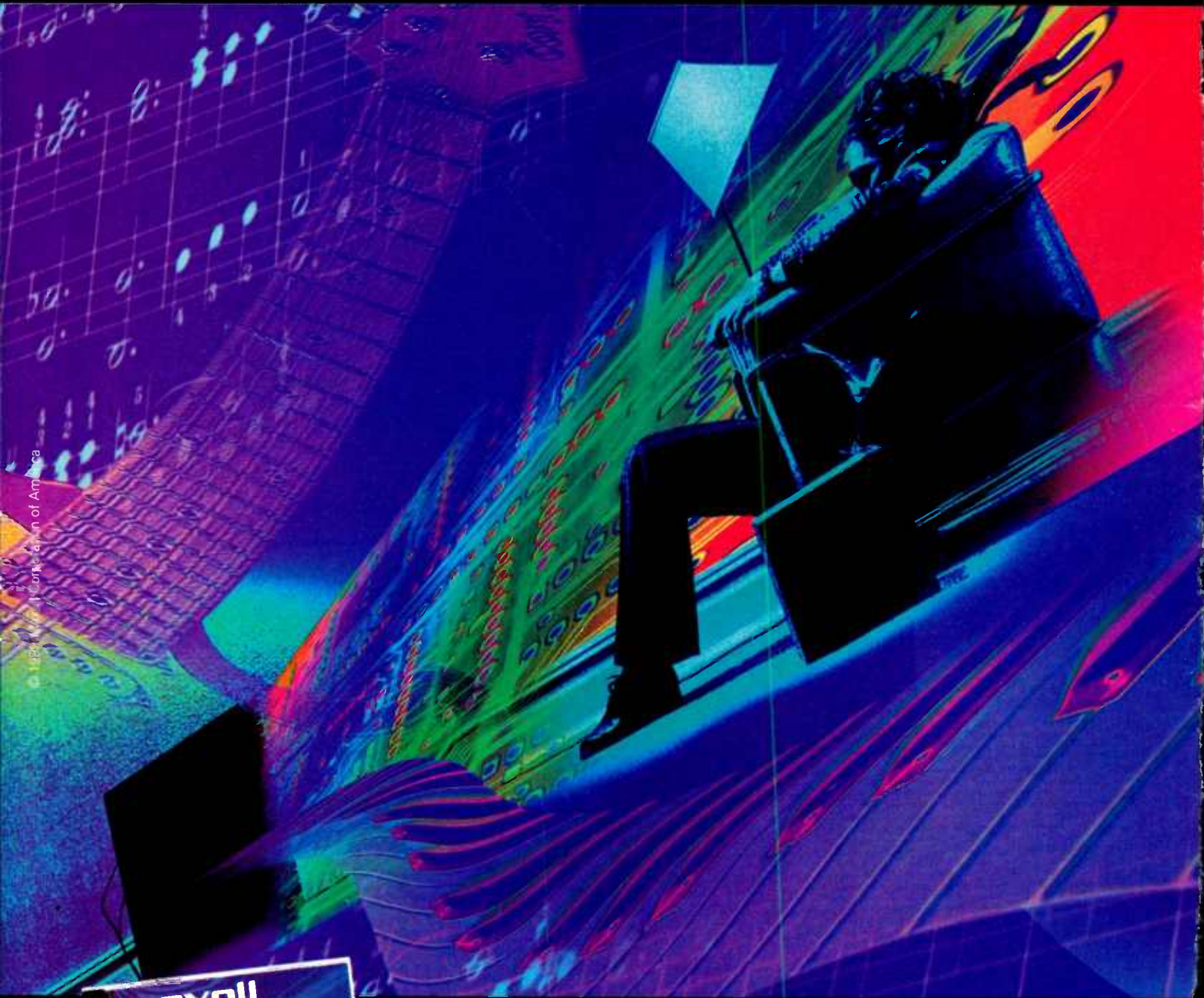
Of course, so many site names are taken now that people who want a Web site for anything with a vaguely ordinary name have to be creative. Take, for instance, the people who put together the site for **The Matrix**. Matrix.com was long gone—that belongs to a "rugged technology" firm. Ditto for thematrix.com, a recording studio and Web service for musicians, though its main screen's patterns of 1's and 0's looks kind of familiar if you've seen the movie. No, for the real thing you have to go to www.whatisthematrix.com. Fortunately, it's worth the extra typing. It's a remarkably detailed, engrossing site, and beautifully designed. It's also got a couple of extra features for people who've been obsessing over the film's hybrid of Gnostic Christianity and kung fu. There's a Shockwave shoot-'em-up game in which you can play either Carrie-Anne Moss (confirming that she's the first actress designed to look like a video game character) or Keanu Reeves (whose performance is only a little more lifelike in digitized form). Even better, there's an impressively large, free collection of original short stories and comics set in the world of *The Matrix*, and they're by some pretty big names: Neil Gaiman (of *Sandman* and *Stardust* fame), Poppy Z. Brite, Bill Sienkiewicz, Ted McKeever and Paul Chadwick, among others. And Harlan Ellison—whose short story "I Have No Mouth And I Must Scream" bears a certain resemblance to the movie's plot—has promised a story for the site soon.

If, after all this, you'd like to dig up some words you don't know already, the Web's got plenty of tools for you too. You can subscribe to **Wordsmith's "A Word A Day"** vocabulary server at www.wordsmith.org/awad/, complete with pronunciations (in RealAudio at their Web site), definitions, and etymology; there's a similar service with slightly less obscure words and slightly hipper definitions, **"Word-Of-The-Day"** (www2.parlez.com/wotd-aux/); you can even check every day for hacker argot at www.jargon.net's **"Cool Jargon of the Day."** And the battle between these services for surfers' brain-time seems to be escalating, which is good news. **"Spizzerinctum"** (www.mcs.net/~kvj/spizz.html) doesn't just provide pronunciation; it quizzes readers about its word of the day, then uses it in a paragraph based on a current news item. Recent selections include "erose," "sepelition," "anacatharsis" and "cibaries." None of which, you'd think, would be domain names—but erose.com is a Canadian escort service, it turns out. There are certain things you just can't get away from on the Web.

