

Interviews with:

Ray Davies
Ira Robbins
Chris Butler
The Primate 5

Articles on:

Jet Li
The Replacements

Plus:

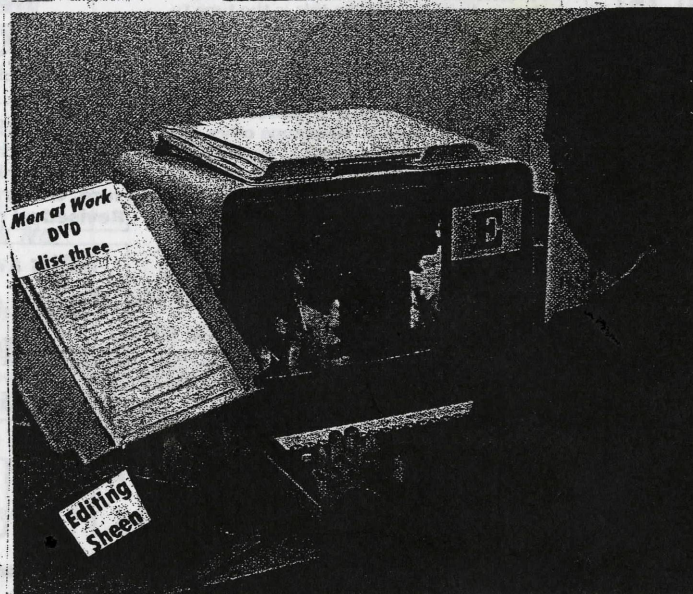
Rev. Norb on Comics
Queen Q&A with Guy Picciotto

and...

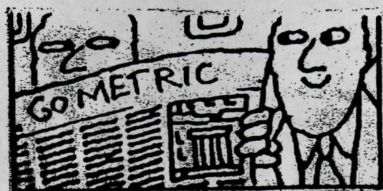
The Loner

Go Metric!

#15 - Spring 2002



Cover photo: A still from Craig Baldwin's Spectre of the Spectrum



(GM! Editor Terry Sheldrake, citing nervous exhaustion, has taken an extended vacation. Below are the notes he dictated to a staff writer the night prior to his departure.)

Terry Sheldrake: ...well fuck me, good fucking question; I don't know where this "zine" is going? "Boost sales"? They don't have a fucking clue how fucking ludicrous a notion that is; not with this bunch of hacks. Honest to god, did you hear them today? They spent the whole day complaining about *The Tick* being canceled! They were actually surprised and disappointed to find out that the rest of the world didn't want to tune into a show starring a fucking blue guy and a moth. And when they actually do arrange an interview it's always with a band no one's heard of. Half of these bands don't even want to be interviewed; they don't want to risk public exposure and we're staking our commercial future on them. And that's just the bands who are still around. We've featured Queen--fucking Queen!--four issues in a row!

Staff writer: They're in the new issue too.
TS: Fuck me. Five issues in a row. The rest of the world laughed off Queen in 1982. Happy fucking days, we're only 20 years behind mainstream America. Maybe this is the time to start new. It's not too late; right, I'm not too old. I don't know what I could put on my resume but I could think of a way to spin the years--god it has been years hasn't it?--I've spent trapped on this rock of a publication. Geez, *Go fucking Metric!*? Name one other zine with a fucking exclamation point in its title? "Oversee a few issues, it'll help grease the GenTech wheels when you put in for a transfer to the sugar cane division down in San Juan. It's only temporary." My ass. Bastards. I've done everything they've ever asked but I can't take it anymore--these kiss-ass editorials are the worst. And what's it gotten me, a bunch of Fat Wreck promos?

SW: It's actually "Fat Wreck," Mr. Sheldrake.
TS: Whatever. What time is it? Quarter to nine. Fuck me.

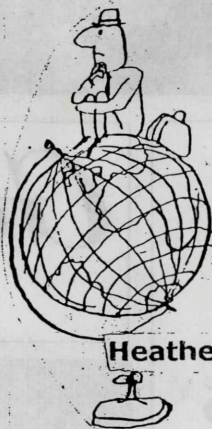
GO METRIC!

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We're moving again. After 6/15/02
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Go Metric! remains a
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Issue #15 was written by:

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Maddy Dental
Pat Dull
Mike Faloon
Mark Hughson
Joe Keller
Frank Leone
Bob Mason
Mark Norris
Heather Peavey-Leone
Josh Rutledge
Jeff Wescott



Ad Rates...the recently revived "sure,
we'll run ads" policy is being re-
evaluated. If you're itchy to send bucks,
sure, we'll run your ad. Write for details.
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Dedicated to the Fastbacks and Billy Wilder Congratulations to Kim & Matt! **

Help needed tracking down older Popluma releases and anything on Clone Records

Queen Q&A with Fugazi's Guy Picciotto...Part five in our Queen appreciation series takes us to D.C....p. 2

Performance Art Playhouse: The Stomach Can Save Lives - Mark Hughson...Round two in our effort to simultaneously promote and destroy performance art....p. 5

The Cult of Ray - Interview with Ray Davies - Mark Norris...Our restraining order was lifted!...p. 6

Chronicling the Underground - An interview with Trouser Press founder Ira Robbins - Pat Dull...Wow!...p. 8

Fastbacks Update...In December they hosted a two-day pop fest and released a fab compilation. In February they broke up. Superfan Scott Lee helps us get a better look...p. 16

The Replacements Should Be Your New Favorite Band - Maddy Dental...Ms. Tight Pants converts the stragglers... p. 18

The Ten Greatest Rock & Roll Front-men of All-Time! - Josh Rutledge...Each issue one of our contributors pushes to the limits our belief in the First Amendment. This time it's Josh. Axl and Oasis in one article? You're killing me!...p. 22

Ready...Get Set...Jet! - David Cawley...From our Baltimore bureau comes an overview of Jet Li's films...p.24

GM! Top 20

1. **The Put-Ons - s/t cd (Manic); A Different Kind of Single** ep (Unity Squad)
2. **Chris Butler/Kilopop! - Easy Life** cd (Future Fossil); **Un Petit Gouter** cd (Future Fossil)
3. **The Figgs - Badger** cd ep (Hearbox)
4. **The Shakes - s/t cd-r (self-released)**
5. **The Kill-a-watts - "Dig Those Kids"** b/w "Snotty Bastard" 7" (Yakisakana); Catholic Boys split 7" (ElectroRock)
6. **Rev. Norb - Touch Me I'm Weird** cd (Bulge)
7. **Tina & the Total Babes - She's So Tuff** lp (Sympathy)
8. **The Disappointments/Microsurgeon - split 7"** (TTSCC)
9. **The Kung Fu Monkeys/Junior Varsity - split 7"** (She's Gone)
10. **V/A - Dr. Ilteams** cd (Book)
11. **Palomar - Palomar II** cd (Self-Starter)
12. **Epoxies - "Need More Time" + 2 7"** ep (Dirtnap)
13. **The Dorks - We Got Drunk for Christmas** cd-r (self-released)
14. **V/A - You're Stuck in Georgetown with No Ride Home** cd-r (Hubba Hubba)
15. **The Ergs! - 3 Guys, 12 Eyes 7"** ep (Whoa Oh)
16. **Grand Champeen - Battle Cry for Help** (Glurp)
17. **The Slurs - "It Just Gets Worse" + 2 7"** ep (self-released)
18. **Moo Rat Fingers - Achtung Duschbag 7"** ep (Big Neck)
19. **Mighty John Waynes - "She Gets Dirty" + 2 7"** ep (Rocknroll Blitzkrieg)
20. **The Flakes - "Bad Girl" b/w "Hangup!" 7"** (Lipstick)

Rev. Norb Delivers His Well-Informed Opinions About a Bunch of Current Day Comic Books...Once in awhile the title says it all...p. 28

Punk Rock Boy Bands - Brian Cogan...Mr. Cogan takes that which was sitting under our noses and makes a mint in the process. With a great Shelter joke to boot!...p. middle

Primate 5 interview...There's no question they are/were a great band. But do they still exist and are/were they apes or people? Brian Wallace addresses these inquiries and makes clear his take on Burt Reynolds--all the big issues... p. 34

Chris Butler interview...He wrote "I Know What Boys Like," has been covered by the Spice Girls and has written a 69-minute pop song. And that's just for starters...p. 38

Sample problem 18-5 - Joe Keller...Physics and the Who. (Answer key on p. 69)... p. 45

Jack Cole Collector...Viva el Plastic Man!...p. 46

The Loner - Bob Mason & Jeff Wescott...Tonight on In the Realm of the Unknown...p. 48

The Briefs interview - Frank Leone & Heather Peavey-Leone...Trust in Frankenheather!...p. 55

Record Reviews...Quick confession followed by heaps of right-minded thinking...p. 56

What My 3rd Graders Think of the Young Fresh Fellows
 Based on when we used the Electric Bird Digest album cover during our work on observations in writers' workshop
 1. "One guy's missing a shoe."
 2. "They look like they're drunk."
 3. "One guy looks like Elvis."
 4. "They look like 19th century hip kind of drunkards."
 5. This one's my favorite:
 3rd grader: They're cool dudes.
 Teacher: What makes you say that?
 3rd grader: Because they're on a record.
 I submit that all five of the quoted observations were spot on! That's awesome. - Scott McCaughey



***Queen Q&A with
Fugazi's Guy Picciotto***

(aka Queen Ruled - Part 5)

My jaw hit the ground when I read it: the guys in Fugazi listen to Queen in their tour van. Or maybe it was just one of the guys, Guy. The details of the interview I'd read had escaped my mind by the time I contacted the Fugazi guitarist with a proposal to contribute to our on-going Queen appreciation series. My interest was further piqued when, in the course of exchanging emails about Queen, Guy mentioned a fondness for one of Queen's least regarded albums, Hot Space; a sign of a diehard fan and a perfect candidate to shed more light on the greatness that was Queen.

When/how did you first encounter Queen's music?

My first memory of hearing Queen was when "Killer Queen" was a radio hit in the early 70's when I was about nine years old. The song completely freaked me out - something about the lyrics and the campy delivery coupled with its pristinely articulated rock power made my stomach feel like it was filled with barium. I actually had a thing with a girl in my elementary school who was also really into "Killer Queen" - we had this pact where we absolutely had to call each other if we were the first to catch it playing on the radio. It would be like "Turn on WMOD right now! They're playing it!" - so in that way Queen was a feature of my earliest music based flirtation. *SHEER HEART ATTACK* ended up being the first of their albums that I got - I joined the Columbia House of Music scam just to get it...it was one of those hustles where you get 10 records for only a dime but then get roped into some bogus contract where you have to buy x amount of records over a period of x amount of years at full price and the selection ends up being dire. That whole contractual obligation thing gave me a lot of anxiety (which may have led to my future distrust of the music business and contracts in general) but getting the Queen album kind of made it worth it. *SHEER HEART ATTACK* had an enormous impact on me and I used to play it and just stare and stare at the cover with them playing dead and wearing black fingernail polish feeling creeped out. The best music always makes you feel that kind of tingly nausea.

In general, which elements make Queen click for you?

The genius of Queen for me is in their eclecticism. A lot of people can only get with Queen when they are laying down the heavy sounds of say a "Modern Times Rock and Roll," "Sheer Heart Attack" or "Son and Daughter" but to me the wonder of them is how they can go from the punishingly rocking to more lightfooted whimsy at the drop of a hat and sometimes within the space of a single song. In our band we often talk about the "Owner of a Lonely Heart" phenomenon - that is when a band takes a dramatic sonic or thematic detour away from what is thought of as being their signature and having continued commercial success after the move (this being considered completely apart from any

discussion of the band's creative validity or worth). YES, for whom the phenomenon was coined, did it with "Owner," going from hobbyist prog rock to 80's production-trick pop with success on both ends of the shift, though, in fairness, this was done with the addition of new members. Another example might be the Hollies suddenly morphing into CCR with "Long Cool Woman in a Black Dress." Anyhow, Queen are a band that are almost beyond the scope of this phenomenon because their eclecticism was built into their make-up from the very beginning. Still, the time-lined geography that takes us from the rock opera grandeur of a "Bohemian Rhapsody" to the spare funk of "Another One Bites the Dust" is one to be marvelled at and one only very rarely equalled (the *White Album* being the uber-bible of this encompassing chameleonic approach). A big part of it is the fact that all four Queen members have distinct musical personalities and each can write - all four of them have contributed multiple songs that are indispensable to their catalogue as a whole. And shockingly, considering how Freddie is simply one of the most amazing vocalists of all time, they all can supply great lead vocals as well - Roger Taylor, for my money, has absolutely the most perfect Glam voice of all time.

Did you ever see Queen live?

No, regretfully not though a bunch of slightly older DC people did like Ian (my bandmate) and Bert Queiroz of the Untouchables - they often talk about Freddie's champagne toast to the crowd (which was apparently appallingly vulgar) and how great they sounded. I did see them on Live Aid as it was going down and to this day I consider it one of the most stunning performances of all time, especially contrasted as it was with U2's Bono's earlier prancing about with his flag-banner and his puke-worthy "messiah at the barricades" hi-jinks. Freddie came out and showed the world what real prancing is all about - Queen's authority, while obviously and completely fascist, was undeniable and every time I watch it on tape it takes my breath away for real.

To what extent was Brian May an influence as a guitarist?

I can't say he was a direct influence cos I don't think I could ever figure out what he's playing - I'm not anywhere near that league. Still, he is an inspiration. The fact that he built his own guitar with wood from a fireplace and he plays with a British coin instead of a pick - really, how cool is that? His harmonizing leads are obviously great but the thing that blows me away the most is his mastery of tone. He gets this cool rolled off sound but he can also muster the most brain pounding chordal crunch - it's hyper-versatile just like the sound of Queen as a whole.

If you were to cover a Queen song which one would it be?

Alone I would do "She Makes Me" - with the band it would have to be "It's Late."

When on tour with Fugazi do you have to convince the others before putting Queen in the tape deck or is there consensus on Queen?

There is complete and utter consensus on Queen in the Fugazi van. In fact, when we first started touring I made a compilation tape of Queen songs that was called 'Queen Bee' and it quickly became the tape of choice, hands down. It was a decidedly broad palette on display, not shying away from the *FLASH GORDON* soundtrack for example, and initially I was worried that I may have fooled myself in terms of anticipating a welcome response, but happily, my bandmates didn't let me down. In fact, that tape is now seen as literally the glue that held us together in those fractitious early days.

What element(s) of later Queen records do you feel are overlooked and/or misunderstood?

It is my firm belief that Queen were on a faultless mission of creative self discovery that peaked with the *HOT SPACE* album. That is not to say that every record up till that point was necessarily better than its predecessor, but rather that with each successive album they continued to reach forward without fearful self-consciousness and that the last time they did so with such pure bravado was with *HOT SPACE*. I always got the sense with Queen that they were trying purposefully to derail your expectations. Once you had acclimated to the thuggish football terrace anthem of "We Will Rock You" they caught you unawares with the drollery of "Bicycle Race" which in turn left you unprepared for the retro-minimalism of "Crazy Little Thing Called Love." With *HOT SPACE* they achieved a perverse anti-musicality which played AGAINST all their strengths. It was a cubist Queen and with it they finally reached a plateau of such extremity that the only possible move from there was, sadly, retreat. Such retreat was probably hastened by commercial pressures for though the record did yield a hit with "Under Pressure," overall Queen must have been cowed by the public's inability to follow them on the more experimental aspects of that album. Indeed, with *THE WORKS* (a still excellent though almost song by song clone of *THE GAME*) and with all the albums to follow till *INNUENDO*, they were basically happy to retread the paths they had layed down on earlier work. They were still often successful creatively speaking but you no longer felt they were operating without a safety net.

Many Queen fans cite *News of the World* (1977) or *Jazz* (1978) as the end of Queen's run of greatness. I know you're a fan of the much-maligned *Hot Space* (1982). Could you indulge us in some feedback regarding Queen's studio albums from the 80s (depending upon which of them you're familiar with).

The Game (1980) - A masterpiece pure and simple. It is on this album that Queen most confidently staked out new territories for themselves while still maintaining a resonance with a mass audience. John Deacon's killer tight jean, short haired mod look of this era underlines his major stepping out party on "Another One Bites the Dust."

Hot Space (1982) As I said before - this marks Queen's last stand as sonic daredevils; they would never again have the same courage to toy with the boundaries of their oeuvre. Though some lame-os might argue that they over-reached themselves in stripping their sound down to the mutant degree of such songs as "Body Language" and "Staying Power," to my ears this is Queen redefining the dimensions of the dance floor. I feel if you can't get with this you may seriously need ass surgery.

The Works (1984) - a wonderful updating of *THE GAME* era Queen- enjoyable but well within the boundaries of their comfort zone. Many of the songs on this album were released as extended remixes on vinyl 12"s and it is these versions that I return to most often particularly in the case of "I Want to Break Free" and the bludgeoning "Hammer to Fall."

It's a Kind of Magic (1986) - Not much more than a pleasant cream puff of an album. Nothing here is indispensable though "One Vision" is better than most of the entire outputs of lesser bands and "Pain is so Close to Pleasure" is a truism that can't be underscored enough in contemporary music.

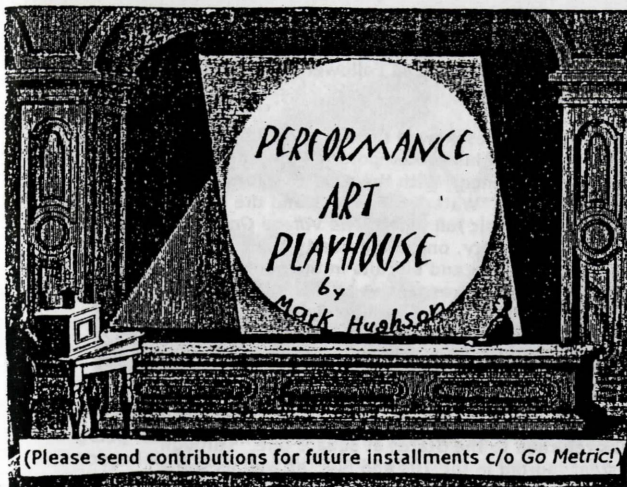
The Miracle (1989) - The cover to this album (a digital fusing of the four Queen members heads so that they seem to have 6 eyes in common and only one neck) is so disturbing and ugly that it remains hard for me to examine the musical contents within. The only song that sticks out in my memory is "Khashoggi's Ship," which has lyrical allusions to the orgiastic partying for which Queen were internationally renowned. There is a sense that the Queen tale, once booming like a timpani, is winding down to a whimper with this album.

Which album(s) would you most recommend to a newcomer?

I would have to say *SHEER HEART ATTACK* - mainly out of sentimental reasons linked to my own experience. Still, it's kind of the easy litmus test. If by the end of the opener "Brighton Rock," you are not 100% sold then you are probably never going to sign on for the long haul.

(Perhaps related to the above) If you were to have a Queen album played over the p.a. before a Fugazi show, which album would it be?

I would opt for *FLASH* - cos that entire album is a fanfare...what better way to come out could there possibly be? (Plus that way we wouldn't be upstaged by their more considered work.)



The Stomach Can Save Lives

Project Description:

To have a man, playing the part of a super hero, actually eat his way out of imprisonment. "We'll have to eat our way out" is a common gag in cartoons and in the old Batman series but probably never attempted in real life.

Details:

The performance starts with the protagonist in a 5x5'x9' glass box open at the top. An equally generic mad villain is on the outside, equipped with an immense supply of Cheerios. The cereal will be continually and consistently poured into the box until the it reaches the hero's chin (By mathematically sound calculations, this would approximate 36.5 15oz. boxes of Cheerios, or approx. 1551.25 grams of cereal). The hero says his one line, and then proceeds to eat. No beverages will be provided. Every "O" must be consumed, however, due to various reasons the "Cheerio dust" will not be eaten.

Duration:

Given that the human body can only survive a short while without liquids before serious health risks occur, the project duration will be limited to 40 hours (approx. 1.1 boxes of cereal per hour). If in fact, the hero has not successfully freed himself before the time limit, he will have to suffer these consequences

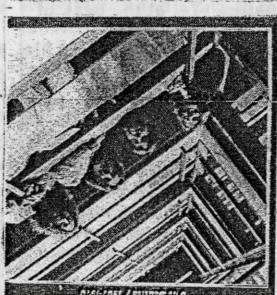
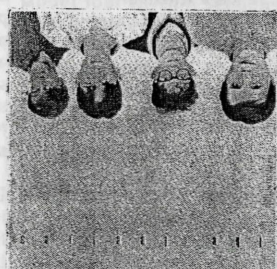
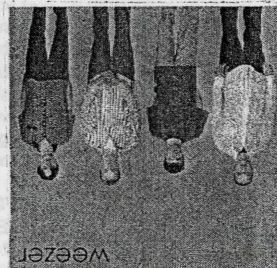
A) The obnoxious gloating of the mad villain, and the ensuing public humiliation.

B) Absolutely NO fame/notoriety/news acknowledgement. Not even 15 seconds.

C) He will be allowed to leave to take care of necessary duties, but MUST return to the cereal in the near future to finish eating. The food must not be wasted.

Cheerios may or may not sponsor the event.

Cappella Stars used the title. Ownership, however, belongs to none of those acts but rather to Big Hello for their ever-fab 2000 release, *The Orange Album*. It didn't come first chronologically and it's named for the fruit not the color but it easily levels the competition (well, I've never heard any of the other records in question but I'll play the percentages).



For the sake of accuracy, stop referring to the third Weezer album as "the green album." Doing so implies that the first Weezer record is now "the blue album" and that title belongs to the *Beattles' 1967-1970 collection* released in 1973. (The *Beattles* also have dubs on "the red album," the 1962-1966 collection and, obviously, "the white album.") Nor can the first of Weezer's self-titled records be called "the album whose cover depicts the four geeky band members standing in front of a blue backdrop," because that title belongs to the first *Feelies* record (which, released in 1980, missed out on "the blue album" status by about seven years, the official title for the *Feelies* record is listed below). So, in order to set straight the record here's a rundown of the official titles for each of the records in question.

The Beatles - they were there first, they get the white, red, and blue titles (which have a previously unnoticed pastiche to them--maybe McCartney was a dumped that wretched "Freedom" song upon us--what a sack of crap that is, can you imagine anyone in the world less likely to incur discomfort for the sake of self preservation?)

The Beatles (1980) - "the album whose cover depicts the four geeky band members, from, roughly, the middle up, standing in front of a blue backdrop"

Weezer (1994) - "the album whose cover depicts the four geeky band members, from, roughly, mid-shin up, standing in front of a blue backdrop"

Weezer (2001) - "the album whose cover depicts the four geeky band members, from the feet up, standing in front of a green backdrop"

And while we're doing out proper credit for albums named for colors, it goes without saying that "the black album" is bequeathed to Spinal Tap. Not only did the *Metallica* album come later, and generally suck, it's also got stuff other than the color black on the cover. The battle for "the orange album" has a number of contenders. Said title is the pseudonym for the Jeff Beck Group's self-titled 1972 record, Wanka used the title in 1977, jets to Brazil's *Orange Rhyming Dictionary* is sometimes referred to as such, and even the Clemson A

The Cult of Ray Interview with Ray Davies

by Mark A. Norris

The man Pete Townshend once described as the ideal candidate to become poet laureate of England is, true to Townshend's hopeful notion, breathing new life into the marriage of music and literature. Ray Davies is currently back in the States and touring with his Storyteller tour, a performance that has provided the songwriter's rabid fan-base with a rare opportunity to see the Kinks founder in a new light.

While the concept of the Storyteller performance has been virtually consumed by VH-1's live music series of the same name, Davies provided the show with its first guest and his name is mentioned as the program's inspiration in the closing credits, Davies' Storyteller tour proves a highly theatrical and atmospheric performance as opposed to an acoustic rendering of hits.

Containing all the cheeky, comically self-effacing nuances that filled the songwriter's best known songs and character studies, the Storyteller tour is in essence a musical adaptation of Davies' 1994 "unauthorized autobiography" *X-Ray*. In performance, Davies relives cherished moments of his familia! and musical history, exhibiting the tender sadness and barbed toughness that has allowed the songwriter to remain a singular musical influence.

In America, The Kinks found the bulk of its success in two far-removed decades. In the mid-1960's the Kinks rose to fame in with the first wave of the British Invasion. The band's gutsy pre-punk riffing on songs like "You Really Got Me" and "All Day and All of the Night" fueled the dreams of thousands of would-be garage groups and earned the band the same maniacal status of The Beatles. Yet at the peak of the group's popularity, The Kinks were banned from performing in the States (a squabble with the American Federation of Musicians kept the band from American concert stages until the end of the decade).

While the ban was disastrous for the furthering of the Kinks stateside success, it was wondrous for the defining of Davies' songwriting voice. Isolated in England, Davies' time of introspection and character study would provide the songwriter with some of his most cherished work. The fuzzed-out intensity of the early hits gave way to a quiet

boisterousness in cutting caricature songs like "Well Respected Man," "Dedicated Follower of Fashion" and "Sunny Afternoon."

Similarly, Davies eschewed the day-glow psychedelia so rampant amongst his contemporaries for a delicate portrait of bygone innocence. With the reflective ruminations on The Kink's single "Waterloo Sunset," and the band's undervalued classic full length *The Village Green Preservation Society*, one could nearly smell the freshly mown lawn and tea and biscuits in the pantry. Sadly, English fans were unresponsive to this passionate portrait (as they were to the band's follow up effort *Arthur* which further examined the passing might of the British Empire) and the Kinks were suddenly banned again...this time from the charts.

Upon the resolution of their American touring blacklist, The Kinks returned to the States at square one. Through constant touring in the 70s and 80s, as well as some heavily rotated videos in the new medium of music television, the band surpassed their former popularity and evolved to the level of a stadium band.

The 1990s saw the Kinks continue to record and tour, but cast suddenly adrift in the world of record company marketing and imagery. Since the mid-1990s the band has been on indefinite hiatus. Although reunion rumors persist, the continuation of Davies' Storyteller tour and impending solo album (his first) seem to belie the notion that the band will ever perform together again. Yet the influence of the group, and Davies' songwriting in particular, have never abated.

The most obvious display of Davies' impact was felt by the Brit-Pop explosion of the mid-1990s (not only in musical terms, Ray and his brother Dave were defining inner-band sibling rivalry long before the Gallagher boys were in short pants). Davies' particularly British songwriting sensibilities proved a natural stepping stone for bands like Oasis, Blur and Supergrass. Yet with the upcoming release of two separate tribute compilations by American groups, where such luminaries as Wilco, Fountains of Wayne and Mudhoney pay homage to Davies, it's clear that the songwriter's influence remains of international appeal.

I spoke with Davies in a telephone interview from his home in London. With the recent tragedy in the States still so fresh, the artist's tone was naturally quite somber, yet his thoughtful consideration of each question and quiet enthusiasm seemed to lighten his spirits (and mine).

MN: What challenges does the Storyteller performance present, compared to touring with The Kinks?

RD: I thought this would be easier but it's proved quite difficult. With a band, even though its more physically exhausting, you get a chance to give yourself a break when someone does a solo. With this, it requires concentration all the time. In a sense it's quite liberating for me as a singer cause I don't have to sing really loud all the time (laughs). I've got a great accompanist, Pete Mathison who's



been with me since 1996. We've got the telepathy thing going which is quite nice. We're working on a few different songs for this show, I always try and do that because the show has its own sort of format in a way. But I always try to change it depending on where we play.

MN: It seems like it would difficult to play with this particular show's format.

RD: The thing about the Storyteller show is that it stands up as a piece in its own right. It's evolved as a piece. The obvious thing doesn't work. If it's too linear it gets boring to me, so I try to make a song work sometime. The show encompasses at the most a third of the book, so I can move it around and place anecdotes in different places here and there. It's pretty free form really.

MN: Do you feel a need to fulfill people's expectations to hear certain songs? I'm sure there must be nights when you don't feel like going out and playing "Lola"?

RD: Some nights I get up there I feel "Uh-oh, this audience just wants to hear "Lola" and "Sunny Afternoon" and I then don't want to do it. But then some nights I go up there and play those songs as if I've never played them before and they sound really fresh. It's just an odd chemistry that builds up as soon as I walk on stage in the atmosphere between the audience and myself, you just never know til you get out there. I still look at a show as like a blind date; sometimes you go out there and they might not like you straight away and they grow to like you, those are my favorite audiences. The difficult audiences are the ones that love you straight away and then you have to take them into the depths and say, "This is what I'm about, this is a bit more dark. Maybe you didn't know about this before" and maybe in the end they'll understand. That's what this show does. The X-Ray Storyteller show makes people think they know me and then get caught up in the story that I'm telling. They forget who I am and get caught up in the character. At the end of the show they think "Oh, he's the guy that wrote those songs!" That's my perfect reaction to the show in a sense.

MN: Do you view the Storyteller tour an update on the musical reminiscences presented on the Kinks' Village Green Preservation Society album? Have you ever considered say a Volume II from that point of view?

RD: I think if you could call me the young photographer in the *Village Green* days, now I'd have to play the old tramp (laughs). I think my point of view would be different. I've always loved the poet W. Davies, he wrote the poem "Leisure" years ago which goes "What is this life, if full of care/We have no time to stand and stare." I think that that Woodsworthian style of poetry is a bit akin to what I do. I love people like William Blake and visionary mad men like him, I suppose my point of view would be more like Blake's or W. Davis' rather than the point of view of a young person taking photographs of this world flashing by. I always think of pop songs as a snapshot of life. My songs now, maybe because I've evolved a bit and got to thinking about it a lot, have subtext in them and two or three things that have a linking narrative. I think it happens because writers need to make things interesting for themselves. The trick is to somehow still keep it entertaining and get the audience to like it. If they feel they want to indulge themselves by getting into the story and the backstory then they can do so. I think the trick is still to keep it simple.

MN: I understand that you're planning on a new studio and have recorded with people like Yo La Tengo...

RD: We did some shows in New York last year at Jane Street Theater where I showcased a lot of new work and they played along. I've got all these songs and hopefully at the end of this tour I'll have a fresh appraisal on them and go in to record them. It would be nice to use those guys on a few more tracks, cause they're a fun band. I think their strength is that they perform as a unit, as the sum total of three parts which I like. The Kinks were like that, there was no one musician leading the way, it sounded like a band. The other musicians I've worked with I'm trying to get to gel to as a band and not play out all the time trying to impress. That process has taken a long time. I've tried about four rhythm sections out and they're all different in a sense, but I think I know now the sound I want... I want it to sound like a band (laughs). Even though it's my first true solo album, I'd like to have a band sound. I want to recapture some of the feel I had when I first started out.

MN: Do you despair at the current state of music? There doesn't seem to be a lot of that spirit that you mentioned out there currently.

RD: Being slightly mad, I still think there's hope (laughs). In the last few years I've been doing some songwriting tutorials with new writers. It's about 15 or 16 people and we take about a week and go up to the country and we just write songs and I talk to them about writing. There a lot of talented young people out there and I tell some of them it will be really hard to get a record deal if you want to write interesting songs and they say "we don't care, we want to make the music." The obvious people get signed by record companies now, if you can dance or make a good rap record, but I still think there's a lot of interesting young people out there who still have time to make their opportunity. I think people are more broad minded than the corporate music industry likes to make out, so I'm hopeful. It's important because it makes me feel I'm giving something back.

Trouser Press

AMERICA'S ONLY BRITISH ROCK MAGAZINE

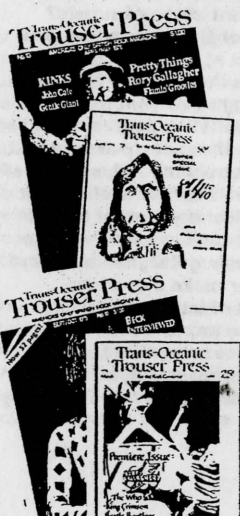
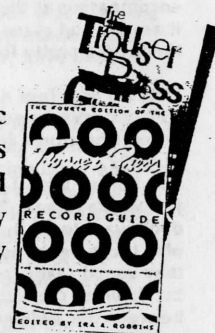
An interview with Ira Robbins Editor of Trouser Press Magazine

by Pat Dull



Whether you know it or not, you owe a debt of gratitude to Ira Robbins. As editor of the seminal Trouser Press magazine, Ira fanned the flames of under-exposed rock'n'roll bands, from The Replacements to Rockpile, providing crucial support, encouragement, and press for countless underground groups, many of whom later became huge international acts (such as Elvis Costello, Blondie, Devo, and Cheap Trick). In fact, Ira was in the studio with Blondie when they recorded their very first album!

Many readers may know of Ira's work from his encyclopedic Trouser Press Record Guides, the first edition of which was published in 1983. At least four updated editions of the Record Guide have appeared since then, each a necessary addition to any self-respecting music fan's bookshelf. But the Trouser Press story began nearly a decade earlier.



Trouser Press started out in 1974 as the Trans-Oceanic Trouser Press (named after a Bonzo Dog Band song). The TOTP was a small fanzine devoted to (as its name suggests) bands across the Atlantic, focusing on progressive/art/cool bands like The Kinks, Dr. Feelgood, ELO, and Queen, with a special emphasis on The Who. In fact, Pete Townshend sent Ira a handwritten letter after receiving a copy of the first issue, which featured a cover story on The Who. Apparently Townshend thought the fanzine was specifically a *Who* fanzine! But the TOTP (and the quickly rechristened "Trouser Press Magazine") developed into much more than that.

Trouser Press was fortuitously poised at the cusp of the 1976-1977 punk/new wave onslaught, and embraced the new music when other publications paid scant, if any, attention. As a result, Trouser Press documented the unloved, unwashed, and unnoticed bands that spewed forth during this crucial late-1970's and early-1980's era, providing a nation of readers with an invaluable connection to the world of underground music. Go Metric! had the opportunity to speak with Ira Robbins recently, and we discussed the impact of Trouser Press on the music scene, on both a personal and a national level.

