

TV

ROCK N' ROLL
ISSUE

Roctober #38
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ROCTOBER #38 TV ROCK ISSUE!

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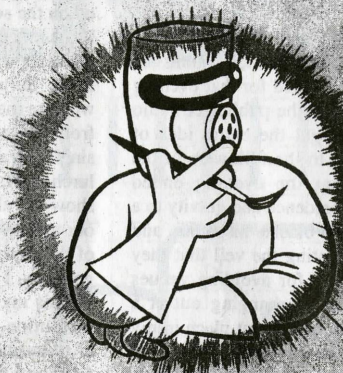
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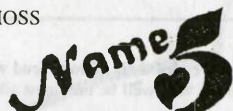


EDITOR'S NOTE

THIS IS OUR TV ROCK ISSUE, A PREVIEW OF A TV ROCK BOOK I AM WORKING ON FOR A CAPELLA BOOKS (LOOK FOR IT IN '05). TV GUIDE

IS ONE OF THE MOST READ THINGS IN AMERICA (AFTER THE BIBLE, CEREAL BOXES & PENIS LENGTHENING E-MAIL) SO I EXPECT THIS ISSUE TO BE OUR BEST SELLER EVER. IF NOT, LOOK OUT FOR THE "PENIS-LENGTHENING ROCK & ROLL ISSUE" NEXT

SPRING! - Jake



...Ramones' name-dropper songs.

- 1) Blast Furnace and The Heatwaves - "Can't Stop The Boy" (mentions Dee Dee).
- 2) Wayne County and the Back Street Boys - "Max's Kansas City" (Dee Dee Marc Bell, aka Marky Ramone, played drums on this track).
- 3) Blubbery Hellbellies- "I Don't Wanna Get Thin" (Joey)
- 4) The Ravers - "Punk Rock Christmas"(Johnny)
- 5) Tina Peel - "Punk Rock Janitor" (Joey)

...New York Dolls name-dropper songs

- 1) Subsonics-"Heroin Addict's Beach Party" (Johnny Thunders)
 - 2) David Bowie - "Time" (Billy Doll, nee Billy Murcia).
 - 3) Tina Peel - "Punk Rock Janitor" (Sylvain Sylvain)
 - 4) Iggy Pop "Look Away" (Johnny Thunders, referred to here as just "Thunder").
 - 5) Criminals-"Kids are Back" (Sylvain name checks all of his fellow former Dolls)
- Honorable Mention (Sort of) Eater-"Thinking of The U.S.A." (Walter Lure gets namechecked in the last line.)



www.treasurehiding.com/random/why.htm

<http://www.klaus-nomi.com/>

www.jilgnr.com/index.html

members.aol.com/RockVideo1/ROCKVIDEO60s.html

www.sickanimation.com

web.media.mit.edu/~bwhitman/10000.html





Hello,

I hope I can keep this brief. I am of split mind as to whether anybody should recall the evening of 12 July 1979. Bill Veeck's marketing and publicity stunts are still embedded in my permanent memory. But the stunt planned for that evening sunk because I feel that Bill was unaware the followers of the publicized radio personality treated the topic with seriousness. Bill thought the entire idea of 'death to disco' was humorous: A parody, or a joke. But to the followers of the radio personality, they were playing for keeps. That the evening ended catastrophically was one thing. To me, the incident gave credence and gravity to a burgeoning subculture of youth who despised contact with blacks, hispanics, and gays. Now they could appear as not being racist by adopting the veil that they were really just "anti-disco". They now had the "excuse" for avoiding venues where they might encounter them. {"You'll never find me hanging out at a disco."} I moved my WGCI "Studio 107" card to a more prominent place in my wallet. The incident caused me to rethink my entire sports pantheon. If baseball was now going to be attracting people who were intolerant to the point of mindless violence, I needed a new sport. Fortunately, there was one other sport playing during the summer months: something called the Chicago STING in the North American Soccer League. Reactionary conservatives will always recall what supposedly happened one evening with a United States Senator and a female in an automobile near a bridge overpassing the Chappaquiddick River. They will never forgive or forget. This is my equivalent: I will never listen to, or pay any heed, to any media outlet which employs the above referred-to radio personality. [I even went so far as to deliberately miss a STING home game on 31 December 1984 when, somehow, Lee B. Stern decided this person would be a suitable post-game attraction.] Maybe, just maybe, when he dies, I'll send an arrangement of thorns, with an attached card reading "Good riddance to bad rubbish" to the funeral home. [On a less gravitous note, Tim Weigel's live 10 P.M. report on Channel 7 from Comiskey Park that night had him holding a

broken record. He read the label. It was by Tommy James and the Shondells. "Funkytown" by Lipps Inc. wasn't until 1980.]

Most sincerely yours, Steve "Pudgy" De Rose

Roctober,

I'm currently volunteering at Harbor View House for Music 101. What is Harbor View House? It is a 5 story YMCA in San Pedro, CA that in 1968(?) was converted to a "board and care for the mentally ill." Every Wednesday from 7pm-8pm is the night of unholy musical chaos. We have a medium sized auditorium up on the second floor outside near the patio, a couple of microphones, a stage & PA, some amps and a bunch of fucked up broken instruments. This is all for the residents who live there and for any outsider who comes in and wants to jam with them. Surprisingly few have taken me on my offer other than a handful of friends who are manic-depressive (so they don't always show up). The music that emits from stage seems to fluctuate between 4 faces - sour blues/punk/solo gospel singing/avante skronk. In between the faces are gobs of indescribable mucus that lurch, boil, sweat and pop. Each Wednesday is different since different people show up, although a couple of residents come like clockwork.: Shirley (who is our token smiling hag music critic) & John (who is the Jim Morrison/Joe Cocker of the Harbor View House). Each Wednesday night, when I have to pack up and go away, I become melancholy over having to wait another week to come back. This is my music dream come true & every community with a mental asylum, institution, Grey Manor, Land of Trances, etc. should have such programs (Art/music/drama). Some guy I explained this to (or tried to) got all pissy and felt that I was belittling or making fun of the "disadvantaged." He didn't get it. He wouldn't volunteer or waste his time on these people. I feel at home at the Harbor View House and relate in one way or another to at least half the people. The spirit that I felt (of unadulterated freedom and expression of making an oaf of yourself without dismaying some peer group) when I first found my own drainage pipe I relived again via the Harbor View. Anyone can sing what they want, play out of tune, etc...it doesn't matter. The spirit comes through. The medication fog clears away. Flowers bloom on the ocean trash barges and cafeteria food turns into cuisine of ambrosia.

-Rich Polysorbate 60

WHEN YOUR HEROES ARE ZEROES by Evan Ginzburg

"What a completely evil, manipulating, lying excuse for a man he was. And what ultimate irony. Clint Eastwood, the man who symbolized to so many what a man should be, had turned out to have none of the acknowledged qualities of a real man - loyalty, bravery, and moral strength." (Ex-girlfriend Sandra Locke in her autobiography *The Good, The Bad & The Very Ugly*)

With the recent arrest of pro wrestling great Dick Slater after an alleged violent attack on a girlfriend, I once again faced a familiar inner battle. Should I still enjoy and support a celebrity who does something that morally repulses me? Just what should happen when your heroes turn out to be zeroes?

These are but some of my all-time favorites and the allegations against them:

a. The Godfather of Soul, James Brown, was recently honored at the Kennedy Center for lifetime achievement. This was deservedly so as Brown, in his prime, may have been the greatest live performer ever. Yet there were protests from women's groups due to various domestic disturbances and accusations of spousal abuse in his past. Were they right for wanting Brown banned from the event? Should his actions off stage take away from his accomplishments?

b. When Bruce Lee died on July 20, 1973, the rumors immediately raged. "He was murdered" for giving away martial arts secrets to "the Westerners." Some even made the outrageous claim that it was Dim Mak - the "death touch," wherein a master put the whammy on him with a mere pat on the back. Evidence ultimately showed, though, that Lee was a smoker of Hashish and he apparently died of a severe allergic reaction to the drug (his brain swelled). What a tragic waste that like so many other pop culture icons of the 60s and 70s he, too, was seemingly a drug casualty. The fact that he collapsed at the home of a mistress and his loving wife and kids got the phone call, made the scenario even uglier.

c. R&B god Sam Cooke was a chronic womanizer who left a trail of pregnant lovers behind. He died as he lived in a sordid little motel where he was shot to death while chasing someone he had just picked up. Many labeled his death the result of an attempted rape. Whether he was "set up" is still in question, but what is certain is that while he went out in a blaze of gunfire, the former Gospel performer didn't go out in a blaze of glory.

d. Al Green, the world's greatest living soul singer, once lived off the earnings of his live-in girlfriend - a prostitute. The lurid details are right there in his autobiography "Take Me to the River."

e. Temptation lead David Ruffin had a voice like an angel, but he most certainly wasn't. Allegations that he beat girlfriend Tammi Terrell (who died of a brain tumor before the age of 30) were prevalent. And he died a John Doe, found outside a crackhouse in Detroit where his body wasn't identified until some weeks later. Not a glamorous exit for a man who sold literally millions of records.

f. My all-time favorite, Marvin Gaye, was probably the most painful one for me to cope with. I will never forget hearing a TV newscaster say the words "Marvin Gaye age 45..." Simultaneously, I thought to myself "Dead." And he was. His brain ravaged by cocaine, he

attacked his own Dad who ended their lifelong feud with a shotgun. How very sordid for a man who created what may very well be the finest album of my generation, "What's Going On."

g. Muhammad Ali at a pre-fight press conference once introduced a beautiful woman as his wife. The only problem was, she wasn't. His real wife at the time was reportedly devastated. Not exactly chivalrous on the champ's part.

h. I once saw Mickey Mantle, America's beloved "Mick," drunk and nasty on a New York street. A fan - not an autograph collector - had woken up early just to meet his childhood icon. "You were always my hero when I was a kid, Mick," he said with the deepest sincerity. "Bullshit," the baseball immortal snarled as he walked away and I watched the devastated fan's face drop.

i. John Wayne, in a notorious interview, stated that Blacks were intellectually inferior to Whites. A former co-star, the Black Shakespearean acting great Roscoe Lee Browne, begged to differ.

a. Berry Gordy made billions from Motown, while many of his artists died broke and penniless. This included one of the original Supremes who ended up on welfare before her early demise. Mary Wells (*My Guy*, *Two Lovers*), one of the early Motown legends who helped put the company on the map, died from cancer in 1992, destitute. "I had made a lot of money for the company and I have nothing to show for it" she stated in one of her last interviews.

I could go on and on. How many of our wrestling heroes have died in horrid little motel rooms, drugs, alcohol, steroids and painkillers shutting down their systems? But again, it begs my philosophical question, does it really matter as far as your love for an entertainer? Does it truly tarnish their legacy?

Surprisingly, I choose no. Think about it. James Stewart had a long, happy marriage and a scandal free life. Do you love his movies any more or less than a Clint Eastwood's or John Wayne's because of the squeaky clean image? I don't.

And will you enjoy the great Dick Slater's videos any less the next time you watch them because he's not going to win "Beau of the year?"

I won't. And a hundred years from now when we're all gone, will it matter that Mickey Mantle wasn't exactly fan friendly? Not at all.

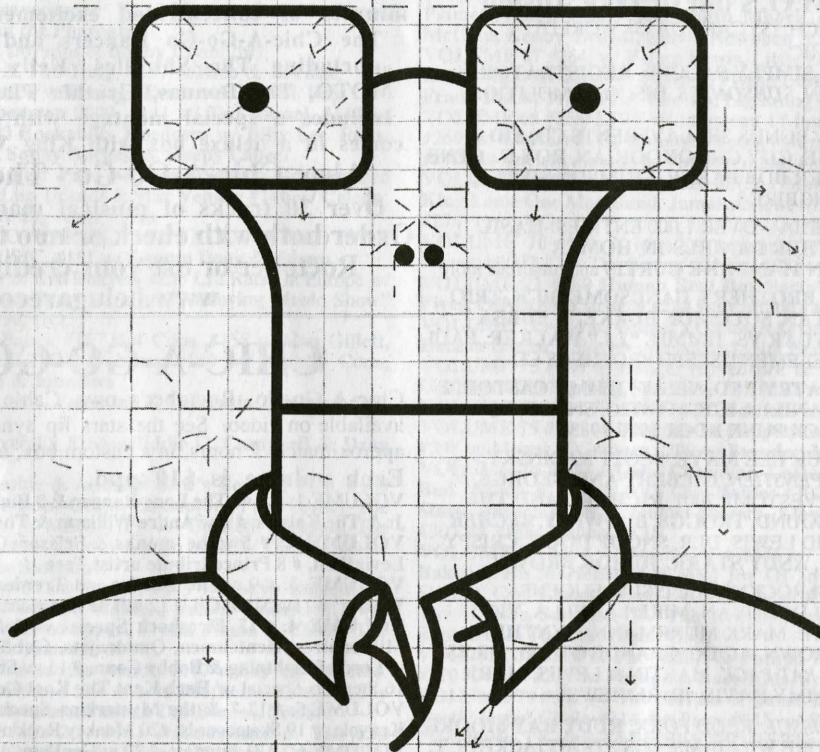
Believe me, I don't condone anti-social, violent, or wildly self-destructive behavior. But when the smoke clears I believe I can disassociate the brilliant performer from the person-the star from the profoundly flawed individual.

So as hard as it may be at times, I believe I can handle the fact that some of my heroes may very well be zeroes.

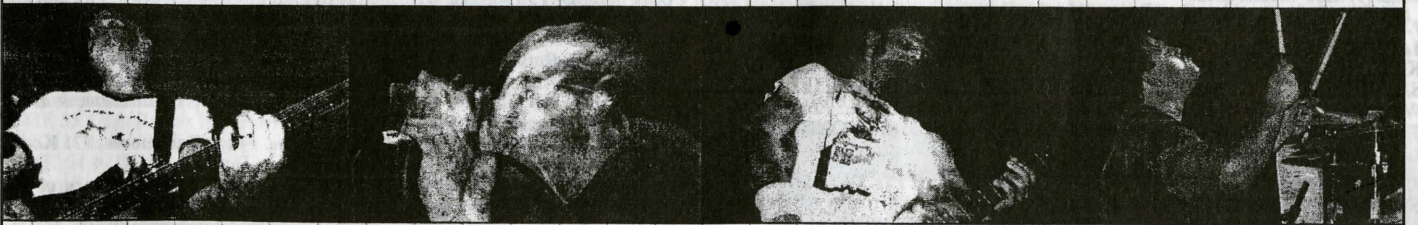
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#32 HIP HOP ISSUE - FAT BOYS, KATEY RED, NELLY, JIMMY CASTOR, 2 LIVE CREW, BUSTA RHYMES, VANILLA ICE, MYSTIC, SNOOP, DJ ASSAULT, RUFUS THOMAS, BLACK PUNK ROCK 1976-1983

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#29 SAMMY DAVIS JR./MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL ISSUE: EUGENE CHADBOURNE, REV. NORB, LALI DONOVAN, MIKE LAVELLA, VIC BONDI, GEORGE TABB, DR. DANTE, MARK MURMANN, CYNTHIA PLASTERCASTER, HR, JAMES BROWN, AC/DC, GRANDE OTELO, MILES DAVIS, THE MILLIONAIRE, THE RAT PACK, MARTIN & LEWIS, MARK ROBINSON, plus ABOUT 1,000 SAMMY DAVIS, JR. REVIEWS!

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#27 PSYCHEDELIC SUPERHEROES, PLASTIC PEOPLE OF THE UNIVERSE, MARVIN RAINWATER, D.J. FONTANA, CHUCK BERRY, KENNY WAYNE SHEPHERD, MISFITS, ROCK & WRESTLING, FLAMING LIPS, GREGG "MR. COMPILATION PRODUCER" GELLER, DAVID LEE ROTH, CHARLES SCHULZ, LITTLE RICHARD, WAX TRAX RECORDS, DON "SUGARCANE" HARRIS, SCREAMING JAY HAWKINS

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#24 VANILLA ICE, PATTI SMITH, THE NUGE, SUGAR PIE DESANTO, SWINGIN' NECKBREAKERS, G.G. ALLIN, ALBERT AYLER, STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE, WIX, RAY SMITH, WAYNE WORLEY, WAYNE KEELING

#21 *LIMITED SUPPLY* SPICE GIRLS, CARL PERKINS, KASENETZ-KATZ, CRAMPS, DAVID ALLAN COE, MOE TUCKER, ANNABELLA LWIN, MORTIIS, THE MAKE'UP, EDIE ADAMS, SKIP SPENCE

#20 *LIMITED SUPPLY* 5TH ANNIVERSARY. WEIRD AL, KISS, EQUALS, GOBLINS, GODZILLA, LOS CRUDOS, RUNAWAYS, DOLLY PARTON, ? (QUESTION MARK), WEST COAST POP ART EXPERIMENTAL BAND, JOHNNY THUNDERS

#19 *LIMITED SUPPLY* ROCKNROLL AIDS QUILT, RICKY WILSON, QUEEN, PETER ALLEN, LIBERACE, KLAUS NOMI, ESQUERITA, SYLVESTER, EAZY E, FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE, BO DIDDLEY, MAYO THOMPSON, SHONEN KNIFE, PHAROAH

#17 ZINE TRIBUTE ISSUE, ANDRE WILLIAMS, WALKER BROTHERS, ?, STANDELLS, JOHN HOLMSTROM, NICO, KICKS, DORA HALL, JANIS MARTIN, P-FUNK

#16 *LIMITED SUPPLY* MONKEY ROCK'N'ROLL, DENNIS DUNAWAY, NEW COLONY 6, ? & THE MYSTERIANS, TYRONE DAVIS, SAMMY DAVIS, JR., MONKS, GOBLINS, HALL OF GREATNESS POSTER

#15 JAYNE COUNTY, CYNDI LAUPER, OSCAR BROWN, JR., JOHN DOE, RON KITTLE, GEORGE STRAIT, OLIVIA NEWTON JOHN, LOU CHRISTIE, SERGE GAINSBOURG, WANDA JACKSON, LITTLE JIMMY SCOTT

#14 *LIMITED SUPPLY* GO NUTS, R&B ECCENTRICS, KISS, WAYNE KRAMER, SAMMY, INCLUDES PUNK'NHEAD FLEXI DISC WITH SONGS BY GIRL TROUBLE, MCRACKINS, PEDRO, GOBLINS, BUTTERGLORY, SCISSOR GIRLS AND MORE!

#13 GREAT AND SMALL ISSUE. JERRY LEE LEWIS, SUGARLOAF, KIDDIE-A-GO-GO, ROLLINS & ROKY, VELVET CRUSH, PEDRO BELL, THE MONKS, GARY GLITTER, THE HISTORY OF MIDGET ROCK AND ROLL, KENNY "R2D2" BAKER, KID DYNAMITE, HFH, GARAGESHOCK, WILDGIRL GOGORAMA BONUS HALL OF GREATNESS POSTER

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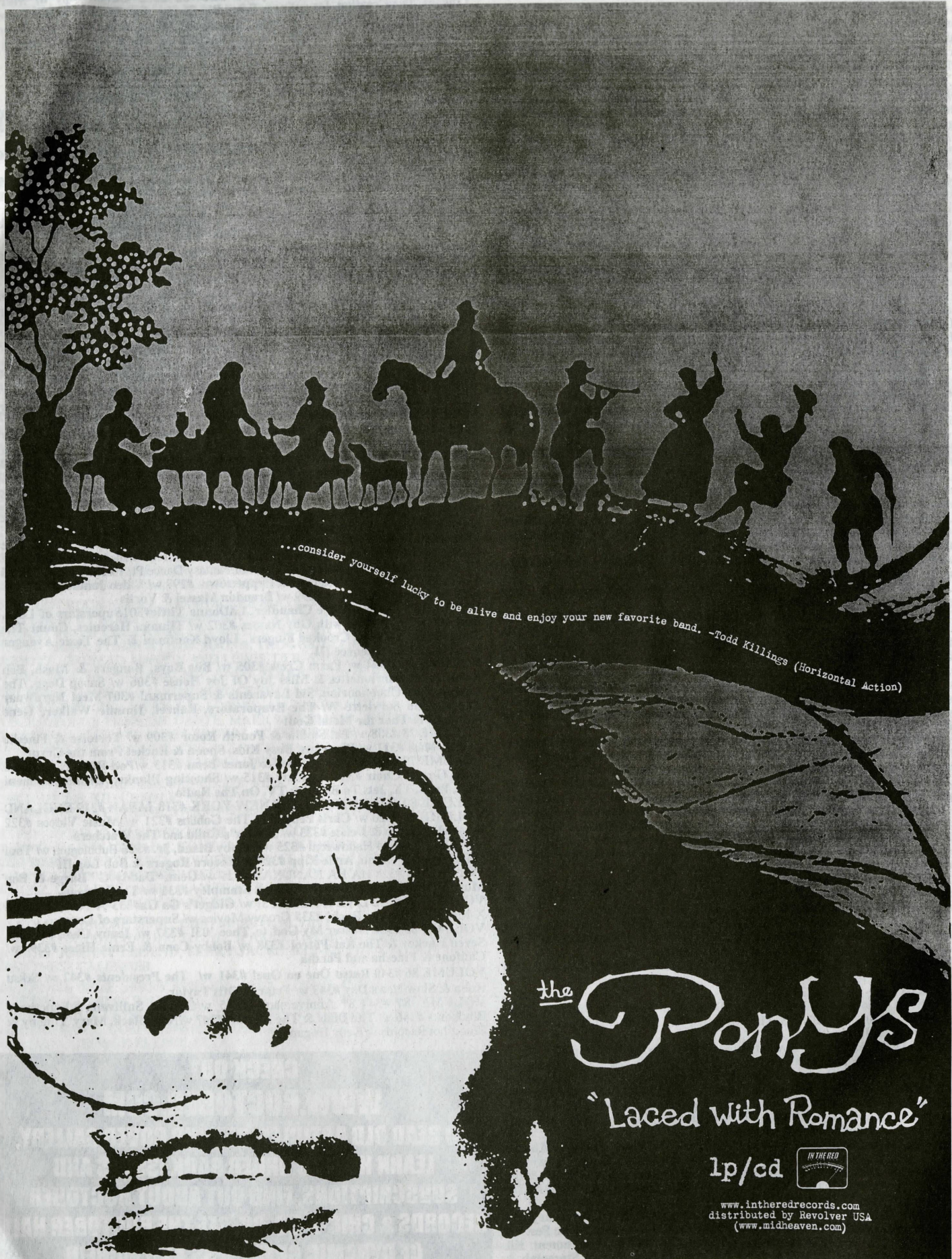
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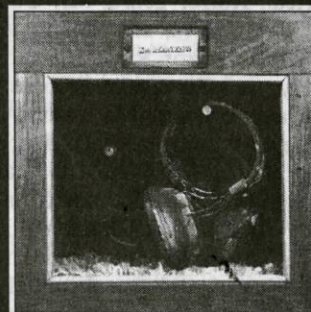
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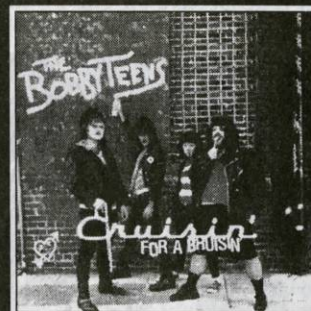
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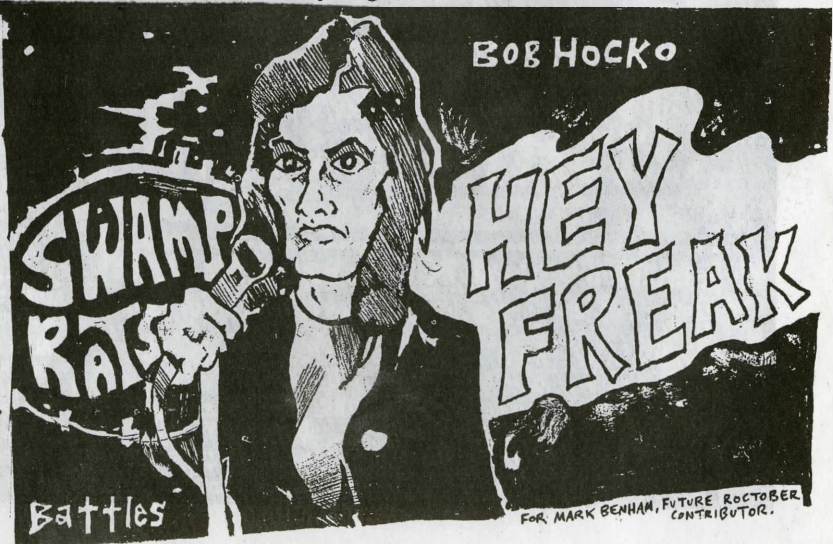
THE FINAL CURTAIN

Gentleman John Battles is a great fan of all and a good friend to many of the legends of Rock & Roll. Here he pays final respects to some of his favorite artists who have recently made the transition from mortal to immortal

BOB HOCKO - Far too many greats have passed away recently, particularly in the fields of Rockabilly and R n' B, but (60s-era) Garage Punk, a not-so-distant cousin to the other two, lost one of its great, unsung heroes in Bob Hocko, who recently succumbed to cancer. Hocko fronted the Fantastic Dee Jays, a Folk-Rock/Brit Invasion-influenced teen combo. As highly regarded as that group is among collectors (if you should attempt to purchase a copy of their lone LP, bear in mind, they WILL still be making SUVs in ten years, so don't think of it as such a sacrifice...in other words, until you win the Irish Sweepstakes, settle for the reissue on Millenia, IF you can even still find that). I'm going to go out on a limb for a moment, and say I much prefer the later mutation of the group (for which Hocko sang and sometimes drummed), a name known and feared throughout the Pittsburgh area as THE SWAMP RATS! If they weren't THEE most savage outfit to trash a teen hall in the mid-60s, they're surely in the Top Five, first or second only to The Sonics, depending on your point of view. But, why Pittsburgh? How did they produce such a deranged Teen-Punk band? It's true Pittsburgh had a healthy teen scene, but the aural onslaught of The Swamp Rats was unprecedented. Still, it's important to note that Pittsburgh was then regarded as the air pollution capital of The U.S.A, and I wouldn't doubt the water was just about as bad. SOMETHING in either or both produced mutants. Beautiful mutants, like the man who almost single-handedly reinvented the American Horror genre, Mr. George Romero, modern Garage gods, The Cynics, and, not long ago, the Godfather of Punk, Psych and Horror Rock himself, Roky Erickson, who, until recently, took up residence there. So, yes, there's something in the air and/or water. The Swamp Rats were ahead of their game in more ways than one, recording covers of then-obscure Garage greats by The Sonics and The Sparkles, as well as killers by The Stones and The Kinks, not to mention insane sendups of the already-standard Folk-Punkers like "Hey, Joe" and "Tobacco Road." Their originals include the boss mid-tempo rocker, "I'm Going Home" and the absolutely unbelievable "Hey, Freak," with attains the same high energy fuzztone freakout of the first MC5 singles. I can't stress enough how much you NEED the recent retrospective on The Swamp Rats (with Hocko given first billing) on Get Hip. The title, "Disco Still Sucks," is a reference

to an earlier, hastily-made compilation LP featuring some (but not all) of the band's official output, plus later (reportedly mediocre) recordings by Hocko and other former Rat Troopers from the 70s called "Disco Sucks." When asked, by Doug Sheppard, what he thought of The Swamp Rats' legacy, Hocko replied, "I'm proud of The Swamp Rats. I'm amazed that some people still remember it and want to hear it. I thought it was good, but I didn't think it would stick around that long." Regarding Disco, "I still hate it. Disco still sucks." As long as there's angry, loud, loose and savage Rock n' Roll that's even remotely like the kind Bob Hocko put down, there need not be any reason to argue his point, and that goes double for what often passes for Punk and/or Garage these days. Put on The Swamp Rats if you want to hear the real thing. They're stronger than dirt, and boy does it hurt.

RALPH BURNS KELLOGG - Ralph Burns Kellogg is probably best remembered today as the keyboardist who joined Blue Cheer just after they'd given up being a power trio, and influenced their future musical direction, with piano and organ stylings that ranged from Rock, Soul and Classical to Honky Tonk. Kellogg, an early associate of the group, actually played on every Blue Cheer record on Phillips, with the exception of their groundbreaking, plaster-shaking debut, "Vincebus Eruptum." Kellogg played on the excellent follow-up, "Outside Inside," but didn't sign on as a member until their third album, "New! Improved!" Prior to joining Blue Cheer, Kellogg played in Mint Tattoo, a San Francisco Blues-Rock trio with lyrics that sometimes utilized macabre themes. Their guitarist and singer, Bruce Stephens, joined Kellogg in the revamped Blue Cheer lineup. Mint Tattoo was never as heavy The Cheer (who was?), but they did have an interesting sound, similar at times to Moby Grape or The (early) Steve Miller Band. Their one LP, on Dot, died from under-exposure, but it's worth seeking out, if you can find it affordably (it was reissued on heavy vinyl a few years ago, but you get bonus points for finding an original copy with the naked lady torso picture intact. Mine had been cut out). I found my copy at a Goodwill in Dallas several years ago, and was immediately met at the door by a policeman, who demanded to know what was in my bag (as if it wasn't obvious), as I was

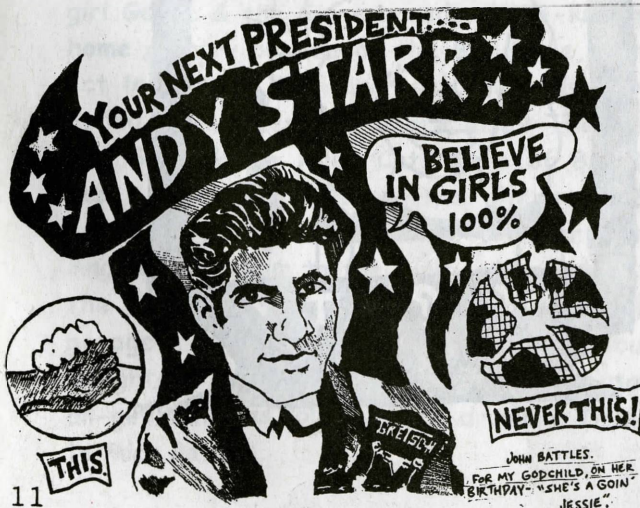


walking out of the store. Kellogg apparently had some issues with the cops himself, judging from his original songs, "Policeman's Ball" (Mint Tattoo), and "Lester The Arrestor" (Blue Cheer), though both are pretty tongue-in-cheek (the former even has a kazoo solo!). He's also photographed in what appears to be a jail cell on the back cover of Blue Cheer's fifth album, "B.C.#5, The Original Human Being," but I could be mistaken. At any rate, Kellogg stayed with Blue Cheer until the bitter end, in 1972, by which time they'd been written off as irrelevant and musically impotent, though Lester Bangs gave their swan song LP, "Oh, Pleasant Hope" an ecstatic (AND coherent) review in *Rolling Stone*. Kellogg did not participate in any of the subsequent Blue Cheer reunions, though a recent solo live CD by singer/bassist and group founder Dickie Peterson, found him covering some of the later B.C. nuggets he'd previously eschewed, utilizing a keyboard sound similar to that of Kellogg's. Taking on a new professional name as Ethan James, Kellogg started Radio Tokyo, a highly regarded recording studio in L.A. that recorded the likes of X, The Flesheaters, Minutemen, Black Flag, The Knitters, and many others. He also played keys with members of The Bangles, The Three O'Clock, and others, in something of a Paisley Underground "Supergroup," and released at least one studio LP of his own. He even produced and mixed two of Sky Saxon's late 80s solo LPs, with an all-star lineup called "Firewall," which included Peter Case (Plimsouls), Carla Olson (Textones), Rudi Protrudi (Fuzztones), Mitch Mitchell (Jimi Hendrix Experience) and Tony Valentino (Standells), plus about a hundred others! Both records are generally better than you've probably been told, the second one being particularly good. I was sorry to learn that Kellogg/James had died recently from liver cancer, and doubly sorry that I missed him when he was performing in Chicago, about ten years ago, at a club that I don't particularly like. "See the church and hear the preaching, everybody inside is weeping. The guest of honor now is leaving, but he's not dead, he's only sleeping." - From "Policeman's Ball," Ralph Burns Kellogg.

ANDY STARR - Andy Starr -*whew!*- he was one of the true wildmen of Rock n' Roll. Not only was his music wilder than what was generally accepted at the time, but his life story is one of the wildest ever! He performed with the likes of Elvis and Carl Perkins at the height of Rockabilly, though he never really made it in his own right (that's the industry's loss). He recorded some of his finest sides for a major label, MGM and, much like labelmate Marvin Rainwater, alternated between hot n' horny Rockabilly and equally crazy Country. Unlike Rainwater, however, he never had a hit, but he kept performing long after Rockabilly had fallen out of favor. Later, he made several efforts to enter the political arena (shades of Screaming Lord Sutch!),

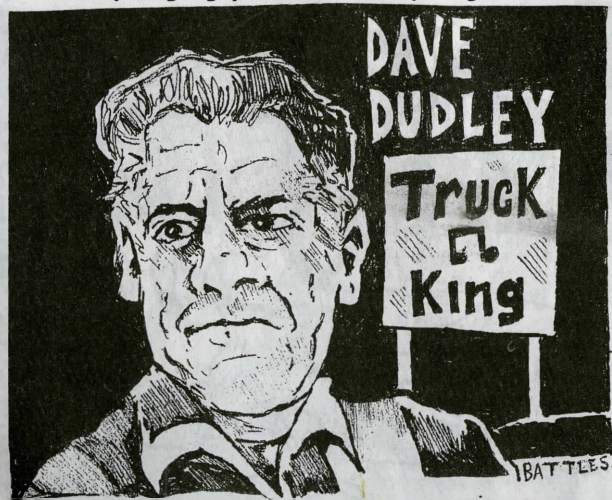
running for Governor of Idaho, and later announcing his candidacy for President. He admitted later, in a *Roctober* interview, that he'd never held office or even been on a ballot. Still, his platform, which was staunchly pro-working class, anti-racist and anti-corporate, but also against the division of church and state, was provocative to say the least. Between campaigns, Andy also became a preacher, with his own Church of America, espousing the same defiant views he'd put forth in his political party (in a *Kicks* interview, Andy expressed his hope to one day urinate on what was left of The Berlin Wall!). Prior to his involvement in Rock n' Roll, politics, and religion, Andy had grown up in frontierlike conditions in the Depression/WW II era Arkansas hills, become a teenage railroad hobo, and served a stint in Korea as both a front line fighter and a Special Services entertainer. Still, the greatest nonmusical venture that Starr ever embarked on would have to be his claim to have had sex with over 5000 women in his R n' R heyday, easily putting him right up there with Gene Simmons. Andy Starr's name didn't usually register with more than the most dedicated Rockabilly fans, in spite of the great interviews in *Kicks* and, of course, *Roctober*, and a cover version of his "Give Me a Woman" by The Cramps. In the *Roctober* article, Starr spoke of resuming his Rock n' Roll career with some degree of caution, though he states that he believed he could still summon up the energy to rock it on stage like he did before. He was on the bill at a Viva Las Vegas Festival a few years ago, but the scheduled performance didn't take place. My friends, Tommy and Big John, were bemoaning Andy's absence, when some Rockabilly chicks broke their concentration to ask, "WHO THE HELL IS ANDY STARR, ANYWAY?" The girls were asked to leave. Those who KNOW, feel that strongly about it, just as Andy Starr did when he said those immortal words: "I BELIEVE IN GIRLS ONE HUNNERT PERCENT!!!!" At least, he believed in girls who believed in HIM, and we believe in Andy Starr a hunnert times more than a hunnert percent! The fame and fortune that eluded Starr in this life will be his in Ropck n' Roll heaven. His "star" will burn forever in the hearts of those who remain true to The Rock (and I don't mean the wrestler-cum-actor, isn't it all the same these days?). Andy Starr, American original. I salute you.

RAY RAYNER - If you didn't grow up in or around the Chicagoland area, the name Ray Rayner may not mean anything to you. But, then again, it might. Chicago's rich legacy of kiddie shows is known nationwide. Chicago didn't create Bozo the Clown, Larry Harmon did, but the late Bob Bell and *Bozo's Circus* made Chicago Bozo's true home. Other markets had their own Bozos (don't even get me started on how lame the one in Ft. Worth was), but Bell ruled the roost. Similarly, on a local level, Ray Rayner was regarded as the King of the breakfast set in



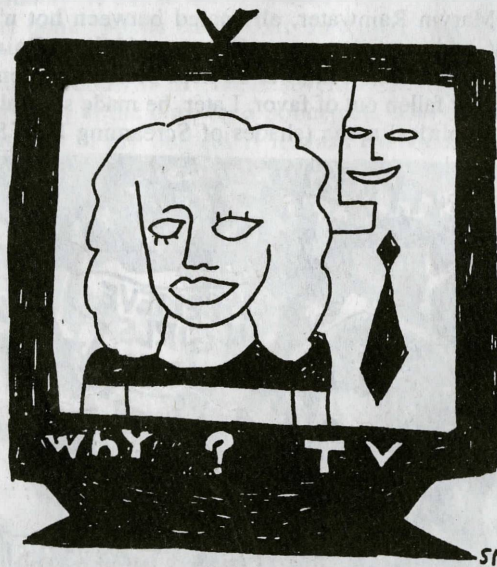
Chicago. Ray became a star with the kids by just being a regular guy. He was kind of like your favorite Uncle, or a neighbor who told good stories and jokes, but you never really knew what he did for a living. Best of all he had this MUG, man, I mean, it was somewhere between Buck Owens and Jack Klugman. My memories are hazy, as I haven't seen his show in about 30 years, but I just remember him setting the tone that made going to school not seem so bad (not that it was that bad in first and second Grade), with Warner Bros. cartoons (in the 60s, he showed those politically incorrect Dick Tracy cartoons), his ever present cohorts, Chelveston The Duck and Cuddley Duddley (the former a real duck, the latter a big, stuffed puppet dog, like the ones you'd see on a fair midway. In fact, a stuffed facsimile of the wisecracking hound was sold at the time). Rayner's often crackly singing voice, and features like "Ark in The Park," filmed at Lincoln Park Zoo, and (not to mention the great b & w "Susie Snowflake," "Frosty The Snowman" and "Hardrock, Coco and Joe" shorts he'd show at Christmas) endeared him to the kids, and put them in a pretty good mood by the time they got to school. Rayner always seemed like he was having fun, even when he was probably bored out of his wits. He could improvise without having to resort to telling kids to take out "those little green pieces of paper in Daddy's wallet and mail them to me!" (That wasn't a shot at Soupy Sales, who's been ill. Get well, Soupy). Ray Rayner and Bob Keeshan (Captain Kangaroo, Clarabelle The Clown) died within a day or two of each other. Maybe Heaven needed more kiddie show hosts.

DAVE DUDLEY - Whether he'd planned it that way or not, Dave Dudley is, in death as in life, The King of The Truckdriving songs. His booming voice and the big, boss guitar sound of his better known songs (provided by Johnny Voit) defined the truckstop sound, which was just coming into being when he cut his breakthrough smash, "Six Days on The Road." From there, it was on to big rig classics like "Truck Driving Son Of a Gun," "There Ain't No Easy Run" and "Thanks For All The Miles," speaking a language the truckers understood (long before the C.B. craze of the mid-70s and its subsequent novelty hits). Not that Dudley was above doing novelties, check out the almost-Rockabilly "Cowboy Boots" or the hilarious "Roloids, Doan's Pills, and Preparation H" (which tells you what truck drivers REALLY live on). Dudley had a big, full sound, the kind that, along with Johnny Cash or George Jones, could win over the average rocker who's just getting his feet wet in the Country pool. He sang in two keys, matter of fact and that's that. Naturally, I expected to hear tales of truckers hanging their little flags at half-mast after Dudley made his last run, but, when I asked my friend, Pope, who's a trucker himself, he just said, "Nahh, these younger guys don't know anything about that." But,



we remember Dave Dudley, the real patron saint of truck drivers everywhere.

Note: I'd like to thank everyone who's responded favorably to the first edition on "The Final Curtain," particularly Danny Dollrod, who told me that these aren't obituaries, they're eulogies. Also, please think a good thought for our ailing friends Soupy Sales, Mick Green (Pirates), Mike Smith (Dave Clark Five), Russ Meyer and Forrest J. Ackerman.



Daughters of Eve



The Story Of An All-Girl Band

by DEBI POMEROY, as told to MICK PATRICK

The Beat Boom was pretty much a masculine domain. In the wake of the Beatles, guitar, bass and drum combos sprang up in their hundreds and thousands all around the world. Nearly all of them were male. But not quite. New York, for example, boasted the all-girl Goldie & the Gingerbreads, little-known in their home country outside of the Big Apple, but a chart act in Britain. The Liverbirds, legends in Hamburg, hailed from Liverpool, where else? The Beat Chics and Sally & the Alley Cats were of British stock, too. Detroit delivered the Pleasure Seekers, featuring young Susan Quatro and her sisters. Los Angeles laid claim to the Girls, while Boston provided the Pandoras and Florida begat the Belles. The garage rock hotbed of Chicago contributed the Daughters Of Eve, the subject of this story of an all-girl band, as told by their drummer Debi Pomeroy to Mick Patrick.

The Daughters Of Eve were formed around Christmas of 1965 by our manager Carl Bonafede. He was managing a band called the Buckingham's at the time and was also DJ at a local hotspot called the Holiday Ballroom. He was interested in putting together an all-girl band, so put the message out and found Judy Johnson, Marsha Tomal and a girl named Connie, their drummer. Connie did not want to go with Carl, so she left the band.

I knew a guy in my high school who was friends with Marsha. He heard me jamming on drums with my brother, Justin, in our basement. I used to play with my boyfriend's surf band, Debi and the L.A. Classmen. L.A. stood for Loyola Academy, which was an all boys Catholic school. The band used to rehearse in our basement and kept their equipment there. He asked me if I wanted to audition as drummer for this new all-girl band. I was actually lead guitarist and didn't even own a set of drums yet. However, I borrowed the Classmen's drums and went and auditioned.

They liked what they heard and saw and hired me on the spot. Carl convinced my parents that I was a drummer and that they should buy me a set of drums. Which they did. The first kit I owned was a Ludwig, identical to Ringo's. It was a blue oyster pearl color with Zildjian cymbals and a red stool just like his. It was a great kit. I never played guitar in a band after that.



I had been playing musical instruments since I was 5 years old. My grandfather was a well-known classical pianist/organist in Chicago and had many students. He taught me to play the piano. I also played the violin in my grade school band. Then I studied the guitar at the Old Town School Of Folk Music, and with a private teacher at Lyon & Healy's, a music store in Chicago.

I listened a lot to the Ventures and played many of their songs in the L.A. Classmen. I liked Dion and the Belmonts, the Four Seasons, Elvis, Sue Thompson, Brenda Lee, Wanda Jackson, the Everly Brothers, Harry Belafonte and Frank Sinatra. I was a big fan of Bob Dylan and went to a concert of his with my brother when I was only 13 years old. I also listened to tons of classical music because of my early classical training. I liked the Beatles, of course. In fact I went to three Beatles concerts. I also saw the original Yardbirds, who were great, and went to a Stones concert when they had Brian Jones with them. Later on I listened a lot to the Jefferson Airplane and Janis Joplin. I actually went to see Janis, Jimi and the Doors in concert. I also enjoyed music by Frank Zappa, Led Zeppelin, Jethro Tull, Vanilla Fudge and the Velvet Underground. And I listened to Tammy Wynette and a few other country artists like Johnny Cash and Loretta Lynn.



The original Daughters Of Eve line-up was Marsha Tomal on Farfisa organ, rhythm guitar and vocals, Judy Johnson on lead guitar and vocals, me on drums and Andee Levin, our first bass guitarist. Andee was replaced by Marilou Davison, and then Lori Wax - we went through so many bass players. I was the youngest member. I recall my dad and I discussing a name for the band in the kitchen of our house, and somehow we came up with the Daughters Of Eve. Everyone liked it. We used to rehearse in the gymnasium of my dad's church. He was a Lutheran minister on the north side of Chicago, and later managed my brother's blues/rock band, the Dirty Wurds. They were also very popular in the '60s. Our dad was a cool dude.

The first stage outfits we wore were from a store on Taylor Street in Chicago that Carl took us to. They were awful actually: just maroon v-neck tops with black cotton turtlenecks under them, and dark green jeans with Beatle boots. Then all of us went shopping together and found bell-bottom outfits. I forget where we bought the silver gear we wore at the McCormick Place shows. We also had a couple of hot pants outfits that we teamed with mesh stockings and white Mary Jane shoes, and Nehru jacket and pants suits which were popular at the time. Later we wore purple and green bellbottoms with bright green turtleneck sweaters and bright green suede Beatle boots.

We went on to play two and half years of one-nighters, travelling in our own Dodge van with our name on the side. I don't recall any bad times on the road. When we first started touring, one of our mothers would accompany us as a chaperone. They would take turns. Then, once they built their trust with Carl, they would let us go out on the road alone. I never felt that it was or could be dangerous. Times were different back then and that is why I always felt safe. Mostly we would play teen places, which there were a lot of back then. We travelled as far south as Dothan, Alabama, near Panama City, to as far north as Iron Mountain, Michigan. We toured all over the Midwest and the southern states to promote the records that were getting airplay in certain cities and small towns.

Of the eight tracks we released, I played on all but 'Symphony Of My Soul' and 'Social Tragedy'. Those two tracks were already done and just needed vocals. I guess that was to save time and money. Carl had already spent a fortune on us. He was very motivated and loved

our band. 'Hey Lover' was our first release. Andee Levin, our original bass guitarist, played on that one. 'Symphony Of My Soul' is my favorite of our records. Marsha and Judy sang solo on different parts and in harmony on the chorus. It's a nice blend. Carl added horns to 'Social Tragedy' and I remember thinking I did not like it. But that one went Top 40 on the radio and even overtook the Beatles' 'Lady Madonna'. Marsha and Judy both sang on 'He Cried'. Judy has the high voice and Marsha the low one. They sang harmony on that one.

I remember appearing on a local TV show in Chicago with Janis Ian when she first came out with 'Society's Child'. And we opened for Gary Puckett & the Union Gap at the famous Clearlake Ballroom. That's the place Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and the Big Bopper left from when their plane went down. We also opened for Rufus Thomas of 'Walking The Dog' fame at a nightclub in Lawrence, Kansas. Being under age, we weren't allowed to sit in the club when he performed. And we shared the stage with Neil Diamond when he first came out - no one knew who he was at the time. Many of the local Chicago bands, like the Buckingham's, the Shadows Of Night and the Cryan' Shames, were with the Willard Alexander Agency. Being on the same circuit, we did shows with them all.

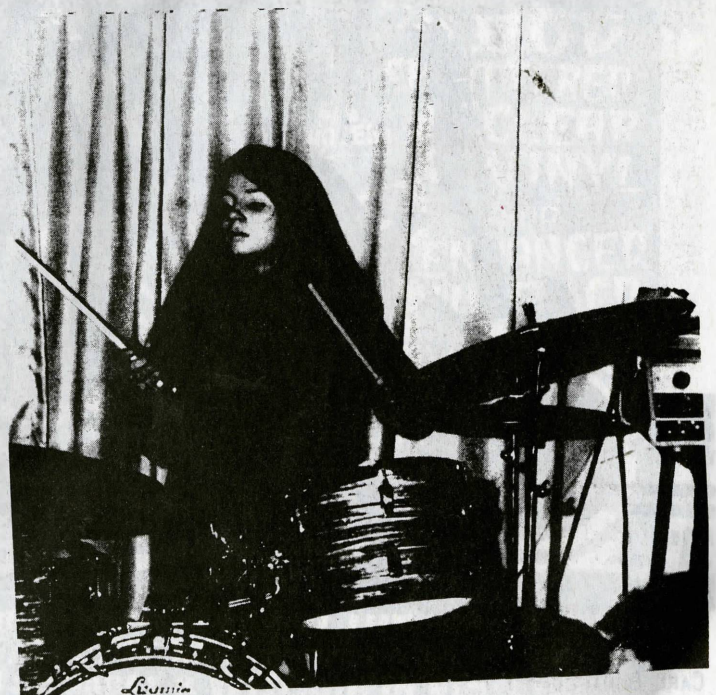
The best gig I remember was at the Cotillion Ballroom in Wichita, Kansas. It was a beautiful room with a good sound system and a very large stage with curtains and all. The worst was in Rapid City, South Dakota. There wasn't a rug on the stage and my drums slid everywhere. My roadie got the idea to put a fire extinguisher in front of my kit. It did not help. So I put it inside the bass drum. When I kicked the drum it exploded onto the audience. They just thought it was part of the show and applauded.

The band broke up in late '68. Both Judy and Marsha got married and Judy became pregnant with her son, Paul. The following year I moved out to Los Angeles. I tried to be as versatile as I could when I first came out here, so I could eat and pay the bills. The first gig I got was with Marlane & the Swinging Dolls. Their drummer, Jenny Jones, had been deported back to Canada. I travelled across the country and Canada with them many times. We also played Tahoe and Vegas lounges. I went on to play with numerous bands including one with Michael McDonald of the Doobie Brothers and the Harry James Band with Phil Harris and Frank Sinatra,

Jr. We played the main stage in Vegas at the Frontier Hotel in Vegas. I got a gig in Hawaii in 1975 and spent almost three years playing over there with several bands, sharing the stage with people like Bobby Rydell and Jose Feliciano. I moved back to LA in the late '70s and played around the area off and on until now. I did a few jazz clubs too. In 1987 I took a three-month gig in Japan with an all-girl band called the Secretarys. I'm always learning new things and ways to improve my playing as I enjoy it so much.

I have wonderful memories of the Daughters Of Eve but many of my photographs of the band were lost in a fire that burned down my house during the earthquake in 1994. Being in the band was an experience I will never forget. Judy lives in Florida now, and Lori has been in Fort Oglethorpe, Georgia for the last 20 years. Marsha's in San Diego, Andee lives in San Jose, and I'm still in Los Angeles. I haven't seen Marilou since she left the band to go off to college. Maybe she will see this article and contact one of us. Carl Bonafede was a good big brother figure to us and always looked out for us. I have great affection for him. The last time I saw him was in 1996 in Chicago when I was back there for Christmas with my family. He took me to dinner and we talked about the old days. Obviously, it was the best time in his life as well. He wanted to try and get the girls together again but it did not happen.

[With thanks to Lori Haddon (Wax), Justin Pomeroy, Clark Besch, Ian Slater, Patty Carman and Dan Agnotts of myfirstband.com]



DISCOGRAPHY

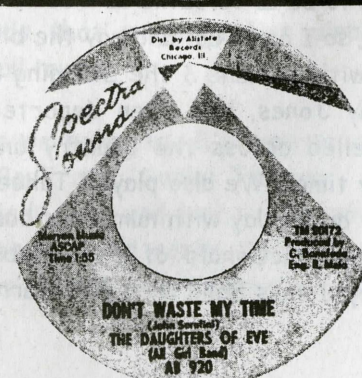
'HEY LOVER' (Originally a modest hit for Debbie Dovalé in 1963) b/w **STAND BY ME** (The Ben E. King song) USA 1779, 1966. Produced by Carl Bonafede and Ron Malo.

'SYMPHONY OF MY SOUL' (Penned by Chicago songwriter James Butler [with a little help from Tchaikovsky]) b/w 'HELP ME BOY' (As 'Help Me Girl', a hit for Eric Burdon and the Animals earlier in 1967) USA 891, 1967. Produced by Carl Bonafede and James Butler.

'DON'T WASTE MY TIME' (Written by John Serafini.) b/w 'HE CRIED' (As popularised by the Shangri-Las, and previously a hit, as 'She Cried', for Jay and the Americans in 1962) Spectra Sound 920, 1967. Produced by Carl Bonafede. Engineered by Ron Malo.

'SOCIAL TRAGEDY' (Written by James Butler, and subsequently recorded, as 'Don't Let It Slip Away', by Ral Donner) b/w 'A THOUSAND STARS' (Introduced by the Rivileers in 1954, but popularised by Kathy Young and the Innocents in 1960) Cadet 5600, 1968. Produced by Carl Bonafede. Engineered by Gary Knipper and Ed Cody.

NEXT ISSUE: THE STORY OF DEBI'S BROTHER'S BAND THE DIRTY WURDS!!!



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and and what ever you think he could do... he does... pure no poser rock'n'roll... to much drugs and alcohol... for this record they asked Rober Butler to record it, they went to the Roy and the Devils Motorcycle room and recorded it in one week, it's all very raw no melodies at all just a crazy fucked up mix between the Cramps and the Oblivians BUT ON SPEED... the album starts off with jimmy reads classic 'baby what's wrong' and after that it's a train to a land you never been before, this is R&B played by teens for a new generation...!!!!

THE GET LOST **WATZLOVES** **DEAD BROTHERS**

ZENO TORNADO & THE BONEY GOOGLE BROTHERS
 'Dirty Dope Infected Blue Grass Hillbilly Hobo XXX Country Music'
 LP: VR1219
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NARDWUAR VS. SNOOP

III

While Canadian TV fans rarely boast that their Rock n' Roll television tops the USA's R&RTV (there's only so many Stomping Tom music videos you can watch) they have one thing up there that makes us wish we lived in Canada...

Nardwuar the Human Serviette! Much Music, the Great White North's answer to MTV, gives several minutes of airtime every so often to Nard's gonzo, ambush interview performance art pieces. We are proud to bring these masterpieces to middle-North America in the form of Roctober transcriptions. With out any further ado, Nardizzle gets bizzle (I could really go for some Twizzlers, or Sizzler, for shizzler)

Nardwuar: Who are you?

Snoop Doggy Dogg: Snoop Dogg, the playa entertainer, slash, MC of the night.

Snoop, welcome to Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Eh, thank ya'll for having me.

And Snoop, who do you have beside ya?

Archbishop Don Magic Juan.

Welcome to Vancouver Archbishop.

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: *Oh, it's always a treat when playas meet. It's such an honour for Snoop Dogg to bring the crew over here to Canada, to be able to entertain and I see that the fans have come out. They love big Snoop Dogg over here, Jack. Chuuuch.*

Snoop, the first time I talked to you, you took my Redd Foxx doll. Although, I was able to get it back. And you also took my Whispers record. Do you remember that Snoop?

[laughs] Yeah, you had a lot of good shit I wanted. You know what I'm sayin'.

And then the next time I talked to you, you took my Blowfly and my Richard Pryor record. Do you remember that at all Snoop?

Yeah, you got some more shit for me to take? [laughs]

Well, yes. That's what I thought I would do. Right off the bat I thought I would give you something and then you can't take anything. Right here is a little Canadian gift, a little Cheech And Chong record for you. [Nardwuar gives Snoop a Cheech and Chong Record]

I appreciate that.

Now Snoop, if you open that up. What do you see inside this Cheech And Chong record?



A big ol' zig-zag and a picture of Cheech And Chong.

Yes. Some Cheech And Chong rolling paper is inside this record.

Big! Big! Big! Big rolling papers.

And I guess what I was wondering is, Snoop, do you still need to use rolling paper? If you know what I mean, for the endo?

No, no I don't have to.

Now Snoop, you're here in Vancouver doing the, "Ho! Ho! Ho! Across Canada" Christmas tour, right?

Yeah, that's what I'm out here for.

And that's with your 17-piece band. That's amazing. The "Snoopadelics," Snoop Doggy Dogg.

[laughs] Yeah, you know, I just try to put on a good show everywhere I go. You know what I'm sayin'?

And Snoop, how do you do gangsta music with a band?

It just, it's good music. That's what it is. G music is good music. It's not a particular type of music, it's just an expression. It doesn't matter, the way you say it is how you say it, and it's just a good feeling when we doin' it.

Snoop Doggy Dogg, you are a gangster. I know you are a gangster because recently I got the gangster colouring book and there you are. [hands Gangsta Rap Colouring book to Snoop] The Gangsta Rap Colouring book, Snoop Doggy Dogg.