NMM

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TELEVISION



ADAM DANIEL



DONNAS

16 "In the '70s, the trend in rock 'n' roll is for somebody to totally pattern themselves after someone else," TELEVISION's Tom Verlaine told the *Boston Phoenix* back in 1977. "Then they play 300 nights a year and make a lot of money, because the people who see you will go buy your records. I'm talking about Aerosmith or Kiss. Everybody's out trying to be commercial. I'm not trying to be anything, really. We're not some fantasy-oriented band—like Kiss goes out and projects their... insect fantasy. But we're not out to project what might be considered common, everyday life, either." "I Don't Care" is from the group's newly reissued live album, *The Blow-Up* (ROIR). (See Flashback, p. 69.)

17 A few years ago, after graduating from UCLA, singer/songwriter ADAM DANIEL had plans to record a demo full of songs that reflected his affinity for both surf and new wave music. But a week before his studio date, he was given an old turntable and began listening to some of his parents' records, including the Zombies' *Odyssey And Oracle* and the Beach Boys' *Endless Summer*. As if struck by revelation, Daniel decided to rework some of his old songs and write new ones that would reflect his new influences. The proof is in "Her Shake," from Daniel's debut album, *Blue Pop* (APG). (See Reviews, p. 47.)

18 "When the press are writing about you, you begin to see that they don't know what they're talking about most of the time," said **NO STARS**' notoriously press-shy Alex Chilton a few years back. "I guess some people start believing their own press. Sure, at some times in my life I've believed some things that somebody's said about me that I shouldn't have." The version of "September Gurls" heard here is from *Nobody Can Dance* (Norton), a live recording of a Big Star show staged on its Memphis home turf in 1973. (See Flashback, p. 69.)

19 For most bands, the time surrounding the release of their debut album is plenty stressful, but Seattle's **JUNG** had an added problem to contend with. A few weeks prior to the intended release date of *This Is The Way It Goes And Goes And Goes* (PacifiCo/DeSoto)—from which "All Your Friends Are Comedians" is taken—vocalist/guitarist Arlie Carstens broke his neck in four places while snowboarding. Miraculously, Carstens, who had been a professional "boarder for the past several years, did not suffer from any paralysis. At press time, Carstens was back to practicing with the band, which should be touring in June and July. (See Best New Music, p. 19.)

20 "A lot of times the opening band was the World Cup," says **DONNAS** drummer Donna C., reminiscing about last summer's European tour. "Seriously! They'd have a big TV screen in front of the stage, everyone would watch the World Cup, then they'd turn it off for a while and say, 'All right! The Donnas are gonna play now!' We'd play, then they'd turn on the World Cup again." "Hyperactive" is from the Palo Alto, California, quartet's new long-player, *Get Skintight* (Lookout). (See feature, p. 36.)

1 **CHEMICAL BROTHERS** blend their samples so precisely that the final sound often seems to mimic other instruments. "We twist something, a tiny bit of sound, into something completely different," explains Ed Simons. "Over the years, we've become so good at creating drums, twisting them up. On our first album, *Exit Planet Dust*, we had these bizarre super-groups playing together—like a sort of trad English indie band playing with an old '70s funk band—which for legal reasons, we can't get into." "Let Forever Be" the Brothers' from their latest, *Surrender* (Astralwerks). (See cover story, p. 40.)

2 "People always expect you to choose sides between digital or analog, old school or new school, even between Chinese or Italian food," says **CIBO MATTO**'s Miho Hatori. "Well, we eat everything." Partner Yuka Honda adds: "You can take a hardcore Indian phrase, set it to a hip-hop beat, have country guitar in the back, and make it work. I really think that technology, if we think about it positively, can give us a brighter future. One where stereotypes will be obsolete." "Sci-Fi Wasabi" is the first single from the New York City band's second long-player, *Stereotype A* (Warner Bros.). (See Best New Music, p. 20.)

3 Techno mainstay **NOBODY** has mellowed with age. After returning from a recent trip to Europe to promote his latest album, *Play* (V2), from which "Bodyrock" is taken, he commented: "A lot of the journalists were saying, 'Oh this could be your big record, it could be a big-seller.' If that happens, fine. But I don't really care. What do I need with more money or more fame? I have a pretty simple life. I own my own house. I'm lucky. I have a recording studio. What else would I want?" (See Quick Fix, p. 11.)

4 Even 15 years into his career, Hideaki Ishi, a.k.a. **DJ KRUSH**—who's been a pioneer turntablist, forging a new identity for the wheels of steel—is modest about his accomplishments. "I still haven't found the true way of using turntable as an instrument," says Krush. "That's exactly why I like playing and experimenting with different musicians. There are still so many techniques of playing turntable that need to be discovered." "Final Home (vocal version)," which is enhanced by vocals from Canadian singer Esthero, is from his latest album, *Kakusei* (Red Ink). (See Quick Fix, p. 16.)

5 "My red polo neck and multicolored hair," recalls **ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN** vocalist Ian McCulloch of the band's first ever gig in 1978. "I was kinda like Bowie if he'd gone to watch the cricket. The drum machine conked out, but it came across as performance art. What we didn't do was tralpe off with our tails between our legs... I come off stage and [former bandmate Pete] Wylie, all Clashed up, goes, 'That was soddin' mad. Yer great!'" "Get In The Car" is from the group's new album, *What Are You Going To Do With Your Life?* (London). (See review, p. 48.)