Go Metric!: Just to give you some background, Ira, I come from a very small town called Greenville, Ohio, and the closest real record store was a Camelot Records about 60 miles away. I remember that the first Trouser Press I ever bought had Chrissie Hynde from The Pretenders on the cover...



Ira Robbins: That must have been in 1981 or 1982, I think...

GM: I didn't have a lot of access to new music in Greenville until I picked up Trouser Press. It just opened my eyes to a whole world of music out there that other magazines weren't covering. It changed my life, and I started mail-ordering records from New York and California; things that I would never have access to in Greenville. Do you get people telling you this type of story often?

IR: The funny thing from my perspective is that I was born and raised in New York City, and my exposure to touring bands and record stores was rather intense. When we started Trouser Press it was very hard for us to get a sense of who was reading it, so we just put it out there, and sent it to places we thought would be promising areas for it; college towns and major cities that had good rock'n'roll enthusiasm. The amount of feedback we got at the time was not extensive, but in the 17 years since Trouser Press ended, I've had more conversations by far, probably by 1000 to one, with people who read the magazine, than I ever did at the time I was putting it out. Especially those who lived in small towns and suburban areas, who felt culturally isolated; they felt that they were the only ones who liked this particular band, whether it was Camel, the Sex Pistols, The Ramones, or King Crimson. Those people found a connection to the outside world, sort of a good friend that shared the same values and taste, and a connection to other people, evidence that there was life out there.

It's been very interesting and illuminating, in retrospect, to discover just how important a role we played in a lot of people's lives. At the time, we were always uncertain whether we played *any* role in *anyone's* life. But I've had some fairly successful musicians come up to me and tell me that reading Trouser Press opened their eyes and convinced them that music was what they really wanted to do. It's incredibly flattering.



"All Around the World" b/w "Carnaby Street"
—The Jam—Polydor (UK) 2058 903
"World" is a good number with early-Who overtones in the melody and the lyrics (if not the arrangement), but the vocals sound like Roger Daltrey with a head cold on a slow turntable. Turn it over and one is informed that "Carnaby Street's not what it used to be." The lyrics don't even pretend to rhyme, the singing's godawful, and fella, you're about nine years too late. Nice color sleeve pic of the hoarsey threesome, but this Who pose is getting tiresome. (Neither side is from In the City.)

Speaking of "fairly successful musicians," Trouser Press was able to snag interviews with many great artists at the very outset of their careers. One such interview was with Paul Weller during The Jam's first American tour, before their New York City show. In a foul mood, Weller was apparently fuming about a Trouser Press review that had unflatteringly tagged The Jam as Who copycats.

After an icy breakfast and an even frostier interview, during which Weller stewed in silence, Ira and Paul went to Bleeker Bob's record store. Bleeker Bob was spinning the new Sex Pistols single, "Holiday In The Sun." Weller was *furious* after hearing the song, accusing the Sex Pistols of swiping the riff to his own composition "In The City." It should be noted that many reviewers have also recognized a similarity between the two songs, and that "Holiday In The Sun" is apparently the first Sex Pistols song after main songwriter Glen Matlock had been kicked out of the band.

GM: Usually the things I read about in Trouser Press concerned bands that I had never heard of before. I would read the record reviews for things that sounded interesting, and then try to go and check them out, or write the bands themselves. I remember ordering *Plastic Surgery Disasters* (by Dead Kennedys) from *Alternative Tentacles Records*, and receiving a letter back from *Jello Biafra* telling me I was the first person from Greenville, Ohio, to order their record. No review I ever read in *Rolling Stone* made me want to do that. Do you think that the Trouser Press writing style spoke to people in a way that other magazines didn't?

IR: The only thing we consciously tried to do was not fake anything. We weren't a big wheeling and dealing publishing organization; we were just a bunch of friends putting out a magazine. The people who wrote the reviews were writing for themselves, and we didn't think too much about whether this was something people would want to read. I guess honesty was the one hallmark. No one was ever told what to say in a Trouser Press record review. They were encouraged to write whatever they felt.

I don't think that's completely fair about *Rolling Stone*, however, because I've written reviews for *Rolling Stone*, and wrote them the same way that I did for Trouser Press. I think if you'd look back at 1980 Trouser Press reviews and 1980 *Rolling Stone* reviews, you wouldn't be able to say, "Gee, the one review is really useful, and the other review is really bad."

GM: That may be true, but the records reviewed in Trouser Press were important to me, and were entirely different than the ones *Rolling Stone* was reviewing.

IR: Rock journalism has become very different in the last 10-15 years, and it's very different from what we were doing then. We always approached it from the perspective that you had to believe in it, you really have to feel personally involved in rock music in a way that a lot of critics today don't understand.

Everybody I knew could be offended by a record; not by the language or the imagery, but a clichéd record was as offensive and angering as if a politician was lying to you. We take it really personally. A lot of critics today just don't take it that personally. From the time when I started to get serious about music, when I was about 12 years old, until today, there hasn't been a minute when I haven't felt personally affected by popular music. Listening and feeling encouraged, enlightened, and exalted by some things, and insulted, angered, and frustrated by others.

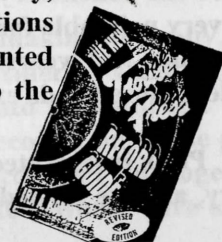
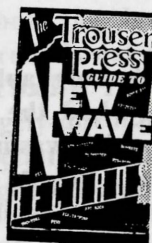
GM: The only exception I would see today, maybe not in the record reviews but in the articles, is England's MOJO magazine.



IR: MOJO is definitely re-claiming territory and a style that has largely been abandoned. There was a time when Rolling Stone would run those types of articles, although they were never as historically oriented as MOJO is. The New Musical Express in the 1970's, in addition to their typically trendy issues of the day, would also have things like Nick Kent's huge Brian Wilson features. Well into the 1970's and early 1980's, many of those British publications were involved in that kind of journalism. It really faded out in England during the period that those magazines weren't doing very well, and Smash Hits was doing well with its 500-word articles.



One detail for which Trouser Press became noted during its ten-year run was its appeal to music collectors. From the outset, the Trans-Oceanic Trouser Press featured several pages devoted to auctions for record collectors to buy, sell, and trade rare records. Eventually, this evolved into the Trouser Press Collector's Magazine, a side-project newsprint magazine that focused on, shall we say, more fanatical tastes. Further, the first two editions of the Trouser Press Record Guide were also printed in quite rare hardcover versions (as opposed to the more common softcover editions).



Not unlike England's Stiff Records at its prime, Trouser Press also understood the allure of collector promotional items, such as buttons and t-shirts, which were often given away as perks for subscribers. One promotional t-shirt for advertisers featured publishing schedules and advertising deadlines. Another subscriber perk was the inclusion of flexi-discs (a bendable thin vinyl square that could be played on a turntable) during the last two years of Trouser Press. Although the regular store-bought version of the magazine featured a page of information about a new and upcoming band, subscribers received a flexi-disc of that band's music. Such notables as R.E.M., The Call, and Joan Jett were presented in this flexi-disc format.



GM: You mentioned previously that honesty was an important aspect of Trouser Press. Did you ever feel that you printed an article about an artist that you didn't really respect? I remember *A Flock Of Seagulls* being on the cover at one time...

IR: The last phase of Trouser Press was a very difficult one for us, both personally and editorially. We were battling against something that we never expected. When MTV came on the air in 1980, they began showing videos, concerts, and interviews with the artists that had no mainstream exposure, some of which were the artists that we were covering in Trouser Press. Some of those dance-oriented post-punk bands, such as Depeche Mode and Duran Duran, were not successful in America at the time. They were exotic and interesting because they were novel, and that made them legitimate subjects for Trouser Press to write about.

As laughable as *A Flock Of Seagulls* now seems, the fact was that they had the first synth-pop record to break the American charts, which was no small feat at the time. We were covering those bands, and then MTV came along and took them away in a manner with which we really couldn't compete. At the same time, however, we were the beneficiary of MTV's assembling of a new audience; it was a very palatable format for 12-year-old kids, like "That guy has colorful hair and wears women's clothing, he's really funny." All of a sudden, those bands exploded as teen idols in America.



Punk invigorated a lot of people emotionally, but it never sold a lot of records in this country, and we started getting a lot of fan mail about Adam and the Ants, Culture Club,

and Duran Duran from kids who were a lot younger than our typical readers. "Oh, I love the cover you did of Adam Ant!" It was our best-selling issue. We wound up in this weird position of recognizing that to sell magazines, we could do a lot worse than putting these bands on the cover. Some of them we actually admired. Adam Ant was a very interesting figure in the early part of his career; he was bringing in a lot of different sounds, made exciting pop records that didn't sound like anyone else's records, had a punk pedigree, and was an interesting guy.

The second time we did a Duran Duran article, however, we didn't really know why we were doing it. Half of the article reported the recent events, but the other half of it was undisguised scorn for how stupid it all was. We covered these bands honestly, but what we hadn't accounted for was that when a 15-year-old kid buys a magazine with Duran Duran on the cover, they want an article praising their hero. I had always read rock magazines expecting to be provoked, informed, and inspired. Like Lester Bangs; he wrote about things that *nobody* liked....

GM: ...or things that didn't even exist!

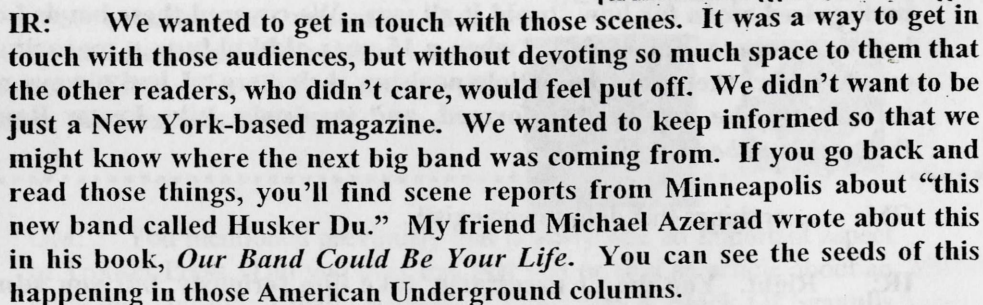
IR: Right. You didn't necessarily take him seriously, but you admired how he did it. We wound ourselves down a rat-hole when we decided that these were the bands that we were going to write about, but that we were going to do it honestly. There was no longer a place for us to do the journalism that we wanted to do about the bands that we wanted to write about. The times made it very difficult for us. Literally, the last year of the magazine was me trying to figure out how to stop doing it. Also, we made one grave mistake, which was not to embrace American hardcore.

GM: In looking back through old issues, the only really hardcore article was one about **Black Flag**, with a goofy picture of Henry Rollins.

IR: That was too little, too late. Personally, after having absorbed both the New York scene and the English scene, I thought that West-coast hardcore was incredibly out-of-date. I felt that two years after England did it right, they came along and did it badly. I no longer feel that way, but that was my prejudice at the time. As a result, we largely discounted the impact that it was having on American culture. Had we simply liked it better, or been more tolerant of it, we would have done more articles on it and perhaps changed the audience of the magazine.

What we were doing with the more glamorous bands wasn't making us happy, but it was keeping us in business. We devoted a lot of energy covering America's underground scene, independent bands and labels, but that wasn't coalescing into an audience. Sure, there were people who liked records on Twin-Tone, SST, and dB Records, but those people weren't a universe; they were very fragmented and isolated. We couldn't put together a constituency, and there was no groundswell of a growing audience that would have kept us

JM: The **American Underground** reports that you did, with scene reports from Boston, New York, etc., were great ideas, but they were difficult to read if you weren't somehow connected to that particular geographic area. I would often read the Ohio ones, but I still didn't know any of those bands!



KNICKERS JAN. 1976
DEC. 1975
And, journalist Jim Green on bass.
light stuff, and Ira and I were writing together
but nothing came of it. They only two gigs. Also
did a demo tape with Len North of Miller & Cookies.

JAY DEE WEISS
bass
ex. Milk
n. Cookies

HARRY DANTONI
drums
Buen

STEVEN JAMES
vocals

IRRA ROBBINS
guitar
publisher of excellent
magazine, Trouser Press

JAMES DESTEL
keyboards

to
BAND 12

At the present time, Ira is in a band called Utensils that only performs new wave covers, "played really hard." Utensils have recorded four songs, with Adny Shernoff (of the Dictators) producing. As probably happens to countless bands, they thought that they had two record deals put together, for two singles with two different labels, but they both fizzled. In the daytime, Ira is the Editorial Director of MJI Broadcasting, which is a music news department that sends out music-related information to radio stations. It is similar to a "very customized wire service for radio stations."

GM: I remember reading a review about **The Elvis Brothers** in *Trouser Press* that made me think that they were one of the greatest bands on earth. I eventually was able to go and see them open for **Billy Idol** and, later, **Cheap Trick**, and they blew me away. How did you discover new, unheard bands like that?



IR: I feel that, on some intrinsic level, every band is created equal. I don't know if everyone believes that, but I certainly do. Some band playing third on a Tuesday night at the Mercury Lounge is no less important in my world than someone who headlines Madison Square Garden. I've never considered success or popularity as a factor in whether a band was good or bad. However, I don't assume that just because I like a band that maybe no one else has heard of, that everyone else should like them, too. I do believe that a band that no one has ever heard of can be as great or greater than a band that everyone has heard of.

GM: That seems to mirror the *Trouser Press* ethic of writing about bands that no one else would write about.

IR: A lot of that was simply due to the fact that we just didn't have access to superstars. We didn't command the kind of circulation that would allow us to say, "Oh, we need an hour with Mick Jagger." So we looked for things that excited us. Bands like **The Shoes** and **Television**; those bands meant more to us than the superstar bands. We saw it as our mission to make sure that people knew about these bands.



In April of 1984, *Trouser Press* Magazine closed shop during the celebration of its 10th anniversary issue, which featured Joey Ramone on the cover in front of a "Gabba Gabba Hey!" cake. This final issue included extended write-ups on **The Minutemen**, **The Elvis Brothers**, **The Go-Betweens**, **Comateens**, **ABC**, **The Suburbs**, and **Spandau Ballet**, as well as reviews of new albums by **The Pretenders**, **The Dickies**, **The Real Kids**, **Psychic TV**, **Nina Hagen**, **Billy Idol**, and **D.O.A.** Buried amongst the other articles is a small review of the debut 45 by a little band called **The Smiths**.

This final issue is little different than the 95 issues that came before it; it's jam-packed with articles, reviews, and musical insights illustrative of the scope of *Trouser Press* Magazine.

THE REVIEW OF THE CD COMPILATION--RELEASED BY A LABEL THAT DOESN'T EXIST--THAT DOESN'T EXIST

Life as a fan of the Young Fresh Fellows and Fastbacks ain't always easy. Neither band tours much, nor are they very prolific these days but both bands do seem to sympathize with their flocks, making those infrequent releases ridiculously worthwhile. Case in point the 12-band, 22-song *Dr. Ilteams* compilation given away at a two-night affair hosted by the Fastbacks, at Seattle's Crocodile Café, last December. I wasn't able to attend but a friend snared a copy for me. The compilation was released by the enigmatic Book Records. When I wrote inquiring about mail order information to tag onto the end of a review, I received the following:

The Ilteams CD is not really going to be available anywhere, per se, It shouldn't really be advertised as available, there might be a few odd copies that might get included free with an order of a 'for-sale' title from Book Records, but this is a little complicated as well, as Book Records doesn't really exist. There are some 'official' Book Records releases, as official as they can be, being released by a label that doesn't exist, these include: Minus Five: In Rock; New Original Sonic Sound; Once For Kicks: Chrome And Fine Shiny Toys.

But how to actually obtain any of these releases, as well as the free-with-purchase Dr. Ilteams compilation, must remain shrouded in mystery.

Yours,
Bill Challenger

The Dr. Ilteams line-up		Features a Fastback	Features a Young Fresh Fellow	Features multiple Fastbacks or Young Fresh Fellows	Tad on drums!	My wife and/or one of her co-workers really likes this song	Possible theme song for the 1985 Seattle Mariners	Rating this song would receive if, in fact, it did exist	Title involves some sort of bodily discharge
Band	Song title								
Model Rockets	This Is a Valentine					✓		★★★★	
Fastbacks	New Painter Man	✓	✓	✓		✓		★★★★	
Young Fresh Fellows	One In a Row	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	★★★★	
Congratulators	No Love Left	✓	✓	✓				★	
Shuggie	Got the Machine	✓						★★	
Pure Joy	Shat Out a Mule	✓	✓	✓		✓		★★★	✓
once for kicks	If I Were Lucky	✓	✓			✓		★★★★	
Visqueen	My House	✓				✓		★★★★	
Chris and Tad Show	Black Hole Canyon	✓	✓		✓	✓		★★★★	
Maroons	The Turns							★★	
James Jimmy	Robert Blake							★★★★	
Minus 5	High School	✓	✓	✓				★★★★	
Fastbacks	The Little Star That Sings	✓	✓	✓				★★★★	
Model Rockets	Ugly Jacket					✓		★★★★	
Congratulators	New Kitty	✓	✓	✓				★★	
Chris and Tad Show	Droo! At You	✓	✓		✓	✓		★★★★	✓
Young Fresh Fellows	Dumb As You Please	✓	✓	✓	✓			★★★★	
Maroons	The Hollywood Primer							★★	
Minus 5	How Many Bones	✓	✓	✓				★★★★	
once for kicks	A Little Thunder	✓	✓					★★★★	
Pure Joy	Bleeding	✓	✓	✓				★★★★	✓
James Jimmy	Everett True							★★	

In February 2002, Kim Warnick left the Fastbacks, and one of the great bands of our time came to an end... The band's break up was as surprising as it is sad. The Fastbacks had been around since 1980, I figured they'd become a public institution that would outlive us all.
If a fanzine is going to cover the Fastbacks break up, then it should do so from a fan's perspective. In this case, a super fan--The Superfan, Scott Lee. We spoke about three weeks after the final Fastbacks show.

So San Francisco was the final show?

Yeah, that was the final show, March 2nd, Noise Pop, Bottom of the Hill. Did the crowd acknowledge that it was the last show?

Oh yeah, it had been hyped up. Two weeks prior to that they were on the cover of *The Guardian*. The show sold out ahead of time and there was a lot to choose from that night, kind of a testament to how the band did actually have a following and people did care. It's kind of their second home. San Francisco may have even enjoyed the Fastbacks more than Seattle when they started out.

What makes the Fastbacks breakup so surprising is that I figure once a band's hit 20 years they've figured out a way to keep it going. Even if the drummers change, and Lulu's in and out, the Fastbacks would continue for a long time.

I think a lot of that had to do with the fact that they had their own things going on outside of the band. The band wasn't their primary focus so it gave them a lot of space. Any good relationship needs space and they seemed to have that happy medium. But it got to that point where I think Kim was tired of being the singer and she was enjoying just playing bass in another band (Visqueen).

Did you have a sense that things might change or did it happen suddenly?

I know that as far as the band was concerned, I think Kurt had higher expectations for them as far as how much time and effort they were willing to commit; to become the band he wanted them to be. I don't know if he was 100% satisfied with the way things were going. I don't know if that was obvious to the other members of the band but in talking with Kim, it seemed like she had more fun when she would tell me stories about practice with Visqueen, while all the while there wasn't nearly the same enthusiasm with regards to Fastbacks rehearsals. She loved the music. She thinks Kurt writes the best songs, obviously, but I think it was kind of a chore for her, like taking a class at school that you're forced to take, knowing that it's good for you but not enjoying it and hoping that one day it will end. And it ended and it was her choice and she was, I think, ready for it. I think it might be a blessing in disguise for Kurt because now he can start another band and perhaps recruit individuals that can achieve the type of musical goals that he's looking at.

And he's not seeking to get someone to replace Kim and continue with the Fastbacks, right?

He would not replace Kim. History has shown that bands who replace the singer are not the same. A case can be made for certain bands but, you

know, even though Van Halen was popular with Sammy Hagar who in their right mind, with any good taste, would enjoy that?

Perfect example, Van Hagar vs. Van Halen.

Sam Halen.

The first time I heard of Visqueen was on the Dr. Ilteams cd. When did Visqueen start up?

I think that band started rehearsing in the summer of 2001 and started playing shows in the fall. They're almost done recording a record. They don't have anybody to put it out yet. It's something that Kim's having a lot of fun with.

Does she write in Visqueen?

Well, they kind of all collectively write but most of the songs are written by the singer. They're a good band.

Did knowing what you did soften the blow or was it still a shock?

I think it came as a surprise that Kim was the one that quit and it wasn't Kurt saying, Well, I don't think we should play together anymore. Everybody has their theory on why she quit. Personally, I think it's that she wasn't having fun and she didn't want to be the main focus, as far as being the singer. I think she just likes playing bass and being up there having a good time.

Had they recorded since the last record?

Kurt has a bunch of new songs but they hadn't recorded, they had been rehearsing a few new ones. The week after the San Francisco show they went into the studio and finished up four songs. Who knows if those are going to come out or not. It would be a shame if they didn't because one of those songs is probably the best song ever written. It would have been a travesty of musical justice if "The World Inside" was not recorded. They also recorded the last show and it was broadcast here last week on KEXP and Kurt was interviewed for it.

Any idea of how soon a new Kurt band might surface?

If he has a master plan, he hasn't shared it with me. I would guess that he's going to be doing something fairly soon. He's playing in other bands but he needs to start his own band, to do his own stuff. He's still got the Young Fresh Fellows. He plays bass for Once for Kicks. He's been playing guitar and keyboards for Pure Joy, which is Rusty Willoughby's band. At some point I'm sure he'll focus his attention on whatever his next thing is.

For the first time in over 20 years he'll be starting a new band.

It's probably got to be a little weird. He had an interesting quote which was, "I've been in this band longer than I haven't."

You seem to be taking the news pretty well.

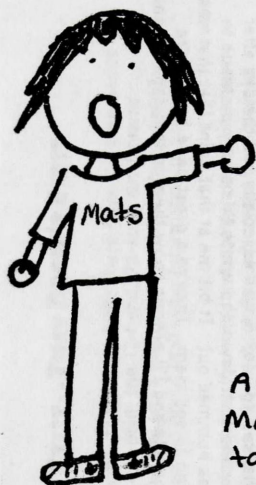
Oh, what am I going to do? Life is not worth living any more? No.

Well, no, I didn't expect you to be distraught but still, it's the Fastbacks, you're the Superfan...

I'm sad about it but what can you do? I was especially sad the day after the San Francisco show and I sat down and wrote this sappy message to Kurt, just because I was bummed out. It hit me at that point that that was the last time I was going to see them. They're a great band but they're also a great bunch of people and I'll always know them in that capacity and feel thankful for that.

The Fastbacks: December '01

The Fastbacks: March '02



The Replacements Should be your new favorite Band

An exhaustive treatise, combining the works of Hegel, Marx, GG Allin, and Joey Ramone with the sweet tastes of gummy Peachie Rings and strong coffee!

Attention all punks, rock and rollers, and pop punk dweebs! Today I call on you to put aside your metric rulers and weighing machines, and take a few minutes to consider the all-important "Who is your favorite band?" question. Tis a matter of no small importance! In fact, a small African country has been in a civil war for the past fifteen years over whether the Rolling Stones or Black Flag rocked harder! (Of course, we all know what the right answer is...and we all know that if we ever decide to shoot ourselves, we will most certainly do it to the sweet sounds of Black Flag's "Depression," but I digress.) And friendships have been lost over such eternal questions as "What is the best Dickies album?" (the second one) and "Should the Clash have broken up after their ~~second~~^{third} album?" (yes). So, in light of recent civil wars and lost friendships, I thought I should take the opportunity to present to you my latest thesis, thoroughly researched over the past five years. I simply wish to state: The Replacements are the best band of all time. The only acceptable dissenters to the party line are those who say that Husker Du is the best band of all time. If that applies to you, feel free to go your merry way, for you are indeed an intelligent individual and exceptions will be granted. If, however, your favorite band is, say, Jawbreaker, or, dare I say, Weezer, you are hereby obligated to read the rest of this article.

Eleven Reasons why the 'Mats Should Be Your Favorite Band!

- ① The Replacements have written both the best sad songs and the best rock and roll songs. And these are the two most important kinds of songs in the history of music! If you are feeling angry about a bad break-up, you can listen to "Don't Ask Why" and hear Paul scream "The way I used to love you/that's the way I hate you now" and if you're feeling super in love and happy, you've got "Favorite Thing" to listen to ("You're my favorite thing/bar nothin'!") And, if you just wanna rock, you've got practically every song on "Stink" and most of "Sorry Ma" to listen to! If you don't believe, listen to "Takin' a Ride." It rocks so hard, even the Candysnatchers cover it!

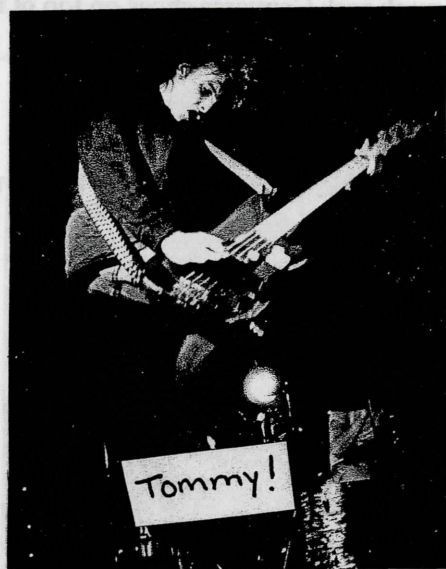
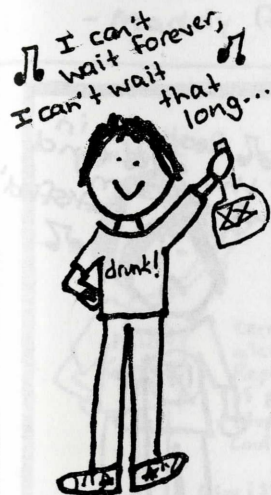
Alcohol, T Rex, Hoedowns, & Murder!

②

Alcohol. So much alcohol. The Replacements were definitely the most drunk band of all time. And, if you're smart, you know that alcohol is the best drug, followed closely by caffeine, then ecstasy, then acid, then speed. Of course, were I to try heroin or cocaine, I'm sure they would top most of 'em, but I'm a wuss.

③

Stage presence. Replacements shows were a sloppy, crazy, drunken disaster, occasionally interspersed with moments of genius. Plus, they covered everything from "20th Century Boy" and "Folsom Prison Blues" to "Ace of Spades" and even the Wizard of Oz's "If I Only Had a Brain." Crazy covers! Paul Westerberg falling down drunk! I have a bootleg of a show where he just screams "Murder!" over and over again, dozens of times! Insanity! Uh, alcohol!



④

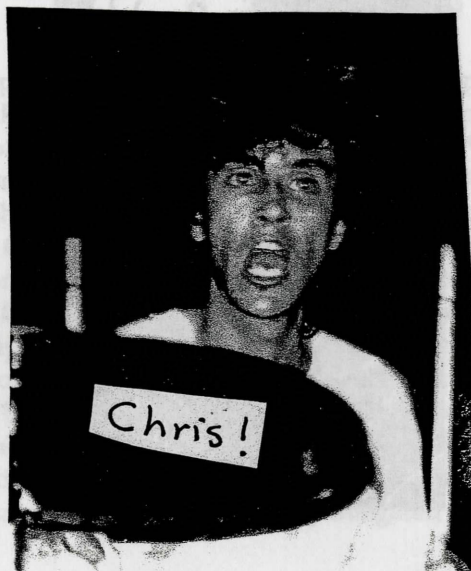
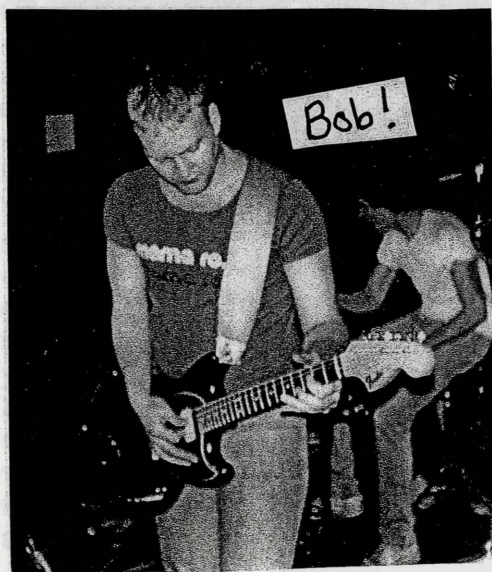
Tommy Stinson joined the Replacements when he was twelve. TWELVE. While I was spending all my time reading Anne of Green Gables books and secretly watching Roseanne (my mom banned Roseanne and Married With Children from our house throughout my formative years), Tommy was helping record such classics as "Shiftless When Idle" and "Don't Ask Why." And he dropped out of school in tenth grade to go on tour. So, does this mean that I am a failure? Yes.

⑤

After releasing a somewhat hardcore album ("Stink") the Mats decided that hardcore was getting dumb and too macho and lame. So the next album they released ("Hootenanny") was a drunken, folk inspired, party album. As Mats-man Chris Mars said, "Aw, I don't know if we fit into [the hardcore scene]. So let's have a hootenanny here, let's settle down and have a hoedown and loosen it up and have some fun." Yes, the Replacements got out of 80's hardcore before it became lame! Alright!

Winona Ryder, post-Nirvana crap, et. al!

- ⑥ No band is better to listen to when you're super depressed or post-break-up, with the possible exception (or tie) with Husker Du (especially Zen Arcade). In fact, the Mats weren't my favorite band until I broke up with a boy many years ago. Such was the depression following this incident that I didn't sleep for three days, and on the fourth night, starting drinking by myself at around 2am (the first and only time I have done so in my life, and hopefully the last). Although the details of the evening are vague to say the least, I do remember listening to the Replacements "Let it Be" about a dozen times, and I emerged the next day with a new favorite band and a horrible headache. (I also discovered my very muddy shoes on top of a newly-purchased Jets to Brazil record. I have no idea how this happened, and can only conclude that I was rightfully angry over having wasted my money on such a piece of post-Nirvana crap that I decided to make some sort of punk protest by placing my punk rock Converse shoes on top of that horrid release. Am I making sense? No.)



♪ Look me in
the eyes and
tell me, I'm
satisfied! ♪



- ⑦ Dude, they're Winona Ryder's favorite band. (This is actually true, and has been pointed out to me countless times by many punk guy friends of mine, all of whom have big crushes on her. Top three most popular non-punk girls for punk boys to have crushes on: Winona Ryder, Drew Barrymore, and Christina Ricci. Hot! Hot! Hot!)
- ⑧ When records started being phased out, Twin Tone records decided to release the early Replacements albums on cd. Paul, Tommy, Bob, and Chris were so angry that they went to the Twin Tone offices, convinced the receptionist that they needed to see the master tapes for some reason, got them, and threw them into the Mississippi River. Punk rock! (Later, it turned out that these were just the back-up tapes.)

Beer, Bob Dylan, and Worship!

- ⑨ While the Replacements were recording in some studio, Bob Dylan walked by and started drinking one of their beers. Tommy yelled at him, "Five bucks a beer, fucker!" Tommy called Bob Dylan a "fucker"! I like Bob Dylan and all, but that rules!
- ⑩ The Replacements have a song called "I Hate Music" that contains the words "I hate music/sometimes I don't/I hate music/it's got too many notes." Rock and fucking roll!
- ⑪ Because they are my favorite band and I told you so.

The end! Go forth + worship Paul, Tommy, Bob, +Chris!
-Maddy Tight Pants

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Joshua Blake Rutledge presents:
**The Ten Greatest
Rock & Roll
Front-men of
All-Time!**

(The first in an infinite series of
ridiculously subjective rock lists)

In my mind, rock & roll bands with front-men (or front-women) are generally cooler than bands WITHOUT them. There's no difference in the studio, but on stage a great front-man can easily make or break a band.

Granted: Over the years, The Beatles, Kinks, Clash, Replacements, Ramones, Husker Du, Buzzcocks, KISS, and Nirvana (among others) have done just fine without proper front-men. But can you possibly imagine the Rolling Stones without Mick Jagger? The Doors without the lizard king? The Stooges without Iggy? Ike and Tina without Tina? It's unfathomable! For better or for worse (usually, it's better), front-men and front-women DEFINE the bands that they, uh, front.

So what exactly IS a front-man? Well, he's not just a lead singer. He's so much more. He's a well-rounded entertainer. Maybe he tells jokes. Maybe he heckles the crowd. Maybe he wears costumes. Maybe he sings while rolling around in a vat of mustard. In any case, he's a genuine performer freed from the constraints of playing an instrument--and thus able to dance around, go crazy, and put on a real SHOW on-stage. He's part of the band, but then again he's NOT. As Captain Faloon says, a front-man is a liaison between the band and the crowd. He's a larger-than-life personality--a rock & roll figurehead who embodies the spirit and allure of the band he represents. Great front-men are often great singers, but they don't HAVE to be. Far more crucial are the non-musical elements of the front-man's repertoire: charisma, image, stage presence, personality, and mystique.

Great front-men are ROCK STARS in every sense of the word. They wear many hats--simultaneously playing the roles of crooner, dancer, clown, instigator, daredevil, master of ceremonies, and media sensation. Studio recordings may preserve a band's musical legacy, but the great front-man's role is to take a band to a higher level--to that of the absolute cultural phenomenon. A front-man can be great in MANY different ways, but the artists mentioned below have one main thing in common. They're all LEGENDS. On to the list!