You crazy!

Yes the Gangster Rap Colouring book. You've been immortalized.

That's cool. I'm taking this.

Yes, that's for you Snoop Doggy Dogg!

I'm taking this. Hold that. [hands the coloring book to the Archbishop] Chuuuch. That's tight.

So Snoop, you're doing this tour across Canada. It's incredible. For instance, you're doing the big cities like Toronto and Vancouver. But you're also doing, like, five dates in Alberta. You are playing places that Canadian bands don't even play. That's amazing Snoop!

Yeah, that's what it's all about, going to places where people don't get to see you and feel you and touch you and give them a show sometimes too, you know. It's always about the big people, but sometimes you gotta remember the small people too.

You're going to be touring Canada in the dead of winter. There's going to be lots of snow. Do you like hockey, Snoop?

Umm, I don't really understand hockey. I like the physical side of it as far as the fighting. But as far as me knowing, I don't know the game yet.

You do love football don't you? Like, you coach your son's football team, right?

Uh-huh. I'm a coach.

Do you think, Snoop Doggy Dogg, you'll ever make a record perhaps like this, "The Superbowl Shuffle?" [Hands Snoop the "Superbowl Shuffle Records"]

[laughs] The Chicago Bears, that's cool, Jack. . . [to the Archbishop]

'85 wasn't it?

Yup, with Refrigerator Perry, William "The Refrigerator" Perry.

[looking at Record] And Walter Payton was wearing Kangaroo shoes. So do you think Snoop, that you ever will make a record like "The Superbowl Shuffle" with your kids and your team?

You never know. If we keep winning I might have to.

What do you think about the Refrigerator, William Perry? He did celebrity boxing with Manute Bol and he lost to Manute Bol.

He got his ass beat when Manute Bol put that reach on him.

Yeah [laughs], he's got one hell of a reach Snoop Doggy Dogg. And, um, actually I was just wondering about that. Manute Bol is a person that was associated with the rock 'n' roll rapper known as William Perry. And also, William Perry worked with The Fat Boys. Do you have any good stories about The Fat Boys? Do you think that The Fat Boys were the best beat boxers ever, Snoop Doggy Dogg?

Yeah, I think they are the best beat box band. You know, Doug E. Fresh was true indeed. An original and fly for what he did but The Fat Boys had there own style in doing it.

They were a great influence on people, Snoop Doggy Dogg, and you've been a great influence. Archbishop Don Magic Juan, Snoop has been an amazing influence on people in Vancouver. And check this out Snoop, look what this is [hands Snoop a poster], somebody has a dog poo removal service called "Scoop Doggy Dogg."

Oh, that's fly!

'We're number one in number two!'

Preach.

And this is from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, "Scoop Doggy Dogg."

Thank y'all people, I love y'all for that, appreciate it. Keep picking up shit, all day!

Snoop Doggy Dogg, lately you've been partying at the "Holiday Inn."

Yeah, me and my peoples.

I was wondering about the "Holidae In." The song "Holidae In," do you take any of your lyrics at all from Ronnie Hudson and the "West Coast Pop Lock." [hands

Snoop a Ronnie Hudson record] What is the importance of Ronnie Hudson? Does he relate at all to the "Holidae In"?

[singing] "Pop-lockin' My Rolls-Royce, Cadillac, Lincoln and Mercedes Benz. Pop-lockin' at the Howard Johnson, Sheraton. Pop-lockin' at the Holiday Inn." That's the one you're talkin' about?

Yes. Does that relate to "Holidae In," the song you did with Chingy?

Yeah, it's the same hotel. It's a fun spot, and it ain't too much to get up in there. But you can have a lot of fun when you do. I need to get that record by you too. That's gangsta right there.

Actually, that one you can't take from me, unfortunately ---

I just did!

No, no Snoop. That one you can't take from me.

[singing] "So tough. So tough. Out here baby."

No, you can't take that one Snoop! But Snoop Doggy Dogg, I was wondering, when I did talk to you the last time — when you took my Blowfly and Richard Pryor records, you're not taking that "Pop Lock" one — you were doing The Muppets. What happened? You were cut out of The Muppets?

I don't know. You gotta go get an interview with them and ask them what's happening because I did my part and I thought it was going to come on, so I don't know what happened.

I was really looking forward to that and you were cut out. And then I was thinking, I was doing research for that interview a while back, and I was thinking: Roosevelt Franklin, he was the original black muppet wasn't he?

Yeah, he was.

But then I did some more research Snoop, and I saw this particular black muppet, this O.G. guy. [hands Snoop a doll] What do you think about this guy right here?

[looking at doll] Who is this nigga right here?

This is the original black muppet. What do you think?

This ain't no muthafuckin' original black muppet, with little tight-ass slacks on, corduroy coat on. Yeah, that's Sam Bone. Sam Bone or some motherfuckin' thing. [Smiles] Look how they did him. That's cool, I'm keeping it though so we can erase this from history.

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: Preach!

Snoop, you cannot take that or the "Pop Lock" record. Those are just to show you. Snoop Doggy Dogg, you were in town awhile back working on *The L Word*. *The L Word*, a show about lesbians!

Mmm-hmm.

Now, what was that like? Cuz I heard that's your dream. Halle Berry and J.Lo and Snoop Doggy Dogg all together.

Yeah, we love the same things, you know. Lesbians and me have something in common.

What were you playing on that show? And that was something to do with Pam Grier wasn't it? *The L Word*.

Yeah. I was, um, a record producer who wanted to use one of her songs. Pam Grier, her character, was an old school artist who has a singing career that's sorta, kinda like disappeared, and I sampled one of her songs and brought her back to life.

On the set of *The L Word* I heard your trailer was completely filled with cereal. Do you love cereal? Was your trailer filled with cereal, Snoop Doggy Dogg?

No-no. I don't know where that came from.

You don't like cereal? What is your favourite cereal?

I like Captain Crunch. (Laughs)

And you are Snoop Doggy Dogg in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. And Snoop, you're also working on *Starsky And Hutch*.

Yeah, it's done. [long pause] You're funnier than a motherfucker. Lookin' at you make a motherfucker straight laugh. [laughs]

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: [Laughs] Chuuuch!

You are Snoop Doggy Dogg and you work with Fred Williamson.

[laughs] Yeah, "The Hammer". I worked with "The Hammer."

"The Hammer!" And Fred "The Hammer" Williamson posed for Playgirl years ago, so the question arises, would Snoop Doggy Dogg ever pose for Playgirl?

It depends on how much money they got.

You are Snoop Doggy Dogg. Now Snoop Doggy Dogg, would you ever wear a dress, like say, Flip Wilson. [hands Snoop a Flip Wilson record]

Never. No. Never, never, never, never, never.

You'd never wear a dress?

Never. No. Never, never, no never, never, never, never.

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: Preach!

Now what about Flip Wilson and why won't you wear a dress?

Flip Wilson was a comedian and he played characters like that. I don't get out like that. He was Geraldine. Wasn't that the character he played? He was sharp, you know what I am saying? That's him. I can't do that.

You couldn't see Snoop in that dress then. And Snoop Doggy Dogg, your influence goes pretty far and I wanted to ask you, right here, about a little interview I did a while back with Vanilla Ice. Do you remember Vanilla Ice?

Yeah, I remember.

Vanilla Ice, Snoop Doggy Dogg. He claims that he paved the way for Snoop Dogg and Death Row Records, believe it or not. That's what he said. Snoop Dogg wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Death Row Records and Vanilla Ice. And we're gonna play it right here [Nardwuar takes out his handy-cam with the Vanilla Ice interview all cued up on it] Snoop Doggy Dogg, check what Vanilla Ice has to say to you.

[Nardwuar plays Snoop a video clip of Vanilla Ice's interview]

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, did you pave the way for Snoop Doggy Dogg and Death Row Records? If it wasn't for Vanilla Ice, would there be Snoop Doggy Dogg or Death Row Records?

Vanilla Ice: Man c'mon, you're stretching it, dude. No, no, no I mean--

Nardwuar: You did pave the way though, didn't you? Indirectly, there would be no Snoopy Doggy Dogg if there wasn't Vanilla Ice, right?

Vanilla Ice: Well y'know you said the word indirectly. Everybody knows about the Suge Knight incident and yes in a way I contributed to the Chronic record, Snoop Dogg and Tupac. I funded, basically, initially, the beginning of that whole Death Row project, indirectly. [laughs] But I---

Nardwuar: Willingly?

Vanilla Ice: Well no, not willingly but y'know what? It was all good because I look at it in a positive way. I got way more money than I ever expected today and basically I look at it like it was an investment in some of the best hip-hop ever to live and ever come out. So I'm happy for it y'know? I'm happy for it.

What do you think about that Snoop?

If that's the way he feel, he telling the truth. You know, you gotta speak what's from your heart, your mind.

Check this out, this is Vanilla Ice talking about "Who is Mini-Me?"

[Nardwuar plays another clip from his Vanilla Ice Interview]

Nardwuar: Vanilla Ice, who is Mini-Me?

Vanilla Ice: Mini-me?

Nardwuar: Who is Mini-Me, Vanilla Ice?

Vanilla Ice: Let's see, "m" and "m." M-M, Mini-Me.

Nardwuar: Eminem.

Vanilla Ice: Well, yo. Y'know what it is? I... it's like this [raps] It's been a long time since ya seen me on the TV. V-Ice is here for she-zee, takin' what's mine 'cause it's my time to hit y'all with a new style of rhyme. Yeah, this is hip rock. It can't be stopped. I bomb the system, straight to the top. Millions of dollars, I been spendin' em. I love rap, I paved the way for Eminem. Needless to say, I rap back today, y'all forgot about me, like y'all forgot about Dre. But I'm still here, with no fear, I say what I want and I make sure it's clear.

Nardwuar: Yeah! Vanilla Ice. Take that Eminem!

Vanilla Ice: [laughs]

What do you think about that Snoop Doggy Dogg?

[Stoned laughter] You're Stupid. You're stupider than a motherfucker.

No words for Vanilla Ice? He's just a stupid motherfucker?

No, no, I didn't say he's stupid. I said you're stupider than a motherfucker.

Thank you Snoop Doggy Dogg. I appreciate that. And winding up here, Snoop Doggy Dogg. You have done everything haven't you? You've pretty much done everything.

Everything except, your mother.

Well, actually there is one thing you have not done Snoop Doggy Dogg. You have not done a ventriloquist record yet. Have you ever thought about doing a ventriloquist record, Snoop Doggy Dogg? [hands Snoop "The Race Track" record by Richard and Willie]

See, I like that. That's kinda horror right there. I might have to. Richard And Willie, I remember them. We used to have these records back at the house. I might have to do that. That would be some fly shit. That some smart shit that your funny lookin' ass done said.

That's a ventriloquist record. I thought that you'd maybe do that on your show. That would be pretty cool.

I like that. That's sharp. I might have to. But I'm gonna let you be the one to put your hand up cuz's (the dummies) ass while I do all the talking.

Ba-boom!!

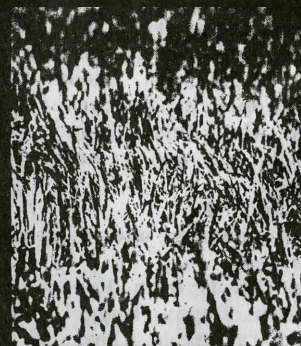
[Laughs]

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Snoop Doggy Dogg I want to ask you about crafty people. Could you tell me the story behind this record here? *Chronic 2000*. [Shows Snoop the record] Now Suge Knight put this out before Dr. Dre could call his record *The Chronic*. Is that how crafty Suge Knight is? And there's a guy on here called Swoop. That's kinda weird isn't it?

Mmmm. That shit is wack. Basically it's like, how would you say it, you know, bullshit and real shit. You put the bullshit out first to pave the way for the real shit. You know, he tried to beat us to the punch with this, but how many copies did he sell? About 15,000? He probably bought all of them. There's some shit I don't want.

And you are Snoop Doggy Dogg. And winding up here Snoop Doggy Dogg in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada. Did you know that Jimmie Walker was the official comedian for the Black Panthers?

No, I didn't know that. That's news to my ears. And why would you say that?

He was the official comedian of the Black Panthers. He really was, going way back when...

He was Chuuuch?

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: First I heard of that. I've been knowin' Jimmie since early in his career and I know a few of the party members, y'know, Mark Clark from outta Chicago. But this is the first I heard of that.

It's on his website.

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: It's a strong possibility. Sammy Davis Jr. worked with them also, so it's a strong possibility.

I did an interview with him and he did admit it.

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: That's a beautiful thing.

[Note: From <nardwuar.com>: "Nardwuar vs. Jimmie Walker: August 14 2001: I was the official comedian for the Black Panthers for about two years, the official comedian for the Black Panthers in the east, ladies and gentlemen! And I used to always think, because they would always brought guns to these cultural meetings, if the guy didn't like me, who was standing by watching the door, well he could just pick up his gun and go, "Pow! Done!" (laughs)]

And winding up here Snoop Doggy Dogg, I wanted to ask you about these guys, the Lifers Group. [hands Snoop the Lifers Group record] These guys recorded in jail. Have you ever thought about doing a project like that? Y'know, like getting some guys in jail to record? This the Lifers Group, a sort of East Coast-type thing.

Yeah, that's cool. That's cool. I wouldn't do that. I would do something totally different though. But that's fly though. I've seen it. I've heard it. It was dope.

Well, thanks very much Snoop Doggy Dogg and Archbishop Don...

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: Magic Juan, chairman of the board of famous playas everywhere. Chuuuch.

I appreciate your time and I want to leave you Snoop Doggy Dogg with a little joke that I have. Snoop Doggy Dogg, thanks for speaking to me, Nardwuar The Human Serviette. How does Snoop Doggy Dogg keep his whitest clothes the whitest?

Mmmm. Stay 15 feet away from the suckas, at all times.

No. He uses lots of blee-ATTCH!

[laughter]

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: They learnin' over here. Yeah, they learnin'.

That's cool.

How was that? How was that?

I got a joke for you.

Go ahead Snoop Doggy Dogg.

Let's say for instance you....[laughs]...I have this... it's not a joke. This guy he used to work out here at MuchMusic, his name is Malone Brown, you ever heard of him?

No I have not.

Malone Brown.

No I have not.

Ma lone Brown dick in your mouth.

Ba-boom!! Snoop Doggy Dogg in da house!

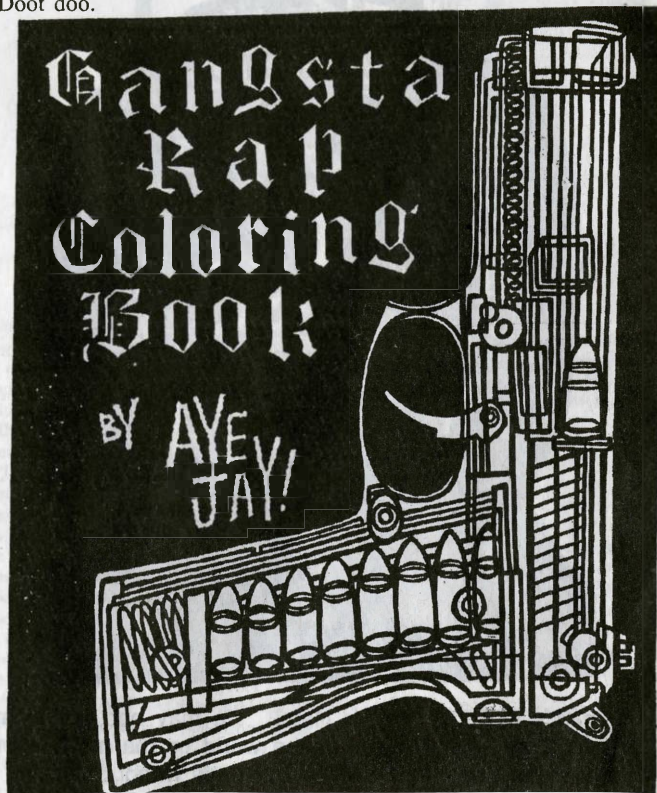
[laughs]

Archbishop Don Magic Juan: Now that's gangsta.

Thank you.

Thanks very much Snoop. Keep on rockin' in the free world and doot doola doot doo...

Doot doo.



IT'S GOOD TO BE KING!

King Diamond Takes On The King of Kings...on LIVE TV!



Denmark's King Diamond is Metal! He may not be the most famous heavy Metal singer in the world or the most talented Heavy metal singer in the world but he is without question the **GREATEST** Heavy metal singer in the universe! The combination of his menacing makeup, his piercing falsetto, his intensely melodramatic songs and his theatrical performances make King Diamond the ultimate Metal god. After playing Metal and punk as a youth in the bands Black Rose and the Brats he went on to form **Mercyful Fate**, and in 1982 they burst upon the scene with the controversial "Nuns Have No Fun," and the amazing "Curse of the Pharaohs." After several albums Diamond changed direction and formed **King Diamond**, the band, who first released a spectacular Christmas record, and then began a series of ambitious concept albums, each telling a gothic horror tale through a series of story songs. After numerous triumphs (most notably the ghost story "Abigail" and its sequel) King has recently released perhaps his scariest epic ever, "The Puppet Master," a gruesome tale of living puppet slaves and the triumphs and tragedies of love in the face of horrible misfortune. He also reformed Mercyful Fate, so the King fronts two fully active bands, and still found time to record a song for Dave Grohl's **Probot** (a Heavy Metal concept record where Grohl had the best vocalists of 80s Metal write and record lyrics to tracks he recorded). With all this going on he managed to find a few minutes to chat with us, and share a tale of his clever, Satanic televised triumph over a rogue priest!

October: I really liked your Probot song.

King Diamond: I think it turned out pretty good. The music is nothing like King Diamond or Mercyful Fate, but the vocal style is somewhere between those two styles.

So you sing differently in King Diamond than you do in Mercyful Fate?

Oh yeah. Mercy is straighter, it's definitely not as theatrical as King Diamond.

Well I thought that was mainly because of the material not being as theatrical.

That has a lot to do with it. That's the way I started developing, that's how I found out I could do all these different voices, the grandma voice and...I now have different names for the voices between me and the producer. "Do we want the grandma voice or should I go into the Satan voice?" Those didn't come about until we started doing things like "Abigail," and from there on because of the stories and wanting to present them theatrically. You will hear all kinds of voices.

My favorite part of "Puppet Master" is where the character turns into the Little Drummer Boy, and I once read in an interview that your favorite food is Christmas dinner, and one of your first King Diamond records was a Christmas single. It occurs to me that you seem to be really into Christmas.

When you think about it I did the "No Presents for Christmas" song and now the song "Christmas," yeah, but it's 17 years between them. I'm not obsessed with Christmas. I remember that time from my childhood being an extremely nice time. My dad always, when he was alive, made a lot out of Christmas and I have such great memories from those times. I think it's a cozy time, definitely, still today.

How does that weigh against your evil persona, your warm Christmas memories against your wicked...

Well I don't know how to say that. Each person on this earth consists of so many feelings and aspects and things that have influence. The whole Christmas aspect on the new album was brought in so it could be cold and wintery and to be able to bring the Little Drummer Boy in because he is the one who kicks the whole thing off.

In the new story the really scary parts aren't from some massive bloody carnage, but from a tiny amount of blood coming from these puppets, a puppet shedding a few drops of blood is a horrifying image, but twenty years ago you were singing about raping and crucifying nuns. Have you consciously become more subtle?

I think I've gotten better at telling stories. Those things with the nun and the cross was not telling stories. "Nuns Have No Fun," the whole point behind that was at that time there was a priest in Denmark who was so anti anything that was Metal, he thought he was like the knight on the white horse protecting youth from bad music. He was so active in trying to stop us from being played on national radio, there were rock shows back then with upcoming new bands, demos, you had a chance - he was so adamant about stopping us from getting that chance, completely unfair judgment. In order to answer him back and in order to be smart we wrote this and we made the cover that way - you have this coven crucifying a nun and burning her at the cross - and of course this guy flipped backwards when he saw this stuff, it was just fuel for his fire. And he went on national TV and on national radio and he was just doing everything. And suddenly we got a public say. Suddenly they would listen to our side, and we got on national shows to talk about this stuff. I was on a national TV show in Denmark in prime time where a preacher was just trying to heckle us and put us down, where I fixed it so he left in the middle of the show, it was embarrassing to him, not because I wanted to be malicious but because I wanted to defend my own right. What happened was, you get to the point where you say, "Hey, he's freaking out over this drawing." The religion that he stands for, look back at what they did for real, not to one, two, five people. They did it to millions of people. Crucified them for no reason, burned them at the stake. C'mon. And it turned into

a situation where his outrageous views were ridiculed. Hello, we're in the present, not in the inquisition right now, and it was the same thing with the TV show we were on. I hate people with disrespect, that's one of the worst things, disrespect for other people that might have other opinions. On that TV show, after he had been saying all kinds of bad things about us, I was just sitting there with a smile on because I knew what was coming. And then he finally stopped and I said, "Can I speak now?" "Yeah, sure, sure..." and then I said, "First of all I'd like to compliment you, you look great. I really like your tie, you are very well dressed for this occasion." He didn't know what to say of course and so he says, "Thank you." So I say, "Ooop! PRIDE! Guilty of pride! Why do you dress up like this for this thing here? Huh? Isn't this one of the sins, supposedly? Forget that, why don't we talk about something a little more serious? What about the inquisition, would you like to talk little bit about that, shall we go into detail? What your religion really stood for in that time period?" And he got up and left.

Were you wearing your makeup?

No. That was totally just 'here's a musician and here's a priest who disagree.'

In Denmark, other then defending yourself, did Mercyful Fate or King Diamond get to be on television, just playing?

We would be on music shows.

Mainstream music shows?

Yeah it happened.

And when you were a kid what music shows on television influenced you?

At that time mostly you had series of things maybe called *Rock Night*, or whatever, something like that, and I remember seeing mostly the Swedish ones because they had half hour concerts and I remember seeing Status Quo there and I saw Iron Butterfly and Queen and other stuff that was giving me sometimes the first look of seeing a band live and later on I would see some of them live in Copenhagen. So it was nice to see pictures of some of those people actually running around live. It was black and white TV at that time.

They weren't lipsynching?

No, it was like some concert they had taken an excerpt of.

Were there teenage shows in Denmark where bands would come on and lip synch?

We never did anything where we lip synched.

Here's what I always wanted to ask you...is it hard to get makeup off a moustache?

It is weird, the makeup would probably look wrong if the moustache weren't there. I rarely think about it because it is so natural. It is the same as getting out of eyebrow makeup, no problem there.

Will you ever stop wearing the makeup?

No. I don't think that will ever happen. It's part of the whole thing, it's part of me. I couldn't imagine doing it without...it just belongs. I don't have the feel of transforming into someone else when I put it on, not at all, it's all me. It would be funny if I could do this during the daytime, wear it to the grocery store and scare the shoppers. It could be fun if there are other people around, otherwise it is a hassle because your face starts itching after a while. I've had questions, "Is it true that you put makeup on when you get up in the morning?" No. Why would I do that? I don't mow my lawn in makeup either.

So you are saying here officially that you don't mow your lawn in King Diamond makeup?

Yes

A Roctober exclusive!



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 92

Sunshine Band, Behind the Music: Gladys Knight and the Pips, Behind the Music: Rick Springfield and strangely Behind the Music: Julian Lennon. There was also a general BTM comp titled *Behind the Music* that you could buy only at Target that had tracks (including live rarities) by Lenny Kravitz, Sheryl Crow, Barenaked Ladies, Melissa Etheridge, Stevie Nicks, Goo Goo Dolls and Alanis Morissette.

BEHIND THE MUSIC BOOKS: During the BTM merch boom of 2000-2001 there was an attempt made to get TV viewers reading with a series of books based on the show. *The Day The Music Died* by Quinton Skinner and Scott Schinder told the tale (quite accurately) of the Buddy Holly, Big Bopper, Richie Valens plane crash. But at little over 100 pages with tons of photos, this is more of a companion to the TV show than an extension of it. Skinner also wrote *Casualties of Rock*, an encyclopedia of dead (and a couple of living but damaged) rockers that is impressive for opening with G.G. Allin's obit, as well as a number of other obscurities. Wayne Robins' *Behind The Music: 1968* told the tale of that tumultuous year, possible aiming for a high school audience. The most ambitious book was *Willie Nelson: Behind the Music* by Clint Richmond, an attempt at a major biography under the BTM brand name. It is a good book, covering Nelson's tax problems that occurred after his autobiography came out. If this had been successful this could have spawned some interesting rock scholarship.

BEHIND THE MUSIC RADIO: Hosted by the voice of BTM Jim Forbes this syndicated Westwood One radio show (which also aired on VH1.com radio) offered 30 minute audio versions of BTM episodes. This has been discontinued, though VH1 and Westwood One still have a radio broadcasting partnership.

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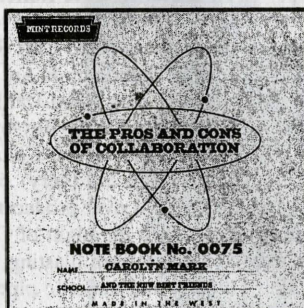
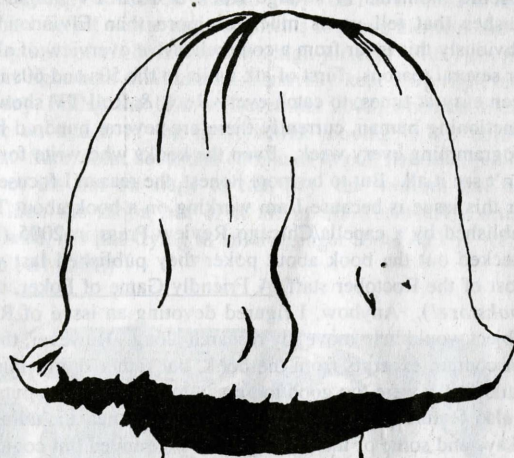
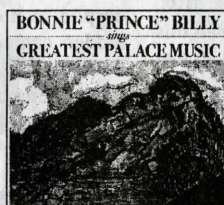
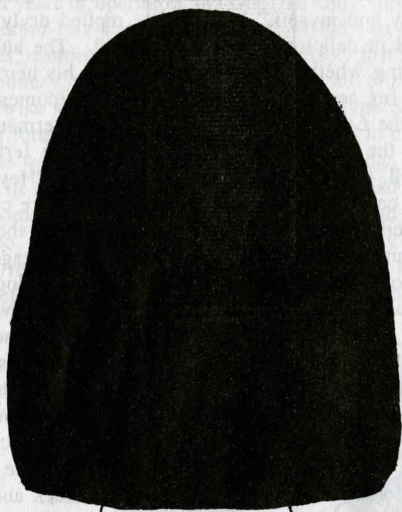
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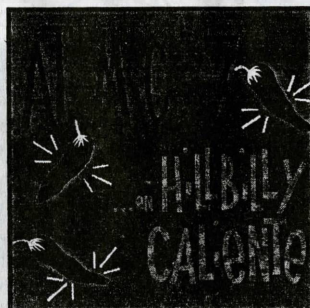
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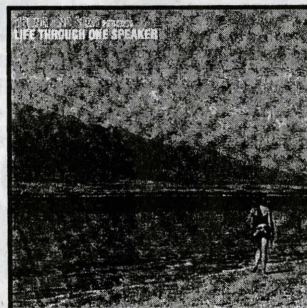
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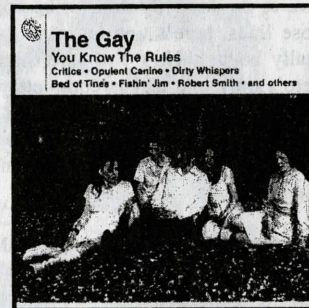
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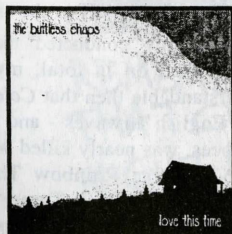
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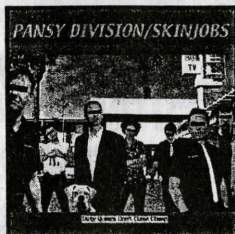
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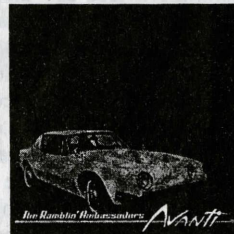
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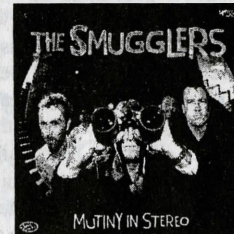
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TV ROCK & ROLL!

Welcome to Roctober's special section on TV Rock & Roll, which spans all the way from the birth of the boob tube to tomorrow! Now this section does not cover television's all time greatest hits – that wouldn't be the Roctober way! Rather, Roctober writers are revisiting some obscure moments of strange Rock & Roll TV magic – cultural car crashes that tell us as much or more than Elvis on *Ed Sullivan*. Obviously this is far from a comprehensive overview of all Rock on TV, for several reasons. First of all, while in the 50s and 60s it was possible, even easy at times, to catch every Rock & Roll TV show and still be a functioning human, currently there are several hundred hours of music programming every week. Even the kooks who write for this magazine can't see it all. But to be more honest, the reason I focused on this topic for this issue is because I am working on a book about TV Rock to be published by a capella/Chicago Review Press in 2005 (if you haven't checked out the book about poker they published last year, featuring most of the Roctober staff, *A Friendly Game of Poker*, then run to the bookstore!). Anyhow, I figured devoting an issue of Roctober to the subject would help move my research along. However, this section does not contain excerpts from the book, but rather things that wouldn't fit, couldn't fit, were too good/too crazy/too personal/too outside my scope. It also features things that didn't fit my format, including comix, lists, essays and some of the raw data that I compiled but couldn't use in this form. There are many golden subjects that are covered at length in that book that are missing here, so wait til next year for your joneses to be satisfied if you fiend for Michael Jackson, Fear on *Saturday Night Live*, *Soul Train*, Bo Diddley on *Ed Sullivan*, the Chipmunks' cartoon, *Making The Band II*, obscure local dance shows, Blue Cheer on *Steve Allen*, the Munsters meet the Standells and hundreds of other TV rock landmarks and bizarre obscurities. But here is a unique look at some of the shows that fell through the cracks at the *TV Guide* office, eliciting neither cheers or jeers til now. And while I really enjoy working on the book, I must say, it was great to have folks send in these entries below (printed as received, without no standardized format) for which I didn't have to do any silly things like copy editing or fact checking! Along those lines, here's one more note – one of these following entries is totally bogus! Now I'm sure there are a few with factual errors, but there's only one that is completely a fictional fantasy (excluding Phil Milstein's comical fictional entries). The first reader to contact Roctober at fakeshow@roctober.com and correctly identify the spurious show will win a fabulous prize (and it really is a big prize, seriously). Happy hunting!

Contributors: AL (Andria Lisle) DM (Dr. Mark) GPG (Gary Pig Gold) JV (Joey Vindictive) KB (Ken Burke) RS (Rob Syers) SM (Ski Mask) WM (William McCurtin)

SAM PHILLIPS on LATE NIGHT WITH DAVID LETTERMAN(1986) As if bringing, in roughly chronological order, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins, Jerry Lee Lewis and Charlie Rich to the world's attention weren't accomplishments enough, the late, extremely great Sam C. Phillips also provided us - though quite often unintentionally I'm sure - with some of the most entertaining moments in rock n' roll VIEWING as well as listening. Say, like the time he most disrespectfully indeed led the unsuspecting viewers of Rupert Murdoch's *Fox After Breakfast* on a live tour of Graceland's kitchen very early one August 16th morning. But it was late on the night of May 15, 1986 that "Mr. Phillips" (as The King always called him) made Rock and Roll Television History himself, when he poured into a hilarious interview with the then King of *apres*-Carson programming. Now, what was extremely obvious right from the get-go was that Sam had spent several hours already taking extreme liberal advantage of the *Late Night* Green Room's hospitalities; the televised festivities began, in fact, with the man leaning dangerously close towards his host's face to tactlessly enquire about certain flaws in the Letterman dental alignment. Things raced quickly downhill following that expert opening salvo (Dave tried to recover by straightening up to talk about Sun Records; Sam simply feigned bug-eyed wonder at the low-budget splendor of the

Late Night set) while the audience merrily kept score with varying boos, hoots and hollers. Eventually, in a last-ditch attempt to salvage the spot, Dave called in reinforcements: his trusty sidekick Paul Shaffer and a stack of mounted photographic blow-ups of Sam in his salad days ("Hey Sam! Who's that?" smirked Dave while holding aloft one of the most instantly recognizable 1956 images from the Sun Studio. "Uh, that would be Elvis Presley and myself," Mr. Phillips replied dryly while rolling pupils skyward in delicious theatrical overkill. The audience roars as Shaffer, mulling whether to protect his job or his hero Sam, continues to shirk in his seat). But when it finally becomes quite obvious to all among the *Late Night* organization that Letterman is no match whatsoever for the man who produced twenty-three Jerry Lee singles and lived to tell, our shredded host shouts a quick "Hey Sam! We're outta time!" as comic thunder and lightning effects are cued in the background and overhead lights flash rapidly on/off. Dave then cuts his losses by cutting immediately to commercial as Sam exits stage right to thunderous salutations from both the in-house and, I'm logically assuming, home audiences. But the *Late Night* fun isn't quite over yet, as subsequent guests Bernadette Peters and even Eli Wallach are continually interrupted to surreptitiously peek in on Sam's post-bout revelry all over the afore-mentioned Green Room, or, in Mr. Phillips' case this eve, the Getting Even Greener 'round The Gills Room. Yet despite such concluding cheap shots from Team Letterman's backstage hidden cameras, when all was said and flung it's without one doubt Point, Match, GAME for the still-undefeated Father of Rock and Roll from Memphis, Tennessee. Why, even The Killer would've been impressed, I'd betcha. (GPG)

"COLOUR ME POP" MOTHERS OF INVENTION episode (1968)

The true, rhythmic blue roots of QUALITY Rock and Roll Television reach deeply back beneath not only Dick Clark's Philadelphian bandstand, but also across the pond to Fifties/Sixties British airwaves. From Jack Good's pioneering *Six-Five Special* and *Oh Boy!* to the dangerously pedophilic "Mini-Pops" to places no Rock & Rollers went before (i.e.: Freddie and the Dreamers jamming with those beloved Brit piglet puppets Pinky and Perky, and the SuperMarionated Cliff Richard JR. and his faithful Shadows boldly declaring "Thunderbirds Are Go!"). In fact, only weeks after the almighty Bonzo Dog (Doo-Dah) Band donned gigantic papier mache heads to croon their Teddy-Boy-by-way-of-Dali "Canyons Of Your Mind," BBC-2's absolutely fab *Colour Me Pop* show invited no less than Frank Zappa and his (very) original Mothers of Invention to do their various things all over producer Steve Turner's tiny 20-by-30-foot London studio. On the night of October 23, 1968, Frank and his Mothers were still fresh from blasting "Louie Louie" through the Royal Albert Hall's mighty and majestic pipe organ (as bassist Roy Estrada, ostensibly playing the role of The Pope, tossed a bucketful of M&M's one-by-one into the audience). In fact, bassman Roy dominated the *Colour Me Pop* spotlight as well, wailing over and over in his patented Pachuco falsetto "Who is this guy?" while keyboardist/monster-masher extraordinaire Don Preston downed a smoking beakerful of his "vile foamy liquid," Jimmy Carl Black beat the drums as only the Indian of the Group can and, way off to the side, So Far yet So Near, Mother of them all Frank glumly "conducted" the entire proceedings. And the wee audience looked on in total, mystified confusion. Perhaps it is somewhat understandable then that *Colour Me Pop* was soon after banished from the English airwaves - and Zappa, during one of his next London performances, was nearly killed when an irate fan tossed him, mid-song, deep into the Rainbow Theatre's orchestra pit. So it's surprising that though, what Steve Turner recalls about those good olde daze, "was the number of middle aged and older people who ENJOYED the progressive groups. They would write and say 'Thank you for introducing me to this music.' I was disappointed when we went off [the air] because I enjoyed doing the program. It wasn't like work for me. Not like work at all." (GPG)

ZAL YANOVSKY cooks on *OPEN MIKE WITH MIKE BULLARD* (1998) Even cursory exposure to any of the ever-Lovin' Spoonful's television appearances from yore will prove that, despite it being John B. Sebastian who wrote and sang the lion's share of the band's Good Time music, those vintage Sixties cameras just could never help but stray across to, then focus longingly upon, that ever-buoyant figure manning the lead guitar over to the side of the proceedings. For it was there that would most often be planted, during the group's golden two initial years of operation, the One, the Only, direct-from-living-inside-a-spin-dryer-in-a-Toronto-laundromat (I kid you not) Zalman Yanovsky. In fact, scuttlebutt has that it was precisely just such incessant, airborne buffoonery throughout the *Ed Sullivan Show* premiere of John's otherwise solemn ballad "Darling Be Home Soon" which led to Zal being forever bounced from the band, only to claim the following year that he was, in the words of his sorrowfully lone solo album, "Alive And Well In Argentina." Well, in actuality Zal had fled instead back up to his home and native Canada to produce - and often make uproarious cameo appearances on - that Grandpappy of all afternoon-TV legal/reality series *Magistrates Court*, before vanishing almost altogether to launch his Chez Piggy restaurant in Kingston, Ontario

(food there is GREAT, btw). While reuniting once every twenty years with the Spoonful (for Paul Simon's 1980 cinematic millstone *One Trick Pony*, then for the band's 2000 induction into the so-called Rock and Roll Hall of Fame) proved he was still the indisputable bouncing star of that unit, it was under the guise of Master Chef that Zal made his final, and perhaps most poignant of all small-screen appearances: Thrashing about with a bottle of (cooking?) wine and a flaming shrimp platter all over Toronto's cult *Open Mike* yak-fest, whilst shamelessly plugging his grand new Chez Piggy cookbook to boot. Now, do I even need to report it took only this briefest of late-night segments to prove the man had lost not one solitary inch of his Sullivision-era high-jinxery? Plus I am most proud to report right here that Zalman Yanovsky kept it up right on up til his dying day, Friday the 13th of December 2002, when he silently succumbed to an attack of the heart whilst tending to his beloved Kingston farm. Sure, John Sebastian continues to pull the odd Spoonful chestnut out of his hat on stage to this day, but without Zal right alongside to loon the moon out of it all in his trademark Carnaby cowboy gear, well, it's like trying to tell a stranger about rock n' roll all over again, isn't it? (GPG)



REMEMBER MIAMI VICE? YEAH, YEAH, YEAH... I NEVER WATCHED THAT CRAP EITHER. ONE EPISODE I "DIDN'T" SEE ONE FRI. NIGHT, EATING NACHOS WITH MY DAD BEFORE GOING TO GET DRUNK IN THE PARKING LOT OF FRIENDLY'S™ FEATURED A WRITER IN A WHEELCHAIR. NOW THIS GUY DITCHED HIS POLICE ESCORT & SNUCK OFF TO A SUICIDAL TENDENCIES SHOW. MIAMI'S VICEST "RESCUE" THIS GUY AS MIKE MUIR & CO. TEAR THRU INSTITUTIONALIZED AFTERWARDS POPS ASKS "IS THAT WHAT YOU DO AT THAT CLUB?"

It's 3 o'clock in the morning and you're too jazzed to sleep but too worn out to do much more than watch TV. If they're being shown, we highly recommend the following....

Ten Essential Vintage Rock'n'Roll Movies

By Ken Burke

- 1.) *The Girl Can't Help It* (1956). Tom Ewell's dry humor and Jayne Mansfield's gravity-defying bustline aside, the reason to catch this all-color extravaganza is to eyeball early rock superstars - Little Richard, Fats Domino, Eddie Cochran, and particularly Gene Vincent & His Blue Caps who look like manic roadhouse toughs being sentenced to a recordings studio. Need some kitsch as a chaser? Wait for Oscar-winning actor Edmund O'Brien (The Barefoot Contessa, 1954) to cut loose on "Rockpile Dust is on My Shoes."
- 2.) *Jailhouse Rock* (1957). Elvis Presley's best movie. All others pale in comparison both in attitude and quality of songs. Leiber & Stoller wrote the score and the dance numbers were built around the star's own on-stage movements. When Presley's sneering misunderstood punk "Vince Everett is a sneering, misunderstood punk utters, "Them ain't tactics, honey. That's just the beast in me," he achieves his true essence.
- 3.) *Wild in the Streets* (1968). Christopher Jones plays Max Frost, a mama-hatin' rocker whose hook-song rage captures the minds of the nation's youth. In between great songs like "Shape of Things to Come," he and his band (featuring a young Richard Pryor) drug Washington's water supply with LSD so the voting age can be lowered to 15. The final snapper on this one is not to be missed.
- 4.) *Jamboree* (1957). Kay Medford - later Kenny Lane's scene-stealing "mother" on the Dean Martin Show, carries the plot in this black & white cheap-o. This nostalgia-fest not only contains disc jockeys from all over the U.S., but sterling lip-synched performances from Fats Domino, Charlie Gracie, Carl Perkins, and Jerry Lee Lewis - whose version of "Great Balls of Fire" is different from his Sun hit. Trivia note: Connie Francis, deemed not cute enough for the movie, supplies the female teen's vocals.
- 5.) *A Hard Day's Night* (1964). Beatles. Great soundtrack. Great jokes. Remarkable black and white cinema verite style. 'Nuff said.
- 6.) *American Hot Wax* (1978). This sanitized Alan Freed bio-pic omits several details and utilizes a skewed chronology. However, it's heart is truly in the right place. Rock veterans Jerry Lee Lewis, Chuck Berry, and Screamin' Jay Hawkins give a mighty account playing early versions of themselves, but it is the ersatz group called the Chesterfields which illuminate the true street level joys of early rock'n'roll.
- 7.) *Don't Knock The Twist* (1961). The best of the Twist movies features stunningly framed low-rent performances by Gene Chandler ("Duke of Earl"), the Dovells ("Bristol Stomp"), Dee Dee Sharp ("Mashed Potato Time"), and the Dance King himself Chubby Checker ("Don't Knock The Twist," "Slow Twistin'"). The plot? That dancing - especially twisting - can be a force for good, God Bless it!
- 8.) *Go, Johnny Go!* (1959). The last Alan Freed flick is the best, boasting top performances from Ritchie Valens, Jimmy Clanton, Jackie Wilson, and The Flamingos. Eddie Cochran's inclusion is disappointing, but the movie is well worth staying up for to see the one and only Chuck Berry. A natural on-screen, he imbues his music ("Little Queenie") and role as Freed's sidekick with deft humor and ironic flair.
- 9.) *Rock, Baby, Rock It* (1957). Teenagers try to save their club from local gangsters in this mostly wonderfully incompetent cheapie. Sporting acting so poor that you don't need drugs to laugh at it, the flick is notable due to top-notch period performances by Roscoe Gordon, the Belew Twins, and the incredibly shake 'em on down greasy stylings of Johnny Carroll. Need some sex appeal? Dancer Kay Wheeler - president of the very first Elvis Fan Club - does the bop barefoot!
- 10.) *The Cool Ones* (1967). The mid-60s rock scene is neatly skewered by this flick which mixes ersatz pop stars (Debbie Watson, Gil Petersen) with the real thing (Glen Campbell, the Leaves). Roddy McDowell plays a Phil Spector-type starmaker who seeks to simultaneously resurrect the career of Cliff Donner (his "Sings the Hits of the '40s" made him a pariah with kids) and capitalize on the accidentally created dance craze "The Tantrum." Rife with comic allusions to the then contemporary scene, the plot builds to the discovery of one of the greatest novelty performers of the '60s - Mrs. Miller. Still good for a laugh and the music isn't half bad.

THE BANANA SPLITS on the big screen!? The great puppet TV rock band appear in the movie *ROLLERCOASTER* (1978, Universal) Just out on DVD. Part of the movie takes place at Kings Dominion Park in Virginia, where there were costumed Hanna-Barbera characters, just like at Kings Island (aka Coney Island) in Cincinnati - where they filmed the intro to the Splits show. At 1:03, a quick glimpse of Bingo's head can be spotted behind an officer, then you can see Fleegle entertaining children by an eatery, then you can spot Drooper in an overhead shot from the skyride cart. I found no shots of Bingo. The Splits might also be spotted in the GAF Kings Island/Kings Dominion View-Master packets from the early 1970s.

Night Gallery "The Flip-Side of Satan" (1971) *Laugh-In's* Arte Johnson plays "J.J. Wilson" a hot disc-jockey who leaves the Big Apple after 15 years to be "reborn" at small town radio station KAPH. Yet, as he mans the abandoned station, in between spilling out bits of his depraved story during various phone calls - he begins to notice odd things. The records are all heavy, depressing organ music, and satanic incantations. Even the discs he brought with him play as homages to the Prince of Darkness. Thinking it's a joke, J.J. looks for the perpetrators - presumably other disc jockeys welcoming him - when suddenly, the door handle rips off in his hand, and the satanic pronouncements grow louder and more personally threatening. J.J.'s problems are compounded to a terrifying degree when the DJ discovers that he can't call out and there are pictures on the wall of other disc jockeys whose stay at station KAPH lasted *only one day*. Although he protests to the last, there is no escaping the fact that this small radio station is portal to eternal damnation reserved exclusively for corrupt disc jockeys like him. For all the performers who missed out on a hit record because they couldn't pony up the payola, this must have been an extremely reassuring episode. (KB)

They're on the tube quite often, so be on the look out for these...

Ten Memorable Rock'n'Roll Moments in Non-Rock'n'Roll Films.

By Ken Burke

- 1.) *One, Two, Three* (1961) Communist interrogators torture Horst Buchholz through repeated playing of "Itsy Bitsy Teeny Weeny Yellow Polka Dot Bikini."
- 2.) *A Face in the Crowd* (1957) "Lonesome" Rhodes falls in lust at a teenage baton-twirling contest while his misogynistic recording of "Mama Guitar" rocks along.
- 3.) *A King in New York* (1957) Drowned out by a nightclub rock'n'roll act, Charlie Chaplin is forced to mime his meal order to a waiter.
- 4.) *The Producers* (1968) Lorenzo St. Dubois - A.K.A. LSD (Dick Shawn) sends up the Flower Power generation with his hip-grinding protest anthem "Love Power."
- 5.) *Bedazzled* (1967) The Devil (Peter Cook) transforms Stanley Moon (Dudley Moore) into a pop star who rants a needy Tom Jones-like "Love Me." The Devil quickly steals his fans away with an unemotional, bad-boy rendering of "I Don't Need You," ending with the fabulous put-down "you fill me with inertia."
- 6.) *King Ralph* (1991). Claimant to the British throne Ralph Jones (John Goodman) disrupts a formal royal gathering with a raucous piano-kicking version of Little Richard's "Good Golly Miss Molly."
- 7.) *Chasing Amy* (1995). Alyssa Jones's (Joey Lauren Adams) singing of "Alive" stokes Holden McNeil's (Ben Affleck) budding passion to incredible heights just before he discovers the song is an entreaty to her lesbian girlfriend.
- 8.) *Into the Night* (1985). During an especially metaphoric interlude, 50s rockabilly pioneer Carl Perkins seems done in by 70s art-rock chameleon David Bowie, when surprisingly he comes to life just long to stab Bowie's character to death.
- 9.) *The Family Jewels* (1965). As Captain Eddie of Eddie's Airlines, Jerry Lewis is asked to turn down the in-flight music. Rather than twist a knob, Eddie opens the door and surprise, it's the star's son Gary Lewis & The Playboys performing "This Diamond Ring."
- 10.) *Jumpin' Jack Flash* (1986). Whoopi Goldberg's funniest scene ("Speak English, Mick!") comes while trying to derive a secret agent's password code-key from repeated playing of the Rolling Stones' immortal title track.

Cramps Go Playboy - The Cramps made a brief appearance on The Playboy Channel, of all places (and why not? What band is closer to Hefner's philosophy?), at around the same time. Once, when a latter day Playmate's "extracurricular" activities were being documented (surely no one watched these shows just to see them take their clothes off), they ran a clip from her own cable access TV show, in which she introduced "New Music group, The Cramps." The band as a whole was only shown for a few seconds, then the Playmate/Host asked Lux, "Tell me, how do you think video has helped young, up and coming artists get ahead in the music business?" to which he replied, "We think video is great, because we're getting all these great movies we never would have seen otherwise." (JB)

BRIAN WILSON vs. DR. EUGENE LANDY on ABC News' PRIME TIME LIVE (1991) The conversation might just as well have gone exactly like this...

Diane Sawyer: Brian, there have been accusations that Dr. Landy and his staff have actually brainwashed you.

Brian Wilson (pausing in deep thought; eyes and brow roll upward): Uh, does constantly being kept away from your family, friends, music and business associates while having your phone calls and every aspect of your daily schedule monitored and even recorded twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, constitute being brainwashed?

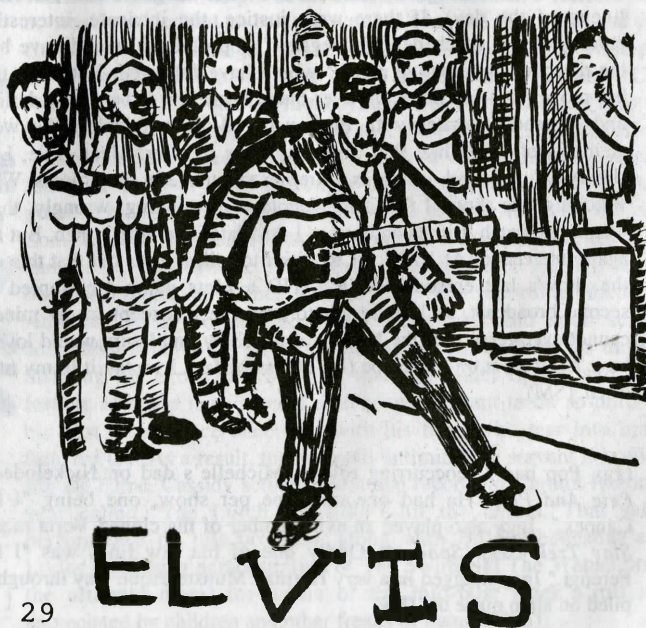
Diane Sawyer (thoroughly exasperated by this point in the interview): YES, Brian. It does!

Brian Wilson: Oh. Well, no, there's been none of that going on then.

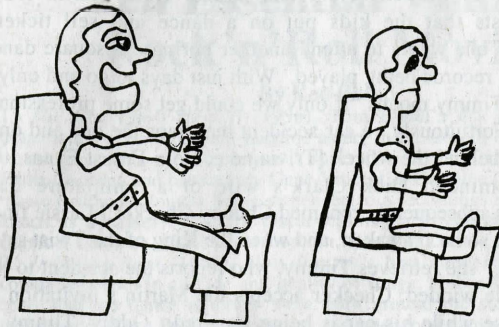
Now, it should go without ever saying at this extremely late stage in the game that to let our beloved Chief Beach Boy loose upon the public airwaves, at ANY given time, is to flagrantly invite a bare minimum of one spectacular, eye-AND-mind-boggling moment-per-broadcast-minute. Nevertheless, the brave programmers at ABC's News Division, on that fateful night of October 10, 1991, squarely and fearlessly went this formula one better -- AT LEAST -- by making Brian Wilson the central, quaking focus of a hard-hitting investigative report centering on such thorny subjects as legal conservatorship rights, probate and estate challenges, prescription drug abuse, mind control, and the very ethical and constitutional boundaries of the Hippocratic Oath itself. Yes indeed, beneath the auspices of filming a simple plug-piece on the eldest Wilson brother's up-coming (and quite appropriately titled) "Sweet Insanity" album, Diane Sawyer and crew found themselves instead fully embroiled in what turned out to be the very height -- no, make that depth -- of Brian and his family's struggles to untangle themselves from the all-hearing, all-seeing, all-feeling, and as it would turn out all-appropriating clutches of self-styled "Shrink to the Stars" Dr. Eugene E. Landy, Ph.D. So after a few acclimatizing moments of sheer fascination spent watching Brian work out, plunk at his piano, serve tea then take a trip to the beach in his lemon-yellow-bright little sports coupe -- all the time being followed, and videotaped, by several of Brian's beefy big "handlers" themselves, mind you -- Ms. Sawyer sits down with the attending doctor to hopefully begin to make SOME sense out of the Twilight Zone we all seem to have dropped into. Directly under the cross-examination crosshairs, and squirming all the while in true *60 Minutes* splendor, Gene is confronted by an impressive hit parade of accusatory witnesses (cousin Mike Love, not surprisingly, but even Jan and Dean as well) only to next be broad-sided by a meticulously detailed, truly horrific litany of medical and legal infractions FAR too numerous to even begin to mention here. But the doctor's sole response (following one VERY damning pregnant pause of at least forty-five full seconds) is, "I never tried to HURT Brian. You can ask anyone." Cut to Brian Wilson himself, zoom in on those baby-blue yet terrified eyes themselves, and the case is most definitely CLOSED. Suffice to say the sheer outrage this *Prime Time* expose immediately elicited soon sent Dr. Landy and Co. scurrying to the Santa Monica Superior Court-mandated exile of distant Hawaiian shores, out of the founding Beach Boy's life forever and unable to ever again practice, quote, psychiatry, not to mention co-produce surf music legend comeback albums -- so long as he may live. Period. And dear Brian, you may well ask? Well, unfortunately "Sweet Insanity" continues to rival only the B. Boys' own "Smile" as the Greatest Unreleased Album in both Rock AND Roll History. (GPG)

Lassie "Stranger with a Twist" (1963) The smartest collie in the world comes to rescue of Chubby Checker and we all learn a lesson about race relations. Timmy (Jon Provost) is having a hard time raising money for his local chapter of the 4-H club. His mother Ruth Martin (June Lockhart) suggests that the kids put on a dance and sell tickets. Unfortunately, no one wants to attend another boring old square dance with the same old records being played. With just days to go and only a few tickets sold, Timmy moans "If only we could get some professional entertainment." Fortunately, "a car accident that traps the one and only Chubby Checker behind the wheel. [Trivia note; Born Ernest Evans, the singer-dancer reminded Dick Clark's wife of a "miniature Fats Domino." He was subsequently renamed Chubby Checker.] Lassie finds him, licks his face so he'll awaken, and when the King of the Twist says, "Go get help, girl," she retrieves Timmy, who reports the accident to the police. Just a little winded, Checker accepts the Martin's invitation to stay at their house while his car is being repaired. Oddly, Timmy is standoffish to the hitmaker, avoiding his gaze, and reacting coolly to his jokes. When Timmy's mother asks what's wrong, the boy responds, "Well mom, he is a Negro" Concerned, the mother frets that their son is a racist. But Mr. Martin (Hugh Reilly) claims it will do no good to lecture the boy, "Timmy will have to figure this out for himself." Well, as longtime viewers of the show fully understand, Timmy is incapable of figuring anything out - that's why he has Lassie. In contrast to his owner, Lassie genuinely loves being around Chubby Checker. She brings him the trade papers from his suitcase, helps him find his wallet, and vies for his attention with every trick at her command. "If Lassie likes him," reasons Timmy during the heartwarming revelation scene, "Then it must not matter that he's a Negro, just that he's a good person." Soon, Checker and Timmy are fast friends. At episodes' end, Checker decides to repay the Martin's kindness by performing at the dance, and naturally he draws big crowds. The 4-H Club is saved, but once again the show is stolen by Lassie. During Checker's abbreviated version of "The Twist," the beautiful collie gets up on her hind legs and actually does a fair approximation of the dance. Then, during the singer's new hit "Let's Limbo Some More" (A follow-up to "Limbo Rock") the dog Limbos more gracefully than any of the humans! As they say their goodbyes, Timmy's mother thanks the singer saying, "We've all learned a lot." Checker says he learned a lot too - especially from their collie. "What do you mean?" asks Timmy. "This is my new dance," Checker demonstrates with a rhythmic pawing and wagging motion, "It's called 'The Lassie.'" They all share a warm laugh. Lassie barks appreciatively. (KB)

In addition to *Ed Sullivan* Elvis also appeared on Milton Berle's show, on which Berle played Elvis' twin brother in a skit. In real life Elvis had a stillborn twin named Jesse Garon. I bet his mom hated the skit.