CHEMICAL BROTHERS



CIBO MATTO



NOBODY

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KULA SHAKER



GARMARNA



BETA BAND

11 "Once you've heard those sounds you can't get them out of your system," says **KULA SHAKER**'s Crispian Mills, of the Indian musical influences that flavor the band's new album, *Peasants, Pigs And Astronauts* (Columbia), from which "Shower Your Love" is taken. "They become part of the way you want to express yourself. If you want to talk about the folk music of Europe, much of it came from India and North Africa. It's part of our principles and ideals, and part of our backgrounds just as four people as well. It's what made us what we are." (See *Quick Fix*, p. 13.)

12 "Neither me nor the rest of the band is very influenced by any other band," says **GARMARNA**'s Rickard Westman. "Garmarna works in a very democratic way—you may do whatever you want to—and we've never done anything with the purpose that one particular tune should sound in this or that particular way. On the other hand you could say that we are inspired by any kind of music that we listen to, and in Garmarna that stretches from everything between David Bowie via Beastie Boys to country music and Pantera." "Gamen I Vulture" appears on the band's third long-player, *Vengeance* (NorthSide). (See *Best New Music*, p. 19, and *The Scene Is Now*, p. 62.)

13 "When I compose music, I am always stoned," declares Parisian Jean-Yves Prieur, a.k.a. **KID LOCO**. "And if I have nothing to smoke, I don't go in the studio." And while he is an electronic musician, he says he doesn't like his music to sound too synth-y. "For me the thing is to believe you have a band behind you. I just sample bands, individual parts, acoustic instruments." "Love Me Sweet (St. Etienne Remix)" is from *Prelude To A Grand Love Story* (Atlantic).

14 **BOGDAN RACZYNSKI**'s debut album *Boku Mo Wakaran* (which includes "Track 24") was just released by Repleix, the label co-run by Aphex Twin, and via email, Raczynski proved to be as unusual as one might expect an artist signed by Richard D. James to be. Asked for his inspirations, he replied: "The smell of urine and bums and alcohol and spunk in the Shinjuku (east exit) toilets. The eyes of Japanese people in Kabukicho (the sex club area of Shinjuku) on my over-tall foreign self. Not being desired by her as much as I needed her. Sleeping outside in Tokyo amongst bums and businessmen on a rainy night. Hunger and homelessness. New friends. HAPPY PANDA MUSTARD BAD MONKEY KETCHUP!!!!!!!" Of course. (See *Reviews*, p. 55.)

15 "We are trying to get more futuristic," says the **BETA BAND**'s drummer Robin Jones about the London-based group's plans. "It's difficult because no one is making instruments with any new sounds on them. They're all retro, analog sounds. We might enter into the computer age and use them to make songs on." "Round The Bend" is from the band's musical melange of a self-titled debut album (Astralwerks). (See *feature*, p. 32.)

6 Grand Rapids, Michigan, quartet **PAPA VEGAS**'s lead singer Joel Ferguson was first bitten by the songwriting bug at a Depeche Mode concert. "I was so blown away by the vibe and atmosphere of the concert and the crowd, and then I was just taken aback by Martin Gore's dark kind of spooky pop," he says. "I came home from the concert the next day, sold my drum set, bought a sampler, and started trying to write songs." "Sermon Underground" is from Papa Vegas's debut album, *Hello Vertigo* (RCA).

7 "We set out to make a heavy record with a lot of depth; we wanted it to be more than hard on the surface. I think that's what we did," says Pete Loeffler, one of the three brothers that comprise Chicago's **CHIVELLE**. The three Loefflers—who have four other siblings!—are still relatively young (Joe's 18; Sam and Pete are 22), but have already been playing shows for nearly five years. "Music can help get aggression out of you," offers Pete. "I don't want to live an angry life." "Mia" is the first single from the band's debut album, *Point #1* (Squint Entertainment). (See *On The Verge*, p. 22.)

8 "A good number of my heroes are from the past, a good chunk of the music I think is better is from the past," says **APPLES IN STEREO**'s Robert Schneider. "At the same time, though, we're not trying to copy [that music]. We are inspired by it, by its energy, its vitality—especially the '60s is inspiring to a rock band. But we're trying to do something better. We've grown up with that music, pieces of our sound are taken from places that inspire us, but none of it's ripped off." "Strawberryfire" is from the band's new mini-LP, *Her Wallpaper Reverie* (Elephant 6-spinART). (See *review*, p. 46.)

9 "The goal was never to form a band because that's the best way for us to make a living. It was never to form a band because we could be really good at it, or be professional," says **PAVEMENT**'s Bob Nastanovich. "Nobody ever wanted to be a big rock star in this band. We all would rather just be comfortable with our existence... And most of our fans are respectful and polite people, so if they come up to us and address us, they're either pretty shy about it, or pretty friendly. We don't get hassled the way that I imagine the lead singer of Oasis does." "Spit On A Stranger" is from the band's new record, *Terror Twilight* (Matador). (See *feature*, p. 28.)

10 "Musicians, poets etc. are like photo copy machines. They take their environment and reflect it back to their fans," says Robbi Robb of **THREE FISH**, the band that also includes Pearl Jam's Jeff Ament. "When we love a song it is usually because in that song the musician has put our own thoughts and feelings into words... The musician shouldn't be concerned about teaching, but should have the courage to be honest with himself and go inside and find the jewels that are hidden therein and share." "Tremor Void" is from the trio's second album, *The Quiet Table* (Epic).