1. FREDDIE MERCURY (QUEEN)

Heads and shoulders above all the rest, Mercury set a standard for rock & roll front-men that may NEVER be equaled. His voice alone would have made him a rock immortal, but that was just one small part of his total

package. He brought glamour, style, sexuality, swagger, soul, and old-fashioned theatrical thunder to the Queen experience. With ANY other front-man, the band's excessive musical pretensions may have come across as pompous, self-indulgent, or utterly ridiculous. But with Mercury up front, Queen was fun, delightful, and charming even at its most ambitious or absurd. He was a singer, musician, dancer, actor, and model all rolled into one--and he never took himself too seriously. Convincing as both a flamboyant crooner AND a virile hard-rock icon, Mercury was a genuine original whose flashy style splendidly complemented his band's musical grandiosity.

2. DAVID LEE ROTH (VAN HALEN)

Roth was like a heterosexual Freddie Mercury gone metal--a dynamic, ostentatious born-performer whose sexually-charged persona and outrageous disposition embodied the good-time sunny California lifestyle of the pre-AIDS age. Sure, he was a walking cartoon. But Van Halen NEEDED a cartoon to offset its pompous virtuoso musical wankery. Post-Roth, the band degenerated into a hyper-macho vanilla-metal bore. But with Roth up front, VH's tunes resonated like rocked-up, sexed-up early Beach Boys jams--oozing a hard-partying joie de vivre and off-the-charts libido. As a singer, Dave was adequate. But as a performer, he was EXTRAORDINARY. He could move and dance and jump and live large with the fervor of a jet-setting playboy going hog-wild at his million-dollar birthday bash. He was a living portrait of hedonistic excess--a lovable 20th Century Dorian Gray endowed with the proverbial lust for life. God bless Diamond Dave!

3. BON SCOTT (AC/DC)

The 70's version of AC/DC--fronted by the remarkable Scott--was the greatest rock & roll band this world has ever known. The group was a dirtier, naughtier, more vulgar mutation of the classic 50's rock outfit--and its musical odes to sex, booze, and general depravity wouldn't have rung so true if Scott hadn't practiced what he preached. Scott LIVED the seedy, thrill-seeking life he sang about, and he did so at maximum velocity. The hard-and-fast living bled into his vocals, which were shamelessly sleazy but undeniably endearing. Like Mick Jagger, he was a master of sly sexuality--utilizing clever innuendoes and tweaking his voice just enough to let the listener know that his mind was in the gutter. In the end he was a casualty of his own debauchery. But, oh, what a wild ride he had!

4. MICK JAGGER (ROLLING STONES)

Probably the first true rock & roll front-man, Jagger remains the living embodiment of the larger-than-life rock-star mystique. Like his band's music, his appeal was largely sexual. The Stones were the bad-boy foils to clean-cut Beatlemania, and Jagger exemplified everything that was raunchy and naughty about the band. Horny girls lusted after him, sex-crazed boys related to him, and uptight puritanical twits feared him. And as a vocalist, he was a perfect fit for the Stones, giving the band's vulgar blues tunes just the right amounts of grit, power, and dirty-minded spunk. And when it came to charisma, he was the KING. Jagger wanna-be's David Johansen and Steven Tyler--two great rock front-men of the 70's--were walking monuments to Mick's undeniable influence.

5. JIM MORRISON (THE DOORS)

Before Morrison came along, poets and rock stars had lived primarily in separate spiritual universes. But Morrison united the two camps with style, dynamically fronting one of the most original and influential bands of the 20th Century. He was a sex symbol, a bad-boy, a dark poetic visionary, an eerie crooner, and the ultimate embodiment of rock-star cool. And his legendary stage persona directly influenced Iggy Pop, who in turn inspired a thousand reckless punk rock wild-men. Is it any wonder that the lizard king remains an American icon?

6. STEVEN MORRISSEY (THE SMITHS)

Morrissey had Liberace's flamboyance, Bryan Ferry's seductive allure, Jim Morrison's way with words, James Dean's good looks, and Oscar Wilde's wit. But the real essence of The Moz was extraordinarily unique. Often imitated but never duplicated, he was an eccentric comic poet trapped in the body of a tortured matinee idol. A melodramatic crooner and the greatest rock lyricist to ever walk the Earth, Morrissey was a hero to lovesick teenage freaks, an inspiration to a new generation of clever Brit-pop upstarts, and a legend in his own mind. His literate pop never reached the mainstream masses, but his devoted fans still love him like he's God in human form.

7. IGGY POP (THE STOOGES)

The Stooges were a classic case study of what a great front-man could do for a group. In its early days, the band was as musically incompetent as it was sonically ferocious. But Pop's on-stage madness managed to make all of the group's gigs must-see attractions. The Stooges played primitive, dangerous rock & roll; and Iggy WAS primitive, dangerous rock & roll come to life--a crazy, comic maniac who transformed the art of fronting a rock band into a violent contact sport. Bruises, cuts, and pools of blood were mere occupational hazards, and The Ig approached his task with a mad-dog intensity that could never be matched by a completely sane human being. Now in his 50's, Pop is still strutting his stuff and showing up all the wanna-be bad-ass youngsters who don't possess one tenth of his charisma, energy, or sheer balls.

8. ROGER DALTREY (THE WHO)

In its prime, The Who was hailed as the greatest live rock band on the planet. Pete Townshend was the musical visionary. Keith Moon was the gonzo wild-man. And Daltrey was the rock & roll superhero who stood front and center. This masculine, good-looking, charismatic lead singer was a front-man of classic proportions--and he gave Townshend's songs a manly vocal power to match their considerable vulnerability. Like all great front-men, he was a born STAR--a performer skilled at the fine art of commanding the public's attention. His role in the film *Tommy* demonstrated just how inseparable his visibility was from the Who mystique. It was Townshend's opera and Ken Russell's movie--but it was Daltrey who stole the show!

9. AXL ROSE (GUNS N' ROSES)

He could barely sing, but Rose was THE great hard rock front-man of his day. He lent vulgarity, venom, a bad

attitude, and a sleazy sensibility to his band's brilliantly brutal metal/glam-punk attack. He was a controversial, outspoken, depraved, chemical-abusing dirtbag--and THAT was what made him great! It was the talent of his band-mates that made the group tick, but G N' R wouldn't have been the same without W. Axl Rose, trashy rock & roll degenerate extraordinaire.

10. (tie) STEVEN TYLER (AEROSMITH); JOHNNY LYDON (SEX PISTOLS, PUBLIC IMAGE LIMITED); LIAM GALLAGHER (OASIS)


Tyler was arguably the greatest (and most successful) of the Jagger clones; he had a pair of lips & a shameless sexuality equal to that of the master. Gifted with style and swagger in abundance, he put his own unique spin on the classic front-man routine, emerging as one of rock & roll's premier bad-boys and defining the enduring phenomenon that was (and still is!) Aerosmith. The Sex Pistols' brand of punk rock was nasty, rude, confrontational, aggressive, and totally in-your-face. Lydon (aka Johnny Rotten) embodied it all. He was an uncouth bastard endowed with a chronic sneer and a real knack for rubbing people the wrong way. Fond of provoking the press and insulting any sad sap unlucky enough to be standing in his way, Lydon also earned a place in history by perfecting the "snotty" vocal style later emulated by ten thousand punk front-men. In the late 90's, notorious Beatles rip-offs Oasis established themselves as one of the biggest rock bands of the decade. Front-man Gallagher combined Little Richard's over-the-top narcissism with Johnny Rotten's rude disposition and Keith Richards's insatiable appetite for chemical abuse. Brother Noel was the band's musical genius; but Liam--who projected the arrogance and insolence that helped make the band so damn hard to ignore--was the STAR. His antics (the fights, the drugs, the overblown prima donna shtick) made him sort of a walking cliché--but that was the whole POINT. He was a bratty, conceited egomaniac--and the world loved him (or hated him) for it!

HONORABLE MENTIONS: David Johansen, Robin Zander, Ozzy Osbourne, Stiv Bators, Michael Stipe, Adam Ant, Handsome Dick Manitoba, Fred Schneider.

TEN GREATEST FRONT-WOMEN: 1. Wendy O. Williams 2. Tina Turner 3. Debbie Harry 4. Patti Smith 5. Janis Joplin 6. Penelope Houston 7. Siouxsie Sioux 8. Shirley Manson 9. Mia Zapata 10. Poly Styrene

NEXT TIME: THE TEN GREATEST NON-AMERICAN, NON-BRITISH ROCK AND ROLL BANDS OF ALL-TIME!





Ready...

Get

Set...

Jet!

*David "Round Eye" Cawley
Reviews the Films of Jet Li!*

Dear reader, let me begin as always by indulging in a bit of nostalgia. Ever since the 70s and the heyday of Bruce Lee I've been a rabid fan of martial arts films. All through the 70s and 80s it was easy to find kung fu films on TV or at the movies. I spent many happy Saturday afternoons watching classic poorly dubbed old Hong Kong kung fu movies on Black Belt Theater. Then, the wellspring of action movies from the Far East seemed to dry up. But in the early 90s there were rumblings of a film renaissance in Hong Kong. This revival featured a martial artist who can take his place next to Bruce Lee and Jackie Chan as the third member of the holy trinity of kung fu superstars--a man named Jet Li!

I first became aware of Jet's films in the early 90s. I went to the Po Tung Trading Company, a tiny Chinese grocery store in the rapidly decaying armpit of Baltimore's once thriving Chinatown. Among my first bootleg movie purchases was a copy of Jet Li's classic *New Legend of Shaolin*. Even ten years later this movie still packs a wallop. I rank it with *Iron Monkey* (recently re-released theatrically in the U.S.) as one of the greatest old-style kung fu movies of all time. Everything about this movie is great--supreme fight choreography, good acting, beautiful photography and a meticulous re-creation of ancient China. But holding it all together is the perfect performance of Jet Li. Not only are his action sequences exquisite, but his scenes with his young kung fu master son are genuinely touching. Anyone who wants to understand what all the hoopla regarding Hong Kong films is about just needs to view *New Legend of Shaolin* (aka *Legend of the Red Dragon*, in America).

Not since Bruce Lee had I seen such a dynamic martial arts actor as Jet Li. I had to see more of his films! Was *New Legend of Shaolin* a fluke or did Jet consistently deliver the kung fu goods? Thus began my quest to see all of Jet Li's movies. I don't remember in what order I saw the movies so I will cover his films in roughly chronological order.

1981's *Shaolin Temple* was the earliest of Jet's films I have seen. I saw it quite a while ago and remember it as a lavish but fairly typical classic kung fu movie. This film is a little out of the ordinary due to the fact that it was made in mainland China instead of Hong Kong. Jet was only 18 years old when he played the lead in this film. The plot is a typical revenge-driven opus. Jet avenges the murder of his father by using kung fu skills he learned at (surprise!) the Shaolin temple. If you like the old-fashioned earlier kung fu films then you'll probably like this. If you only like the modern, artistically-shot films, stay away. This movie made Jet a huge star in mainland China--kids were reportedly running away from home to study at the decaying Shaolin temple.

The Master, made in 1989, was filmed in San Francisco and was directed by Tsui Hark, the famous Chinese director. Sadly, Tsui's career was soiled when he later moved to the U.S. to direct films for such luminaries as Jean Claude Van Lame and Dennis Rodman. But back to *The Master*--this movie has some great fight scenes but not much else. The acting is sub-par and the plot (Jet comes to the U.S. and fights back against the indigenous bullies who continually

hassle him) is no great shakes either. For Jet Li completists only.

In 1990 Jet finally appeared in what is in this humble writer's opinion a masterpiece--a Chinese blockbuster of a film called *Once Upon a Time in China*. This movie has interesting characters, a compelling plot and of course, the expected great fight scenes. Some critics have said the movie needed more action but I must disagree. This movie is refreshing because the fight scenes are an organic part of the storyline (ala *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*) and not just action sequences crammed in to fill up the running time. Jet plays famous Chinese folk hero, Wong Fei Hung who was also portrayed by Jackie Chan in *Drunken Master*. *Once Upon a Time in China* is widely considered to have almost single handedly jumpstarted the "new wave" of Hong Kong films--rent it today and find out why! See Jet Li stand tall for traditional Chinese values against the encroaching corruption of round-eyed Western influence!

Surprisingly enough, *Once Upon a Time in China* was followed by the imaginatively titled sequel *Once Upon a Time in China 2*. Jet Li again essays the role of Wong Fei Hung and this time battles a xenophobic Chinese cult called the White Lotus Sect. They want to expel all Westerners from China and so are quite dangerous to Caucasians living in China and their Chinese friends. This film also features Donnie Yen (*Iron Monkey*) and it's fun to see two martial arts movie titans in the same film. *Once Upon a Time in China 2* is an okay sequel but not a must-see--the plot and fights just aren't as compelling as in its predecessor.

Can you guess what the sequel to *Once Upon a Time in China 2* was called? Yes, it was...*Once Upon a Time in China 3*. I hate to say it but this movie made me feel the series was really running out of steam. The fights are replaced by lion dance competitions and the villains are now Russian. Despite these innovations the film failed to ignite my interest. While beautifully shot like the other films in the series, in terms of plot and action *Once Upon a Time in China 3* is just not up to snuff.

In 1993 Jet made five films (such prolific film making schedules are quite common for Hong Kong stars) and while all are enjoyable, four of them are kung fu classics.

Fong Sai Yuk and *Fong Sai Yuk II* (yeah, I know those Hong Kong guys have to work on those titles for the sequels) are the saga of another Chinese folk hero named (you guessed it) Fong Sai Yuk. Both movies have it all--great fights scenes, good plots, interesting characters and some humorous moments. These movies are a little different than other kung fu films due to the fact that Fong Sai Yuk shares his adventures with his mother, played by Josephine Siao--she is a kung fu expert who has taught her son all she knows! I highly recommend both *Fong Sai Yuk* films if you are a Jet Li fan or just a fan of kung fu films in general. The American release title for *Fong Sai Yuk* is *The Legend*--it should be available for rental at almost any video store.

Jet also made *Last Hero in China* in 1993. In this film Jet lampoons his Wong Fei Hung character from the *Once Upon*

a *Time in China* series. This movie seems to have been universally reviled but I enjoyed it. The fight scenes are fun and the movie's climax features a chicken-suited Jet Li battling a giant centipede. *Last Hero in China* is just so over-the-top and different from American action films that I couldn't help but enjoy it. If you like Jet Li give it a chance. The American release is (called) *Deadly China Hero*.

Jet's 1993 winning streak continued with *Kung Fu Cult Master*. This is a film which seems to take place in an era similar to that of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*--i.e., people can fly and there are lots of martial arts masters wandering around. Jet Li again avenges the murder of his parents (I know, those Hong Kong scriptwriters have to come up with some new plots!). But the fight scenes are great and even the romantic subplot held my interest.

The year of 1993 ended with the release of *Tai Chi Master*, one of my favorite Jet Li movies. The movie starts with Jet and his young friend as children studying at the Shaolin temple. They both become kung fu masters but are eventually expelled from the temple. Jet follows the path of righteousness while his former friend becomes a ruthless evildoer. They become sworn enemies and engage in epic battles against each other. Everything about this movie is great, even the soundtrack! I purchased it on cd in Chinatown in NYC and even listening to it without the movie's imagery it is quite listenable in its own right. *Tai Chi Master* also features *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*'s Michelle Yeoh in a great role which allows her to display her fighting skills to the utmost. It is imperative for Jet Li fans to see this movie. The American title is *Twin Warriors*.

1994 was another good year for Jet, he appeared in the aforementioned *New Legend of Shaolin* and also in the kung fu masterpiece men call *Fist of Legend*. In *Fist of Legend* Jet played Bruce Lee's role in a remake of the classic old school movie *The Chinese Connection*. When I first heard about *Fist of Legend* I thought "Oh great, a remake of a perfect Bruce Lee movie, there's no way to go but down with that." Well, dear reader, I know you will find this hard to believe but...I was wrong! *Fist of Legend* is a remake and SO MUCH MORE! While I love *The Chinese Connection* I must admit the virulent anti-Japanese sentiments of the film are downright racist. ALL of the Japanese characters in the movie are cruel and villainous. The remake of *Fist of Legend* has some Japanese villains but also features noble Japanese characters and Jet even has a Japanese girlfriend. After seeing so many Chinese films with cardboard Japanese characters it was refreshing to see three-dimensional portrayals of people from the Land of the Rising Sun. Even if you've seen *The Chinese Connection* I feel it is definitely worthwhile to see *Fist of Legend*. The fight scenes are great, of course, and Jet's character has more depth than the vengeance-driven demon portrayed by Bruce Lee. There are enough changes to the plot to keep the movie fresh and interesting to even the most jaded martial arts fan. Lo Wei, the director of *The Chinese Connection*, even has a cameo role in *Fist of Legend*. *Fist of Legend* is not just a great Jet Li movie, it's a great movie, period.

Unfortunately, 1994 also saw the release of *Bodyguard From Beijing*. (American title - *The Defender*. This is in no way a recommendation to the reader to rent this film.) *Bodyguard From Beijing* is an actual remake of *The Bodyguard* with Jet Li playing Kevin Costner's role. I have never seen *The Bodyguard* with Kevin Costner but it doesn't mean I can't judge it. I feel Mr. Costner is a pretentious dork so I feel safe in dismissing his cinematic oeuvre sight unseen. But back to *Bodyguard From Beijing*--this lame romance has a nice battle at the end with our hero Jet but unfortunately most viewers will probably have fallen asleep by then. I guess the moral we can learn from *Bodyguard From Beijing* is that even Jet Li cannot save a movie if it is based on a Kevin Costner project. Thankfully, the gross of this film probably made Jet realize that a Hong Kong version of *Waterworld* would not be a box office smash.

Jet made two great movies in 1995. *My Father is Hero* (U.S. title - *The Enforcer*) reunites Jet with his diminutive co-star from *New Legend of Shaolin*, Tse Mui. Again, a touching father-son relationship brings a new dimension of drama to *My Father is Hero* amid the standard bone-crunching action scenes. The exciting climax features Jet taking on the bad guys by tying a rope to his young son and wielding him at the villains like an avenging kung fu yo-yo of fury!

1995 also saw the release of *High Risk*. This movie is one of the rare Hong Kong action comedies where the comedy sequences are actually successful. Our man Jet plays the bodyguard to a character who is a thinly-disguised parody of Jackie Chan. The Jackie Chan-type character (played by comedian-actor Jackie Cheung) is a careless martial arts movie actor whose skills have dissipated due to years of debauchery. He can no longer do the incredible stunts of his youth so now his bodyguard, Jet, does all the stunts while the actor reaps the adulation. Rumor has it that the director of *High Risk*, Wong Jing, had a beef with Jackie Chan which resulted in this vicious personal attack of a film. Never has a vendetta resulted in such great entertainment! Besides the comedy, the action sequences and fights are great too. Watch Billy Chow (Jet's nemesis from *Fist of Legend*) in a horrible mullet as the bad guy. If you end up wanting to see this movie and you're at an American video store, look for it under the title *Meltdown*.

The year of Our Lord 1996 was the year we were blessed with the movie *Black Mask*. This film was actually released theatrically in the U.S. a few years later when Jet became a star over here too. *Black Mask* is a fun romp of a movie which could have made a good film for the kiddies if they just could've left out a few sick scenes. Jet plays a mild-mannered librarian who was once part of a top-secret government program designed to produce super-soldiers. (Sort of like a Hong Kong version of Captain America but I guess, of course, his name would've been Captain Hong Kong.) To battle his enemies Jet must don his Black Mask persona which is quite similar to the outfit worn by Kato, the Green Hornet's faithful sidekick. One of the pleasures I derived from *Black Mask* is that it can be viewed as a Green Hornet movie with Green Hornet left out and only featuring the GH's much cooler better half, Kato. *Black Mask's* plot is

all over the place and somewhat disjointed but the fast pace and great action scenes more than make up for the plot's deficiencies. It was nice to see *Black Mask* receive a stateside release but unfortunately the great retro spy guitar soundtrack of the Hong Kong original was replaced by a ghastly rap music score. *Black Mask* includes what is perhaps the funniest scene I have ever seen in a Hong Kong film. A police officer handcuffs a psychotic super soldier to a vehicle. The super soldier whips out a knife and slices off his own handcuffed hand to free himself. The policeman says, "I HAD a key!"

1997 was a somewhat spotty year for Jet Li movies. *Once Upon a Time in China and America* was the sixth film in the *Once Upon a Time in China* series. (At least it was not called *Once Upon a Time in China 6*.) Interestingly enough this film was shot largely in Texas. It's a fun little movie which features Jet once again playing Wong Fei Hong journeying to American where he battles Indians and prejudice against Chinese immigrants. The fights are great but the production values are a little shoddy. The Indians are played largely by white guys in war paint but then again if you're looking for historical accuracy maybe kung fu movies aren't the genre for you. This movie is sort of a template for the later, much more successful Jackie Chan/Owen Wilson movie *Shanghai Noon*. The plots are just too similar to be coincidental--kung fu master travels from China to old West America where he befriends a blond-haired surfer dude-type cowboy and then hijinks ensue! While *Shanghai Noon* is a better film technically than *Once Upon a Time in China and America*, Jet's movie has more fight scenes. Both are fun, watchable movies in different ways.

Unfortunately, 1997 also saw the release of one of Jet's last Hong Kong films, *The Hitman*. This film is a perfect example of the doldrums which seemed to epitomize late 90s Hong Kong action movies. I was looking forward to this film since it had three, count 'em three, of my favorite Hong Kong stars: Jet Li (duh!), the debonair Simon Yam (well-known for playing villains but I actually met him a few years ago and let me assure you that in real life he is a true gentleman!) and Eric Tsang (sort of a Chinese Jerry Lewis). I thought with a boffo line-up of stars like that I was in for a good night in front of the VCR. Alas, I was wrong. Jet didn't do much fighting at all, what little action there was was sub-John Woo gunplay. Why have Jet Li as the star of a film if he isn't going to perform some of his specialty, kung fu? I mean, Jet is a charismatic guy and all but does anyone really watch his films to see him emote? I think not. We want to see Jet gracefully knock the stuffing out of his opponents. Eric Tsang's attempts at humor are quite ineffective. Simon Yam is the most interesting character in the movie but it's hardly worth sitting through just to see him. So far *The Hitman* has mercifully not been released in the U.S. to taint Jet's sterling reputation here. If *The Hitman* is released stateside I suggest they call it *Don't Watch This, It's Lame*.

The U.S. beckoned in 1998 and so Jet arrived to make his mark in American cinema. He first appeared in *Lethal Weapon 4* which disappointed me in that Jet had to portray a villain. Leave it to the Hollywood bigwigs to cast one of

the screen's greatest heroic icons as a bad guy. At least *Lethal Weapon 4* allows the viewer the pleasure of seeing Jet kick ever-shrill and irritating Rene Russo in the face! Go, Jet, go!

Next up was *Romeo Must Die*. This was a fun flick which gave Jet a good part in a fine ensemble cast. This movie made me realize Jet could cut it playing a lead in an American film. *Romeo Must Die* was followed by *Kiss of the Dragon*. I liked this 70s style action film, I could imagine Bruce Lee playing Jet's role as well. Except for Bridget Fonda's utterly superfluous character this film was another feather in Jet's cinematic cap.

Jet's last U.S. cinematic venture to date was *The One*. This sci-fi saga of alternate universe doppelgangers really gave Jet a chance to stretch his acting wings, he plays the hero AND the villain. My only quibble with *The One* is that some of the fights and action scenes were computer-enhanced. When a movie features a natural athlete like Jet it seems sort of silly to use artificial means like digital effects. After all, isn't Jet's talent that he is a living special effect? *The One* does however also include a healthy dose of Jet's cool martial arts movements and poses. Overall *The One* is a worthy addition to Mr. Li's resume.

Perhaps Jet's greatest regret in his post-Hong Kong career was turning down the male lead in *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, which, of course, went to Chow Yun Fat - perhaps a better actor than Jet Li but definitely not a superior martial artist. Maybe Jet's next movie will make him a household word in the U.S. While I am happy for Jet's stateside success I regret that he will no longer be appearing in Hong Kong action films which transpire in a sort of ancient Chinese never-never land of super warriors. Jet's future seems to be tied up in high-tech modern day action movies. For obvious reasons Hollywood just can't make movies based on old Chinese legends.

If you've only seen some of Jet's U.S. cinematic efforts why not look for some of his earlier Hong Kong films? They are easily found at any video store. Happy viewing and... Ready...get set...JET!

**David Cawley's 10 Best Jet Li Movies
in Descending Order from Magnificent to Pretty Darn
Cool (Hong Kong Title followed by U.S. Title)**

1. *Fist of Legend*
2. *Tai Chi Master (Twin Warriors)*
3. *Kung Fu Cult Master*
4. *New Legend of Shaolin (Legend of Red Dragon)*
5. *Fong Sai Yuk (The Legend)*
6. *Fong Sai Yuk II (The Legend II - betcha didn't see THAT title comin'!)*
7. *Once Upon a Time in China*
8. *My Father Is Hero (The Enforcer)*
9. *High Risk (Meltdown)*
10. *Black Mask*

Back in issue #13 Rev. Norb reviewed the X-Men movie and the review was a hit! (And not just because he mentioned Halle Berry's boobs 27 times.) The world of funny books funneled through Norb's mind is a good and all-too-rare thing so why not a comics column, or, in this case, an on-going exchange of emails that are about comics? (The exchanges are dated so as to give you a sense of the timeline (and to kinda excuse the fact that we're talking about comics that are two-to-six months old--timeliness be damned!))

Delivers

Norb

Rev.

9/20/01 - What do you think about those "What if Stan Lee invented (insert name of DC luminary here)?" The concept is intriguing but they look lame. How about Mike Allred moving to X-Force?

Yeah, i too have not taken the plunge on those Stan Lee Dee Cee things. It seemed like a brilliant idea when i saw the ads, but i flipped thru the Batman one when it came out and the Superman one this week, and they, quite frankly, didn't look good at all. They looked like dismal "COLLECTOR'S ITEM FIRST ISSUE!!!" type origin stories of superheroes whose titles got canceled (and whose publishers perhaps went out of business) after six issues in the seventies or something, like (Stan's little brother Larry Lieber's) Atlas Comics, or maybe even the Marvel "New Universe" or "2099" lines which hopefully you never came in contact with...i mean, if Stan Lee is going to re-do Superman and Batman, the results should probably be better than Ragman #1 and Black Lightning #1, which they don't appear to be...i think Stan's gifts have essentially deserted him, probably as a result of being a figurehead/ monarch type guy for so long...oh well, he still plays a mean guitar. As for the new X-Force, i too have been following the Allredization of Marvel (or perhaps the other way round) with a rather inflamed curiosity...i'm not sure how much sleep i would lose over not having a complete collection of the Allred X-Force issues, it definitely lacks the transfixing charm of The Atomics, and the cynical, over-the-top violence of it all seems to be at odds with the amazingly pleasing draftsmanship and colors of the Allred duo. Or some shit like that. Did you buy the Atomics super-special thing? I wanted to, but couldn't see paying \$8.95 for something that reprinted four comic books i just bought a few months ago...the square binding was most attractive, however! Have you been reading the Morrison/Quintely "New X-Men?" It appears to be worth following, especially given how abysmally unreadable the X- titles have been for the last decade. The new creative team on Uncanny X-Men is okay, nothing spectacular (as evinced by the fact that i don't remember their names). One other title that i quite enjoy is JSA, for no real reason other than "it's good and i like it."

11/29/01 - I picked up, but have yet to read, the reprints of the Green Arrows done by Jack Kirby (circa '58, '59). I'm a sucker for that era and enjoyed the thumb through but noticed that the liner notes were of the "yes, it's Jack Kirby but it's not really Jack Kirby" nature. Then again I'm a novice in Kirby-ology. What's your take?



Well, don't look for any brilliant analysis here, but, okay, it's obviously "Kirby," but, yet, the DC pacing/scripting (recall that at DC, the script is written out before the art is done, as opposed to Marvel, where the artist works off of a mere page-by-page synopsis) obviously kinda precludes The King from doing anything particularly Kirbyesque, for the most part, as his task is merely to illustrate That Which Has Been Written, ergo his ability to just draw a bunch of wacky devices and situations and have Stan explain it all later is taken from him. It's great, but one can't help but think "shouldn't Curt Swan or somebody have been drawing this instead?" One of my first superhero comics, circa 1970, was a 25¢ giant of World's Finest (geez -- if you don't remember World's Finest i'm really dating myself) (well, just in case you missed it, World's Finest was the long-running Superman/Batman team-up book) which reprinted the Kirby Green Arrow story where his secret identity is imperiled, and he's using all these doggoned zany arrows like the Fountain Pen Arrow and the Boxing Glove Arrow or whatever the hell...i thought Green Arrow was pretty friggin' cool to have such a litany of gimmick- laden arrows fitting into that one little quiver, i asked my dad how G.A. could possibly fit a dang Boxing Glove Arrow in that little quiver, and, of course, he laughed at me... i'm veering from the topic with pointless personal ramblings...i really dug Xeen Arrow! I want to write a Xeen Arrow story for DC. Actually i want to do a lot of things, but it's hard to concentrate because, after about two years of the lightbulbs above my desk being burned out, they replaced them, and now it's like i'm being interrogated by the CIA or something....i thought it was interesting how Jack's wife partially inked his work...except she sucks!

I've also been enjoying the Marvel 100-pagers with the generous reprints, especially the Black Panther issue (which had two Fantastic 4 reprints). The new Black Panther stuff seems pretty cool. Have you been following it all? I'm thinking of skimming the back issues bin for copies of other stuff from this current run.

Absolutely positively missed it! As you may or may not recall, my one and only letter printed in a comic book was in praise of the Marvel "Monster" 100-page format, wherein i vowed to buy each and every one, so, had i Xeen it, i would've purchased it. Have not been reading the Black Panther at all.

Hadn't even occurred to me. I'll give it the thumb at my local newsstand (as the kids say). I think i sort of assumed any Black Panther series would be more or less forgettable owing to the fact that every time they gave him his own series in the 70's it was pretty unexciting (i speak of the whole African King type strip in Jungle Action in the mid-70's and the [small world] goofy Kirby take in the later 70's...i talk like i know what i'm talking about...i don't know why...

12/19/01 - How would you rank Kurt Busiek's run on the Avengers?

"Good." Actually, you know, it's hard to really pick out any other writer who was ever particularly spectacular on that series...i love the early primitive Stan Lee stuff, of course, but i'm not so sure what he did during his relatively short tenure on Avengers could qualify as a properly, i dunno, "deep" body of work...Roy Thomas did some good stuff after that, but i always sort of found his dialogue kind of irritating...then who was after that? Steve Englehart? He did some cool stuff, too...i can't remember a single writer after that until Busiek! I usually think that the writer is kind of like the offensive line in football, if you don't notice that they're sucking, they're doing a great job. The actual blow that i think may be harder to weather is the departure of Art Adams as penciler...George Perez was great, but i think Art Adams...have to go win packer tickets...

...Er, as i was saying (during radio broadcasts of Bucks games, when Ervin Favre [Brett's pop] comes on the air, if you're caller #14 you win a pair of Packer tickets. Thus far tonight i've been caller #4, #10, #12 and #13. So anyway, i had to log off so i could redial on all the lines...to no avail), i really thought Art Adams was kind of born to draw the Avengers, his style reminded me of a cross between that of two other olde greate Avengers artists, namely John Buscema's first run on the series in the 60's (before he got all generic and was still allowed to draw oddly-shaped panels and use Zip-a-Tone™ and have the figures extending beyond the borders and stuff) and Neal Adams' brief stint in the early 70's... Okay, now the Bucks have blown 75% of a 16 point lead and i have to go!

What's your take on pronouncing "Busiek"?

I think i just pronounce it however it best fits into the rhythm of the sentence i am using it in; sometimes BYOO-see-ek comes out more naturally, other times it's more like byoo-SEE-ek. It's all about meter and



scanscion? Actually, i've not figured out how to pronounce (inker Frank) "Giacioia" after like thirty years of contemplating it...

2/28/02 - Have you picked up the newest Kurt Busiek stuff (Power Company)?

God no, there was a free preview in i think last month's JLA or something and it was godawful. It was like he was trying to knock off the Thunderbolts or something, who never interested me whatsoever. You wonder if the guy writes down to a certain level in a direct attempt to appeal to what he thinks certain segments of fandom will dig at times. Well, i wonder that, in any event.

I was reading the new Plastic Man archives (best one yet) and it dawned on me that all of my favorite characters (Plas, Flash, Batman, Hulk, etc.) have been around for 35+ years. When's the last time either DC or Marvel cooked up a great new character? Looking at the costumes in Power Company it would seem the well of new ideas has run dry.

Off the top of my be-antlered head, the only slam-dunk (as the kids say) (actually, they don't say that) would be Wolverine, who was still created over 25 years ago (i bought those three issues of Incredible Hulk he first appeared in [two of them being just for a panel or two], snipped out the ever-collectible Marvel Value Stamp in each ish, and that was that. I suppose some would say that Neil Gaiman's Sandman somehow qualifies, but that was a chick comic book (as opposed to a Chick comic book, i.e., the religious tracts created and dispensed by Jack T. Chick) in my book so i never read it, nor do i intend to. It certainly does seem like all viable heroic archetypes have been exhausted. Ack, this is getting suddenly Jungian.

Did you read any of the new Defenders?

