

# Junkie XL Kicks Genre Borders

## Roadrunner Act Uses Metal, Hip-Hop Sounds

BY STEVE KNOPPER

As Tom Holkenborg sees it, electronic artists hold the golden ticket. Every record company wants the next Chemical Brothers or Prodigy, but nobody knows how to find them. So his one-man band—Junkie XL, which releases its Roadrunner debut, "Saturday Teenage Kick," March 24—has an automatic commercial edge. And it's not just because he employs a well-known metal guitarist and an old-school rapper to expand his audience.

"It used to be you'd see a band at a club, you'd put them in the right studio with the right producer, and you'd be more or less sure how it was going to come out," says Holkenborg by phone from his home in the Netherlands. "But most of the [electronica] bands which have become pretty big started out in attics in small studios, like the way Roni

Size worked, the way Goldie worked, the way Prodigy worked. So I think [labels] are pretty sure to listen to most of the demos. They don't want to miss the next bedroom big thing."



JUNKIE XL

Though the Chemical Brothers and Prodigy put out hit albums in '97, it has been harder for more experimental artists, from Size to Spring Heel Jack,

to break as big. With Junkie XL, however, two of the album's most prominent players—Fear Factory guitarist Dino Cazares and Urban Dance Squad rapper Rude Boy—aren't techno musicians at all.

Because of this diversity, Roadrunner product manager Cory Brennan says,

the first Junkie XL single, "Billy Club," makes "a really catchy kind of pop song. It's very electronic, but it's got a lot of rock elements."

Still, Roadrunner—best known as a rock label, though its 3-year-old ESP-Sun division dabbles in electronica—has been marketing Junkie XL in dance circles for months. The company heavily pushed a 12-inch single, featuring "Def Beat" and two other instrumental tracks, which have turned up on such influential techno radio shows, as the one hosted by Liquid Todd on WXRK New York.

It's tempting to lump Junkie XL's fast-paced breakbeats on "Saturday Teenage Kick" with the Chemical Brothers and other electronic acts with similarly loud, straightforward dance music. Both the title cut and "Billy Club" have the same anthemic party feeling and catchy repetition as the Chemicals' "Block Rockin' Beats."

But Holkenborg throws in a number of rock, rap, metal, funk, and experimental curves. For the title track, Holkenborg samples the guitar parts from an old punk song, Hüsker Dü's "Divide And Conquer."

Holkenborg, 30, grew up a traditional rock fan but, while working at a music store at age 17, started tinkering with samplers and other high-tech equipment. Though he gradually gained a reputation in the Netherlands as a house DJ, he achieved his first taste of international renown through the heavy metal world; well-known speed metal band Fear Factory hooked up with Holkenborg for remixes of songs from its "Remanufacture" album. Cazares even contributed Holkenborg's "Junkie" nickname, which refers to the DJ's workaholic tendencies.

To prepare for this album, more than a year ago, Holkenborg sent a tape to Rude Boy, who leads the five-member, Netherlands-based Urban Dance Squad, best known for the 1991 hit "A Deeper Shade Of Soul." An enthusiastic Rude Boy had existing lyrics ready to use and even agreed to join Junkie XL as a touring band member.

Cazares was even easier to bring on board. The guitarist liked what Holkenborg did with his remixes for "Remanufacture," so he agreed to contribute (although studio commitments prevented him from touring).

The album's catchiest tracks—"Metrolike," which recalls such late-'80s/early-'90s rap-and-techno groups as MC 900 Ft Jesus and Pop Will Eat Itself, and the guitar-heavy instrumental "Def Beat"—rely on super-fast drum beats, heavy guitars, and Rude Boy's pinched, rambling raps. But the DJ slows down frequently, stretching "Dealing With The Roster" into an ambient mood song, and flying at several speeds on the 18-minute closing track, "Future In Computer Hell."

Though many musicians deride the tag "alternative music" as a meaningless marketing term, Holkenborg embraces it. "On the left side, you have bands like Daft Punk and Underworld entering it from the dance scene, then Foo Fighters and bands like that in the middle, and Sepultura on the right side. So there's a whole spectrum that will always be there. It's getting bigger and bigger."

# SOUNDTRACKS

AND FILM SCORE NEWS

EDITED BY CATHERINE APPLEFELD OLSON

**KAMEN'S PICKS:** When it came time for soundtrack composer Michael Kamen to decide which movie selections to include on his forthcoming London Records project, "Michael Kamen's Opus," one rule proved inviolable: If he couldn't play or conduct the piece, he wouldn't include it. "I had to straighten out all the [sheet music] in order to perform it, and some of it was just impossible to get through. There were cues and things I just couldn't perform—they're really hard!" he exclaims with a laugh. "You can write things you can't play. I wrote a great waltz for 'The Adventures Of Baron Münchhausen' that I'd like to have put on the record, but I couldn't conduct it."



KAMEN

Not that Kamen was lacking for material; he's scored more than 60 films, including "Mr. Holland's Opus" (from which the March 17 release lovingly takes its name), "Die Hard," "Die Hard II," "Brazil," "Mona Lisa," "Lethal Weapon," "Lethal Weapon II," "Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves," "Don Juan De Marco," and "Circle Of Friends." He's scoring the upcoming Ralph Fiennes/Uma Thurman film "The Avengers."