ROCK IS FUNNY by Dan Buck

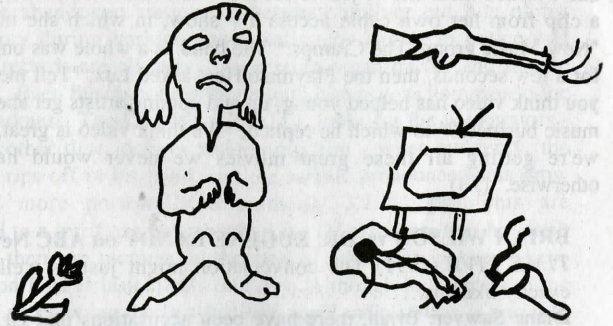
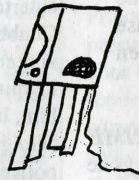


The Music Was Really
Hard To Swallow,
But The Drugs Sure
Were n it.

IGGY on LETTERMAN...like '81...Dave says "So how have you spent your summer Iggy?" And IGGY goes "Suckin' and lickin'!" A truly beautiful PUNK TV moment that's beyond punk...it's IGGY! (JV)

WWOR channel 9- Lollapalooza 2 (July 3, 1991) Back in the last days of that great time when cable tv systems still carried the signals of really cool, out-of-town, big city independent "superstations", where you could really get the sense of another place, complete with interesting local (to that area) commercials, before new FCC regulations condemned us to a homogenous cable network wasteland, there was a really good music video show on Secaucus, NJ's WWOR (formerly NYC's WOR) channel 9, which we could still receive here in Buffalo, NY on cable. It aired every Saturday Night- at 8 PM and again repeated at 1 AM. This was the year of Lollapalooza 2, which was condemned by the lame-o mainstream music critics of the day for having a "weaker" lineup than the first year of the festival, when, in fact, it had the stronger lineup (how can you argue with Ice Cube when he was still relevant?). Lush was on the bill, as was Pearl Jam. Between screenings of every Lush video ever made up to the point of the incredible "Spooky" album, the interviewer was backstage interviewing the band on rickety, dirty couches. Someone from Pearl Jam walks by outside, and the punky/gothy girls from Lush spot him, ridiculing the band as being "Van Halen." Truer words were never spoken (supposing that this jeering reference was a derogatory one in reference to the god-awful Van Hagar lineup of the day). If there were justice, the intricate, interesting, emotional and psychedelic "shoegazer" pop of Lush would have been the direction "alternative music" would have followed. But, alas, time has proven frat-boy faves, the ever-bland Pearl Jam to be critics' darlings and jarhead favorites with their watered-down take on the worst elements of bands like Bad Company have to offer. Meanwhile, Lush slowly disintegrated, losing its drummer to suicide in the process. When watching this show, I failed to videotape it, thinking, wrongly, that I would just catch it in its entirety at 1 AM later and tape it then. But fate again interceded! At 1 AM, VCR all set to roll, it turns out that this was the show's last episode EVER, AND a Mets game pre-empted the second broadcast, so I never got to preserve it, except in my mind. I cannot even remember the NAME of the show, but I sure would love to have a dub of it on videotape (DVD?) someday...I replay it in my mind often. (SM)

Iggy Pop had a reoccurring role as Michelle's dad on Nickelodeon's *Pete And Pete*. He had one odd line per show, one being "I hate Canoes." Iggy also played an evil member of the cloned Vorta race on *Star Trek Deep Space 9*. Oddly one of his few lines was "I hate Ferengi." Iggy mugged in a very Herman Munsteresque way through his piled on alien make up. (RS)



The Trouble With
Rock Is
It Rolls
All Over You.

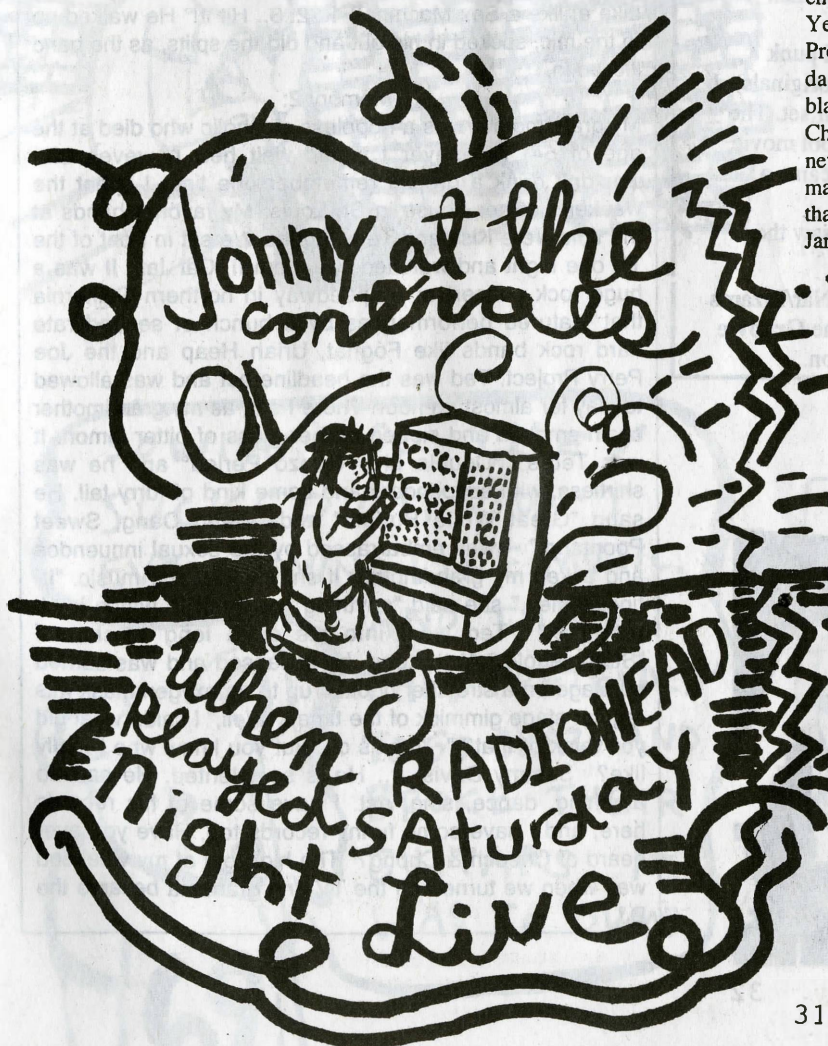
David Bowie (with Klaus Nomi) on *Saturday Night Live* What a wonderful thing for a young Catholic boy in the 4th grade, already predisposed to fetishistic tendencies (thanks mostly to the winning combination of 1st Communion, school uniforms, and not being able to use the bathrooms all day) to see on TV! My first real brush with "transvestism" via Klaus Nomi and Joey Arias, Bowie's other dress-clad backup singer (who also appears in many of Nomi's own music videos). I used to stay up until 1AM with my parents on Saturday and watch SNL. There I learned of all sorts of great music that radio avoided like the plague- the likes of Devo, the B-52's and the Specials - the bands I tormented square friends and relatives by playing, rather than the fare of the day, such as the #1 hit by Styx at the time, "Babe", or other like-minded "album rock" they seemed to prefer. I recently acquired a copy of this performance from a friend who taped it off a rerun of the show as shown on Comedy Central- which I believe shows 1 hour and not full 90 minute shows. I am either wrong and crazy, or my memories are jumbled if this is not the case, but I remember a segment where Bowie, wearing a dress, had some sort of fluorescent fake poodle on a leash amidst a bunch of flickering televisions on the stage during one song- but this is absent from the video I now have. However, there ARE the two clips for "Boys Keep Swinging" (a great ode to the joys of manhood off one of Bowie's strangest and best albums, "Lodger")- where some sort of spastic animated marionette body is keyed in over Bowie's actual body as his head sings, with Nomi and Arias in the back, as well as a performance of "The Man Who Sold The World", where Nomi and friend carry a stiff, seemingly immobile Bowie out to the microphone, then pick him up again and carry him back to where he was before the song at the end- who knew that two skinny men in new wave drag could be so strong? I remember the look of horror on my parents' faces as I enjoyed every twisted moment of it while they hamfistedly attempted to explain that some people will do strange things just to make an artistic statement, but I needed no explanation to know, yes, this is good and correct. Where are the role models today for young boys to emulate? (SM)

Remember how the 1st actor to play the grandson on *Mama's Family* was a punk rocker? he invited that girl punk rock band to stay over, and Mama had them cooking and sewing by the end of the episode. (AL)

Lux Interior of the Cramps sings a song as a member of the Bird Brains on the "Spongebob's House Party" episode of *Spongebob Squarepants*. (RS)

Get Smart "The Groovy Guru" (1968) When compiling his dream TV line-up, former NBC chief Brandon Tartikof included this Mel Brooks - Buck Henry creation "because it was the only spoof that really worked." True enough, this slapstick LBJ-era response to the James Bond - *Man From U.N.C.L.E.* craze of the '60s stays fresh because it contained a sly, subversive sense. In this particular episode, Maxwell Smart (Don Adams) and 99 (Barbara Feldon) investigate the Groovy Guru (Larry Storch of *F Troop* fame), a peace-and-love spewing psychedelic who is putting mind-control messages into the music he plays for the kids. In order to combat the music's hypnotic influence, Smart takes a "lie" pill which forces him to contradict whatever truthful statement he would ordinarily make, but it is all for naught as he and 99 (who is absolutely stunning in her short '60s garb) are discovered and tortured with a device that amplifies their own heartbeats to ear-drum crushing volumes. (Symbolism, man, symbolism.) While Smart and 99 try to escape, a fictitious group called The Sacred Cows sing a mind control song that betrays the satirical bent of an early Fugs record with a refrain that goes: "Kill Kill Kill! Thrill Thrill Thrill! Make a scene, knock off the dean." Before the song's listener's are fully incited to riot, Smart destroys the Guru and his broadcast facilities. Very few sitcoms of this era ever acknowledged topical events. And, the fact that *Get Smart* even mentioned campus unrest, rock-oriented youth culture, and the government's plan to undermine same proved remarkably prescient. As the truculence of the Johnson presidency gave way to the abuses of the Nixon years, one could almost hear the wistful regret of one of Maxwell Smart's better catch-phrases, "If only he had used his power for niceness instead of evil." (KB)

Jonny from Radiohead playing a Ondes/Martenot on *Saturday Night Live* when they played the song "Idiotique." (WM)



HEINO's DIE HITSTORY (1995) How to even BEGIN to describe the beauty, the splendor, the downright wonder which is Heinz Georg Kramm, d.b.a. Heino, the most successful German "volksmusik" singer of all time? Perhaps by viewing -- if you dare -- this utterly astounding sixty-minute celebration of the man and his, uh, music entitled *Die Hitstory* (after the compact career-retrospective disc of the same name, of course). Hosted by, I swear, Heino's German shepherd Falco (who at one point can be seen actually "producing" a recording session for his master (complete with headphones propped precariously atop his fur), *Die Hitstory* unleashes a dizzying -- to say the least! -- series of the man's legendary Concept Videos intercut with a slap-hazard smorgasbord of vanity clips and semi-celebrity testimonials. Yes, there's Heino (and, of course, trusty Falco) piloting a covered wagon across the German Wild West, pirating a tropical tall-ship with a Spanish guitar in one hand, serenading an Austrian mariachi band plus a roomful of extremely frightened-looking pre-schoolers, having a snowball fight high in the Alps with what looks like a bevy of tres-buxom extras from an ABBA/Benny Hill sketch, then leading a noticeably uneasy-riding mob of torch-bearing Heck's Angels deep into the Black Forest for what appears to be a recreation of the Stones' Altamont shindig, minus the pool cues and firearms, that is. Dressed throughout in his trademark sports jackets, white turtlenecks, black black shades and shocking parade of blonde hairpieces, Heino invites us wary viewers into the study of his own Swiss tax haven (where we glimpse Heino Family Album snaps of the man inserted alongside Lorne Greene, David Copperfield, LaToya Jackson, Mick Jagger, and even America's greatest volksinger Elvis Himself) then on to the palatial Vegas desert digs of none other than Siegfried und Roy (Falco somehow ends up in their act alongside a pair of snow-white Bengal tigers). Why, we even get to briefly meet Heino's good-lady wife Hannelore (a divorced noblewoman, she is the former Princess of Auersperg); Falco is extremely jealous whenever she's in the scene though, refusing to chase the numerous sticks Mrs. Heino tosses to rid the room of the mutt. Yet most fetching by far, so to speak, is the gigantic, climactic Production Number wherein the man of the hour is surrounded by dancing dozens upon dozens of identically-dressed, turtleneck-and-black-shaded Heinos -- including life-size cardboard cut-outs of Prince Charles and The Pope (!) "disguised" as Heinz Georg! Needless to say never for the faint of eye OR ear, "der Goldene Heino" and his *Hitstory* may just be Required Viewing for anyone out there brave enough to ask that pseudo-musical question, "What would ever happen if one crossed James Last with Max Headroom?" (GPG)

Addams Family "Lurch, the Teenage Idol" (1965) For reasons still unclear, Ted Cassidy's portrayal of the ghoulish butler Lurch resonated with teenaged viewers of this Charles Addams-inspired sitcom. Fan magazines such as *FAB* and *TEEN* actually carried pin-up photos of the character right next to pix of the Beatles and Herman's Hermits. So, it's no small wonder that an episode was built around this weird and popular character. Upon hearing Lurch sing a grunt-filled scat tune while playing his harpsichord, Gomez (John Astin) and Morticia Addams (Carolyn Jones) get the idea that the monosyllabic butler could make it as a folk-singer. "They're doing that on all the shows now," explains Morticia. "Singeree. Swingeree. Flingeree!" At first the Addams' inquiries are rebuffed by everyone, including Mizzy Records whose president proudly claims, "I only handle standard groups like the Polecats, the Zombies, and the Headsplitters." (Hmmm, how many groups got their names from this episode?) But when he hears Lurch gasping out a tune over the phone, he rushes to sign him. The recording, made in the Addams' living room, becomes a smash hit and soon screaming admirers surround the property, distracting Lurch from his duties, and inflating his ego. Gomez insists that the butler depart and seek his fortune as a pop music star. Lurch seems content to do so until he has his first face-to-face encounter with his fans, who tear into him with frenzied joy. As a result, the normally intimidating servant is cowed into staying home. Cassidy actually cut a real record for Capitol Records that year called "The Lurch." It didn't hit the charts. That said, his performance on this program, along with little Wednesday's (Lisa Loring) charming demonstration of The Swim and The Watusi provided the ultimate moral for music of the mid-60s: Rock'n'roll is best appreciated by children and other freaks of nature. (KB)

WEST COAST TV ROCK EXPERIMENTAL BANDS by Scott Soriano

Sacramento California is home of the best TV band ever - the infamous **No Kill I**. They are our evil *Star Trek* band. They do shows that start off as out of control garage punk and unintentually morph into out of hand free jazz, attacks on the audience and stand up comedy. The band members are Capt. Kirk, Spock, Uhuru, Nurse whatever her name was, a guy who dresses as either Gorn or the Mugatu, and Abe Lincoln (Spock, Help me Spock). The band consists of members and former members of the Bananas, Horny Mormons, Los Huevos, & Pounded Clown. They have no records but were recently filmed for *Trekkies 2*. More info www.nokilli.com. Related to No Kill I is **No Kill I: Next Generation** who are an updated version of No Kill I with totally different members but still on a *Star Trek* theme. An excellent band they were also filmed for *Trekkies 2*. This band has played just twice and consists of members of Rock the Light and the **Four Eyes** (who do many tv theme songs), as well as the excellent uke player Oliver Brown.

From Portland OR is a Klingon metal band named **Stovokor**. They perform in full Klingon gear and actually sound as you think a Klingon metal band would. And their very very big singer has a stump for an arm. They are often joined by a guy who does Klingon karaoke.

Sacramento has another "*Star Trek*" band. I bracket the *Star Trek* with quotations because they are a very half assed star trek band. They wear uniforms and sing about sex with *Star Trek* characters. They long to get signed by a major label. they are called **Warp 9** or **Warp 7** or something like that.

Do not forget **The Shatners**, the spin off of the great Neer do Wells, featuring gentleman drummer Al Sobrante. They had one record on Planet Pimp (who put out the *Star Trek* related "Fuck You Spaceman" 7"). The Shatners LP is one side of *Trek* songs and one LP side of a drunk man jabbering.

Another Sacramento TV band was **Diff'rent Strokes** (a bi racial punk duo/couple who did the *Diff'rent Strokes* theme song as well as originals). I do know that **Pounded Clown** did a few TV theme songs in their set. The underappreciated **Nar** did the theme song for the great after school movie *The Longest Mile*, the tale about the kid who wet his bed and became a great runner cuz he had to sprint home to take the pee stained sheets off the clothes line before the neighborhood kids saw the sheets that his mom put out there to humiliate him. That song appeared on the Nar/Lizards split. **The Lizards** also did TV theme songs. And don't forget the **Groovie Ghoulies**, the popular Pop Punk band named after the TV cartoon.

No Kill I



TV ROCK MEMORIES

BY BRIAN MIER

Memory 1:

My parents used to let me stay up as long as I wanted on Saturday nights when I was a kid during the late 70s. I used to love watching the original cast of *Saturday Night Live*, when John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd helped select the musical guests and people like Sun Ra, Eubie Blake and William S. Burroughs (doing spoken word) used to appear. After *Saturday Night Live* ended, *Second City TV* came on, with John Candy and company, then came a show I never missed: *Midnight Special*. It was the heyday of disco, but new wave was also beginning to catch on. Sometimes they would have guest hosts. One time Grace Slick hosted and one of the guests was Frank Zappa, who was riding the small wave of fame from his "Dancing Fool" single. It was towards the end of the Jefferson Starship period and even I, at the age of 11 realized they sucked. Slick was dressed in black leather. At one moment she decided to show how cool she was by ask a bunch of hip questions to Frank. She asked him three questions and he refused to open his mouth. Ms. Slick looked uncomfortable. There was dead air and they cut to a commercial. Another time, Wolfman Jack hosted the show with James Brown. Guests included Thelma Houston and the Tavares. It was a disco party. As they went to each commercial break, the Wolfman asked James Brown when he was going to get up and do his thing. Finally, Brown replied, "You want me to get up and do my thing? Like a, like a Sex Machine? 1...2...3.. Hit it!" He walked up to the mic, sucked in his gut and did the splits, as the band kicked in.

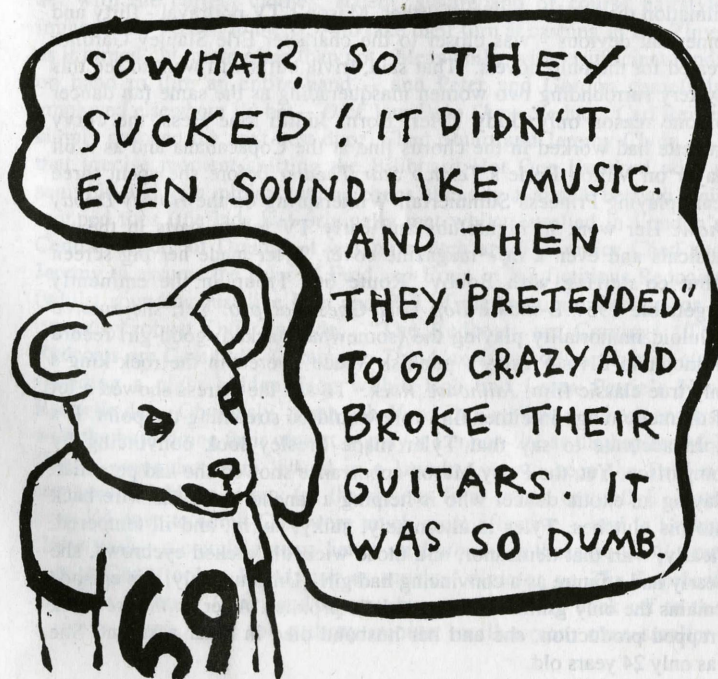
Memory 2:

My grandmother was a hopeless alcoholic who died at the age of 54. Whenever I would visit her, however, she wouldn't drink a drop. I remember one time I spent the weekend at her house in St. Louis. My favorite bands at the time were Kiss and Ted Nugent. We sat in front of the TV one night and watched Cal Jam II. Cal Jam II was a huge rock concert at a speedway in northern California that featured performances by a bunch of second rate hard rock bands like Foghat, Uriah Heap and the Joe Perry Project. Ted was the headline act and was allowed to play for almost an hour. There I sat, as my grandmother chain smoked and sipped on her glass of bitter lemon. It was Ted's "Double Live Gonzo Period" and he was shirtless, with suspenders and some kind of furry tail. He sang "Great White Buffalo" and "Wang Dang, Sweet Poontang." I was embarrassed by the sexual innuendos and asked my grandmother if she minded the music. "It's fine, honey," she said "anything you want to watch is ok with me." Ted went into his extra long version of "Stranglehold." At the end, he collapsed and was carried off stage on a stretcher hooked up to an oxygen mask (his regular stage gimmick of the time). "Well," I said, "what did you think of that?." "It was ok. But you know who I really like? Sammy Davis Jr.. He is so talented. He can do anything, dance, sing, act. I have some of his records here, and I have some funny records too. Have you ever heard of Cheech & Chong?" The highlight of my weekend was when we turned off the TV and grandma became the DJ.

The Andy Griffith Show "The Guitar Player" (1960) This episode, only the 3rd of the show's original 7-year run, peaks with drumsticks clattering, horns blaring, and Barney Fife dancing the Hoochie Koo in a mini-version of *Jailhouse Rock*. Looking very Elvis-y, James Best plays "Jim Lindsey," a young layabout who's constantly in trouble. Yet, both Sheriff Taylor (Andy Griffith) and Deputy Fife (Don Knotts) believe Lindsey has a solid future as a musician, if he'd only apply himself. Hot tempered, insecure, and contrary - already you know he's a rock star in the making - Lindsey refuses to audition for the Bobby Fleet Band when it travels through. Mixing old-fashioned police harassment with a liberal social agenda, Sheriff Taylor forces the issue by arresting the band and putting them in a jail cell next to the troubled guitar-slinger. Blanching at the set-up, Lindsey only picks up the guitar when the Sheriff - a decent front porch picker in his own right - asks him to tune the instrument so that he might play. As Lindsey tunes, Fleet (Henry Slate) and the rest of the band begin leveling torrents of hipster sarcasm upon him. Humiliated, angry, and vulnerable all at once - an emotional mix

that actor Best made his early trademark - Lindsey bursts out of his shell and begins playing some first class rock'n'roll guitar. Eventually the catcalls subside and the angry young man's rhythm begins to sway the band into unpacking their gear and engaging in a full out jam session! By episode's end two problems are solved at once. The guitar player has a job with the Bobby Fleet band, and just as importantly, is out of Mayberry. As Lindsey departs, the character played by Griffith - who played a pretty convincing rockabilly/TV star hybrid in the 1957 film *A Face In The Crowd* - gives Lindsey some mighty potent advice, "Now [Bobby Fleet] says he 'digs' you. You make sure you dig him right back." (KB)

THE GONG SHOW (NBC 76-80) Among many musical moments, I remember this weird guy that would come out on stage in a bathrobe and "Black Lagoon"- like creature mask. He would put up a card table and eat. All to the music of BILLY JOEL'S instrumental "Root Beer Rag" played at a faster speed. "Rag" was the flip-side to "Big Shot" (2/79) from the LP "Streetlife Serenade." (DM)



ROBOT NEUTRON



HOW'BOU WHATS HAPPENINGS? 'MEMBER THE TWO-PARTER W/THE DOOBIE BROTHERS? RAJ AND TH'BOYS GET TIX BUT HAVE TO BOOTLEG THE SHOW FOR SOME HOODS. TURNS OUT ALL THEY GET ON TAPE IS RERUNS SNACK FEST!

THE FLYING NUN- A discoteque band plays an instrumental version of THE MONKEES song "Your Auntie Grizelda" in the very first episode of THE FLYING NUN. (09/67) Both were Columbia/Screen Gems productions. Sally Field recorded an album of pop music. One song, "Felicidad b/w Find Yourself A Rainbow" actually charted at #94. (11/67- Colgems 1008) Most viewers don't seem to realize that THE FLYING NUN is basically a rip-off of THE SOUND OF MUSIC (About a singing nun) and especially, THE SINGING NUN (1966) An MGM movie with Debbie Reynolds. A "syrupy comic-book stuff based on real-life Belgian nun whose devotion is split between religious work and making hit records." The movie was loosely based on the life of the nun who wrote the song, "Dominique," (Phillips 40152) which in another time and place from today's pop music world, spent 4 weeks at #1 in 11/63. In a sad footnote, Sister Luc-Gabrielle, committed suicide at age 52. (03/31/85) And there was even one more singing nun! **SISTER JANET MEAD-** The Lords Prayer (02/74 #4 A&M 1491)-(DM)

Glen Danzig played himself on *Aqua Teen Hunger Force*. (RS)

Skrewdriver is playing in the background of many segments of the History Channel's *Nazi America*. (RS)

Anthrax "mashed" it up on *Married With Children*. (RS)

Perry Mason "The Case of the Fan Dancer's Horse" (1957) Initially, series actors Raymond Burr and William "My Mom is Hedda" Hopper are not only thin and handsome, but show a great deal more humor and animation than in later years. Further, Mason's TV portrayal - flirty and somewhat devious - was closer to the character Erle Stanley Gardner created for the pulp novels. That said, trivia buffs will want to see this mystery surrounding two women masquerading as the same fan dancer for one reason only: Judy Tyler. Born: Judith Mae Hess, the curvy brunette had worked in the chorus line at the Copacabana and as a bit player on Milton Berle's *Texaco Star Theater* before she spent three years playing Princess Summerfall Winterspring on the *Howdy Doody Show*. Her work in nightclubs and early TV led to parts in theater musicals and even a *Life* magazine cover. Tyler made her big screen debut co-starring with Bobby "Route 66" Troup in the eminently forgettable 1957 B-movie *Bop Girl Goes Calypso*. Yet, she entered celluloid immortality playing the (somewhat stacked) good-girl record promoter to Elvis Presley's punkish Vince Everett in the rock king's only true classic film, *Jailhouse Rock*. To say the actress showed a lot of dramatic range in either film role would be stretching the point. It's more accurate to say that Tyler made Presley look convincing by comparison. Yet, the Perry Mason appearance showed she had potential. Playing an exotic dancer who is helping a rancher force his wife back into his clutches, Tyler is alternately, sulky, sultry, and ill-tempered. Clearly, with that demeanor, and those wickedly arched eyebrows, she clearly had a future as a convincing bad girl. Unfortunately, this episode remains the only glimmer of her artistic promise. After *Jailhouse Rock* wrapped production, she and her husband died in a car accident. She was only 24 years old.

The Johnny Ginger Show (1965) When Soupy Sales went national with his Detroit-based kids-show-for-adults, WXYZ-TV brought in a young comedian named Johnny Ginger to entertain young viewers weekday mornings before school. A seasoned nightclub performer who played straight man to pre-recorded off-stage voices - a technique at which he was a master - the bellhop attired Ginger enacted comedic vignettes in between classic Three Stooges short subject films. The Stooges, who received no royalties from the constant re-showings of their old films, saw their career given a final major boost by kid shows hosts like Ginger. Original Stooges Moe Howard and Larry Fine replaced the late Curly Howard - the most popular third Stooge - with an unfunny burlesque comic named Curly Joe DeRita and appeared in a series of new full length movies. To show their gratitude, the Stooges cast several prominent kid show hosts - Ginger among them - in their final major studio release *Outlaws is Coming* (which also starred a pre-Batman Adam West). The last days of the Stooge revival ran concurrent with the rise of Beatlemania. Initially, the Beatles' fans were mainly gushy over-the-top screaming girls, which invalidated the group's talents in the view of most young guys. However, it was the chief Stooge who helped reshape the opinion of many resentful local boys. In a live phone call to Johnny Ginger's show, Moe Howard spoke about how the Beatles modeled their unique hairstyle after his. "I created this haircut over 30 years ago," said the man who made "pick out two" and "spread out" part of the American lexicon. "That makes me the original Beatle!" Further, Howard stated that his brother Curly was doing a girlish high pitched squeal long before the English group had even thought of recording, "She Loves You." But Moe's greatest endorsement was yet to come. When Ginger asked if the Stooges were mad at the Beatles for appropriating their coiffure, Howard was adamant, "Are you kidding? We love it! The Beatles are the best advertisement the Stooges ever had." The slapstick comic also confessed that he liked their music and thought well of them personally, "They're a wonderful bunch of knuckleheads." Howard made dozens of such phone calls to TV hosts and disc-jockeys all around the country. He sometimes substituted the phrase "chowderheads" for "knuckleheads," but the impact was the same. Everywhere, Stooge fans - who were and will always be predominantly male - thought, "Well, if an undisputed genius like Moe of the Three Stooges likes the Beatles, maybe I should give 'em another chance." The rest, as they say, is history. (KB)

Brian Cauley of Manorastroman? does the theme song for *Jimmy Neutron*. (RS)

CHAD & JEREMY on THE DICK VAN DYKE SHOW (1964) During the North American media's insatiable thirst for Any Thing Fab in the wake of a certain 1964 Ed Sullivan show, most each and every English act with the correct clothes, accent, airfare and of course hairstyle immediately headed to the USA to take their turn at cashing in Big Time, as it turned out, more often than not. Meanwhile, with insufficient funds on hand to hire an entire band -- and Peter and Gordon gamefully employed elsewhere I'd bet -- *Dick Van Dyke Show* producer Carl Reiner simply grabbed the next best duo: Chad Stuart and Jeremy Clyde. At that precise moment skirting the Billboard Hot One Hundred with a semi-hit, and with minimal acting chops already available beneath their mopped tops (the lads had originally met whilst enrolled in London's Central School of Drama), it was no stretch at all to entice Chad and Jeremy to assume the roles of Fred and Ernie of the fictitious Redcoats (whilst sounding just like Don and Phil of the fractious Everlys) on a typically robust DvD episode. "The Redcoats are Coming! The Redcoats are Coming!" Coming to *The Alan Brady Show*, that is, after spending a night hidden deep within Rob and Laura Petrie's New Rochelle den. Obviously, much sub-*Hard Day's Night* zaniness ensues, with the boys doing their utmost to play it Lennon-lite as the hapless Mel Cooley smuggles them 'round in a laundry van to keep the Petries' teenaged neighbors at bay (til the riotous final scene, naturally). Now even I'd have to admit C&J were much more effective -- and in Living Color too! -- a couple'a years hence on *Batman*, in those good ol' daze before Chad took a REAL job as musical director on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* (and Jeremy buggered entirely back off to the London stage). But for a thirty-minute small-screen, even-smaller-

budget version of faux-Fabness circa "I Feel Fine," you could do much worse than to spend a half hour watching the Redcoats coming - if you can keep either eye off of Mary Tyler Moore's Capri slacks, I mean. (GPG)

DAVE CLARK meets RICHARD CHAMBERLAIN in HOLD ON, IT'S THE DAVE CLARK FIVE (1967) Not only was he by far the most successful singing/writing/arranging/producing/booking/and/even/managing jack-hammer drummer of the British Invasion, Dave Clark's pre-Pop career as a stunt driver on English film sets kindled cinematic aspirations which were later wisely employed to help keep his dickie-necked quintet alive on the small screen years after Freddie, Gerry, Billy J. and even Herman had all long gone the way of the Beatle wig. Not surprisingly then, the first production of Dave's Big Five Films company was a strikingly fast-paced, action-packed television special called *Hold On, It's The Dave Clark Five* which, to these wisened eyes at least, holds up almost as well as anything from Season Two of *The Monkees* (plus, need I add, makes much of tonight's MTV look positively lame-o by comparison). In retrospect especially however, by far the most, um, interesting segment of *Hold On* is when an even-sassier-than-usual-looking Dave takes the stage alone to solemnly introduce his Very Special Guest. As the set fades to near black and the familiar strains of the *Dr. Kildare* theme swells, out walks a thoroughly baffled Richard Chamberlain to engage in a brief, incongruous tete-a-tete with Mr. Glad All Over. As bizarre even today as anything that, at that very moment in '67, could've been seen over on BBC-TV's *Magical Mystery Tour* premiere, Dave proceeds to lob praise a-plenty at Richard, who simply grins sorta uncomfortably while all the time nodding in stilted agreement. Dave then steps a touch closer to further gush atop the multiple real-life attributes of Dr. Kildare, both in-role AND off-stage too, it appears. The good Doctor this time recoils somewhat in a hint of true, genuine horror. But no matter: Dave boldly invites Richard back any olde time he likes. Huh! (Richard stiffly exits stage left.) Now, rewind your player and freeze-frame on Dave's extreme-close-up as this quite flummoxing portion of the show closes: Aren't those the kind of unmistakably google-eyes one would think an international jet-setting bachelor like Dave should've reserved instead for his first television special's NEXT guest, no less than the irrepressibly flame-haired, red-hot Lulu? "Not that there's anything WRONG with that," of course, but, uh... (GPG)

MICKY DOLENZ vs. NARDWUAR (1991) From out of the wilds of West Vancouver, British Columbia comes The Man, The Myth, and yes, The Legend known as Nardwuar the Human Serviette. Often imitated (most recently by Ali G; most shamefully by Jimmy Glick [editor's note: I would say Tom Green may be the most shamefull, or shameless, impersonator of Nardwuar]) but quite impossible to ever duplicate, Nardwuar perfected the art of guerilla gossip journalism by somehow crossing Howard Stern with Emo Phillips long, long before pseudo-celebrity crank yankers like MTV's pint-sized prankster Ryan Pinkston ever punk'd a velvety rope. Yes, Nardwuar's successfully broken bread with the Snoop Dogg, quizzed Mikhail Gorbachev (in fluent Russian no less!) about relative pant size, and even won a backstage fistfight with Sonic Youth (despite first having his glasses torn and shattered by the supposedly hep Kings of New York Noise). But perhaps the greatest of all the Human Serviette's encounters was when he chanced to trap none other than Micky Dolenz in a Vancouver parking garage, right there under the Vehicles Will Be Towed At Owner's Expense sign. The interview began, as most of Nardwuar's do, with a simple "Who are you?" "Don't you know?" barks Micky. "Why are you interviewing me if you don't know?" Yep, the once-curly-haired Monkee had already taken the bait, ensnared himself in the Serviette's web, and luckily for us gets even more testy as the festivities unfold. In town to tape a local game show ("It's a good game. You gotta be quite bright." Nardwuar: "Why did they ask you to do it?" Micky: "Because I'm a celebrity"), our hero then shifts into his "Geez whiz, I'm only from Canada, I don't know a helluva lot about the Monkees" routine, to which Micky retorts,

jabbing a finger at his inquisitor's face, "It's probably just because you're too young, but when you grow up, maybe you'll learn." Well, something else Micky doesn't realize is that Nardwuar routinely preps for all such occasions by meticulously researching his victims - I mean interview subjects - with the aid of an immense, and immensely loyal network of virtual informants the world over. Thus he is so easily able to confront the increasingly hapless Monkee about his soft-porn career alongside Linda Lovelace, failed auditions for such roles as the Fonzy on *Happy Days*, and ultimately his hitherto closely-guarded, dangerously Mike Love-like neo-Conservative leanings (via pirated footage of Micky alongside the cast of *Major Dad*, riding a tacky Taco Bell float in the post-Gulf War One Operation Homecoming Parade). "Hey! The good guys won!" claims Major Dolenz, as Nardwuar most pointedly reminds him of the 'ANTI-war slant powering the Monkees' marvelous *Head* film. But by the time Nardwuar gets down to inquiring about Sixties uber-groupies The Plaster Casters immortalizing fellow Monkee Peter's manhood in dental paste (yes, Mr. Tork's WAS bigger than Mr. Hendrix's, Micky admits), the monkeyshines are getting downright pointed. So after failing a final pop quiz by not knowing who the current Canadian Prime Minister is (but then, Dan Quayle didn't know either when HE got Nardwuar), Micky manages to high-tail it at last deep into the relative safety of the car-park before the crew quick-cuts to a vintage Prefab Four "Make Friends With Kool-Aid" commercial. Needless to say that in the ensuing years Nardwuar has gone onward and much upward to many a better interview(ee) indeed while we can only assume Micky still breathlessly awaits a much-deserved cabinet position within the Junior Bush White House. (GPG)

DREAD ZEPPELIN's MUCH MUSIC BBQ (1991) Need I ever reiterate, being one myself, how utterly wild & wacky Canadians are? Even strictly musically speaking, whenever some new way-out sound rounds the corner, those tuned far in north of the 49th parallel are usually the very, very first to bravely jump atop that band's wagon, all decency and decorum be damned. Excellent case in point: Beatle records were topping local Canadian radio surveys a good year before Brian Epstein ever invaded Ed Sullivan's office, and a full quarter-century later when a Pasadena-based, Polynesian polyester-coated sextet dismantling Led Zeppelin's canon reggae-style (fronted by a 300-pound Elvis impersonator) magically appeared on the 54th anniversary of The King Himself's birth, just who do you think picked up on all the resultant Led zaniness first and foremost? You guessed it! Consequently, one sultry summer day on the invitation of Canada's Much Music channel (imagine MTV hijacked by SCTV), Tortelvis delivered his dreaded crue to the Great Wild North, commandeered Much's parking lot -- AND programming schedule -- for an entire afternoon, installed requisite fake palms a'plenty (the station provided the outdoor grill however), and the result actually rivaled earlier legendary moments when Much's "broadcast environment" had been penetrated by Mojo Nixon (wholly seizing the opportunity to broadcast a Canada-wide bounty for the head of Don Henley) and even GWAR (who terrorized and pretty near deflowered-Live-on-screen Much's resident Martha Quinn). The "Dreaded B.B.Q. '91," hosted by MM "Power Hour" VJ Dan Gallagher (weighing in at well over 300 himself), presented Dread Zep in all of their original back-flipping, guitar-cord-tripping, fake Hawaiian lei-tossing mock-glory. Why, Dan even coaxed the Top Secret ingredients for "Tortelvis' Hot Dog Monte Cristo" straight from the mock-King himself between numbers (hint: you have to BATTER the frankfurters first, then keep plenty of jam and jelly on hand). Roasting one and all beneath the unusually hot Toronto sun, Dread Zeppelin actually succeeded in creating, more or less, a perfect polar opposite to them Beatles' decidedly less-colorful farewell concert: Sure, DZ may have had the expanse of an entire parking lot rather than a mere rooftop to cavort across, but I never once saw even Paul handing out plastic leis to HIS uninvited audience! There's a lesson (not to mention a bustle in your hedgerow) here SOMEWHERE, in case you don't know, but for several fleeting hours at least all of Canada saw, ah-

hemmm, The Future of Rock and Roll - and even copped some groovy wiener recipes in the process. "Hot damn tamale," as the first Elvis would've definitely told his Mafia -- before tossing the remote and reaching for the six-shooter, that is. (GPG)

Night Gallery "The Academy" (1971) Although not in the same league as *They're Tearing Down Tim Riley's Bar*, this segment from Rod Serling's second best series deserves kudos because Pat Boone's hard-assed portrayal of a father scouting out a military school, works so strongly against his compassionate, good-humored Christian image. Boone plays "Mr. Hostenen," a high-powered businessman who looks quite snazzy in his three-piece Brooks Brothers suit, thank you very much. From the jump, the singer of "Don't Forbid Me" and "April Love" proves his serious acting mettle when the Commandant (Leif Erickson from the High Chaparral) graciously offers him a glass of milk and Boone's character *refuses* without flinching. (During the 70s, Boone was the number one spokesman for the hoofed mammal lactation industry.) Initially, Hostenen is worried that son Roger, a "high spirited" 15-year-old suspected of killing his mother, won't be accepted by The Academy. Yet, while inspecting the barracks he discovers that many of the constantly drilled, rigidly disciplined Cadets have trouble pasts and are a bit long in the tooth. One in particular (played by Larry Linville of *MASH* fame), is clearly in his 30s. As a boy he had embarrassed his wealthy family by compiling a shocking arrest record and is still a cadet 15 years later. As Hostenen concludes his tour, he notices the symbolic statue of a soldier preparing a youngster for life faces toward the academy instead of the outside world. Then, while watching a boy being bullied by a merciless drill sergeant, he guilelessly asks, "How long will my son stay here?" The Commandant is surprised by the inquiry, "How long? I assumed you understood that...indefinitely, Mr. Hostenen. Most of the parents *prefer* it that way." At this point the audience expects the real Pat Boone to spill out, the earnest caring father of five girls who is willing to give the powers of prayer and love a chance. Instead, Boone responds with the type of venom he was never able to muster for his music, sneering triumphantly, "Roger will be here tomorrow." As the vignette ends, a chauffeur's sympathetic protests are dashed when the pop-singing author of the teen advice manual *Twist, Twelve, and Twenty* coldly hisses, "My son's a rotter, George. You and I both know it." With this smartly underplayed role, Boone accomplished more as an actor than his friend and rival Elvis Presley did in nearly three dozen movies combined - and he did without singing a note. (KB)

Gidget "Ring A Ding Ding Bat" (1965 ABC). Gidget helps one of the singers have a quiet wedding day." They distill The Beatles down to 2 guys. A group called THE DINGBATS. Girls are shown screaming at them like they were The Beatles. The Dingbats wear Robin Hood-like hats and costumes with really gay, bowl-cut haircuts. They are later shown taking off wigs. Gidget and her friend Larue dress as fake Dingbats to draw the fans away from the real ones, so the one getting married can have a quiet honeymoon. Gidget credits: Music consultant-Don Kirshner. Actor Greg Mullavy (later on *Mary Hartman*) is in this episode. (DM)

THE LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY on LAUGH-IN (1968) Come and listen to my story 'bout a man named Norman Carl Odam Esq., a far-from-mild-mannered Texan who, for one brief brightly shining moment, held all the world in the palm of his young hand, only to see everything slip from his grasp quicker than one can say "Whatever Happened To?" You see, running out of money in Fort Worth en route to crash Johnny Carson's *Tonight Show* during the Summer of 1968, the man they were already nicknaming "The Ledge" detoured into producer T-Bone Burnett's spartan facilities just long enough to record two of the greatest musical minutes ever known to man: a MUCH more than merely down home, zero-fi rebel-yell-in-a-bucket called "Paralyzed." Now this being the magical Sixties, said

semi-song was quickly snatched up by Mercury Records and was already giving "Hey Jude" a run for its money on many radio surveys nationwide when *Laugh-In* invited The Legendary Stardust Cowboy to be "Discovery of the Week" on their November 11th episode. "Now this is a unique act," explained Dan Rowan. "He's the only one of his kind and we're very lucky [to have him]." "I guess we are lucky," replied Dick Martin. "There could've been two." Cut to The Ledge, utterly resplendent in white cowboy hat, boots, spurs, brown fringe jacket, and monogrammed phlorescent yellow chaps, whooping with his battered guitar and bugle what turns out to be "Paralyzed" ("I threw my baby in a sack, threw her over my back, and took off in a big black Cadillac") while leaping across the stage to the accompaniment of a lone drummer wearing Highway Patrolman's shades and an Indian feather on his head. Present in the studio for what "Spin" Magazine has rightfully hailed one of the 25 Greatest Musical Moments in TV History were Liberace, Laurence Harvey, Peter Lawford, and even a local high school class who just happened to be touring NBC that afternoon. "I threw my bugle up in the air as part of my act," recalls The Ledge, "and everybody ducked: I just barely missed these big overhead lights. Bingo! Almost knocked one out." Liberace's verdict? "This guy's worth a million dollars." Rowan and Martin were duly amazed themselves, as was the entire *Laugh-In* cast who joyously stormed the stage to dance, throw confetti, and in Goldie Hawn's case blow that errant bugle as our hero struggled through his hit single's flipside before bolting from the chaos altogether. The very next day, "Paralyzed" sold 5,000 copies in Cleveland alone and Joey Bishop, Dick Clark and even Ed Sullivan came calling for their own piece of the action. Unfortunately, the very next week a Musicians Union strike banned all live music from the television airwaves for the next several months, and The Ledge's career momentum -- not to mention his two minutes of fame -- seemed forever, well, paralyzed. However, I'm more than happy to report the man's insidious influence continues to fester, most notably via no less than David Bowie, who not only admitted to fashioning ZIGGY Stardust somewhat in The Ledge's afterglow, but has recently recorded a version of "Paralyzed"'s flop follow-up by way of ensuring the man and his music WILL live on and on. And on. One can only now hope that Liberace's verdict will soon be fully realized as well. (GPG)

LAUGH-IN- For starters, the infamous 1968 episode featured THE LEGENDARY STARDUST COWBOY playing his "Dr. Demento Show" favorite, "Paralyzed" and another tune. He sounds like either he's speaking in tongues or has his tongue cut out. The last 10 minutes of that show featured a series of taped and filmed blackout skits featuring the cast and guest stars and surprise guests. With all the non-sequiter pop star appearances, you never know who will turn up. This episode also featured Rosemary Clooney and Drooper of THE BANANA SPLITS!!! They cut in a segment from the actual Banana Splits show that fit right in visually, since THE BANANA SPLITS was basically a *Laugh-In* clone anyway. (And both were on NBC to boot.) It was a brief scene with Drooper taking out the trash and battling with a serpent in the garbage can. The magnificent TRIO network is rerunning entire episodes (they were previously syndicated cut into half hour segments), intact with even the musical appearances by THE BEE GEES and STRAWBERRY ALARM CLOCK! (KB)

Lee Ving of Fear played a sleazy guy that Angela had had a crush on in high school on *Who's The Boss?* Lee sang an Elvis song on that episode. Lee also had a reoccurring role as a ticket scalper on the short lived *Fast Times At Ridgmont High* sitcom. (RS)

Devo played "That's Good" on *Square Pegs*, they opened up for Johnny Slash's "punk" band. The Waitresses also did the theme song for *Square Pegs*. (RS)

Johnny Ramone and Jerry Only (of the Misfits) turned up in the street crowd commentary segment of an episode of *The Peoples Court*. (RS)

ERNIE KOVACS SHOW- I was watching a rerun of THE ERNIE KOVACS SHOW on Trio TV and his musical guest was THE TRENIERS. A pretty rocking Jump Blues group. (DM)

Jeff Clayton (of Antiseen): My first wedding was on CNN the day before New Years eve in '89. I guess due to the fact it was in a club, Antiseen played the wedding march, and I had a woman as my best man.

It is oft reported that Sullivan made the Stones change the lyrics "Let's Spend The Night Together" to "Let's Spend Some Time Together," Mick insists he mumbled and never sang the sanitized lyric.

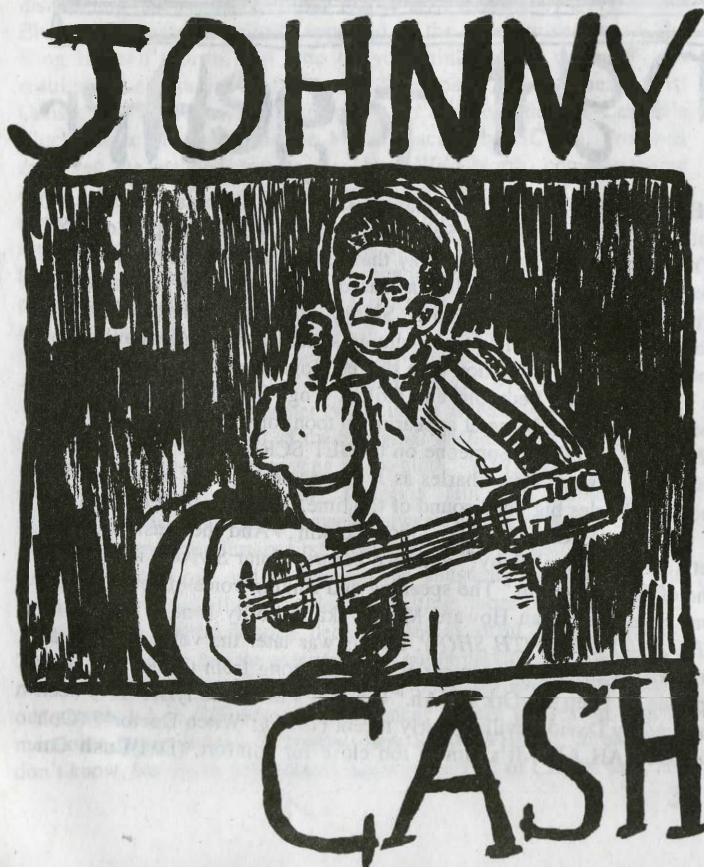


THE JETSONS- The 1962 Hanna-Barbera (Columbia/ScreenGems) episode, "A Date With Jet Screamer," was based on the plot of BYE BYE BIRDIE, the Broadway play that became a Columbia feature film the next year (1963). BIRDIE was based on Elvis Presley going into the army. BIRDIE's director, George Sidney, was also the head of Hanna-Barbera Productions. The film featured some Hanna-Barbera animation and notable cross promotion with stuffed Yogi Bear and Flintstone dolls in Ann-Margret's bedroom and Colpix Yogi Bear LPs visible in the record shop. Later, Margret appearing in toon form as Ann-Margrock on THE FLINTSTONES. Someone on the JET SCREAMER music writing team was a fan of Ray Charles as Jet Screamer's. music is arranged in the Ray Charles big band sound of the time. The intro of "Eep Op Ork" is the same as Charles' "Hey Good Lookin'." And the music used for Jet's "Baby! Baby! Baby!" entrance before "Solar Swivel" is from the end of "Good Lookin'." The speaking and singing voice of Jet Screamer was none other than Howard Morris aka. hillbilly Ernest T. Bass on THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW. Morris was later the voice of Jughead on THE ARCHIES cartoon series. The big song from the Jet Screamer episode, is "Eep Op Ork Ah Ah." Could it's nonsense lyrics have been inspired by David Seville's fairly recent (1958), "Witch Doctor"? (Ooh Eee Ooh AH AH!) It's almost too close for comfort. (DM) Lush On

PEE WEE'S PLAYHOUSE (CBS 86-91)- The exotic jungle music intro to the PEE WEE'S PLAYHOUSE theme is actually a segment of MARTIN DENNY'S "Quiet Village" (04-59). For years, I wondered who the Cyndi Lauper-esque singer on Pee Wee's theme was. Well, it was... CYNDILAUPER! (Credited as "Ellen Shaw.") Mark Mothersbaugh of DEVO contributed quite a bit of music, as did Todd Rundgren, Stanley Clarke and The Residents. Another rocker, ROB ZOMBIE was a production assistant(!) (DM)

Don Pardo announces The Sex Pistols on Saturday Night Live - Depending on who's telling the story, Malcolm McLaren was in negotiation to better promote The Pistols by booking them in New York City, Chicago, and several other key Northern cities (tickets were actually sold in Chicago), culminating in the coveted live spot on what was then the hippest show on network TV *Saturday Night Live*. Instead, he insisted on putting his boys through a grueling tour of the Deep South en route to what would be their last concert in San Francisco (saying nothing of the fact that their weeklong stay in L.A. could have been made productive with a highly coveted live performance). Apparently, SNL were told they could have The Pistols, at least tentatively, but the band never even made it to New York (well, Lydon hung out there for a while after the breakup, and Vicious would eventually relocate to NYC to live out his numbered days). Don Pardo, however, gave them a rousing buildup during the show's closing credits "With Musical guests (next week): The Sex Pistols!!", with all the gusto reserved for the likes of Sinatra or Presley, had they done the show in their lifetimes. The Sex Pistols never appeared on an American TV show, barring documentary and concert footage. It should have happened, really, but McClaren, ripe for chaos, chose the road less traveled. To be fair, they may have broken up, anyway, had they gone the obvious route, but what a TV Rock n' Roll moment it COULD have been! (JB)

Johnny Cash flipping the bird to the TV crew/warden during the soundcheck before his 1969 San Quentin concert/TV special/live album taping. This was not seen on TV. (The special has been rerun on the Trio cable network) The photo was used in a Billboard ad after Cash won a Grammy, telling the Country industry to fuck off for ignoring older artists. It was also used on an Urban Outfitters shirt, which prompted a lawsuit from Cash. (WM)



TOP 5 BEST PUNK ROCK© MOMENTS IN TELEVISION HISTORY

by Gabe "Universe City" Walter (Zartan917@aol.com)

I know alot about television, producing my own network Universe City and all. Punk Rock© has left the building, just like Hardcore®, it's extremely popular and in fact embraced by society. Although it would be easy to compile a list of Punk on T.V. today when it's so prevalent would be just proving my point on how mainstream it's become, I wanted to make a list that required some thought. This means going back in time to when it was rare to see anyone even remotely associated with Punk© on television (excluding of course, for cable access). I wanted to list the...

Counting backwards....

5. ADROCK appears on *THE EQUALIZER*... I could have chosen any number of BEASTIE BOYS moments from their original SHE'S ON IT video on that channel in-between 13 and 2, to being on *Soul Train*...I don't even want to debate how Punk Rock© THE BEASTIE BOYS are/were because yes, even though they turned RAP™, before that they were of course Hardcore Punk and anyone who survived the early 1980s New York scene AND isn't a washed up out of touch individual today deserves merit. Anyway, the episode itself had nothing to do with Punk Rock© but it was hilarious to see Adrock "act" with that old dude that played the "help for hire." Plus I think Laurence (RISE UP ZION!) Fishbourne had a cameo. TV doesn't get more unique than that!

4. Anything with HENRY ROLLINS, another survivor of the early 1980s scene (although not the New York one, but ya can't win 'em all). Did you think I would talk about ACTUAL Punk© moments on T.V. and not just the punk rockers themselves? Don't worry, that's coming. In the mean time think of any time you've seen or heard Mr. Rollins on T.V. knowing full well he pisses people off (mostly on-purpose) and you'll probably have good television. I could have selected Iggy Pop (or some other famous name) that appears with bands like SUM 41 but that would be too easy! Mr. Rollins paved the way for T.V.-hood spokespersonship. All them spoken word tours must've paid off.

3. Alright already, I'll name them. Ok, ok, so alot of people never liked them and consider them a marketing tool rather than "real" punk, but you can't ignore the fact that THE SEX PISTOLS were there (The U.K., not U.S.A. like THE RAMONES) in the late 1970s playing bad/good music shocking everyone. BBC T.V. had Bill Grundy do a worse interview than most zines coming out today, on par with Charlie Rose journalism! "Swear words" were apparently of controversy way back then on T.V. and THE SEX PISTOLS didn't care. If this list had a best HxCx interview I would've listed Civ of Gorilla Biscuits and certain scenesters being interviewed for...*Good Day New York!!!* But as Johnny Rotten said...we don't carrreeree.

2. "Yo, why'd you throw that chair at Geraldo Rivera". Shock TV is a very common term nowadays, but back in the 1980's it wasn't as all-encompassing. There were only a handful of shows that were so trashy it made them stand out as being recognizably trashy. The Morton Downey Jr. show was one of them. Geraldo was another, although back then it was under the guise of a talk show like "People are Talking" (with Richard Bey before he too went for the shock). When you think of talk shows today even starting with "The ringmaster" Jerry Springer, Geraldo still ranks up there in sleaziness. That is, putting a bunch of racist wanna-be skinheads on stage with members of the NAACP to have a "debate" would probably spell trouble (high ratings is more like it for them). Of course a fight broke out, but ya don't need a script for something like that! Beating up a bonehead racist, now that's p-u-n-k (and "made for television")!

1. THE #1 PUNK ROCK© MOMENT IN TV HISTORY...

FEAR ON SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE! Yes I could have named the *21 Jump St.* episode with Punk© or a bunch of other lame contenders, but for me, seeing FEAR do a live set on SNL with people like John "Bloodclot" Joseph and Ian McKaye slamdancing and stagediving takes first place. The best part of that is, like the true spirit of p-u-n-k it was LIVE. So what if they stopped it, FEAR had their chance to do what they do best- generally confuse, annoy and aggravate! Thank you John Belushi for "booking" FEAR on live television. The singer actually did some acting as well, and maybe in the future we'll talk about that! Until next time, I want my beef bologna.