Yeah, i read the first couple issues since i used to read Defenders off and on as a kid (first issue i owned was #2 which i recall my mom purchasing for me at my request on my 8th birthday) and wasn't terribly impressed. I don't really dig that Erik Larsen guy's art in general although i thought he did do a good job on those few issues of Thor he did after Romita Jr. left (and i was also pissed that he packed it in on Nova after only six issues, when that book was really going great... Nova being my one of my favorite titles of 5th/6th grade although of course Nova was merely Marvel's attempt to give my generation an [early] Spider-Man of our own, with greater superpowers but lesser

scholastic brilliance, thusly adding emphasis to your statement [or was it my statement?] that all the great heroic archetypes are exhausted). So i stopped reading after about #3 or #4...i did buy the two issues with OROGO in it, because one of my earliest (and favorite) comics was a copy of FEAR #2 which i got right around Halloween 1970 (age 5), which was a giant-sized collection of reprints from Marvel's pre-hero years, and the Lee/ Kirby/Ayers tale of mighty OROGO was the second story, after only the most fearsome X, THE THING THAT LIVED, and i was kinda scared of his invincible telepathic might when i was a kindergartner. It was okay. Defenders was kind of a cool title at times, because the writer could get weird with it if he wanted to unlike FF or Avengers ...Steve Gerber (the Howard The Duck guy) had some pretty skewed stories and characters (the Headmen, etc.). Realistically the only guy qualified to scribe the exploits of the Defenders if you bear in mind the Steve Gerber tradition is Grant Morrison. Did they bring back Lunatik yet? He was my favorite villain, kind of like the Joker, but funnier and weirder. Oh well, this is getting out of hand.

3/11/02 - Dark Knight 2?

Dark Knight 2 = Not That Great. I mean, it doesn't appear to be a bad story or anything, but, as opposed to Dark Knight 1 (or is it just "Dark Knight, Period"?), i don't see anything even vaguely resembling a platform from which the character will be redefined (i hope i never have to diagram this sentence in English class) -- basically, all it is is an alt/future Justice League story, and, as such, has to compete with the fairly substantial litany of alternate/ future/whatever Justice League stories told in the past ten years or so -- "Kingdom Come," "The Nail," "Secret Society of Superheroes" etc. etc. etc... anyway, yeah, it's a Justice League story, not a Batman story. And there have been plenty of good alternate/future type Justice League stories told. So kind of like, who cares? It's still cool, but i wouldn't say that it's "important," or even "significant" in anything other than its sequel-ness...one thing that is sort of striking is that both Barry Allen & Hal Jordan appear to be alive, and i was under the impression that the Dark Knight thingy took place in the future of the "real" DC Universe, where they should remain quite dead by all known laws of fiction, so what gives???

How about the relaunched, Kevin Smith-scripted Green Arrow?



I bought it off and on, like everybody else i wanted to know how the hell Oliver Queen turned up alive after all these years, but it sort of became apparent that i was going to have to wait like twelve months for Mr. Smith to tell me, so i kind of lost interest. I mean, it was a great idea, but after about two or three issues it's just like TELL ME!!! JUST FUCKING TELL ME!!! I DON'T WANNA WAIT TIL DECEMBER TO FIND OUT WHY HE'S ALIVE, JUST TELL ME!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Also, if you've been reading it, and you do, in fact, know why he's alive, do, in fact, tell me.

(Ok, here's my take...the Oliver/Green Arrow who appears in #1 is a husk--body sans soul. Long about #8 or #9 we meet an elderly evil-doer (a satan worshipper of sorts, not any kind of super villain) who wants to ditch his current body & take over Ollie's. Somewhere along the way (I've forgotten when and how) Husk Ollie encounters Spirit Ollie (soul sans body) and they join as one, yielding a Flesh & Blood & Soul Ollie who proceeds to thwart the efforts of the elderly evil-doer, with help from Ollie's kid, Connor. The story tails off at the end but it's still more engaging than my retelling.)

3/11/02 - One last comics query (and, being the most obvious question, it's the one with which I should have started but, then again, if my head operated like those of other folks I wouldn't be doing a zine as stupid as Go Metric! in the first place!)...I've been asking about the comics I've read or scratched my head over, what spins your comic buying clock?

STUFF I BUY EACH MONTH (in vague order, that is to say, in the opposite order of how i would read them if they all came out on the same week)

1. New X-MEN
2. JSA
3. JLA
4. AVENGERS
5. X-FORCE
6. LEGION OF
SUPER-HEROES
7. THOR

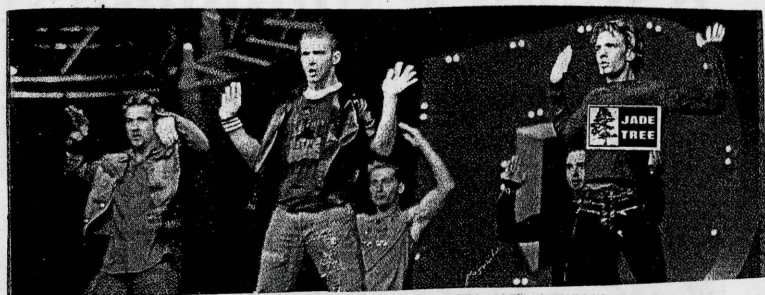


Punk Rock Boy Bands

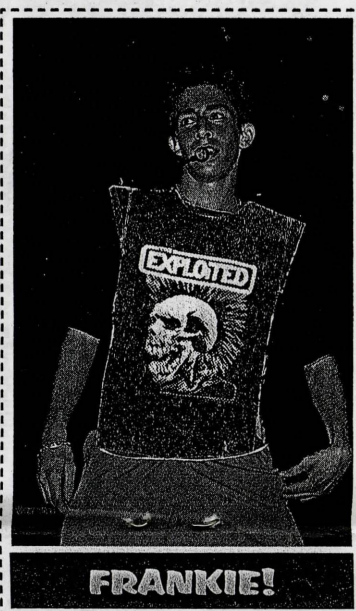
by Brian Cogan

I've done a lot of things in my life, some respectable (such as teaching at various universities),¹ some quasi-respectable (playing in a punk-rock band, running a small unprofitable record label),² and some that still depress me to this day (scrubbing toilets and washing dishes as a production assistant on Ang Lee's first film) yet none of these have given me the satisfaction that I have always craved for. Let's face it, unless you're in Shelter and have all the answers,³ most likely you too have wondered what you could do to make your life more enjoyable. Like me, you have wondered how to find what the French call "La joie de vivre"⁴ and realized that there was always an elusive "something" that remained somehow beyond your grasp. Well, personally I have finally found an activity that provides me with hours and hours of enjoyment and can be done relatively easily, I have realized that the only thing that would give my life meaning would be a career change. So say good-bye to Brian Cogan, Punk Rock Professor, and say hello to Brian Cogan, Boy Band Svengali!

Yes, I know, at first glance I seem ill-suited to creating a boy band. First of all, I'm not a pederast. Second of all, the very idea of slickly-coated harmonies and electronic percussion make me break out in hives.⁵ However, I began to realize this was my true calling when I was idly channel surfing between MTV and MTV2⁶ one night. An emo video was on M2 by what I think was Jimmy Promise Tree, or Dashboard Trio, or some such band who looked depressed, and on MTV proper was one of those peppy boy bands who use more hair gel in a night than I have in 35 years. As I switched from one to the other something began to dawn upon me. Aside from the smile/frown ratio and the fact that that the fans who were shown in the emo video all looked like they worked at record stores and that the fans who were in the boy band video looked as though they were still in braces, it really could have been the same thing. "Hmmm," I thought to myself. "Hmmm indeed." The similarities were striking and it occurred to me, what if I created a boy band of my own? But not your typical fey boy band, but one with the urgency and authenticity of punk rock! I knew now what I needed to do, I needed to create the first Punk Rock Boy Band! After a momentous decision like this there was only one thing to do: go and look for a really good smoothie. After that there was only one thing to do: create the band. My version of "making the band" would involve aspects of the punk I loved and the pop I loathed⁷ in a fiendish musical goulash. I decided that my band would involve various "types" like those done by the most successful boy bands around. All boy bands are supposed to have a surly one, a cute one, one in rehab, etc. If I created various types of my own I could do the same thing and by creating my own types there was much less chance that Lou Perlman⁸ would sue me. After about thirty seconds of deliberation and a perusal of what the kids outside the hardcore matinee down the block were wearing I decided to use the following types with only one unifying factor, that they all be boys, or those really cute boyish girls that you sometimes see at emo shows.



The first member of the band would be a character that I would call the greasy one. This combines the best parts of the typically greasy actual members of boy bands and the scuzzy anarchists who hang around places like Berkeley and Haight Ashbury. His job will be to dance maniacally with no connection to the music and pass out pamphlets about the evils of large corporations. Any applicants for this position must be able to dance, sing harmonies, quote Trotsky and live on a diet of lentils and air.



The second member of the band would be harder to pin down, but that's because he would be known simply as the nebulous one. This is based on sexually ambiguous and notoriously obtuse lyricists such as Guy from Fugazi or whatshisname from Shudder to Think. This would add the subtle homoerotic edge that the best boy bands contain. The applicant must be able to appeal to all sexes and genders and sing harmony.

The next one would add the punky edge to the band by actually playing an instrument. But, as this is a boy band, the instrument in question would be a flute. Thus, the member known as the flautist, would add the raw punk edge and seething sexuality as epitomized by Jethro Tull.

As Boy Bands in general are creepily peppy, always smiling as though their careers depended upon it, the punk boy band must be contrarian. Therefore instead of enforced levity, the punk rock boy band would have as a member Leppo, the crying one. Leppo's job would be to stare mutely into space, a single tear rolling down his face while the other members engage in vigorous choreographed routines.

But, of course, no punk event of any sort is complete without an old-school St. Marks Place multiple tattooed and pierced leather-jacket type. Mr. Tattoo will be an evocation of the classic punk rock era circa 1977, but of course, as this is a boy band, the applicant for this position can not have been born when his favorite records came out. This will be particularly helpful when the group covers "Punk's Not Dead" with five part harmony. When not singing he must drink sullenly in the background while chanting "Oi oi oi!" over and over again.

I hope to have open auditions within a few months and my first million made within the next year. Anyone that wishes to audition for the boy band please send an 8x10 color glossy and a notarized letter that you don't mind being exploited in the name of punk glory. I'm not saying you could be the next Sum 41,⁹ but this might be your best chance to dance onstage and my best chance to make lots of money.

⁹ Ok, so technically they aren't a boy band, but really, just look at them for pete's sake!

¹ Cut me some slack on this one, no one makes fun of Milo from the Descendents for getting a Ph.D., or Greg Graffin from Bad Religion for doing the same thing although someone most certainly should.

² Although, "running a small record company" and "unprofitable" sort of go without saying.

³ Although, the last time I asked they had yet to solve Fermat's last equation.

⁴ Literally translated as "A very smelly piece of cheese"

⁵ To be fair, almost anything I eat or drink gives me hives as well. I'm delicate like that.

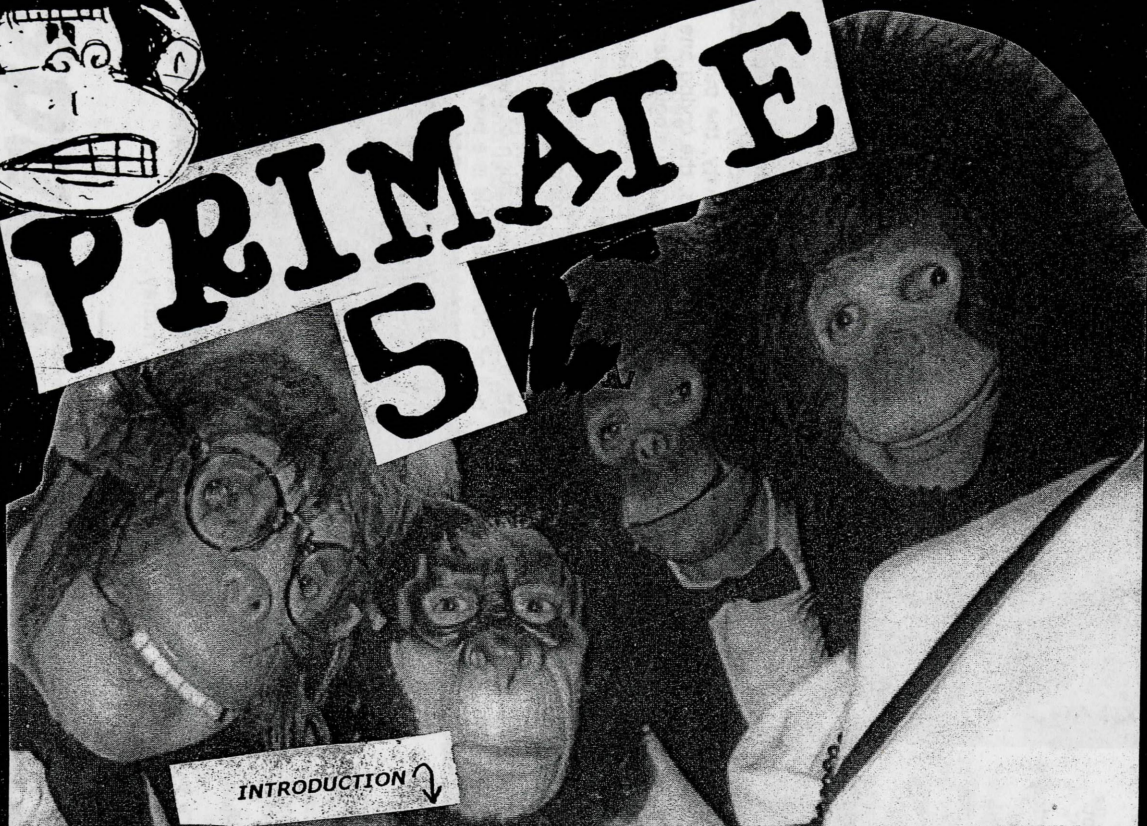
⁶ At this point half the readers, realizing that I have sold out the "kids" and the "scene," have stopped reading. If you've gotten this far you are either as old as me or just too bored to put the zine down.

⁷ Although "pop" is a nebulous term and there are plenty of good "pop" bands such as the McCrackins and Napalm Death.

⁸ The creator of N'Sync and The Backstreet Boys and wearer of several hundred tacky Hawaiian shirts.



PRIMATE 5



INTRODUCTION ↴

The Primate 5 first made their indelible mark upon my psyche when their Nova ep came across the GM! review desk nearly six years ago. Tracking down the rest of the band's records has not been easy (and I'm still not done) but it has been extremely rewarding. Mummies-like garage rock is the milieu they've chosen to explore and they do it with excellence!

The Primate 5 guide to success is ace tunes, humor, an attack that alternates between guitar/organ and guitar/guitar, and apes, lots of references to apes.

I'd been waiting for the release of a new P5 record before seeking an interview. Such a record, long overdue, hit our shores last summer (in the form of a split 7" on Italy's Rockin' Bones Records). Sadly, when Primate Brian gave the green light for an interview he also informed me that the band had broken up. But, as I was to find out soon, in the end it's not a tragic story. Come, join us for the tale of the PRIMATE 5!

(Oh yeah, there were only 4 members of the Primate 5, they were based in Seattle, and they always wore masks on stage...or were they actual apes?)

Go Metric: The burning question: is the band a group of primates or bunch of humans wearing masks?

Primate Brian: It's gone both ways, I think we're going with the actual primates. Yeah. Or, half human, half primate things. There was some story about your basic genetic experiment gone wrong. There was another one about being from outer space. Some sort of experiment gone wrong.

GM: But no one can peg it down?

PB: Right.

GM: How do 4 genetic mutants of unknown origin become known as the Primate 5?

PB: We started out as the Primates then somebody pointed out that there's a garage type band called the Primates in the mid-to-early 80s--Vox Records, the 80s garage revival. It was actually on a flyer. We took the "s," smoothed off a few edges, and made it into a 5.

GM: Had you played a few shows as the Primates?

PB: No, we made the switch right before our first show.

GM: When would this be chronologically?

PB: 1993 or 1994.

GM: And at first it was, well, I don't if I can say guys because I don't know the gender(s) of the P5 personnel. The masks obscure everything.

PB: They've all been guys.

GM: Was it two guys who were in the band throughout its run and then a revolving door rhythm section?

PB: It was a three-piece and then we bought an organ and we needed somebody to play it and he (Jim) was one of our housemates. We roped him into playing it and he stuck. He was in the band from our first show. He's also a dandy guitarist. I got to relax and play two chords.

GM: About how long after the first show was it before the first record came out?

PB: Pretty quick actually. We got a few shows with the Statics. We ended up sharing our practice space with them, we went with them and played in San Francisco and stuff. Good friends, good guys. They had a single out on Rat City records and Zack (from the Statics) hooked us up. We gave a tape to the Rat City guy and he put out a (Primate 5) record. It was all pretty quick and it was pretty cool. We were very excited. That was enough right there, we were going to quit. We were like, Hey, got a record, that's good enough.

GM: I have your first record but not the next couple. You did some releases with the Statics, right?

PB: Yeah, split with the Statics. Dead Beat Records, they had talked to Zack and wanted to do the Statics thing and he said, Why don't we do a split with the Primate 5. Then Zack had a label called Static Records and put out that (record) *Seattle vs. Austin*. Our song on there is our first drummer Tommy, his one song that he wrote and sang and everything. It turned out pretty good.

GM: You let your drummer release a song? Wow.

PB: I'm a horrible songwriter as far as not very prolific. I'm constantly encouraging people to write songs so we go forward instead of doing the same songs over and over.

GM: Was there a time when you guys were playing with Ean after Sicko broke up?

PB: Yeah, Tales from the Birdbath. He approached us one day and said, Hey, you guys want to be my back up band? And everybody said, Yeah!, 'cause we're pretty lame about touring. We got to play a bunch of dates with him and our organ player couldn't do the tour so Ean said for the Primate 5 stuff he'd play the organ and guitar parts. We worked out a short set with Ean playing guitar and organ in Jim's place. We learned the Birdbath songs and we had to retune our guitars to the Birdbath tuning. That was pretty cool because, especially guitar, I haven't played in a lot of different bands. Usually I'm working at my level at competence, I'll write the songs and I won't write them too hard. So when Ean writes songs I go damn, I have to learn a new chord.

GM: You write within your comfort level.

PB: Right, exactly.

GM: Didn't one of you guys co-write a song that landed on the Birdbath album?

PB: Yeah, "Olympa," purposely spelled wrong but not purposefully originally. I wrote that after the International Pop Underground Festival. We went down there back in '91 or '92, a little joke song, little four-chord song. Supposed to sound like Beat Happening kind of stuff, rips off some of their lyrics and it's sort of a recount of the weekend, more or less.

GM: And Birdbath is still active, right?

PB: Yeah, him and his girlfriend, Reba. Back in college I was in a band with Ean called Voodoo Hotdog. Ean and I switched off between guitar and drums and this guy Shawn Lennon--who was in a band called Stuntman, some sort of emo, pop-punk kind of thing, I guess they were a big deal--and then my friend Carl who played bass. He learned those seven songs and I don't think he ever learned any more. We talked about putting out those songs we recorded back then. They were all two chords, very primitive. Ean was playing down at our level at the time.

GM: How did you get on the Soda Punx compilation?

PB: Top Drawer Records was Ean and Carl, the Voodoo Hotdog bass player. The label was operated out of our house but they didn't tell us that they were going to put us (Primate 5) on the compilation. We didn't know until it came out. It was kind of cool. They stole the dat out of my room. That was our first release. Their final project was going to be a Sicko/Cub split where they did each other's songs and Carl lost the dats. This label ended badly. Carl came with us on the Birdbath tour, as the driver, so it (the label) ended badly and abruptly but everyone still stayed friends.

GM: The video of Primate 5 stuff you sent me has tons of performance footage (great stuff!) but no complete shows, thus, no stage banter. Does the fact that you guys are genetic mutants kind of hinder that?

PB: The fact that we drink a lot on stage hinders that. Yeah, I cut out most of the stage banter. There's not a lot and when there is it's usually long, embarrassing rants that are funny only to me at the time.

GM: I also thought it was neat how you seemed to play such a variety of venues. Was that conscious or did it just work out that way?

PB: It kind of worked out that way. Seattle bars close left and right. The places we've played the most in town, the B-level punk rock dives as opposed to the big venues. Every place on that videotape is probably gone now.

GM: Where was the place where you were showing movies behind you?

PB: That was the Seattle Art Museum. A friend of mine put together a show there. It was us, Tales from the Birdbath, the Links (Lynx?) and the Cripples.

GM: Yeah, they're on the tape too, the band with the two guys playing those guitar-like keyboards.

PB: I used to play drums for them. They did a square single, orange square 7", big piece of cheese. They're releasing something in the next couple months, a full-length. They're great. Their drummer just moved so Ean's girlfriend Reba's now their drummer.

GM: Is being in Seattle more of a pro or con, or is it more like an even draw, what with the hoopla that blew through there. You guys were around during all the nuttiness of the early-to-mid 90s.

PB: The coolest thing about the whole thing is that touring bands took notice of Seattle and wanted to go there so you'd see more bands. I remember right when I turned 21 and started going out to bars there was one bar that had live music on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and that was it. Everything else was djs or whatever. In the summer when I was in town we'd go out every Tuesday and Wednesday and see whatever band happened to be playing at the

Vogue. Saw some great (bands), like Steelpole Bathtub, good weird stuff like that. That was inspiring, like, Hey, start a band, yeah! Then more clubs opened up and more bands popped up. Then Estrus Records, being right up in Bellingham, those guys have a great nose for garage bands so they'd all play up in Bellingham. Probably the chance of our being able to see the A-Bones would have been nil if it weren't for Estrus Records and Garage Shock and stuff like that. As far as the big Seattle hype explosion it didn't really trickle down too far.

GM: Sidetracking a bit, at one point you mentioned trying to interview a guy who runs a Burt Reynolds website. I've never seen the site you mentioned but I wonder what struck you about this particular guy and/or site?

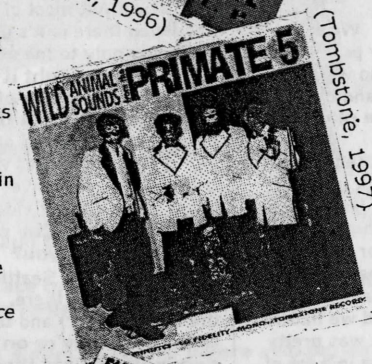
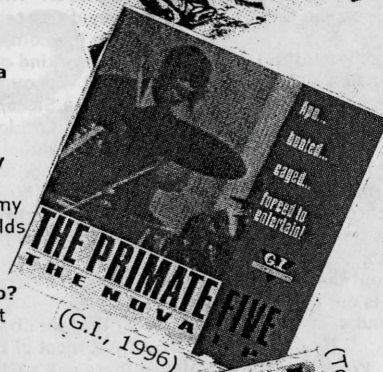
PB: It was right before Halloween and my wife and I were going to be Burt Reynolds and Loni Anderson, and we did and it turned out kind of cool.

GM: Which era did you choose to do?

PB: Sort of *Cannonball Run*, satin jacket with the sleeves pushed up, gum chewing. I was looking on the internet for some pictures and came across the, I think it's called the unofficial Burt Reynolds fanclub website, or something like that. You know, Burt Reynolds walks the line between being a huge joke and respectable. When he takes himself or other people take his stardom seriously in the year 2000 it's bizarre. It's a whole site of these people who earnestly love Burt Reynolds and talk endlessly about car chase movies. They have a message board and people are saying things like, They should make a sequel to *Deliverance* only if they let Burt Reynolds direct it. I thought, man, like *Evening Shade* or something. There was a debate, the guy who was running the website got an offer to make them the official Burt Reynolds website but they had to pass everything by them (Burt's people) first, so it was going to be censored to some point. To me, that was very silly yet it was a dilemma for them which I thought was really great, very humanistic. I like some Burt Reynolds movies, I like a lot of them, sure, but I don't take them that seriously but these people do, they're being pulled two directions but it's all so silly.

GM: How was it resolved?

PB: I think they're still the unofficial Burt Reynolds website. Every now and then I email him and he doesn't get back to me.



GM: Sounds like he carries his cause pretty seriously, you'd think he seek outlets to spread his message.

PB: I hope he wasn't suspicious about me making fun of him. I might but I don't think I would. The thing I like about it is the fact that that was such a dilemma for them. That was sweet and that was the interesting part.

GM: Just in case they had a critical word to say about Stroker Ace they wanted the leeway to express such thoughts.

PB: Yeah. A friend of mine came up with the idea of the Burt races. It was sort of a soapbox derby race but every contestant would have to dress up like Burt Reynolds and have whatever their vehicle was for the race be Burt Reynolds-themed, be it a canoe or the Bandit mobile, or something like that. Or the airboat from *Gator*.

GM: How many Primate 5 drummers have there been?

PB: Five. Tommy was the first one. Alan Wright, who used to do a zine called *Cryptic Times* and his last one was called *Do the Pop*--power pop, very detailed, very obsessive, very good--he played drums for us for awhile, then he quit. Then Bryant, who was in the Statics, played drums for awhile. Then he quit and moved to Arizona. Then we got this guy, James O'Brien, who's our drummer now. He played for a few shows then we got this guy Ward, who was in Drag King, who we did the split single with. We played with them a few times and we asked him if he wanted to sit in with us for some show we had down in Portland. He said, Yeah, and then ended up sticking around for awhile. Then when he quit we got James back again. All of our drummers were more or less self taught. Tommy, he taught himself on the spot, our first practice was his first drumming experience. The way he played was 100% natural. He stomped his foot on every beat, did different things with this arms. Ward, was left handed, he had the drum kit set up right handed and played left handed. The next drummer, Bryant from the Statics, his background has been playing in his high school jazz band. He had a bunch of other stuff under his belt and the caveman beat did not come natural to him at all.

GM: The guy from the Statics played in his school jazz band? Wow. I have one record of theirs...

PB: Which one?

GM: I was going to say the one with the black and white cover but that might not distinguish it from the others. I think it was on Empty.

PB: He wasn't their first drummer. The first drummer was this guy, Donnie, he was pretty crazy. Bryant was their second drummer but Bryant was underage when he played with us. He might have even still been in high school when he was playing with the Statics. They had to make him sit outside at the bars and wait to play. But he had the youthful energy, that's good.

GM: How many bass players?

PB: There was Dave Wheeler, who wrote a thing for you (see GM! #13), he was the original bass player. When he quit we had this guy Carlos who was in Bad Girls with Zack from the Statics, and actually he was their manager when the Statics went to Japan. So, yeah, we basically feed off the Statics, like sharks. He played for a few shows then Ward found Jamie our last bass player who's very good, came to the band with not much bass-playin' knowledge and is very good now. Left the band with a lot of knowledge.

(Around this time there was a bit of tape drop out. It's not clear how we got onto the topic of the Primate 5's split with Drag King but we return you to the program, already in progress, nonetheless.)

PB:...on Tombstone, they're like a co-op. Basically they put out Dead Moon records and then other people can put out their (own) stuff. Have you heard of Dead Moon at all?

GM: Heard of them, never heard them.

PB: They're very weird. It's a singer/guitar player, his wife plays bass and they have a drummer. He was in a band that toured with the Doors, called Lollipop Shoppe. I've heard they live together on this farm in Oregon. It's this kind of amazing, spooky garage stuff. I think they're huge in German and places like that. They put out their own records mostly. They have their own record lathe, they carve their own masters and everything. They record their own stuff in their farm. They're spooky looking people. So we did the record kind of through them, kind of a co-op deal. We split up the records with Drag King.

GM: It's one of the few times where I really like both sides of split.

PB: The singer for that band (Drag King), his dad is some CNN correspondent. It's funny because he's a very strange guy. He always had these nice shirts. Apparently the network paid for his on-air shirts and then he would send them to his son.

GM: One of my favorite parts of the record is the very over the top, very out of tune guitar on "Four Months Later."

PB: I like that too. At Vinyl Manor (where the Primate 5 did most of their recording) he only charges \$10/hour, and he doesn't charge for set up time. We record one day and we mix the next day and we end up owing him \$70. When we did stuff there we'd play the songs we got there to play and then there's some nonsensical, made up on the spot songs here and there. That one ("Four Months Later") was not quite knowing any of the lyrics or the parts for a song by the Fleshtones. It's on some live in France record, and I don't even know if it's their original song. The record I learned it from doesn't credit it to any one. Jim untuned his guitar while we were playing and started banging out that on the weird, untuned guitar.

GM: You guys also did a session with Conrad Uno at Egg Studios, right? *(The beginning of Brian's reply was lost to the flip of the cassette.)*

PB: ...we started getting particular. Instead of telling him what we wanted beforehand, when we got to the mix down we said, Ok, we what to sound like this band and kind of like this and he started to get frustrated and said, You should have told me that before, we would have put more room mics. Then he gave us this, Why don't you guys go get some lunch, come back in a couple of hours? And we did and we came back he's like, How's this?

GM: Which bands did you have in mind?

PB: The Kaisers, Mighty Cesars and Wildebeests mostly.

GM: You'd also mentioned that even though the band has broken up you guys might record a last batch of songs, one last session to clear out the closet.

PB: Just last night I saw everybody from the band. I asked them about it and they all shrugged and nodded, so, yeah.

GM: That's cool, most bands don't end that way.

They either fizzle out and everyone's bitter or, well, bitterness seems to be involved with just about every band break up.

PB: We just break up one band member, usually one drummer, at a time.

GM: So what's to come with the demise of the Primate 5?

PB: Either the Super Great Emancipators or something to do with Abe Lincoln, some sort of Abe Lincoln costumes and rock'n'roll. I have a bunch of song lyrics written, various Abe Lincoln speeches and assassination accounts and things.

GM: So the content of the songs would revolve around the concept of the band?

PB: Yeah, until that ran dry. Once again I tried to find ideas on the internet, found a great website of artwork by kids to do with the life of Abraham Lincoln, there's like 40 color, crayon drawings of Abe Lincoln being assassinated. They're the craziest things. Some you don't know what they are, some are cute. Some have the bullet flying through the air, some don't. Some have him up in the balcony, some have him just sitting in a chair in a room. Some have him fighting back. They're amazing.

GM: Might this next band draw on some of the Primate 5 alumni?

PB: Yeah, everyone seems pretty bored that we're not a band. Pretty willing, yeah, those guys and anybody else I can find. Anybody willing to don a stove pipe hat and a fake beard.

The Primate Five 7" (Rat City, 1994)

split with the Statics 7" (Dead Beat, 1995)

The Nova E.P. 7" (G.I. Productions, 1996)

split with Drag King 7" (Tombstone, 1997)

The Smash Hits of the Primate 5 7" (Big Neck, 1998)

split with Monkey Buzzness 7" (Rockin Bones, Italy, 2001)

"Jim Goes to Spain" - 13 Soda Punx (Top Drawer, 1993)

"Drive" - Seattle vs. Austin 7" (Static, 1996)

"Devil Dance" - Invasion of the Insectoids (G.I. Productions, 1997)

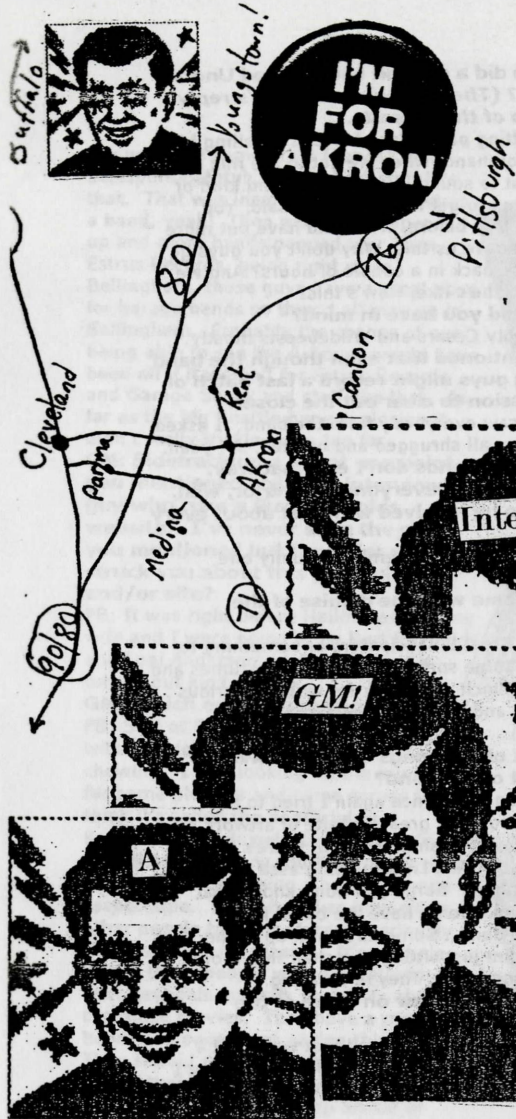
"Ivan Will Get His Revenge on Seattle" - The Big Choice: It's Clobberin' Time/Buffalo Nickel (Bands We Like, 1997)

"Button Nose" - Designer Drug Vol. 2 (Estate, 1999)

"1234567 Ape" - That's Bad Vol. 1 (Do the Dog, France, 1999)

"Book By Its Cover," "You're on My Mind," "Drinkin' Bird," - You're Stuck in Georgetown with No Ride Home (Hubba Hubba, 2002)

Chris Butler



"WORLD'S LONGEST POP SONG!"
—Guinness Book of World Records
(1998 U.S. Edition)

"otium cum dignitate"

While it's difficult to say what Chris Butler is best known for, it's a near certainty that you're familiar with something he's worked on. If you're a fan of the Northeast Ohio scene of the 70s (which yielded Devo, Pere Ubu, the Dead Boys, Pagans, Bizarros, and Rubber City Rebels, among many others), then it may be Butler's work with Tin Huey. If you're a fan of early 80s pop culture, then it may be one of the hits he wrote and played on while with the Waitresses ("I Know What Boys Like," the Square Pegs theme song, "Christmas Wrapping" (which was covered by the Spice Girls, thus accommodating any Spice Girls aficionados among our readers)). If you're a fan of WFMU-style peculiarities, then it may be "The Devil Glitch," the Grammy-nominated, 69-minute song with which Butler set a Guinness Book of World Records mark for longest pop song. And if it's not his work as a performer, then it may be one of his productions credits (Scruffy the Cat, the dB's, again, among many others).