DJ KRUSH



ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN



PAVEMENT



THREE FISH

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<input type="checkbox"/> 1. CHEMICAL BROTHERS	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 2. CIBO MATTO	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 3. MOBY	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 4. DJ KRUSH	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 5. ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 6. PAPA VEGAS	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 7. CHIVELLE	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 8. APPLES IN STEREO	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 9. PAVEMENT	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 10. THREE FISH	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 11. KULA SHAKER	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 12. GARMARNA	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 13. KID LOCO	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 14. BOGDAN RACZYNSKI	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 15. BETA BAND	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 16. TELEVISION	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 17. ADAM DANIEL	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 18. BIG STAR	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 19. JUNO	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> 20. DONNAS	5	4	3	2	1	<input type="checkbox"/>

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June 8

APPLES IN STEREO Her Wallpaper Reverie *spinART*
LORENZO ARRUGA, DAVE LOMBARDO AND FRIENDS Vivaldi: The Meeting *Thirsty Ear*
 —Concept album featuring Slayer drummer Lombardo
BIOHAZARD New World Disorder *Mercury*
CHRISTIAN DEATH The Wind Kissed Pictures *Cleopatra*
CIBO MATTO Stereotype A *Warner Bros.*
NELS CLINE & GREGG BENDIAN Interstellar Space Revisited—Music Of John Coltrane *Atavistic*
COYOTE MEN Two Sides Of The Coyote Men *Estrus*
CONNAS Get Skintight Lookout
ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN What Are You Going To Do With Your Life? *London*
LIONEL HAMPTON Just One of Those Things *Verve*
 —Swing music recorded 1953-54 featuring guest stars Oscar Peterson, Herb Ellis, Buddy Rich and Buddy DeFranco
HELLACOPTERS Grande Rock *Sub Pop*
 —Sub Pop debut from Swedish garage rockers
DANIELLE HOWLE Catalog *Kill Rock Stars*
 —Kill Rock Stars debut from Southern singer/songwriter
JAMIROQUAI Synkronized 550
JUNE OF 44 Anahata *Quarterstick*
KING KOBRA The Lost Years *Deadline*
LONDON SUEDE Head Music *Nude-Columbia*
LUNETNS My Little Star... 3-2-1
LONGVIEW High Lonesome Rounder
 —Sophomore album by bluegrass super-group featuring Marshall Wilborn, Dudley Connell, James King, Don Rigsby, Joe Mullins and Glen Duncan
MANIC STREET PREACHERS This Is My Truth Now Tell Me Yours *Virgin*
BOB MARLEY & THE WAILERS Rare Ska Sides From Studio One *Heartbeat*
 —21 tracks from his Studio One recording days, including "Do You Feel The Same Way Too" and "Your Love"
BRAD MEHLDAU Elegiac Cycle *Warner Bros.*
 —Jazz pianist known for his interpretations of Radiohead, among others
MINISTRY Dark Side Of The Spoon *Warner Bros.*
MOFFATT'S Chapter One: A New Beginning *Capitol*
OS MUTANTES World Psychedelic Classics One: The Best Of Os Mutantes *Luaka Bop-Warner Bros.*
 —Collection of tunes from influential '60s Brazilian psych-rock group
PENNYWISE Straight Ahead *Epitaph*
RACHEL'S Selenography *Quarterstick*
RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS Californication *Warner Bros.*
 —First new album since 1995's One Hot Minute
RED KRAYOLA Fingerpainting *Drag City*
SMASH MOUTH Astrolounge *Interscope*
SPELLS The Age Of Backwards EP *K*
 —Carrie Brownstein from Sleater-Kinney and Mary Timony from Helium
NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA Scope *Thrill Jockey*
TENTACLES The Touch? *K*
 —"Mystery project" with some K artists, but they're not tellin' who
TO ROCOCO ROT The Amateur View *Mute*
DAVID THOMAS & THE PALE ORCHESTRA Mirror Man *Thirsty Ear*
 —David Thomas of Pere Ubu
US MAPLE Talker *Drag City*
VANDERMARK 5 Simpatico *Atavistic*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Hypnotic Classics Boxed *Hypno*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Nu York Nu School 2: East Coast Drum 'N' Bass Revelations *Smile*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Ultimate Space Rock *Purp*
VERBENA Into The Pink *Capitol*
 —Major-label debut produced by Dave Grohl
PERE UBU Dub Housing *Thirsty Ear*
 —Reissue of 1978 album
PERE UBU New Picnic Time *Thirsty Ear*
 —Reissue of 1979 album

June 15

ART OF NOISE The Seduction Of Claude Debussy *ZTT-Universal*
BETA BAND The Beta Band *Astralwerks*
 —First proper LP for UK pop-rockers
BLINDSIDE A Thought Crushed My Mind *Solid State*
BLUE HAWAIIANS Savage Night *Interscope*
BILLY CRAWFORD Billy Crawford V2
 —Debut album for 16-year-old pop-funk singer
JULIA DARLING Figure 8 *Wind-up*
DINGEES Sundown To Midnight *BEC Recordings*
FRED EAGLESMITH 50-Odd Dollars *Razor & Tie*
FANMAIL The Latest Craze *Tooth And Nail*
GERI HALLIWELL Schizophonic *Capitol*
 —Debut solo album from the artist formerly known as Ginger Spice
INCOGNITO (ENGLAND) No Time Like The Future *Verve*
KID LOCO Prelude To A Grand Love Story *Division One-Atlantic*
LOOP GURU The Fountains Of Paradise *Hypno*
EDWIN MCCAIN Messenger *Atlantic*
MUFFS Alert Today Alive Tomorrow *Honest Don's*
MPXK At The Show *Tooth and Nail*
OLU Soul Catcher *Gee Street*
 —Debut from New York City soul singer
ORBITAL Middle Of Nowhere *London*
ASIE PAYTON Worried *Fat Possum-Epitaph*
RZA Epic
SOUNDTRACK South Park *Atlantic*
SOUNDTRACK Wild Wild West *Interscope*
MANIC STIGERS Brighter Days *Columbia*
SWAY & TECH This Or That *Interscope*
US BOMBS The World *Helicat*
JOSH WINK Ovum-Rutherford
 —Mix CD