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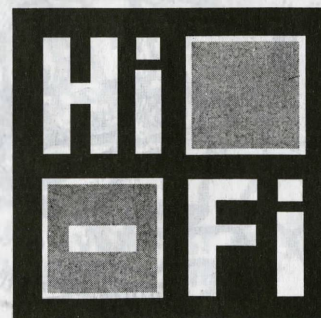
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HANNA-BARBERA

YEAH, YEAH I'VE HEARD HOW H-B SINGLE-HANDEDLY LOWERED STANDARDS FOR ANIMATION & ALL THAT JIVE...THERE WOULD BE NO T.V. CARTOONS PERIOD, WITHOUT H-B FIGURING OUT HOW TO MAKE IT ALL ECONOMICAL! ANYHOW, PART OF THE SIXTIES IS DEFINED BY H-B (GLAD TO SEE THE SCOOPY COMBACK- PLEEZ NO MORE COMPUTER/LIVE ACTION CRAP THO) WITH THEIR TIGHT-PANTS YOUNGSTERS & CRAVATTES, NOT TO MENTION THE SEAMLESS INTEGRATION OF ROCK N'ROLL INTO THEIR BRIGHTLY FLAT CARTOONS! WE'LL EVEN FORGET ABOUT THE SMOKIN' H-B RECORD LABEL, (WHICH PUT OUT SOME FINE GARAGE & SOUL 45S) AND HEAD RIGHT TO CARTOONLAND! PAST SCOOPY DOO'S ROMPING CHASE SCENES SET TO THE BUBBLE-GUM-TASTIC "SISTER MARY SUNSHINE" (SIC), THE OBVIOUS JOSIE & THE PUSSYCAT BAND, OR EVEN THE LESS OBVIOUS TEENAGE BAM BAM/PEBBLES ROCK GROUP OR THOSE FAB "WAY OUTS."

THE
REAL
SHOUT-
OUTS GO
TO...

THE Banana Splits

ROCKED
HARD IN THEIR
MERRY MADCAP WAY-FUR
AND FLOPPY EARS FLYING IN
RECKLESS ABANDON! YES THEIR
BRAND OF BUBBLE-PUNK WAS
INFECTIOUS & COLORFUL,
JUST LISTEN TO THOSE
SINISTER BASS
RUMBLES ON "I
ENJOY BEING A BOY
IN LOVE WITH YOU"
(& THE FIERCE 'HUT
HUTS!!') SID & MARTY
KROFFT MADE THEIR
REPUTATION ON THIS
EARLY VENTURE (BEFORE
THEY WENT FULL-ON
LIPSVILLE) WITH
EYE-POPPING SETS
& KIDDIE GO-GO
GIRLS, IE THE
SOUR GRAPES GANG-
REALLY TOO MUCH...
'M MOVED. SIGH.



ROCKS!

BY: PLASTIC "GRAND GAZOO"
CRIMEWAVE



THESE HAPPENING LADS
FUFILL SOME OF MY WILDEST DREAMS
BY BOTH FIGHTING CRIME AND KICKING OUT SOME NICE BEAT-
BUBBLEGUM DITTIES. YES, THESE TEENAGERS WOULD JANGLE ON SOME
FAUX RICKENBACHERS (AND WHERE WAS THE DRUMMER?) SPORTING SOME
SHAGGY-MOD-MOPTOPS, ALL SMILES, WHEN SUDDENLY SUMMONED BY
THEIR CHIEF, BIG P, VIA A TINY TV SET HIDDEN IN A GUITAR! THEY'D
BECOME COIL MAN, MULTI MAN (VOICED BY GENIUS DON MESSICK) AND
FLUID MAN, CRY 'RALLY HO' & HOP IN THE 'IMPOSSICAR'. MULTI-MAN
(NOTE THE RAD THURSTON MOORE DO) COULD MAKE MANY DUPLICATES OF
HIMSELF (TO PRETTY PSYCHEDELIC EFFECT); FLUID MAN COULD, YUP, TURN
TO WATER; COIL MAN TURNED HIS LIMBS TO COILS & BOUNCED AROUND.
THEY TOOK ON SOME MUSIC THEMED VILLAINS LIKE THE FIENDISH FIDDLER.
..IT WAS ALL VERY 1968!



OK, I'LL ADMIT I'VE NEVER SEEN THIS CARTOON- SO YES, THIS IS DEF.
A PLEA FOR HELP- I NEED TO SEE THIS SHIT! THE GUITARIST HAS
GREEN HAIR! 1969! IS THIS THE ACID ROCK H-B HOLY GRAIL! HELP! PC04,
(plasticcw@hotmail.com!)

GOODY GOODY YUM YUM: THE FABULOUS GOODIES

By F. R. "Russ" Forster



The year was 1975, I was a Junior High School egghead with a voracious appetite for unusual and surrealistic humor, and I was in the right place at the right time. SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE was ripping up the American television comedy scene, MONTY PYTHON'S FLYING CIRCUS was quickly becoming the most successful British dada comedy export to the U.S., and even kids' shows included the wacky and unpredictable HUDSON BROTHERS RAZZLE DAZZLE SHOW. And then there was this wonderfully strange show that was a bit like a British version of THE HUDSON BROTHERS which turned up on Public TV here in Chicago for a year of my youth: THE GOODIES. I remember it being televised on Saturday afternoons, and after stumbling onto the show quite by accident one day I became an instant addict. With their signature bicycle built for three (which they called a "Trandem"), their ridiculous but endearing songs, and their storylines wending here there and everywhere with a gleeful sense of satire and mischief, the show's charm for kids and adults alike was undeniable.

THE GOODIES was like THE MONKEES, THE PARTRIDGE FAMILY, and especially THE HUDSON BROTHERS rolled up into one whirlwind manic slapstick package with BENNY HILL and MONTY PYTHON overtones. Like THE HUDSONs there were three main actors for the show and they used their actual names for the characters they portrayed on the show. (And what names they were: Tim Brooke-Taylor, Graeme Garden, and especially Bill Oddie. I always assumed that the name of the show was a mixture of all their last names, but I haven't found independent corroboration of that theory.) And I was impressed further when I checked the end credits and found that, again like THE HUDSONs, THE GOODIES wrote their own rockin' music for the show (well, Mr. Oddie was listed as co-writer at least). And though THE GOODIES did more sped-

up slapstick than musical performance on their show, here and there they would unexpectedly burst into song together as a threesome, which never failed to surprise and delight me.

For one episode called "The Stolen Musicians," they actually became a full-fledged rock'n'roll band given the task of tracking down the "Music Master," who is kidnapping UK musicians for his own nefarious purposes, and this programme solidified the picture in my mind of THE GOODIES as a musical act as well as a comical one. Little did I know that in jolly olde England THE GOODIES enjoyed a string of hits on pop radio, the most successful of which was "The Funky Gibbon," an incredibly silly ditty about unlikely animal behavior that undoubtedly would have appealed to me as a cheeky 12-year-old had I known about it. They even appeared several times on TOP OF THE POPS and other British music shows performing their original songs! Now the original LP releases of their silly rock music go for big bucks on eBay, but back when I was a young tyke grooving on THE GOODIES, the show itself barely made it across the Atlantic much less the music and the marketing.

In Britain, the show became known as a sort of MONTY PYTHON for kids. Even THE GOODIES' theme song describes the show as being "fun for all the family." But compared to kids' shows in the U.S., THE GOODIES was pretty heady stuff, with references to homosexuality and masturbation and even a shot of some comely coeds in a nudist colony in one episode. Very occasionally the humor would veer toward political satire as well, as in an episode called "A South African Adventure." Somehow it's not surprising that in the days before THE GOODIES there were several humorous BBC TV projects that were collaborations between future GOODIES and future PYTHONs. The most notable of these collaborations

was AT LAST THE 1948 SHOW, which combined an unrelated sketch format that would later become an important element of the PYTHON style with slapstick, visual comedy that would later become an important element of the GOODIES style.

While THE GOODIES enjoyed a four-year longer life span than MONTY PYTHON, and could even count a young Prince Charles among its fans, it has never enjoyed the massive worldwide success and recognition that PYTHON has. Though it vexes and perplexes the original minds behind the show (especially Bill Oddie, who now hosts a very successful BBC TV show about bird watching) that their work should be relegated to cult status while PYTHON projects are on their third generation of grand success, perhaps the pure Dadaistic verbal humour of PYTHON was destined to have more universal appeal than the more quintessentially loopy British humour of THE GOODIES. But the music of THE GOODIES does live on thanks to a couple of CD collections released in the past decade (FUNKY GIBBON: THE BEST OF THE GOODIES (Castle Pie, 2000) and YUM YUM! (Music Club, 1994)), and maybe, just maybe, ROCTOBER readers with a childish sense of humour can finally give THE GOODIES the rockin' recognition they deserve.

Sing THE GOODIES THEME SONG!

Take a little good advice,
Try a trip to paradise
It's not hard to find
You've got it on your mind
You can't pretend it wouldn't be nice

It's whatever turns you on,
A circus or a seaside pier
A sausage or a can of beer
Squiggle or a clown, prices going down,
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(Check out THE GOODIES RULE-OK! Website at
www.goodiesruleok.com/index.php
for more information!)



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YELLOW SUBMARINE

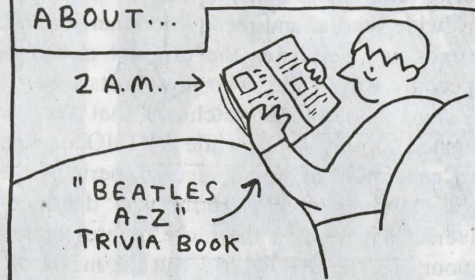
WHEN I WAS A KID,
THE FIRST BAND I EVER
REALLY GOT INTO WAS
THE BEATLES...



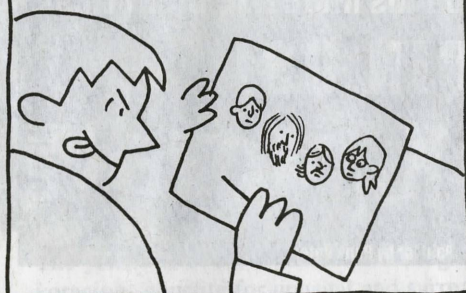
WHEN I SAY "I GOT
INTO THEM," I MEAN
I WAS PRETTY OBSESSED



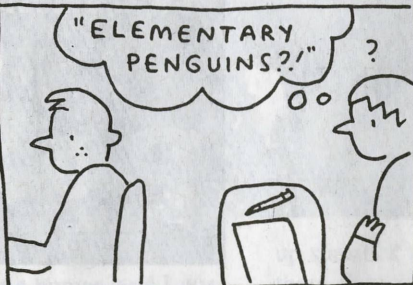
THEY WERE ALL I'D
EVER LISTEN TO, and
ALL I WOULD READ
ABOUT...



IN ART CLASS I DREW
PICTURES OF THE BEATLES



IN STUDY HALL I SAT
THERE and THOUGHT
ABOUT THEM...



I MADE MY WAY THROUGH
THEIR CATALOG, EAGERLY
ANTICIPATING EACH
"NEW" ALBUM THAT I'D
GET...



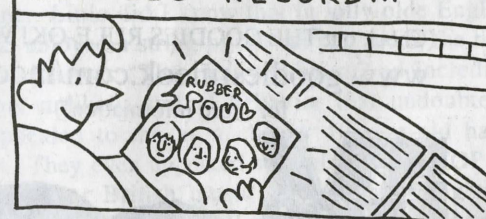
THE WAY I DID IT WAS
THIS: A HOT SCHOOL
LUNCH COST \$1.90, SO
EVERY DAY MY MOM WOULD
GIVE US \$2 TO TAKE TO
SCHOOL



and EVERY DAY I'D
GET 10¢ IN CHANGE



WHEN THOSE DIMES ADDED
UP TO \$5.98, I'D GO
DOWN TO THE FLIPSIDE
and GET ANOTHER
BEATLES RECORD...



I'D RUSH HOME and
PUT IT ON...



and LISTEN TO IT OVER
and OVER...



SOMETIMES ON T.V. THEY'D
SHOW "YELLOW SUBMARINE"



BUT ALWAYS AT LIKE 3.A.M.
ON A THURSDAY MORNING

MY MOM WOULD WAKE ME UP...

JOHNNY-
IT'S TIME FOR
YOUR SHOW...

I'D STUMBLE DOWNSTAIRS INTO MY DAD'S RECLINER...

WITH A PILLOW and A BLANKET...

THE STILL, QUIET NIGHT

THE VOLUME DOWN LOW

THE ROOM WASHED OVER
IN SHAKY, PALE LIGHT

STRUGGLING TO
STAY
AWAKE

and THEN FINALLY
GIVING IN...

Z Z Z

"ALL YOU
NEED
IS LOVE..."

HAPPENED CIRCA 1982 • DRAWN FEB '04 • JOHN P.

MORE
LATE NIGHT
ROCK and ROLL
T.V. MEMORIES...

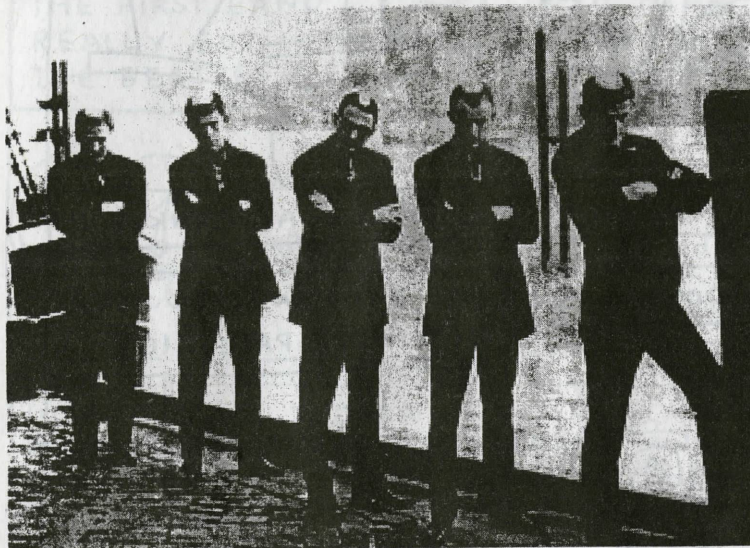
NIGHT
FLIGHT

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CULTURE -- ON NIGHT FLIGHT IT WAS ANYTHING GOES--
FROM DURAN DURAN TO HENDRIX TO PORKY PIG, RUN DMC,
THE ART OF NOISE, KATE BUSH and FRANK ZAPPA. IT WAS A
TOTAL ARTISTIC FREE-FOR-ALL, WITH GERMAN EXPRESSIONIST
FILMS BUMPED UP AGAINST 1950'S ERA SERIALS (COMMANDER BUZZ
CORY and THE SPACE PATROL) BUMPED UP AGAINST DEVO and MR. BILL.
WITHOUT A DOUBT- NIGHT FLIGHT OPENED MY MIND -and CHANGED MY LIFE!!

I WANT MY MONK-TV

EDDIE SHAW INTERVIEWED BY JAKE AUSTEN



The monks were one of the greatest progressive garage bands of all time. A disparate group of American GIs who formed a band in Germany in the 60s, haunting the Beat clubs in the Beatles' wake, they became a devastatingly tight unit by playing dozens of hours a week. When visionary managers transformed them into nihilistic Anti-Beatles, dressed as moody monks with heads shaved in tonsures all in black with ropes around their necks, they became a bizarre musical force to be reckoned with. Not only did they become legends, recognized as the first true punk band, because of their unbelievable album, "black monk time," but also because their devastating visual performances were captured on German TV, and the tapes exist and have become necessary viewing for garage rock fans. Eddie Shaw was the bass player in the band (and the historian, his book black monk time can be purchased from him, write to carsonstreet@gbis.com) spoke with me recently about the monk's first hand exposure to TV Rock & Roll...

Roctober: I want to hear about the monks experiences on television in Europe.

Shaw: You know, we had never been on TV, of course it was in black and white, and we went on *Beat Beat Beat* in Bremen when we promoted the first single. It was the premiere German Rock & Roll show. They called Rock 7 Roll "Beat music."

Since you were playing every night you had probably never seen the show.

No, we never had. We showed up in Bremen, spent the afternoon. I sat in the bleachers and read *Catch 22* while I was waiting to go on. The shocker was this pretty girl asking if we wanted makeup on our heads to keep the shine off.

Because you had your shaved monk heads...

Yeah, we had these tonsures shaved, and we were totally shocked and we said, no, no we don't want any of that. And we went on and everything was played live. So what you see on stage is what was actually being played and of course the soundmen, not used to our sound, were doing a lot of scrambling because the monks were pretty loud and the technicians hadn't really expected that.

Sounds like they did a pretty good job, though.

Well I think they did given the conditions, because it was in a huge auditorium and I think, if I remember right, the sound was pretty horrible.

It may have sounded bad live, I guess, but on TV it was recorded pretty well.

Yeah, they had things close miked. And so we did that one. I forget the other artists there, there was one singer, I forget what his name was, he was some pop star that lip synched to a record and that was sort of interesting. We all sat around and smirked while he did that.

Why? What was your opinion of lip synching?

(laughs) Well, it was just odd to see somebody do that. I remember we used to do this in high school assemblies, we used to lip synch to things, so it all didn't seem real to me when I saw it.

You were a teen in the 50s, did you watch *American Bandstand*?

I was palying music in the 50s, I actually made my first recording in 1959 playing Dixieland. I got my first experience in the Nugget casino. I played in the back bar and Wayne Newton and his brother played in the front bar. Wayne was 14 and I think I was 16.

So you weren't into Rock & Roll in the 50s, just Dixieland?

When I heard Bill Haley I really liked him, I wasn't a Rockabilly guy so Elvis Presley didn't do that much for me, although there must have been something wrong with me because the rest of the country loved him.

Had you watched Rock on TV, *Bandstand* or a locals dance show?

Well, after school, yeah, I had some girls, neighbors across the street. I used to go after school and we would dance, Dick Clark...

You'd watch TV and dance in front of the TV?

Yeah, we had a great time.

Do you think most people danced in front of the TV or do you think most people sat down and watched?

Well, the 50s, we were sexually repressed, so all we could do was dance.

So you had seen lip synching on television, but it was odd to see a colleague do it in person.

Well yeah, we were pretty grimy. We were night people. Our skin was gray, we weighed 90 pounds.

You were used to palying in these dark, dank clubs, now you were playing in this gigantic bright auditorium. Did it feel different when you were playing?

Not really. At the time we were transplanted Americans and I think in terms of our experience, having been GIs trained to defend the country and the world from communism and then being in a foreign culture, and then seeing all the things we were seeing in Hamburg, which is one of the wildest craziest places in any of the European cities, we had become fairly jaded by then and nothing was really surprising. We'd play music, we'd rehearse all day long, play all night long, party a little bit, grab some sleep and start the whole thing over every day. Every day was spent playing music, all the waking hours.

But you were grimy playing in these dirty rough clubs. Now you had a single out, you were on TV. While you were doing that first TV appearance you didn't feel some sense of excitement or elation, a vision of impending success...

I was married and I told my wife to make sure she watched, and I did something foolish like I winked at her, something you don't do these days. Other than that we were always in a sense under pressure because our performances were being watched, we were always being critiqued by our manager.

The main thing that is amazing about that footage, you end with an experimental noise bit where a guitar is laid on the floor and everyone goes and hammers on the strings like a dulcimer and plays the feedback.

Well that was the second TV show we did in Frankfurt, and that was with Manfred Mann, they played live...

That was a different show? Well, let me jump back to the first show. What's really notable about that show is that the kids, who are used to dancing to poofy pop stuff, they are making a great effort but they seem a little confused.

Well they were confused by us anyway and in fact, I have some photos of us in the Top Ten club, which is where the Beatles played, and it's striking in those photos to look at the kids. As soon as we became the monks the kids would not look you in the eye. They would look down and around, avoid your gaze. The music and the volume and the image, they felt very intimidated and it was very hard for them to let go, let loose.

So that was your first TV show, how many times were you on TV
Well we did three TV shows, one in Sweden, one in Frankfurt and that one on Bremen. The second was with Manfred Mann in Frankfurt. And the show was a little concerned. They didn't like the words to some of the songs we were going to be playing. They thought we were being a little bit...harsh or something, I can't remember

"I hate you with a passion..." Now all the bands, even the German bands like the Lords, sang in English, so even though you were singing in a foreign language, it was the language of rock so they did care what the lyrics were even though most of the kids couldn't understand them anyway. So they told you to change the lyrics?

Well they were concerned so they said, "Can you just make up something for the song, you have so many minutes here?" Can you make up something just for the last song? And so we did one of those things, take a minimal beat and work at it. Here we had to do something visual so we laid the guitar on the floor and let it feed back and gathered a round it like a campfire.

That was progressive, you certainly hadn't seen anyone else do that...it was half noise, half jazz.

As much as we were experimenting I think we were also experimenting with the audience, seeing what they would take.

What was the audience's reaction?

At the time we had gotten to used to being stared at I think we would play games with people, in one sense you don't even think about what people thought about you.

Beat Beat Beat was the biggest show in the country, what was the status of this show? What was the show's name?

That was *Beat Club*. They were both big shows.

Any anecdotes about Manfred Mann?

His drummer, I think Rudd was his name, he and I talked a lot. I got along with drummers..

You are the opposite of most people, most people can't deal with drummers.

Well, they are psychopaths...which is probably why I like them. I remember Manfred Mann watching us and asking, "What is that?" And I told him it was *über-beat*, over beat. I think he was a little snooty, but maybe I shouldn't make those remarks. He might have just been disengaged.

How did they treat you on these shows? Was there a green room, were you treated like stars?

Well they always treated us good, and people were always curious. People who worked on the staff always had these grins on their faces, like, "Oh boy this is going to be fun!" I don't know what it would be like to be in the circus, but in a sense we were a sideshow, we had become outcasts and something to be feared when we became Monks.

We are very fortunate to have copies of those two shows, but you were on a third show which no longer exists.

Well, we were with Johnny Rivers on that one, and Swedish television had some problems...

How often did you play outside of Germany?

Not often, but we did do a tour of Sweden, and their studio was in Stockholm. And I remember Sweden would be really strange because we would play all these folk parks and we would scream "I hate you!" and there would be all these little children out there with their mothers and fathers. Very staid people, and after being in these dens of inequity in Hamburg it felt strange to be in folk parks with all these parents and their children

What was the television experience?

Well it was in a small room and it was sort of our best performance because we did some things there that weren't rehearsed, including taking off our ties and throwing them at the people, and they recoiled, it scared the hell out of them. Basically I think it was our best visual performance, by then we had a little more experience on TV.

How did the audience react other than being scared by your noose/rope ties?

Well they recoiled at first then they all started laughing.

I guess that is the best audience reaction!

CHEWING THE FAT WITH CORPSEGRINDER



We recently got to talk to George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher, the vocalist of the most brutal Death Metal band ever, Cannibal Corpse. This is our second attempt, the first time we tried to interview him we had a time zone misunderstanding and missed the call. This time the cassette tape messed up and ate the first half of the interview. To summarize what we talked about, I complimented him on his pre-Corpse band, Monstrosity, who made one of the best demos ever, we established that his family does not call him "Corpsegrinder," we discussed the recent documentary on the Florida Death metal scene *Six Feet Underground*, and I got the impression that Cannibal Corpse is not fond of their former lead vocalist Chris Barnes, then I asked a question about the art in his home. Cannibal Corpse is famed for having the most bloody, nauseating, evisceration-laden cover art of any band (their excellent new Metal Blade release, "The Wretched Spawn" is graced by a painting of zombie obstetricians conducting a gory simultaneous Caesarean/vaginal/oral demon-triplet birth), and I wondered if George's personal art collection ran along those lines. He responded that all he had on the walls of his den where he spends all his time, are artifacts that celebrate video games and the Indianapolis Colts. The rest of our conversation was about the football (it the playoffs and the Colts had been amazing up to that point). Corpsegrinder is OBSESSED with the Colts! He is an intensely passionate football fan, and here our tape picked up, with me finally asking a theoretical TV Rock question (Cannibal Corpse, not surprisingly, has had limited TV exposure...they've never been invited on *Soul Train* or Nickelodeon)

Roctober: Man, you are an awesome singer and you love football...you should try to get on singing with Hank Williams Jr...

Corpsegrinder: You mean on Monday Night Football?

Sure, they have a different singer do a duet to open the show every week!

I don't think in a million years they would want me.

Hey! They had KISS do it once. You are in the best selling Death Metal band of the Soundscan era...Cannibal Corpse has sold over half a million records! You totally should be singing "Are you ready for some football..."

If they asked me there is no doubt about it! I'd go do it! I don't think the general public is ready to hear me say (in brutal Cookie Monster/Death voice) "It's Monday Night...!"

You'd be surprised...it's a brutal game, it need brutal music. So to wrap things up, any message for the kids out there reading this that are ready to start a band!

Corpsegrinder: Stay dedicated if that's your dream, and that's what you really want, pursue it with everything you have. I had a lot of people tell me that it was never going to work out, when I was in Monstrosity and we had a lull in the action, but I never stopped believing. And obviously it helps if you have parents that understand that you're not some kind of maniac because you listen to this music. I had parents that were really good with that, but if they weren't I would have stayed dedicated. Don't give up.

Any messages for the kids who don't want to start bands but still look up to you.

Stay out of trouble...or I'll come get you!

OUTTA (REMOTE) CONTROL...

Ten Subversive Moments In TV Rock by Emil Hyde

Television has an unfortunate way of taming even the wildest rock n' rollers. Perhaps it's the fact that, while most stages make a person look 10 feet tall, the average TV set makes them look 10 inches small. Or maybe it's because most musicians are *not* actors (a point re-iterated nearly every time one of them takes a movie role), and get just as nervous under the unblinking gaze of the cameras as the rest of us. Else, it could be that TV has been corporatized from the get-go, long before Clear Channel was even a ripple in the radio waves, and those who control it generally know better than to let any *real* rock n' roll rebels on screen.

Whatever the case, it's a rare and joyous thing when musicians manage to resist the suck-ifying effects of the cathode ray tube and master the medium (or simply fuck with the format). It doesn't matter if it's spontaneous, premeditated, or wholly unconscious - any stunt that helps rock n' roll to break out of the idiot box is justified in the eyes of true music fans.

Below is a chronological list of ten moments when rock tangled with television, and rock won (it's worth noting that none of them happened on MTV).

Pink Floyd on the Pat Boone Show (May 11, 1967)

Ed Sullivan knew damn well what he was getting into when he lamely tried to hide Elvis' schwerving hips or when he feebly admonished Jim Morrison not to sing the words "get much higher" during the Doors' performance of "Light My Fire". But the same cannot be said of Pat Boone, who couldn't have known what he was in for when his producers booked the young Pink Floyd and their acid-damaged, certifiably wacko front man Syd Barrett to appear on his show. Barrett, already well on his way to a complete mental breakdown, arrived at the studio late, wearing clothes that he'd apparently slept in for days, reeking of sweat, garbage, booze, and God knew what else. As the neatly groomed Boone went through the standard pre-song repartee with the band, Barrett gave nothing but a blank, haunted stare in reply to the host's questions. When it came time for the band to lip-sync their UK hit "See Emily Play", Barrett stood motionless, refusing to open his mouth, let alone move any other part of his body. Two or three lines into the song, Roger Waters stepped up to the microphone and took over the lip-synching duties. A few months later, Barrett would be out of the band and Waters would be doing the actual singing, as well.

John Lennon & Yoko Ono on the Mike Douglas Show (February 14-18, 1972)

The week in which John Lennon and Yoko Ono co-hosted *The Mike Douglas Show* can arguably be singled out as the moment when the entertainment mainstream and flower-power counter culture made amends. At the time, Mike Douglas was the undisputed champion of daytime television, while Lennon and Ono were the world's pre-eminent hippie freaks. The closest current-day analogy would be if Oprah invited Outkast or the Wu-Tang Clan to take control of her show for a couple of days. It's enough to make you wish you had some of whatever Douglas' producers were smoking. Thankfully, instead of playing good little celebrities, John and Yoko used their borrowed soapbox to maximum subversive effect. From shaggy-haired, anti-Nixon comedian George Carlin to Ralph Nader and Black Panther co-founder Bobby Seale, their guest list made for one unusual television tea party. Musical guests included the by-then-forgotten Chuck Berry, who jammed with John on "Memphis" and "Johnny B. Goode". There was also more than a little self-indulgent, hippy-dippy ridiculousness, such as Yoko's straight-faced experiment to see if she could bring about world peace by gluing back together a broken tea cup, and the couple's attempt to lead the studio audience through some primal scream therapy.

While John & Yoko's tenure as hosts was Heaven for anyone bored with daytime TV, it was Hell on Mike Douglas' staff. Yoko constantly dogged the interns, demanding that they dim the lights, then brighten them, then turn on the air conditioning, then the heat... John wasn't

quite so much a diva as an incorrigible man-child. In a demented twist on the standard talk-show animal segment, Lennon got a monkey stoned (by exhaling in its face) then unleashed the fuddled primate upon the studio band, to crawl up their trombones and bite the musicians' hands.

Despite such annoyances, Douglas remembered the week fondly:

"The headaches were relatively minor and I will say that John was a joyful a guest as we ever had," said Douglas. "He proved to be a most benign, talented, and likable young man.

"Yoko Ono proved to be... well, Yoko."

Isaac Hayes on the Academy Awards (April 10, 1972)

With his theme for the 1972 private dick flick *Shaft*, Isaac Hayes became the first Black man to win a music award from the Academy. Though that distinction should have gone to Quincy Jones (nominated in 1967 for his score for *In Cold Blood*, Q also scored Best Picture winner *In The Heat of the Night*), Hayes' bare-chested, gold-chain-swathed, sweat-soaked performance on the awards broadcast made up for the injustice. With all due respect to *Sanford & Son* (whose famously funky theme made its debut just three months before), Hayes' full-orchestra, full-band, half-clothed rendition of the *Shaft* theme was by far the funkier musical moment in TV history up to that point.

Frank Zappa on Saturday Night Live (December 11, 1976, October 21, 1976)

It makes me kind of misty when I see vintage, mid-70s *SNL* episodes where, during the end sequence when the cast hugs each other and loiters around the stage, you might catch Aykroyd wearing a shirt with some clever anti-Nixon/Ford slogan or Bill Murray looking suspiciously giddy and glassy-eyed. To think the show was once cool... To think that the cast were once poor, stoned and/or politicized, like most of the struggling comics I know in my own life. And to think that they were once hip enough to allow my idol, Frank Zappa, to not only perform on two occasions, but also to act in some seriously bizarre sketches.

That's right, kids... though they may not be as heavily re-run and anthologized as Paul Simon's hosting stints, Frank Zappa's appearances represent old-school *Saturday Night Live* at its whacked-out best. In one 1976 episode, FZ performs his xylophone-loaded masterpiece "Peaches En Regalia", then comes back later to play a victim in a skit about killer Christmas trees and again to cross swords & saxophones with John Belushi's samurai. Two years later, he came back as not only the musical guest, but also the host, performing the song "Meek" and chugging beer with Conehead dad Zeldar. In the skit "Night On Freak Mountain", Zappa shocks a cabin full of hippies by turning down an offer of acid-laced tea ("What?! *Frank Zappa doesn't do drugs?*!" asks a confused Laraine Newman).

Devo on Fridays (May 23, 1980, November 7, 1980, October 9, 1981)

ABC's short-lived, early-80s *Saturday Night Live* rip-off *Fridays* positioned itself as an edgier, more adult-oriented alternative to its primary inspiration. And while any difference between the two was usually no more significant than that between Pepsi and Coke, *Fridays* did manage to consistently one-up *SNL* in the music department, especially during its first season in 1981. While the best *SNL* could typically offer that year was Mellancamp and Olivia Newton-John, *Fridays* featured The Clash, Jam, Busboys, and Plasmatics at their respective apexes (more than making up for the occasional Kenny Rogers). Meanwhile, cast member Michael Richards (the future Cosmo Kramer) had a recurring schtick in which he expertly impersonated a thinly disguised Frank Zappa delivering hilarious fuck-the-music-business rants as "The Unknown Music Critic". Richards' screed against lapsed Beatles fans running out to buy *Double Fantasy* the day after Lennon's murder would've done the real FZ proud.

However, it was Devo who provided *Fridays*' best musical moments. Appearing no less than three times (once in each of *Fridays*' three seasons), everyone's favorite de-evolved spudboys were shown not only performing their hits "Girl U Want", "Whip It", and "Through Being Cool" (among others), but also engaging in weird backstage antics "in character" throughout the night. Best of all is guitarist Bob

Mothersbaugh as the hideous, squaky-voiced mutant babyman Booji Boy. For those whose knowledge of Devo ends with the "Whip It" video, the skits make a great introduction to the band's nightmare vision of a human race rapidly de-evolving into a sub-species of radiation-warped, TV-brainwashed chimpanzees.

Serge Gainsbourg and Whitney Houston on *Champs-Elysées* (April 5, 1986)

The guest list for the April 5th 1986 telecast of the popular French late-night show *Champs-Elysées* featured the veteran French rock star and womanizer Serge Gainsbourg - best known for hits like "69 Erotic Year" and "The Doll That Goes To The Toilet" - and rising American starlet Whitney Houston. Houston was 23 and beautiful. Serge was 58, and looked even older and uglier than his hard-lived years. After belting out her latest hit, Whitney took a seat on the couch next to the drunk, bored, and horny Gainsbourg. Host Michel Drucker introduced Houston to the French icon.

"I'm honored," says Houston.

"I'd like to fuck you," says Gainsbourg.

"What did he say?" Whitney asks the blushing Drucker.

"Il vient simplement de lui dire qu'il aimerait lui conter fleurette", says Drucker. "He simply wanted to offer you some flowers."

"Don't translate for me!" Gainsbourg shouts. "Pas du tout, j'ai dit que j'aimerais bien la baiser!"

Eventually, Drucker wrings an apology, which comes in the form of Serge singing his song "Visille Canaille" ("You Rascal, You") as a duet with Eddie Mitchell. Who knows/cares if the apology was accepted... In any case, the whole incident made for the most titillating lead-in to a perfunctory late-night-TV musical performance ever.

The KLF on the Brits (British Grammys) (March 17, 1992)

Things were finally looking up for the KLF in 1992. After some rough early years, during which Abba's lawyers forced them to destroy all copies of their album 1987: *What The Fuck Is Going On?*, they were now sitting atop the UK pop charts with a string of top-10 dance singles. Voted "Best British Act" of the year by the BPI, the KLF reported to the London Theater for what should have been their coronation as Big Time Rock Stars...

But the band had better things to do than bask in shallow adulation. Instead of their synthesizers and r&b diva backing vocalists, the KLF brought the relatively unknown punk outfit Extreme Noise Terror as their backing band for the evening. Wearing a kilt and hobbling about the stage on crutches, vocalist Bill Drummond shouted half-intelligible lyrics vaguely reminiscent of their hit "3 A.M. Eternal" while E.N.T. lived up to their name with spastic, almost arrhythmic drumming and speaker-wrecking feedback. As the song wound down, Drummond briefly stepped offstage, returning with a machine gun. After unloading a clip's worth of blanks at the dazed industry bigwigs in the front row, the group exited the stage (and the building) as a pre-recorded statement declared "The KLF has left the music industry". This came as a surprise to Arista, which recently inked a multi-album, multi-million dollar deal with the band.

In a gruesome coda to the whole fiasco, the KLF arranged to have a mutilated sheep carcass and several buckets of blood delivered to the official after-party in the lobby. The plan had originally been to mangle the dead animal onstage, but Extreme Noise Terror - vegetarians all - threatened not to participate if any poor little lambs were to be desecrated during the performance.

Sinead O'Connor on *Saturday Night Live* (October 3, 1992)

In yet another case of "they should have known better", *Saturday Night Live* decided to book radical actor Tim Robbins and even-more-radical singer Sinead O'Connor on the same show. While the early-90s SNL cast were insipid as usual (David Spade doing the Hollywood Report, another 'Deep Thought' from Jack Handey), Robbins upped the satirical ante in a sketch where his far-right folk singer Bob Roberts leads a troop of Republican cub scouts in a campfire singalong / book burning. But it would take more than a pack of neo-Hitler Youth to match the

political shock value of what O'Connor had in store for the audience. Following a standard full-band rendition of "Am I Not Your Girl?", O'Connor came out for her second number alone, surrounded by candles, wearing a white robe. She began a solemn, impassioned, a-capella performance of Bob Marley's "War", ending with a cry of "Fight the real enemy!" At this point she pulled out a photograph of Pope John Paul II and ripped it to pieces.

Silence in the studio. Cut to commercial.

Things were not so quiet in NBC's corporate offices. Enraged viewers jammed the phone lines to capacity, demanding an explanation for O'Connor's actions. The network didn't have one, and O'Connor herself refused to clarify her message in the weeks and months that followed. She (quite reasonably) assumed that her substitution of "sexual abuse" for "racial injustice" in the song's lyrics was explanation enough in itself.

Of course, the American masses couldn't be bothered to *think about what O'Connor did*. Instead, they burned her records, booed her off stages, and demanded that any further TV appearances be cancelled. O'Connor fell from superstardom to cult status in the U.S., never again to grace the mainstream.

Twelve years, innumerable church scandals, and thousands of victims later, it would seem America owes Ms. O'Connor a great, big apology.

G.G. Allin on the *Phil Donahue Show*, Marilyn Manson on the *Phil Donahue Show* (? , 1994)

Lucky for me, I just happened to be home sick from school on the days that each of these Donahue episodes originally aired... or maybe they were on the same show, I don't remember. Anyhow, G.G. Allin did his part to make daytime talk TV what it is today, sitting beside a green-haired, underage groupie while declaring "I rape my fans onstage! I force my fans to perform oral sex on me onstage! Rock and roll is not your friend... rock and roll is the enemy!"

Oh, G.G.... you silly goose!

At the other end of the I.Q. scale, a then-not-famous Marilyn Manson appeared to explain how his spooooooky manner of dress and lewd onstage behavior could all be traced to his Catholic upbringing, and how people's hateful reactions to his freakishness were far more worrisome than his own deviant behavior. The whole while, as Manson engaged Donahue and the audience in very civil, intelligent political discourse, stoned-looking bassist Twiggy Ramirez kept pressing the buttons on some electronic gadget that produced fart sounds, maniacal laughter, and other obnoxious noises.

Pulp's Jarvis Cocker crashes Michael Jackson's appearance on the Brits (February 20, 1996)

"When his feet move, you can see God dancing," says Boomtown Rats singer Bob Geldof, introducing Michael Jackson on the 1996 Brit awards. The curtain opens and, lest there be any doubt of His pop divinity, the surgery-warped MJ appears on a shining cloud, above a circle of dancing children. As the cloud descends to stage level, Michael begins warbling his rather inessential late-career hit "Earthsong".

Backstage: Britpop rascals Jarvis Cocker and Peter Mansell are hitting the open bar and watching MJ's deification on the television overhead.

●Bloody bugger thinks he's Jesus Christ," says Cocker.

"I dare you to go out there and show 'im your bum," Mansell says.

"You're on."

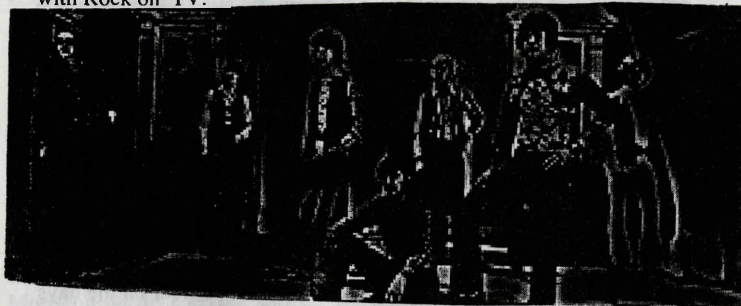
Second later, Cocker slips past the line of security goons blocking the stage entrance and dashes onstage, through the throng of perplexed kiddies, stopping just short of Michael. Before the goons can tackle him, Cocker undoes his belt and beams his pasty English bottom into millions of British living rooms. Jackson, shocked and horrified, has to be helped offstage. Cocker gets hauled off by Scotland Yard and held in a cell for a couple of hours.

The authorities consider prosecuting Cocker for causing one of the tykes to fall and cut his ear, but the naughty rock star is ultimately released without charges. Jackson was no doubt relieved to learn that, aside from the nicked ear, none of his other little friends came to harm.

THE IDES OF MARCH PLAY THE GAME

Jim Peterik on the Ides of March's and Survivor's TV Rock Experiences

Jim Peterik is one of the most talented men in Chicago pop music history. He started out in the 60s with the Ides of March (a garage band that was briefly called Batman and the Boy Wonders!). Their love of R&B had them combine the British Invasion sound with Curtis Mayfield style songwriting. Inspired by bands like Chicago and Blood Sweat and Tears (as well as the horn sections of James Brown and other Soul acts) they changed direction and had their biggest hit, "Vehicle" in 1970. The band later toyed with Country Rock before becoming temporarily inactive while Peterik formed Survivor and wrote their megahit, "Eye of the Tiger." And though it certainly wasn't his most important work, Jim's husky voice also made him the king of 70s jingles, singing the Sunkist "Good Vibrations" song, the "I could have had a V8" theme and the classic, "Don't say beer, say bull, the Schlitz Malt Liquor Bull!" An accomplished songwriter ("Hold on Loosely" by 38 Special is one of his many gems) Jim also runs his own recording studio, and even helped write the Songwriting for Dummies book. Peterik has worn many hats over the years, but he is first and foremost an Ide of March. This year the band celebrated an amazing 40 years with the same lineup, and Roctober was honored to have Mr. Peterik on our radio show to promote the multimedia anniversary concert. Here are some excerpts from our interview where he discussed his experiences with Rock on TV.



(Roctober is James Porter and Jake Austen)

Roctober: When "Vehicle" took off did you get to do much television?

Jim Peterik: We did *Upbeat* we did a Dick Clark production called *The Mama Cass Show* (editor's note: the show was actually called *Get It Together*), we actually did not get to do *Bandstand*, but we called Dick Clark last week and he is going to be part of the congratulatory testimonial package that we are going to be playing at our 40th anniversary concert. He actually remembered us and it was very cool.

Can you tell us about the experience of being on television?

Most of it was kind of cheesy because you just lip synched to the record.

What's your opinion of lip synching?

I don't like it. It's a few steps away from reality for sure. To me, I like the mistakes and all. I'd rather see an artist fumble around and sing from the heart than try to lip synch with a perfect record. But that was the game we played and even through the Survivor years we were on *Solid Gold* probably four times always doing that cheesy lip synch thing.

How did you feel while you were lip synching? I mean, you must have just been so excited to be on TV...

You play the game. Yeah, you're excited to be on TV, and everybody did it so you go along with it.

I'll never forget seeing you on the *Upbeat* show, I remember Don Webster interviewed you before you lip synched to "Vehicle" and while you were talking you were steadily fingering your guitar. Almost like you were trying to prove something. "I'm not really Milli Vanilli..."

(laughs) Either that or I was nervous.

Now did you do a TV show with the Jackson 5?

Yeah we did, it was before anyone even knew who they were.

And what was the show?

It was in downtown Chicago, I wish I could remember the name of it. It was definitely like a dance show based here in Chicago.

Was it the Mulqueens' show?

It might have been the Mulqueens...

The other show I'm thinking of is *The Swinging Majority*.

That was it!

Well tell us about that.

Well, this was pre-"Vehicle," this was "You Wouldn't Listen," this had to be '67, '68 and we performed "You Wouldn't Listen," and I think we performed "Roller Coaster," which was our new record at the time. And then they brought on this Black group, "Ladies and gentleman from

Gary, Indiana, the Jackson Five!" And there's this little kid who dances his you-know-what off, and, and we were watching these guys and they didn't have any of their really great songs at that point, I think there was a song called, "Big Boy," which was OK, but we all kind of stopped and went, *man these guys are going to be huge.*

Was there a studio audience there?

There was.

And how did they react to the Jackson Five?

They loved it. They loved us, they loved the Jackson Five, little Michael had to be five years old at the time (editor's note: around ten, but he was short and pretended to be younger).

And little did they know that by 1970 both you guys would be household words.

There you go.

What was the difference between going on the 60s record hop shows and going on *Solid Gold*?

Well you know, there's really not much difference, except that *Solid Gold* had the dancers (laughs).

***Shindig* did too**

Well then there is no difference. *Solid Gold* came very much from the same machine, the same pre-packaged, pre-programmed machine as all the 60s and early 70s shows did. It just got reframed in more of the disco/rock era, that's really the only difference.

Well let me ask you this, you talk about doing the shows and lip synching as playing the game and as pre-packaged programming. When you got to do the Dick Clark show, and things like that, was that an exciting landmark in your career, or was it like, "OK, we have to go play the game..."

Well, you know, we're not a cynical band. We weren't then and we aren't now. We took it as a great opportunity. I wouldn't say a landmark. To us a landmark was playing Winnipeg with Led Zeppelin, I mean that was a landmark moment for us. Or playing the Whiskey-A-Go-Go with Tony Joe White and Stephen Stills. You know, the TV shows were a means to an end, they were fun, we took them light heartedly, had a lot of fun with them, but I wouldn't call it a landmark. If we had done *Ed Sullivan*, that's a landmark. If we had done *Shindig* that's a landmark. But that wasn't our lot in life.

If you didn't mind me bringing this up, you never did *Where The Action Is*, but there's another show you did that was set on the beach, I think it was called *Something Else*?

Yeah.

That seemed kind of weird, because they would have these comedy sketches and then they would work you in between that. How was that?

It was weird. We taped that on Catalina Islands, John Byner was the host. And it was in this grand ballroom...it was OK. We took a helicopter to Catalina and they filmed us all around the grounds there, I had my tie dye shirt on. We were feeling pretty good. We were in L.A., man that was the first time we had been in L.A. We were digging it, the palm trees and the whole bit. This was a real eye opener. We were from Berwyn!

Check out idesofmarch.com and jimpeterik.com

ART FEIN'S TV PARTY!

For my upcoming TV Rock book I have been interviewing a number of pop culture pundits, and one of my favorites to chew the fat with is the great Art Fein, former Chicagoan and now the king of L.A. public access. Here are a few excerpts from one of our conversations:

It was January of 1957 when I saw Elvis on *Ed Sullivan* and I got the message. Before that I was buying records like the theme song from Robin Hood. I went down to the stamp store immediately and bought "Too Much." When I got the record I was pretty disappointed that it wasn't as good as the TV show. There's no variety shows on today like *Ed Sullivan*, acrobats and singers and scenes from plays, whatever cultural things that were going on in the United States and elsewhere, he would have the most famous stars of the day. Now when you see the kinescope of an entire show that Elvis was on it's shocking; dancing people and hokey singers, regular family entertainment, and then this man from Mars comes out. Quite a contrast...an explosion!

I think the "official" beginning of rock and roll on TV was when Elvis appeared on the Dorsey Brothers show, but prior to that Ed Sullivan, who was an interesting guy, but square – well, he wasn't an unhip guy, he put on a lot of Black people that other shows wouldn't put on the air. In late '55 he brought in the Rhythm and Blues review from Harlem, and he had on Bo Diddley and it was just astonishing. The drumbeats were just hypnotizing; it was a very exciting thing. They also had on Lavern Baker and the Five Keys, and a fellow named Willis "Gatortail" Jackson who blew sax while a big horn band backed him up, and he fell to the floor, just crazy stuff. He was blowing his brains out on sax, it was the wildest thing I've ever seen in my life. I didn't see this at the time, I saw a tape of it later. If I had seen it at the time I would have lost my mind. This way I was able to take it in stride and not jump out a window or something.

I remember seeing, I wish they would find this in an archive somewhere, it must have been early 1957 I was getting ready for school. my parents had on the *Today* show, I was in another room, and I hear the announcer say, "...and now, playing tonight at Alan Freed's Big Beat show, we have singer Jerry Lee Lewis..." and so I dropped everything, flew into the living room to see this, and he was doing, "Down The Line," a flip side. It was like a dream, you couldn't see Rock & Roll on TV, it was very rare.

The greatest rockabilly thing I've ever seen on TV was the Sparkletones, who did "Black Slacks," on the *Nat King Cole Show* in 1957. The show was live from Las Vegas. They played "Black Slacks" and a song called "Rocket." It was very exciting to see teenage kids, a tremendous explosion of energy and happiness. They were on because they had a hit song, but also they were put on for the kids, same reason that in Los Angeles on *Town Hall Party* the Collins Kids, 14 and 15 year old out of this world rockabillys, were on. It was for the kids, like Captain Kangaroo.

I had seen Jerry Lee Lewis on Steve Allen in 1957 as a kid. I was already worried because Elvis was going into the army and I was thinking, "well, the world is going to end because Elvis will be gone." Then this character shows up with the flaming blonde hair and the madness. I was just jumping out of my skin. It was so great to see him do "Whole Lot of Shaking Going

On," and that performance is still one of the greatest performances in rock history, though it's not heralded like Elvis'. He's out of control; he's so crazy and excited about being on TV. He's kind of snarling, but just out of bravado. And he's snarling in a possessed sort of way that no one has seen since. Forget Screaming Jay Hawkins, this guy was under some kind of outside influence...of the music, of the moment. I saw him about six months later in Chicago and he was very, very good, but this (TV show) was when he just pulled straight out of the sticks. Three weeks earlier he was living in Louisiana. It was his first appearance on any kind of national podium and it was explosive. I had Steve Allen as a guest on my show once, and I said to him, "Less than a year after Elvis this other phenomenon shows up, this must have been quite a revelation to you when he hit the floor," and Allen says, "Oh no, I had rock and roll people on...I had the Supremes on." Ok, we have nothing to talk about...we're not on the same page.

The best use of music in a (fiction) TV show was on one of the final episodes of *Moonlighting*, when the two main characters, a man and a woman who had always been antagonistic, had a drag out fight in her apartment, and then they look at each other and you know they're going to, well let's just say, "make out." But the whole tone changes and one looks at the other, and they say, "Uh oh, this is the moment," and it cuts to "Be My Baby," (sings) "Boom boom boom," I was so thrilled that they did that right.

Check out Art's columns on Oversight.com/SoFein

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Purism retards both the passion for adventure and the craftiness needed for survival; the "purity" of purism exists only in the minds of those content with others thinking for them. Purism historically exists as an abstract product of moral dogma - whether imposed through archaic religions or modern bourgeois cultural, political, and economic ideologies.

Purism tries to separate passion from reasoning, continuing repressive mind & body separation which also reflects social separation; purism denies the conceptual presence and fluidity of contradiction.

Yes you can develop radical critiques of this society, like that old Teddy Boy Karl Marx, while still enjoying various products and experiences from it. After all, much of what we enjoy is made by us as a class. Besides, contradiction facilitates learning and human development; the total, global revolution we ultimately need and desire will be, among other things, a greater unity of contradictions (a more creative engaging unity).

While a rift still exists between "purist" radicals and "rockist" purists (despite the MC5, much 70s/80s British punk, the Minutemen, etc.), I'm neither. I'm a product of t.v. as much as I am of 70s to early 80s Top 40 radio. I'm not ashamed to admit, I'm even proud in most cases, that say Mister Ed & Magilla Gorilla (both had Beatlesque episodes) has as much influence on my radicalism

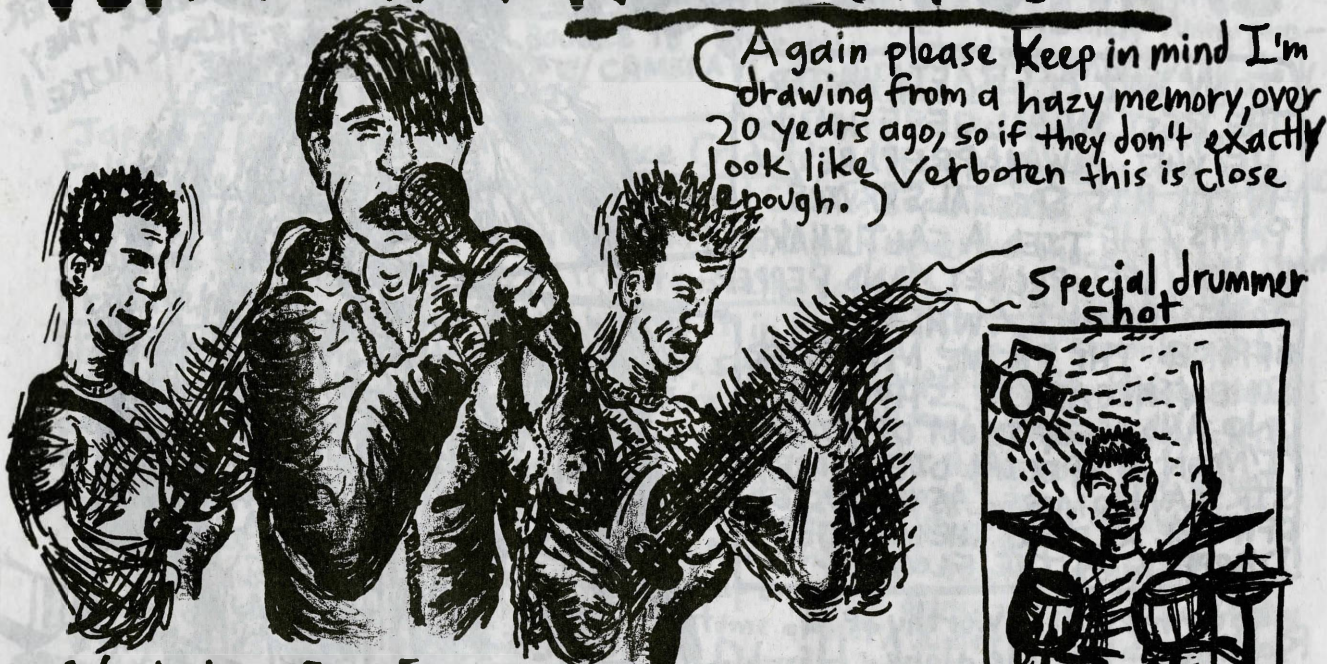
FEW PEOPLE REMEMBER IN ADDITION TO MY RIGOROUS CRITIQUE OF CAPITALISM I PLAYED GUITAR ON GERMAN T.V. WITH SCREAMIN' LORD SUTCH IN 1968. I WAS ONE OF HIS HEAVY FRIENDS.



as say Guy Debord & Wilhelm Reich. Anyway, I've absorbed over 30 years of "great moments in rock n' roll t.v." so to make this more interesting I'm narrowing my choices to 4 underrated or less serious (being too serious is the flipside of excessive stupidity) video flashbacks that were on local, national, and international programs.

For better or worse, these four impressed me enough as a kid to somehow whet my appetite for the creative destruction of later radical philosophical banquets to come.

VERBOTEN ON KIDDING AROUND



Verboten, from Evanston (right?), were one of the new breed of early 80s Chicagoland "kiddie" punk bands. They along with such luminaries as Negative Element, Rights Of The Accused, Bloody Nails, Evil I, etc. reinvigorated the predominantly 21 and over punk scene with DIY all ages shows, zines, tape compilations, skate boards, etc. Kidding Around was the local NBC affiliate, Channel 5, kids news and activities program sort of between Public Television's Zoom and ABC's Kids Are People Too.

Now when a kid sees a bunch of older people rock out on t.v., like on KISS Meets The Phantom, there still is a little feeling of distance and inaccessibility since kids often don't have the same levels of money, resources, experience, and public support to indulge their rock urges. When I saw kids like me doing their own punk rock songs on local t.v. it was probably similar to those early Sex Pistols gigs that inspired many to form bands immediately.