Any one of the above would snare my attention but taken as a whole Chris Butler's varied credits make for a fascinating romp through the pop music of the past 25 years, a romp that shows no signs of slowing down (as evidenced by his projects of recent years--drumming for Richard Lloyd, conceiving of and releasing a cd under the guise of Kilopop!, and compiling a new solo cd, Easy Life).

Chris Butler is witty, passionate, and, like all those interviewed for these pages, patient. We spoke by phone in December, fending off colds on both ends of the line. (Interview by Mike Faloan)

INTRODUCTION & KILOPOPI: The former is self-explanatory, the latter is the name of one of Chris' latest projects.

CB: (Explaining stuffiness) I'm yours in Sudafed. So, Copley, Ohio? Better get out of there.

GM: Fortunately, it's only a year here in the gateway to Akron.

(Unexpectedly, we began talking about our current locales. Mine being in Northeast Ohio, Chris' former stomping grounds, his being the post-9/11 NYC area I'm returning to this summer.)

CB: Boy, we're getting off to a good start. (Laughs)

GM: Yeah, I just wanted to talk about pop music.

CB: We can do that too. It's a fun magazine. I have an observation. Most of the articles, maybe it's just this (issue), are about a golden age that has gone. I'm seeing Japanese anime and I'm seeing Queen, and I'm seeing *Dark Side of the Moon* and Young Fresh Fellows. It's not a criticism, it's interesting because most fanzine type things are that kind of pimply writing about a 19 year-old band that are playing down the corner and how great they are and how they're going to conquer the world. The cultural references here are much broader and frankly, out of my tradition which I did not expect. Can I bring it a little closer to home? I really wish this would have worked but on the Kilopop! record I did the cover of "Skyman." I really wanted to do a video of that. Do you know *Thunderbirds Are Go?* *Fireball XL5*?

GM: No, I don't.

CB: Okay, imagine a sci-fi kids show, only with puppets, marionettes, instead of actors. When I grew up this was a big deal. The guy who put this together was a guy named Gerry Anderson. I really wanted Gerry Anderson to come out of the mothballs and make a video for "Skyman" in that style. Highly recommended if you want to see something utterly bizarre. There's a movie, it's on video, he made a full-length movie called *Thunderbirds Are Go*. The best thing in it is a dream sequence of flying automobiles going up to their swinging star nightclub in space with Cliff Richard and the Shadows playing, but they're marionettes with little Vox amplifiers and doing the Shadows Walk and little Stratocasters. It's astounding. That's what I wanted for "Skyman."

GM: Did you get in touch with Gerry Anderson?

CB: Yeah, I got to call him but he's a grumpy old man and didn't want to hear it. I got to talk to one of my heroes and then he said, And look, don't send me a package--because it was the middle of the anthrax scare--I won't accept packages from America. He grumped out on me. It's too bad, it would have been so much fun.

15-60-75: Long-running Kent, Ohio band, they drew huge crowds through the 70s but never caught on outside of their native region. At different times 15-60-75, aka the Numbers Bands, featured a pre-Devo Gerald Casale, Chrissie Hynde's brother, and, for a time in the mid-70s, Chris Butler (on bass); kind of like Northeast Ohio's version of John Mayall's Blues Breakers.

TIN HUEY: Smart, complicated pop band with a twisted sense of humor. They came along during the

height of punk and new wave, borrowing from both camps but belonging to neither. After a series of ep's for Clone Records, they released *Contents Dislodged During Shipping* on Warner Brothers in 1979. Tin Huey broke up 1980 but in 1999 they released *Disinformation*, a cd of outtakes and demos, most from '79-'80.

GM: When you joined Tin Huey had they already released the 7"s they did on Clone Records?

CB: Yeah.

GM: How long was it after you joined that the lp came together.

CB: It was really fast. I joined up and I had contacted Karin Berg from Warner Brothers about when I was in the Numbers Band because I really thought the Numbers Band and Television had a lot in common and Karin was intrigued. The Numbers Band had gone to New York but Karin had been called to the west coast so it was a fruitless trip. Karin had also told me about Robert Christgau and you could get the *Village Voice* like two weeks after it came out, in Kent, and I began a correspondence with Christgau. He called and said, Look I want to come out, I understand you've got a scene on there and I wanna see what's going on. We put on a show for him and he had a good time and went back and told Karin Berg. Two weeks later Karin came out. We had to put everything back together, you know, beg and plead the club owner to let us have a night and cobble together a pa system and put on another show. Then Karin brought her boss, Jerry Wexler. Two weeks later, we had the same thing, scramble and beg, and that's when we were asked to record for Warner Brothers, which was kind of a disaster. I don't think they knew what the hell they were getting and we certainly didn't know what we were doing. Or at least we tried like hell to know what we were doing and we should have done more along the lines of where we were headed which was to be a Pere Ubu-ish small force of nature that really had no business being on a huge major label because a huge major label is all about hits and Tin Huey was way too cranky and arty and didn't belong on there. Smartest people I've ever been with, most creative people I've ever been with.

GM: That's very interesting, I like *Contents* quite a bit. Does it reflect where the band was at the time, or had been at one point?

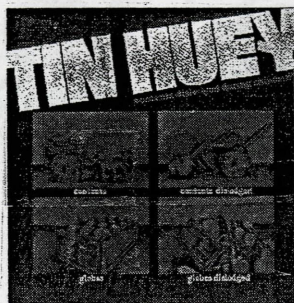
CB: I think the band was ten times better than that record. It was a little, nutty band trying to be a big time band. We should have gone much slower and a much more controlled pace. This is my take on it, I cannot speak for everybody, that's important to say.

GM: Does that play a part in the fact that you guys later on did a second record together, the dissatisfaction with the first one?

CB: Well, no. The second record is in fact the stuff from that period. It's older stuff. They did a whole complete album after I left. It's a little bit of that and some demos.

GM: Oh, it's unreleased material from back then, I thought it was a reunion album.

CB: There was a Tin Huey house. It was great, huge old Victorian thing, three floors. Because we had a band house everything would be recorded. There's stuff with Ralph Carney (Tin Huey's saxophonist) and Dave Thomas from Pere Ubu. Every once in awhile a Devo would show up. That's all in the can, it was just a matter of someone



**Contents
Dislodged
During
Shipping
(1979)**

getting it together and organizing it in some way. Two or three years ago, before this (*Disinformation*) actually became a record most of us were back in Ohio for Thanksgiving and Mike Aylward and John Mondl, (Tin Huey's guitarist and in-house engineer, respectively) said, We have presents for all of you, and gave us cd-rs of that record, the rough mixes. We said, Man, we had forgotten, this is pretty good stuff. Well, it's not fair to say "we," who really busted their nut was John and Michael. They're the ones who really archived this and made this happen.

GM: That would make a fascinating series of cds.

CB: We're working on it. There's live stuff. There's at least, I think, another cd's worth of material. But you know, it's of interest to us, and maybe you, and maybe three and a half other people.

GM: That seems to be the case with a lot of my favorites.

THE WAITRESSES: Probably the best known of Butler's projects, the Waitresses were conceived of before he joined Tin Huey, dabbled with, on a part-time basis, while he was in Tin Huey, and launched as a full-time band after he left Tin Huey.

GM: It was after leaving Tin Huey that you moved to New York?

CB: Moved to New York in 1979, mid-October. Warners gave us a little money to go away so we split that up. I played around a little bit and did some shows on my own and was strongly advised by my musician friends that I should not be the frontperson. I was able to contact Patty (Donahue, *Waitresses* singer), who had left school but gone to Galveston. I was able to get a nibble on "I Know What Boys Like" by a record company. They said, Where's the band? And I said, Er, umm, uh, back in Ohio? I asked Patty if she was free. She said, Yeah. I said, do you want to be in a rock'n'roll band for awhile. She said, Yeah. I sent her my last \$50 for bus fare and she came and we put this band together and debuted at New Year's Eve at a wonderful place called Little Club 57 with sets by Keith Haring and the Cultural Czarina for Club 57 was Ann Magnuson. We did that New Year's Eve, '80/'81.

GM: And this was after the Waitresses had put one song on The Akron Compilation (Stiff Records) but not as the same line up.

CB: It wasn't a group really, it was just me playing or some other Akron musicians playing, it was just a name. You know, by this time I was really disgusted with bands since they always fell apart and were a heavy lifting project more than anything else. I thought, I don't need a band. But when the record company says, Hey, pretty good, we're going to put this out but, uh, you need a band. I go, Oh,

shit. I'm a hermit, kind of. I like hiding in my little studio and making my little records and that's that. The idea of confronting the world and being in the big, bad music business. Oy, not the best scenario. Plus, trying to keep five other really cranky people happy, not my life's goal.

GM: And you guys didn't ease into it, that's a pretty big show for a public debut.

CB: Yep. You know, kaboom.

GM: Was it pretty shortly afterward that you started recording or did you play a bunch of shows with that line up and then hit the studio?

CB: Little bit of both. Some of the members left to start the Raybeats, they were a surf band. It was a bunch of really good musicians who said, What's the most uncool kind of music out there that we can make cool? And they settled on surf music. It was a joke too because they were all from like Nebraska and they became this really great surf band. The drummer (Don Christensen), and keyboard player (Pat Irwin) left to do that. The record company that was interested in "I Know What Boys Like" was called ZE Records. I was able to get some musicians together to record the b-side, which was "No Guilt" and that basically became the core for the Waitresses band. We began to play because the single got on college radio. We began to tour behind the single any place that it was on the radio, for the first half of the year. Then we recorded, May, June, I don't know, the album. But by then ZE had lost its distribution so we were in limbo all summer. But thankfully, as I recall, "Boys" did not sink off the charts. It didn't even chart really. It never went up but it never went away. Thankfully some stations flipped the record and began to play the other side.

GM: At some point you did a video too, right?

CB: Yeah, yeah.

GM: I don't remember what it looks like but when I first saw MTV "I Know What Boys Like" was one of the few songs I liked.

CB: Thank you. It was very cartoony because it was a cartoony band and a cartoony song and it used a process that was very hip at the time, to take frames projected in as a color xerox and then re-photograph it as cell animation, although at a slower speed so it had a pixelated effect but the color look is all primary colors. Then the color xerox becomes all muted which at the time was a graphic designer's trick and very cool. The people who had developed this process had done a series of radio promos in the New York area for radio station WPLJ and they had taken film clips from the Who and Led Zeppelin and gone through this process. We thought, Oh, this is cool, we would like to use it for the saxophone solo for Mars (Mars Williams, the Waitresses' reed section). It was one of the first videos, to the point where in our contract it's not even charged against us which is funny because about three or four years ago I got a call from my lawyer who said, Are you sitting down? You are in the black at Polygram. They owe you money. I said, You're kidding. He said, No, it's true. We requested the files and then they (Polygram) tried to charge us \$20,000 for a video and I said, Wait a minute, our contract is so old that at the time videos were considered promotional expense. They hadn't gotten around to realize that they could make the artist pay for it. It was considered an advertising expense, like print ads.

Sure enough, there's nothing in our contract that says we have to pay for the video so they grudgingly said, Ok.

GM: That might be the first time a contract's worked to a musician's benefit.

CB: Well, that is a misnomer, that is an error.

GM: Is it?

CB: The most valuable lesson I ever learned from our manager was: Read. The. Contract. It costs thousands of dollars and attorneys bang all these points out and then nobody reads the damn thing when it's done. We were able to renegotiate our arrangement with ZE Records for the simple matter that our manager said, Let's see what the contract says. And the contract said that I'm supposed to be notified if ZE was going to pick up our option. ZE never notified us which means we were free to go. This is also what happened, by the way, when Belinda Carlisle got off IRS and went to Columbia. IRS said, What are you doing? She says, Did you notify us? Nobody ever reads the contract after they're done. Nobody.

GM: I've never heard of a story where a band picked up a contract and found something in their favor.

CB: Yeah, so I'm not saying that people don't get screwed, of course, they get screwed but there is a point where some things are your own fault, dummy. You need to take advantage of a situation that you'd already won but didn't even know it.

GM: Makes sense. Getting back to the video, it's ironic that while it sounds like a very interesting video, and it obviously caught my attention as a kid, my memory of the video has faded but I remember the song. I think what makes the Waitresses' songs work so well is that there's more to them than meets the eye.

CB: I have to say I got a lot of flack from my quote, unquote, "heavy, heavy artist" friends about things like "I Know What Boys Like" because it was supposed to be cheesy pop. I'm sorry. I had to go back, for various reasons, to do a backing track for "I Know What Boys Like" that sounded pretty similar to the other one and I had forgotten how musically complex the song is. And how there's a honky tonk piano in there which didn't make the final mix but I brought back in on my version which was great fun. That is not a stupid piece of music.

GM: No, not at all. I had no sense how neat the arrangements were when I first them but yeah, I love stuff like that. It catches your ear and the more you delve into it, the more you'll find.

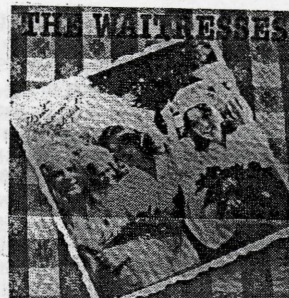
CB: I love XTC. XTC is a perfect example. On the surface, you go, Boy, great sing along melodies and then you try and learn some of those songs and they are unbelievably brilliant musicians and these songs are unbelievably complex. I am just in awe of them. They are so fantastic.

GM: When you makes things that complex sound so smooth...

CB: That's a real art.

GM: I think that's why I appreciate the Waitresses even more now than I did then.

CB: I have to tell you, I can say this without ego because it's been so long but I found a 20 year-old tape of some radio show. I was curious and I listened to it. I can't relate to who this person is or who these people are--it sounded like just another record to me--but I kept listening going, Man, these people are killing. It's ferocious and



Wasn't Tomorrow Wonderful? (1982)

roaring and everything's just a little too fast and jittery, sounds like a punk band that was playing really complex stops and starts with a jazz twiddly guy on saxophone and I thought, man, this shit is great. I was impressed, I'd sign me. (Laughs)

GM: Did you have a sense of that at the time?

CB: I know what I tried to do. I wanted to take the things I love about Tin Huey and the Numbers Band and XTC and the Who and the CBGB's stuff and somehow put it all together. I wanted to be the American Who. I wanted to tell stories and I wanted to have a real exciting stage act and wanted to have some legs. I mean, this was not a hobby. I really wanted to do this for the rest of my life and in a capacity that was more creative than was required by the commercial reality while including the commercial reality, which is always a dangerous thing to do because suddenly you find yourself doing smarter, more interesting stuff. But when you're working ten hours when five hours worth of work would have done it, then you have a whole other existential dilemma of why am I pushing for some ideal so hard when in reality all the world wants is x and I'm trying to give x times ten.

GM: Was that one of the issues that complicated things within the band?

CB: Yeah, because I'm a real hard worker and some of our band were very lazy. Nobody didn't do their job. But some people drew the line, and some people could compartmentalize, let's say. Which at the time I thought, Well, you're just not really committed. But now I see it as I was wrong, they were right. They actually wanted to have a life.

"The Devil Glitch": In 1996 Chris released a pop song called "The Devil Glitch." It's a damn fine song but, at 68:53 in length, its quantity garnered more attention than its quality. To further convolute matters, the song is broken into 16 sections, each of which features a different performer or band adding accompaniment to Butler's basic track. Fascinating.

GM: Ironic that you'd mention the Who. They're the first band that came to mind when I heard "The Devil Glitch." The opening crescendo sounds very much like the Who.

CB: I love the Who, they're everything I could possibly want in a rock'n'roll band. And out of all the people from that era they're the ones who have had the most impact. They invented 100-watt amplifiers and stadium shows and rock'n'roll decadence but also the beautiful three-minute single. And they still kill, even for the September 11th show. It was just like the *Rock'n'Roll Circus* again. The

Who were on and then Mick Jagger followed and the Who blew away Mick Jagger again. It was fantastic.

GM: I spent a year working at ASCAP (a music licensing company) which gives me a skewed perspective when it comes to reading the writing credits on a record. One song with 16 different entities participating; that's got to complicate things. How did you register that with BMI?

CB: With great relish. Part of this prank, and the song is a prank, is the world coming to grips with it. Because you're throwing something out there like that and it blows the system wide open. I think I had six pages with the copyright form because they only give you three spaces and I wanted to make sure everybody got credit. Same with BMI, I think at the most they list three co-writers and I had four sheets with them. The great fun of that, and that was the most fun project I've ever done, was really throwing a monkey wrench into the system.

GM: So in the eyes of BMI it's one song?

CB: One song. It's one of those horrible things you can do to a bureaucracy because it's their job to divide up the money, to figure out which chunk was played.

GM: Funny you'd mention that aspect. The year I worked at ASCAP Prince changed his name to that symbol and ASCAP actually installed new computer software to accommodate...

CB: The squiggle, that's brilliant.

GM: I thought he was a shmuck when I first heard about the name thing but the day I heard that at work I thought, Now he's was a genius.

CB: That is brilliant.

GM: Sounds like there were a lot of extra things that came with this project.

CB: I had a lot of fun. I didn't go after the Guinness thing. Well, that's not true, I did write Guinness and say, Look, I'm going to do this, what do you think? They sent me a stupid form letter and basically said, Go away, kid. I said, All right, I'll show you. I'll do it first and then just for the hell of it send them a copy and see what they think.

GM: Do you know who previously held the record?

CB: There wasn't a record. In order to justify my award, I had to do research, I had to prove to Guinness that I thought I had done something. They do follow up but basically you provide them with all the evidence to back up your claim. There was a guy named Michael Hall who had done something, somebody's Dream, that was like 32 minutes but it wasn't necessarily a pile of verses. It had a lot of instrumental stuff in there, a lot of stretching and noodling and technically it was a musical piece but it wasn't

a song. Definition of a song is music and lyric. That's it. Everything else is accompaniment, is arrangement, and therefore uncopyrightable, by the way, but the definition of a song is music and lyric and so I wrote a song that had 500 plus verses. (*All of which are on-line at Chris' site*). At the time the top limit for a cd was 74 minutes. You could burn 80 but all kinds of special charges kicked in and some cd players could not play it. But if anybody goes after this record I have, easily, five minutes more. I could do the director's cut. And now that you've got DVD with 96 minutes, you know, don't fuck with me. (Laughs)

GM: Do you know who gave you the Grammy vote?

CB: Sure, WFMU. During exam time the college djs would put this on late at night and they would study. It was really utilitarian. I have friends who use it as a shrink, who put it on shuttle mode, ask it an I Ching kind of question and then see if there's any relevance in some of the lines.

GM: Well, steering into the content, I was reading an old interview where you said something to the effect of wanting to leave listeners with a feeling of encouragement but doing so intelligently.

CB: Yeah.

GM: Yet the last line in "The Devil Glitch" is "some times you can solve things by just giving up."

CB: Well, I figured after 69 minutes, man, you're going through all the possible permutations of how to solve a problem and how to work it out, eh, eventually after all this persistence you still might have to just say, Fuck it. That's another legitimate coping tactic, I guess.

GM: How many weeks or months did it take to write the lyrics.

CB: I think about three months, in the morning, six to eight, before your work life kicks in. I was able to do a couple pages a day.

GM: Do you still have the original manuscript?

CB: Oh yeah, on a dot matrix printer. It basically melted the printer. I think it's 66 pages.

GM: And not only did you come up with this idea and see it through, you made something people would want to listen to; it's a really good song.

CB: I have to agree, it is a really good song. It's maybe not as wild as I thought it was going to be. I thought some of friends would come up with wackier shit but some of it's wacky and some of it's mainstream and that's ok. Everybody did what they do. I really appreciate the fact that we're talking about this and you get the idea. For 99% of the world this is a fucked up idea and people look at me like, What are you doing, are you out of your mind? Most of my ideas, I'm afraid, get that kind of reaction. If they don't get it, then they're daring me to do it. It brings out the punk in me, I can't think of anything more punk than doing a 69-minute song.

GM: You even recruited your mom to take part.

CB: Yes, but there's a stratagem there. My mother does not accept money from myself or my brother but...she can't say no to royalties. But yes, I got my mom on there. She's a piano teacher, she did some prepared piano.

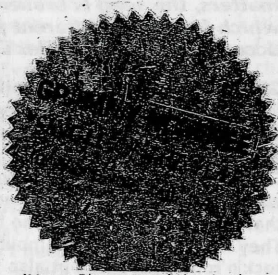
GM: Has she listened to all of it?

CB: Oh, sure. She's 80, she's got a lot of time on her hands. Between *Jeopardy* and *Oprah* there's a lot of time.

Next section: Here we talk about Chris' latest solo cd, *Easy Life* (which I hadn't heard at the time), and the *Kilopop* cd, which we touched on earlier. *Kilopop* is



(Future Fossil, 1996)



(Note: Please read this in the event that the text of the sticker above does not photocopy clearly. Said sticker reads: GRAMMY NOMINEE! "SINGLE OF THE YEAR" (only one vote, but...hey!)"

basically Chris on instruments and Carla Murray on vocals. The concept/gag is that Chris and Carla are a brother-sister act, using the names Furk and Trynka.

GM: You've also put out a couple of cds this year (2001), one as a band (Kilopop!) and one as a solo act. I haven't heard the new Chris Butler cd but noticed that some of the titles are songs that have appeared on other projects. Is this a cd of new material or a compilation of sorts?

CB: Some of them are older songs that showed up on obscure compilations and some are re-recordings and some are new. It's a little bit of everything but it has a bit of a theme. It's kind of about being in Kent, Ohio before the shootings, pre-1970, loosely. A lot of it is slice of life stuff and kind of what a very free spirited life was and all of that changed with the shootings. Life is taken much lighter and then things got super serious. It was completed about a month or so before 9/11 but there seems to be a parallel, suddenly life gets serious and for me it was the shootings at Kent State, that's my big crisis. I'd always wanted to do something about that but you know, either my own immaturity, or everything came out kind of icky or whatever. I'm glad I waited, I think it's powerful.

GM: With Kilopop, is that a project you play out with?

CB: Nope, the thought occurred but it was a place to park songs that I didn't have anything to do with. It was another fun thing to do. When you come up with a song and you don't do anything with it, it just sits. It's not like a painting, you can't put it up on the wall. In order to do something you need a vehicle so either give it to your publisher rep and say, See if you can get this covered. And then if nobody records it, what do you do? Eventually the trunk gets full and you've got to dump it, hence Kilopop.

GM: It's a very enjoyable dumping of the trunk.

CB: I think so too. There are some things on there that I really love. I really like "Millions and Millions," that turned out pretty well. "Sky Man" is a hoot.

GM: I love the organ sound on that.

CB: That's called an Ondioline, real primitive original synthesizer that was made popular by Joe Meek on his song "Telstar." It was used on Lou Christie records, "Lightning Strikes"

GM: I like the contrast between pretty straight forward sounding contemporary pop songs and covering songs by people like Joe Meek, the Shaggs, and Raymond Scott. Yet it doesn't feel like it swerves from one side of the road to another.

CB: I appreciate you saying that, others do not agree. Others say there's not identity, no consistency. I think there is a unified sound. I wanted to do the sound of a band that's like questing, trying to find new things. I'm half serious when I say, I mean, I'm 100% serious, when I have the Furk character say, We're concerned about what pop could be versus what pop it is. So if I say a Shaggs tune should be pop, it's pop. A really bad Joe Meek song, if we do it up, we're pop so therefore it's pop. There's a bit of crusading going on there.

GM: I think that's an apt way of summarizing what links together all of these projects we've been talking about; what a pop song could be.

CB: It's really interesting because this is the post-modern era where everything is supposed to be combinant. I'm from the era where this thing about constant striving, a lot

of creativity is about constant striving for something.

That's generational. I don't think that's really a popular more these days but it's definitely from the 60s era. That's a residue, fallout, whatever, that's affected me. Pop culture is as much about commercialism as it is about trying to do something different and new and fresh and fun, you back into commercialism by doing something that's fun. I get that from the Who. The Who were without a doubt, showbiz kids in a commercial entity but they were also so inventive and so creative and so exciting. Anyway, that's where I seem to be coming from versus much more acceptance or taking a straight commercial path. It's not that I'm waving any banners, it's just that that's what I do. I guess it's my background.

GM: I could hear a lot of these songs coming over the radio and they wouldn't be out of place but they'd be a notch above what is there.

CB: Thank you, that's flattering. That's why the conceit of the whole project is that these are hit songs already.

GM: Or I was wondering if it was another way to subvert yourself.

CB: Well, yeah, of course, without a doubt but also some wish fulfillment. Some of those songs were requested by people. You know, write me a song that's Waitressy but is, like, you know, the "Heaven Can Hurt" song. That was requested by a woman named Jennifer Warnes, who used to be a popular singer, who needed a hit. She said, I like country and I like the Waitresses. Can you do a country Waitresses song? My co-writing friend and I came up with this. We kind of thought it was icky but okay and we gave it to them and they passed on it so she didn't do it. Here's this unfortunate situation again, you've got a song in the can, it was a bit of whore work so you're not actually going to kill for it because it's not one of your babies necessarily but on the other hand it's not a total piece of shit so what do you do with it? Songs are hard to come by, they're hard to make and you don't have that many. Okay, you invent a band that could do it and had a hit with it. The woman wanted a hit, we gave her a hit, it's not my fault she didn't do it. (Laughs)

GM: I like that song, I like how you used the word "hell" in a "heaven" pop song.

CB: Yeah, now Diane Warren of me. But now that I think about it, I have to have some (more) of the Diane Warren...I'll get through...stars...sky...night... those are requisite words that I didn't fit in that you have to have to have a Diane Warren song. In fact, I can't believe there isn't a riot amongst the Star Trek fans. There's a new Star Trek, Enterprise whatever, and the theme song, instead of being this traditional stirring instrumental, rocket in space type soundtrack, is a fucking Diane Warren song and it's horrible. I am flabbergasted that the Star Trek community hasn't gone ballistic. It may not be in your market but it's being shown here. It's actually a decent show but it starts with this HORRIBLE Diane Warren song. I mean to the point where you want to throw something at the television because it's so awful.

GM: And it's not Diane Warren-like, it's her?

CB: It's her.

GM: What I've heard of her stuff has been awful but in someone's world those songs work.

CB: That's not your world, your world of Go Go Metric.

GM: We've carved out our little corner of the universe

where everything is right, people like Kinks records...
CB: Right, and there's an endless string of Japanese science fiction tv shows on. And guess what, Cheap Trick is coming over for dinner!

(As usual a bunch of additional questions cropped up as I was transcribing the interview. Chris fielded them via email.)

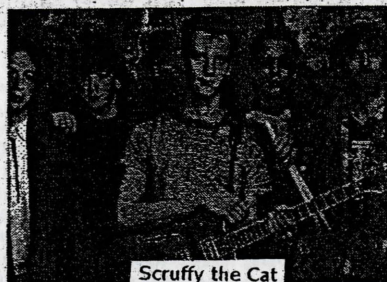
GM: One thing I missed during the interview but picked up in transcribing the tape...you mentioned "Christmas Wrapping" being a parody of pop groups (if I understood you correctly) and that the song was covered by the Spice Girls. Was I even close regarding the parody aspect of "Christmas Wrapping" and how weird was it to have one of your songs covered by the Spice Girls?

CB: mix up. 1) Kilopop! is a parody of European pop bands...many of these are duos and have a few hits and never seem to go away. they are always showing up hosting summer variety shows on French or German TV. 2) "Christmas Wrapping" is not a parody. it was written/recorded under duress/protest because our nutty record company boss wanted to make an off-beat Xmas album w/ his stable of kooky artists...and we were pressed for time/had to go on the road. he was right...as i tell him every year! 3) Spice Girls cover. how weird is it????? as weird as things can be. i go thru life thinking i'm an artist w/ a capital 'R'...bust my brain to make interesting/complicated/outsider music (at the time i was playing drums w/ Richard Lloyd of Television, recording w/ antique audio gear and getting a show together w/ other cranky musicians)...when the most commercial entity at the time records one of my tunes. a total mind-fuck...it turns out that their American label guy had suggested they do the song the previous year, but they were too busy. i got queried by someone at Virgin UK in Oct. ('98?) that mysteriously hinted that one of their 'top' groups was interested in recording the song...but thought no more of it because these requests are very common. found out it was the Spices in mid-November. didn't really know anything about them, so i rented their movie (actually Blockbuster was having a sale = buy one for \$3.99 [!] get a second copy free [!])...guess they were overstocked). thought the whole idea was very bizarre. went to England in early December/took the Virgin contact out to dinner/never met the Spices = they were all having babies or something. as to WHY they did it...the song is even more popular in the UK than it is here, and is considered the hippest Xmas song ever...so i think they were trying to gain some street credibility by recording the tune.

GM: How did you meet up with the dB's and what was it like working with them on *Like This*?

CB: had known (Peter) Holsapple before but not too well. they needed a producer, but Chris Stamey had just quit...and they were a little lost. they had great songs to record, but what was left was the rhythm section, and they had not come up with the arrangement parts that was Chris's domain/forte. it was pulling teeth to flesh out the tunes. plus Bearsville Records was in turmoil - Todd Rundgren and Albert Grossman were mortal enemies who suddenly made peace during the middle of our sessions and suddenly Todd is Bearsville's new A & R guy and is butting in. Woodstock is a very spooky place actually...i do not

like the "let's get groovy and go up to the country and like work on our music man"...and neither did the engineer or the band, really. Albert and Todd were bastards who struck fear in the locals. it was hippie hell...a miserable experience. great record tho.



Scruffy the Cat

GM: How did you meet up with the Scruffy the Cat, what was it like working with them on *Tiny Days*?

CB: don't remember how i got hooked up w/ Scruffy...i think maybe thru a booking agent. they were a great, great band. we rehearsed in Boston below a donut shop (there was a pile of rotting donut dough in the corner that i swear was going to attack us) and recorded here in Hoboken at the old Water Music. a great experience...good people/good time. came in on time and under budget. turns out one of my current friends was the then girlfriend of Charlie Chesterman...didn't meet her 'til last year = small world.

GM: How did you first meet Patty? To what extent was her personality linked to the characters she portrayed in the Waitresses' songs? I know you penned the lyrics but I'm curious how she related to and found her place with the material.

CB: Patty was the girlfriend of Dave Robinson = the Numbers Band's drummer. i had joined them. she was a party girl w/ a good sense of humor and fast w/ the wisecrack, an on-and-off Kent State student and generally a good buddy. she had an enormous amount of courage and spunk, and i think she was a very good actress, and if she had had any ambition she could have been quite a comedienne/film star. i take nothing away from her performing my stuff - she breathed life into the lyrics. my job was to get a laugh from her = then she could 'get' the song and/or character. she was a major pain in the ass, but i miss her. (She died in 1996)

GM: What's your take on Holly Vincent's tenure with the Waitresses?

CB: you know...i found a show board tape w/ her a few months ago in a pile of old junk. damn!...she was very good and our band was just KILLING! if she hadn't had dope troubles (i didn't know), we could have been a very interesting combo...she sang very well/wrote well too and was a much better performer than Patty. too bad she sank my little boat by no-showing at an important gig. i see her every once in a while...

Discography

with Tin Huey

Contents Dislodged During Shipping (Warner Brothers, 1979)

Disinformation (Future Fossil/P.O.S., 1999)

The Waitresses

In Short Stack - "Clones" b/w "Slide" 7" (Clone Records, CL006, 1978)

"I Know What Boys Like" b/w "No Guilt" 7" (ZE/Antilles, 1982)

I Could Rule the World If I Could Only Get the Parts ep (Polydor, 1983)

Make the Weather ep (Polydor UK, 1983)

Wasn't Tomorrow Wonderful? (Polydor, 1982)

Bruiseology (Polydor, 1983)

The Best of the Waitresses (Polydor, 1990)

The Waitresses in Concert (King Buscuit, 1997)

"The Comb," "Slide" - V/A - *The Akron Compilation* (Stiff, 1978)

"Wait Here I'll Be Right Back...(Son of Comb)" - V/A - *Bowling Balls from Hell* (Clone, 1980)

"Astronettes" - V/A - *Bowling Balls from Hell II* (Clone, 1981)

as producer (selected)

dB's - *Like This* (Bearsville, 1984)

Scruffy the Cat - *Tiny Days* (Relativity, 1987)

Chris Butler

The Wilderness Years: Volume 1 - "A Hole in the Sky" b/w "Davy's Sister's Home From College" 7" (Future Fossil, 1995)

The Wilderness Years: Volume 2 - "The Man in the Razor Suit" b/w "The Bottom of a Working Man's Beer" 7" (Future Fossil, 1995)

"The Devil Glitch" (Future Fossil, 1996)

I Feel a Bit Normal Today (Future Fossil, 1997)

Easy Life (Future Fossil, 2001)

Kilopop!