June 22

MERRIE AMSTERBURG Season Of Rain *Zoe-Rounder*
 —Reissue of 1997 debut album, plus two newly-recorded tracks, one a cover of the Police's "Walking On The Moon"
CHARLIE BALTIMORE Ice *Epic*
BICYCLE Bicycle *Capricorn*
BLACKALICIOUS Nia 3-2-1
CHRIS BOTTI Slowing Down The World *Verve*
CHEMICAL BROTHERS Surrender *Astralwerks*
FLAMING LIPS The Soft Bulletin *Warner Bros.*
 —You'll need only one CD player to play this one
FLYING BULGAR KLEZMER BAND Agada *Traditional Crossroads*
 —Reissue of the debut album for top-selling klezmer band
ADAM FRANKLIN Wurliizer *Zero Hour*
GBH The Punk Rock Hits *Cleopatra*
INVISIBLE COWBOYS Zero Hour *Columbia*
KULA SHAKER Peasants, Pigs And Astronauts *Columbia*
LIMP BIZKIT Significant Other *Interscope*
TAKAKO MINEKAWA Ximer *Emperor Norton*
LOUIS PHILLIPE A Kiss In The Funhouse *Le Grand Magistry*
 —Compilation spanning the last decade of this French pop singer
PLAID Rest Proof Clockwork *Warp-Nothing*
PRETENDERS Viva El Amor *Warner Bros.*
REPLIKANTS Slickaphonics *5RC*
 —Loldest LP from Justin Trosper of Unwound's other band
SQUAREPUSHER Maximum Priest *Warp-Nothing*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Electronica Dance Classics *Hypno*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Kraut and Space Rocks *Hypno*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Psyched *Beggars Banquet*
 —Compilation of Beggars Banquet underground garage-psych
VARIOUS ARTISTS Punk-O-Rama 4 *Epitaph*
 —Budget-priced compilation with 25 bands; includes an unreleased Pennywise track
WEDDING PRESENT box set *spinArt*
 —Contains the first two, and the last two, albums by the English pop group
WEEN Paintin' The Town Brown: Ween Live 1990-1998 *Elektra*
 —Double-disc set
KARI WUHRER Shiny *Del-Fi*
 —Solo debut from former MTV Remote Control hostess and star of the Sci-Fi Channel's Sliders

June 29

CRAIG ARMSTRONG Soundtrack To Plunkett And Maclean *Melankolic-Astralwerks*
CLARENCE "GATEMOUTH" BROWN *Verve*
CRAIG CHAQUICO Four Corners *Higher Octave*
CYCLEFLY Generation Sap *MCA*
DRAIN STH Freaks Of Nature *Interscope*
GANG STARR Full Clip: A Decade Of Gang Starr *Virgin*
 —Double album retrospective plus a couple of new tracks
GZA Beneath The Surface *MCA*
SOPHIE B. HAWKINS Timbra *Columbia*
HEVIA Tierra De Nadie *Higher Octave*
IGGY & THE STOOGES Search And Destroy *Cleopatra*
KY-MANI The Journey *Gee Street*
 —Son of Bob Marley releases Gee Street debut
LYLE LOVETT & HIS BIG BAND Live In Texas *MCA*
LUSCIOUS JACKSON Electric Honey *Grand Royal-Capitol*
PROTEIN Protein Work
SHOOTER ...And Your Point? *Columbia*
SOUNDTRACK Soul Ecstasy *Emperor Norton*
TODD TERRY Resolutions *Astralwerks*
TEXAS TORNADOS Live *Virgin*
JEFF "TAIN" WATTS Citizen Tain *Columbia*
WHORIDAS High Times *TVT*

July 6

AMERICAN ANALOG SET The Golden Band *Emperor Jones*
BIF NAKED I Bificus *Lava-Atlantic*
 —Canadian pop-punker's Atlantic debut
BLACK BOX RECORDER England Made Me *Jetset*
 —US issue of project by Luke Haines of the Auteurs
TRINA BROUSSARD Inside My Love *So So Def-Columbia*
MUSIC TAPES First Imaginary Symphony for Nomad *Merge*
 —Led by Julian Koster of Neutral Milk Hotel
NEW AMERICAN SHAME New American Shame *Lava-Atlantic*
NOMADS Big Sound 2000 *Estrus*
SCANNER Lukewarm Instrumentals *Beggars Banquet*
SCIENZ OF LIFE 3-2-1
SUPERCHUNK Hello Hawk EP *Merge*
 —Previews the band's forthcoming Jim O'Rourke-produced album, Come Pick Me Up
SWERVEDRIVER Wrong Treats *Zero Hour*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Oh, Merge *Merge*
 —Ten-year anniversary compilation featuring 20 tracks (most previously unreleased and a few B-sides) from the likes of Superchunk, Magnetic Fields, Rocket From The Crypt and others
VARIOUS ARTISTS Y2K: Beat The Clock *Columbia*
 —Electronic compilation featuring previously released tracks from Chemical Brothers, Underworld, Fatboy Slim, Prodigy, Lo-Fidelity All Stars and more

July 13

DEERHOOF Holdy Paw *SRC-Kill Rock Stars*
KATIES Elektra
 —New rock band from Murfreesboro, TN
MACY GRAY Macy Gray On How Life Is *Epic*
KENDALL PAYNE Jordan's Sister *Capitol*
POCKET SIZE 100 Percent Human *Atlantic*
SHOWOFF Falling Star *Maverick*
SUPER FURRY ANIMALS Guerrilla Flydaddy
THOSE BASTARD SOULS Debt And Departure *V2*
 —Latest album by band featuring former members of the Gritters, the Dambuilders and Jeff Buckley's band
JASON TRAEGER My Religion Is Love *K*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Unknown Works *Astralwerks*
 —Compilation of unsigned American electronic artists