Kamen is equally as adept at writing pop hits for movies as he is scoring. He co-wrote "Everything I Do (I

Do It For You)," recorded by Bryan Adams for "Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves"; "All For Love," recorded by Sting, Adams, and Rod Stewart for "The Three Musketeers"; and "Have You Ever Really Loved A Woman?," recorded by Adams for "Don Juan De Marco." However, when it came to putting together "Michael Kamen's Opus," he chose orchestrations that had not been pop hits. "That would have been a different album if we'd included the hits," he says. "I wouldn't include a Bryan Adams song without Bryan. This is a compilation album in that it's movie music from different movies, but it's all in the same voice. That voice is mine."

Kamen rerecorded the selections with the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, whose director is a friend from high school. Kamen says the rerecordings allowed him to circumvent the cost of licensing the songs from the soundtracks they originally appeared on. They also gave him the leeway to arrange the works as he wanted, as opposed to how they needed to be used to greatest effect in the movies.

"For example, in 'Don Juan,' there's a place where I had to slow notes down waiting for Johnny Depp to pick something up on the table," says Kamen. "I don't have to wait for Johnny Depp now; I can beat him."

Kamen will conduct selections from the album March 24 during a Carnegie Hall performance in New York that will benefit Mr. Holland's Opus Foundation, a nonprofit organization Kamen founded that provides and maintains musical instruments for children. An orchestra composed of students from the Juilliard School (Kamen's alma mater) will play. Adams and Bryan Ferry are also slated to appear at the benefit.

While Kamen has no plans for a national tour, he will conduct symphonies playing his material in a number of cities, including Phoenix, Boston, Houston, and Los Angeles, this spring.

**KEEPING SCORE WITH GOLDENTHAL:** No one can accuse composer Elliot Goldenthal of being stagnant. The New Yorker jokingly calls himself a "33½ guy," referring to the fact that he splits his time between writing classical pieces, film scores, and music for theatrical productions. As his ballet "Othello" makes its way to major cities across the country, Goldenthal will also showcase his movie mettle this month. His score to Barry Levinson's "Sphere" is due Tuesday (24) on Varese Sarabande; the score album to Neil Jordan's "Butcher Boy" is due March 24. "Butcher Boy" is the third Jordan score for Goldenthal, following "Interview With The Vampire" and "Michael Collins." He is at work on the music for Jordan's upcoming film "In Dreams."

Although both the "Sphere" and "Butcher Boy" projects fall under the film umbrella, they provided completely different experiences for Goldenthal. He says he spent more than a month trying to nail down the tone of the music for "Butcher Boy" before finally deciding it should be in the spirit of the film's protagonist, an adolescent boy. "He has his own special way of looking at the world," Goldenthal says. "It required a complex naiveté, if that makes sense." For "Sphere," a sci-fi thriller that takes place primarily underwater, Goldenthal worked to provide a dramatic and somewhat uplifting backdrop. "This is a movie about your greatest fears becoming manifested, so orchestratorially it's like giving the audience kind of an LSD trip," he says. "But because everything in the movie is so scary and murky, I wanted to come up with themes that were beautiful."

Of working in the film medium in general, Goldenthal says the greatest challenge is balancing all the hands in the pot. "The variables shift. Sometimes you work with a difficult director; sometimes the subject matter presents a conceptual challenge; sometimes you have to deal with fighting to be heard through sound effects," he says.

Assistance in preparing this column was provided by Melinda Newman in New York.

amusement business		BOXSCORE		TOP 10 CONCERT GROSSES	
ARTIST(S)	Venue	Date(s)	Gross Ticket Price(s)	Attendance Capacity	Promoter
U2	River Plate Stadium Buenos Aires	Feb. 5-7	\$8,668,840 (8,668,707 pesos) \$150/\$25	160,478 three sellouts	Rock & Pop TNA International Ltd.
U2	Morumbi Stadium São Paulo, Brazil	Jan. 30-31	\$6,103,065 (6,841,536 reales) \$53.09/\$13.27	154,056 two sellouts	TNA International Ltd. Franco Bruni
ROLLING STONES	Foro Sol Mexico City	Feb. 7, 9	\$3,902,244 (33,012,984 pesos) \$177.09/\$16.53	88,700 two sellouts	Ocesa Presents/CIE TNA International Ltd.
ROLLING STONES JOHNNY LANG	Aloha Stadium Honolulu	Jan. 23-24	\$3,317,190 Gross Record \$65/\$35	54,006 60,000, two shows	TNA USA Tom Moffatt Prods. Shep Gordon
ROLLING STONES SANTANA	Qualcomm Stadium San Diego	Feb. 3	\$3,270,069 Gross Record \$60/\$39.50	55,507 sellout	TNA USA Bill Silva Presents Andrew Hewitt
ROLLING STONES JOHNNY LANG	Rose Garden Portland, Ore.	Jan. 30-31	\$2,975,914 Gross Record \$125/\$39.50	35,059 two sellouts	TNA USA Avalon Attractions
U2	Nelson Piquet Auto- dromo Rio De Janeiro, Brazil	Jan. 27	\$2,654,715 (2,976,201 reales) \$44.24/\$13.27	66,949 sellout	TNA International Ltd. Franco Bruni
ROLLING STONES JOHNNY LANG	Compaq Center Houston	Feb. 12-13	\$2,244,058 Gross Record \$150/\$39.50	23,612 two sellouts	TNA USA Avalon Attractions
U2	Estadio Nacional Santiago, Chile	Feb. 11	\$2,171,112 (979,171,512 pesos) \$66.22/\$17.66	67,633 sellout	Rock & Pop TNA International Ltd.
ROLLING STONES JOHNNY LANG	B.C. Place Stadium Vancouver	Jan. 28	\$1,472,119 (\$2,134,572 Canadian) \$60/\$39.50	37,058 40,000	TNA International Ltd. Universal Concerts Canada

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