Best of Kilopop!: "Un Petit Gouter" (Future Fossil, 2001)

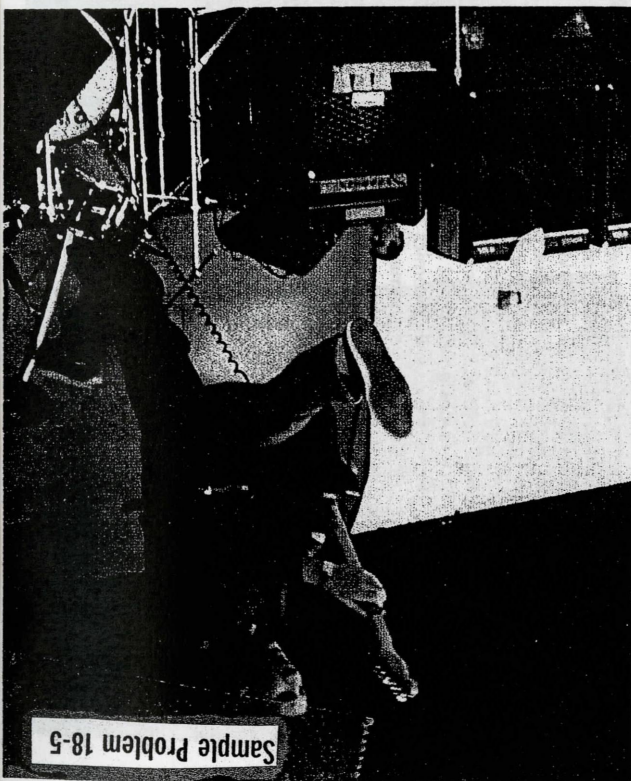
Chris Butler/Future Fossil Music:

Box 6248, Hoboken, NJ 07030

www.nutscape.com/ChrisButler/ffm.htm

reduction of hearing. Repeated or prolonged exposure can result in permanent reduction of hearing (Fig. 18-12). Loss of hearing is a clear risk for anyone continually listening to, say, heavy metal at high volume, especially on headphones.

Fig. 18-12 Sample Problem 18-5. Peter Townshend of the Who, playing in front of a speaker system. He suffered a permanent reduction in his hearing ability due to his exposure to high-intensity sound, not so much during on-stage performances as from wearing headphones in recording studios and at home.



Sample Problem 18-5

Thus, the Who was very loud. Temporary exposure to sound intensities as great as those of a jackhammer and the 1976 Who concert results in a temporary

$$\frac{I_1}{I_2} = \log^{-1} 2.8 = 630. \quad (\text{Answer})$$

we find taking the analog of the far left and far right sides of this equation the analog key on your calculator is probably marked as 10^x).

$$\log \frac{I_1}{I_2} = \beta_2 - \beta_1 = \frac{10 \text{ dB}}{120 \text{ dB} - 92 \text{ dB}} = 2.8.$$

Rearranging and substituting the known sound levels now yield

$$\beta_2 - \beta_1 = (10 \text{ dB}) \log \frac{I_1}{I_2} \quad (18-37)$$

we can rewrite Eq. 18-36 as

$$\log \frac{b}{a} - \log \frac{c}{d} = \log \frac{bc}{ad},$$

Using the identity

$$\beta_2 - \beta_1 = (10 \text{ dB}) \left(\log \frac{I_0}{I_2} - \log \frac{I_0}{I_1} \right). \quad (18-36)$$

The difference in the sound levels is

$$\beta_1 = (10 \text{ dB}) \log \frac{I_0}{I_1}$$

and for the jackhammer, we have

$$\beta_2 = (10 \text{ dB}) \log \frac{I_0}{I_2}$$

tion of sound level in Eq. 18-29. For the Who, we have
 SOLUTION: The key idea here is that for both the Who and the jackhammer, the sound level β is related to the intensity by the definition of sound level in Eq. 18-29. For the Who, we have

of a jackhammer operating at sound level $\beta_1 = 92 \text{ dB}$?
 s the ratio of the intensity I_2 of the band at that spot to the intensity level 46 m in front of the speaker systems was $\beta_2 = 120 \text{ dB}$. What in 1976, the Who set a record for the loudest concert—the sound

THE JACK COLE COLLECTOR

These are good times for Jack Cole fans. Not only have there been two books released recently, but Cole's best known creation, Plastic Man, continues to appear in new issues of DC's *JLA*. (If only Plas had made the cut for the Cartoon Network's *Justice League Adventure* series.)

The Plastic Man Archives - Vol. 3 (DC Comics) Nothing I write is going to convince you to drop \$50 on this but if you're among the enlightened and simply procrastinating your purchase, here's the low down on Vol. 3: all of Plas' escapades from *Police Comics* #31-#39 along with all four of his stories from *Plastic Man* #2, all in full-color. As with Vol. 2, it eclipses its predecessor as the humor is more frenzied and Cole further evolves as a storyteller (his splash pages may be more subdued but the stories zip along even when Plas isn't in the panels). The foreword is, again, forgettable. This time it was written by someone who neither knew nor worked with Cole, Michelle Urry (a design editor at *Playboy* who oversaw re-runs of some of Cole's comics for grown ups, *Females* by Cole). It's a shame because the comics world is overflowing with people inspired by Jack Cole, why not get one of them--Evan

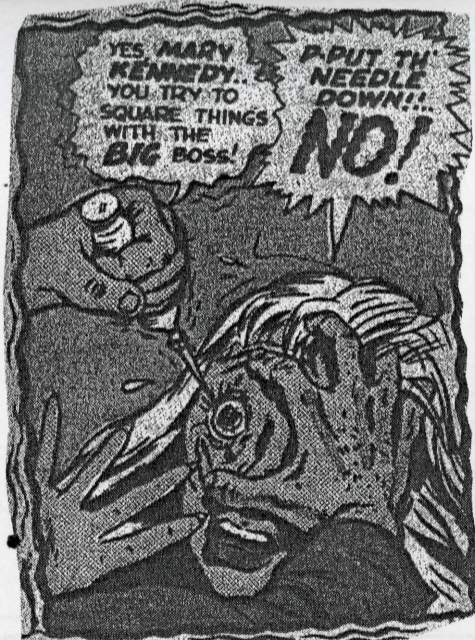


Jack Cole

"Coroner's Corner,"
Plastic Man #2,
1944



by JACK COLE



"Murder, Morphine and Me"
True Crime Comics #2, 1947

Dorkin, Mike Allred, for instance--to wax poetic about Cole? Oy. Fortunately, the other 201 pages can, and will, be savored for a lifetime.

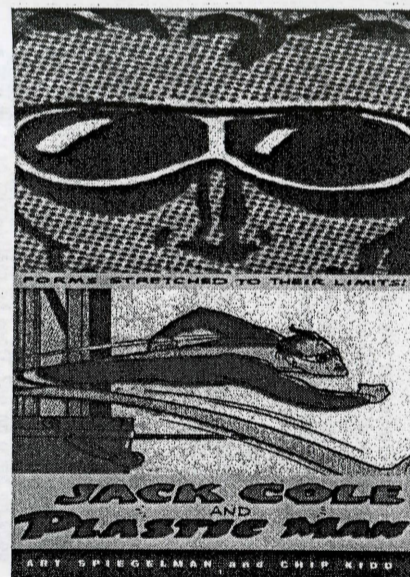
Jack Cole and Plastic Man - Forms Stretched to Their Limits (Chronicle Books) is perfect for both the curious and the converted. First of all, it's only \$20. Second of all, the text--a slightly edited version of an article Art Spiegelman wrote for the *New Yorker*--combines an overview of Cole's life with insightful analysis into what made (and makes!) Cole's work tick. Third, and best of all, there are tons of Cole's comics. And because there's an early story (from 1943) and two later tales ('49, '50), you can see for yourself how Cole vaulted from great to legendary. There are also samples of Cole's non-Plas comics, including one of his uber-pulp *True Crimes* stories, "Murder, Morphine and Me," that was Exhibit A for Dr. Fredric Wertham (whose book *The Seduction of the Innocent* sparked Senate hearings regarding the comic book industry) in 1954. If you like the early, Harvey Kurtzman issues of *Mad* magazine, then this book is going to spin your clock.

JLA (DC Comics)

Though Plastic Man hasn't had an on-going series since the 70s, he's had steady cameo and/or second banana work ever since. He joined the revamped *Justice League* in issue #15 (1998), and writers Grant Morrison and Mark Waid have consistently used Plas as a second string member of the team. Both writers recognize that what Plas says and does provides welcome comic relief from the often over-serious *Justice League* line up. In fact, in his final issue as *JLA* writer (#60), Mark Waid gave Plas top billing in the goofy "Twins the Fight before Christmas!" story. So far, Joe Kelly, the writer who took over with issue #61, has kept Plastic Man on board and even raised his profile a bit. Plas also appears in Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight Strikes Again* #2 where he comes face-to-face with the ever-lame Elongated Man ("You're pathetic. All you do is stretch. You don't even turn into stuff.")

Plastic Man and the Invasion of the Plastic Men (Power Records, 1976)

Cole had nothing to do with this uncredited Plastic Man story on vinyl but I like the cover and I'm a sucker for these sorts of novelty records. (And I got it from a guy named O'Brien, no less).



Art Spiegelman's
Jack Cole and Plastic Man
(Chronicle Books, 2001)



Plastic Man and the Invasion of the Plastic Men (1976)



"The Mangler's Slaughter Clinic"
Police Comics #31, 1944

The Loner

By Bob Mason and Jeff Wescott

EXT. WOODED PATH- DUSK

It is autumn. The spectacular color of the leaves on the trees that line the dirt path give the area a Rockwellian appearance. A young COUPLE stroll arm-in-arm down the path, very much in love.

A country cabin prominently displays a Jack-O-Lantern in a window.

LEON
(V.O.)

Autumn. A time of peace as the Earth prepares for the long sleep of winter. The time of Halloween. For years untold, legends have swirled about this night of darkness. Ghosts, witches, goblins...

The young couple follow a turn in the path and head toward a covered bridge that crosses a babbling brook. The other side of the bridge is shrouded in shadow.

LEON
(V.O.)

The existence of these creatures is accepted for this one night a year. But no matter how scared we allow ourselves to become, we know somewhere in the back of our minds it's only pretend.

The young couple enter the covered bridge.

LEON
(V.O.)

But for the last thirty-seven years, something else has been out on this night of spirits. Something that has been sighted with such alarming frequency, to doubt its existence would be foolish. Something the mere mention of which sends a chill down a grown man's spine...

The young couple stop dead in their tracks halfway across the bridge, their eyes locked in terror on the other side. Lightning flashes to reveal the silhouette of a chubby CHILD with glasses standing motionless, blocking the exit.

The young couple SCREAM.

LEON
(V.O.)

An eight-year old child known simply as The Loner.

OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE

A montage of some of the great mysteries of our time: the pyramids, UFO's, Bigfoot, the Sphinx, the Loch Ness Monster, Zsa Zsa Gabor. URGENT MUSIC drones.

ANNOUNCER
(V.O.)

There are many things in this world that cannot be explained. Mysteries for which science has no pat

answers. Things that live on the border of reality known as the Realm of the Unknown.

The graphics IN THE REALM OF THE UNKNOWN; HOSTED BY LEON NOGG ENDERS flash on screen as an OMINOUS CHORD rings out.

EXT. WOODED PATH- DAY

The host, LEON NOGG ENDERS, walks on-camera by the same covered bridge seen earlier.

LEON

In the realm of the unknown, The Loner has become legend. He now ranks with vampires, werewolves and the Frankenstein Monster as creatures who inspire fear at the mere mention of their names. Movies, novels and music have all been inspired by the story of this perpetually eight year-old boy. But why? What hold does he have on us? Does he really exist or is he just a product of our minds, used to explain the unknown? To get to the bottom of this mystery, we must trace the story back to the beginning.

EXT. SOLVAY- DAY

A panoramic view of the small industrial town. Black smoke spews into the air from factories, giving the town a sooty look.

LEON
(V.O.)

It all began here, in the scenic Central New York town of Solvay. Born on Arbor Day, 1947, The Loner spent his early years living a carefree existence, unaware of the financial difficulties his parents were going through.

A still photograph shows an infant Loner playing on his front lawn, which is covered with shards of metal, broken glass, rusty metal barrels and house shingles.

LEON
(V.O.)

With his father earning only thirty-two cents a month working at a refrigerator magnet factory and his mother laid up with a severe hangnail, times were very lean.

A dour family photograph of his FATHER, covered in soot; his MOTHER sitting in a wheelchair with her foot raised; and The Loner.

LEON
(V.O.)

Unable to afford toys, The Loner would spend the long nights reading and re-reading his only worldly possession, an empty can of Heinz Baked Beans.

A still of The Loner sitting in his empty room, reading the label of an empty can. A single blanket and pillow lie on the floor behind him.

LEON
(V.O.)

Because the family could not afford electricity, this ruined his eyes at a young age, forcing him to wear thick glasses. It also left him with a voracious appetite.

A still of The Loner wearing his new glasses. In one hand he holds a huge steak sandwich, in the other cotton candy. He has gotten fat.

LEON
(V.O.)

And so this mundane existence continued until one day his father entered a Glenn Ford sound-alike contest and was discovered by a television producer, who made him the host of the game show "It Pays to be Ornerly."

Still of the father, clean and dressed-up, in a publicity photo for "It Pays to be Ornerly." He pretends to read questions to excited CONTESTANTS.

LEON
(V.O.)

For the first time, The Loner knew something besides misery and poverty. He was happy. But it was to be short-lived as a freak accident claimed his father's life just weeks later. Using these recently discovered kinescopes, we will now show the footage from that tragic day for the first time since its original broadcast.

INT. SET OF "IT PAYS TO BE ORNERLY"- DAY

An old recording of a black and white television show begins. The Loner's father stands next to an excited fat female CONTESTANT. A large curtain hangs behind them with IT PAYS TO BE ORNERLY written on it.

A desk stands off to the side.

FATHER

Now it's time for the bonus round. For you at home who don't know the rules; I hurl insults at the contestant and if she can control her temper for one minute, she wins our grand prize: a fine assortment of cheeses from Yessir, Cheese My Baby.

The father motions over to some cheeses placed on a pedestal. The audience COOS appreciatively.

FATHER

Ready, Jocelyn?

JOCelyn

Ready...

FATHER

Start the clock...

A clock appears in the corner of the screen and starts to countdown the minute.

FATHER

Hey, is that your face or did your pants just fall down?

The audience ROARS with LAUGHTER. Jocelyn remains stoic.

FATHER

You know, I was at the zoo the other day and stopped by the ape house. Your mother says "hi."

More LAUGHTER. Jocelyn starts to get a little agitated.

FATHER

And I want to compliment you on your hair. I didn't realize the Moe Howard look was back in style.

Jocelyn grits her teeth. The clock continues to countdown.

FATHER

I noticed your family was here with you today. Very handsome group of people. Hey, someone call the penitentiary and see if there's been a prison break.

Jocelyn finally snaps and slugs the father. He stumbles back in a daze and falls onto a desk, which collapses under his weight. As he lies there, sandbags plummet from above and crush him.

His unmoving legs stick out from underneath the bags as STAGEHANDS hurry out to help.

LEON
(V.O.)

The loss of his father threw the family back into poverty. The Loner and his mother tried to get back on their feet by becoming street musicians.

Still of The Loner and his mother standing on a street corner. The Loner wails on a saxophone, while his mother plays an accordion. An empty hat lies in front of them.

LEON
(V.O.)

But his mother was too devastated by the loss of her husband and could no longer face life. One dark night while The Loner slept, she sneaked into the garage, started the car...and ran away to trucking school. When he awoke the next morning he found a note that read simply, "Loner, good-bye. Your Mother."

Still of the note.

LEON
(V.O.)

She also left behind her most prized possession, a pair of tap shoes she had worn in an all tap dance production of "Hamlet."

Still of a stage production of Hamlet. Everyone on stage is dressed in the proper costumes, but they all tap dance.

LEON
(V.O.)

He would wear them wherever he went as a reminder of happier days.

Still of The Loner dressed normally, except for the pair of tap shoes on his feet.

EXT. H. MARTIN SLUGBUNNY HOME FOR BOYS- DAY

A very preppie and distinguished-looking campus. A sign in front reads H. MARTIN SLUGBUNNY HOME FOR BOYS; EST. 1801.

LEON
(V.O.)

The next chapter in The Loner's life took place here, at the prestigious H. Martin Slugbunny Home for Boys. Now a ward of the state, he unhappily agreed to attend after being rebuked in numerous attempts to get his real estate license.

INT. DORMS- DAY

Light glares through the windows, giving the hallway a weird feel. A single door is ominously ajar at the end of the hall.

LEON
(V.O.)

The Loner spent the loneliest days of his life here, rejected by the other boys and ostracized by his teachers. His only solace came from his roommate and only friend, Leslie Finklepuss.

INT. HAIR SALON- DAY

A wild and arty salon. LESLIE FINKLEPUSS, mid-forties, balding, effeminate, meticulously works on a CUSTOMER'S hair.

LEON
(V.O.)

Finklepuss, now a hairdresser in Pittsburgh, recounts his time with The Loner.

LESLIE

He was a beautiful, beautiful person. You know what I mean? But for some reason he didn't get along with the others. He preferred to sit in our room and read Chaucer. He loved Chaucer...and the Hardy Boys. We got along famously. We'd talk to all hours of the night, tell each other stories, I'd do his hair...One time he said to me, "Fink..." All the kids called me Fink back then. But he was the only one who didn't steam my shorts when he did it. Him and Carl Van Horn. Well...Carl steamed my shorts when he did, but in a different way.

(GIGGLES)

Anyway, he said "Fink, where's the lovin'?" And you know, I couldn't answer him. I was awake all night trying to come up with the answer. To this day I still don't know.

Yearbook photos of The Loner and Leslie. The Loner is expressionless, Leslie smiles like an idiot.

LEON
(V.O.)

The Loner struggled through a semester, coming out of his room only for classes, meals, and his favorite school activity, Marquis Club.

Still photo of The Loner, Leslie, and SAL IVERS, a one-armed shop teacher, with the caption THE MARQUIS CLUB (L.-R.): THE LONER, LESLIE FINKLEPUSS, SAL IVERS- CLUB PRESIDENT.

LEON
(V.O.)

Devoted to the works of the Marquis de Sade, the club was The Loner's refuge from the harshness of everyday life. A place where he was free to act like a little boy.

INT. STATE PENITENTIARY- DAY

SAL IVERS, now much older and dressed in prison grays, sits behind a glass partition, speaking through the telephone.

LEON
(V.O.)

Sal Ivers, the club president and school shop teacher, now eighty seven and living in the Evansville Maximum Security Prison, remembers his time with The Loner.

SAL

*@#\$\$% right I remember the little *@#\$\$%. Kept to himself, didn't say much. Was always hanging out with that fairy...Funkleberry? Anyway, those two *@#\$\$% were the only ones in my club. *@#\$\$%, we had a great time. We'd have discussions...I'd give them crossword puzzles on what we had discussed. We'd go on field trips...*@#\$\$%! It was a lotta fun! Then one day the *@#\$\$% just didn't show up. I knew right then I wouldn't ever see him again. *@#\$\$%, I loved that little *@#\$\$% like a son.

INT. BEAUTY SALON- DAY

Leslie continues his remembrance.

LESLIE

I remember that horrible, horrible day like it were yesterday. I had just returned from New York City, where I had seen Bea Arthur in "Auntie Mame." Just spectacular...the costumes, the music. I don't care what anyone says, she's a very graceful lady.

INT. DORMS- DAY

The camera becomes Leslie as it travels down the corridor to his room.

LESLIE
(V.O.)

I was hurrying down the hall because I wanted to share every last bit of my trip with him and also, Mother had bought me a very smart-looking sweater that I was just dying to try on. But when I got there, he was gone.

The door to their room opens to reveal emptiness. The tone of Leslie's voice has changed, it's becoming difficult for him to go on.

LESLIE
(V.O.)

I knew what had happened...the note he left behind only confirmed it.

A note lies on one of the beds.

INT. BEAUTY SALON- DAY

LESLIE

It said, "Fink..."

Leslie's voice catches and he chokes back a tear.

LESLIE

"Fink, hope you had a great time in New York and enjoyed the show. I'm running away forever. Your pal, The Loner."

As Leslie recounts it, the actual note is shown. It is written with a green crayon in exquisite, ornate calligraphy. On the top of the stationary is printed FROM THE DESK OF THE LONER.

LESLIE

"P.S. Where's the lovin'?"

Leslie breaks down and starts to CRY.

LESLIE

I'm sorry...I can't go on...

He waves the camera away, but it continues to linger on him.

LEON
(V.O.)

No one would ever see The Loner again. He was eight ears old.

INT. DORM- DAY

An ominous shot of The Loner's empty dorm room.

EXT. IOWA FARM- DAY

A huge cornfield blows gently in the breeze. A tractor works in a far-off field.

LEON
(V.O.)

It wasn't until 1962, here at this farm in Iowa, that the first mysterious sighting of the creature known as The

Loner was reported.

PIERRE "CHIP" LAFONTAINE, an elderly farmer, walks through his cornfield. His name appears at the bottom of the screen.

PIERRE

I was out here checking the field for bugs same as every day, when I hear my cows making a racket something awful. They were spooked to bejeezus. I figured a coyote had gotten into the pasture, so I hurried to get my gun...that's when I saw him.

Pierre turns to the camera, deadly serious.

PIERRE

He was just standing in the pasture, staring at me. Little fella, about yay high, glasses. Well, that made me madder'n hell. No kid's prank was gonna scare my cows outta a week's worth of milk. Before I could chase him off, my cows stampeded. It was all I could do to get out of the way...

Pierre walks out of the cornfield to reveal a trampled, almost scorched, barren trail of dirt. It stretches off into the distance.

PIERRE

See this here? They stampeded right through here and I ain't never been able to grow anything here since. Finally caught up to them six miles down the road. None of them ever gave milk again. And there was no trace of that kid. It was like he weren't ever there.

LEON

(V.O.)

This one nearly fatal incident was all it took to open the floodgates; reports of Loner sightings started coming in at an alarming rate. New York, Los Angeles, London, Tokyo...The Loner was being spotted all over the world...and in parts of Canada.

Various shots of major cities, the New York skyline, the Hollywood sign, Big Ben.

LEON

(V.O.)

The stories were all the same; the people would always be alone, usually in a less populated area. They'd know something was wrong even before they'd see him, almost as if he radiated terror. He would just stand and watch them, never saying a word, never moving. So the question arose--what did he want? Was he waging some sort of psychological warfare to get back at a society that had treated him unfairly? Was he a spirit, haunting mankind as a reminder of its inhumanity toward others?

Artist's rendering of encounters with The Loner. His silhouette against the backdrop of the moon, frightening an elderly woman. The Loner staring in a child's bedroom window, the child cowering under the covers in terror.

LEON

(V.O.)

Harvey Peptoss of Duluth, Minnesota was one of the first people to spot The Loner.

INT. HARVEY'S HOUSE- DAY

HARVEY PEPTOSS, fat and middle-aged, sits on his front porch.

HARVEY

I saw The Loner, I kid you not. Summer of '64...or was it '65? All I remember is that it was hotter than one of those bikini bathing suits. Honest to God, you'd break into a sweat drinking ice water.

INT. HARVEY'S BEDROOM- NIGHT

Harvey lies on his bed, turning restlessly in his sleep. RE-ENACTMENT appears at the bottom of the screen.

HARVEY

(V.O.)

Sleep was almost out of the question, and when you did doze off it was hardly what you'd call restful, believe you me. And to top things off, I had eaten an onion burrito just before going to bed. I don't know what woke me up, all I know is I was scared. Bad scared. I knew I wasn't alone.

Harvey's eyes shoot open as sweat drips down his face. He bolts to a sitting position and his face fills with fright. The pale moonlight shining through the window reveals the silhouette of The Loner sitting in a chair.

EXT. HARVEY'S HOUSE- DAY

HARVEY

I tell you I was out of that house so fast I don't think my feet ever touched the ground. So there I am in the middle of the street, wearing nothing but my skivvies. When the cops finally came by they thought I was hopped up on something, so they ran me in. And that's the God's honest truth.

A newspaper headline from the *New York Times* reads WHO OR WHAT IS THE MYSTERIOUS LONER?

LEON

(V.O.)

It wasn't long before the press got in on the action, turning it into the story of the decade.

Another headline, this one from the *Chicago Tribune*: LONER'S WAVE OF TERROR HITS THE MIDWEST.

LEON

(V.O.)

They were like sharks, rushing to the scenes of sightings in an attempt to get an exclusive.

A headline from the *Poughkeepsie Blab*: LONER TO MARRY LIZ--BLAB EXCLUSIVE. An obviously doctored photo of The Loner arm-in-arm with Elizabeth Taylor accompanies the article.

LEON

(V.O.)

A headline on The Loner was sure to be an instant sellout. Noted psychologist Melrose N. Qwang of the International Doctors' Institute of Technology explains the fascination with The Loner.

INT. DR. QWANG'S OFFICE- DAY

DR. MELROSE N. QWANG, a very proper psychologist, sits behind his desk. The graphics DR. MELROSE N. QWANG, I.D.I.O.T. appear.

DR. QWANG

Simply put, it's the Little Boy Syndrome. We've created this "Loner" out of a group subconscious that longs for

the simplicity of a life we had as children. The fact that he's seen all over the world merely displays our desire for freedom, the wish to break free from the restraints of everyday life. Now the fear factor...that's extremely interesting. Though we all strive for acceptance and wish to be liked, we would also like for people to fear us a bit. This goes all the way back to our childhoods. After all, who among us hasn't leapt out from the dark at a friend or pretended to be a ghost? And we all know what it's like to electrocute birds or chain small children to tombstones and leave them in a cemetery overnight. It's just a part of growing up.

EXT. YASGAR'S FARM, WOODSTOCK- DAY

Aerial view of sight of the 1969 Woodstock concert. The camera gradually descends, showing the famous site.

LEON
(V.O.)

The latter half of the 1960's was a time of peace, a time of change, a time of revolt. Woodstock marked the culmination of the psychedelic era, bringing to an end many ideas and concepts of the past. But some parts of the past will not die.

Still of SHA NA NA in concert at Woodstock. Among the members of the band stands The Loner, dressed as the rest of them, but with familiar tap shoes and glasses. The Loner stands still as the rest of the people on stage dance and sing.

LEON
(V.O.)

The Woodstock performance of the popular group Sha Na Na is perhaps the most widely documented account of a Loner sighting. Was it truly him, or a clever hoax perpetrated by the million-selling supergroup? Band members, including Dirty Dan, could not be reached for comment.

EXT. YASGAR'S FARM, WOODSTOCK- DAY

Continuation of aerial descent over field.

LEON
(V.O.)

Aside from Jimi Hendrix' unfortunate entrapment in a Porta-Potty, the Loner's appearance at Woodstock has become the most talked about myth of the famous concert. Again, speculation and media hysteria cloud our perception of the truth. Of the three thousand people we interviewed who attended Woodstock, only thirty-one remember The Loner...and only seven remember the sixties. We are left to guess, to wonder.

The camera reaches ground level, and shows fresh tracks of tap shoes in mud.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD- NIGHT

KELLY D. FORREST, an attractive young woman in her early 20's, walks down a quiet neighborhood street. There is no sound, save for the echoing click of her shoes on the sidewalk.

Kelly sports a seventies-style Farrah hairstyle, outrageous bell bottoms, and clogs.

LEON
(V.O.)

1976. The year commemorating our country's independence. We are free to say what we want, go where we want, and even wear clogs. But there is one

freedom some never have...freedom from their deepest fears.

Graphic in the lower part of the screen reads RE-ENACTMENT. Kelly continues down a dimly lit street. She furrows her brow and slows her pace as the sound of shoes echoes behind her.

When she stops, the mysterious sound stops. She continues again, and stops when the strange sound behind her returns, getting louder and louder.

She stops, turns, and screams in complete terror as the obscure silhouette of The Loner stands in the darkened part of the sidewalk, several yards from her. Kelly continues to scream.

INT. KELLY'S HOUSE- DAY

Today, Kelly is no longer the beautiful woman we had seen. She is ghostly pale, her hair is white and a complete mess, and she sits in a big chair under several blankets. The graphic below reads KELLY D. FORREST. Disco music drones feebly in the background.

KELLY
(V.O.)

...And there he was. Beastly thing. Like something out of a *Mannix* episode. Didn't say a word, didn't move. I screamed and screamed, all the way home. I haven't stepped outside since.

(PAUSE)

No, not *Mannix*...that other show, the one with Darrin McGavin.

(PAUSE)

Beastly thing.

Kelly pulls a blanket up to her nose and stares blankly forward.

INT. SOUND LAB- DAY

Four men in white laboratory coats sit in an impressive, state-of-the-art sound analysis facility. Three men in the background work with various pieces of equipment. The man in the foreground examines a wave pattern on a computer screen.

LEON
(V.O.)

Miss Forrest's encounter some sixteen years ago shares factors common to other Loner sightings. Once such factor is the lack of verbal communication from the pint-sized apparition. Does The Loner have something to say? Dr. Emery "Chip" Curnin, chief audio analyst at Snareside Acoustic Labs, has made a startling discovery.

The man in the foreground turns and faces the camera. The graphic DR. EMERY "CHIP" CURNIN, SOUND ANALYST appears at the bottom of the screen.

DR. CURNIN
(V.O.)

Well, yes, this discovery is not only crucial in substantiating the very existence of the little fella, but it also helps us determine the motive for his sojourn of seeming perpetuity. This dude's really got a beef. This belief of mine led me to a search for concrete evidence. I knew that I would unearth the very artifact that would link the motive with the sightings.

Still of Curnin and associates excavating ground in front of the ladies' restroom of a Solvay gas station. The men are dressed in typical archeologist garb.

LEON
(V.O.)

Dr. Curnin's search for concrete evidence of The Loner led him to the side of a self-service gas station in Solvay, believed to be the very spot where The Loner's childhood home once stood.

Still of Curnin crouching over a hole he dug through the concrete. He is smiling triumphantly as he pulls a piece of audio tape from the hole. Curnin's associates sit off to the side and eat sandwiches from a picnic basket, paying no attention to Curnin.

INT. SOUND LAB- DAY:

Curnin holds a piece of audio tape.

DR. CURNIN
(V.O.)

My discovery of this audio tape was precisely what I had hoped for. My associates have been subjecting the artifact to high-tech, state-of-the-art machinery in an effort to determine if the tape is indeed genuine.

One associate wears headphones, turning knobs and pressing buttons as he sits in front of an oscilloscope. Another associate wears safety goggles and subjects some tape to chemical tests. A third looks into a View Master, writes on a clipboard, and repeats the process.

DR. CURNIN
(V.O.)

What we found was more incredible that I could have possibly dreamed. We found...the link.

Dr. Curnin fiddles with some buttons.

LEON
(V.O.)

Dr. Curnin believes that this recording, thought to have been made at The Loner's fourth birthday party, is the only known tangible insight into his thoughts. This is a television exclusive, brought before the public for the first time ever.

Dr. Curnin presses the PLAY button. He looks thoughtfully into space as the room is flooded by the crackling, crude sound of the tape.

Then, in a very despondent voice, the poorly recorded voice of a very young boy is heard to say "Where's the lovin'?" Curnin turns the tape off. He looks at the camera with a cold, haunted face.

DR. CURNIN
(V.O.)

And that's all he had to say.

EXT. CITY STREET- DAY

The camera strolls leisurely down a well-kept city street.

LEON
(V.O.)

"Where's the lovin'?" Can any of us truly answer that? Perhaps our society expresses compassion in a more indirect fashion. Ours is a culture inundated by objects of wonder.

The camera passes a Poster and Gift Shop, and in the front window a poster of a giant thirteen dollar bill is displayed. The Loner's persona adorning the center. The camera moves on.

LEON
(V.O.)

Since the mid-sixties, we have seen hundreds of Loner-related products.

The camera passes a very large man wearing a T-shirt with the likeness of The Loner and the caption "I'd Rather Be Lovin'."

LEON
(V.O.)

T-shirts, bumper stickers, frozen dinners...and of course, movies.

The camera reaches a movie theater, the marquee reads 60's HORROR FILM FEST. The camera heads for the entrance.

A mid-sixties film shows a teen couple making out in tall grass near a beach. Graphic at bottom reads NIGHT OF THE LOVIN' DEAD- 1967.

The couple is getting a bit more intimate, until the girl opens her eyes and SCREAMS, having seen something terrifying. The boy turns around and SCREAMS as well.

Several yards away from them stands a cheap Loner look-alike. Camera pans back to the couple. They are dead, drenched in fake blood, and have anguished looks on their faces. Ominous music SOUNDS.

INT. BAR- NIGHT

Leather-clad heavy metal fans crowd the stage of a small, seedy bar. On stage, a thrash metal trio known as DEATH SANDWICH performs in typical metal band fashion.

LEON
(V.O.)

Like the films of yesterday, today's arts are heavily influenced by the fables and folklore of The Loner. We even find his inspiration in the repertoire of contemporary music combos.

INT. BAR- NIGHT

The members of Death Sandwich sit on the edge of the stage. The crowd is gone, and a man sweeps the stage. Graphics at the bottom of the screen reveal the band as DEATH SANDWICH.

LEON
(V.O.)

Death Sandwich is one band that truly keeps alive the spirit and adventure of The Loner myth. We asked band members Guttersnipe, Acrimony, and Sweet Lou Sweet (NAMES APPEAR AS THEY ARE MENTIONED) what it is about the wee wanderer that penetrates our imaginations.

GUTTERSNIPE

Oh, heavens to Betsy, whatever shall I say about that? Hmm...jeekers, I'm stumped. Ackie?

Guttersnipe turns to Acrimony.

ACRIMONY

Goodness gracious peas in gravy...I think it's, well, he's kinda like a pixie. A mad little gnome who tickles our fancies then scurries off. Sweet Lou?

Acrimony turns to Sweet Lou, who stares at the camera for a short moment, silently, then turns back to Acrimony.

ACRIMONY

Have you seen our latest album? Honey, if you're really into the little guy, you'll think this album's an A-1 hoot!