Verboten did at least 3 or 4 songs! One of them were a Specials T-Shirt! They encouraged me to pursue more DIY activities instead of worrying about what others thought or trying to "make it" within the music industry. Jason Narducy from Verboten went on to form alternative duo Verbow a few years ago. Bob Mauld produced a recording of theirs!

WHY OF COURSE MUCH COULD BE WRITTEN ABOUT HUSKER DÜ'S CHICAGO APPEARANCES WITH BLACK FLAG, ARTICLES OF FAITH, SAVAGE BELIEFS, ETC. WHY DON'T YOU WRITE SOMETHING? DO YOU REMEMBER?

BENNY HILL LAMPOONS ROY WOOD

BENNY SHOULD'VE DONE GARY GLITTER SINCE THEY LOOK ALIKE!

TONY WUZ A CRAFTY WAITER/
THE BEST IN ALL OF ENGLAND/
HE WUZ ALWAYS PREPARED/
WITH HIS SPECIAL SERVICE
PANTS/ HE TIED A SALT SHAKER
TO HIS LEFT POCKET/ AND PEPPER
TO HIS RIGHT/ WHEN 'E
OFFERED THE PRIME MINISTER
SOME VINEGAR/ 'E SHOUTED
NO AND KEEP IT OUT OF SIGHT/
I'M ON A SPECIAL DIET/ SORRY
SIR SAY NO MORE/ AS HE DUSTED
OFF THE KIPPER/ THE MINISTER
DROPPED ON THE FLOOR...



Benny Hill is worthy of a Roctober article alone. His humor continued somethings from Music Hall/Vaudeville/burlesque; Monty Python (extending the anarchic conceptual humor of The Goons and Beyond The Fringe) had an edgier surreal satirical onslaught. Still, Benny could be as hip as the young upstarts which his memorable satire of British 70s pop music show SuperSonic showed. Super Sonic's gimmick was taking viewers behind the scenes in the production of the show as it happened. Benny had a field day lampooning such a lame concept and even clowned out Roy Orbison (the running joke was he was blind and clumsy with his trademark shades on) and Roy Wood!

For the novices, Roy Wood was the main force behind infectious 60s and 70s poprock band The Move, a founder of Electric Light Orchestra (which he wisely left early on), and, at the time Benny did him, the Wizard of Wizzard (a 70s glam era pop circus). Benny wore a big rainbow fright wig and facial glittery make up similar to Roy's glam looks. Benny sounded like Benny though and did one of his silly double entendre songs rather than attempt a Wizzard parody. I didn't know about Wizzard then, but the use of satire with rock has stuck with me in generally lampooning this too absurd society. Radicals that avoid humor end up becoming radicals to avoid.

THE HILARIOUS HOUSE OF FRIGHTENSTEIN



THE COUNT & IGOR BOOGIE TO
THE THREE DOG NIGHT W/ CAMERA
CHROMA KEY EFFECTS

I was one of the many Chicagoland kids that plugged into the low budget thrills of Channel 44 in the 70s (when it programmed in English before going all Spanish in the 80s). If only we all had VCRs available since a lot of regional and syndicated programs from then are now lost or out of print. We had Bob Luce's All Star Wrestling (with genuinely funny pro-wrestlers also doing unbelievable low budget commercials such as the infamous Ben's Auto Sales spots),

Japanese psychotronic fare - Space Giants, Ultra Man, Spectre Man, etc. Felix The Cat (60s Version), 60s Marvel Comics Super Heroes cartoons, etc.

We briefly had a Canadian import, I vaguely remember much of it but thanks to James Porter I found www.frightenstein.com, The Hilarious House of Frightenstein. Vincent Price hosted it in 1971-1972; I remember a big blonde afro and headband wearing hippie superhero, Super Hippie, flying around spouting stoner humor (funnier if you're flying high too), other wiggy skits, and a dance to the hits of the day moment in the dungeon. The Count & Igor would dance, with video effects, to such Top 40 fare as Vanity Fare's "Mitching A Ride" and First Class "Beach Baby."

A lot of us below "The Great White North" saw it tested in our cities in 1975. I suppose this show stimulated deep urges to dance in public (the "Hokey Pokey" did something too). Whether in costume or not, I get high dancing like a maniac especially on Chic-A-Go-Go. Dancing becomes a form of communication; communication that is radical (gets to the root of societal problems) makes petrified conditions dance.

THE PLASMATICS' FRIDAYS APPEARANCE



R.I.P.
W.O.W.

When I saw their 1980 Fridays (ABC's short lived SNL rip off w/ future Seinfeld culprits Larry David & Michael Richards) debut, they blew my mind like an exploding Milwaukee Cop car! I loved them; most of my friends in junior high and enemies hated them. The Plasmatics, like DEVO, had a multifaceted influence on me; I came to understand these bands roots in Dada, Futurism (minus the Italians' fascism), Fluxus, and, in Wendy O. Williams' case, conceptual artist Gustav Metzger's Auto Destruction movement from the 60s.

I continually synthesize radical anti-politics, radical avant garde cultural provocation, and music in my critical theory and practice. Bands like The Plasmatics become multi-purpose tools you could use in projects of immediate and long term liberation.

It's no accident that rock'n'roll and television came of age during the same time period. A more visual medium than radio, TV needed the type of sock performances and raw, uncluttered sexuality that rock musicians routinely provided to attract young viewers and sell products. (Not much has changed in that regard.) In return, television offered the type of free publicity that made careers and stimulated record sales to remarkable heights in a very short time.

Nowhere is this more true than in the career of this writer's favorite performer, Jerry Lee Lewis. Not only did TV launch the rock pioneer's early Sun recordings on a national scale, it allowed longtime viewers a shorthand method of discerning the jerky ebbs and flows of a career that has spanned nearly five decades.

Eleven Notable JERRY LEE LEWIS TV Appearances

By Ken Burke

1.) *The Steve Allen Show* (1957)

Steve Allen once told *Goldmine* that he didn't actually hate rock'n'roll. Yet many of his actions demonstrated that he did. Remember his infamous reading of "Be-Bop-A-Lula" as a poetry bit? ("Let's just drink in the simple beauty of these words...") Not only did he not understand Gene Vincent's iconic classic, he got the words wrong! Further, when he got a hold of Elvis Presley, the first thing he did was dress him up in tails, and made him stand perfectly still. (Who did he think EP was? Roy Orbison? Oh wait. Orbison's mystique hadn't been invented yet.)

Although no true believer, Allen was important to rock'n'roll because he introduced Jerry Lee Lewis to mass audiences. The Ferriday Fireball's first recording "Crazy Arms" had sold well around Memphis, but the follow up "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" was banned from radio playlists just as it was really taking off. Sam Phillip's brother Jud, the Sun Records promo man, decided to force the issue by taking the Killer to New York and put him on television.

Securing an audition for Steve Allen's prime time NBC show, Phillips simply directed Lewis to "cut loose on 'Whole Lotta Shakin'.'" Whether Allen was impressed because Lewis was a great talent or because he thought it'd be funny to feature his frantic style on his show, is not clear. But that Sunday night, after a newlywed sketch featuring Shelley Winters and Anthony Franciosa, Lewis closed the show with the frenzy of violent sexuality that became his trademark. Taking a wild, discordant solo, his peroxide blonde hair bounced straight up and down as the audience hooted appreciatively. Then, after he kicked the piano stool off-screen, Allen threw it back across the stage, fanning the flames of emotion even higher. By song's end, Jerry Lee Lewis became a star and there was a buzz about what just happened on the Steve Allen show.

When Lewis returned the following week, it precipitated one of only two times that Allen's show beat Ed Sullivan's in head-to-head ratings. By his third appearance in three weeks, "Whole Lotta Shakin' Going On" was a solid national hit. When radio programmers balked at the song's leering suggestions, all Jud Phillips had to say was, "Obscene? Why Mr. Steve Allen at NBC doesn't think it's obscene, how can you?" Later, Lewis debuted his classic "Great Balls of Fire" on Allen's show to even bigger ratings.

In all the years since that appearance, Lewis has changed his attitude about a lot of people and events - that happens often in showbiz - but he never forgot what Steve Allen had done for him. He named his first child with Myra Gale, Steve Allen Lewis. (The child tragically drowned while still a toddler.) Allen, for his part said he was touched by the gesture and liked Lewis personally. Yet, it's interesting that during a career that included several different programs, the bespeckled multi-talented Allen never had Lewis - or any rock'n'roll exponent - on again.

2.) *Shindig Presents Jerry Lee Lewis* (1964, 1965)

The cream of Jerry Lee's *Shindig* guest shots are lovingly compiled on this 1988 Rhino home video release. With his hair freshly peroxided - and occasionally plastered down with greasy kid stuff - Lewis imbues "Mean Woman Blues," "Long Tall Sally," "Breathless," and "Great Balls of Fire" with sneering punk attitude galore. Attired in a letter sweater with dancing cheerleaders all around him, the Killer lays down as salacious a version of "High School Confidential" as ever filmed. Better still, a triumphant rendition of "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," showcases Lewis in friendly competition with the Righteous Brothers and Jackie Wilson, which provoked hysterical teenage screams.

The best moment? *Shindig* pays tribute to ABC's first affiliation with Major League Baseball - which proved a ratings disaster - by staging a duet with Jerry Lee Lewis and Neil Sedaka on "Take Me Out to the Ballgame." Pounding the Memphis Beat on his grand piano, Lewis turns the old ditty into a blues, shouting and snarling while the *Shindig* cast dances about the stage in baseball togs. Halfway through the song, the camera rises up and we see a smiling Sedaka at a baby grand perched on top of Lewis's piano. Sedaka sings with all the power at his zaftig command, but there is no getting around the fact that Lewis is outplaying and out-singing the composer of "Breaking Up Is Hard To Do." After crooning his bit, Sedaka meekly leaves his perch - as if chased - so Jerry Lee can finish the show alone. Amazing.

Lewis' *Shindig* appearances returned him to the national concert stage and he joined the *Shower of Stars* tour, where he routinely stole the show from newer performers with hotter records. Unfortunately, the Killer never lucked into the right combination of song and circumstance that resulted in his own hit discs. Producer Jack Good, a regular on the show, can be seen here valiantly plugging Lewis' *Return of Rock* album, which stiffed. Moreover, as seen here, the show chose "I Believe In You" and his electric piano version of Huey "Piano" Smith's "Rockin' Pneumonia & The Boogie Woogie Flu" as their *Pick Hit of the Week*. Lewis would have to wait until 1968 to begin scoring hits again - then it would be in country music - but for those seeking out something by the Killer when he really was the best of the white rockers, this tape provides essential viewing.



3.) *This Is Tom Jones!* (1969)

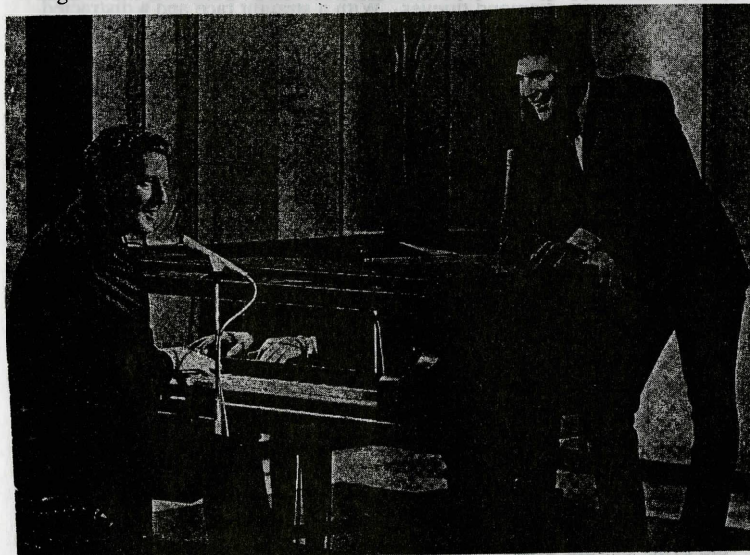
While still a member of the Jerry Lee Lewis fan club in England, Tom Jones heard the Killer's version of "Green, Green Grass of Home" on the *Country Songs for City Folks* LP. Years later, the Welsh belter turned the country standard into a bonafide pop hit, and he was looking for a way to pay tribute to his idol on his ABC TV variety hour.

That moment came as Jerry Lee's country comeback began gathering momentum. Among the guests that night were impressionist Rich Little, *I Dream of Jeannie* star Barbara Eden, and Nashville guitar virtuoso Chet Atkins, but frankly they didn't get much screen time. Jerry Lee, dressed like a true country squire, sang a riveting emotional version of his current country hit "One Has My Name." Later in the show, Lewis and Jones, dressed in matching sweat suits, kidded with each other about the Welshman owing dues to the Killer's fan club before trading verses on a lengthy medley of Jerry Lee's hits including "Great Ball of Fire," "Down The Line," "Long Tall Sally," and "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On."

One of the most underrated white rhythm and blues singers of his generation, Jones more than held his own vocally with the Killer. He also exhibited the good grace to beam admiringly at his hero's scene-stealing piano antics - banging his heel on the high notes, extending his hands like two disembodied claws before taking a rabid solo, and most of all kicking the stool back with hellbent fury! Lewis also saw fit to throw his friend a bit of a curve. During one particular verse of "Whole Lotta Shakin'," Lewis abruptly changed meter on his piano playing. Jones, clearly thrown by the switch looked over at JLL inquisitively, but his guest just shrugged him off - making Jones look ill-prepared, if not foolish - before puckishly pounding away in the new rhythm.

The show, which cemented Jones' reputation with rockers of Teddy Boy vintage, proved a milestone for Lewis, leading to more prime time shots with Glen Campbell, Johnny Cash, and Ed Sullivan. Afterwards, Jones stayed friendly with Lewis and has not mentioned the upstaging in his book or in subsequent interviews. However, Jerry Lee told *Rolling Stone* that there was an underlying purpose to his showbiz sabotage, "I just wanted to show him who the ol' master was."

Although reunions were often suggested, the two never worked together again.



4.) *The Jerry Lee Lewis Show* (1970)

This particular show was never broadcast, but is currently being sold on DVD by Cleopatra/Stardust Records. At a time when syndicated country music programs were still a reliable commercial commodity, Jerry Lee Lewis seemed a natural. Still relatively young, good looking, and profoundly enjoying his newfound country music fame, Lewis was also an "action artist," someone who was fun to watch. Moreover, guest appearances on *Hee Haw*, *The Johnny Cash Show*, and *This is Tom Jones* went over quite well with fans. Hoping to capitalize, Lewis made this series pilot. *Country Song Round-Up* magazine saw the show and proclaimed that it would be a smash, but one look at this archival DVD and you can see why it wasn't picked up.

Not that Jerry Lee himself was bad. Far from it. His opening of "Whole Lotta Shakin'," duet with sister Linda Gail on "When You Wore A Tulip," and the medley of his latest country hits are done with palpable flair and feeling. Equally fine are two *Hee Haw* styled film vinettes, Linda Gail's "Bad Motorcycle" (featuring JLL, his kids, and a good look at his Mississippi property), and the country narrative "Things That Matter Most To Me" (during which Lewis pensively wanders around Ferriday, Louisiana). Even Lewis's duet with Carl Perkins on "Mean Woman Blues" and "Blue Suede Shoes" evokes good fun - although Perkins' guitar is badly miked. Had the show only included these elements, it would have comprised a very tasty half hour indeed. However, the pilot's problem comes when it cannot decide what type of show it wants to be.

Linda Gail Lewis's version of Frank Sinatra's "Strangers in the Night," nearly sinks the program. Lewis's organist Bill Strom, does a witless imitation of Tom Jones singing "Delilah," and Sound Generation - an Up With People type white vocal group - stops the show in its tracks by cooing "Up, Up and Away" and "God Bless America." Another guest star and personal friend of JLL's, Jackie Wilson, exhibits funky confidence zipping through his signature hits "Lonely Teardrops" and "(Your Love Keeps Lifting Me) Higher and Higher," but clearly the red jumpsuit wearing soul star seems out of place. Into this mix, comes a black gospel group, the Rust College Quintet, who sing the staple "Joy in My Heart." Lewis himself befuddles us all by warbling a cross-armed, sans piano version of "Autumn Leaves" and plucking an electric guitar while fronting the gospel group and singing "I Will Follow Him." This kicks off a lengthy gospel section featuring Perkins, Linda Gail, and Wilson just before the whole ensemble closes the show with Woody Guthrie's "This Land is Your Land" - a song that has nothing to do with any of these performers or their appeal.

You can see that producer Rita Gillespie - of *Oh Boy!* fame - was trying to give full vent to Lewis' influences and talents. Yet all she succeeded in doing was diluting what made him unique. As a result of this pilot's failure, the single most lucrative area of show business for a country performer, was forever denied to the Killer.

5.) *The Dick Cavett Show* (1972)

Dick Cavett, who got his start writing jokes for Jack Paar and Johnny Carson, carved out a special niche with his own late night ABC chat-fest. In between appearances by authors, political pundits, '60s radicals, and notable entertainers playing the New York area, Cavett also counter-programmed Carson by including rock stars as guests. Indeed, his interviews with Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix are high water marks for the show. However, Cavett never looked more like a snobbish Yale-y than when he had Jerry Lee Lewis on.

Lewis' country comeback had peaked when Cavett's show invited him, although the host didn't seem to know much about the piano-pounding star or his music. Once introduced, the Killer launched into a rockin' version of his current pop and country hit "Me & Bobby McGee." Part way through the song one thing is abundantly clear - Cavett's houseband has no idea on how to back Jerry Lee Lewis. After the group misses a fundamental key change, Lewis jokes away their miscue before simplifying his rhythm enough for the overrated jazz band to follow him.

Sitting down next to Cavett, Lewis tries to help save face for Bobby Rosengarden's TV orchestra by saying, "I'll tell you what - that's one of the best bands I've heard in a while." (Have you ever heard a performer

say, "Man, the band is really off tonight?" You won't and you never will. It's an unwritten rule: Don't diss the band.) Years later, a published report opined Lewis was drunk that night. He didn't look inebriated to this writer's eyes, but if he was, then that might explain Cavett's smarmy, superior attitude. Mistaking the Killer's halting, inarticulate speaking style - after 40 years in showbiz he is still a lousy interview - for truculence, he begins asking him sucker question ala "Do you know *all the words* to 'Great Balls of Fire?'" (The inference being that his music is so simple that it is somehow beneath contempt.) Lewis gamely recites a verse and the audience applauds.

Then, while Cavett begins talking to another guest, a bored Lewis belts out a line from Chuck Berry's "Sweet Little Sixteen," "They're really rockin' in Boston!" The host then sneers mockingly, "Far out." It gets a laugh, but the superior tone of the quip quickly recasts Cavett as an intolerant prig unwilling or unable to understand a person from a different background or showbiz strata. Then, while JLL prepared for his second number, Cavett's other guest makes comments about Lewis' rough handling of the piano, which draw chuckles. Once again, it's a case of someone who had never rocked in their life casting aspersions on someone whose whole life was about rocking.

If Lewis bared Cavett any malice - or even noticed the slights - it didn't show in his second performance. Tackling a piano-kicking rendition of "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," he jumped on top of the instrument, provoking applause from the normally staid, cerebral audience. The ovation was still going strong as Cavett signaled for a commercial. Normally the host would shake hands with the musical guest, but Cavett - standing with his back to the stage - ignored the singer who was just behind him with his hand out. Finally, Lewis gave Cavett a friendly nudge with his outstretched hand and the diminutive host gave a slight jump of surprise, briefly shook hands and said mildly, "Thank you, Jerry."

During the rest of the program Cavett seemed vaguely embarrassed. Could it have been because a redneck high school dropout displayed better manners than ABC's precious college-educated host? Naw. That couldn't have been it. Could it?

6.) *Midnight Special*. (1973)

In the summer of 2003, this writer was waiting at the Cliff Castle Casino for Jerry Lee Lewis to make an appearance when another fan was overheard to say, "I saw Jerry Lee last Spring in Memphis. He was drunk." When his companion expressed disapproval, the fan explained, "No, no! You don't understand. He does better shows when he's got a buzz on." Although politically incorrect as it is to admit, Jerry Lee Lewis' two stints as the host of NBC's late night variety proved that was sometimes true.

Jerry Lee's guest spot on the Bee Gees hosted episode of the late night music variety show went over so well that the producers felt that Lewis was the natural choice to host a show that featured the likes of Chubby Checker, Freddy Cannon, Bobby Day, the Del Vikings, Lloyd Price, Little Anthony, the Ronettes, the Shirelles, and Del Shannon. Some of the segments were taped earlier but it really was a cohesive program with Shannon, Little Anthony, and Price really giving their estimable all. For his part, Lewis looked sober and quite handsome in his white tuxedo with ruffled shirt, but couldn't seem to get on track with the cue card introductions. His most cogent intro? "There must've been a hundred million reasons why I should have thought of it," says the Killer about "The Twist" and Chubby Checker, "But I didn't." Musically, he rendered solid, professional renditions of "Great Balls of Fire," "High School Confidential," his current hit "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-Oh-Dee," and helped his stoned sister Linda Gail through their duet of "Roll Over Beethoven," but he never really caught fire.

Nearly seven months later, Lewis again hosted the *Special*. Although he wore a similarly natty tuxedo, one look at circles under his eyes, lines in his face, and his loose posture and you could tell he'd been partying hard for God knows how long. My heart sank when I saw him, thinking the show would be a disaster. However, I was delightfully surprised.

Wolfman Jack did most of the intros for guests B.B. King, Ike & Tina Turner, Dalton and Dabarri, Flash, and Ballin' Jack, and on their own they provided a damned fine show - especially JLL's hero B.B. King.

Yet, it was Lewis who seared with white hot focus during performances of "Breathless," "Hold On I'm Coming," "Chantilly Lace," and an especially hard rocking version of "Lonely Weekends." As he pounded through his closing refrains of "Whole Lotta Shakin'," it became quite apparent that Lewis could rock harder drunk than most performers could sober.

This was the point that Lewis' career began to take bizarre ups and downs. He appeared on the show a couple more times, but never hosted again. What about the 2003 appearance at Cliff Castle Casino? Well, JLL never made it. Storms kept his plane from leaving. I knew the weather conditions to be a fact. However, the fan who knew that Lewis was sometimes better drunk than sober, didn't believe it.

7.) *TJ Hooker* "Deadly Ambition" (1982)

Jerry Lee Lewis had actually made his acting debut in 1968 as part of the Los Angeles company of "Catch My Soul," the rock version of Shakespeare's *Othello* produced by Jack Good (*Shindig*). Although the play itself got mixed reviews, Lewis received glowing personal notices (the Killer can be heard rehearsing some of his scenes on the 1995 CD "Private Stash"). Is he a better actor than Elvis? Undeniably, but only as the heavy. Lewis' acting plans were put on hold by his comeback via country music later that year. After signing with the William Morris agency in 1973, he landed a part on the "Collision Course" episode of *Police Story* (an anthology series that eventually evolved into the better known Angie Dickinson vehicle, *Police Woman*). Lewis' part was small. He played the driver of a getaway car whose job was to listen to co-star (former child actor) Dean Stockwell rant obsessively about great guns and infamous gunmen. When caught at episode's end, Lewis' elicits a big laugh by getting out of the car with hands up and barking at the police as if they were rowdy nightclub patrons, "Cool it!" The TJ Hooker appearance provided a meatier role after Lewis' near fatal abdominal tear earned him some sympathy with mass audiences. Playing himself, he is first heard wailing through a career best version of Chuck Willis' "C.C. Rider" at the legendary Palomino Club. Hooker (William Shatner) and Romano (Adrian Zmed) are both fans who are thrilled to question the rock legend about his former road manager's involvement with diamond thieves. With a straight face and a distracted manner, Lewis explains that his former road manager is basically a good ol' boy who went wrong when he started getting involved in cocaine. (Hot stuff coming from one of rock's most conspicuous substance abusers.) Eventually Hooker and crew solve the case - a self-serving detective is to blame - and the cops are treated to a night out at the Palomino Club. "It's identification time," says Jerry Lee before ripping into a lively version of his 1957 hit, "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On." However, the show is stolen by some of the hammiest mugging William Shatner has ever committed to film. As the Killer rocks the house, Hooker is seen on the verge of bursting with rapture out of proportion to the event, causing one to wonder if the TV cop had visited the singer's former road manager before the show.

8.) *Salute!* (1985)

Dick Clark and Jerry Lee Lewis have had a troubled relationship. During their respective '50s hey-days, Lewis appeared on the network debut of Dick Clark's *Saturday Night Beechnut Show*. Wearing a leopard-trimmed tux with flash pots going off behind him as he sang, "Great Balls of Fire," Lewis - then at his peak - helped the show achieve strong ratings. Several months later, when his career was teetering on the brink of ruin because of the controversial marriage to 13 year-old Myra Gale, Clark paid Lewis back by dumping his records from *American Bandstand's* playlists, and canceling the piano pumper's contract with his *Caravan of Stars* tours. In his autobiography, Clark called the move "an admitted act of cowardice."

Lewis rebuffed most of the *Bandstand* host's latter day attempts at reconciliation. Once, he expressed his displeasure by wearing panties on his head at a Clark promoted show. Another time by simply made the mogul stay at his house for a week before giving him an answer about doing a project with him - and then the answer was "no." But by the time of this syndicated tribute show, both Jerry Lee and Dick Clark were treading water on the pop culture consciousness. Yet, thanks to Clark, there is no shortage of stars here.

Besides filmed spoken tributes from Johnny Cash and Kris Kristofferson, the show featured musical duets with Gary Busey, Emmylou Harris, Mick Fleetwood, Little Richard, and Keith Richards. But, perhaps the tribute that meant the most to Lewis personally came when his boyhood idol Gene Autry stood by as he sang "Mexicali Rose." "Sir, you have been an inspiration to the world, Jerry Lee Lewis, and my whole family for many years," uttered Jerry Lee as he crooned along with the singing cowboy's old film clips. Autry, a stroke and heart-attack survivor, tells Clark, "He's done a good job. I wish I could sing like him." The shy look of gratitude on Lewis' face was a touching sight to behold.

Yet, no Clark production could proceed without a certain level of showbiz cheesiness. Gary Busey makes an ass of himself shouting and screaming through "High School Confidential." Only slightly more enjoyable is an appearance from *Laugh-In*'s Ruth Buzzi - a longtime fan - who sits next to Lewis at the piano and cracks him up while together they make a shambles of "Breathless." The lowest point comes when Little Richard - then a full-time speaker for a Bible firm - nearly sabotages a duet with the Killer on "I'll Fly Away" by standing directly in front of him - forcing the camera into odd angles for a two-shot.

The show's greatest moments come when Clark pairs Lewis up with Keith Richards. After a few salutary comments, Clark asks Richard's, "Like country music?" "I can get behind it," draws the canny Stones co-leader. Soon he and JLL are warbling imprecise barroom harmonies on Hank William's "Your Cheatin' Heart," which jolts this show to life. Following up with Chuck Berry's "Little Queenie," the duo hits a solid groove that amuses both men, and they trade verses and solos with spirit and class. Watching their natural musical rapport during these numbers and the closing refrains of "Whole Lotta Shakin'," one wonders why someone didn't throw Lewis and Richards into a studio and cut the muthah-humper of all albums. As is, the show ended far better than it started, and after Clark jokes about Lewis breaking another piano stool, he thanks him for being "what you are - a one of a kind." The comments don't seem to register with Lewis, who acts anxious to jam further with Richards.

Although it did little for Lewis' flagging career, there's no question that Dick Clark did right by Jerry Lee this time.

9.) *Television Parts*. (1986)

It was late in Jerry Lee's career when Mike Nesmith's low-rated half-hour version of his *Elephant Parts* sketch comedy came to NBC. Kicked off two major labels by Jimmy Bowen, Lewis hadn't had a chart hit in five years, his fifth wife died under controversial circumstances, he was experiencing constant tax trouble, and frankly he needed the exposure.

For the show, Nesmith had Lewis lip-synch his two biggest hits from the 50s. The first clip featured Lewis treading heavily into a gothic cave of a nightclub filled with shaved head punks, tattooed lesbians, and casting couch lowlifes. As he clomped up to the piano, a mohawk-coiffed musician makes a move to stop him, but JLL lowers his sun glasses and two beams of white-hot energy blare from his eyes, disintegrating the offending presence. Then, as the eerie echos of "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" pound throughout the club, we see that the punks truly dig the seminal blues and boogie beat that the Killer is laying down. As song's end, the punks, dykes, and bimbos give Jerry Lee a big ovation, and you can hear the legendary rocker chuckling in disbelief while adding, "Thank you, thank you. God bless you." The moral? Jerry Lee Lewis had sprung from the grave and was now back where he belonged, with society's underground of thrill-seeking mutants.

More light-hearted, was the second show's story of a teenage boy bringing his date home late at night. She's a talker and the boy has to continually warn, "Shhh, don't wake up my dad!" Several brief interludes and admonishments of "Don't wake up my dad" later, the girl makes too much noise and suddenly, the room begins to rumble! The wall adjacent to the couch where the teenagers are sitting comes down with a crash, and there we see Jerry Lee Lewis - in his pajamas - sitting up at a piano with eerie smoke and backlighting surrounding him. "You shake my nerves and you rattle my brains," plays the old Sun 45 as its singer bashes sternly at his instrument, as if he were meting out harsh corporal punishment.

As "Great Balls of Fire" concludes and the wall closes up, the exuberant girl tells the boy how much she dug his dad's music. "Shhhh," the boy warns, "You might wake up my mother."

Television Parts - which featured a young Whoopi Goldberg as a regular - bombed so badly in the ratings that NBC did not let the show finish out its brief run in prime time. In fact, the second episode with Lewis made its debut after a *Saturday Night Live* rerun. Although the program did nothing for JLL's faltering career, it did demonstrate that the rock legend had a delightful, if not previously unsuspected, self-mocking sense of humor.

10.) *Dolly* (1987)

Dolly Parton's ABC show never made up its mind if it was a variety hour or music showcase and was canceled after one disappointing season. However, Dolly was smart enough to feature Jerry Lee Lewis at his undiluted latter-day best. Looking fit and quite natty in a black leather fringe jacket, the Killer took the stage and slammed into the most salacious number in his repertoire, "Meat Man." The food/oral sex metaphors run rampant during this Mack Vickery song and Lewis milks 'em for all their worth right up to suggestively spelling out the song's title as an ending. No doubt many of Parton's younger home viewers - who ABC accommodated by having the show on during the "Family Hour" - were asking, "Mommy, what does a 'Maytag tongue' do?"

After cheerfully announcing that he wants to do "One of Dolly's favorite songs," Lewis rocks out a full-throttle version of "Great Balls of Fire" that burns so fast that even he chuckles at the intensity of the performance. With spirited applause filling the studio, Parton joins Jerry Lee. Quickly thanking him for saying how much she liked "Great Balls of Fire" Parton mentions that she had recorded the song too (in 1979 - it ranks a cut above Tiny Tim's and Mae West's versions respectively). Lewis, who is seemingly putty in the hands of vivacious big-haired "ladies," politely compliments her version before his hostess asks, "Who wrote this song we're about to do?" Not given time to be a bad interview, JLL quickly chimes in with "Mickey Newberry," (who also penned the Killer's hit, "She Even Woke Me Up To Say Goodbye").

Standing in front of the piano, the pair launch into Newberry's "Why You Been Gone So Long," the best tune off Jerry Lee's 1982 album for MCA *My Fingers Do The Talking*. Neither the album nor single were hits, but the Ferriday Fireball clearly loves the song - in fact, he still does it today. One verse into the number and it is quite apparent that Dolly Parton - brilliantly straining every muscle in her tiny diaphragm - is actually out-singing Jerry Lee Lewis! He digs it too and smiles appreciatively before laying out his harmony part on the refrain. All is going well when suddenly during Lewis's solo verse, the ABC censor actually bleeped out the word "stoned" from the song's lyric. This, after letting a whole double entendre ditty about oral sex run unabated.

However, the appearance - Lewis' last on a network prime-time variety show - was one of the show's few unqualified artistic successes. Parton not only showed that her heart was in the right place by giving JLL's fading career a boost, but demonstrated her thrilling ability to rise to the occasion.

11.) *Music City Tonight* with Crook & Chase. (1994)

You know your career is in trouble when a cable channel does a tribute show for you.

It's important to reiterate that Mickey Gilley and Jerry Lee Lewis are double first cousins, and that Jerry Lee taught Mickey to play the piano in his style. However, Jason D. Williams is a flat out imitator whose repertoire consists largely of Lewis's tunes. Early in his career, Williams often wore Lewis's old clothes on stage and as a publicity ploy, the rumor was spread that he was JLL's illegitimate son. Thrilled by his act, which highlighted all of Lewis' more physical pianistic exploits, TNN's *Music City Tonight* hired Williams as a semi-regular. Once or twice a month, he'd show up, plug his latest gig or album, and then ape Jerry Lee's act from his wilder, younger days. Oh sure, every now and then he'd perform a semi-classical instrumental, but mostly he was doing the Killer.

Crook & Chase didn't have much to work with for a Lewis tribute show. The killer was no longer a big enough name to draw top acts hoping to cash in on his reflected limelight. Old friends, George Jones and Hank

Williams Jr. - JLL taught the latter how to play piano - sent telegrams. Another good friend, Conway Twitty, had died by that time and both Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash were in ill health.

The arrival of Lewis' second cousin Mickey Gilley, shows how someone can be a good sport and defensive at the same time. "If it hadn't been for Jerry Lee I would've never gotten in the business," says Gilley before he even sits down. Then he explains that they get along so well because, "I just get out of his way." For his part, Jerry Lee seems glad to see cousin Mickey, who does a topnotch medley of "Breathless," "Break-Up," and "Rockin' My Life Away." Laughing about their days in Ferriday, Louisiana, somehow the *Great Balls of Fire* movie is mentioned. "I was disappointed in that movie," says Gilley. "I know it was Jerry's life story but they left me out of it." Lewis one-ups his cousin by saying, "They left *me* out of it too."

Up to this point, the show is going reasonably well. Lewis, whose various illnesses have rendered him a bit mush-mouthed, is still not comfortable being interviewed, but he's in good humor. However, the appearance of Jason D. Williams spoiled it all, After butchering "High School Confidential," Williams joined Lewis at the couch and the strain between the two became obvious as Crook & Chase sought validation for their house imitator. Jerry Lee tries hard to be polite, but cannot resist bringing up the "illegitimate" son angle before backtracking and allowing that Williams has keyboard talents. After the break, the hosts break the building tension by bringing Gilley back to do a solid medley of Lewis's greatest country hits.

The only current country star Crook & Chase were able to secure was Alabama's bassist Jeff Cook, who brought along a tape Lewis made in his garage studio in 1967 of "Days of Wine and Roses." Delighted with Cook's complimentary recollections, Lewis can be seen moving his lips to the half-remembered archival recording. For the obviously health-challenged star - he is a full step slower than he used to be on his solo spots - it is the show's sweetest moment. As a follow - up, an energized JLL delivers a surprisingly strong rendition of "Whole Lotta Shakin'."

For the penultimate musical segment, all three pianists gather on stage to party out a version of "What'd I Say." After one particularly nice solo run, Williams shouts gleefully, "I learned that one from the Killer!" "Better believe it," Lewis sneers contemptuously before one-upping him with a deft two-fingered break. Despite the sloppiness of the arrangement - in which Gilley seems lost - the duel between Lewis and his imitator plays out with surprisingly friendly vigor. "I really enjoyed it," said Jerry Lee after the break, "I thought Mickey and Jason were fantastic." That said, once Williams proclaims his admiration for Lewis and Gilley, JLL thanks him and smiles, but does not look him in the eye while they shake hands.

Williams is given the final musical word and does a soulless, hyper-kinetic version of "You Can Have Her," a staple of JLL's act. Raking the keyboards, kicking the piano stool, and jumping up on the instrument, the imitator upstages Lewis on his own tribute show. As a result, when it comes time for the cast to say their goodnights, Jerry Lee is nowhere to be found, leaving Gilley to make apologies for him - it wouldn't be the last time.

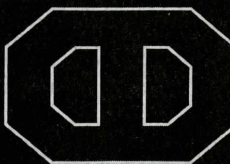
This show ushered in the final major days for all concerned. Soon after, JLL released an album on Sire and his autobiography was published overseas. Both flopped. Williams has forged an odd career in which he went from recording for such powerhouses as MCA and RCA, then down to Sun - then a mail order label - and finally a website only independent. Gilley, who runs a successful theater in Branson, received his own TNN tribute show shortly before *Music City Tonight* was yanked off the air. A few years later, the idea of country variety television died completely when the network was sold off, eventually becoming Spike TV.

Other worthwhile Lewis U.S. TV appearances include *Austin City Limits*, *The Joey Bishop Show*, the *Tonight Show* with Jay Leno, *Hee Haw*, and *Tomorrow with Tom Snyder*. The Killer also did some impressive work in the U.K. on *Ready, Steady, Go* and as part of D.A. Pennbaker's *Don't Knock the Rock*. Thanks to Gary Pig Gold, I was able to view Lewis' surreal contributions to the Brit documentary series *All You Need is Love*. If you find 'em, check 'em out.



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PUNK SURVEY RESULTS

(compiled by Jake Austen, illustration by Greg Jacobsen)

In researching my book, which features a chapter on punk on television, I surveyed over 100 "punks" about some general ideas concerning the subject. Here is a brief sampling of some responses we received...

ROCTOBER: Were you already into punk when you first saw it on TV? If not, did it influence you to become punk? How did you react when you first saw punk on TV?

Joey Vindictive (the Vindictives): My PUNK wake up call was seeing a report on the SEX PISTOLS on the news harassing the Queen - seriously acting like they do about reports of Iraqi terrorists today. I can still picture this hot punk chick with a ripped up shirt saying "NO FUTURE" spray painted on it. I was like...whoa, something more extreme than Black Sabbath! I went to Old Town the next day and ordered "Never Mind The Bollocks" and The Clash s/t direct from the UK. DEVO on *Don Kirshners Rock Concert*...that was really a wake up call. I was wasted on PCP...could barely move....woke up the next day wondering if it was just some wonderful dream.

Scott Soriano (SS Records): The first time I saw punk on TV was Devo on SNL. My friend, Jeff C (aka Deathrider, same guy Tales of Terror wrote a song about), and I were rivited to the set. We were already listening to punk and saw pictures of Devo in Skateboarder mag but that was the first time we ever saw it "live." I think seeing it gave us a bit more of a foundation or validation. I think the second time we saw punk on TV or at least the second big impression was John Lydon & PiL on Tom Snyder. That really psyched me and a couple of my friends cuz it was obvious that Lydon was very smart and we were teen "high potential underachievers" with a bent toward thinking. So that was validation of us smart kids being into punk.

Larry Hardy (In The Red records): There was a show that aired one Saturday a month back in the late 70's on NBC...it aired in the same time slot as *Saturday Night Live*...I believe it was called "Weekend"...it was a news/magazine type show...this show aired a profile on the punk rock explosion in the UK sometime in late '77. This was the first time I ever saw punk on TV. It showed pogo dancing, the Damned, Sex Pistols, Sue Cat Woman and the SEX shop.

ROCTOBER: Here is a list of the significant punk TV moments I gathered. Do you have any specific memories attached to any of these? CPO Sharkey with Dickies (1978), WKRP punk episode (1978), Kids are People Too w/ Patti Smith (1978), Clash on Fridays (1980), Fear on SNL (1981), Tomorrow show (various episodes w/ Paul Weller, Joan Jett, Clash, Black Flag, Plasmatics and Serena Dank of Parents against Punks (circa 1978-1982), ChiPs punk episode (1982), Quincy punk episode (1982), Square Pegs (1982), SCTV

"Queenhaters" on Mel's Rockpile (1983), 21 Jump Street (1987 - several years past my cutoff date, but Agent Orange portrayed the punk band).

Scott Soriano: The thing that annoyed us about *Chips* and *Quincy* wasn't the portrayal of punks as bad people or the shows themselves, but that jocks would come to punk shows after seeing those TV shows and figure they were free to fight. What pissed me and my friends off the most was the endless appearances of Serena Dank on talk shows. I remember the two Parents against Punk *Donahue* shows very well. And Serena came to Sacto to do our local TV talk show (*Flaherty and Co.* Jim Flaherty was the co host). We packed the studio and she lost that battle cuz there were some intelligent punks and punk defenders represented. Hey, my mom even called the show and said that she would rather have her kids slam dancing than playing high school football, cuz the pit was much safer than a football field. Anyway the reason Serena pissed us off was because she actually was a threat. We knew kids who were packed up and sent to Utah to be deprogrammed or sent to children's homes or even juvenile hall because parents listened to that bitch. Kind of a side note: In reaction to Serena's Parents against Punks, my mom and a few other moms of punk kids formed a group in Sacto called Moms of Punks. They would meet with their punk kids and talk about things that disturbed them in punk (like the lyrics of "I Kill Children") or what they didn't understand. This was done over pizza and cokes and in a very non confrontational/nonjudgmental manner. We were encouraged to bring friends and the moms also met with other moms who were freaked out about their kids being punk. They did this outside the media, did not include dads (cuz they thought dads were too macho) and there was absolutely no religious angle to it. It lasted for a couple years. So there is a possitive spinoff of a pretty fucked up TV publicity hound.

Kelly Kuvo (Scissor Girls/Bubblegum Queen): I remember when Suicidal Tendencies was on Miami Vice...everybody in school was talking about it!

Bosco (punk pornographer) : One of my favorite punk memories is being on a speed bender for a few days (still living at home so I had to maintain composure) coming home one Friday night, and while flipping stations came across one of those early eighties attempts to re-create the *Midnight Special* kinda show. It was called Rock Palace, and appeared to hail from the L.A. Palladium or somewhere similar. The 'hip' emcee was blathering about some lame hair band that had just

left the stage, and in my highly excited mental state I could barely sit still, but just as I was about to turn the station he introduces the Circle Jerks. It was an early, solid line-up and Hetson looked like he was a ten year old in his big brothers hockey uniform, while Keith jumped up and down wearing a sequined 'Sgt. Pepper' jacket and one sequined glove ala the baby dangler. It cemented my need for faster, shorter music in my life.

Barry Stepe (Negative Element): I remember Johnny Lydon (Rotten) and Public Image Ltd. on the Tomorrow show. I recorded it on cassette with my tape recorder pressed against the TV speaker. I listened to it over and over again trying to figure out what Mr. Rotten meant when he said, "We are not a band, we are a company! We have many interests..." I still don't know what the fuck that dude was rambling about. I recall on the *Quincy* "Punk" Episode that Quincy made some jackass remark that he was from the Coroner's Office and some kook said they were a great band. The ChiPs episode had the three mohawked youngsters playing "I Dig Pain" and were all into breaking glass, fighting and other punk rock antics. Yeah, both of the shows were seriously jacked up, showing more of the violent side of punk than the others. The Ohio hardcore group, Starvation Army, did a decent cover of "I Dig Pain" on the "This Tape Sucks!" compilation. The punks were displayed as violent, obnoxious creatures having no values. At least after the airing of the program people were a little less willing to pick fights with me. Better than being called "Rock Lobster" every I walked down the hallway during high school. Sacred Order (early hardcore group from Milwaukee) later put Erik Estrada in his place with their song, "Erik Estrada." I remember Phil Donohue inviting a number of the original Chicago hardcore punks down to his TV studio for an episode on punk music. This was a true Chicago classic on punk that we watched over and over again on video. We saw a number of punks that we recognized from some of the early hardcore shows. Ray (Singer of Six Feet Under) represented us with his shaved head and combat boots. Naked



Raygun was there to spill the truth. The show is a who's who's in Chicago Punk music for christsakes! And for crying-out-loud, what the hell were Verboten (early 80's Chicago hardcore/pop group) doing on the children's show *Kidding Around*?

Russ Forster: The only one that left a lingering impression on me was the PATTI SMITH performance, which blew me away by showing that an insipid pop song ("You Light Up My Life") could become a gritty, uplifting anthem in the right hands. I remember PUBLIC IMAGE LTD. on AMERICAN BANDSTAND vividly, because they were so uncompromisingly difficult to get a straight answer from.

Ben Poe (Light Brigade): I remember Johnny Rotten with PiL on Dick Clark's *Bandstand* show. Instead of lip synching his song he kept his mouth shut and passed the microphone around to the jock and preppy dancers to sing.

Bloody Mess (Bloody Mess and the Scabs): As far as the *ChiPs* "punk" connection, I was actually in a band called Chips Patrol! We named the band with two letter L's just in case we might get sued for using that band name. In retrospect, we should've prayed that we WOULD get sued. It would have given us lots of free publicity, and it would've been funny to get sued, and to force the networks to realize the monster that they were helping to create. Besides, what could they have gotten from us? Skateboards? Records?

Roctober: Were you offended by the way punk was portrayed on TV? Were you angry at the portrayal? Did you think it was funny? Were you excited to see it on TV at all?

Weasel Walter (Flying Luttenbachers): Oh yeah, in the late '80s, Degrassi Junior High had a female punk character named Spike. I found the show amusing, but certainly didn't take the character seriously. Actually, she reflected the ineffectual fashion rebellion of the new wave/Cure type people I knew in High School. In that sense, it was actually realistic.

Larry Hardy: Yes, it bothered me at the time to have the music and scene that was so important to me misrepresented. At the time (late 70's/early 80's) living in suburbia (Orange County) you caught a lot of flack from school mates and people in general for being a "punk rocker" so it didn't help when shows like *Quincy* made out as if punk rockers were violent miscreants. It was also very funny in a "Reefer Madness" kind of way too, though. It was always exciting if a band you liked actually got on TV...appearances like PIL on *American Bandstand* and Iggy on *Dinah Shore* stand as some of the best TV moments of all time in my mind.

Bloody Mess: Some punks were actually offended by it. Mainly the straight-edge types. But, I actually knew real punks who mirrored the "punks" portrayed on TV, so in reality, the punks on TV weren't too far from the truth. But not always.

Jason Mitchell (UFA): Most of the time I found it humorous. I spent a lot of time explaining to my parents that this or that wasn't how shit really happens when I go to the all ages show.

Andria Lisle: I thought it was funny, and also being stuck in Atlanta, GA it was hard to find out much from the outside world. So believe it

or not a lot of my style in the early 80s came from whatever glimpses of LA or NY punk rockers I could get off the boob tube. Then I'd pour over the Bogey's catalog and pick out Doc Martins and goth skirts that I could never afford.

Russ Forster: I would say offended and angry summed it up pretty well. I could tell that the richness of "punk culture" completely eluded the TV suits, who boiled it down to some nihilist catch phrases and fashion strokes for mass consumption. When the portrayals were extreme enough, like on *QUINCY*, it did get funny, though.

Roctober: *Why do you think the producers of the shows chose to portray punks the way they did? Why did you think they were using punk characters?*

Bloody Mess: Because the media are corporate whores. They always choose to obscure reality, so that they can make a fast buck. Whores!

Scott Soriano: I think they used punk characters cuz they were colorful or at least they thought they were colorful and because they needed some kind of freak to make fun of or uses as a foil/villain/social concern. I mean by the 80s, long haired revolutionaries and hippies were so yesterday. I think the producers of fictional tv chose to portray punks as criminals and dunderheads because they needed villains and punk being the other lended themselves to it by their dress and fuck you attitude. Since TV is so one dimensional there wasnt really any room to make the punk character more than some kind of type. Also TV writers are some of the laziest fuckers in the writing world. Really, so many of them are lame fucking hacks and that's why they deal with cliches as a rule.

Larry Hardy: It was the underground subculture of the moment so, of course, it had to be appropriated in the media. It's the same as seeing rave culture in a *CSI* episode now.

Weasel Walter: Up until '85 or so, that was just about all the concrete evidence I really had that punk existed at all. In 1985, I saw "Urgh! A Music War" (1981) on USA's *Night Flight* show on Friday and Saturday nights, and the hammer fell. Basically, seeing The Cramps, Gang of Four, Pere Ubu, Dead Kennedys, Klaus Nomi, Ru Pairs, et al all in one fell swoop irrevocably convinced me, so I started buying records with my allowance instead of comic books. *Night Flight* was a devastating cultural bomb for me. It's where, in the scope of like three years, I saw: *The Residents' Third Reich and Roll*, *Un Chien Andalou*, *Breaking Glass*, *Ladies and Gentlemen The Fabulous Stains*, *New Wave Theater*, *Liquid Sky*, *Another State of Mind*, concerts by Toyah, Bauhaus, et al. Pretty strong stuff for cable. Those days of television swashbuckling are long gone and I believe that the youth of america suffers from a certain horrible cultural homogeneity as a result. My discoveries were lonesome, cloistered ones,

but later I found others who were likeminded. Once again, I didn't identify with punk to be part of a club - it was simply a mirror for what I was.

Roctober: *How has your attitude about these shows changed over the years?*

Jason Mitchell: No real change in my attitude. I know I can't count on the "media" to truthfully depict anything that flies under their radar. I still think they were a bunch of kooks! And now they use the classic old punk music like Iggy Pop, Buzzcocks, and the Ramones, etc. to sell boat cruises, SUVs and other crap. It is funny how the rebellious music I caught so much shit for as a teenager is the backdrop for some of the corniest marketing campaigns imaginable. Punk was the soundtrack to a revolution that was later used to sell us a lifestyle that we rebelled against. Punk was always against consumerism. What the fuck? Who would have thought?

Roctober: *Did you have a favorite of these TV shows? What do you think is the greatest punk rock TV moment?*

Bloody Mess: My favorite TV moment was when the late great Wendy O. Williams & The Plasmatics appeared on the *Tomorrow* show with Tom Snyder. It was awesome watching Tom interview Wendy, and to see a band as cool as The Plasmatics playing live & loud - a part of the studio ceiling actually starting falling, and the lead guitarist, Richie Stotts, ended up jumping into the audience with his guitar...THAT was a definite Kodak moment. Another great punk tv moment was watching the Ramones on *Don Kirshner's Rock Concert*. Hey Ho Lets Go!

Weasel Walter: At the risk of sounding like a complete idiot, the Nirvana SNL perf. of "Territorial Pissings" was the greatest punk rock TV moment I've seen. Brutal!

Scott Soriano: My favorite is Devo on SNL. I mean you cant beat live shots. As far as fiction, I'll go with Chips, because of Pain's theme song and Ponch singing Kool and the Gang's "Celebration" to the punks at the end! Ever since I discovered that Eric Estrada has a bit of his sons foreskin in formaldehyde in a vial on a chain around his neck, I've been a big fan! HOWEVER the greatest punk rock tv moment was FEAR on SNL. Nothing like seeing a TV studio trashed by your peers!

Barry Stepe: Greatest punk TV moment, probably Fear on SNL. but my favorite is the *Quincy* episode. The girl freaking out on drugs and stabbing the guy in the mosh pit, and then everyone showing up for that "concerned citizen" talk show. Absolutely genius! and despite many inaccuracies, it actually seemed to be more thought out than the other punk episodes. Here is a song by Negative Element on this subject.

MEDIA PUNKS

Created by the TV screen

Cut your hair and act real mean
Don't believe in the music or what
it means

Just want to be cool and be part of
the scene

BEHIND THE MUSIC EPISODE GUIDE

Behind the Music is one of the few shows that I have ever made a point to watch every week. Certainly as the show declined and began profiling contemporary artists who had a new album out that week they were trying to sell it became harder to dig (I want to like you Hootie, but I can't!). But at its peak this was prime addictive TV. It was low and silly but also clever and thoughtful. It explored the weaknesses and human frailties of people who are oft seen as above the rest of us, and despite its inaccurate tabloid reputation, in fact featured less sleaziness than empathy.

The show was born after a successful VH1 documentary on heroin abuse sparked interest in a documentary series. VH1 had always had a rap of being the refuge for the baby boomers. It was the Woodstock generation's MTV, where James Taylor would always have a home. But as that boomers aged out of wanting to watch the channel, and as the children of the 70s and the 80s became too old for MTV, the executives at VH1 wisely decided to create a show that could appeal across demographics. Jeff Gaspin, VH1 vice prez, and producer Gay Rosenthal had the idea to do a sympathetic profile of Milli Vanilli, the shamed lip synchroners who disappeared from the public eye and consciousness, but whose story had to be interesting. The reason the first episode of BTM is so good is because they worked so hard at it. They tracked their subjects down with detectives and then spent two months wining and dining Milli and Vanilli, convincing them that they were not going to railroad them. BTM was establishing their longstanding policy of complete cooperation of the artist, and though the stories would certainly feature embarrassing elements, they promised to be respectful.

The table had been set for a show like this. In the 90s Ken Burns had made talking head documentaries a respected art form, and cable already had precedents with A&E's venerable *Biography* (on the air since 1987!) and E! network's sleazy *True Hollywood Story* (which premiered in late 1996). But to really figure out why BTM became a landmark TV show in the 90s, look at how it related to other iconic 90s shows. Much like *Seinfeld* and *The Simpsons*, *Behind The Music* is really a triumph of writing. Certainly it is hackneyed writing at times, but the key to the shows is a tight, formulaic construction that mixes up clichés with clever, florid writing, scripted to have power and force when delivered in the dire tones of announcer Jim Forbes. The formula is set in stone like some kind of ancient Kabuki play (or more accurately, like a Christian morality play, as BTM often imposes a moralistic structure of vices receiving punishment and redemption coming from repentance...or you could compare the rigid structure to that other 90s fave, *Law and Order*). There is a humble beginning, a meteoric rise, a devastating fall and a redemptive mini rise at the end. The formula made it ripe for parody, but it also made the show structurally sound and guaranteed fascinating episodes as long as they stuck to artist with amazing stories.

Unfortunately, success crept in. As BTM became the network's top rated show, putting VH1 on the map and establishing it as the hip cable destination it is today, the corporate culture of Viacom took over. As the record biz began to realize that the show was impacting record sales, things changed. Their *Behind the Music* doubled Def Leppard's weekly record sales, and for artists with miniscule sales like Vanilla Ice increased sales exponentially. It also helped sell thousands of copies of artist back catalogue the week after a show aired. The high ratings it boasted (for cable, that is, three million or more viewers per new episode in 2000) and the direct connection to album sales made the series move away from obscure, interesting artists, and into marketable new subjects like Alanis Morissette and Green Day, despite the artists not having much history. In 1999 producer George Moll boasted, "We're moving away from heritage artists."

The next year VH1 explored *Behind The Music* as a brand, saturating the market with CDs, books and videos under the BTM banner. Instead of following the model of A&E, whose *Biography* show will easily reach its 20th anniversary in a few years, VH1 lost focus and doomed the show. In 2003 less than a handful of episodes were produced, and by April of 2004 only one new show has aired. Because the structure poorly served trendy, new artists, VH1 developed shows that worked better, like *Driven*, which has family friends describe the early days leading up to stardom (and which purposely does not interview the overexposed subject). Also, BTM's occasional "year" shows, which had talking heads discuss numerous events from a given historical year, begat the new trend on the channel: shows in which comedians and stars flippantly deliver scripted, empty quips about pop culture.

The network, thanks to BTM, became a hip destination. However, it is now too hip to feature a show that at its best involves old people revealing their pathetic humanity. A sad fate for one of my favorite shows. But at least we'll always have Leif.

One note, I am very unsure of many of these dates. VH1 often changes their schedules at the last minute, and it seems that legal issues sometimes shelve a show for years (like the Badfinger episode) so just because I found TV Guide listings or press releases from VH1 for air dates doesn't mean they are right. Sorry.