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<input type="checkbox"/> Nov '94	Liz Phair	<input type="checkbox"/> Feb '97	Future Of Music Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> Jan '95	Throwing Muses	<input type="checkbox"/> Apr '97	Chemical Brothers
<input type="checkbox"/> Feb '95	Veruca Salt/Elastica	<input type="checkbox"/> May '97	Morphine
<input type="checkbox"/> Mar '95	Belly	<input type="checkbox"/> Jun '97	Grand Royal
<input type="checkbox"/> Apr '95	Faith No More	<input type="checkbox"/> Jul '97	Squirrel Nut Zippers/ Special Summer Issue
<input type="checkbox"/> May '95	Juliana Hatfield	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug '97	Sarah McLachlan
<input type="checkbox"/> Jun '95	Chris Isaak	<input type="checkbox"/> Sep '97	Prodigy
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<input type="checkbox"/> Aug '95	Primus	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov '97	Portishead
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<input type="checkbox"/> Jun '96	Everything But The Girl	<input type="checkbox"/> Aug '98	Smashing Pumpkins
<input type="checkbox"/> Jul '96	Beck	<input type="checkbox"/> Sep '98	Rancid
<input type="checkbox"/> Aug '96	D-Generation/ Special NYC Issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Oct '98	Rob Zombie
<input type="checkbox"/> Sep '96	Fiona Apple: Next Big Thing	<input type="checkbox"/> Nov '98	Beck
<input type="checkbox"/> Oct '96	Tracy Bonham	<input type="checkbox"/> Dec '98	Marilyn Manson
<input type="checkbox"/> Nov '96	The Lemonheads	<input type="checkbox"/> Jan '99	Beth Orton
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USE YOUR MIND. TRUST YOUR EARS

(continued from page 90)

attracted many top electronic and rap acts, most recently Andrea Parker, the Pharcyde, and LTJ Bukem.

It may be decked out with a fireplace in the front bar and a candlelit, red-velvet back room, but you would be mistaken if you thought **Storyville** (1751 Fulton St., 441 1751) was still an old jazz club. The owners have recently opened their doors to club promoters and Storyville has become a regular spot for one-off parties. Next door is **Fulton Street**, a double-layered bar/hang-out and good place to meet for a pre-Storyville drink.

SoMA

South of Market, a converted warehouse area that abuts the Financial District, is packed with mega-clubs and smaller bars. **111 Minna** (111 Minna St., 974-1719) is a high-ceilinged art gallery littered with retro couches. The array of tunes spun is as diverse as the art on the walls. A favorite for one-offs, the space also hosts a few regular nights including Stir-Fri Days, blending drum 'n' bass and other electronic goodies on Fridays during happy hour. Wednesday night is Heat, where Latin treats and Brazilian beats are played by Cool Chris, Vinnie, and a rotating crew of enthusiasts.

For a full-scale club event, check out **1015 Folsom** (1015 Folsom, 281-0823). The legendary Friday night Nikita runs from 10 p.m. until 6 a.m. and features house on the main floor, but it's most notable for The Basement, which blasts a heavy dose of drum 'n' bass.

The current local favorite for a variety of nights is **Rico's Loft** (78 Minna St., 909-1987). During the day, it's a pizza parlor, but by night Rico's hosts one of the most popular nights in the city, Eklectic. Run by local female DJs, this Thursday night drum 'n' bass extravaganza is packed every week and features rotating DJs. Every last Saturday of the month, Dubphonik moves into Rico's with a mix of drum 'n' bass, dub, and hip-hop.

Two large SoMA locations worth visiting, if the line-up is right, are **Manhattan Lounge** (699 Market, 543-0191) and **Big Heart City** (836 Mission, 777-0666). Neither has a regular night worth mentioning, but both host impressive one-offs.

The Mission

While the Mission District sprawls out over a broad section of San Francisco, its reputation as an entertainment Mecca radiates out from the intersection of 16th and Valencia Streets. A block east is one of the roughest neighborhoods in the city, but it is also overrun with hip 20-somethings. Most of the after-dark appeal is found at packed, see-and-be-seen bars that may be popular one week and gone the next. Here, chillin' out is more the order of the day than hitting the dance floor. A long-time favorite is **Dalva** (3121 16th St., 252-7740). With a soundscape provided by various DJs and the well-stocked jukebox, this is an intimate bar with a small back room offering a much-needed respite from the bustle of the streets.

The **Beauty Bar** (2299 Mission, 285-0323) is a place to volunteer for a makeover or sit beneath '50s-style hair dryers while sipping your cocktail of choice. The scene is in full effect and worth a visit if only to people watch. Other bars worth checking out include **Skylark** (3089 16th St., 621-9294), **Doc's Clock** (2575 Mission St., 824-3627), and the **Make-Out Room** (3225 22nd St., 647-2888).



TIM "LUC" LEE AT THE TOP

The Roaming Party

Numerous promoters produce roaming parties that pop up around the city on a semi-regular basis. Breaking away from the



FELIX THE DOG AT BLACK DIAMOND

confines of a weekly club, these parties often offer a more experimental clubbing experience and feature DJs with varying musical tastes. The **Future Primitive Sound Session** nights are the place to check out turntable wizardry from top vinyl technicians. The promoters have a line of CDs capturing performances from the likes of Z-Trip and Radar or Cut Chemist with Short Cut, all live from past sessions. **Nu-Forms** is a monthly party with a policy to promote eclectic sounds. Guest DJs from around the globe play alongside local heroes. The most recent night featured sets from Joe Claussell and Capital A from Sylk 130. **Black Diamond** is one of the longest running of the roaming nights. Conceptualized by Cool Lady Bongo C and Felix the Dog, the night attracts a good-sized crowd to unique locations for a cutting-edge selection of sounds. Hosted by DJ and music writer Toph One, **Abstract Science** is a night where DJs spin tunes from all across the sonic spectrum—it's no-attitude clubbing with the best local DJs.