Still of front of album cover. Death Sandwich sit at a table in a very posh restaurant. Acrimony politely grabs the attention of the skeleton waiter.

The album title, DEATH PLEASE!, appears at the top, below it an ornate logo depicting the band's name.

In the background of the restaurant sit other patrons, including Hitler, Dracula, Stalin, Ghengis Khan, Satan, the comic strip character Nancy, and The Loner.

ACRIMONY
(V.O.)

'Twas our intention to find an audience responsive to this whole Loner bugaboo, and just give them all one big rock'n'roll goose.

Death Sandwich song "The Lone Psychodude" plays in the background.

Reverse side of album shows list of songs: TAP DANCE ON YOUR SKULL; LITTLE BOY FASCIST; THE LONE PSYCHODUDE; HALFWAY THERE, BUT FOR SATAN; I'M GONNA CLEAN MY SPECTACLES, THEN I'M GONNA KILL YOU; TRUCK DRIVER BEAST MOTHER; EVIL RUNT (THE SILLY NILLY SONG); and HAVE YOU NEVER BEEN MELLOW?

The bottom of the album shows the record company name, Asparagust Records, and a photo of the band posing like menacing tough guys.

LEON
(V.O.)

Songs such as "The Lone Psychodude" express the new generation's fascination with The Loner. The counterculture has found a new battle cry, and their cry to the world-- "Where's the lovin'?"

INT. FARBINSON KITCHEN- DAY

PHYLLIS AND GUS FARBINSON sit in their modest suburban kitchen.

LEON
(V.O.)

Even today, The Loner's existence is evident in more than just song. Sighting are as frequent as ever, as in the experience of the Farbinsons, Phyllis and Gus.

Graphics reveal the middle aged couple as THE FARBINSONS, PHYLLIS AND GUS. Phyllis gestures freely as she speaks. Gus sits as still as death.

PHYLLIS

I was walking 'round the house with my Nakahomi 2000 Mini-camcorder, same as always. If something newsworthy happens, I'm gonna be at the ready. I once caught ol' Gus here picking his nose with his Ed McMahon swizzle stick.

Gus doesn't move an inch.

GUS

Ya did not.

Phyllis pats him reassuringly on his forearm.

PHYLLIS

I most certainly did so. Well, one day I noticed my camera was on the fritz. And believe you me, I charged those batteries. I really thought that was odd. I knew right then something spooky-like was gonna happen.

INT. FARBINSON KITCHEN- NIGHT

A home video of Phyllis trekking through her house with her video camera. Gus sits at the kitchen table, reading a newspaper.

LEON
(V.O.)

With the help of her neighbor, Gvette Gorschlumpfki, Phyllis created this re-enactment of her haunting encounter with The Loner.

PHYLLIS
(V.O.)

My camcorder went kaputz just then. For no reason whatsoever.

Video shows Phyllis banging violently on her camcorder, trying to fix it.

PHYLLIS
(V.O.)

I was so spooked by the damn thing breaking, I thought of only one thing--I needed a stiff belt. Y'know, a squirt bottle full of margaritas.

Phyllis drops the camcorder on the kitchen table and walks to the blender.

PHYLLIS
(V.O.)

I walked over to the blender, which was usually empty and never haunted, believe you me. And then...I saw him.

Phyllis jumps back as the blender starts up by itself.

PHYLLIS
(V.O.)

The damn thing was set to puree, and right inside the pitcher I saw those creepy little glasses. It was him all right.

Phyllis backs up to Gus and taps him on the shoulder. She points to the blender and he looks. His eyes widen, he jumps from his chair and points to the apparition with grand overacting.

GUS

Jesus H. Schwarzkopf!! It's The Loner!!

The camcorder moves in closer to the blender. A motionless pair of glasses resembling those of The Loner float inside the whirling liquid of the blender. Ominous music SOUNDS.

EXT. WOODED PATH- DAY

Leon walks down the path, addressing the camera.

LEON

Is it true? Does The Loner really exist? You have seen the evidence, the decision is yours to make. But the next time you hear tap shoes echoing in the darkness or see a small figure slip into the shadows just remember: anything is possible in the realm of the unknown.

Leon walks off-screen, leaving the eerily quiet woods behind him. A photo of The Loner fades up as the audio tape of him plays.

THE LONER

Where's the lovin'?

FADE OUT



STEVE E.

Chris separately that night)

FrankenHeather:
Introduce yourself and state what you do in the band.

Steve: I'm Steve E. Nixx, I play guitar and I sing

Lance: Lance Romance, attempting bass, kinda singing.

Daniel: I play guitar and part-time plumber.

Chris: I'm Chris Brief, I scream and hurt my throat, and play drums.

F&H: What's your favorite type of road food?

Lance: Krispy Kreme's.

F&H: How do you stay so thin?

Lance: I throw up afterwards.

Steve: Those are disgusting.

Zingers. Zingers all the way. Honey roasted Cashews!! Dr.

Pepper!!!!

Chris: Frosted Mini-Wheats. It helps in many ways.

F&H: What would you eat for your last meal? You know, if you were about to be executed?

Steve: Oh! If we were about to die? That's a heavy question, don't hex us please.

Lance: I'd eat a human.

Steve: I'd like to sample a human myself, we'd have a human Luau. We're vegetarians, but for that I'd do that.

Daniel: I'd like to taste Lance....NO, not like that, no no! That's gross.

DANIEL



Chris: I had some really good Belgian Waffles here(at Bulgin' Waffles), that's my last meal in NY.

F&H: How much do you consider fashion to be important in the band?

Lance: Fashion?...we're just into the entertainment.

Daniel: I'm more into democracy for sure.

MEET THE BRIEFS

Did you say how important is fascism? I'm a communist, but

Lance is for sure a fascist.

Chris: We're not really into that kind of thing, people give us clothes, which is really cool, our fans determine our fashion. When I was a kid, all punk rock bands looked either like hippies, or just dirty. I had a tri-hawk, and I was like 'where's all the shit I want to see, and no one's wearing it'. People want to see a show.

F&H: Has anything really embarrassing happened to you onstage?

Daniel: Yeah, oh God, Lance had the worst diarrhea three nights ago, it was so horrible, and he was wearing white pants.

Lance: I tried to throw up but it came out the wrong end.

Daniel: See what you get when we come off stage? Nothing but diarrhea jokes and innuendo.

Steve: Fish guts- that was gross. We played with the Damned and they threw fish guts onstage. And somebody threw this really awful Chinese food with chicken in it onstage in Seattle once.

Lance: I blew my nose one time, accidentally onstage without any sort of napkin, that was pretty bad.

Daniel: It was wrapped around his head.

Chris: You mean like fuck-ups? One time I stopped in the middle of a song I was singing cause I couldn't hear anything, that was embarrassing to me.

F&H: What's the best thing about being on a major label(Interscope)?

Chris: I think it's great. It's definitely not anything I ever dreamt. There's nothing wrong with getting some money to tour, doing what you want to do, and eating. If people say that's not punk, I just don't know where this hippie shit got put on punk. Every single record that I love, most of them anyway, are on major labels. We're just surprised that we got money, we're like, 'these guys are really dumb, they gave us money'.

Lance: Well, there's really one honest answer to that(money), we get to tour and put out records and that's what we wanted to do. Indie labels rule, but money is good.

Steve: We're on tour, and we haven't even put out a record yet.

Lance: And they give us free Krispy Kreme's.



LANCE



CHRIS



Zus Reviews de Recordose et Disscs

The jig is up...the record review section contains "personal opinions." Since 1995 I've been pulling the wool over the eyes of tens of readers but late last year, no joke, a press person from Fat Wreck Records castigated me for the lack of objectivity contained in the record reviews. With much shame I must confess to the crime and, sans further ado, commit about 60 or 70 more violations.

The Actual - The Red EP cd ep

Aside from a couple of verses that are mildly entertaining--or at least not as offensively unimaginative as the rest of the record--this is comprised of all the MTV-ready rock moves that you've heard reused endlessly over the past ten years. They close the ep with an acoustic song that reeks of "hey, listen, we're ready to break out on radio, we've got crossover appeal!"--the final nail in le coffin du lame. (Missing Sequences - 7095 Hollywood Blvd., No. 626, Hollywood, CA 90028)

Amazing Transparent Man - The Death of the Party cd

Same as their debut cd (reviewed below), though they do cook up one good song title and line ("The Ocean Is a Fuck of a Long Way to Swim"-- "those guys from Alcatraz with their raincoat boats/ain't got nothing on me"). The ultimate failing is that the band's sound is always the same, regardless of a song's content. Lyrically, "Phones Are Dumb" mines the same territory as the Replacements' "Answering Machine" ("A phone call won't keep you warm at night" isn't that far removed from "How do you say good night to an answering machine?"). But whereas Paul Westerberg's delivery aches with a unnerving pathos, the guy from Amazing Transparent Man might be lonely, he might be content or maybe he's just thinking about ordering a pizza. Therein lies the distinction between legends and also-rans. (Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

Amazing Transparent Man - The Measure of All Things cd

...flaccid pop punk, a transparent effort to "make it," right down to the obligatory wacky cover, in this case they erase every ounce of personality from "Girls Just Want to Have Fun," and in one of the other songs there's a lyric about "...time is passing, I'm 22 years old..." Ugh.

(Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

Chris Butler - Easy Life double cd

This two-cd set is the sound of Chris Butler having a sonic lawn sale. Most of the gems are on disc one, itself seemingly broken into three acts. Act one is all big, fantastic pop songs. "Easy Life," "Millions & Millions," and "Hey Stranger" are simply brilliant (yet, beneath the surface, too complex to be brilliantly simple), especially the title track, a pop art masterpiece ("Every morning breakfast in bed, if that's what I would like/And every evening adjust the sunset 'till it looks real nice"). (Someone ought to run these songs by Pete Townshend just in case Sir Pete ever decides to do something other than Who relishes and recognizes the need for a collaborator.) Act two is mostly Butler and his guitar, still poppy and insightful but worked up using fewer tools. Act three is devoted to "Beggars' Bullets," a six-part memoir of Butler's experiences at Kent State in the late 60s and early 70s. He was there and a friend of his was killed but "Beggars' Bullets" is framed by neither self pity nor nostalgic lament but rather a simple (that word again) yet compelling personal retelling of related events (including a hilarious story about taking a trip to Cleveland to see a Grateful Dead show, a show at which Butler wandered backstage, then

on-stage, then joined the band on beer can percussion only to find himself staring at Jerry Garcia's "wonderful face, so deep lined and wise with the beatific look of pure knowing...and from out of that wonderful mouth and those twinkling eyes came at the top of his lungs, 'Will you shut the fuck up, you fucking asshole.'") Disc two is subtitled "a collection of demos, covers, sketches, and obscurios" and that says it all. Highlights include "My Hometown (Hueyville)," a long distance Tin Huey reunion conducted via the postal system, and "Easy Life (Ice Rink Version)" which was used as cue music in the American Drama Group's stage version of *Harold and Maude*. *Easy Life* is never less than interesting and is most often excellent to breathtaking. One hell of a lawn sale.

(Future Fossil - Box 6248, Hoboken, NJ 07030)

Ken Cormier - Radio-Bueno cd

Even if "Nothing Personal" weren't the only song I'd ever heard about a gay agoraphobic it'd be one of my favorite gay agoraphobic songs of all time. It's a pleasant piece of pop. I also like the oddball "Everybody Kind" and "The Avenue" which sound like They Might Be Giants. Most of the rest of *Radio-Bueno* is acoustic coffeehouse pop, that would play well on NPR, carried by Ken's likable and witty personality (which is good because he needs such attributes to carry him through his occasional lapses into Dave Matthews-like stuff (I hesitate to use the term "Dave Matthews-like funk"), such as "Bug Dreams" and "You Are Nothing"). Overall, radio pretty good-o. (Elis Eil - Box 1282, Jackson Heights, NY 11372)

The Crowd - Punk Off cd

Long time Orange County band, I don't like them as much as some of the bands they inspired (Agent Orange, Social Distortion) but have to give credit where it's due. Plus, there are some pretty good cuts here. High energy and good chops but nothing to get exited about.

(Unity Squad - Box 1235, Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

The Cuffs - "Never Forget" b/w "Cut Throat" 7"

Not only do these songs sound unusually tame for a Headache Records band (that being the label that's served as homebase for Limecell and the Wretched Ones, among others) but I'm not even sure all three of these guys could beat me up and a Headache band that doesn't strike fear into me isn't really a Headache band. Oi/street punk doesn't have to be devoid of melody but the solo to "Never Forget" stumbles into full-fledged wussiness. "Cut Throat" is a little better but still amounts to name calling more than fist throwing.

(Headache - Box 204, Midland Park, NJ 07432)

Dirt Bike Annie-Night of the Living Rock'n'Roll Creation 7"ep

You could spend a lot of time tallying all of the positive attributes that make Dirt Bike Annie such a stellar band. Setting aside the obvious--great songs, killer stage act--I'd top my list with the fact that on this ep they've recorded a birthday song for their number one fan, Enoch. It's one thing to dedicate a song from stage but how many bands would record a song for a fan and name that fan in said song? A class act, DBA. And a damn fine ep too.

(Knock Knock - 394 Hewlett Ave., Patchogue, NY 11772)

The Disappointments/Microsurgeon - split 7"

God bless the Disappointments. They're one of the best pop bands in the world yet they remain criminally overlooked. So, when planning their next 7", they opted not to release a pair of the more immediately catchy songs from their stunning live act but rather to do a split with a synth pop band (Microsurgeon, who sound like a cross between Erasure and They Might Be Giants) that's also a concept record about the assassination of President William McKinley and the subsequent decline of Buffalo, NY. If the Disappointments last record found them toying with power pop's conventions this ep shows them

thumping their noses at the academy. But they're still a pop band, just as the Kinks were still a pop band when they did "Dead End Street," because while the record's about McKinley and his assassin, Leon Czolgosz, on the surface, it's really about the Disappointments' hometown of Buffalo. And like that Kinks' song, these Disappointments tracks sound like they're filtering out of a neighborhood bar, but instead of lamenting a leaky London flat, they're toasting their city, warts and all. I love the Disappointments songs and like the Microsurgeon songs but the sum total is more than a very good pop record, it's a bewildering and engaging concept record that yields a small-scale cultural event. (This last point is further substantiated by the Leon Czolgosz shot glass that accompanied the review copy of the 7", ask for yours when you order a copy.) (TTSCC - Box 7, Buffalo, NY 14240-0007)

A Drink with Shane MacGowan - Shane MacGowan & Victoria Mary Clarke

Talk about truth in advertising, this is like rolling tape on a sauce-filled night with the former Pogue. Thankfully, he hits the mark much more often than most drunks, only stumbling, verbally, on occasion. It's too bad he wasn't prodded into talking about the Pogues more often. I mean, sure, I'm interested in his desire to move back to the Emerald Isle one day but it's the "ex-Pogue" part of his resume that drew me to this book in the first place. I feel comfortable laying the blame on the shoulders of Shane's co-author, and wife, Victoria Mary Clarke. It may be that she's responsible for taking hundreds of hours of incomprehensible madness and pulling them together into a decent biography. However, any and all credit is promptly tossed out the window--and set aflame--about six pages into *A Drink with Shane MacGowan*. For it is at that point that you realize she is going to end each and every one of her many, many, many pointless interjections with an adverb. Every time the text breaks from straight dialogue into some sort of description of how or where they're conversing, Ms. Clarke indulges in an adverb, never using the same one twice. It's clever for a page or two, annoying for the next two to four, and unbearable for the rest of the read. I skipped those parts for the better part of 300 pages. She seems to think we're buying this book to enjoy her craft. The fact that she doesn't use "reluctantly" until p. 112 ought to demonstrate how far she stretches the "how many 'ly' words are there?" question (as if they were ever posed in the first place!). Despite all of that, Shane's part of the book--sad to say it but Clarke's presence is so overbearing that Shane merely co-stars in his own autobiography--makes it a worthy read for any Pogues fan. Not a worthy purchase though, try the library or borrow my copy. (Grove Press)

The Donalds - I Wanna Be in Palo Alto 7" ep

The cover art, band name and logo parody and/or pay tribute to an early Donnas 7". But whereas the Donnas leaned toward the Ramones, the Donalds lean toward the Misfits or Cosmic Psychos--heavy duty enough for the thug/cretin crowd and catchy enough for wusses like me. With that comes big sing along action and the Donalds are well-versed in the "Cool Yet Simple Backing Vocals" chapter of *The Book of Punk Rock*. There are heaps of call and response parts and, my favorites, spell outs ("D-O-double N-A" - "Regular Girls; "M-A (beat) N-O" - "Mano a Go Go"). Still, from the sounds of it you'd think these guys were 6'5" Australians not the scrawny Southern California stoners staring back at you from in the band photos. Right fine, this one, right fine. (Cabeza de Tornado - 203 1/2 Acacia, Huntington Beach, CA 92648)

The Dorks - We Got Drunk for Christmas cd ep

Even when drunk and singing holiday songs, the Dorks are one of the best bands around. "Better Be Nice" and "In the Snow" rock, "Fa La La" is a toasty ballad for those of us without

fireplaces (and havers of fireplaces too, I suppose) and the other two songs, well, that's the Dorks getting *really* drunk. But they're a punked up power pop band, it makes sense that they're going to dip into the sauce now and again. Plus, it's not like you have to be drunk to love this ep, the first three cuts are genuinely fun, the other two genuinely goofy. The world would be a much better place if bands like the Promise Ring and Jets to Brazil could put together an ep half, no, a quarter, hell, I'll settle for 1/32 as entertaining as *We Got Drunk for Christmas*. But those bands can't and should be shunned. The Dorks can and should be embraced by every motherfokin' household on the globe. Now, to revise that title: *The Dorks Got Drunk for Christmas, Cut an Excellent 3-Song EP and Tacked Onto it a Couple of (Liquored Up) Goofs*. (Dorks - 227 Columbia Ave., Park Ridge, IL 60068)

Epoxies - s/t 7" ep

Holy new wave revival, Batman! The Epoxies are the result of a gloriously successful attempt to fuse the Dickies and Kim Wilde. And if for some reason the two originals didn't make it clear that the Epoxies are reverent new wavers, they cover Adam Ant's "Beat My Guest" on the flipside. Adhesive! (Dirtnap - Box 21249, Seattle, WA 98111)

The Ergs! - 3 Guys, 12 Eyes 7" ep

Whoa Oh Records is on a roll. Their last release was a wonderful Dirt Bike Annie/Kung Fu Monkeys split, now this, the vinyl debut from the Ergs! The 7" comes with a cd-r version of the same songs but trust in the 7", it's the perfect medium because none of the great, short songs get lost and before you know it side two is over and it's time to flip back to the beginning. What happens during that ride? Lots of Replacements references--the phrasing in "If You Don't" is swiped from "Hold My Life," the between songs banter is nicked from *Stink*--along with nods to Devo, Gang of Four and vintage Lookout bands before wrapping up with a surf instrumental (which could be construed as a nod to the Replacements' "Buck Hill"). 3 guys, 12 eyes, 5 hits = one great time! (Whoa Oh - 52 McLoughlin St., Glen Cove, NY 11542)

F*Bomb - El Diablo Dinner Theatre cd**

When I isolate the guitar riffs I like some of what's going on here. When I solder said riffs back onto the rest of the song in question it all falls apart (*note: not to be read as a Husker Du reference*). The vocals consistently miss the mark and none of the songs explodes, or even threatens to detonate. And that's just the Fugazi knockoffs. A couple of times they inexplicably try some dumprtruck jangle pop, though without the hooks and "we're all fucked, let's get drunk" pathos. F*** = Forgettable. (Groundswell - 581 E. Town St., #33, Columbus, OH 43215)

The Figgs - Badger cd ep

Shortly after buying a copy of *Badger* I was convinced that I'd proven there can't be a God. But, conscious of my tendency to get carried away when writing about the Figgs, I'll put such frivolity on hold and get to the heart of the matter. Q: Do you, esteemed reader, need to get this ep. A: Yes. Many a Figgs Freak will tell you that "The Trench" is the crown jewel of this 6-song disc. It's a great mid-tempo Pete Donnelly number but probably only the fourth or fifth best song here. My vote goes to the stunningly satisfying "Three Times a Riff," a pure rush of adrenaline wrapped around a scalding AC/DC riff. It sounds especially amazing coming on the heels of "To Throw Us," the opening track and silver medalist. That song condenses the best of *Who's Next*, doubles the energy, and leaves me wondering if Mike Gent is singing about a group of friends getting kicked out of a bar or a couple throwing away their future. I'd give the bronze to "With Pounding Hearts," a genuinely heartfelt dose of optimism (with a guest spot from NRBQ's Johnny Spaminato). Toss in an quality arena rocker

("Riding on You") and a song I'll never decode but will enjoy forever ("Send Fever to Guide") and we've got another essential Figgs record. (Now, for the rest of that theory...Last fall I was late to a Figgs show in (relatively) nearby Cleveland. I misjudged the length of the trip and was late; I missed half of the Figgs set. Still, I was able to catch the second half, see all of their set with Graham Parker, and allowed to purchase a copy of *Badger*. On the way home it dawned on me that there was no way any self-respecting all-powerful being would allow me to commit such a crime (being late to a Figgs show) and, not only avoid punishment, but be rewarded with one and a half great shows and a new ep. A couple miles later the air cleared and it came to me that perhaps there is a God but s/he takes a laissez faire approach to pop music. See why I put this at the end?) Long live the Figgs. (hearbox.com)

The Flakes - "Bad Girl" b/w "Hangup!" 7"

This rocks with a low rent garage thump that reaches back to 1955 (as opposed to a band like the Count Backwards--who shared a couple of band members with the Flakes--whose low rent garage thump reached back to 1965). Two great, put-hair-on-your-chest scorches that are nearly as good as their first single, and in both cases the b-side was the better song. (Lipstick - 1154 Powell St., Oakland, CA 94608)

Flipping Hades - Tell Peaches Lulu Called cd

The music - bouncy, angular art punk that bobs and weaves and never quite goes where you expect it to. Very, very good. The lead vocals - a tale of two singers. Jake's pipes are perfectly suited for the songs, not far removed from the Embarrassment or Big Dipper (in fact, Flipping Hades' "Good Times" seems like an answer song to Big Dipper's "Ron Klaus"). Clark's squawk, on the other hand, = no good. At times it's merely annoying but on a song like "Sausage Town" it's like he's summoning and emphasizing every ounce of phlegm in his respiratory system. The shame of it is that musically Clark's songs are as good as Jake's. Flipping Hades rarely sound like any one else. Whether or not that's a good thing depends on who's singing. (Deraillleur - Box 10276, Columbus, OH 43201)

The Gentlemen - Blondes Prefer the Gentlemen cd

This came in just before the review section was closed off. Given that it's a Figgs offshoot it'll require weeks of thorough examination before we're able to go public with an assessment. In the meantime, the facts...six songs written by the Figgs Mike Gent, three each from Lucky Jackson and Ed Valauskas (both of whom are moonlighting from the Gravel Pit). The missing link between the Stones and AC/DC. To be continued...

(The Gentlemen's Recording Company - Box 391035, Cambridge, MA 02139)

Georgia Tucker - For Lack of Humor cd ep

I like the sounds--Superchunk here, Dischord-era Jawbox there--but not the speeds. Or, rather, speed, as everything moves slowly. The ep's title is certainly accurate but it's not all doom and gloom ("Sunshine's always better" - "Join the Club"). A bit of pep and pruning (the last cut is over eight minutes) and this would make much more sense to me.

Go Real Slow - Thirteen cd ep

Green Day songs on 78. You've heard it before. (Retraction: When I reviewed their demo I stated that their name was in need of at least one "ly" ending, which is not necessarily true.) (Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

Grand Champeen - Battle Cry for Help cd

I've always been fascinated by the link between power pop (in the broad sense) and country. Through the pop ages scores of luminaries (Young Fresh Fellows, Figgs, Elvis Costello, Jonathan Richman, Kim Deal) have dabbled in country and made it seem a perfectly natural extension of what they normally indulged in. Grand Champeen don't sound like any of the aforementioned

bands but they're mining the same fertile grounds--enough energy to attract the skinny tie set and enough twang to draw the flannel clad *No Depression* nation. If you love records like the Replacements' *Pleased to Meet Me* and Soul Asylum's *Hang Time* but were disappointed by where those bands went after the fact, Grand Champeen's your band. A stellar record from start to finish.

(Glurp - Box 685163, Austin, TX 78768)

The Half Empties - Full Bore cd

Loud, fast, lunkhead punk. Nothing of note in the music but the lyric sheet has more typos per capita than any in history. Sample these gems, all from "Burn": "Burn doen the bridge...I'm comming for you...I get cloths from capitalism". (Note: Here's what I found when I looked up capitalism...: capitalism (cap' e-tel-iz-em) n. the economic system under which Capital recording artists, such as the Peggy Lee, Nat Cole, and Mike Love have historically exerted collective oppression; first noted by esteemed social critics the Half Empties). Best of all, they offer lyrics for only five of the twelve songs, imagine what awaits on the other 7/12 of the lyrics? "Dropped out of school so I could read all the books"--guys, try a dictionary.

(Out of Step - Box 509, Vineburg, CA 95487)

Kill-a-watts - "Dig These Kids" b/w/ "Snotty Bastard!" 7"

When this single arrived I spun it four times in a row, mostly because I was floored by the last Kill-a-watts single and wanted these new songs hardwired into my brain as soon as possible but also because I couldn't immediately distinguish one part of either cut from the other. Both songs seem shorter and faster, making for a sonic smear. Few bands can cook up this kind of intensity and still leave memorable songs in their wake (Black Flag, the Pagans). Dig these kids, indeed! (Yakisakana - 51, rue Pierre Renaudel, 76 100 Rouen, France)

Kill-a-watts/Catholic Boys - split 7"

Both sides of this platter are totally blistering, moronic garage punk. The Kill-a-watts keep their hit streak alive with two more torrid tunes, "Video Game" being the standout. The Catholic Boys are just as fast, catchy, and intense and give the mighty Kill-a-watts a run for their money. If you want to talk about the best turn-of-the-century punk bands, start the conversation with this record. Dare I say awesome? Yes, yes I do.

(Electrorock - Box 13504, Wauwatosa, WI 53213)

Kilopop - Un Petit Gouter cd

Chris Butler (Tin Huey, Waitresses) needed an outlet for a bunch of his songs. Rather than do another solo album, he paired up with singer Carla Murray and formed Kilopop. Only they're not Chris and Carla on the record, they're the brother/sister team of Furk and Trynka, hailing from a never-actually-specified part of Western Europe. And this is not just a collection of previously unreleased songs, this is a greatest hits collection spanning 1966-1999. (And scattered among the originals are Joe Meek, Raymond Scott, and Shaggs (!) covers.) The concept is amusing but it also serves a purpose, providing the common thread that runs through this diverse batch of songs. Murray's wonderfully malleable voice is also a big factor in this regard. She sounds equally at ease with the lounge pop of "Red Drinks" as she does with the sweet absurdity that is the Shaggs' "Who Are Parents?" And, all kidding aside, this is a remarkable pop record. "Beat of the World" really should be a hit somewhere in the world, likewise for a number of other cuts. Or better yet, use Butler's ingenious idea that these are hits already. Why wait for the rest of the world to give hit status to these gems? Label them successes now and let the rest of the populace catch up.

(Future Fossil - Box 6248, Hoboken, NJ 07030)

The Kung Fu Monkeys/Junior Varsity - ...Get Along Famously - split 7"

Disclosure: I used to be in KFM and I wrote the liner notes for this humdinger. So, having freed myself from the shackles of objectivity, I'll go on record as saying this is the best split I've heard in, well, I can't remember how long. I think it's even better than the KFM/Dirt Bike Annie split from last year (and that's one hell of a good record!). All five cuts are new and each band does a song about the other band. As far as I know the bands have never met in person but from this ep you'd swear they were close-knit kinfolk. This is pop music as is should be, fun, fast, deceptively simple and utterly infectious. (She's Gone - 807 Bernard St., #6, Denton, TX 76201)

The Lab Rats - Start Thinking cd

These guys are from the same section of the punk rock periodic table as Minor Threat or vintage Bad Religion but definitely retain enough of their own sound as to remain a unique element. They blast out of the gates with hyped up, 1-2, 1-2 hardcore but they're at their best when they slow down to a mere warp factor four--taking the time to pummel their audience rather than just sprint by. A good start. (New Disorder - 115 Bartlett St., SF, CA 94110)

The Leg Hounds - s/t cd

Souped up greaser punk with bits of power pop and twang (as in Nine Pound Hammer) tossed in for good, occasionally great, measure. There's isn't a bad song in the bunch but, with one exception (that being the sole, and quite excellent, mid-tempo song, "Too Late"), they all travel at the same speed, causing things to run together. With a bit more variety they'll cash in on the abundant potential at which *The Leg Hounds* hints. (Bulge - Box 1173, Green Bay, WI 54305)

Lifestyle - Frontier cd ep

It's synthpop! Yet it's neither as goofily buoyant as Erasure nor as goofily morose as New Order, and it's that absence of any sort of goofiness that drags these songs into the abyss of blandness. If the machines are going to do more of the work, then the band's got to have a clearly defined personality. Lifestyle aren't there yet. (Archenemy - Box 802, Boston, MA 02134)

The Line - Monsters We Breed cd

Chili Peppers style, mix-in-a-bit-of-everything rock, there's enough pop and additional spices to avoid cloning their Warped tour mates. Not enough to merit repeated visits but not bad. (Volcom - 1740 Monrovia Ave., Costa Mesa, CA 92627)

Micky & the Salty Sea Dogs - Fresh Fish 7" ep

"I Keep on Wanting" is a doozy of a garage tune, sure to please those who've dug Micky's previous bands (such as the Milkshakes). The two songs on the flipside are pretty good rewrites ("Didn't I?" is a raunchier version of "Tequila"; "Now You Move in Different Circles" is a vocalized take of "Misirlou"). All in all a fine affair, as long as you step over the flaming turd that is the lead song, "Leave Me Alone." Micky's gruff vocals are great for fast songs but he handles a ballad with all the grace of Jose Canseco patrolling the outfield (Canseco being the guy who once had a fly ball bounce off his head and into the stands for a home run). Three keepers and one to toss back into the drink. (Smart Guy - 3288 21st St., #32, SF, CA 94110)

The Mighty John Waynes - "She Gets Dirty" & "Wanna Be Your Toy" b/w "You Threw Me Out"

Something's afoot in the Midwest. In the last year or so there's been a burst of brilliant garage punk records. From Wisconsin there's the Kill-a-watts, Catholic Boys, and Teenage Rejects. From Indiana there's the Slurs and, now, the Mighty John Waynes. (For the record, that's simply the order in which I've come across these bands, it may be chronologically flawed.) With all of these bands it's the low rent Rip Off approach

revved up with New Bomb Turks-caliber energy, and the Mighty John Waynes are at the head of the class. Well, no, that's probably the wrong tact metaphorically. More like they're the kids skipping class and bumming smokes from whomever happens to be in the bathroom at the time. The only thing that confuses me is the band name. These guys look more like *Dawn of the Dead* fans than disciples of the Duke. That aside, methinks this ep is a knockout.