Contributing writers: CB - Chris Butler, EB - Elliot Brennan, EF - Erika Feldman, EH - Emil Hyde, EO - Eric Ottens, GPG - Gary Pig Gold, JA - Jake Austen, JB - John Battles, JP - James Porter, JR - Jon Resh, KB - Ken Burke, MF - Mike Faloon, SL - Skippy Lange, TA - Tim Aher

MILLI VANILLI (8/17/97) (JA) This was one of the best BTM episodes because it was the one that they put the most effort into, and because it really was an example of what this show could be at its finest: a fascinating, respectful human story that makes you care about the protagonists even if you are not a fan of their music. This is the story of two muscle-bound Euroboys, living in Germany at the end of the 80s. One is a vacant eyed Afro-Parisian named Fabrice Morvan. The other, Rob Pilatus, the child of an African American GI and a Caucasian German stripper will prove to be the classic tragic mulatto. The pretty boys decide to become stars and work out athletic dance routines that accompany the cover songs they sing at nightclubs. Impressed by their dancing and looks, the evil German record producer Frank Farian, has them tour to support a record he made with studio musicians and middle aged singers (Rob and Fab are not on the actual record). It should be noted that this was not an uncommon practice in the Bubblegum 60s, and more importantly, the record they are dancing to was profoundly mediocre. *Anyone* could have sung and rapped that record, it just so happened that these guys didn't. What follows is a whirlwind trip to the top, as their album somehow becomes a global smash, ten times

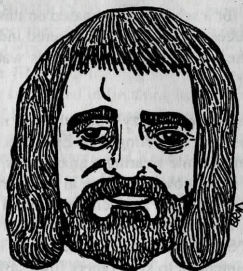
platinum, and their looks and moves (and the fact that spandex was an acceptable fashion statement) make them MTV darlings. Though BTM acts like a concert in which their DAT starts skipping and they are exposed as lip synchroners was a big deal, many acts (especially dance acts, as Downtown Julie Brown tells us in this show) mime live, and the audience didn't seem to care. But trouble erupts after they win the Grammy for best new artist. "All we wanted was to not get the Grammy, and we got the goddamn Grammy," laments Rob in his melancholy, heavy accent. Soon, despite them making him millions, and despite the appeal of the act being primarily visual, the awful producer decides it is his duty to reveal their charade. We then see the amazing footage of the press conference. During the event, in which the sad boys, who can hardly speak English, face a hostile press without the support of their evil svengali or their record label, Rob pleads pathetically for empathy, stating that if he hadn't gone this route, "We would still be in Munich, I would still work at the McDonalds." They try to regroup and record an album with their own vocals, but Rob (likely on drugs) has a poor attention span in the studio, and when they debut on *Arsenio* only Fab is better than average, and the album only sells several thousand copies. It's downhill from there, though Fab eventually rebounds and pulls himself together, developing his talent and becoming a singer/songwriter in an earthy neo-soul mold. But while suddenly beautiful Fabrice, who actually looks younger than he did in Milli Vanilli, has become centered and focused, Rob has had a much harder time and looks haggard. Though they were good friends before, they had to stop hanging out, partly because Rob felt he increased his chances to be recognized and ridiculed if the two of them were together. Though staged scenes of a troubled man walking on the beach should be hokey and false, they aren't in this case, you really can see how upset and disturbed he is. Originally the show ended with us hearing of his drug abuse (he went through rehab 11 times) sadly the show was updated later when he returned to Germany to work with Frank again (who bailed him out of jail) and then killed himself with a drug overdose in a hotel room. Though the never repentant Frank should have earned redemption, I suppose, for reaching out to Rob, he apparently didn't do too good a job. This show ends with us pondering the pathetic fate of a guy who it seems would have been better off still working at McDonalds in Munich. Formally this show is spot on, with the arc of rise, peak, lurking devastation, hard fall and (for Fab) redemptive rise fully realized. They make decisions to show the boom microphones and lights on occasion during interviews to demystify the process (later they would go another direction and have numerous interviewees be surrounded by candles, creating a mystifying atmosphere). And one odd note, the announcer, Jim Forbes, for some reason tried to go by the fake name "James Jude" in this early episode. (JA)

MC HAMMER (8/24/97) What is most notable about this episode is that BTM had not yet established their formula despite the near-perfect premiere. This show has the wrong announcer (a nasal-voiced guy) and the rhythm is off. The set up is v-e-r-y-long, almost fifteen minutes. The repetition of information is more redundant than the stylized redundancy BTM is known for. And the writing is much worse than what BTM viewers would become familiar with (the show ends with, "win or lose this time around, when it comes to everything he's accomplished, well, as Hammer might say, you can't touch this"). The talking heads commenting on Hammer are pretty interesting. A thoughtful Black journalist, Chuck D. and Mrs. Hammer are all very insightful. Arsenio Hall, on the other hand, seems very invested in being Arsenio Hall and all his comments feel like either pre-written testimonials or stand up routines (and his credibility is a little strained when he calls Hammer, "the Michael Jackson of Hip Hop"). Best of all is M. C. Hammer's barber, Diamond Ken, who is the go to guy for VH1, getting more screen time than anyone, despite the fact that he doesn't know what the fuck he's talking about. What this show is mostly about is how a sweet, god fearing, nerdy family guy with few vices rose from nothing to making and blowing zillions of dollars with his excessive spending and his generosity. The rise of street dancer Stanley Burrell, who befriended pro baseball players and had them bankroll his independent rap career, is based on savvy and talent. With all the early footage it becomes clear that though M. C. Hammer was never a great rapper he actually was a brilliant dancer and because of that artistry he deserved the attention and success he got. After he becomes a mega-success he blows tens of millions by buying a far too big house (this show is sort of set up as an anti-MTV *Cribs*) and by hiring everyone from his ghetto to be in the act/entourage. At one point they show his concert and the stage is covered with almost a hundred unnecessary "dancers" and standers-around, which led to a \$500,000 a month payroll. What happens when he loses the money is that he declares bankruptcy, but he never becomes spiritually bankrupt, or mentally off kilter and is never destitute. His low is making a horny song with him in Speedos in the video. Not exactly crippling your friend in a drunk driving accident or burning down your mansion out of spite. My favorite character in this show is Oprah Winfrey's image. When Hammer first appears on her show, bragging about his success at the height of his glory bloated Oprah is not quite ready for the 90s, wearing an outfit that basically looks like clown clothes. Hammer, in his absurd parachute-pants superhero outfit, looks normal in comparison to her. On a later Oprah show, where Hammer nobly explains his bankruptcy and tells everyone that he can't be called broke or poor when there are actual broke or poor people out there, stylish Oprah looks *awesome*. She appears on screen for about one minute in this show and her development is as compelling as Hammer's! And as the show raps up, Hammer looks great and feels positive about his future. Here we get our first look at a true BTM cliché: the artist in the studio making a comeback record that obvious to everyone but the artist, is going nowhere. But we also get to experience that great BTM feeling where we hope beyond hope that somehow this will work out and our new friend will stay happy! (JA)

BOY GEORGE (8/31/97) This episode in some ways feels like the first *real* BTM because it is the debut of the true *Behind the Music* announcer Jim Forbes. The story opens with a poor Irish Catholic kid from the UK ghetto dressing in his mommy's clothes and being a proud freak as a kid. His regular guy brother seems to have always sort of admired George's boldness and doesn't speak judgmentally about the poofster sibling. After seeing Bowie when he was 12 George becomes a New Romantic, joins the punky dance scene, supports himself as a DJ and a thief and forms a band. This is where it gets interesting. Jon Moss is the drummer for Culture Club. A beautiful son of a millionaire, Moss becomes the love of George's life, and all the songs written for Culture Club are

about their relationship. They clearly had an intense love affair, but when interviewed today Moss, acting macho and manly, brushes off everything. He won't say they didn't have a relationship, but he also won't verbalize in any way shape or form that he was gay at any point in his life. He isn't denying anything, but he just downplays it and tries to change the subject. He was engaged to a woman when they met and he is a father now, and he left George for a woman back in the day. "Karma Chameleon," and many other songs, were about Moss' confusion, and informed that he still is in denial George calls Jon, "a sad little liar." That's one of the interesting things about this episode; the band was a huge, global phenomenon, but everything about Culture Club was hinged on something as small as the relationship between two lovers. The non-gay guitarist didn't really get to enjoy his rock stardom because of this, explaining, "It wasn't my idea of being in a band, I didn't really want to be in some gay drama...where are the drugs? Where are the girls?" Though the girls were not forthcoming, after Jon left George the drugs were plentiful. The most vivid imagery in this show is George on heroin performing at a charity concert with some kind of crusty cold cream on his face (he clearly doesn't know it's there), nodding off while being interviewed and talking gibberish like a schizo street person. One shot shows visibly disturbed Sting and Sade posing for photographers with George, and the BTM announcer very explicitly tells us when to watch as our Boy actually passes out while still standing up mid sentence. With his family putting pressure on him he tries to get straight and finally a bald, sad and gaunt George pulls himself together after three friends OD, one in his house. The show ends with a fairly together George (not the happiest guy in the world) lamenting that though he's over Jon he wished Jon would acknowledge their love they once shared. We also see Jon completely shrugging off and denying any profound memories of their relationship. Like many episodes it's repetitive and tells things in many more words than necessary, but this also really shows why this series is excellent because it covers fascinating human mistakes and weaknesses in a way that is removed from tabloid sleaziness because of the sympathetic nature of the documentarian's lens and the total involvement of the subject, a subject (in this case) who has good perspective on his past problems. (JA)

FLEETWOOD MAC (9/7/97) Fleetwood Mac's history from 1967 to 1974 (the year Lindsey Buckingham and Stevie Nicks joined) could be an entire *Behind The Music* in itself...or even three (see *Stevie:BTM* and *Lindsay:BTM*). Even though the pre-Buckingham/Nicks version of the band went through numerous personnel changes and wrote the often covered "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight" and the Judas Priest standard "Green Manalishi," this period of the band only gets about five minutes of coverage. But naturally the Lindsey and Stevie era is the one that Fleetwood Mac is best known for. Anyway, this episode not only chronicles the crazy level of success the band attained, but it illustrates how absolute fame can corrupt absolutely. There are more mentions of drug use in these interviews than there are killings in your average John Woo film. Then there are the busted relationships, the rigors of the road, the tribulations of recording and the triumphant reunion (which provides a framing device for the episode, as the episode provides a promotional device for the reunion). It's everything you could hope for in a *Behind The Music*. But what's the deal with those balls on the cover of "Rumours?" (CB)



UNDER
APPRECIATED
FLEETWOOD
MAC
GUY:

THIS
DUDE.

NOWHERE TO HIDE (9/21/97) This episode was made before the formula had been worked out. It is a documentary on people who stalk rock stars, and not on any one particular figure, so the "arc" doesn't apply. There's a segment on John Lennon's murder and some expert psychologists explaining the stalking phenomenon and there's even a weird bit where a singer-songwriter is inspired by her stalker to write a powerful song about stalkers (so the stalker was a muse as well as a terrorist). The best thing in this episode is that it was the first place I saw the riveting insane footage of the fat maniac who videotaped himself constantly (including his suicide) as he planned his stalking and murder of Bjork (don't worry, his bomb didn't work and Bjork lives on, though this guy must have really rattled her). One of the points of the documentary was that female artists are easy to identify with and have a more intimate relationship with their fans, and that really appeals to stalkers. So the lesson is to be unpleasant and distant. (JA)

IMAGEMAKERS (9/28/97) This has not been rerun, since it didn't fit the format, and I can only vaguely remember the episode, but it is a documentary about rock photographers (visionary geniuses, not paparazzi). It includes an interview with photographer turned music video director Herb Ritts. (JA)

LYNYRD SKYNYRD (10/19/97) Because news crews arrived at the plane crash site almost immediately, because a great amount of footage was shot directly after the accident and because there are survivors who can give first hand accounts of the carnage, the tragedy at the heart of this episode is grounded in reality more than any other episode except for perhaps Aaliyah's. Add to that the way the fat, hairy and regularly giggling Skynyrd's look today and you have a completely unique, Southern-fried *Behind The Music*. The pre-crash stuff is pretty compelling, and while you don't really get a great handle on what made Ronnie Van Zant tick (although footage of him fishing comes closest to doing so) you do see how brilliant this band was musically. The real fascinating stuff comes after

the crash, as there is contention with some band members about how survivors acted immediately in the wake of the crash leading to a schism. Later there is a long, successful but controversial reunion of the band, as they become the very popular touring outfit they are today, with a younger Van Zant up front. The footage of the current band, including reunions that include an ailing member, is a fascinating look into what being in a band and what fan loyalty are all about. (JA)

TEDDY PENDERGRASS (10/97) This is a really interesting episode because it is centered in the rich 60s and 70s Philly Soul scene which doesn't get nearly enough historical attention paid to it (there's ten Motown documentaries, but this is the closest I can think of to a Philly Soul doc). The older, grayer Pendergrass that holds court in this show may not be the sex good with steam rising off him from his heyday, but he certainly demonstrates ample soul, charm and sexiness as he calmly recalls his days growing up listening to legends, his navigation through the Philly scene, his mega success as a solo artist and his crippling 1982 accident. Philosophical and brave, Teddy Bear doesn't let you feel sorry for him, and as the documentarians build up his Live Aid on-stage appearance as a climatic milestone his words make it clear that as great as that was he realized that being onstage paled in comparison to being alive. This was done years before he made an earnest, powerful return to concert touring, and I saw him on that tour and it was amazing. Rarely rerun, this isn't one of the most popular BTM's, but as far as being genuinely inspiring, it is one of the best. (JA)

BILLY JOEL (11/9/97) I was totally ready for this to be a tale of a sordid descent into cocaine fueled insanity but instead it is a lesson in rock economics. Billy Joel early on makes a mistake of handling his music wrong, signing away rights to his songs that was basically like giving someone a no limit platinum card. But the super fucked up stuff is with his manager, who was basically a family member, just reaming Joel and taking what the documentary led me to believe was about 8 zillion dollars of Joel's money and somehow never having to return it. I've always thought of Joel as a bitter, unpleasant guy who made contrived music, and at least this explains why his soul is so wrinkled and awful; he has been screwed by life. But he is still rich as hell, so I don't feel sorry enough to excuse him for "Pressure." (JA)

LILITH FAIR (11/16/97) Not a typical BTM, this was more like a concert documentary without very much concert. Sarah McLachlan and Jewel and the Indigo Girls discuss how this all women's tour came to be and how profoundly important it is to them and their fans. There's backstage footage, a press conference and even an offstage jam session with some of the rocking ladies. I haven't seen this since it first aired (as important as it was it must have also had a quick expiration date as VH1 has not deemed it re-runnable) but I recall there was some pretty earnest declarations by the participants including rockers from the 80s and singer songwriters from the 70s as well as the 90s uber-coffeehouse singers that dominated the lineup. (JA)

ANDY GIBB (11/30/97) This is a sad strange story of a young man who had everything. Though he perhaps wasn't the most talented Gibb brother he certainly could sing, and was surely the prettiest. His career, while somewhat undignified due to the era when he hit (who could have dignity in a satin baseball jacket and a feathered hair helmet), would have been a great one if he just could have held it together. He was with one of the hottest ladies of the era, Victoria Principal, and he was about to become the fourth Bee Gee. Gibb had supportive family and friends and if he would just show up to claim it the world was his. And he just took an ass whooping from cocaine that left him bloody, beaten, broken and eventually dead. This episode really shows how powerful drugs can be and how utterly damaging it can be when they make you lose control. When *Behind The Music* plays us Gibb's unreleased recordings and they frighteningly predict his pathetic death it is jarring. And the way the show demonstrates his decline is very effective (if anything is lower than being the host of *Solid Gold* it is being such a fuck up that you fail at being the host of *Solid Gold*). Though it is hard to really paint a picture of a guy without his participation, the affection that his brothers and Ms. Principal express, and the loss they feel, really makes you feel sad for the life Gibb didn't get to live. (JA)

JIM CROCE (12/97) This is a nice episode because there really is no dark side to Croce. A publishing company screws him out of money, but it doesn't reflect badly on him in any way. Croce was a talented songwriter who was on the rise when he was killed in a plane crash. While there was drugs in his life he never reached a point that they were a huge problem, and one of the best sections of this is his friends reminiscing about the communal partying and songwriting they used to do together, which clearly was pot fueled (Cheech is one of his buddies). The warmest part of this is the relationship he had with his loving wife, and we even get to hear a Croce rarity; a love song he wrote for her. Her loss is tragic, but her loyalty, love and devotion she still feels for him is inspiring. (JA)

THE CARPENTERS (1/1/98) Todd Haynes' 1987 *Superstar: The Karen Carpenter Story* is not incredible because it uses Barbie dolls to re-enact this story of a life lost to anorexia, but because it maintains distance from and sympathy for its subject. Richard Carpenter's eyes betray an endless sadness in the loss of a partner and sibling. This episode is too close to both family and Herb Alpert to give anything but a glossy version of a messy story, paying no respect to the sadness and strength of a lost voice. (EB)

SONNY BONO (1/11/98) Sonny only got this because he died a crazy ski accident death; though his story is fascinating and he was a creative genius he is generally considered a footnote to Cher. Well, despite the sad circumstances that got him on this show, it is excellent to see him get this attention. His shtick was to act like a loser, and compared to Cher his charisma certainly appeared to be minimal, at least to the general public. But this episode demonstrates that his friends and industry people and especially his family really respected him. Even when he entered politics, partly out of spite, you get the impression from his colleagues that even though he knew nothing about government he made all the right decisions (through his people) and did a good job. The number one thing this episode relates, however, is that a mom outliving her son is a truly tragic thing, as Sonny's mother's heartbreak and deep sadness are the most tangible elements of this show. (JA)

MAMAS AND THE PAPAS (1/18/98) This episode is a lot more sober and sympathetic than what you expect from BTM. The Mamas & Papas helped pioneer the whole 1960's flower-pop craze that collectors now covet. True to their easygoing image, all of the then-surviving members have a level-headed perspective considering what they went through. All have maintained their sense of humor, although former Papa Denny Doherty is a little too wound up at times. Naturally, everyone becomes misty-eyed at the memory of deceased Mama Cass Elliott, and the love triangles within the group are spelled out in minute detail. Especially appreciated the footage of supercool manager/producer Lou Adler, sitting tight in his Phat Farm polo shirt. At the time of broadcast, tragedy still haunted them, as former members John Phillips and ex-wife Michelle Phillips (nee Gilliam) weren't speaking to each other. We can only hope they mended the fence at some point, as John died of heart failure in March 2001. (JP)

MEAT LOAF (2/1/98) From the BTM voiceover: "In 1972, a part in another play, *More Than You Deserve*, convinced him that he could really make it as a singer." Hmm...I would have thought that he came to that conclusion long before that. The year before, he was part of a Detroit-based duo (Stoney & Meatloaf) that recorded for a Motown subsidiary and had a Top 40 hit on the soul charts with "What You See Is What You Get" (not the similarly-titled Dramatics tune). It's pretty obvious that Mr. Loaf only remembered what he wanted to remember - his struggles with his weight and his voice, his abusive father, the death of his mother from breast cancer - yet his Detroit rock years in the early 70's are unaccounted for. This particular BTM has an unusual arc - it starts with his heyday around '78 or so, dwells there for what seems like an eternity, doubles back to his childhood in Dallas, TX, then takes a jet airliner to Los Angeles where he gets a part in a stage production of *Hair*, then after diddling around with the thespians for a while, it's straight to fame like a bat out of hell. Not even a mention of that Ted Nugent album he sang on (*Free-For-All*). Either VH1 was getting their chain yanked, or somebody goofed with the research. (JP)

GLADYS KNIGHT AND THE PIPS (2/15/98) Gladys is the baddest! One of the most down to earth subjects of a *Behind The Music*, it is a pleasure to watch Ms. Knight tell her tale, as her speaking voice proves as beautiful as her singing voice. However, as devastating as her gambling addiction was financially, it does not make for the juiciest BTM. And she also doesn't seem to have the most promising taste in men. But her cousin Bubba sure seems like a great dude! I'm glad she kept that Pip around (and didn't lose him at a Vegas craps table). (JA)

WILLIE NELSON (3/1/98) There are many reasons that this episode is a pleasure to watch, but mostly I was delighted by the ample amount of old footage of young Willie. The arc of this has Willie achieving songwriting success but very little recognition as an artist for decades, then becoming a superstar when he was pushing 50 in the 1970s. Also, only a few years after his success the revenues started a'comin' after him. A decade of wars with the IRS ends with Willie losing (to the tune of \$10 million or so) and seeing such disrespectful indignities befall such a legend is hard. I also thought this episode put too much weight on his pop crossover, and duets with other stars, and not enough weight was given to the Austin scene and the Outlaw Country movement that he spearheaded. Overall, though, this features a great artist and relates triumphs and tragedies in a very tangible way, which is what you really want from BTM. (JA)

JERRY LEE LEWIS (3/8/98) VH1 originally skewed towards James Taylor-loving boomers, and would subsequently keep the age demographic the same but start appealing to late 70s then 80s and now early 90s nostalgia. Thus, there was little room for the 50s, and this episode has been run very rarely. I vaguely recall seeing it really late one night and my main impression was that after his marriage to his child bride ends there seemed to be an avalanche of death and divorce and ugliness. Lewis is a brilliant musician but obviously he is not the most focused person when it comes to making good life decisions. I'd love to see it again, but until advertisers start coveting 70 year olds I don't expect them to dust this off. (JA)

RICK JAMES (3/15/98) One reason that this is an all time classic BTM is that, though he may be holding back some truths about some of the more heinous crimes he's been accused of, for the most part James not only is incredibly candid about his drug use and awful behavior, he actually seems particularly proud of it. This is not a contrite former addict, this is a braggart of a (former?) addict! His musical career has an inauspicious start. He meets Neil Young and forms a rock band, the Mynah Birds, while living in Canada as a draft dodger. The band gets signed to Motown but falls apart after some enemy of Rick turns him in. For years I've been dying to hear Mynah Birds stuff, hoping Motown would include the recordings on a Rick James compilation, and this show actually played some of their music from the Motown vault, so that alone made this BTM super-satisfying, but of course it gets better. Rick works out his problems and returns to Motown and proceeds to make some of his best Funk records of all time, many in praise of the evil weed, many in praise of freaky sex. And his lifestyle is very 70s, with his onstage pot use dwarfed by his offstage cocaine use, eventually culminating in spending prison time for some type of bizarre cocaine-fueled sex kidnapping drugging torture scenario involving a young woman perpetrated by Rick and his wife (talk about an open marriage). Seeing Rick in court in disconcerting, can you imagine being on that jury? Anyhow, the show ends with Rick free (claiming prison straightened him out) and on the rebound. The worst thing I can say about this episode is that it is obsolete now because of the Rick James episode of Dave Chapelle's show which featured the real Rick James and an associate discussing a minor incident. This humble episode may have summed up James' life more than BTM's broad biography. Unlike BTM which is dedicated to not make a fool of the participants, *Chapelle's Show* operates on the opposite principal. Rick (looking bizarre; he has suffered a stroke since the BTM so his face is a little saggy, but he is also wearing mountains of makeup and lip gloss) vehemently denies wrongdoing, then boldly admits it a minute later. The producers demonstratively rewind the tape back to the contradiction to make sure no one missed it. And the show continually repeats James' mantra to explain

his behavior, and that pretty much should have also been the last line of BTM, "Cocaine is a hell of a drug." (JA)

DAVID CROSBY (3/22/98) Honestly, what I wanted out of this show was someone to explain to me why Buffalo Springfield belonged in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, but in 45 minutes VH1 didn't really have much time to cover the actual music portion of David Crosby's life. Instead you get a life devastated by drugs and partying and hippie excess (though coke doesn't seem like a very hippie drug) that leads to prison and the operating table (Crosby is the poster boy for "why did he get the kidney, he's just gonna fuck it up!"). While this is a perfect BTM in that here is drama and decadence and a heartwarming ending (he is reunited with a grown son who becomes a musical collaborator in a band called CPR [Crosby, Pevar and Raymond - his son is James Raymond]) what I really liked about it was that Crosby's presence alone explained why he could get away with so much shit. His friendly eyes and his cute little smile and his natural charm helped this man get all the pussy he could handle, keep friends loyal, even after he let them down time and time again and even keep him in one piece in prison. (JA)

SELENA (3/29/98) I love Selena and though the Selena movie with J-Lo was schmaltzy I admired a number of things about it, most importantly that it decided (out of respect for Selena and her fans) not to depict her slaying at the wicked hands of troll-like Yolanda. This episode has no such convictions, and in a very *E! True Hollywood Story* move they obsess on the murder and even give voice to crazy-ass Yolanda by interviewing her in jail. As hokey and silly as the Selena biopic is I would still have to send Selena-newbies to that, as it is a better primer than this. By the way, my theory about J-Lo is that people feel loyal to her even through inferior records and movies because they still see her as Selena, who they genuinely want to love. (JA)

JEFFERSON AIRPLANE (4/5/98) If you are a baby boomer this was your band so I'm sure you were pumped for it. As a somewhat younger rock fan I've always liked some of their stuff but was never that fond of Grace Slick's voice, so I never really was a fan. This episode didn't convince me that the band is great but I am now 100% behind Grace Slick, mainly because she ends this thing vowing to never be a rock star again because she feels that old rockers on stage is stupid (her statements contrasting with Paul Kantner's, who was still trying to get the band back together). This episode does a good job getting your head into the sex and drugs 60s scene, and relates how Slick's wild child was magnetic in the early days: This is also a nice example of hippies-to-yuppies, as the ultimate peace and love and drugs band becomes the ultimate corporate soulless rockers in the 80s. And while I'm sure no one stopped cashing their "We Built This City" checks, give most of them credit for knowing that Starship was awful. (JA)

TAKIN' IT TO THE STREETS (4/12/98) VH1 was still pretty much series oriented at the time this came out (now they will introduce specials or very limited series at the drop of a hat) so this odd documentary about street musicians was shoehorned into the BTM format. What was notable was that this was used as part of the "cable in the classroom" program, in which parents were encouraged to videotape the shows and then bring them to schools, where VH1 would provide a lesson plan for a school project based on this episode. Thus, it was actually pretty noble that they produced an episode that featured independent artists without products to push as subject matter, rather than having kids watch a 45-minute commercial for the new Ozzy album. (JA)

OZZY OSBOURNE (4/19/98) Five crazy-ass things from Ozzy's past that are mentioned in this episode: 1. He bit the head off of a live dove at a meeting with Epic executives. 2. He was arrested for pissing on the side of the Alamo while wearing a green dress. 3. He bit the head off of a stunned but live bat someone had thrown on stage at a concert in Des Moines. 4. Randy Rhodes, Ozzy's guitar player, died in an accident in which a plane he was flying in was repeatedly buzzing Ozzy's RV. 5. Ozzy was sued (3 times!) for allegedly putting subliminal messages in a song called "Suicide Solution". The songs lyrics are actually inspired by Bon Scott's death, and were intended to keep others from suffering the same fate. I guess they didn't have time to mention that ant snorting incident with Motley Crue (see *Motley BTM*). Anyway, through it all, Ozzy maintains a positive mental attitude, appears to be a genuinely sweet, good hearted guy. The bleep quotient is slightly lower than the subsequent *Osbourne's* reality show, but you can already see how Ozzy's uninhibited personality will work in the future. I think Sharon sums it up best, "He has a natural gift to entertain." PS. "Musicologist" "Dr." Robert Walser offers absolutely no insight into the Sabbath/Ozzy story whatsoever. But his superficial observations are pretty funny. (CB) **OZZY "DIRECTOR'S CUT" (2001)** After *The Osbournes* became a hit they added a half hour to the Ozzy BTM and ran it briefly as an extended episode. I'm not positive, but I suspect the extra footage may be the stuff Penelope Spheeris shot at Ozzfest for *Decline of Western Civilization Pt. 4* that Sharon hijacked from her. (JA)

TED NUGENT (4/26/98) For some reason, I have a vivid recollection of hearing "Where Have You Been All My Life" (from Ted Nugent's eponymous LP) on the juke box at a pizza place sometime in the mid 70s when I was I was in my mid teens. I don't know why it made such an impression. I guess it just condensed everything juvenile about being, uh, juvenile. Unfortunately, Ted never progresses beyond his teenaged mentality as evidenced by this episode of *Behind The Music*. Ted spends the bulk of this program proving what a hypocrite he is. He lambastes drug users and alcohol drinkers, but repeatedly admits (without a trace of humility, however) to being a serial pedophile. Two relationships (one with his wife and one with "muse" Pele Massa, who was 17 when they started dating) were ended due to Ted's infidelity while on the road, often with underage women. But Ted justifies his behavior with one of his trademark funny expressions: "alternative flesh management." And look, I'm not anti hunting, I mean I don't exactly dig the meat industry, but Ted has this attitude that you're somehow stupid if you don't hunt. I just think it's unrealistic to believe that suddenly a nation of 290 million or so people are going to head to the woods every night before dinner. What is really surprising is his disdain for both fans and fellow band members. Both of which were necessary for his, um, success. Ted accuses fans of being unable to handle the energy of his shows when they behave violently, although tons of other bands have high energy shows without incident. And his

determination to subdue singer Derek St. Holmes, resulting in his quitting the band seems incredibly pointless and stupid. You just have to laugh (well, I did) when they get to the part where Ted finds out that his management has blown all his money on chinchillas and horses. My favorite piece of Nuge-stalgia, however, is the video for his 1982 song "Bound And Gagged". Ostensibly this song is in protest of the 1979 Iranian "hostage crisis", but in reality it's just an excuse for Ted to whine about flag burning while he and his band prance about in pastel spandex. Of course Ted never mentions the CIA's coup of democratically elected Mohammad Mossadeq, and the atrocities of the US backed Shah that led to the revolution in '79. Oh well. And then, there's Damn Yankess. Ouch! Ultimately Ted comes off like you or me when we were maybe 19 and we thought we had the answers to everything (apologies to all you 19 year old know it alls), and it was impossible to consider another view point. But Ted is still like that, and he's in his fifties. I guess he plays guitar pretty well, though. (CB)

JOE COCKER (5/3/98) As a subject Cocker is really a nod to VH1's original boomer audience, as he hasn't had much of an impression on younger fans. However, this episode demonstrates that he deserves to be heard from more, because (as the show accurately stated), "Joe is singing like a man 25 years younger." And more importantly, Joe looks much healthier and more together than he did in his ragged haired heyday. What I liked most about this episode was that they addressed what was up with him when he was away from the spotlight for many years. Joe was getting support from family, reconstructing a drug ravaged life and becoming the dignified Englishman we see before us today singing R&B with as much class as grit. I'm sure this was an introduction of Joe to many of the viewers, and it was an excellent introduction. (JA)

BEHIND THE MUSIC NEWS SPECIAL: MILLI VANILLI (5/98) this updates the story from the first BTM including the post-BTM suicide of Rob. (JA)

STUDIO 54 (5/24/1998) The Studio 54 *Behind the Music* was great. They focused, of course, on the exclusivity of the club and how the bouncers would intentionally torment people by telling a just married couple that one could enter but the other could not. In what I thought was a very clever set-up, they interviewed "three guys who couldn't get in" and kept them on a couch behind a red velvet rope throughout the scene. I'm sure their coverage of Steve Rubell's descent into drug addiction involved one of my favorite aspects of the show, which is the stock footage they use for "drug addiction," grainy black and white shots of half-filled glasses and dirty ashtrays. One particularly memorable scene was old footage of Steve Rubell on a couch with two creepy Hare Krishna-looking guys fondling him and he's clearly blitzed out of his mind slurring "I'm happy." I think they referenced but did not play or say by name Kid Creole's "Darrio," but they did have Nile Rogers from Chic talking about how they wrote "Freak Out" as "Fuck Off" after being denied entrance. There was more substance to the episode than what I've recounted here, I just tend to remember the stupid stuff. Overall it was really well done, one of the first episodes I saw that made me think the series was great and made VH1 a significant part of my decision to get cable. (EO)

KEITH MOON (5/31/98) Pete Townshend, John Entwistle and Roger Daltrey may indeed have lost their all-time greatest drummer after Keith Moon grilled his last steak breakfast, popped "The Abominable Dr. Phibes" into the video player one last time, then settled back for the final in a lifelong string of recreational overdoses. But when Keith John Moon finally succeeded in finishing himself off very early on the morning of September 7, 1978, we ALL lost our meaty beaty biggest-ever bouncer, or, as Townshend himself so eloquently eulogized, "our great comedian; the supreme melodramatist." Yet on the twentieth anniversary of Keith's ultimate O.D., when *Behind The Music* finally got around to dedicating forty-five minutes of prime airtime to the man who defiantly put the "oo!" into The Who, all VH1 seemed to be able to come up with was an utterly predictable string of not-so-vintage public domain performance clips of Moon and Co. in their auto-destructive glory interspersed with a smattering of celebrity heads regurgitating the same tired old "he emptied all the fire extinguishers into the swimming pool!" party tales. While click-trackin' contemporary stickmen feebly attempt to swear to Keith's rarest of abilities behind the skins, only Ray Davies seems to have anything intelligent to say...but, alas, his moment onscreen is over quicker than you can say "Tommy Lee" (whilst diving for the remote). May I instead direct the discriminating Who and/or rockumentary fan over to the infinitely superior British televised tribute "The Real Keith Moon," wherein such genuinely kindred spirits as Pamela Des Barres and "Legs" Larry Smith wax extremely poetic all over the magnificent Moon legacy while Keith's original partner in Holiday Inn crime, Hermit of Herman's Karl Green, even recounts step-by-step instructions on how best to insert lit cherry bomb explosives into running toilets. Need I say any more? "The Real Keith Moon" can pretty easily be tracked down online, but whilst Googling be very aware of stumbling instead into Keith's BTM page on VH1.com, where the unsuspecting cybersurfer is invited to, and I quote, "hear how Keith Moon became a member of The Who by wrecking his drum kit!" and "hear how Keith Moon's attempts to overcome alcoholism led to his death!" Somewhere, the REAL Keith Moon is at this moment flushing a jumbo cherry bomb in VH1's direction. (GPG)

BONNIE RAITT (6/98) This episode wasn't too memorable, but I do recall that Raitt seemed like a really amazing, well-rounded person in her interviews, and the other musicians they interviewed seemed to genuinely hold her in as high regard as any BTM subject ever. She starts out bloozy and goes Pop while keeping it Bluesalicious. (JA)

ROBBIE ROBERTSON (6/98) OK, you've already seen a pretty good movie about The Band and what was going on during their final days, so what does this have to offer? Basically we learn that Robertson, a thoughtful and intelligent man, who has kept up his chops doing film scoring, and is way into being Native American. (JA)

CULTURE CLUB REUNION (6/13/98) This updates the great Boy George episode, with the main highlight being Jon's finally addressing questions of his romance with George which he avoided in the previous show. With their love publicly acknowledged they go on to make beautiful music together as a touring band again.

DEF LEPPARD (6/21/98) What I find most notable about Def Leppard's career is their transcendence of their New Wave Of British Heavy Metal origin. I remember Def Leppard in context with Tygers Of Pan Tang, Samson, Saxon, etc., none of whom matched the consistent chart success of Def Leppard. Def Leppard's genius was wrapping pop songs in a metal image thereby making it acceptable for both boys and girls (mooks and midrifts) to like the band. Of course, having Mutt Lange produce your record doesn't hurt either. Anyway, this episode touches on the widely known moments in Def Leppard's history (band members have ridiculous, choreographed sex with groupies, band members drink to excess, drummer loses arm, guitar player dies, etc.) and follows the band up until their "grunge" album "Slang" from 1995. Certainly the most memorable segment covers the arm-losing auto accident. As Rick Allen very calmly and honestly recalls the incident without bitterness, we see one of the oddest recreations in BTM history. As they show us sheep grazing in the field near where the accident occurred the BTM editors add the screeching sound effect of the car crash, causing one sheep to look up to, presumably, see the (off camera) accident. Particularly impressive are the interviews with the good Samaritans that found Allen (and his arm, pinned under the dashboard) and saved his life. Special moment for punk fans, look for Joe Elliott wearing a Misfits "Legacy Of Brutality" shirt at a show from 1988. (CB)

TONY ORLANDO (6/28/98) This was a landmark episode because it took someone that virtually no one cared about and made a compelling show about him. In fact the promo for the show used to quote a review that said "they even made Tony Orlando interesting..." The show had some great moments, as the born again Orlando shamelessly remembers his cocaine binging days that came to an end when his good buddy, and fellow mustachio, Freddie Prinze killed himself after a deep drug descent. The story has a happy ending, if you consider Branson, MO a happy ending. This episode was apparently one of the highest rated ever and was incessantly rerun, showing well over 100 times. This should have demonstrated that the fans cared more about story than stars but by the end of the century either the show's attitude or the fans had changed. There will never be an episode like this produced again. (JA)

GLORIA ESTEFAN (7/98) You would think a crippling bus crash, a heroic recovery and a loyal bearded husband would add up to a fascinating, or at least inspirational, story, but this is pretty dull. Estefan and her family and fans manage to convey an incredibly passive, unemotional vibe even when they talk about the most devastating or triumphant things, and even when they show the signs of emotions it seems passionless. At least she breaks the fiery Latino stereotype. (JA)

JAN AND DEAN (7/12/98) This is an episode that steps outside of the confines of most BTMs, going way back to pre-Beatles days simply because this story is too good to ignore. Often these tales have tragic accidents, but this is the rarity in which the tragic accident falls just short of fatal and you get to see and interview the survivor. Jan and Dean made perfect California Beach Doo Wop records, and their early days are told with flair, as high school memories are vivid for Dean. Jan is less verbal however, since he suffered the ironic accident of crashing his car in a manner eerily similar to the crash in their hit song, "Dead Man's Curve." Suffering brain damage and partial paralysis he fought back to be able to stand on stage and sort of sing thanks to dedicated speech therapist (interviewed for the show) and a young doctor who was a big rock & roll fan and understood the importance of him returning to the stage. California scenesters interviewed throughout include Lou Adler, Glen Campbell and Brian Wilson (Brian finally seems ultra articulate compared to Jan's post-accident speech pattern, which sounds like a meek Frankenstein monster). Interesting things here include the fact that their career received a huge boost from a very shitty made for TV movie about them, that Jan, after fighting to be able to stand and speak, decides to be a coke head, and most unique, that this episode gives complete dignified validity to the oldies state fair music circuit. (JA)

HARRY CHAPIN (7/19/98) Chapin's "Cat's In The Cradle" and "Taxi" are masterpieces of emotionally manipulative hokeyness, but the singer-songwriter apparently was one of the most sincere socially active artists of his era. When the hits stopped, he relentlessly kept performing benefit after benefit, and his fatal car crash occurred on the way to a charity concert. Hearing his family and friends talk about him you see a portrait of a very down to earth, well loved guy. This is one of the most low key episodes of the series, but also one of the warmest. (JA)

GLORIA GAYNOR (7/98) This is a video version of Gaynor's autobiography, as the "I Will Survive" Disco diva survives indignities, tragedies and roadblocks that range from being overweight to a scary concert accident to a relative's murder to a crazy Disco coke addiction. While the up part of this arc is great (humble jersey girl gets discovered by Clive Davis and goes on to win the only Disco Grammy in history) the down part is almost too much. This was a popular episode for a little while but then disappeared, I don't think the audience really connected with the show. I suspect that may be because the happy plateau at the end involves Ms. Gaynor making a very serious lifestyle change and becoming a born-again Christian. I suspect this may not be a super satisfying ending because BTM is so moral and Christian in its almost propaganda depiction of the Reefer Madness effects of drugs and alcohol that actually ending one of these morality plays in an actual church sort of pulls the curtain back and shows the viewers what the show is really about. (JA)

FRANK SINATRA: NEWS SPECIAL - VH1 listed this on their website, but to my knowledge this episode never aired.

MADONNA (8/16/1998), the show was updated and expanded at a later date) Madonna, who as we're told is, "simply the most famous woman on earth," appears in a dizzying array of hair-styles and "looks" in a seemingly infinite number of interviews that span her long career. Her absurd media oversaturation sort of makes a show like this obsolete, and add to that the fact that the less Madonna talks the more interesting she is, you don't really have a winner here. When you look too closely at Madonna it's not pretty. Her singing

isn't that great, her dancing in mediocre and since the last time I watched this was after I'd seen the sorry Britney Spears BTM, I couldn't help but notice that at times she sounds as dumb as Ms. Spears. That's not really fair because for all the things Madonna isn't she initially made her splash because of what she was: a unique, charismatic, street smart fashion innovator who drew people to her. As she got farther from the street her fashion sense became less unique and more calculated, but the genuine magic Madonna originally had was all hers and not created by handlers - Britney will never have that. Madonna is a mediocre, self-important blowhard and her pride in winning a Golden Globe for her shitty *Evita* movie seems absurd. Madonna also seems to be taking a lot more credit for her musical collaborations than she perhaps deserves. "Ray of Light" was a cover of an obscure British song and I remember reading about the songwriter falling off his couch when he heard Madonna tell Oprah why she wrote it. I don't mean for this to be a Madonna-bashing party, there are great things here, like the shots of Madonna-wannabe kids in the 80s, and the pre-Madonna rock band she was in. But for the most part this episode is as charmless as her. (JA)

STEPPENWOLF (9/6/98) This episode really sums up what can be magical about this series. Steppenwolf is thought of (if at all) as a minor two-hit wonder ("Born To Be Wild" and "Magic Carpet Ride") and one would not expect a fascinating story with twists and turns. And then smack in the middle you get this scene of Steppenwolf singer John Kay devilishly recounting with wicked glee how he duped his sucker band mates into giving him the rights to the catalogue and publishing in exchange for the band's name, which they wanted to use to continue their bright future as a band after Kay's departure. Decades and a hundred "Born To Be Wild" diaper and Dorito commercials later Kay is seen wealthy and still working (under the Steppenwolf name, which he easily got back after the songs made him wealthy and their legally named Steppenwolf act failed to succeed without their lead singer). The ex-bandmates are currently at various levels of failure. That VH1 found them and had them tell their side is amazing, but that they got Kay to revel in his cruel schemes, sounding like Mr. Burns on *The Simpsons* and almost going into an evil cackle after declaring "I had them where I wanted them" was an unbelievable Rock TV moment. This struck me as the saddest of the *Behind the Musics* I've seen. The show ends with Kay strolling around his Tennessee estate, itself a sign of a guy who has maximized life as a two-hit wonder. These scenes are contrasted with those of a former bandmate. The scene etched in my mind goes as follows: it is early morning, we see the plush rolling green hills of a golf course and over the ridge emerges a golf cart driven by the down-on-his-luck ex-Steppenwolf; he is not squeezing in an early morning round on the links, he is working maintenance. Cut to a TV studio at which point he makes an on-camera plea to John Kay, in essence asking for forgiveness and a chance to have back his old gig. Kay's response is evasive but his tone is clear: no way, man. The lingering bitterness is palpable. (JA, MF)

JOHN DENVER (9/20/98) Henry John Deutschendorf was born in 1943 to a peripatetic military family, learned how to play at age twelve on his grandmother's guitar and like Jerry Harrison and Ice Cube, quit architecture for music. Though not a great singer or guitarist, he became popular in LA clubs and his private-pressed single becomes a number one hit when Peter, Paul and Mary record his "Leaving on a Jet Plane," leading to a deal with RCA. He moves to Colorado, and is inspired by the most beautiful place he's ever seen in his life to write songs like "Rocky Mountain High" that combine with his non-threatening, wholesome and photogenic image to make him superstar, on par with his good friends the Muppets. He marries and adopts children and all is good until the 80s when a mid-life crisis brought on by death of his father leads to a divorce and being dropped by RCA, and soon only flying a plane brings him happiness. His life has ups and downs (he remarries, then re-divorces, his sperm count finally peaks allowing him to father a child, he stays involved in political causes, but is less in demand because of his hit-free music career) and then when things started looking pretty bright (he was about to sign a new record deal and tour) his Long-EZ experimental plane crashes into Pacific Ocean on October 12, 1997. The post-crash testimonials by his family (his second wife maintained a close friend ship even after the divorce) and his good buddy Gerald Rivera (who thought that they were both renegade outsiders) demonstrate that though he may have faded from the public eye he was still one of the greats to his inner circle. (EB)

BLONDIE (9/27/98) *Behind The Music* was a phenomenon at this point and it is really notable that this episode seems to really take an overt position of trying to sell the new Blondie album. Their new single "Maria" is featured extremely prominently as the band returns to the studio to record their reunion album, and the entire episode seems to be sandwiched between "Buy our new single" messages. Now I'm never going to seriously disparage Deborah Harry, not after I spent so many hours of my childhood (to paraphrase Steve Martin's Farrah joke) holding up her poster with one hand. I will forever have a crush on Ms. Harry, so it is with trepidation that I say that it is a little hard to watch her as a talking head for the better part of an hour when said head seems to have an uncomfortable amount of plastic surgery. As far as the story arc it is based around Harry's unique relationship with guitarist Chris Stein, who was her man for years, and then they broke up yet still see or talk to each other every day. That enough is unusual, but throw in Stein falling deadily ill with Harry at his bedside coaxing him back into rock & roll shape and you have a BTM! Over the years I've seen pictures of Harry in *Punk* magazine and heard the Ramones talk about how they had never seen anyone that beautiful, and it was weird that she was in their scene. I have always thought that was a really odd idea; the beauty amongst the beasts. I think this episode missed an opportunity by not spending more time in the NY punk scene with Blondie before they went on to talk about the band making it. But all in all this was pretty good, and it made me dust (and wipe) a few of my old Blondie posters off. (JA)

SHANIA TWAIN (10/4/98) This is a real landmark episode. Though it would be not be implemented until a later season the phenomenal success of this episode (one of the highest rated at the time, and it was released on video as well) proved that you could get high ratings by profiling a currently hot artist instead of by seeking out the most fascinating story. Combined with record labels exploring the sales increases a BTM brought to a performers new records and back catalogues, the days of Milli Vanilli and Tony Orlando episodes (artists with no product or current following) were done./ Not to imply that

Shania's story wasn't interesting. In fact, I'd go as far as to say that this show may have made it less interesting. Canadian Shania isn't identifiable as the beauty she is today until she gets out of Canada and gets a Nashville makeover, so even though her early years are pretty remarkable I felt that they were underplayed. The fact is that she had a very short career when this was made. Her life as a young woman was more interesting than her professional story. She grew up poor, spent time on an Indian reservation with her family (her stepfather was Native American) and raising her siblings after an auto accident killed her parents. I guess it would be cruel to really dwell on this event too long, but I didn't feel it got the weight it should have. The most exciting footage of the show was coming up, when we see video of young Shania performing in a cheap prom dress and awful big stacked hair at a low budget Canadian entertainment review. She was discovered and moved to Nashville where she flopped until Mutt Lange (who rarely appears on camera in BTMs but is mentioned in many episodes) falls for her and uses his awesome powers of production magic to make her a superstar. The show claims that there were two controversies she had to overcome, one being that she was outed as non-Native American (her Indian dad was not her birth dad, and I guess she was billed as a "half-breed" by her publicists) and one being that she showed her midriff in a video and traditional Nashville was aghast. I don't believe either of these things were actual problems. But this episode wasn't popular because of her problems, it was popular because she stuck to her guns and kept showing her naval. Man, she feels like a woman. (JA)

1968 (10/98) This was the first "year" BTM, and it may be the best one. This was subsequently used as a "Cable In The Classroom" teacher's aide for high schools, and you can see why. Even though it is obviously a truncated, simplified history lesson (one of the most culturally turbulent and exciting years of the twentieth century summarized in 44 minutes) it manages to combine striking, powerful archival footage and eloquent, passionate interviews with folks from the frontline. This episode really transcends just being about music because the Viet Nam war was such a real, powerful force, and there is plenty of footage and passionate testimony to make it real for young viewers today. Lefty turned righty P.J. Rourke belittles the concept of music changing the world, James Brown boasts of his stature in Black America at an important time and Country Joe convinces you of the power of flowers. And we learn that hippies still hate Nixon. The latter is certainly a valuable lesson in these trying times. (JA)

JOHN MELLENCAMP (11/8/98) A handful of episodes are 90 minutes instead of an hour, usually because the artist is so big and the career is so long, or so many fucked up things happened (the Aerosmith is TWO HOURS long!). Making Johnny Cougar's show an hour and a half was a terrible mistake, as the story drags on and is ill paced and at the end all you are left with in that Mellencamp is arrogant, unpleasant and smokes too much. In 60 minutes they could have compacted it to portray him as a Hoosier Springsteen, but instead he goes on and on until you realize that the more you hear him talk the less you dig "Jack and Diane." (JA)

METALLICA (11/22/98) The thing that baffled me most about this episode was the fact that for some reason every member of Metallica was confoundingly articulate. I saw them in concert at medium sized clubs with lots of slurred, garbled growling between songs, and I even asked people who hung out with them in the 80s and they confirmed that Metallica were regular, rough-edged, dumb-acting dudes. Somehow since then they've transformed into Noel Cowards and Oscar Wildes. Well I guess Noel Coward's pithy stories were never about blowing himself up with stage pyrotechnics or cruelly waking up his fired guitarist to put him on a bus. The band's oration abilities best serve the very vivid description of the tour bus accident that killed bassist Cliff Burton. I think it may be one of the most tangible descriptions of an accident in BTM history. Metallica's transition from evil underground Metalheads to their more genteel, short haired "Alternica" mode was well underway when this show was made, but it would be fair to say that this TV appearance, explaining their story in a civilized manner to America, was an important moment in the band's transformation to dignified elder statesmen. (JA)

LIONEL RICHIE (11/98) My main impression after watching this is that Richie is a confident man and a solid songwriter, but basically he has merely crafted a series of catchy songs rather than creating important music. Of course, I say that because none of the love ballads moved me or won me any loving. Haile Berry, who for some reason is the main commentator on Richie's music, disagrees with me wholeheartedly, and clearly had I tried to get some action with her by writing lovenotes filled with Ramones lyrics I would have gotten no taste of Berry. This episode opens in Tuskegee, his hometown that he truly loves, and we are treated to wonderful interviews with his mother who is beaming with pride when discussing her talented son. He joins the band at the local college, the Commodores, and he marries Brenda, the cheerleader. Things bode poorly, as every photo of Brenda has her looking very pretty, but never happy. The band eventually splits with Lionel when his love songs make him a standout star making tons more money (on song royalties) and his marriage breaks up when he gets busted cheating with a woman named Dianne, resulting in Brenda publicly beating Lionel. They try to reconcile, and they adopt Nicole Richie, Paris Hilton's sidekick, and that seems a little fishy to me. I always figure rich people adoptions involve bringing an "illegitimate" kid into the house, either secretly fathered by the man or born unto the teen daughter who went away to a school for a few months. The reason I would suspect the former in this case is because I don't know why a Black man and a Black woman would adopt a mixed race baby. But maybe there is more to the story than my devious mind is concocting - but you can't blame me for being fascinated with Nicole Richie. Anyhow, my fave part of this is when Kenny Rogers recounts how Lionel invited him to hear the song he wrote and just sings, "Lady...da da da da da da," which is all that was written at the time...and is also how I still sing that song even after Lionel added more lyrics! This show ends with him marrying Dianne, who he recently divorced and who now has him in court demanding \$300,000 a month. (JA)

RICK SPRINGFIELD (11/98) The Rick Springfield story isn't a narrative so much as it is a list of interesting facts. As a teen, Springfield toured Vietnam as part of the Australian band Rock House. He had his first taste of success with the teen band Zoot. His early solo albums flopped. He was confused with Bruce Springsteen. He starred in a Saturday

morning cartoon show for two years. (Unmentioned in the show are his bit parts in shows such as *The Rockford Files*, *The Six Million Dollar Man*, and *The Incredible Hulk*.) He dated Linda Blair of *The Exorcist* fame. He played Dr. Noah Drake on *General Hospital*. His later solo albums were quite successful. He starred in the movie *Hard to Hold*. He had to cancel a tour in the late 80s due to an accident on a four-wheeler. He stopped playing for about 10 years. He came back in the late 90s, and people still like him. The producers of BTM try to inject drama (Rick was depressed when his dad died; Rick did not fully enjoy the heights of his success), but more than anything else Springfield comes across as a nice guy who likes spending time with his wife and kids. (MF)

KC AND THE SUNSHINE BAND (11/98) One has to respect VH1 for resisting its typical sensationalist leanings here. It would be easy enough to either position KC as a pathetic freak – after all, he spent a decade in seclusion with a \$100,000 per annum drug habit – but *Behind the Music* chooses instead to treat him as a Brian Wilson-style miracle recovery story. The issue of KC's sexuality is never addressed, and it's hard to imagine either VH1 arbitrarily deciding to ignore one of its *Behind the Music* subject's sex life or KC being able to afford a kick-ass agent who negotiated absolute privacy on that issue. Rather, it seems like the show's producers recognized KC's reticence and decided not to press the topic. The show suffers some from the avoidance – KC's momentous and acrimonious break from Richard Finch, for example, might be better explained in that light, as would his 10-year retreat from the world, which the show attributes to his grief after his father's death. Oddly, the show makes no mention of the Miami-Bass reworking of "Please Don't Go" that charted in the early 90's, right in the middle of KC's drug hell! (TA)

STEVIE NICKS (12/98) I found the Fleetwood Mac BTM interesting and was sorta intrigued by the unique perspective of the Lindsay Buckingham episode, but I was underwhelmed by Stevie's. The witchy woman is an expressive vocalist, but she speaks very plainly and tells her story in a fairly inexpressive, matter-of-fact way. Her struggles with her weight, illegal drugs, legal drugs (she gets addicted to Klonopin), Epsteinbar and Lindsay are all covered in detail, but not with any emotional weight. At times this episode feels more like an infomercial for her 3 CD box set than a *Behind the Music*. (JA)

R.E.M. (12/6/98) This episode does a good job indicating how important this band is to their fans, colleagues and their hometown. In addition to all the (of course, absurdly articulate) band members we also hear from Kate of the B52s giving some insight into the Athens, Georgia "scene" from whence "college rock" came, Courtney Love's crazy ass puts in her two cents and even the mayor of Athens declares the boys to be local treasures. Although the third act has the dramatic note of a band member falling ill on tour as the band unifies to support him, for the most part the tragedy here is second hand, as the sensitive Michael Stipe is deeply affected and inspired to create by the untimely deaths of River Phoenix and Kurt Cobain. They also have Stipe talk about his "queerness" to keep things hot. My fave thing in the show is Stipe preserving his town by becoming a historical real estate tycoon, buying up old buildings so they don't get torn down for redevelopment. Can you imagine having Michael Stipe as your landlord? (JA)

MOTLEY CRUE (12/13/98) It would be hard not to make a great *Behind the Music* out of the Motley Crue story, and this episode does not disappoint. There's all the sex, drugs, death and bitter infighting you can eat here and the interviews are spectacular! Ironically, the two most drug-addled lunatics in the band, Nikki Sixx and Tommy Lee (both sober now, more or less), look pretty good in the contemporary interviews while Vince Neil looks like a bloated beach bum and Mick Mars looks like the mummified corpse of Ming the Merciless. Motley Crue doesn't get the audience rooting for them so much as staring in slack-jawed disbelief at their epic excesses and this is a formula that BTM is only too comfortable with. In *Motley Crue: Behind the Music*, the form and the content meet like hand and glove and the experience is completely satisfying. I give it an A+. (BC)

DAVID CASSIDY (12/20/98) David Cassidy has told his own story so many times that he can't help but sound like an over-rehearsed, smug, uncharming braggart when he describes his highs and lows of being a teen star, getting no respect in the industry, and causing a teenybopper fan frenzy that crushed a fan to death. What is notable about this episode is that Cassidy ends up "on top" because he is doing an absurd Vegas special effects play. While he is likely making more money doing this than 75 per cent of BTM subjects somehow this feels as sadly absurd and self-delusional as the BTM artists who are "back in the studio" working on a new CD nobody is going to buy. (JA)

BETTE MIDLER (1/3/99) Born in Hawaii, Midler moves to New York, becomes a bathhouse singer, briefly stars in *Fiddler*, then basically invents a one woman cabaret craze. Though she is an unsigned act Bette gets to perform on *The Tonight Show*, and we are treated to the footage of Johnny Carson praising her to the heavens, telling her on air that she will become a big star. This is presented by BTM as a monumental, historic, crucially important moment. Viewers with foresight will figure out how this is going to work into the story arc. Anyhoo, Bette gets a recording contract, and I guess in the weird 70s when there was a few minutes of eclectic, anything-goes FM radio programming, Bette's bawdy Andrews Sisters updates played alongside Led Zeppelin, and that's why Bette gets to be on a rock n roll channel biography. Highlights include a bad record review devastating Bette, Ms. Midler revealing the happiest time of her life was when she was an anonymous go go dancer, and the Divine Miss M marrying a bizarre Australian performance artist. The lowlight is Bruce Vilanch. Since there was little crazy career stuff they make the notable dramatic career highlight be (you guessed it) Bette being the last guest on Carson's *Tonight Show*. Not exactly a spontaneous rock & roll triumph, but I guess it was good show biz. Unfortunately, after that Carson moment the show wasn't over, though it had ran out of steam. The last ten minutes is a dull, rote list of Bette's 90s records and movies and concerts and awards. Though Bette was a reasonably interesting interview, this episode was one of the rare BTM structural failures. (JA)

LEIF GARRETT (1/10/99) This is by far the greatest episode ever of this seductive documentary series. A marginally talented teen pop star who had trouble dealing with life

when the applause died, Leif Garrett's story is interesting but familiar. But out of nowhere this tale takes a crazy turn when we meet Leif's buddy Roland Winkler, who we are told was a dancer – a kid defined by the use of his legs. It seems eighteen year-old Leif and young Roland were partying hard one night when a drugged-up Garrett crashed his Porsche, crippling Winkler for life. As modern day Leif tells this sad story VH1 lets him know that they have arranged for a reunion with Winkler. Though Winkler is odd-looking, stringy-haired and wheelchair-bound it becomes obvious instantly that he's a winner (he's a together, mentally stable dude) and Mr. Garrett is, in fact, the invalid. While this tearful, intensely melodramatic reunion is unbelievable TV what really makes this episode special is VH1's shameless dishonesty. At every turn the show lets Leif explain how his drugged days are behind him and how he has learned from his mistakes, but at least half of these statements are made with slurred words and glassy eyes. For the *Behind the Music* story arc function he has to be back on his feet and rising as the story ends, but the viewers (and the producers) know that his new band wasn't going to make it, that he still is partying pretty hard and that he's learned little from his past. But the TV audience has definitely learned something from this program: If you want to make a riveting documentary all you need to do is find a subject who severely injured his best friend twenty years ago and hasn't seen him since. (JA)

HEART (1/24/99) This is a wonderful episode, because through stylistic changes, personnel changes, love life drama, record label shenanigans and full compliance with the absurdities of changing eras (they give in to MTV image makeovers without a flinch) and through thick and thin (sorry) Ann and Nancy remain loyal, loving sisters. Through all the nuttiness they never broke up as a duo and their chemistry not only is demonstrated by their actions but by their music, and when they aren't getting too musically schmaltsy (which is too often) they kick ass! This story starts off with the girls very young (thanks to great home movies and lots of photos) and as they become more musical Nancy joins a pre-existing band called Heart and falls in love with the guitarist's crazy-eyebrowed, draft-dodging "Magic Man" brother. They get signed to a label and jump ship when the press material playfully implies that the sisters have an incestuous sexual relationship. However, years later when they become a power-ballad MTV band (as opposed to the breathtaking rock band they were early on) they comply to pose in suggestively sexual poses together. They also go along with all these compromises to hide Ann's weight gain (one video just keeps showing her beautiful eyes and nothing else). BTM seems really concerned with dealing with her weight gain, and I guess the fact that she happened to be a perfect, amazing beauty at the time in the 70s when they were making their best songs may be a reason that Heart fans might be jarred by the weight gain. However, they were selling more records than ever in the 80s and the way their label treated them seemed more abusive than a joking sex photo in a print ad. Luckily for their souls the hits stop coming and they get to regain their integrity again. Ultimately their love of each other is what this episode is about. But for fans of funny rock excess don't miss a scene where a guitarist/lover takes out his frustrations with his Wilson woman on stage by destroying his guitar like a two year old having a tantrum in an incident the band calls "The Great Kabong." (JA)

DAY THE MUSIC DIED (2/3/99) I have to give credit to VH1 at how tasteful this episode is. This BTM focuses on the 1959 plane crash that claimed the lives of Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens, and the Big Bopper, no scandal, no dirty laundry, total respect. Even the more somber BTMs, like the Mamas & Papas, walk to the very edge of being a video *National Enquirer*, but here they left their gossip detector at the door. This was apparently done with the full cooperation of the artists' families, as we're treated to rare candids and home movies. There's one odd shot of the Big Bopper with Bob Hope, and the color home movies of Buddy Holly with the Crickets are clearer than the fuzzy black-and-white clip of the same band on Ed Sullivan's show. Featuring exclusive interviews with most of those who were there: Waylon Jennings (at the time Holly's bassist who gave up his seat to the Big Bopper on the plane), the "Donna" that Ritchie Valens wrote the same-name song about, Tommy Allsup from the Crickets, and various others. Naturally, they had to interview Don McLean, who authored "American Pie" as a Holly tribute (as tired as I am of this song, McLean's comments are on target). They also get some surprisingly relevant quotes from actors Lou Diamond Phillips (who played Valens in the movie *La Bamba*) and Gary Bussey (who played the title role in *The Buddy Holly Story*). It's not like this 90's Motown documentary I once saw, where they interviewed these modern soul performers who evidently had no clue why that label was so influential. Phillips and (especially) Bussey weren't just actors playing roles, they knew the impact of what Valens and Holly brought to the table. Add the Big Bopper to that lineup (and his lookalike son) and you have a BTM that does its subjects full justice. (JP)

DEPECHE MODE (2/28/99) If it weren't for the pathetic antics of lead singer Dave Gahan, then it's unlikely Depeche Mode would ever have made it into BTM's hall of shame. Recruited by geeky classmates Vince Clark, Martin Gore, and Andrew Fletcher to lead their synthesizer band a bit of his prettyboy cool, Gahan's ego soon edged founder Clark out of the group (though Vince doesn't seem the least bit upset about it today, having enjoyed mega-success with Yaz and Erasure). Between Gore's songwriting, Gahan's fey charisma, and Anton Corbin's distinctive videos (which provide some very stylish source material for BTM's editors), the group conquered the British charts and eventually overcame America's aversion to a quartet of un-macho men in bondage gear playing synthesizers. Their triumphant 1988 concert for an arm-waving crowd at a sold-out Pasadena Rose Bowl (well documented onstage and backstage by D.A. Pennebaker) provides both the narrative turning point and visual centerpiece of the episode. Whereas the rest of the band chose to lead quiet, respectable English lives with steady girlfriends, wives, and children (and are thereby relegated to bit players in BTM's version of events), Gahan felt compelled to back up the group's platinum sales with some bona-fide rock star depravity. Leaving his wife and kid (never interviewed) in the UK to marry a bad-news junkie groupie in LA (also not interviewed), Gahan quickly becomes a standard-issue rock n' roll waste case. Lucky for him, he survived to lament his days of scuzzzy, long-haired slumping in a series of sober, clean-cut interviews. Montages of needles and hotel rooms lead to the squirm-inducing revelation that, at one point in the late 90s, Gahan actually died (clinically) for somewhere between two and five minutes. Upon his resuscitation, Dave

decides it's time to clean up, divorces his addict second wife, and climbs aboard the rehab wagon. Two albums later, DM remains commercially and creatively viable, and upbeat about their future as a group (though their best rock n' roll stories are probably behind them). Though Depeche Mode's sleek, minimal synthpop makes for a refreshing change from BTM's usual soundtrack of rock and hip-hop, and its artsy videos are easier on the eyes than still pictures of Led Zeppelin's ugly mugs, the band's story doesn't make for compelling rock drama. The fact that Gahan led a normal, well-adjusted life and didn't do anything naughty until already at the height of his fame just makes him appear spoiled, selfish, and stupid. Even his suicide attempts are made pitiful by his admission that none of them were serious ("I always made sure there'd be someone around to pick me up off the floor"). Call me callous, but watching some rich bastard ditch his family to dabble in drugs, slit his wrists for attention (as if the adulation of millions weren't attention enough), then get clean at some posh rehab center just doesn't resonate with me. But at least there was plenty of eye and ear candy to make up for the lack of emotional weight. (EH)

TEMPTATIONS – This episode was announced but never aired.