Since these parties occur on an irregular basis and at random locations, the best way to stay informed is to look for flyers in stores or check local press.

Beyond Clubland

If you want to hear club sounds on the airwaves, your best bet is **KUSF** at 90.3 FM. Saturday afternoons (3-5 p.m.) feature "Future Breaks," a drum 'n' bass extravaganza hosted by Miss E (of Eklectic) and Gabe Real. Sunday evenings, J-Boogie brings on the beats with his hip-hop show "Beatsauce" from 8-10 p.m. And the Friday Night Session, from 10 p.m. to midnight, features a varied selection of club tunes. For the big-beat sound, tune into Aaron Axelson on "Subsonic," Saturday nights from 10 p.m. until 3 a.m. on the local alternative-rock station **Live 105**.

Living up to its reputation as the multimedia capital of the West Coast, San Francisco offers a live club event broadcast over the Internet. The **Beta Lounge** (www.betalounge.com) streams over the World Wide Web every Thursday from 7-11 p.m. featuring international DJs spinning experimental electronic tunes.

And if you wanted to take a bit of your SF clubbing experience home with you, various independent record stores can hook you up with the platters that matter: **Groove Merchant** (687 Haight St., 252-5766), **Open Mind** (342 Divisadero, 621-2244), **Compound Records** (6 Valencia St., 864-8309), **BPM** (573 Hayes, 487-8680), and **Soundworks** (228 Valencia, 487-3980).

Finally, for your reading pleasure, **XLR8R** magazine is published locally, and can still be found for free at a few locations around town or for sale everywhere else. Assembled by DJs and producers, it puts a San Francisco slant on the latest happenings in the electronic music scene.

All phone numbers are in area code 415.

Andrew Jervis is vice president of Ubiquity Recordings. He also DJs, produces the Friday Night Session, and records as Bugs, Capsule 150, and Better Daze. Research for this article was conducted in part by Kathleen Fitzpatrick. Contact: andrew@ubiquityrecords.com.

story: ANDREW JERVIS photos: FARIKA



LTJ BUKEM AT JUSTICE LEAGUE

Packed into the ten square miles that make up San Francisco is an extremely diverse population spoiled by an amazing array of restaurants, bars, and clubs. Despite this abundance, some still complain that the city suffers from a lack of decent nighttime venues. It doesn't help that the once-buzzing SoMA district has been quieted by the upsurge of interest in live-work spaces; loft-dwelling bohemians appreciate their beauty sleep, and many of the SoMA-district clubs have been shut down as a result of late-night noise complaints.

Even so, the city has a lot to offer party-hearty San Francisco clubbers, depending on their taste and willingness to seek out the unusual. New nights come and go, so the following represents only a

fraction of what may be happening at press time. If you plan to visit the city, be sure to check local papers for current details. There are also plenty of web sites offering online guides to clubbing opportunities, including www.sfstation.com and www.citysearch7.com.

Most San Francisco club nights are theme specific, offering heavy servings of one particular genre of music. While a few promoters attempt to book a well-rounded diet of sounds, the dance floors are currently dominated by house, drum 'n' bass, and hip-hop parties.



BREAKDANCER AT JUSTICE LEAGUE

The Haight

Once home to the hippie-dippy, free-love community, the Haight now boasts an odd mix of clubs, bars, record stores, restaurants, tourist attractions, and 1960s leftovers. Sound cynical? Try living next to it for four years! Nonetheless, the Haight offers a good time for those in need of a boogie. The slightly sketchy Lower Haight (improved since the projects were "cleaned up," but you should still watch your step) is home to small bars that double as clubs.