(Rocknroll Blitzkrieg - Box 11906, Berkeley, CA 94712)

The Mr. T Experience - ...and the Women Who Love Them - Special Addition cd

A couple of singles, two ep's, demos, outtakes, comp tracks...25 non-lp songs from '93-'97. Like any collection with 20+ songs there are some clunkers mixed in with the gems but in this case it's not a good/bad see-saw. The ho-hum songs are confined to the first third of the disc, once you hit "Alternative Is Here to Stay" (track #9) it's clear sailing for 16 songs. This is MTX at the top of their game (it was during this period that they also cut their magnificent *Love Is Dead* lp). (Lookout - 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703)

The Moo-Rat Fingers - Acting Duschbag 7" ep

Whatever the band's name lost in being translated from the original German (which is, apparently, everything) is more than made up for by the killer songs. We get English and German versions of "You Should Be Swinging" (which I'd like to think is a call for baseball hitters to be more aggressive but is probably related to fisticuffs) and two versions of "Radio Off," one regular, one with the (I think) bassist who happens to sound a lot like Lemmy. Rip roaring, let's-get-drunk-and-rumble garage punk fueled by Godzilla-size riffs (had to borrow from another culture there, I couldn't think of a German equivalent). Great stuff. (Big Neck - Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

Neutral Mark Hotel - ...and the terrible, horrible, no good, very bad album cd-r

Don't believe a single adjective in the title, this is good, a bit long (30 songs), but good. Mark skimmed the best of two previous eps and added a dozen new ones (if I've done my math correctly). He's got great pipes, harmonizes with himself really well, and, instrumentally, operates various combinations of acoustic guitar and keyboards. I like the poppier stuff best (especially the Dr. Frank-like "Never Find Another") but the folkier stuff is charming too (like a simpler version of that part of the Four Freshmen that Brian Wilson flipped for). (Mark Hughson - 8093 Henry Clay Blvd., Liverpool, NY 13090)

Rev. Norb - Touch Me I'm Weird cd

If the last Boris the Sprinkler record, *Gay*, was their *The Conversation*, *Touch Me I'm Weird* is Norb's *Apocalypse Now*. You see, both Boris the Sprinkler and Francis Ford Coppola followed a series of highly successful releases with one that defied audience expectations. For Boris it was the *Gay* cd, for Coppola it was *The Conversation*. Coppola then went off the deep end with *Apocalypse Now*, a very long, very weird movie that polarizes fans to this day. *Touch Me I'm Weird* is very long (over 40 minutes, with several songs hitting the four and five-minute marks), very weird (lots of keyboards, Norb playing all of the instruments, did I mention five-minute songs?), and it's sure to polarize popular opinion. But in the end *Apocalypse Now* is a sack of shit and *Touch Me I'm Weird* is great. The difference is that Coppola had no idea what he wanted to do, zero focus. Norb has a clearly defined mission: He broke up with his girlfriend, he's pissed off about it--really pissed--and he needs to vent. The songs are consistently riveting and fun and invigorating but beneath all of that the lyrics are really, really bitter. This is a work of catharsis, a successful work of catharsis wherein all signs of "life sucks" are purged and self pity never creeps into the picture. All of which is carried away--ese for this disc may differ greatly from a Boris record but it still rocks." I think *Touch Me I'm Weird* is best summarized by

the words emblazoned across the disc: "I swear to God I never have any idea what I'm doing." Whether that's a proclamation or a disclaimer depends on the extent to which you dig the good Reverend's approach to punk and pop. I'd argue that it's a bit of both and that *Touch Me I'm Weird* is excellent. (Bulge - Box 1173, Green Bay, WI 54305)

One Time Angels - *Tricks and Dreams* cd ep

Based on the band's name, you'd be forgiven for having low expectations for this ep. But once you've pressed play and subjected yourself to the bland rock that limps out of your speakers you'll kick yourself for not setting lower expectations. This is a stunningly lifeless exercise in "gee, we used to be in punk bands but now we want to prove that we're musicians." The guitar break in "Any Port in a Storm" reeks of Guns'n'Roses while the solo in "Dream #9" sounds like Lynyrd Skynyrd, and that's just for starters. But I needn't get worked up, the press sheet says it all: "...a mature effort by a group of long time accomplished musicians..." Those are virtues? (Lookout - 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703)

Operation Makeout - *First Base* cd

Track after track they stack up cool riffs--fidgety, catchy verses with more than a touch of (vibrato-less) Sleater Kinney in the vocals. These riffs don't yet lead to equally great songs (the choruses tend to be anticlimactic) but hey, it's only first base, it'll get better. (As long as they don't let Jesse sing anymore, he comes across as smoothly as that annoying guy in the Sugarcubes). Plus, if nothing else, they've come up with the most tongue-centric album cover since the Lemonhead's *Lick*. (Mint - Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3Y6)

Pain - *Jabberjaw* cd ep

Part I: Dan the singer has a great sense of meter, a good sense of humor, and a clever way with lyrics. Unfortunately, he's chosen to apply these skills to ska punk (and a ska punk band with Christian undertones, no less). Here's hoping he'll work in a different genre one day. (Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

Pain - *Wonderful Beef* cd

Part II: Tried to like this, good melodies, well-written horn parts, but then the ska and the punk collide yielding a strand of that ska/punk fusion that never seems to work. If these guys can't make it work, no one can. (Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

Palomar - *Palomar II* cd

Angelic melodies and clever arrangements are hallmarks of great indie pop. Palomar infuse copious amounts of both into every track on their sophomore record. They also add absolutely fearless guitar work and kick ass energy that push *Palomar II* way ahead of the pack. All of that while sparing us the contrived cutesiness and art school cool that bog down so many indie pop bands; Palomar are a pop band who'll hold the door for themselves, thank you very much. And they prefer the direct approach with their lyrics, who needs to be coy when you know what's on your mind? The incredibly frantic "Knockout" is a piece of art, their Brian Eno cover ("I'll Come Running") is better than anything I've ever heard Eno do, and, if "Can't Wake Up" is any indication, they're Mets fans. More need not be said...but just in case, this is one of my favorite records of the year.

(Self-Starter Foundation - Box 1562, NY, NY 10276)

Pepper - *Kona Town* cd

"It's not like I'm asking you to give it up for free/We can start right now, baby, get on your knees (or it could be get all your needs)/Don't make me beg again, girl, I just said please" Your take on lyrics like those will determine whether this comes across as a fun reggae and punk record or a mean-spirited frat boy soundtrack. But really, what's the world coming to when a

guy has to do more than say "please" in order to get laid? (Volcom/MCA)

Piranhas - "Isolation" b/w "David Hazel Eyes"

Even after a dozen spins this single leaves me feeling like the victim of a sonic mugging. The a-side sounds like XTC's *White Music* rendered in three minutes. The flip side is spazzier, save for the bridge which interpolates the Syd Barrett-era Pink Floyd gem "Interstellar Overdrive." The squawking vocals are a stumbling block but otherwise this is remarkable noise. (Rocknroll Blitzkrieg - Box 11906, Berkeley, CA 94712)

The Products - *Fast Music* cd

I really like *Fast Music* but it took me at least a dozen listens to decode it. The Products hailed from San Diego, circa 1980-81, and along with their originals, they did a bunch of Clash, Sex Pistols, and Jam covers (among others). But there's more to these songs, recorded in '81 but previously unreleased, than initially meets the ear. If the Products were mere Clash knockoffs no one would be interested two decades later. The perplexing mix on *Fast Music* pushes the hi-hat and crash cymbals to the foreground, forcing us to unearth the guitars and vocals. It was after a couple of rounds of excavation that I was able to pick up on the sense of urgency that courses through *Fast Music*, a sense of urgency most American punk bands didn't pull off until the Reagan years (*Fast Music* was recorded just before and around the time that Reagan took office). The Products paint a bleak picture of a sunny town, singing about San Diego like it's in the heart of the rust belt. (Who would think a San Diego band could pull off a song called "Factory Town"? But, despite the influence of the British bands they were covering, the Products, musically, sound more like bands to the north, like Red(d) C/Kross. And that's what makes *Fast Music* tick for me, the sound of early 80s Southern California punk with the heart of late 70s British punk. It's not really that fast but it's pretty damn good. (Cabeza de Tornado - 203 1/2 Acacia, Huntington Beach, CA 92648)

The Put-Ons - *A Different Kind of Single* cd

There's a groundswell of support for the Put-ons, and rightfully so, they're at the forefront of the emerging power pop nation. Trouble is that the reviews I've read have got it all wrong. Half of them liken the Put-ons to late 70s American power pop bands. The other half of them liken the Put-ons to late 70s poppy British punk bands. Erroneous! Close, but erroneous. The Put-ons certainly cop all the right power pop moves yet their sound is more like that of the Replacements or Figgs--bands reared on Only Ones and Undertones records but dedicated to twisting those sounds into their own brand of sugar-coated torment. The vocals have "character" (they'll take a listen or two to love, and your on-the-fence about power pop friends might not be sold but fuck 'em) and the production's rough around the edges (think *Hootenanny* or *Ginger*) but the enlightened will persevere--basking in the warm glow of the positively Stinsonian guitar work and smart-guy-trudging-life lyrics--and discover the decade's best debut ep. (Unity Squad - Box 1235, Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

The Put-Ons - *s/t* cd

Take the million and one things that made their 7" shine, upgrade the production (the one factor that may-I'm not conceding anything here--have infinitesimally hindered said 7") and you've got *The Put-Ons*. Wow. Not since the Disappointments' debut (from '99) has there been such an amazing debut cd. Ten songs (two being retakes of songs from the 7") of 00s style power pop. You can wait ten or twenty years and read about *The Put-Ons* in some article about overlooked pop classics or you can get on board now. (Manic - Box 667, Huntington Beach, CA 92648)

Radio Birdman - The Essential Radio Birdman: 1974-1978 double lp

The MCS have one of the strangest discographies in history. They debuted with the bloated, hippier-than-the-critics-let-on mess that was *Kick Out the Jams* (even if the Fastbacks did cover "Ramblin' Rose"). Then they were dropped by their label only to resurface a couple years later with *Back in the USA*, a tour de force of "so dumb, it's brilliant" rock'n'roll (further evidence of such available in the form of virtually no support for this record from the VH-1/*Spin*/*Hitlist* old guard). Radio Birdman found a niche between those two extremes. Sure, they can be high on drama but they're just as likely to sing about *Hawaii 5-0* reruns and twinkles as anything else. Hell, they've got a song called "Do the Pop." And though Radio Birdman was based in Australia, the link isn't totally unfounded as their lead guitarist Deniz Tek hailed from Detroit (he headed Down Under to study medicine). I'd heard a lot about Radio Birdman before buying this collection but never could get a fix on what type of band they were. Truth is they could have shared a stage with the Surfaris, Stooges, or Sex Pistols and held their own. Furthermore, in the rarest of feats, the obligatory live tracks at the end actually reveal another side of the band (rather than rehash studio material heard elsewhere). By this point Pip Hoyle's Doors-like organ had given way to a percolating circus organ that's reminiscent of the Attractions' Steve Nieve or XTC's Barry Andrews (or perhaps Pip influenced them, I'm uncertain of the chronology here). So while Radio Birdman sound like a number of other bands no single group put it all together like these guys. A benchmark compilation for fans of 70s pop and punk.

(Sub Pop)

Riff Randells - "How 'Bout Romance?" + 2 7" ep

The a-side starts off on the slow side of the "is this on the right speed?" continuum before perking up to a decent punk pop tune. The action's much better on the flipside with a pair of peppy hot rod tunes, "M.O." (which probably stands for "make out" but when they sing "M.O., M.O." in the chorus I'm wondering if it stands for "Modus Operandi: Make Out") and a cover of Nikki and the Corvettes "Girls Like Me." Pretty good stuff. (Lipstick - 1154 Powell St., Oakland, CA 94608)

Roman Evening - Together Now cd

What sort of cd is more peculiar than one that opens with a 7-minute song? A cd that opens with a 7-minute song that I really like! And when I tell you that "Comfort Bringers" is broken into three parts--numbered with Roman numerals--you'd be forgiven for thinking we've got a prog rock rehash on our hands but that's not the case. It's more like the melancholy and melodic sounds associated with Neil Young or Alex Chilton (circa the third Big Star record). In fact, these songs are the side of Neil Young that Ja' Masecis/Dinosaur Jr. never got--the exposed nerve frankness that can be reassuring as it can be depressing. Of all the records reviewed for this issue, *Together Now* is the biggest surprise. (Bitter Stag - Box 190008, SF, CA 94119)

Saturday Night Kids - Total Knockout! cd

Ladies and gentlemen, we have a battle on our hands. You see, this cd was released by the cooler than cool people at She's Gone (Jessa and Chad) but it was produced by Cliff from the duller than dull Huntingtons. There are plenty of points on the "good" side of the ledger. The Saturday Night Kids have a Ramones-loving, Mutant Pop look and sound. They've got some swell ideas and song titles ("I Want to Go to Nevada"; "The Kids Are Rockin' in Luxembourg"), the singer sounds like Joe Queer, and they've got the best ever photo-under-the-cd (their drummer, playing a basement show sporting a mutant Frankenstein's monster/mummy mask). However, the final result is smack dab in the middle of cool and dull. The songs are all ok but there's no stand out, no song that leaps out of

the speakers and grabs you by the lapels. It'd be great to hear these guys bounce one off the walls, go for the proverbial total knockout.

(She's Gone - 807 Bernard St., #6, Denton, TX 76201)

The Shakes - s/t cd

When I saw Cheap Trick last summer I was amazed by the extent to which the band still has its chops and Robin Zander still has that voice. The only thing lacking--and it's been lacking for about 20 years--is new material. Enter the Shakes. They've got the energy, they've got the (collective) personality, and they've got the songs. Boy howdy, do they ever. They approach pop songs like Cheap Trick and deliver them like the Clash (circa '77, in both cases), super sweet pop on the outside, snarling conviction on the inside. I love they way they make no effort to veil their contempt for all things dishonest ("How do you fall asleep knowing there are promises you made just not to keep" - "Not to Keep") and lame ("You go see a movie all about a cartoon or a tv show/And the bands you go see learn their songs off the radio" - "Hook"). Stand with them or against them, just make it clear where you stand, all right? They can also bring down the room with the occasional haunting ballad, like the noir-ish "Mystery." The Shakes uncork one hit after another and they never play it by the book, making for a supremely good disc. (Though, stunningly, this remains but a small-run cd-r in search of a label. Well-funded takers?) (The Shakes - Box 254, Park Ridge, IL 60068)

The Shy Guys - Hits from the Batcave; Go to Disney World; Gunslingers cd-r's

Why release one cd-r when you can upgrade to a full-fledged trilogy? The Shy Guys are bold, no two ways about it. At their best they rise above the slavish Ramones worshipping that's killed pop punk. They consistently offer new takes on girl/guy lyrics and delve into matters other than romance now and again too (though I was hoping "DeLorean" was actually about the car manufacturer/drug smuggler instead of *Back to the Future*). The key to a good Shy Guys song, as opposed to a weak Shy Guys song, is how often they use "whoa oh" backing vocals. On the first of these eps, *Batcave*, they dip in the whoa oh well too often. They curtail the habit a bit on *Disney World* and, by the time they get to *Gunslingers* (which should be renamed *Shy Guys: The College Years* given the references to dope smokin' and booze) have it under control. Good stuff as is, if they were to put together a 'best of' from these cds they'd have a pretty damn good record.

(Shy Guys - 43-15 20th Rd., Astoria, NY 11105)

The Slash City Daggers - Backstabber Blues cd

The dopey band name and glam-gone-wrong band photos invite a wealth of wise ass comments but most of *Backstabber Blues* is good enough to postpone such reverie. Well, the first three songs anyway. The next few tracks slow down--a lot--even getting bluesy on the title track, and then I'm forced to make fun of the guys' pouty looks and lipstick. After that the disc see-saws between the first sounds (AC/DC and Johnny Thunders reverence) and the middle sounds (bad blues rock) yielding a good ep stretched past its limits.

(Unity Squad - Box 1235, Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

Slurs - "It Just Worse" + 2 7" ep

The title track is an open letter to the Dawson Creek/self pity nation: Shut the fuck up! There's a huge difference between unrelenting complaints and a straight forward acknowledgment of the facts--life sucks and it's downhill as you get older. I don't agree with the Slurs on that point but I can't resist "It Just Gets Worse," that song fucking smokes. (And, no, I don't believe it's possible to talk about the Slurs without ample use of the f-bomb).

(Slurs - 1545 Hoefgen St., Indpls, IN 46203)

Stormshadow - Set on Destroy cd-r

It's too bad this band broke up before more people knew about them. They're the all-too-rare breed of hardcore punk band--they've got brains and they had an interesting blueprint for how hardcore could a) sound different from song to song and b) not suck. Given the sad state of the genre, that's impressive. Stormshadow never settle on the same sound. The guy growls, the woman can actually sing well and the whole cauldron of angst never stops motoring along, nor does it use the same sound and dynamics on every song. (Matthew Crawford - 414 N. Oaks Blvd., North Brunswick, NJ 08902)

Ken Stringfellow - Touched cd

A solo record from a former Posie (or current Posie depending upon that band's on again, off again status) carries high expectations. The question running through my cranium was whether *Touched* would sound more like the Posies or perhaps one of Stringfellow's extracurricular projects (he's usually part of the Minus 5 and often part of R.E.M.). Sadly, *Touched* sounds more like the last R.E.M. record than the Posies or Minus 5 and wasted little time in dashing my hopes. Stringfellow's angelic voice is in fine shape but the record drags from track to track. Not even working with the legendary Mitch Easter could spark this collection of drab songs. The solo to "The Lover's Hymn" is the low point; the drummer goes double time, trying to propel the song but the band is completely unresponsive and move forth like they're shuffling through molasses. (Manifesto - 740 North La Brea Ave., LA, CA 90038)

The Tennessee Twin - Free to Do What? cd

Say, this is even better than their single, there's more pedal steel guitar and fiddle, (or at least they seem more prominent in the mix). Pros: Good pipes, good songs, an "I'll take none of your crap" attitude (taking a page from the Loretta Lynn book), and a crackerjack band. Cons: The lyrics and storytelling are inconsistent. Sometimes I get the sense they're trying to use a traditional country voice, other times it seems they're after something more contemporary. Or maybe they're trying to do both. In any event it hasn't gelled yet. Still a good record. (Mint - Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3Y6)

Thinking Day Rally - Into the Blue Room cd ep

I was using headphones the first time I listened to *Into the Blue Room*. When my wife heard groans of "oh, this is awful!" she inquired about which cd I had on. I handed the headphones to her, she listened for a few seconds and then branded Thinking Day Rally "Barry Manilow-ish." I agreed initially but then realized that in Barry's defense, he was trying to entertain people. Aside from a desire to mope in front of others, I haven't a clue as to what Thinking Day Rally seek to accomplish. A lot of people joke about how the current rash of self-pitying emo-ish bands will lead to a rehash of dreaded 70s singer/songwriter dreck. This is that nightmare realized. (Bravenoise - Box 2268, Brandon, FL 33509)

Tina and the Total Babes - She's So Tuff lp

asdfghjkl;...pardon the incoherent babbling, it's difficult to speak when my jaw's scrapping the floor. Given Tina's background (Trashwomen, Bobbyteens, Lipstick Records), I figured *She's So Tuff* was a good bet but this, wow, this is incredible; sizzling 70s power pop right down to the Holly and the Italians cover (which reduces the original to rubble). The Total Babes pack a Figgs-like fire power and Tina's singing is always on the money, even on the Phil Spector-like ballad ("Tragedy") and the glittery album-closing anthem ("It's Tina Time"). What makes *She's So Tuff* all the more remarkable is that it has all the markings of a fly-by-night affair (singer and band seemingly based 1,500 miles apart) but the unrelenting sound of having been rigorously road-tested. *She's So Tuff* is so great that for 30 minutes I forget that it's March and I'm living in Copley, Ohio. That's power.

(Sympathy for the Record Industry)**20 Dollar Whore - Teenage Fuckin' Boredom 7" ep**

There's a lot of baggage to overlook here (uber-lame band name, pointless appropriation--not so much offensive as confusing--of black American cultural icons for the front and back covers) but it's worth it for "Teenage Boredom"--a rip snorting, sure-to-raise-a-ruckus gem that, given mega promotion, would likely stir up PMRC: Mach II. If the "boredom, boredom" refrain doesn't stir the marrow in your bones, you've got a disease I don't want to be near. The other three songs hover around "ok" making "Teenage Boredom" stand out all the more.

(Big Neck - Box 8144, Reston, VA 20195)

Tungsten 74 - Await Further Instructions cd

The prog rocker is me is dormant 99% of the time, becoming active only when I replace of the cassettes I bought in high school. Last summer it happened when I found a \$2 copy of Yes' *Close to the Edge*. Last fall it was a \$3 copy of ELP's *Trilogy*. This winter, however, it was *Await Further Instructions*--an hour's worth of melodic, energetic space rockin'. But rather than carve that hour into three or four songs, Tungsten 74 wisely offer 15 tracks thus avoiding a situation where an idea is stretched past its limits. And while I firmly believe there's a definite connection to 70s progressive rock, there are also points where *Await Further Instructions* recalls the hypnotic heights of Stereolab or the Feelies. Bien! (Technical Echo - 172 5th Ave. #51, Brooklyn, NY 11217)

V/A - The Emo Philips Diaries - From Tampa to Eternity cd

If you want to relive the worst of 90s underground music, then have I got the compilation for you! This collection samples the Tampa Bay scene from 1993-2001. You've got your Bad Religion knockoff, your Helmet knockoff, your Lilith Fair knockoff, your MTV rock band knockoff, some emo crap, and the something-core stylings of **Omega Man** (grindcore, hardcore, "gee I'm upset"-core...what's the distinction?). I had hopes for the **Happy Bagpipers**, the last band on the comp, but they exude that kind of "gosh, aren't we nutty?" most often found in college-based a cappella groups. Connection to Emo Philips? I've not a clue, although they apparently got his permission to his name in the title and his photo for the cd cover. How they pulled that off is more interesting than any of the music contained within. That ought to say it all. 0 for 19 = .000. (Bravenoise - Box 2268, Brandon, FL 33509)

V/A - Liquid Hamburger Training Pants cd-r

I can't figure out if the elderly gent on the cover is Ernest Noyes Brookings or perhaps one of the guys from that *Shut Up, Little Man* cd. Not much of this collection caught my ear--I seldom like compilations that use the "something for everyone" approach--and spent most of my time contemplating the cover art. I found the quieter bands, such as **Pacer**, **Molotov Cocktail Inc.** (not to be confused with the NYC band), **This Rectangular Planet**, and **McClure's Zoo**, to be the best suited for this activity. The **Fiascoes** were all right as well. 5 for 25 = .200. (Koala - Box 35070, Syracuse, NY 13235)

V/A - Lookout Freakout - Episode 2 cd

For my money Sub Pop became a must better label after grunge passed by. That's when my favorite Sub Pop records came out (Fastbacks, Velocity Girl, Sebadoh, Supersuckers). Pop punk was Lookout's grunge and my favorite Lookout records were mostly not of the standard pop punk variety (Servotron, High Fives, and one or two others that are escaping me at the moment). Lookout still has that amazing (though slightly diminished) diversity working in their favor; hell, they've got the **Go Nuts**, **Bratmobile**, and **Gaza Strippers** on the same roster. That's remarkable. Too bad the rest of the roster doesn't keep up. There's a lot of beating-a-dead-horse

pop punk (**Screeching Weasel, Lillingtons, Eyeliners, Wanna Be's**), and a bunch of bands made up of people from older, better known bands (like **Ted Leo** (ex-Chisel), **Common Rider** (Jesse from Op Ivy), the **Pattern** (featuring, I believe, Chris from the Pee Chees, hard to believe any one in the world would want more of his singing preserved on plastic). So yeah, percentage wise it's mostly crap but having lost track of Lookout I enjoyed catching up on their current bands. Best of all was the **Queers** song, which was much better than I expected it to be. 7 for 26 = .269 (Lookout - 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703)

V/A - Punk Rock Strike cd

15 of these 27 songs are previously released, which means 56% of this crap exists on multiple releases. Of the "old stuff" the highlights are the keyboard intro to the **River City High** song (don't worry, the rest of the song sucks) and the part of the **Pain** song wherein the singer compares himself to Patton. A lot of the "new stuff" is covers, sped up to conform to industry standards. There is a **Down By Law** song but it turns out to be a sub-bootleg live song (plus, my fondness for all things Dave Smalley plummeted when I found out how he gave the shaft to the Decibels). Being generous, and giving half a point to the River City High and Pain songs, we're left with a final tally of 1 for 27 = .037. (Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

V/A - Punk Rock Strike 2 cd

I like Bad Religion, Green Day, and Weezer so why is it that a bunch of groups pillaging the sounds of those aforementioned bands is so thoroughly unappealing? Oy. I swear the first 21 of these 24 bands used the same guitar amp and, to insure - complete no-brainer consumption, used the exact same settings too. But there is entertainment to be had here. If you're a fan of recording techniques that are so inept they're bizarre, check out the **My New Life** and **Disruptives** songs. With the former you get a mix that put the guitars and drums light years away (your living room never felt so wide), with the latter you get the loudest kick drum ever (it sounds like a backing vocalist). The cd takes a 90 degree turn for the last three songs. The record label even prefaced these last tracks with a warning, labeling them "Punks are open-minded bonus tracks." The synth pop'n'rock of **Enda** and **Mates of State** isn't very good but at least it differs from the rest of the program. **Xiu Xiu** close out the comp with a freakazoid, "where did that come from?" mind fuck of a song that's so unpleasant and so unsettling it's the only song of interest on here. I'd be shocked to learn that the singer didn't commit suicide the second they finished recording. A couple of points must be given for the unexpected ending. 2 for 24 = .083. (Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

V/A - Spring Really Sucks cd

This comp has it all wrong, from the misguided title on down to the wretched songs. With rare exception (those being marginal tracks from **Operation Cliff Clavin**, **Shut Up Donny**, and **Pain**, actually the Pain song is fantastic until the ska punk part leeches in), it's run-of-the-mill through and through. These findings are supported by some rather interesting statistics. For example, 50% of the bands (11 of 22) have one word names, 46% of the songs (12 of 26) have one word titles, and 69% of the tracks involve either a one word band name or one word song title (18 of 26). Everything's awry when math supersedes music. 3 for 26 = .111. (Springman - Box 2043, Cupertino, CA 95015)

V/A - Team Mint: Volume 2! cd

The Mint roster has a bunch of great bands so it's a shame that there are no previously unreleased songs here. But even though there's nothing new to draw the Mint diehard there is a bunch of worthy acts to check out. Three Nardwuar projects are represented (**Evaporators**, **Thee Goblins**, **Skablins**).

There's a bevy of good country acts (**Neko Case**, **Corn Sisters**, **Carolyn Mark**, **Tennessee Twin**) along with the pop punk done right charms of the **New Town Animals**. I also got to hear a pair of bands I'd long been curious about, **I Am Spoonbender** (featuring Robynn from cub) and the **New Pornographers**. Let downs on both fronts. Neither are horrible yet none of their songs left me wanting to hear more. The comp, however, is, overall, a fine affair. 13 for 23 = .565. (Mint - Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3Y6)

V/A - The Thing That Ate Floyd double cd

Originally released in 1988, this reissue will probably get a lot of attention for its early and/or rare cuts from **MTX**, **Op Ivy**, **Steelpole Bathtub**, **No Use for a Name**, **Sweet Baby**, etc. Most of that's fine but I think the attraction here is the slew of good to great cuts from bands that didn't go on to wider acclaim. I've never heard of, yet alone heard, **East Bay Mud**, **Neighborhood Watch**, **Boo! Hiss! Pffft!**, **Complete Disorder**, **Well Hung Monks** and **Raskul** but they all rock. The beauty of the compilation as a whole is that all of the bands are devoid of the sterile professionalism that plagues most California punk these days. Simultaneously, the bands seem to be both more political and more humorous. A cool time capsule even if, like me, you weren't there at the time. 20 for 34 = .588.

(Lookout - 3264 Adeline Street, Berkeley, CA 94703)

V/A - A Tribute to Nashville cd

Tributes to musicals are unpredictable affairs. For every achievement like Schlöng's **Punk Side Story** there's a colossal wipe out like **Less Than Jake's Grease**. **Nashville**, presented by **Carolyn Marks and Her Roommates**, falls somewhere in between. There's a bunch of genuinely great country music here, some of it sizzles (**Dallas Good**, **Dave Lang**) and some of it smolders (**Dottie Cormier**, **Kelly Hogan**, **Carolyn Mark**, **Robyn Carrigan**). There's also a bunch of marginally appealing songs. Given the source material, a Robert Altman movie, inconsistency is to be expected. For every **Mash** or **The Player** he dumps a **Popeye** or **Ready to Wear** (you're reading the wrong zine if you think I'm going to type the French title, fucko) on us. With minor editing **Nashville** will treat you well. 9 for 19 = .474.

(Mint - Box 3613, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 3Y6)

V/A - You're Stuck in Georgetown with No Ride Home cd

If you like fun, dumb garage punk--ala the Mummies or Repent Records--you'll want to seek out this compilation. It was given away at the **Primate 5's** recent (and fourth) reunion show, which also featured the **Rock'n'Roll Adventure Kids**, **Zombie IV**, and **Red Barons**. I so very much wish I could have been there in person but **You're Stuck...** is the next best thing. I think most of the songs are previously unreleased but can't be sure. Hell, I can't even be certain of which band is playing which song. You see, Brian from the **Primate 5** recruited a bunch of people to help him burn copies of this cd for the show. Apparently not everyone followed the same sequence of songs. So the copy you order--and you really should get a copy--might have a different running order than my copy. Brilliant. Some of the songs were cut in studios, some were done live, others are from practices. Again, that's speculation. Comes with a zine too. Yeah. 13 for 14 = .928. (Hubba Hubba - c/o Brian 4115 SW Charlestown St., Seattle, WA 98116)

Wack Cat - That's What My Girlfriend Says lp

Take the sweet, poppy vocals of Lush and combine them with a rawer musical attack (ala Mambo Taxi or Bratmobile) and you'll have a sense of where Wack Cat is coming from. There isn't a clear standout track but **That's What** is pretty good from head to toe. Just steer clear of the funk-ish "workout" that closes side one (and unfortunately is reprised on the flip) and this will treat you right.

(Paroxysm - Box 58133, Washington, DC 20037)

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Everybody Should Stop Doing Everything - cd-r - \$5

milf was an incredible Buffalo band from early-to-mid 90s, along the lines of the Pixies, Teenage Fanclub, Husker Du, Dag Nasty--intense but poppy. Prior to recording two cd's for Big Deal records, milf did a bunch of cassettes and 7"s. *Everybody Should Stop Doing Everything* is the best of those early releases. Brett milf chose the 18 tracks and had them re-mixed too. It comes with tons of reading material, a great photo of Brett's dad at the beach wearing a milf hat...and it's only \$5!

Shortly before the cd's release, the band contacted their former manager, Sloan Stymus, to write liner notes. They couldn't work out payment so I'm going to use said liner notes here (rather than in the cd).

Here lies the bloody and battered carcass of milf's early years. I would say salad years, but the boys pretty much ate only red meat in those days. In fact, it was at a hamburger stand where I worked that first I met the lads, three Lockport kids weaned on Who bootlegs, the first three Cheap Trick albums, and a heavy dose of REM's post-punk murmurings. While hatching their world domination plans (a club show in the booming metropolis of Buffalo, 25 miles south, or a 7" maybe) they would suck down malts and eat quarter-pound burgers. Eventually, I started giving 'em free food, a favor they would return with an invitation to their humble practice space, where I would drink cough medicine and read gardening magazines and eventually pass out while they devised their own skewed version of what pop music should sound like. I became their de facto manager, booking them at graduation parties, church rec rooms, and any place that would have them. As time went on they got scruffier, louder, and harder to deal with. So I did what any manager would do. Stuck 'em in the studio and waited patiently on a thrift store couch until they were done. When they came out with their first real demo tape, the five-song New Skin, in January 1992, I knew we had something. I told 'em so and they immediately fired me. The continually wanted to grow, I kept buggin' 'em about shaving and stage presentation. A number of tapes and 7-inches and northeast mini-tours followed, along with two albums that sank like stones. I stopped paying attention though, because I was bitter and I knew that they would fail without me. It feels so good being right 'cos these guys bit it in '95 under the weight of their own fat amps. Every once and a while I'll see a use copy of one of their cd's in the sell-back bin and I'll re-file it in the "L" section for BIG FAT LOSERS. So when they asked me to write the liner notes (ha!) to this compilation of their pre-professional singles and demo takes, I burst out laughing and said "fuck yes, those fuckers." Listening back, they were just as bad as I remember. So boo-hoo, you bought this and I would've told you so if you just asked. But hey, they still owe me \$300 and this is the only way I'll ever get it. Rock on, for what that's worth.

--Sloan Stymus, milf manager ('91-'92)

Other stuff we hawk...

V/A - Day Dreaming with an Empty Station Wagon

Exclusive tracks from Figgs, Sea Monkeys, Decibels, Weird Lovemakers, Dorks, Shakes, Dirt Bike Annie, Dick Army, In Crowd, Lizards, Kung Fu Monkeys, Garage Sale, Thundercats, Mixelpricks, Sheldrakes, Kluggmen, and the legendary "Snowbeast" rock opera (Tortillas You Wanted). Along with different versions of Young Fresh Fellows, Junior Varsity and Rondelles songs that later surfaced on lps.

cd - \$5

8-track (2 cartridges) - \$10

Sticklers/Kung Fu Monkeys - split 7"

Hawaii vs. NYC. "Rough-edged yet tasty lo-fi pop punk" from the Sticklers. KFM counter with a side long tribute to the 50th state. 3 tracks from each band. A split release with Wet Noodle.

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Egghead. Dumb Songs for Smart People (Mutant Pop-510)

Posthumous 14 song collection. 4 new, 10 old.

cd - \$10

V/A - Break-Up! Records Guide to Entertaining (Break Up!)

Two songs each by Dirt Bike Annie, Revelers, Big Hello, the Media Whores, the Pop Quiz, the Heartdrops, the Kung Fu Monkeys, and more.

cd - \$5

V/A - Grease: The Not So Original Soundtrack (Dummy Up)

Better than the originals and the Less than Jake covers. Boris the Sprinkler, J Church, Parasites, Dirt Bike Annie, Nothing Cool, Connie Dungs, Mixelpricks, Sheldrakes, Kung Fu Monkeys, Atom and his Package, and more.

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32 p., \$2

#3 - Billy Bragg; Detroit's 4-man shirt; *The Life and Times of Hank Greenberg*; Coping with the Off-Season, 35 Years at the Astrodome; and more.

32 p., \$2

(#1 and #2 are still out of print.)

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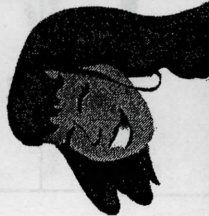
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Go Metric's Lyrics Hall of Fame "Bastards of Young" (Induction #10)

God, what a mess on the ladder of success
Where you take one step and miss the whole first rung
Dreams unfulfilled, graduate unskilled
It beats picking cotton and waiting to be forgotten

We are the sons of no one
Bastards of young
The daughters and the sons

Clean your baby room, trash that baby boom
Elvis in the ground but we don't fear tonight
Income tax deduction, one hell of a function
It beats picking cotton and waiting to be forgotten

Chorus

Unwillingness to claim us,
You got no right to name us

Ones who love us best are the ones we'll lay to rest
And visit their graves on holidays at best
Ones who love us least are the ones we'll die to please
If it's any consolation, I don't begin to understand

Chorus

Take it, it's yours (or make it a choice or something along those
lines, no matter how many times I listen to this song I still can't make
out some of the words--fuckin' Westenberg!)

Written and performed by:

Paul Westenberg/The Replacements

From the Sire lp:

Tim (1985)

There wasn't enough room to squeeze in a photo copy of the
cover art from Tim but that's not much of a loss. Tim's cover
is a waste, especially considering the landmark cover art
from Tim's predecessor, *Let it Be*. I hope Robert Longo and
Deborah DeStefano get shitfanned for
blatantly a
masterpiece!

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