GRAND FUNK RAILROAD (3/99) This is one of my favorite bands ever and this episode celebrates dumb, working class guys making stupid, fun rock as well as any BTM. It also has the evil rock businessman villain who rips the band off mercilessly cast perfectly with Terry Knight packing his wallet with all of Grand's grands. A ridiculous lawsuit ends with Knight owning their entire back catalogue, but unlike Steppenwolf's episode (which has one band member finagle the back catalogue from the others) this has a happy ending as the Railroadsters have their biggest hit after getting their publishing back. That actually was a happy middle, because the real happy ending has GFR reuniting in the late 90s and playing to packed houses. More importantly, they actually sound awesome! Mark may be born again, and the drummer may look like your uncle who has been through hard times, but when the beer goggles clear there they stand, An American Band triumphant! (JA)

IGGY POP (3/14/99) All the sordid details, from his humble beginnings in a trailer park, to becoming an ace student in high school, to eventually dropping out after one semester of College to become a Blues drummer in Chicago (Bob Koester of Delmark Records, who once housed young James/Iggy in The Jazz Record Mart basement, wasn't quoted), and eventually form the musical mutation known as The Stooges, whose saga comprises most of this program. It's all here; drug addiction, self mutilation, vomiting, taking a dump on stage, prodigious sexual indulgences and other delights. Of course, most of this is dumbed down for the sake of more sensitive viewers, or so we're led to believe, but the lack of oversensationalism is actually admirable. The documentary states that it is what it is, and doesn't pass judgment when discussing Iggy's "indiscretions." Iggy, however, takes great relish in talking about what a bad boy he's been, accentuating each naughty story with a good, hearty laugh. There's another side to Iggy, however, as we see with his relationship with his son, Eric. We learn quickly that, though he tried, Iggy proved an incompetent parent at the height of his drinkin' and druggin' days. This will surprise absolutely no one, but we get a better understanding of how, in the course of several years of hanging out, traveling together, and (unfortunately), sharing some bad habits, Iggy and Eric start to bond, and become both friends and the Father and Son they hadn't really been earlier. Today, Eric is drug-free, and works with his dad on the road. The Stooges' segment is littered with glorious early footage and rare photos, commentary by (Stooges guitarist and drummer) Ron and Scott Asheton plus the elusive later guitarist, James Williamson. They all look remarkably well, Williamson's straight appearance being the REAL shocker here. Basically, the three are open and honest about the difficulties of working with Iggy and being in a band that seemingly nobody wanted, without running Iggy OR The Stooges down. Dave Alexander's life and death is barely eluded to, and others who served - Steven MacKay, Jimmy Recca, Scott Thurston, Billy Cheatham and the late Zeke Zeitner - aren't even mentioned, though a couple of them turn up in group photos. Inevitably, The Stooges bottom out. Iggy is hit the hardest, though Scott and James also had heroin habits. After several abortive comeback attempts (including an association with Ray Manzarek which sparked rumors of a revamped Doors lineup with Iggy filling Jim Morrison's leather trousers), David Bowie (also interviewed here) makes yet another attempt to salvage Iggy's career, woodshedding with him in Berlin, producing two solo Iggy albums with a cold, frequently depressing, though still danceable, mood about them, and stepping out of the spotlight to join Iggy's live band on keyboards. Iggy doesn't completely kick the drugs and alcohol, and his records run the gamut from New Wave friendly Rock n' Roll (particularly on "New Values," his brief reconciliation with James Williamson), to flirtations with Pop material (The Tommy Boyce produced "Party " LP) to the downright self-indulgent ("Zombie Birdhouse" and it's subsequent, often disastrous, tour invited rumors of retirement and speculations of impending death). Eventually, The Ig lands back on his feet, scores a hit with David Bowie's version of their collaborative effort, "China Girl," as well as an American hit single, a first for Iggy, with Aussie Johnny O'Keefe's Rockabilly classic (which The Crickets and Jerry Lee Lewis had previously covered), "Real Wild One" (a.k.a "Real Wild Child"), which didn't rock nearly as hard as it should have, but it put him back on the map in a big way. Iggy's real strength has always been his live show, and in the last fifteen-plus years, he's never failed to deliver high-energy sets that evoke the spirit (and a sizeable chunk of the songbook) of The Stooges, without falling into a nostalgia trap. He's been remarried (his first, however brief, marriage isn't touched upon, here), divorced, and managed to stay clean. He was nearly reunited with The Stooges in 1996 (something also not eluded to by BTM), continues to make fine records, and, of course, there was the surprisingly low key invasion in 2003 by the surviving classic Stooges lineup, which hit even the most jaded scenesters in the head like Thor's hammer. I, for one, still have to pick my jaw up off the floor when asked to bear witness to The Stooges' recent hometown onslaught. Reportedly, more tours, and even a new Stooges LP (They recorded four great tracks for Iggy's latest release, "Skull Ring") are in the works. As Ron Asheton himself says during the end credits, "You gotta respect the man (Iggy), he keeps on keepin' on!" (JB)

VANILLA ICE (3/28/99) This is a great episode because, to start with, Ice is more handsome and charismatic now than when he was a huge star. Contrasted with episodes featuring old, wrinkled, doughy versions of stars this is pretty striking. It also is interesting because it involves a huge fall from #1 in the world to nowhere without any actual

wrongdoing. Sure, he made up some backstory, but so what? One element of Ice's story that always really irks me is that he gets destroyed because his silly stories of Miami street life as a teen get debunked. Anyone who followed Vanilla Ice knows that he is a bold braggart who is loose with tall tales and ridiculous boasts, but these aren't lies about important, real things. Someone like the *New York Times* journalist Jayson Blair, who fabricated and plagiarized information about major crimes and then presented them as facts in "the paper of record" is a heinous, dangerous liar who must be stopped. Discovering whether or not Rob Van Winkle ever won a motocross trophy or went to high school with the 2 Live Crew doesn't seem like valuable investigative journalism. I fact it seems to go against the entire braggadocio nature of Hip Hop. On the other hand, the fact that Ice is a tall tale teller, and that he can tell conflicting stories and sound convincing both times (accounts of his run in with Suge Knight over royalties is the perfect example) is a little problematic for a documentary that is supposed to be telling the "real" story. But I think what makes Ice interesting is that he obviously was damaged from the get-go despite his big ego. Suffering from some chemical imbalances, having a poor relationship with his father and being thrust to far greater heights than he expected or deserved set him up for a fall. But his fall wasn't Hammer's, because Ice amazingly kept his money. But he did get depressed, use drugs and attempt suicide at a party. Ice emerged a stronger dude, getting into Rap-Rock, taking extreme sports to the extreme, and getting married and having a kid (he also became Christian, which doesn't get the mention here it deserves). I guess the final word goes to Lenny Kravitz, who concludes, "What can I say. He's a cool cat." Timeless sentiment worthy of a Vanilla Ice lyric. (JA)

JACKIE WILSON – This episode never aired but I think it was made. For about a year it was listed in the VH1 upcoming schedule every time there was a hole (maybe an episode wasn't done on time or something) and then always pulled at the last minute. (JA)

DURAN DURAN (4/4/99) After selling 60 million records Duran Duran has been through some wild times, and it has taken a toll on their faces. Cutting from an early 80s appearance on MTV with Andy Warhol to contemporary interviews shows how Andy looked then, they look now. But, oh the life they led that earned those wrinkles! The stage banter that Simon LeBon uttered when he first took the big stage rings true even today, "This is our party...THIS IS YOUR PARTY!" Though there is ebbing fame and though all three members named Taylor eventually quit, this isn't really a rock & roll tale of devastation and sorrow. Their adventures as music video pioneers include wacky stories about runaway elephants and windmills gone amok, which certainly don't count as tragedy. There are mentions of drugs, and a leisurely boating accident, but basically everyone comes out of this story in good shape with a lot of good times behind them. Despite little sorrow in it, this is still a good BTM, if only because the Durans are proud divas happy to tell their grand tale. (JA)

CHER (4/11/99) Haven't we seen pretty much all of Cher's life through television? The small screen has shown us Cher's love, split, mourning, and acceptance, and that's just for the assapants! Of course, her initial ambition wasn't for singing but for the silver screen. "I Got You Babe" goes to the top of the pops and the British press eats it up when Sonny & Cher's attire gets them kicked out of the London Hilton in '65. By 1967, irrelevance forces them to consider other options, and interestingly, their daughter is named after the film failure that bankrupted them in 1968. The lounge circuit follows and in 1971, CBS's Fred Silverman enjoys the show at the Americana in New York. A chapter in television history follows. The weeklong show tapings and weekend tours wear her down, and the *Comedy Hour* is only starting its second season when Cher considers leaving the man and the show. The façade can only go for so long before the cancellation, separation and divorce. Solo Sonny's show bombs, while careerist Cher goes to the top in Bob Mackie's outrageous costumes. With hubby Greg Allman's drug problems overwhelming her, Cher calls in Sonny for a televisual comeback. Cher's second divorce and trip around the lounge circuit follow, but stage, movies, an Oscar and well paparazzi'd relationships follow. Even though Gene Simmons is in the picture, I'll take Elijah Blue Allman's picture of Mom's boyfriends: "I probably got along best with Val. He gave me a human scalp for my birthday, and from then on, I just loved him." She's found someone, and you know it's a moment of media catharsis when even Cher's mom throws guilt at the cameras for hating on "bagel boy" Rob Cavaletti. Chastity coming out of the closet and plastic surgery make the tabloids. Regains momentum in 1989 with "Turn Back Time" video and the resulting tour, but crashes due to fatigue. Really sells out when she does a haircare infomercial for a friend. David Letterman reunites Palm Springs mayoral candidate Sonny with big hair Cher. Unbeknownst to her, CNN televises her tearful eulogy at Sonny's funeral, and BTM treats this as one of Cher's most important performances ever. The triumphant story ends with Cher, ever the survivor, coming back with "Believe," topping charts worldwide and inspiring the Rapture. (EB)

TLC (4/18/1999) Made before there was an actual tragic death in the band this show is super famous for one sequence: "Left Eye" Lopes breaks down record company economics to explain how a multi-million selling artist can be broke. Lisa was the woman that made TLC interesting: she was cocky, bold and crazy, and not in a crazysexycool way but in a loose cannon way where she could go buck wild at any second. Her involvement in the band assured that they would have a crazy ride, and they did. This episode opens with some great stuff, as we see former pop singer Pebbles assemble a group of teens to be a wacky hip hop act. One of the most popular parts of a BTM is meeting the member who quit or was kicked out just before the band made it and this episode definitely features that girl. There is also drama with T-Boz's health and there is even a super memorable family drama that involves one of those sleazy talk show "reunions." But what this really comes down to is the little bit where Lopes, sitting alone on a couch (it is clear that she is kind of hated by and kind of hates her band mates so she is alone for her interviews) explains how record companies charge bands for videos, tours, recording, transportation, etc. etc. etc., doing simple arithmetic until millions of dollars is reduced to a deficit. She doesn't mention that part of the band's debt involved losses of a mansion she burned down on purpose because she was mad at her man (she calmly describes the incident...apparently you can't burn your husband's clothes in an expensive tub). Also, many industry people believe that the TLC bankruptcy was cooked to break their contract with Pebbles.

Regardless, Lopes' personality made this one of the most compelling BTM's, and her death in an auto accident a few years later was tragic but not shocking; she clearly was too much for this world. (JA)

JULIAN LENNON (4/25/99) You'd think your father dying was enough to provide the tragedy and story arc for a BTM but this is a chilling episode about profound bitterness and unhappiness. Lennon's father abandoned him and his mom for Yoko and (subsequently) Sean (his son with Yoko) and that messed Julian's head up. Couple that with sharing his father's face but having much different talents musically and you have a life filled with uncomfortable moments and unfair comparisons. Julian, to say the least, did not take any of this in stride. While this BTM is light on huge, important moments it is heavy on vividly portraying Julian's attitude and it is pretty chilling. This is a thought-provoking portrait of a fucked up guy. (JA)



ALICE COOPER (5/2/99) This episode satisfies on all levels, dealing with The Coop's the Skynard crash. (JA)

unlikely teenage beginnings as both a *Mad* magazine-fueled wiseass and a letterman in track, not to mention one of the most popular kids at Cortez High School in Phoenix ("I RAN that school," he says), and going into detail about the very early beginnings of The Alice Cooper Group, the metamorphoses they underwent, and their eventual downfall. We're treated to amazing photos of The Earwigs, basically a talent show Beatle parody. The Spiders, a snarling Teen-Punk band influenced heavily by The Yardbirds (whom they once shared a stage with. A photo of the marquee from that show - with The Spiders' name at the top! - awaits your drooling perusal), on to The Nazz, which quickly became "Alice Cooper" after Todd Rundgren (who'd later flirt with Glam Rock trappings, but with a much more sedate brand of Rock music) laid legal claim to the name for his seminal late-60's Powerpop/Psych outfit. Coincidentally, David Bowie, the only recognized contender for Alice's Shock-Rock crown (even though the two were actually good friends, and didn't see themselves as competitors), called his own band, what else.....? The Spiders. Bowie and Marc Bolan even formed a short-lived "Supergroup" in 1970 called DIB COCHRAN and THE EARWIGS. The footage of Alice Cooper circa '68/'69 lip-synching to "Reflected," from their first LP, and clips from The 1969 Toronto Rock n' Roll Revival (many other performances from this festival have been officially released, but when is Alice Cooper's set, AND Gene Vincent's, backed by The Alice Cooper Group, going to be made available?!), are nothing short of staggering....and, oh, yes, you get to see Alice inadvertently throw a chicken to it's death, believing it to be capable of flight. Band mentor, Frank Zappa, urged Alice not to dump all the free publicity by admitting it wasn't intentional. The incident inspired numerous "Gross-Out Contest" stories, involving Alice and/or Zappa, that have become some of Rock's most popular "Urban Legends." The REAL Alice Cooper story is conveyed by the original surviving members of The Alice Group, all of whom are careful to get their points across without ragging on each other. As luck would have it, this program was completed shortly before the original group, barring the late Glen Buxton, did a one-off performance at Cooperstown, Alice's Phoenix-based, now-nationally franchised restaurant and bar (the recent opening in Cleveland of a Cooperstown has sparked rumors of a Chicago franchise in the works, but you didn't hear that from me). This program drops the ball on the problems other band members had with drink and drugs (though The Coopers were ostensibly drug-free, this WAS the early 70s, fer chrissake), particularly Buxton's tragic battle with the same demons, which is barely alluded to, though it's quite possible that it was a mutual decision to focus on Alice, the public figure (Public Animal #9 to you), and his own (long since cured) alcoholism. Through it all, we witness the mutation of what one underground paper called a "Five-headed woman-child," Alice Cooper, from their 1971 commercial breakthrough to several consistently strong, chartbreaking LPs and singles, the phenomenally successful tours that accompanied them, and their breakup at the height of their popularity. Alice was keen to

bring in even more theatrics, which the others protested. Alice, in turn, scoffed at the band's suggestion that they should take a break, work on solo albums, and regroup at a later date. By late 1974, it was all over for The Alice Cooper Group. The solo albums, while now sought-after collectors' items, died on the vine. Alice obtained the legal rights to his famous stage name, and resurfaced with the wildly successful "Welcome To My Nightmare" LP, tour, TV special and feature film. For all of "Nightmare's" campy pleasures, Riff without The Jets just wasn't the same. The remaining group members (Glen Buxton excluded) would later emerge as The Billion Dollar Babies, with an ignored (though quite good) album and an aborted U.S. tour. Still, as we move into the next phase of The Strange Case of Alice Cooper, we see a gradual downslide further into alcoholism, a general apathy about his singing, and an inability to profitably reinvent himself for the new Rock audiences, BUT, we also see something extraordinary happen. Alice falls in love. His (still!) beautiful wife, Cheryl, proves to be a June Carter to his Johnny Cash, loving him through the roughest times, but refusing to let him give up on himself. His admission to a mental facility in the late 70s (Alice later stated that he thought he was in a proto-Betty Ford dryout center, but found himself surrounded by real, live murderers and sundry other criminally insane types) is covered here, as is his falling off the wagon after many years of sobriety, almost losing his life, then pulling the ultimate Lazarus trick - not only making a full recovery and cleaning up for good, but getting his career back on track. Eventually, Alice would become a popular live attraction once more, and his records began to chart again, and he became a more powerful singer than anyone had a right to expect. Alice reinvented himself by pulling from past strengths in a manner comparable to his old pal and rival, Iggy Pop. His is a story that has a happy end, even though it's far from over. His marriage is one of the rare success stories in Rock, and his ever-supportive parents have lived to see him turn his life around. Alice Cooper is putting on one of the greatest shows of his life, somewhere, right now, as you read this, and if that don't suit ya, that's a drag. (JB)

BLACK CROWES (5/9/1999) You know how when you talk to a total pothead he thinks you are having a super interesting conversation but it is actually really boring. This hazy, smoke filled episode is like that, with the only fire not lighting a joint coming from some good old fashioned brotherly hate between the Robinsons. The best part is the description of a series of recording sessions where totally stoned Chris records all day and his brother comes in at night and erases everything he did. Also sweet is that their dad was a goofy pop singer and they show him doing a novelty song on a 50s Dick Clark show. (JA)

TOM PETTY (5/16/99) I found this episode pretty unmemorable. I like Petty and his music but I think he is a "music speaks for itself" guy and he does himself no favors being his own spokesman. He's not unpleasant or unintelligent, he's just a little dull. This is one of those BTM's where all the tragedy and ugliness involves crooked record company economics and bankruptcy. Which isn't boring in itself, but he's no Hammer or Willie Nelson, his going broke compared to them is like your bike getting a flat compared to



Tom Petty in BURGER COOK HAT.

MARIANNE FAITHFULL (5/23/99) An odd choice for a profile, Faithfull is most "notorious" to Americans for an incident involving less nudity and drugs than the Superbowl, and in America she's known less as a musical figure than as a drugged out Mick Jagger associate. However, this show was interesting because older, wiser Marianne Faithfull is a remarkably dignified, eloquent figure, recalling events and mistakes with style and strength rarely seen on this series. While it didn't make me run out and buy her torch song albums I would say this program made me a fan. (JA)

RED HOT CHILI PEPPERS (5/30/99) This episode works for an unexpected reason. There was a drug overdose death of the original guitarist and that clearly should be the big moment, but it doesn't work out like that. This band is made up of characters that are incredibly charismatic and self-destructive but also very intelligent and articulate, so that should be what makes this work, but it kind of doesn't. There was a lot of sex and nudity, and that should be the key to this, but no dice. Instead what shines through this episode is the fascinating story of the truly unique, eccentric, gentle, odd genius guitarist John Frusciante who joins the band twice and is such a weird guy that the bandmates and the documentarians never seem fully sure what to make of him. He certainly deserved an entire episode to himself, because he is as magnetic and enigmatic as they come. Comedian Neil Hamburger does an entire set of RHCP heroin jokes, and I expected this show to be one long heroin joke. But this episode ends up being less about the ugly savage damage of horse and more about the way chemicals and the world damaged, yet left oddly preserved, this special musician who inexplicably gets to do his thing in a stadium rock band. (JA)

ERIC BURDON AND THE ANIMALS (6/13/99) While Burdon was a willing interview, and while his days from the Animals to WAR and beyond were sort of interesting, this seemed a bit half-hearted as the show never really found its focus or footing. You get a good sense of Burdon's arrogance and attitude but never really get swept into a *Behind The Music* story arc. (JA)

DONNA SUMMER (6/20/99) Donna used this episode to relaunch her career and become the *grande dame* of Disco, and it worked. She certainly earned it, by surviving an odd career that began with a disturbing cocktail of musical theater, weird white Euro-boyfriends and creepy German producers. Not to be hard on Giorgio Moroder, he is one of my heroes, and seeing mature, less hairy Giorgio talk soberly

today is my favorite part of this show. But I in no way believe that the adult that calmly discusses those days has anything to do with the man who was living large in the decadent days of Disco. Donna defends allegations of her denouncing AIDS sufferers, is let off the hook by not being made to defend her recurring role as Urkel's nerdy cousin, and seems to be very comfortable today as a mother and family person. (JA)

LENNY KRAVITZ (6/27/99) This episode is kind of bunk, but like Lenny himself, despite not being great it is still fun if you let yourself be a sucker. Kravitz has had a successful career by not actually making music that sounds good but rather by making music that sounds like it sounds good. It's the same thing when he talks in his pseudo-spiritual, new age-ish jargon - it makes sense unless you think about it (he is topped only by ex-wife/true love Lisa Bonet's who is so spiritual she almost isn't speaking English). While there are a few good moments in this episode about a Hollywood kid whose dad bought him a rock career, the best way to watch this episode is to just appreciate how pretty Lenny is and leave it at that. The real reason I consider this episode a winner, however, is because it ends with perhaps the greatest quote in the history of BTM. Jeff Ayeroff, a former Virgin Records executive, who pontificate, "Ultimately, bottomline, after everything - after all the fashion is gone, after all the good looks, after all the muscles in his stomach and all the nipple rings...of life, Lenny Kravitz is a brilliant musician." I'm pretty sure Lenny went on to name his next album "The Nipple Rings of Life." (JA)

"WEIRD AL" YANKOVIC (7/4/99) For a man who admits he has no major vices - no costly cocaine habits or love affairs with his bass player's wife (or husband) - they still managed to make this an engrossing episode. VH1 knows how musical parodist Weird Al fits into the music continuum, tracing his lineage back to Spike Jones and featuring Stan Freberg and radio host Dr. Demento as interviewees. The closest thing to real muckracking is the flap with Coolio, who complained that Weird Al dared to lampoon something as serious as "Gangsta's Paradise" as "Amish Paradise" - without his permission. (Coolio: "This isn't 'Beat It'!") Weird Al is incredibly apologetic about the mistake, although Stevie Wonder obviously didn't mind. What BTM didn't tell you is that Coolio nicked his song from Stevie's "Pastime Paradise." Watch for the scene where comedian Emo Phillips proudly displays his thirty-cent residual check from his role in Al's movie *UHF* - while the camera zooms in close, Emo is censoring his home address with his thumb... (JP)

POISON (7/11/99) Poison's *Behind the Music* is just as forgettable as their radio hits. These guys truly give glam a bad name. VH1's motives in making Poison's BTM episode are pretty transparent: the episode obviously makes fun of the band, as evidenced by the parade of music writers, critics and DJs who ruthlessly disparage Poison's music on camera. It's unclear, however, whether the band is in on the joke—they actually seem to take themselves somewhat seriously. The best part of the show—and the band—is unquestionably guitarist C.C. DeVille. It appears that C.C. had been working on his punk rock posturing long before Poison even turned up on his radar—his scratchy, nasal, Krusty the Clown-soundalike voice, affected swagger, Johnny Rotten hairdo and carefully chosen wardrobe all suggest that he might have fit in just as well in an actual L.A. rock band from the same era. He's either slightly more authentic than his bandmates or a whole lot more affected, it's hard to say which (not that it matters). The episode loses all meaning when C.C. quits Poison, though it recovers slightly upon his return from his self-proclaimed "drugs sex bachelor fuck-pad." Regrettably, watching this episode will entail sitting through "Every Rose has its Thorn." (EF)

QUIET RIOT (7/18/99) This episode shouldn't be good, but it is. Even though QR didn't do much other than have some really big selling hits at the dawn of Hair Metal they did do something that makes the story work. They had a lead singer, Kevin Dubrow, who was into making everyone in Metal hate him for his obnoxious arrogance. What a great story element; the asshole who was too much of an asshole for the world of assholes! But what really makes this episode crazy is not what is in Dubrow's head but what is on it. One of the boldest things about Quiet Riot was that in the "Hair" metal era he was boldly prematurely bald and it didn't reduce his power at all. However, in the BTM contemporary interviews he has a head of bizarre, thick, black curly hair that looks like it came out of a soft-serve ice cream machine. It resembles sleeping snakes. He is the Medusa of the 80s Metal revival! In addition to his curious coils, there is something else great about this and similar BTMs. When the show begins to cover the 80s rock band guys they are different from the 70s rock band guys because they don't come from the 60s in the same way. You start to see working class, ethnic white regular dudes who rarely get a voice on TV. I really like "meeting" these guys and they say a lot about what Rock and its fans are about. (JA)

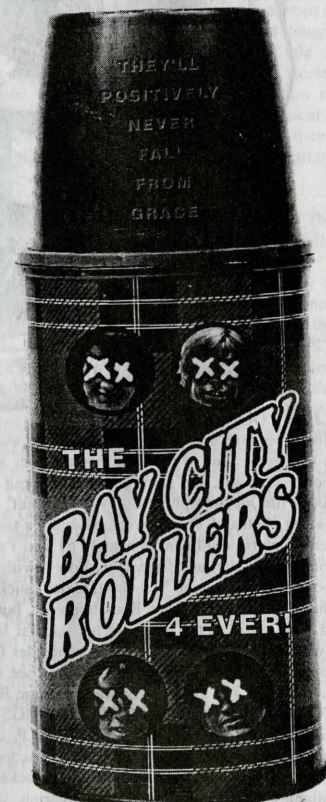
NATALIE COLE (7/25/99) While Cole mostly made MOR R&B, and later inoffensive adult contemporary pop, she actually may be the hardest drugging BTM subject of them all. While you would love her father's inattentiveness to be the root of all problems, because you want to have his famous self be a major character, in fact it seems that it is her proper, bourgeois, arrogant, and seemingly downright insane mother who is the villain here. We also learn that her rock star drug habits may indicate which way her music might have went. She went to college to become a psychologist but started taking LSD, and singing professionally and soon quit her doctor plans as she was way into rock music. She gets no label interest for her rock band, but when she hooks up with soulful songwriters she gets a contract. And the drugs keep coming. She recalls thinking (as she contemplated horse use) "I can just see the headline now, 'Nat King Cole's daughter overdoses from heroin.'" At one point when the drugs got her in trouble she hid coke in a police car seat and tried to memorize the car number to go back and get it later. She also, with a bit of pride, declares that she was a genuine expert at freebasing. Though making nice, mature Black pop (written by her husband at the time, Marvin Yancey, whom she has a son with) she kept her rock star vibe going with outfits that made KISS look tame and would make Janet Jackson blush. A crazy magenta jump suit with huge sleeves, a bizarre rainbow

dress, and about ten other get ups that all feature no bra and plenty of skin make for an amusing journey through 70s fashion. After a supposedly successful 80s rehab she recovered her career with a hit (an awful cover of Springsteen's "Pink Cadillac") and then is positioned for her big move, her ghostly duet with her father's disembodied vocal tracks. Actually, their voices do sound nice together on the record, and it sold zillions (flipping flopping with Metallica for #1 on the charts). Even her crazy, mentally abusive mother seemed to like the record. But later we learn (as she states in the same passionless, bitchy, high-falutin' voice she uses throughout to subtly put down Natalie) that she is suing her children for a larger part of Nat's estate. This is a profoundly old woman, who I assume will leave her estate to her kids when she dies (which will be soon) and she is suing them to get the money now! That is nuts. Unfortunately, one theme here is that Natalie had a bad mother and became (because of being an absentee addict mom) a bad mother. But her musician son is loyal and loving to his mom and it seems there is hope for their future. (JA)

MELISSA ETHERIDGE (8/1/99) I didn't know that much about Etheridge so there was some juicy stuff here. Sure I knew that she and her partner had David Crosby donate sperm for their insemination (and though they express admiration for his talent I still can't believe a drug addict would be the healthiest DNA provider) but what I never knew was that Melissa made a cuckold out of *La Bamba* star Lou Diamond Phillips by stealing his woman. Juicy gossip aside this is a pretty tame BTM, as Etheridge seems to have just been a very hard worker who made it because people admired her talent (Island Records' honcho Chris Blackwell says he thought he was signing the next Bruce Springsteen). The BTM shows some class and dignity in regards to treating Ms. Etheridge as a singer who is gay rather than some gay who sings. (JA)

WOODSTOCK (8/8/99) What is interesting here is that obviously there is no need for a documentary to document Woodstock - *Woodstock* was perhaps the most famous music documentary/concert film ever. So this is the story of the corporate wranglings of the Woodstock business people, not of the artists or musicians or fans. One of the very interesting things here is the concert finally turns a profit decades later with all the "branding" of the Woodstock idea and logo. This goes up to the Woodstock II concert but not the nightmarish Woodstock 99. (JA)

BAY CITY ROLLERS (8/15/99) The first "Behind The Music" I ever saw was the very best episode (in my estimation), and has been the standard by which I measure all others. It was the one with the BAY CITY ROLLERS. Let me be clear: I have no love for the Bay City Rollers. I think they're actually kind of horrible. But their story is so twisted in the most quintessential rock n' roll fashion, that I simply haven't been able to forget it. In truth, the exact facts about the band's history are a little hazy to me now, but the chronology goes something like this: In the early 1970s, a neophyte Scottish pop band seeks to hit it big by naming themselves after something American. They stick a pin in a map of the U.S.; it lands on Bay City, MI. For whatever reason, they agree this is a good name for their band: the Bay City Rollers. Having never been to America, they have no idea Michigan is a shithole. -- Because they are Scottish and have little else to draw upon culturally, they wear an abundance of tartan plaids in hideous colors, like green and yellow. They sport Sean Cassidy haircuts, which, to this writer's deepest regret, would make a comeback in 2004 among annoying art-school snots. -- They sing irresistible pop: surefire Top of the Pops ear candy. Predictably, adolescent girls go crazy for the clean image and easy-to-hum songs, and the Bay City Rollers are sudden teen idols. (To use the British street lingo: the "birds" "fancy" these "lads.") -- The overbearing manager who helped shape the band refuses to allow the members to have girlfriends. Despite their public pledges of abstinence from alcohol and drugs, it seems the poor Bay City Rollers receive no female affection during this time -- a period of their lives in which they could've had unholy three-ways with any girls of their choosing every night of the week. A terrible shame. -- Despite sell-out concerts, alarmingly frenzied street scenes and rabid fan devotion not seen since the Beatles, the Rollers seem to find little of their records' earned profits in their wallets. -- By 1977, punk and disco are the New Sound. There is no place in modern ears for the Bay City Rollers. -- In an effort to boost sales, the Rollers co-host a Sid & Marty Krofft children's show (with, I believe, H.R. Pufnstuf), and would later admit to being greatly humiliated by the experience. (Note: this footage in the "BTM" episode was particularly great -- you could just see how much the Bay City Rollers hated it. And the puppets were totally creepy.) -- From this point forward, everything goes to shit. Bitter infighting splits the band. They attempt suing their record company for unearned wages (having sold more than 100 million records), without success. The Rollers' fan club closes its doors. The founding member drives his car into a 75-year-old widow, killing her. Two



**OFFICIAL THERMOS
CIRCA 1974
(LATER DEFACED)**

other members attempt suicide. Their former manager is, naturally, later jailed for "committing indecent acts with underage teenagers." One of them dies of AIDS, another stars in a porn movie. Another member becomes a nurse, but is later indicted for downloading 6,000 images of child pornography. Soon, the Bay City Rollers are all but forgotten, though big dreams of a comeback are fostered among surviving members. -- Epilogue (i.e., the kicker): Middle-aged housewives presently host annual "Remember the Bay City Rollers" parties, complete with embroidered tartan scarves and singalongs of "Shang-A-Lang," to reminisce upon the band's (and the ladies') glory years. Or something like that. It's the most beautifully tawdry, pathetic conclusion to the story of one of the most despicably wholesome bands in history. (to remaining Bay City Roller people: don't sue me if I fucked up the particulars of your weird-ass lives here. This is how I remembered the episode; go sue VH1.) It seemed every other *Behind The Music* I saw thereafter featured bloated, tired buttpickers like Badfinger or Foreigner or some other band that, in my estimation, was best left forgotten even when they were around. Their stories simply didn't match the breathtakingly pitiful saga that was the Bay City Rollers. I saw that episode only once. Nothing has lived up to it since. (JR)

DONNY & MARIE (8/22/99) Unlike many other child stars who are met with indifference from once-adoring fans as they transition into adulthood, Donny Osmond avoided the perils of drinking, drugging and kinky sex through his involvement with a bizarre Utah-based cult called Mormons. His sister Marie became a County and Western singer. I don't know if I liked this episode or not because I really don't think I was allowed "behind the music" on this one. I was shocked by the glaring omission of The Osmonds' Mormon-inspired heavy metal concept album "The Plan". Donny Osmond's interviews were too polished and contrived and both he and Marie came off like a couple of unlikable freak shows, which they probably are. The problem here is that the producers let the Osmonds run the show too much, and what should have been startling revelation felt as staged as a TV movie. On the positive side, the pictures of Donny on stage in the title role of Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat are hilarious! And I do have a favorite quote from Donny: "I pray every day. He is in charge. There's a plan. It can be taken away just like that, like it was given to us.... In fact, ha ha, it was taken away. But um... that's what keeps me grounded." This one gets a C+. (BC)

PETER TOSH (8/29/99) While Tosh in theory is a good BTM subject this episode fails as they can't really catch a groove or get the show to fully identify with Tosh. Being very dead he can't be interviewed and his archival interviews don't provide intimacy. They also seem concerned with making Tosh relevant to VH1 fans, so his connections to the Rolling Stones are overemphasized. When he is murdered it doesn't feel real or important, more like some cheap recreation on an episode of *Unsolved Mysteries* that you're half paying attention to. BTM rarely struck out when covering an interesting subject, but this is a big whiff (as opposed to a big spliff). (JA)

GOO GOO DOLLS (9/5/99) Though they're probably the only Metal Blade artists ever to cross over into adult contemporary, Goo Goo Dolls still make for a pretty uneventful and un-engaging episode. Johnny Rzeznik, the orphaned punk-turned-heartthrob singer-guitarist, is a drama queen, and Robbie Takac plays his dorky, if somewhat likeable, sidekick. They sound like the Replacements and gun for a contract. Metal Blade signs them, and Johnny throws a tantrum and makes Robbie fire the drummer (and replace him with a guy who'd been in Minor Threat!). They get a hit with a ballad, then sue to get out of their Metal Blade contract. They sign to Warner Bros., take a break while Johnny gets highlights and suffers from writer's block, then make a triumphant return with "Iris" and three or four other singles, all of them obviously modeled very closely on their breakthrough hit, "Name". Throughout, Johnny gives Scott Stapp a run for his money as the least remarkable personality ever featured on *Behind the Music*, and Robbie's enduring love for Johnnie is sort of touching. (TA)

BAD COMPANY (9/12/99) I had a friend who for some reason HATED Bad Company, thought they were the lowest of the low. I never had much of an opinion. Then a girl I knew cringed whenever she heard Paul Rodgers' voice, based on bad experiences in college with "All Right Now." So I expected this episode to inspire some kind of wild emotion in me, or to light my ire against or for the B-Co. But it didn't happen. There were a lot of interesting things I didn't know (including how Bonham's death messed up the band) but the best thing here is the mundane, workmanlike existence the band had for a decade when they toured and recorded with a revamped lineup. Then in the mid 90s they reunite with the original crew and light up the summer oldies classic rock concert tour circuit! Not exactly the most compelling story, and the best tragedy stuff here is second hand, but hey, that's Bad Company - you can't deny! (JA)

GLEN CAMPBELL (9/19/99) This writer vividly recalls Glen Campbell's early 90s appearance on NBC's *Later with Bob Costas*. During the course of a sincere and informative interview, the Arkansas-born singer/guitar player mentioned that he came from a family so big that, "It wasn't until I was married that I knew what it was like to sleep alone." Suddenly, there is an abrupt cut to a close-up of Costas who exclaims with puckish solemnity, "Heavy!" Think about for a second. The talk-show host had to have gone back after the show was over, stage the comment and ask that it be edited into the program for the express purpose of humiliating Glen Campbell. That's how bad his career had gotten. (And yes, that makes the much respected Costas something of an ass.) This *Behind the Music* episode tackles that type of ridicule head on with unflinching depth. Tantalizing early pre-fame TV clips circulate around genuinely important talking heads - his brothers, oldest daughter, manager Stan Schneider, producer Al DeLory, Mike Love, Tommy Smothers included. The result is remarkably candid, yet sympathetic portrayal. The hard scrabble life as one of L.A.'s most prolific studio musicians, the dizzying rise and fall from the pop charts, the drugs, the alcohol, the divorces, the marriage to Mac Davis' ex-wife and the torrid affair with Tanya Tucker are all dealt with by the star. Naturally, there is redemption at the end of this hour-long documentary. Campbell finds a new wife who inspires him to sober up. (Yes, I know, he hit the headlines by falling off the wagon briefly in 2003.) Together they recommit to God and the singer once again delights in his rather substantial guitar talents, and even forges a fresh emotional connection with his eldest daughter. The

documentary made a point of plugging the artist's equally revealing 1994 autobiography, *Rhinestone Cowboy* - a book whose tone Campbell no longer likes. However, he and his PR firm, the Brokaw Company, still think highly enough of this video biography to include it with their promotional kits. (KB)

STING (9/26/99) Sting's *Behind the Music* is just one big advertisement for Sting, but at least VH1 had the honest decency here to call the episode *Sting: Behind the Music* rather than deceptively titling it after the Police (see Genesis' episode). The *Sting BTM* doesn't give me the impression that Sting was ever any less boring than he is today and confirms my suspicion that, with his Britishness, dramatic and highly visible departure from his band on the brink of dinosaurism and world-music leanings, he might be characterized as the poor (boring, unimaginative) man's Peter Gabriel. Yes, the Tantric sex thing does come up, but it's so tired at this point that it seems to be vainly employed as an inside-joke device to try to make Sting seem even a little interesting. If VH1 was trying to confer a kind of fairy-tale status onto Sting through the making of this episode, the endeavor is successful, portraying Sting as the working-class boy who became the goodly and handsome prince of adult contemporary music (who ends up in a British castle). However, the analogy seems a little forced when *BTM* hurriedly glosses over Sting's dubious method of procuring his beautiful princess by cheating on his wife with his next-door neighbor. (EF)

ALAN FREED (10/3/99) I never saw this one and I would say it never aired except that someone told me they saw it, but all they really remembered was that Little Richard appeared and he was not only wild and awesome, but also very reverent and warm discussing Freed. Of course Freed is a perfect BTM subject; he started humble, made it to the top by being a rock & roll pioneer and then had everything tumble down because of the payola scandals. The only thing missing is an uplifting last act, as he died alone and poor. (JA)



THIN LIZZY (10/17/99) This is one of the better episodes, I think, and not just because of Thin Lizzy's stature as one of Ireland's most important bands, second only to THEM (And if you feel I'm slighting someone, all I can say is, "U - WHO?"). In a move that should surprise absolutely no one, this documentary centers largely around Lizzy bassist and frontman, the late, great, Phil Lynott. Several of Phil's surviving bandmates are featured in revealing interviews, and the talk turns inevitably to Phil, his triumphs, disappointments, and sad, slow, decline. A smaller portion of the program is dedicated to the other band members' "indiscretions." Original guitarist Eric Bell had trouble with excessive drinking and later guitarist Brian Robertson blew a major U.S. tour by injuring his hand severely in a pub brawl, leading to their respective dismissals. Longtime guitarist, Scott Gorham, along with Lynott, developed a heroin habit as the band fell out of favor. But it is Phil's troubled, though compelling, personal journey that makes up the bulk of this episode, and I can't picture anyone finding fault with that. Born in the Forties of Irish and Jamaican parents, Phil had to live with the (frequently unwelcome) distinction of being a Black man in Ireland, and not knowing who his father was (the two did meet in the eighties, perhaps bringing Phil a sense of closure in what he felt, sadly, was destined to be a short lifetime), and the depression and descent into alcohol and drugs that followed grabbing the brass ring, then dropping it, not once, but twice. The breakthrough success (in Europe) of Thin Lizzy's Rock adaptation of the Irish standard, "Whisky In The Jar," in 1973, saved them from literally starving, but good fortune would not repeat itself until 1976's "The Boys Are Back In Town," a summer smash-hit in The U.S.A., and a victory well-earned, but one never to be repeated. Thin Lizzy and other Hard Rock groups were being bumped off the singles market, to be replaced by mellower, more mature Rock bands like a totally revamped (though not for the better) Fleetwood Mac, Wimpy Pop, Disco, and, in The U.K., Punk. Something not touched upon in this documentary, though, is that Phil Lynott, along with Marc Bolan, would prove to be an early champion of the Punk scene, and began recording with ex-Pistols, Steve Jones and Paul Cook, as "The Greedies" (a.k.a. "The Greedy Bastards"), which also featured Scott Gorham and Brian Campbell of Thin Lizzy. Lynott, Cook and Jones also formed the core of the studio band for Johnny Thunders' first, great, solo LP, "So Alone." Lynott, Thunders, and Steve Marriott teamed up to cut a rocking cover of "Daddy Rolling Stone," and they would all go on to die young (Thunders and Marriott in the same week). Phil would even go so far as to recruit Midge Ure, future Ultravox frontman and recent departee from Glen Matlock's post-Pistols outfit, The Rich Kids, as a temporary member of Thin Lizzy. So, while Lizzy remained top priority, it would have been fun to delve a little bit more into Lynott's side projects. Eventually, Phil marries, becomes a father, and seems to be content with a more structured lifestyle (this was still before "Rehab Chic"), but marital bliss could not be sustained, and a death wish continued to follow our man, whose manager, Chris O' Donnell, is quoted, tellingly, as saying "All of Phil's role models were DEAD Rock stars, Jimi Hendrix, Elvis Presley,

Janis Joplin, Brian Jones..." And, while Phil was reported as a shoo-in for the leading role in a proposed film about Hendrix's life story (despite his thick Irish brogue, right-handed (BASS) playing style, and only a vague resemblance, at best, to the man he succeeded as the reigning Black Rocker [and he wore that crown well]). Lynott would also go on to write one of the finest Elvis tribute songs to date, "King's Call." Through it all, a constant source of love and support, Phillip's mother, the lovely Philomena (Who raised Phil as a single mom, when being one meant constant persecution, particularly in contemporary Irish society), comes on as sweet and as devoid of pretension as friends of mine who've met the lady have described her. Her recollections of life with and without Phil, and how the support of fans has helped her to get on with her own life, brought me to tears, though I also found myself smiling in time with her. St. Patrick may have driven out the snakes, but Philomena surely would have charmed them if they ever returned. Now, on a purely technical level, this episode is amazing, the editing is superb, and there's lots of great rare live and T.V. footage. His death, in a hospital bed, from total system failure (it is revealed that, while in the hospital, he was still using in secret), is, of course, a tremendously sad final chapter in a life and career that traveled a path still rich with promise, but littered with roadblocks. While Phil didn't live to make a comeback (in spite of the possibilities MTV and the early 80s Metal revival might have held, to say nothing of the fact that Lynott's good friend, Bob Geldof, was recently quoted as saying that he wished he had tried to instigate a Thin Lizzy reunion for Live Aid. One of Phil's last live appearances would turn out to be playing second bass (bad pun, I know), to his good mate, Lemmy, in a one-off performance of the song, "Motorhead," which featured nearly everyone who had, up to that point, played in Motorhead, excluding Larry Wallis, but including Brian Robertson, whose relationship with Motorhead was reportedly as rocky as it was in Thin Lizzy). But still, Lynott's legend grows ever stronger, as does his presence. Close friend, Jim Fitzpatrick, whose great, Marvel Comics style, artwork has graced Thin Lizzy's LPs, and even Phil's gravesite, confides that he has felt the presence of Phil's spirit, as have several fans. Moreover, a statue of Phil is expected to be unveiled in Dublin sometime in the near future, and Philomena, who makes no bones of the fact that she, too, was treated as an outcast in her homeland, was just named Ireland's Woman of The Year. The Irish Rose, Long May She Reign... (JB)

LOU PERLMAN (never aired) Perlman was the creepy mogul behind the "O-Town" acts (Orlando based pre-fab pop vocal acts like N*SYNC, Backstreet Boys and several lesser stars). This episode of BTM was certainly shot and scheduled (it appeared as an upcoming episode on their website) but never aired, and some of the footage ended up being the heart of *Behind The Music 1999*. You can see why they wanted to make a whole episode out of him, as he is an obese freak who drools over the sexy teen girls (he horribly is seen adjusting a teenybopper pop girl's clothing, under the banner of "no detail is too small") and sexy teen boys, and who is seen directing a teen movie and yelling out inanities about how if the movie is going to be any good they need to work in the line "My way or the highway!" (JA)

ROCKY HORROR PICTURE SHOW (10/31/99) There were several documentaries about *Rocky Horror* done on several channels and they were all OK. The story of a small rock play that becomes a sensation and the flop movie that follows that becomes a cult classic is interesting, and this show covers the fanatical fans pretty well. It is also good to see Richard O'Brien (the man behind the play/movie, who plays Riff Raff) proud and centered about it and not bitter about not matching it. It is also interesting to see which major stars no longer embrace this (basically only Barry Bostwick seems to have a great sense of humor about this being on his resume). (JA)

BARRY WHITE (11/99) Though White does have a brother who died tragically that is downplayed and much is made of a very brief and seemingly insignificant arrest, dressing the Walrus of Love's story up as an ex-con made good tale, when that doesn't really apply. While they don't do a great job telling what is a very interesting story (White did interesting production work before becoming a solo singer, and he became a star releasing records with really unusual arrangements, and his relationship with his wife Glodean is fascinating) this is still a great episode. Where the narrative falters it is picked up by a riveting interview with White who is incredibly hostile and angry about everything he talks about even when it seems unwarranted. His dark, moody attitude makes one reexamine his body of work and makes this episode extremely memorable. (JA)

ALANIS MORISSETTE (12/99) "Now music's most immaterial girl bares all...the story behind the music." Interestingly that is pretty much the only Madonna reference in the show, because making a big point of how she was signed to Madonna's label would throw off the serious, anti-Pop angle they are playing up here. Driven even as a little kid Alanis releases a record on her own label with the money she made acting on a kiddie show on Nickelodeon. She soon becomes a Canadian bubblegum Pop princess. But that isn't enough for her, and she becomes much more serious when she meets an intense, sensitive songwriting partner. Her serious, expressive letter of pain and deep emotion then goes on to sell THIRTY MILLION COPIES! I had to rewind a couple of times, that is unbelievable. Critics contended that she was a pop puppet who was being manipulated by her songwriting "partner" who must be the sole creative force, but seeing the meek, sensitive mouse man who she worked with I find that hard to believe. What those critics fail to realize is that she made it because of her expressive voice and good lyrics and her healthy bouncy hair, and most importantly, because the hooky way she sings these lines, with weird, bold vocal decisions, *is pop!* Hooks is pop, and if these lyrics had been sung with an acoustic strum at a coffeehouse by an Indigo Girl fan this would not have worked. Her next BTM conflict is the sophomore jinx, but she is fairly convincing in explaining that she didn't care. She is much happier and more at peace after using her money and down time to visit spiritual meccas around the globe at a leisurely pace. She came back with a happy, upbeat, vaguely spiritual album that sold less but made her happy, and that seems like a nice ending. (JA)

DR. DRE (12/99) The man who brought melody to hiphop is a complex character, forged in the heat and pressure of a great many ups and downs. Moms immersed the kids in music to keep them off the mean streets of Compton. After she got him a mixer for Christmas, 15-year-old Andre Young borrowed Dr. J's title and scratched 'til it bled. We do get to see a few photos of a jheri-curl'd Dre, but the World Class Wrecking Kru just wasn't big enough. During NWA's first tour, "911" on the pager means a phone call home, and the news of younger brother Tyree's death in a brawl hits hard. During his recollection of an alleged attack on radio personality Dee Barnes, Dre makes just one moment of direct eye contact with the camera when he blames the media for blowing the situation out of proportion. *The Chronic* introduces the world to cousin Snoop while Eazy and Jerry Heller get dissed in the video for "Dre Day." Getting shot outside the Marriott in August of '92 is lovingly recounted and partially reenacted by cousin RBX. Dre is also left shook in a moment of truth when one of Suge's posse beats an engineer down for rewinding a tape too far. Released on Dre's own Aftermath Records, *The Chronic 2001* introduces the world to Eminem and quashes much beef. All in all, an extensive episode, though it would have been nice to know something about the inspiration (Mom's old copy of *Innervisions*?) behind all those classic skits. (EB)