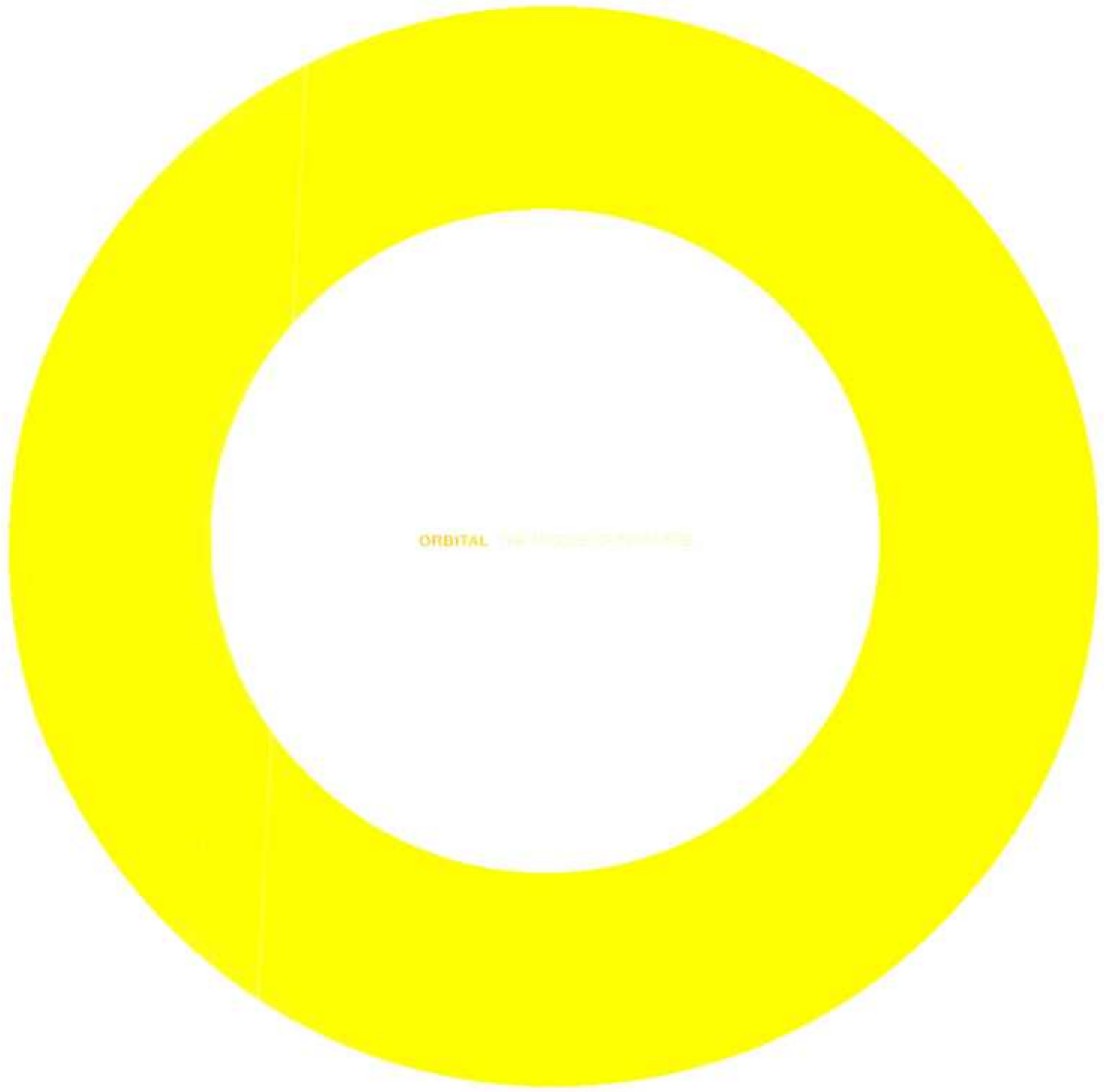
If you want an intimate night with the locals, try **The Top** (424 Haight St., 864-7386). Producers from the Hardkiss family have been known to turn up and drop tunes, while regular nights include the atmospheric drum 'n' bass Saturday called La Belle Epoch and Sunday's Peanut Butter, featuring deep house and disco by DJs IZ, Solar, and Mark E Quark. Renowned drum 'n' bass crew Phunkatec hosts parties here, too.

Part college hang-out, part friendly local bar, and part club, **Nickies BBQ** (460 Haight St., 621-8505) is low on attitude and high on good times—if you're not opposed to a dose of house-party claustrophobia.

The Western Addition

Not more than a stoner's throw away from the Haight lies the neighborhood known as the Western Addition. It is a relatively new zone for clubgoers, but it boasts a few venues offering events. The most prominent is the **Justice League** (628 Divisadero St., 440-0409, www.justice-league.com). Old timers will remember this as the Kennel Klub, renowned for its grungy décor and live bands. Renovated a few years back, the club now favors DJ performances over live music. Regular nights include Density, an evening of drum 'n' bass on Mondays featuring J-Boogie, Al Simmonds, Noel, and Aural B plus stars from around the globe, and Pause-A-Tivity, Wednesday's hip-hop night with DJs Pause and that man J-Boogie again. The Justice League has

(continued on page 89)



ORBITAL *The Innocents*

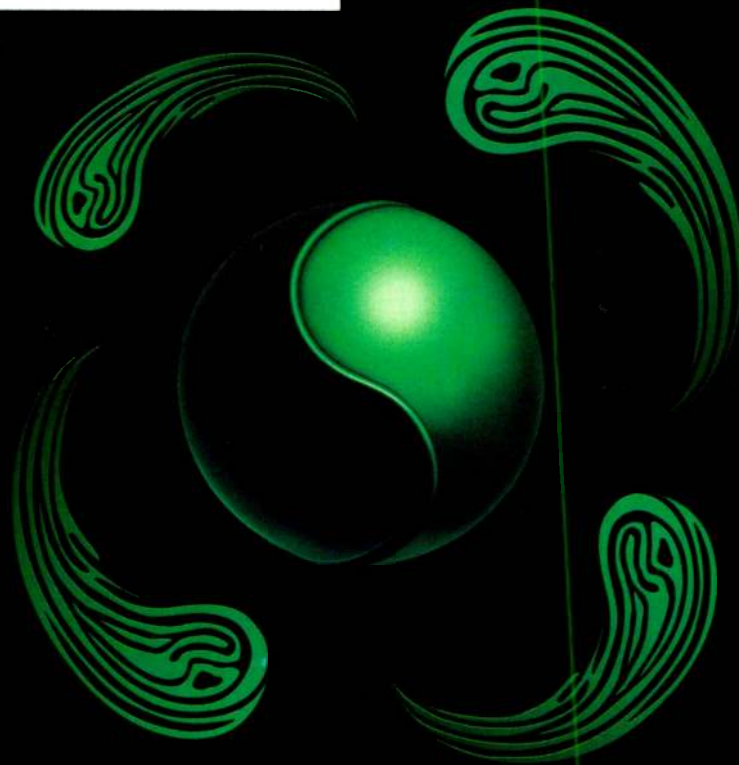


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MARC ECHO THE ECKO UNLIMITED COMPANY ALONZO ADAMS BEVERLY PEELE

CRAZY LEGS OF ROCK STEADY CREW JONATHAN MANNION

STEP INSIDE

21 ONLY OPEN TO 21
YEARS OR OLDER

SUMMER • 1999

Salem Slide Box

17 mg. "tar", 1.1 mg. nicotine av. per cigarette by FTC method.