1999 (12/99) Like the Y2K fears, this promised some bang but was actually a disappointment. Framed in Millennium Mania this BTM fails to really deliver fireworks. They cover the manufactured "Latin Music Boom" with uncritical eyes. Their report on the Woodstock 99 riots were tame and cleaned up. The best parts were the Lou Perlman segment (see LOU PERLMAN entry) which was fascinating in this episode's original 90 minute version and fun in the shortened version, and the Columbine incident is covered pretty well because commentators include a handsome, wheelchair-bound survivor and the insipid Insane Clown Posse, and both make good sense in exonerating rock & roll in the slayings. The silliest moment here is the coverage of Leif Garrett's drug bust, which was not an actual national news story or something that resonated in the music world *but* it sure is amusing to *Behind The Music* fans. (JA)

GENESIS (12/19/99) The fact that Genesis has had, over the course of their career, three different lead singers, should go a long way towards making this episode less the story of a frontman than the story of a band. But it's still unmistakably the Phil Collins Show. From Peter Gabriel's departure onward, it's clear that if Genesis weren't hawking a best-of at the moment, the very same footage would be going into *Behind the Music: Phil Collins*. A lot of time is spent building up the band's discovery that Phil could sing, and maintaining that he hadn't ever intended to be a singer, but as anyone who's heard *Selling England by the Pound* can tell you, it was clear well before Peter Gabriel considered leaving that Phil could sing even very difficult parts well. While the episode makes a long digression into how Phil's failing marriage became *Face Value*, Mike and The Mechanics aren't even mentioned by name. The disparity between the treatments of Phil Collins and Peter Gabriel's post-Genesis careers is criminal. Granted, Phil's a good deal less swollen-headed in interview segments than you might expect, and we're treated to several pictures of him as a young man, including a blow-up of his headshot from the gatefold of *Foxrot*, where he looks exactly like Kurt Cobain! (TA)

QUINCY JONES (2000) The story opens with Quincy at home surrounded by a bevy of extremely attractive children, fathered by Jones with a parade of sexy ladies (many Caucasian, a few famous - Peggy "Mod Squad" Lipton, Nastassja Kinski - and all seemingly the same young age when they fell under Quincy's spell, though his age varied by decades). As "Home" from the movie version of *The Wiz* (a Jones project that isn't really covered in this show) plays we contemplate this family and the way women are drawn to Q, and still seem to remain fond of him after he traded up for a younger model. It becomes clear that he is an unusual dude. As this BTM reveals Quincy Jones is such a driven visionary that his charisma stems from not just his good looks or his player ways but from his actual greatness, and that is what truly draws people to him. We learn of his Jazz career, as a teen in Lionel Hampton's band, and as an expatriate in Paris leading his own combo, and his pioneering of electric bass in Jazz. We see how he decided to test the waters of Pop, scoring instantly with Lesley Gore. He becomes Sinatra's band leader, then an almost insanely prolific film scorer, then a force in 70s Black pop, then Michael Jackson's producer during the most successful years of anyone in Pop history. It's a long, mighty career, that extends into the Hip Hop era, with Jones collaborating with rappers, bringing the Fresh Prince to TV and coming to peace with Tupac dating his daughter (obviously this contains no mentions of Jones/Tupac conspiracy theories). While I was surprised that Patti Austin and James Ingram, who I consider two of his best collaborators, weren't involved, this BTM featured affirmations from a wide breadth of Jones admirers and it was as much of a love fest as any episode. But when it ends with his son expressing pride that his dad has a younger girlfriend than him we come back to Q as loverman, and I think that is appropriate. He has achieved so much that he deserves all the love he gets, and if he wants that love to be from extremely hot, extremely young, light complexioned women, so be it. (JA)

PARTRIDGE FAMILY (1/2/00) Since a David Cassidy BTM was already in the can what exactly is this show? It's *Danny Bonaduce Behind The Music!* Which isn't a bad thing, as Bonaduce was at the time at his healthiest, happiest and handsomest, having survived drugs and foolishness to marry a hot babe (they got married on their first date, yet it really worked out for some reason) and doing well professionally as a personality deejay. Actually the whole episode isn't about Danny and it couldn't be because he breaks some BTM rules by never being serious or dire or teary when discussing his horrible mistakes, it's just one joke after another! The rest of the show focuses on the musical mechanics of the show, celebrating the godlike session men who played the music (Hal Blaine and Mike Melvoin are interviewed) and mocking the absurdity of the Partridge actor's miming (the girl who played Tracy posits, "We were the original Milli Vanilli"). The most interesting thing in the episode does turn out to be David again, but for different reasons. He seems jubilant, grounded and in great spirits here, the best attitude he's ever displayed in any interview I've ever seen of him. He is usually arrogant, charmless and bubbling with hostility or ambivalence towards the TV show, or towards constantly having to talk about

it. But as the show progresses we see that he is a little *too* into the P-Family these days, involved in a Made For TV movie about the show, re-recording the songs with the original session men for that movie's soundtrack and then re-re-recording them in new modern (cheesy) arrangements for a solo album. One suspects that he has reached a pocket in his career where it is prudent to be pro-Partridge, and perhaps his charming smile is pasted on to cover his still seething hostility. This theory proves to be the case when the show ends with Cassidy declaring that he has nothing bad to say about the Partridge Family days, and then looking directly in the camera and half-joking, half-scary declaring, "and don't let anyone tell you otherwise!" (JA)

MICHAEL HUTCHENCE (1/9/00) Though this didn't convince me to like INXS music it did convince me that something might have been fishy about his "suicide." Involved with a crazy broad who was married to Bob Geldof (I'm not suggesting Geldof is a murderer who killed Hutchence, just saying that maybe it's a good thing he didn't win that Nobel Peace Prize he coveted) and depressed because an accident caused him to lose his taste buds (!!!) anything could have happened. The craziest thing in the whole show (which was, by the way, an advertisement for his new solo album) was that he named his daughter something like Heavenly Tiger Hamani. (JA)

CELINE DION (1/16/00) Taken at face value, *Behind the Music* fails to live up to its name in its profile of Celine Dion. Rather than delving *behind* the music in search of sleaze, it presents us with the polished, publicist's version of Dion's biography - Celine's life as the sort of uncomplicated, happy fairytale intended to reassure her milquetoast-loving fans that dreams *do* come true (even if they're Celine's dreams, not yours). Visually, the episode is loaded with endless soft-focus interview footage of Celine looking pensive in cashmere sweaters, searching for the right words to express just how wonderfully perfectly happy she is, and slow-motion propaganda shots of Dion waving triumphantly from Nuremberg-like stages to stadiums filled to capacity with the faithful. It would be unwatchable for anyone with the faintest streak of cynicism or capacity for critical reasoning, if not for the fact that, like every good fairytale, this one has a creepy, psychosexual subtext, which BTM - like the Brothers Grimm - neither hides nor points out. First, the Cinderella story. Celine's early childhood resembled a Francophonic version of The Waltons, sleeping five to a bed in a small house crammed with fourteen kids and two parents in rural Quebec. Though they lived only 12 miles from Montreal, the logistics of transporting such a massive brood limited their entertainment and cultural options to family sing-alongs in the basement, where Celine distinguished herself at the age of three. When her father finally scraped together enough money to open a pub, 10-year-old Celine provided the entertainment. At least she did until her mother (one of the principal interviewees), ever mindful of Celine's long-term career prospects, forbade it, insisting that instead she record a demo tape (music by Celine's brother, words by Mom) and shop it to industry bigwigs. Enter our creepy subtext as 12-year-old Celine's demo crosses the desk of Rene Angelil, a 38-year-old, veteran French-Canadian talent manager, at the time contemplating retirement. Reinvigorated by Celine's alluring voice and innocently attractive press photos, Rene wastes no time making her a star, first in French Canada, then (following two months of English lessons), the United States. A scant six years later, just hours after Celine received a prestigious Eurovision music award at a ceremony in Ireland, Rene bedded his barely-legal songbird, using a congratulatory kiss as a pretext for busting a move. They carry on for years without going public, albeit with the full knowledge and tacit consent of Maman Dion. Okay, perhaps that's making it out to be more sinister than it actually is. Celine, from all appearances in the interviews, couldn't be happier (or just doesn't know better) in her relationship with Rene. And it's not as if the corpulent Quebecois Casanova defiled Dion only to dump her: the two were eventually married in an absolutely regal ceremony in Montreal's Notre Dame cathedral (the opulent images of which rival Charles and Di's globally televised nuptials). Still, we've got a right to wonder. This is, after all, a girl who dropped out of high school to spend all her waking hours with her mother, manager, and record producer before she ever got a chance to date a boy her own age. And it's obvious, from that faint nervousness behind his eyes in the interviews, that Rene *knows* we have a right to wonder. All right, all right - so maybe it's not that obvious. Maybe I'm reading too much into all this. But the part where the cancer-stricken Rene, too weak from chemotherapy to accompany Celine on tour, has technicians install a satellite link-up in his hospital room so he can watch Celine perform, anywhere in the world, and whisper long-distance nothings directly into her in-ear monitors... you gotta admit that sounds like a hack, made-for-TV update of the original Svengali story (wherein a diabolic Italian opera coach trains a gift young soprano so that she cannot sing outside his presence). *Creeeeeeee* py! Enough psychoanalysis - how's the music? Wretched, over-sung, under-written Streisand-caliber easy-listening pap, minus the benefit of Barry Gibb's production. What did you expect? But I must say, Celine has a *huge* fan in Sony Music CEO Tommy Mottola, whose decision to grace this episode with some fawning personal comments suggests just how big an industry Celine Dion, Incorporated must be. (EH)

RUSSELL SIMMONS (1/23/00) The early footage is satisfies the old school nostalgia, but it's nothing that *Krush Groove* doesn't show you. Present-day life with Kimora is a classy, domestic bliss, but naturally, Russell Rush hasn't slowed down any, spending twenty thousand nonstop anytime minutes a month specifying everything from trade details with Polygram for Sony's slightly used half of Def Jam (pocketing a cool \$18 mil) to Phat Farm signage placement (storefront window, always) and button specifications ("they should look like the rubber on a Bugari watch, like it'll bounce if you hit it on the floor"). Though he went back to Cali, Rick Rubin will always be a friend. The thought that Russell could have brought peace between East and West before the bloodshed is the only moment of regret. But when even The Donald sings his praises, isn't it time for a Russell reality show? (EB)

1972 (2000) This episode has all the best things and all the worst things about the "year" shows. On the negative side they try to sum up certain aspects of culture that year in tiny, inconsequential segments (Blacks in '72 are Superfly and Stevie and out). But when they tell longer stories this actually features some of the most compelling segments in any of these specials. You really get a feel for the volatile, yet somewhat defeated, state of youth culture. "Fashion statements were in, political statements were out," is how this episode is

summarized (and also pretty how the 1970 episode was summarized, by the way) though that isn't exactly what happens in this episode. It is more about Nixon's successes in squashing an uprising. John Lennon tries to "Reok the Vote" and they start deportation proceedings, rock stars rally against Dick and he counters with a James Brown (and by faking the end of the war) and most importantly (in the longest, most effective segment) McGovern runs a youth-driven ideological campaign as the democratic nominee and Nixon *crushes* him, even getting the youth vote. Other highlights on this episode include a great segment where a riot is avoided at a Rolling Stones concert, Alice Cooper admitting he was pro-war and G. Gordon Liddy, for some reason or another, insulting Britney Spears. (JA)

1975 (2000) While short segments on Springsteen, Bee Gees, Dylan, Elton John and Earth Wind and Fire provide little Cliff's Notes about what was going on that year, what is most interesting here are the longer segments, because they show why these BTM "year" episodes work sometimes and fail sometimes. The birth of the punk and Disco eras seem to be the most compelling things here. Legs McNeil and Joey Ramone open the punk segment by discussing their total disgust in the state of pop music in 75. While these episodes of BTM are usually disjointed and choppy the punk section of this is cohesive and flows, mostly because all the interviewees are talking about being part of a collective scene. Cut to the Disco artists and KC and Donna Summer are just talking about themselves. I guess that says a lot about the differences between punk and Disco, but it also says a lot about why these shows would have been a lot better if they were more focused. (JA)

TINA TURNER (3/5/2000) It's not often that *Behind The Music* finds itself a genuinely sympathetic protagonist, which is probably why the producers seem to put more loving care into Tina Turner's episode than their typical dumb-musician-gets-rich/dumb-musician-gets-hooked/dumb-musician-dies-or-cleans-up toss-off. Tina's story is the sort that, no matter how many times you've heard it before, you can't help but cheer silently as she gets free of her abusive Svengali husband Ike and gets her multi-platinum revenge. Meanwhile, if Tina makes the episode inspiring, it's Ike who makes it utterly fascinating, oozing pure evil for BTM's cameras in a series of shockingly candid, unbelievably unapologetic interviews (does this guy realize just how many rock fans would love to bash his skull?). The future Tina Turner (born Anna Mae Bullock) followed her mother to St. Louis in the late 50s, away from her abusive, hard-drinking father. She soon entered the orbit of abusive, hard-drinking local rocker Ike Turner, as a backing vocalist for his band The Rhythm Kings. Ike proceeds to beat, berate, manipulate, and impregnate the talented, but woefully naïve young singer. Rotten to the core, the present-day Ike makes it clear that, given a second chance, he'd do it all again (on the subject of his womanizing, he says "If I knew how she felt, I wouldn't say I'd stop doing it, but I'd've done it a different way"). In a series of grainy clips from all-Black, local television variety shows from the 50s and 60s (where do they find that amazing footage?), Ike and Tina work the R&B circuit, then - after hooking up with Phil Spector for "River Deep, Mountain High" - leap into the British pop mainstream. During their tour of England with the Rolling Stones (of which, sadly, there is but one still photo), Tina fell in love with England, British-style rock and roll, and the scruffy, skinny white boys who made it. She encouraged Ike to work more rock songs into their predominately R&B sets, yielding an even bigger hit in their cover of Creedence Clearwater Revival's "Proud Mary". Emboldened by success, Tina starts fighting back against Ike and eventually develops the resolve to walk out. Act Two of Tina's American life begins with her and the kids (her son with Ray, her son with Ike, and Ike's two sons with other women) surviving on food stamps and the charity of Tina's famous friends, for whom she worked as a maid. Determined to get back into show business on her own terms, Tina begins appearing in a series of tacky clips from 70s television, launching a comeback that climaxes in the familiar, iconic footage of the forty-something Tina shaking her aging (but still sexy) stuff on her mid-80s "Private Dancer" tour. Given such a dramatic rise-and-fall-and-rise storyline, BTM does a laudable job of not screwing it up. While her highs are better documented, it's Tina's lows that provide the real meat of the story, and BTM wisely focuses on the tough times, even if that means making do with a small handful of photographs. Meanwhile, Ike is the episode's secret weapon. If he were acting, Ike would deserve an Oscar. Considering that he's not, he deserves a punch in the face. (EH)

1970 (3/12/2000) This is not one of the most cohesive "year" shows. Basically there's just a number of snippets about a bunch of stuff. Singer-Songwriters got big, including Elton John (Bernie Taupin dressed as a gay cowboy speaks for Sir Elton). Jimi and Janis die. And in perhaps the most interesting idea presented here, Charles Manson betrayed the counter culture by looking cool, digging rock yet not being a good guy. The concluding theory that sums up 1970 is that fatigue from protesting the war for so long led to Carpenters schmalz. (JA)

ELTON JOHN (3/19/2000) This episode doesn't really tell you much you didn't already know about Elton John, except possibly the fact that he used to be at least a little bit cooler than he is now. In the beginning and middle of the episode, the music is pretty enjoyable, as are the outfits; toward the end, especially during the bizarre animated segment that must have been PR for whatever nameless failed Disney movie Elton's agent had pimped him out to at the time of the show's taping, the music is pretty awful and embarrassing. Two highlights: Elton declares the strictly platonic nature of his relationship with Bernie Taupin (as though it were ever a question!), and we're informed that Elton John was originally intended as the name of a *band* rather than a single fey performer. I guess that "equal partnership" thing got lost somewhere along the Yellow Brick Road to international diva stardom (also known as Broadway). (EF)

OASIS (4/2/2000) While this episode about the Oasis Brothers constant fighting, breaking up and screwing up is interesting, it had already been handled more deftly and with more humour by the Brit press numerous times. However, what does make this episode great is the fact that VH1 decided that a drunken Englishman requires subtitles! According to a TV watchdog group this featured the most bleeped cursing of any BTM. (JA)

NO DOUBT (4/9/2000) This episode is odd because the band was together for over a decade going through some very interesting times I'm sure, including the very tragic death

of a member. But that stuff was all in the indie/punk/ska underground days and falls outside of the interest of VH1 so it gets compacted and downplayed. What this episode is really about is the fact that they shot this just when lead singer Gwen Stefani was dealing with her most pathetic, "I want to get married and have kids now" anxieties (I'm assuming she isn't always like that). All the actual band romance and heartbreak and tensions are better portrayed in their videos than in this show but nowhere but on BTM will you see Gwen act like a very hot version of the *Cathy* comic strip. (JA)

1984 (4/16/00) Framed in the context of George Orwell, this is a hodge podge of seemingly unrelated things in the year of "Big Brother and more big hits, big hair and big changes." At least they have footage of Rockwell to invoke paranoia, but other than that I wasn't impressed. Effeminate first son Ron Reagan is included as a talking head as kind of the anti-Ronald Reagan, which I guess is interesting, but any reports of real news always segues into some silly rock thing. Homelessness leads us into men-of-the-people John Cougar Mellencamp, Springsteen and Lee Greenwood. Ethiopian famine, El Salvador and Irish Terrorist/Freedom Fighters gave us U2 and "Do They Know It's Christmas." It seemed like a lot of stuff they mentioned was from '83, and I'm not sure Flock of Seagulls and Wham were referred to as "hair bands" and I question a "Girl Power" link between Geraldine Ferraro and Tina, Annie Lennox, Madonna, Lauper and Pat Benatar. But I did like the contrast of Huey Lewis' humility and David Lee Roth's insane anti-humility. And the most telling thing about what was twisted about 1984 was footage of Kenny Rogers in concert wearing a Hip Hop Adidas t-shirt. (JA)

POLICE (4/23/2000) If this wasn't made by Americans I would say it was made to make Americans look stupid. After Sting walks away to become a solo act just as the Police become the biggest band in the world poor American drummer Andy Summers thinks his "cool band" will still get back together someday. When they do for an impromptu jam at a wedding it may be the most anticlimactic big BTM moment ever. (JA)

THE GO-GOS (5/2000) I've always been more a Jane guy than a Belinda guy (think of Jane's sexy Joan of Arc turn in *Bill and Ted's Big Adventure*), but Ms. Carlisle really won me over by doing something Tina Turner and Madonna likely never will...while rehearsing for the Go-Go's reunion (a focal point of their BTM) she actually *un-affected!* That is, she reverted from the fake English accent affectation she's been perpetrating for the last few years and went back to her drugged-out All-American Valley voice! This episode does a good job capturing the vibe of the early punk days and the tensions and abuse problems that occur when the band makes it. Also, bravo to VH1 for editing the tedious Go Go groupie masturbation video to an interesting 30 seconds. (JA)

RICKY MARTIN (5/28/00) Give Martin classy, bold credit for refusing to answer if he is gay. However, give VH1 bad journalism points for agreeing to do this show completely out of its regular format so that Martin (or his publicist) can show the world HE IS NOT GAY! This episode is framed in the form of "spend the day with Ricky Martin" as he lives a *vida loca!* Along the course of this crazy day we meet a very fake, central casting "true love" girlfriend. So much for classy boldness. We also learn of his close, collaborative relationship with beautiful ex-Menudo Robby Rosa, but RICKY IS NOT GAY! (JA)

AC/DC (6/4/00) A classic and essential episode that deserves every fan's viewing. The Bon Scott period gets more than equal time, and much of the time spent on Brian Johnson-er AC/DC is devoted to fond remembrances of Bon. The episode's charm rests on the Young brothers' on-screen charisma, which obviously hasn't receded with Angus's hairline. Malcolm is the true interview centerpiece, and what he lacks in on-stage dynamism, he more than makes up for on-camera as a candid, sweet, and sympathetic figure. His drug hell segment is actually painful for the viewer, and we're genuinely happy to see him rise out of it. The episode's only flaw is the extended lip service it pays to AC/DC's latter-day output ("I was born with a stiff...stiff upper [up her?] lip"). (TA)

BON JOVI (6/11/2000) The Bon Jovi episode finds *Behind the Music* in fine form. This is a totally solid episode that's a rollicking good time from start to finish. Sure, Jon Bon Jovi and the boys don't ever seem to confront the high-level, manic-depressive, wrecking-ball tragedies and devastating personal struggles that plague their *Behind the Music* comrades-in-arms and characterize *Behind the Music*'s TV personality, but I for one didn't feel let down. How can't you root for five rough-and-tumble musketeers from Jersey who set their sights on stardom and—through hard work, hot riffs and Jon's pretty face—end up in the limelight just like they always wanted? This episode must have been put together at the height of *Sopranos* mania, because references to the North Jersey mafia pervade the whole thing—throughout the episode, we're constantly reminded that, as far as Bon Jovi is concerned, "once you're in, you're in." This celebrated aura of brotherhood compounds the gravity of Alec John Such's redcoat defection and leaves the viewer wholly satisfied that Jon Bon Jovi would never cheat with Heather Locklear behind Richie Sambora's back (though the reason Heather chose weaselly Richie over photo-friendly Jon is not discussed). The repeatedly affirmed feeling of brotherhood or "family" enjoyed by the Bon Jovi boys does beg one question that VH1 never asks: if the boys are all equal-partner "brothers," WHY did they agree to let the band be called Bon Jovi? And for that matter, why did Jon—vocally proud of his ethnic heritage—change his name (and the band's) from the Italian-sounding "Bongiovi" to the somewhat more ambiguous (but still meaningless) Bon Jovi? Even though these burning questions are never resolved, you'll forget your gripes as soon as you hear "Wanted Dead or Alive" playing in the background. I know I did. (EF)

MONKEES (6/25/00) This segment pretty much tells the story of The Monkees, verbatim, probably not telling you a lot you don't already know if you're much of a fan, BUT the story is told, and the images unfold, with the same whirlwind pace of the T.V. show. Four actors, each with varying degrees of musical experience and all with great comic timing, find themselves in a shotgun marriage that both jump-started their careers and sealed their fate. All this because Davey, Michael, Mickey and Peter had passed the final audition for a new T.V. show based, conceptually, on the early Beatle films. Among the many hopefuls these four young men (all barely 20) beat out were Steven Stills, Bobby "Boris" Pickett,

Mickey Rooney, Jr. (who'd soon star in *Riot on Sunset Strip*), the whole of the Lovin' Spoonful, and even, legend has it, Charles Manson. Considering that the four, who'd never previously met, had to learn to be both a comedy troupe and a musical unit (though, yes, they were not allowed to actually play on their own records) in a very short time, they pulled it all off remarkably well. Their first single, "Last Train To Clarksville," was a hit before their T.V. show even debuted. It was already 1966, and while The Beatles could afford the luxury of experimentation in the third year of their reign, The Monkees, under the direction of Don Kirshner, played it safe, coming up with something that resembled the already quaint-sounding '64 model Beatles, but with an American sound that could not be denied (despite the presence of a bonafide Brit). The show was a smash hit, as were their subsequent LP and 45 releases, but all was not well in Dodge. Considering themselves to be prisoners of their surroundings, the "Prefab Four" quickly sowed the seeds of revolt (speaking of Seeds, a 45 of "Mr. Farmer" is displayed twice in this program!), led by Mike Nesmith and Pete Tork, the "real musicians" of the group. They fought tooth and nail with Kirshner for the right to play on their own records. The infamous incident where Nesmith runs his fist through a wall, saying, "Don, that could have been your head!" is accounted for. Nesmith is given the right to record one song per album, his first effort being "Sweet Young Thing," an early venture into Psychedelia (as was Peter Tork's underrated Novelty/Psych masterpiece, "Your Auntie Grizelda," which sounds like Mickey Lee Lane guesting on "Piper At The Gates of Dawn"). Still, things eventually came to a head, and when the big showdown occurred, The Monkees basically told Kirshner to step aside and let them do it their way. Kirshner probably thought that the show's producers, Bert Schneider and Robert Rafelson, would call their bluff, but, surprisingly, they sided up with The Monkees. For their third LP, "Headquarters," The Monkees basically got the chance to be a real band for the first time (though their first concert dates, without support musicians, should have proven they were up to the task). Though it was a noble effort, and one that produced some great songs, "Headquarters" had the misfortune of being released within days of "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band." The Monkees still turned up a very respectable #2 to The Beatles' #1 spot in the Summer of Love, but the record they fought so hard to make only amassed a little over half the sales of their two previous LPs. Still, their follow-up "Pisces, Aquarius, Capricorn and Jones, reverted (somewhat) to Kirshner's approach without their former mentor's involvement. Sharing musicians' duties with studio cats (all credited), The Monkees finally produced an album worthy of their individual and collective talents. Most people agree that it was their best work. Nevertheless, the boys learned quickly that even creative control wasn't going to bring them the relevance they strove for in what was probably the most rapidly changing market ever, one in which the underground had found it's way to suburbia. Still, when they embarked on their first U.K. tour, they found themselves the guests of honor at a now-legendary party thrown for them by The Beatles, who made it very clear, privately and publicly, that they "got it." (too bad they didn't follow the Monkees' example when they were filming "Magical Mystery Tour"). The band also befriended Jimi Hendrix, who had yet to return to The States after conquering Britain and much of The Continent, and offered him the opening slot on their upcoming U.S. tour. It was a move designed to give Hendrix the exposure they felt he deserved in his homeland, but, also to allow themselves a shot at the older, hipper crowds they so desperately wanted to attract. It didn't happen that way. In fact, if you're to believe this documentary, it didn't happen at all. They didn't mention it. When the T.V. show was cancelled, The Monkees did what Batman and The Munsters did, they set out on their first (and only) feature film venture. Unlike similar projects, "Head" was in no way meant to be viewed as a companion piece to the T.V. show. With Jack Nicholson concocting a script from stoned conversations with the band (who had, metaphorically, at least, based a later episode of their floundering series on the joys of smoking pot, which they referred to as "The Frotus"), and a cast that includes Annette Funicello, Victor Mature, Sonny Liston, Tony Basil, Frank Zappa, Carol Doda and even Tor Johnson, "Head" is comprised of several, mostly unrelated, vignettes. For all it's druggy surrealism, it remains a popular underground classic, with some beautiful photography and great songs, not to mention a then-daring stab at The Vietnam War. By 1968, many artists were voicing their discontent with the situation in Southeast Asia, but I don't think even Country Joe ever incorporated the controversial and disturbing footage of the President of South Vietnam being shot in the head. "Head" flopped, and the equally ambitious T.V. special, "33 1/3 Revolutions Per Monkee" didn't fare much better, in spite of some fine new songs and special guests like Little Richard, Jerry Lee Lewis, Fats Domino, Brian Auger and Julie Driscoll, and The Buddy Miles Express. The group, falling out of favor (even though yet another, albeit younger, audience was discovering them via Saturday morning T.V.), began to disintegrate, first with Peter's departure, then with Mike checking out after two LPs as a three piece, and finally, Mickey and Davey roughing it before a disinterested public as a duo for one album. The two continued to record and perform together after the final, official (and, some would say, overdue) breakup of The Monkees. What happened next is not covered in great detail. Mickey Dolenz's long descent into drugs and alcohol is briefly discussed, and his boozing and shmoozing with the elite of Hollywood's (relocated) Rock community, but there's no mention of The Hollywood Vampires (A notorious drinking club and sometimes Baseball team, with a core membership of Dolenz, Nilsson, John Lennon, Alice Cooper and Keith Moon), a situation somewhat rectified by a mouth-watering color photo of Dolenz with Alice Cooper and Suzi Quatro. Nesmith's many successes are accounted for, though Peter seems to have fallen the hardest in later years. His stay in an Oklahoma jail for bringing a small amount of hash across the Mexican border illustrates his lowest point, but one might argue things would have been a lot worse if the Mexican authorities had got to him first. Davey Jones appears to have avoided scandal (though there was a drunk driving incident more recently), but his post-Monkees career is hardly even eluded to (not even his "encounter" with Marcia Brady, to which he later mentioned, "A lot of people think we got married, moved to Nebraska, and had 8 kids. Actually, it was Ohio, and we only had 6 kids!"), at least not until he joined Mickey and The Monkees' chief songwriters and producers, Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart in the short-lived but tightly knit unit, Dolenz, Jones, Boyce and Hart, who toured the U.S. and The Far East in 1976, and even put out a fine studio LP and a live album recorded in Japan. Eventually, MTV put The Monkees back on the map by running a marathon of all their T.V. episodes, which led to a huge reunion tour in 1986 and even a Top 20 single. Since then, The Monkees have been touring off and on, minus Nesmith, though he's joined the others on stage a few times, and nearly went through with a reconciliatory tour (which

he backed out of after a few U.K. dates, though not before participating in a reunion CD and T.V. special, both of which were better than one might suspect). Last time I checked, they were down to Mickey and Davey (if they're even still performing), though, when I saw them a few years ago, shortly before Peter split yet again, they were still trying to prove that they could cut it, and succeeding remarkably. (JB)

QUEEN LATIFAH (7/9/2000) Although her brother dies and that really upsets her, for the most part this is a BTM where nothing happens and nothing is interesting. They certainly portray her as a big, butch biker gal but she won't address rumors of being a lesbian and there's almost no private life stuff covered in this episode. Her music wasn't really interesting enough to be a compelling focal point and her acting and talk show hosting careers were similarly unremarkable at that point. This is a good example of a show that should have been benched in pre-production. (JA)

PUBLIC ENEMY (7/16/2000) What is fascinating about this episode is that Professor Griff, a band "member" who made no musical contributions (he provided the paramilitary SIW security force that was a major visual element of the band's stage show, and operated as road manager) is the most interesting guy in the act, and BTM recognizes that. As he tells his story, and is constantly smiling a winning grin, laughing and being charming, you are totally freaked out by a) his disconnect from reality, or b.) his ability to lie while smiling, or c.) that this guy is fucking crazier than you can begin to figure out. Griff was out of the army and running a fifty man security force when he was recruited by PE, and you can tell he cast a spell over his bandmates with both his charismatic ways and by pure intimidation (when he would have to go fetch Flavor Flav from the local projects for shows Flav never challenged him, fearing Griff's mystical powers of violence, "I can't beat no Griff up, the guy is like *Five Fingers of Death!*"). When an interview gets him in trouble (something about Jews being responsible for "the majority of wickedness") he insists that the tape is doctored, and laughs at the playback as if it was absurd. When it leads to his suspension from the group he reacts, "Suspended me, what the fuck, is this the military, this is a fucking rap group, how do you get suspended from a rap group?" We are also told that this lead to a Jewish sniper hunting the group, which I find pretty hard to believe. We really see that Griff's smiling, happy act is off-kilter when he maniacally laughs about his wife leaving him, and we know he lived as crazy a life as we suspected when his post PE career is as a bounty hunter, never going anywhere without a bulletproof vest and a gun. Griff aside, the other members of the group are also compelling. Chuck D's story is great, as he became a rapper on a college radio station and directly turned that low wattage success into one of the best rap LPs ever, their Def Jam debut featuring songs they did on the radio. Also, Flavor Flav, who looks drug damaged, is great to listen to, explaining how he is straight now except he still uses beer and Newports. The two best interviews here, though, are archival pieces with the governor of Arizona who apparently was unhappy with being assassinated in a PE video and some white hillbilly PE fans who explain, in a deep drawl, how Public Enemy, "teaches us about black struggle..." (JA)

FAITH HILL (7/23/00) There ought to be a rule, like the Catholic Church has for canonization, that X number of years must pass since an artist's last noteworthy album before they may take their place atop Mount Behind the Music. And there should also be some kind of minimum-three-rock n' roll-miracles requirement. Were that the case, then BTM fans wouldn't have to suffer through the series' premature, half-assed retrospective of country/pop phenom Faith Hill. Not that Faith is necessarily a bad candidate for the BTM treatment - we do get a few intriguing glimpses of her dues-paying days opening for tobacco-spitting contests and slogging it out as a backup singer to balding fat guys on the unglamorous Nashville bar circuit. However, it's clear from the interviews that Ms. Hill is too much of an ongoing concern for her friends, family, or industry associates to cough up the real dirt. Instead, all the interviewees circle their wagons around the billion-dollar, bottle-blondie superstar, telling us all about how wonderful she is and how fabulously she and her hunky megastar husband Tim McGraw get along (meanwhile Faith's ex-husband, from whom she has retained her stage surname, doesn't get a chance to rebut). In place of personal drama, BTM offers a lame subplot about Hill's search for her birth mother (she was adopted as an infant by a good, God-fearing, small-town Mississippi family) which goes nowhere. Faith finds her, they meet in a park, they say "hi" then get on with their respective lives (and we don't get so much as a name or a photo, let alone an interview). On the career front - for want of any genuinely miraculous moments (like Johnny Cash's prison concerts or Sinead on SNL) - much is made of Faith singing "The Star Spangled Banner" at the Superbowl in January 2000 and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" at the Oscars three months later. VH1 even shamelessly plugs her appearance on their "Divas" special that same year, as if it were some kind of monumental, Jimi-lighting-his-guitar-on-fire feat. Given that the episodes original airdate of late 2000, the whole thing feels more like a press release than a documentary. Musically, the episode glides along to the whiskey-free, post-Garth country-pop of Hill's hits "This Kiss", "It Matters to Me" and "Breathe". All gloss and no grit, it's the sort of 'country' that a suburban car dealership might use to demo an SUV's stereo system. After forty-five minutes of hearing Hill and McGraw coo their mildly twangy soft-rock duets, it's easy to grasp why Hip Hop is presently outselling country music among white, rural youth by a 4-to-1 margin. (EH)

BANGLES (7/30/00) This episode does exactly what everybody involved with BTM wants it to do - namely, it makes the viewer want to listen to the featured artist's oeuvre all over again in hopes of decoding all the lyrics, album art, and music videos in light of new revelations about tensions within the band, personal problems, looming insanity, or whatever else has been exposed "behind the music". The classic example of this is Fleetwood Mac's "Rumours." It's one thing listening to the record as a collection of pop songs, but it's quite another to listen to it as a document of the painful breakup of Stevie Nicks and Lindsay Buckingham. *The Bangles: Behind the Music*, like the Foreigner episode, sets up a series of hit singles to be read as career milestones, for better or worse (mostly for worse, of course). "Manic Monday" make the Bangles stars, but it also tells the story of yet another seduction of a young ingénue in the 1980s by the Purple One, who penned the song as a love-offering to Susannah Hoffs. The official word is that they never got together, but who can blame Prince for giving it a shot? In a band full of hot-looking girls, Susannah makes them all look like dogs, which is increasingly problematic in itself. "Walk Like an Egyptian" was a massive hit, but the drummer, a founding

member, neither sang nor drummed on it; sort of like when Ringo was replaced in the studio, it's a death knell. Now, "Hazy Shade of Winter", recorded for the *Less than Zero* soundtrack (which also featured an early Danzig vanity project and Slayer playing "Inna Gadda da Vida") was a rocker that really sounded like a brief revival of their LA garage roots, but it was not to last. "Eternal Flame" was all Susannah Hoffs - the shape of things to come. Man, what a great episode if only for the ephemeral musical footage it contains. There's even an interview with famed Los Angeles DJ/Sad Sack Rodney Bingenheimer, who broke the band when they were called The Bangs. My favorite moment has to be The Bangles playing "September Gurls" in 1986. Beautiful. The other nice thing about this episode was that it was able to portray the band's conflicts without making a villain out of anybody, not even Susannah Hoffs. Motley Crue and the Bangles both reunite as bands at the end of their respective BTM's, but where I felt embarrassed for the war-weary, but desperate to "reconnect with their fans" Crue, I was genuinely happy to see The Bangles playing together again, and Susannah Hoffs is still as hot as ever. This episode definitely merits an A+. (BC)

PETER FRAMPTON (8/6/2000) One of the most interesting things I read regarding this type of program was an interview with Frampton where he compared being the subject of a VH1 BTM with being the subject of an A&E *Biography*. Framp seemed to feel that the rigid rise/fall/redemption story arc of BTM was dishonest and that it told his story poorly. That said, I'm not sure how to write about this other than to say that *anyone* would view his career as having that arc. He was respected but marginal then became the biggest rocker ever with one album that sold seventy gazillion copies and then nobody heard about him for decades and then he seemed to reemerge as a healthy survivor...but his reemergence prominently involved appearing in shows like this! One thing I will say that seems to support his claims that this show was dishonest is that even though it only gets a few seconds of tongue in cheek commentary I'm pretty sure VH1 put some kind of subliminal super-editing into play where his male pattern baldness is given as much tragic weight as his near fatal car crash. But his *Sgt. Peppers* movie flop is given the most tragic weight of all! (JA)

STYX (8/13/00) As a Chicagoan I should have loyalty, but I've never liked STYX. However, their *Behind The Music* was AMAZING! For 50 minutes you're not privy to the fact that everyone holds Dennis DeYoung in the same type of contempt that one usually reserves for, say, plagues. Then in the last 10 minutes, James "JY" Young makes several brutally telling comments, one of which makes it clear that the band feels Dennis is lying about his "light sensitivity" that cancelled a 90s tour (he claims stage lights fatigue him) and one statement about how VERY VERY SLIM the possibility of working together again was, that actually made me flinch. And in the "Nice job, honey!" Department, it ends with Mrs. DeYoung just making her man look as pathetic as possible, by telling how he'll watch TV and see something and say, "We should do that," to which she always tells him, "They don't want you." Ouch. Also you have to tip your hat to a band that suffers a low point by being forced by the band leader to perform a futuristic melodrama musical play with dialogue and costumes in front of a rabid festival metal crowd that wants to rip their Mr. Roboto mechanical limbs off! Sail away and don't come back, brother. Not exactly a love letter to Dennis, the moral is, "sail away, brother, and don't come back." (JA)

1977 (8/20/00) Sadly, this episode doesn't go strictly month-by-month, moving between genre, time, location, and historical context for its eleven-minute blocks. Sometimes the motion can be a bit disorienting. We begin with the corporate arena rock of Frampton, Styx, Boston, Journey, Kansas, et al. set far off in the distance, nicely contrasted against the immediacy, proximity and vitality of punk. Queen is arena, but "We Will Rock You" b/w "We Are the Champions" is designed to leave the audience bleeding, deafened, blinded, and emotionally drained. Andy Gibb and KC & The Sunshine Band keep it lite 'n' funky, but Halle Berry gives an idea of the Commodores' command of the charts: "Everybody wanted to be a 'Brickhouse.' You had to be 36-24-26, and even if you weren't, you said you were." (this is a leftover quote from the Lionel Richie BTM). Camille Paglia and Harvey Fierstein inform us of disco's history as gay, black subculture. Donna Summer, Studio 54, Grace Jones, Bianca Jagger, a white pony, 8 million people trying cocaine. It's the same old bacchanalian sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll, but it's just clearly much better. The industry loves it because clubs *can* sell records. "Dancing Queen" is the crossover hit and *Saturday Night Fever* is both the movie and the soundtrack of the era. While uptown was disco, downtown was CBGB's and Hilly Kristal explains that the country bluegrass blues thing just wasn't working out. The Ramones take the tunnel to audition then quickly skip the pond and, in Joey's words, incite the punk movement. All the lights go out for 25 hours and Fran Drescher recounts Son of Sam terrifying New York and promoting the Talking Heads (thankfully, Spike used the version w/strings). Blondie is slow but steady in pushing the new wave. As we focus on London, Malcom McLaren explains that the original vision was for young, sexy, assassins of pop music. Sid can't play but Miles Copeland explains message over musicianship. The Clash can't get American distribution but Elvis Costello can. We hear "Suspicious Minds" and Jo Strummer lets us know that there were some punks that mourned the loss of The King. Debbie Boone lights up our lives while Ronnie Van Zandt, and Steve and Cassie Gaines are gone. Sid is already covered with blood and we're two years away from Steve Dahl/Disco Sucks. Steve Jones is wearing a v-neck t-shirt under a furry anorak. Chris Frantz wears Oakley shades and a RSD sweatshirt. Tina Weymouth has bangs and looks like a Volvo ad. Joey looked like Joey, and "Blitzkrieg Bop" was used in a Nissan Pathfinder ad in this episode. (EB)

ICE-T (8/27/00) This episode could go for two hours and still seem incomplete. The first man to walk like a pimp to the mic on getting started in entertainment industry: "I'm not one of those guys that's like, 'I like the music.' No, I like the money." When Body Count releases "Cop Killer," Bush, Quayle and Charlton Heston have Ice up against the wall. Complaints are a fever pitch and Warner Bros shies away. Already in his fifth career as an actor, Ice goes independent: "When you don't have to worry about record sales, you can worry about the art." Seem contradictory? Ice's charisma will have you seeing clearly. Remember, Don "Magic" Juan asks him for advice. (EB)

ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL (9/24/00) Though I would likely mark the Creed

episode later this fall as the beginning of the end of decent BTM's, I think this episode is more accurately the so called "jump the shark" point. The never-funny Kathy Griffin hosts a sit down, ironic retrospective of the show. The producers of the show shouldn't be sanctioning snickering, ironic appreciation of BTM - they have to act like they are just presenting the facts and not trying to make fun of people, this isn't "E! Network." Griffin welcomes past guests to update their stories, and in a shockingly uncool move jokes with Rick Springfield about his very recent domestic abuse arrest. However, the biggest blow that demystifies the wonder of BTM is dealt when Jim Forbes, the announcer who became the awesome voice of BTM, appears on camera, ruining the mystique of that ominous narrative voice by putting a plain face to it. (JA)

CAT STEVENS (10/1/00) The Cat Stevens episode has operatic rises and falls and aside from the interludes of actual Cat Stevens music, it is easily one of the best BTM's. Cat was only 19 when his second single, "Matthew and Son," leaped into the British pop charts. He went on a package tour with Englebert Humperdink, from whom he learned to drink, and Jimi Hendrix, from whom he learned "other things." Then came fall number one: he was diagnosed with tuberculosis. But rather than allow the illness to derail his career, Stevens used the recovery time to write tons of new material. He emerged as an introspective, singer/songwriter who cranked out three Top 10 albums in a mere 18 months. During this run nine of his songs were used in Hal Ashby's 1972 film *Harold & Maude*. From there Stevens spent the rest of the 70s riding one wave of success to the next. (In typical BTM style, the show's producers skated through Cat's biggest years, which is a shame because I wanted to learn more about his 1975 numerology-based concept album, "Numbers.") It sounds like a fascinating mistake, but I know I'll never be curious enough to actually buy a copy. I think VH-1 should start a separate series that focuses on misguided 70s concept albums.) Steven's next fall came when he nearly drowned while visiting the beach house of A&M Records president Jerry Moss. Stevens bounced back from the incident but promised to serve God for sparing his life. Within three years Stevens had converted to Islam, changed his name to Yusuf Islam, and stepped away from his life as a pop singer. For years he stayed out of the spotlight and devoted his time to various charitable causes and educational organizations, and all was well until 1989. That is when Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa, or death sentence, against British writer Salman Rushdie for his blasphemous book *The Satanic Verses*, and set up Stevens' third fall in the process. Asked to comment on the fatwa, Stevens said something to the effect of, "Yes, the Koran calls for such a punishment for those who commit blasphemy," which was interpreted by the press as, "Yes, I think Rushdie should die." And scores of music fans, myself included, accepted the press' version as true and hopped aboard the anti-Stevens bandwagon. I remember feeling no small amount of respect for 10,000 Maniacs when they insisted that their cover of Steven's "Peace Train" be deleted from future pressings of their *I'm My Tribe* album because of what Stevens had said. For most people Stevens remains a pop music pariah due to his Rushdie-related comments, but that is what makes this episode to remarkable. In many ways it is a sympathetic portrayal of a misunderstood Muslim and even when depicting Yusuf's current secular music projects, this episode avoids the ironic detachment typically associated with VH-1. (MF)

BARENAKED LADIES (10/8/00) If you are interested in seeing goofy, doughy guys get naked this is the episode for you. There are two key things that elevate this episode. One is seeing photos of a young black kid with an afro, who we learn often asked his white mother why the other kids called him "nigger." All grown up, Tyler, the light skinned, goofy member of Barenaked Ladies, explains that when he was twelve his mother told him his father was Black. *Twelve???* You didn't have a mirror? On a dramatic note, the band's keyboard player is diagnosed with cancer and went through debilitating chemo and a bone marrow transplant. Not being a key, creative member of the band this shouldn't have worked as a powerful story arc because we hadn't heard much from or about him before we learn he got sick *but* we do get to see his frailness and his spirit as he attempts to get his chops back and rejoin the act. This unfolds before our eyes and it is a vivid portrayal of both how serious and damaging chemo can be but also how strong and loyal and good hearted a nerd-based band and their fans can be in helping this young man recover. (JA)

CHICAGO (10/15/00) Chicago is not at its surface a fascinating act, and the best they can sum them up as is "the men behind the most famous logo in Rock." That said, this brass based, one time progressive band has 33 years of straight touring under their belt and has sold 120 million LPs. Starting at Depaul University (where they are still honored by a hot dog stand featuring their gold records) this was a group of regular Chicago guys (the interviews likely remind non-Chicagoans of the Bears Superfans skits on *Saturday Night Live*) who rode an interesting idea and loyalty to mega-success. Their manager decided to push the logo and keep the band faceless until music videos had them put tenor Peter Cetera upfront, which led to him leaving for a solo career (he doesn't participate in the documentary, which makes it easier to downplay that era, which doesn't fit into the storyline). The last word on the video Cetera-era comes from a founding member stating, "I'd rather fail with good music than have a megahit of crap." Unfortunately the good music he is referring to is a late 90s Prog-concept album called "Stone of Sisyphus" that sounds worse than a Cetera-Steve Perry-Dennis DeYoung supergroup would. Anyways what makes this episode interesting is that the big tragedy is a key member dying, but since that doesn't really halt their success (the 80s superstardom was still ahead of them) it is handled in a different, more respectful way than many BTM deaths. Big Terry Kath was the best member of Chicago, an awesome Blues-based guitarist who could really sing with soul and had a love of experimental music. He was also an ugly, fat Chicago guy which totally grounded the band in the city's regular guy aesthetic. He accidentally shot himself in the head at the party (infamous last words: "It's not loaded"). Since this doesn't really fit in to the narrative of the story (it is senseless and strange, and not totally drug related) instead of being all dark musical cues and fades to black they instead have a nice long tribute to Terry, a free standing piece, featuring all the warm memories his wife, daughter and colleagues have of him. After his death the band goes from sorta soulful to totally schmaltzy, but there's still half a show left. Ultimately what makes this episode interesting is the Chicago-ness of Chicago. While every other band has some conniving slickster ripping them off, Chicago's loyal manager is as un-Hollywood as possible, and despite completely making them what they became, he simply tears up all their contracts when

they decide to leave him. That's good people, Midwestern style. I also learned that it's harder to play horns on coke than guitar on coke. (JA)

TIFFANY (10/29/00) I used to think that the producers of BTM could make an interesting show for any once-successful pop star. Then I saw the Tiffany episode. As you may recall, Tiffany was the late 80s teen queen who toured shopping malls and landed a pair of dull covers in the Top 10 ("I Think We're Alone Now" and "I Saw Him Standing There"). To no one's surprise her subsequent albums failed commercially and she faded from public view. This episode focuses on what happened after her days on the charts but there's not much to work with. She dabbled with decadence ("I smoked a lot of pot") and then opted for the straight and narrow (getting married and accepting Jesus Christ as her lord and savior). There was considerable tension between Tiffany and her parents during her rise to fame (at one point she took her mom to court, suing for the right to move out of her mother's house and to get out from her mom's legal control), but because no one was willing to go into any depth on the issue—as is their right—nothing is revealed. One amusing exception is her what-I-was-doing-when-I-heard-about-my-first-#1-single anecdote. Tiffany, then 16, was doing dishes at home when her manager called with the big news. She replied to the effect of, "Wow, thanks, but I can't stay on the phone because my mom will get mad if I don't get the dishes done." (MF)

BADFINGER (11/5/00 - originally scheduled 1998) The real story of Badfinger, as far as I can tell, is done faithfully, here. It is one of heartbreak, woe, anger, immeasurable tragedy, and, yes, triumph. Their triumphs, however, prove to be short-lived. As The Iveys, the band gets the opportunity of the lifetime, winning the patronage of The Beatles, who sign them to Apple where they work extensively with the soon-to-be ex-Beatles, as well as releasing several, critically acclaimed, albums of their own. Now known professionally as Badfinger (taken from an obscure John Lennon song), the band is personally groomed for success by The Beatles, a dream come true by any band of their day's standards. But they find themselves unable to forge their own identity, despite several hit records. Amidst the recollections of a band with talent to spare and arguably the best break in the world (weighted down by the horrors of bad management and rapid loss of direction) are dazzling clips from T.V. shows like Germany's *Musikladen* and *Beat Club*, as well as interviews with the likes of Paul McCartney and (Would you believe?) Lou Christie, both of whom express tremendous admiration and respect for Badfinger. Neither the safety net of Apple Corps (Which outlived The Beatles, though only by a few years), nor having one of the most respected songwriters on the scene, Harry Nilsson, covering their own "Without You" (And, of course, making it a monster hit) could save them from their fate. By all accounts, the group's downfall would be with their second manager, Stan Polly, reported to have ties to the mob. Polly had the band, with their girlfriends, residing at his house and put on salaries well below the cost of living, even as their records were selling millions. A break with Apple in 1972 proved to be commercial suicide, as they released an album on the former, and on Warner Bros., at the same time. WB withdrew their LP, and the advance ended up in Polly's pocket. The group still put out records for Warner Bros., but found their sound falling out of favor, record sales tapering off and touring sometimes not even an option, for apparent lack of interest. Things could only get worse, and soon, they did. The first, devastating, blow came in 1975, when guitarist, Pete Ham, now living with his girlfriend and her young son, gets the word that he's broke, just as the couple are also expecting a child. Ham turns to Polly for some long-overdue financial assistance, but is turned down flat. After a night of drinking with bassist, Tom Evans, Pete Ham is found in his garage, hanged. Excerpts from his suicide note are chillingly read aloud: "I will not be allowed to love and trust everybody...This is better. Stan Polly is a soulless bastard. I will take him with me." The surviving band members attempt to keep it together, amidst much infighting. Eventually, Joey Molland and Tom Evans drop out of music and take regular jobs, while drummer Mike Gibbons turns to session work. Molland is later approached by two young musicians from Chicago about starting a new band. He accepts, and convinces Tom Evans to join. Elektra agrees to sign the band, on the condition that they call themselves "Badfinger." Their two LPs for Elektra flop, as drink and drugs fuel unrest within their ranks. In the early 80s, U.S. Tours are simultaneously announced by two competing versions of Badfinger, one led by Molland, the other featuring Evans, Gibbons, and later member, keyboardist Bob Jackson. A battle over the rights to use the band name only causes the already-thin ties between Evans and Molland to break. The Evans-led group only performs sporadically, though they do turn up on local T.V. at their present base in Milwaukee, doing a guest spot with, of all things, a Horror Host known as "Toulouse No-Neck," who sings a wretched version of "Come and Get It" for laughs. It is, at once, both fascinating and depressing. The group did, however, play a gig in the Chicago suburbs around this time, and I'm told they were nothing short of brilliant. (I myself saw Joey Molland perform as Badfinger with a pickup band several years ago, and it was better than anyone had a right to expect. He connected with the audience admirably, and handled the songs that he didn't even sing originally with a rare sort of elan. He also did a credible Snagglepuss imitation, a feat only previously ascribed to The Downliners Sect.) In 1983, Evans informs Molland (who, we're led to believe, was, by that time, on better terms with his former bandmate) that he intends to kill himself. Evans' six-year old son finds him hanging from a tree, and a wish to join Ham is sadly fulfilled, by the same means. Somehow, the saga of Badfinger never seems to really end, despite tragedies of Shakespearean proportions. Molland continues to perform under the Badfinger name, stating, quite accurately, that it's the only way he can get bookings. Gibbons joined Molland and Jackson recently at a special awards presentation, declaring "Without You" one of the most covered songs of the year, in wake of Mariah Carey's hit version. As usual, something goes wrong, an erroneous group credit for "Without You," plainly Evan and Ham's baby, ruins what should have been a triumph. Once more, defeat is snatched from the jaws of victory. The Badfinger story is not a happy story, it is a true story, and every true story ends in death. (JB)

1992 (11/12) This could have been good, with "Grunge" usurping hair metal and Clinton sweeping Bush out, but instead it was just one minute mentions of every one who was hot this year. They make some clichéd nods towards trends, but for the most part they are just trying to figure out a way to shoehorn En Vogue, Soundgarden, Michael Bolton, Jon Seda, Cypress Hill, Pm Dawn and a bunch of other incongruous acts together. The most interesting thing here was the theory that Nirvana became #1 in January because kids who got the Michael Jackson record for Christmas returned it and got "Nevermind." (JA)

SNOOP DOGG (11/19/2000) You know our society is screwed up when a guy as essentially upbeat and laid-back as Snoop Dogg can find himself mixed up in crack dealing and murder. Though his BTM profile often seems ripped from *COPS* or Court TV (in fact, I reckon about a third of the footage is from Court TV), he almost seems like the kind of guy you'd want to hang out with. The kind of guy you almost wouldn't mind your daughter bringing home... *Almost*. The origin of Snoop's nickname is surprisingly benign. Born Cordozar Broadus, his mother dubbed him "Snoopy" for his large Charlie Brown head and love of *Peanuts* cartoons. In a hilarious exaggeration of the usual Saturday night/Sunday morning dichotomy, his mother fondly recalls how she'd share a six pack of malt liquor with her twelve-year-old son every Saturday night, then wake Snoop early the following morning to sing in the church choir. Essentially a good kid, Snoop made \$90 a week bagging groceries and spent his free time freestyling over hip-hop beats with best friend Warren G, the kid stepbrother of NWA's Doctor Dre. Later, frustrated by Dre's refusal to even listen to their demo tape, Snoop gave up on music and turned to crack dealing as a way to bring in some real cash. Scared semi-straight by a stint in prison, Snoop returned to society with a renewed dedication to music. Around this time, Warren was able to sneak one of Snoop's tracks into the mix at a bachelor party for one of Dre's friends. Impressed, Dre took Snoop under his wing and the two made gold with their soundtrack for *Deep Cover*, then platinum with Dre's "The Chronic" and Snoop's solo debut "Doggystyle." Unfortunately, the environment at Death Row Records, the label Dre co-founded with uber-thug Suge Knight, was saturated with drugs, guns, booty, cash, malt liquor, and testosterone. This ultimately led to an incident in which Snoop's bodyguard gunned down a stalker from a rival gang. In an eerie series of reenactments more reminiscent of *COPS* than BTM, we see the altercation play out over and over again in washed-out slow motion. We also see photos of the victim, introducing an uneasy awareness that *a human being actually died... this Snoop Dogg guy might actually be dangerous*. It's a testament to Snoop's candor and charisma that he's able to reassure us of his innocence (once set apart from the mass of anonymous Black defendants by his fame, no jury could convict this man). As the drama enters its Court TV phase, Snoop has our full empathy once again, and we are relieved when the jury pronounces him not guilty. Today, the older, wiser Snoop enjoys a status as a beloved mainstream entertainer, doting father, quasi-role model, and hip-hop elder statesman. Like Ice-T before him, he has gone from the face of scary ghetto depravity to a familiar, friendly prime-time personality. The kind of guy even your grandmother almost wouldn't mind having as a house guest... *Almost*. (EH)

CREED (11/26/00) The *Creed Behind The Music* was the perfect example of how the show was on a downward spiral because they were making episodes about young, boring bands to coincide with expected blockbuster record releases instead of choosing subjects based on the dramatic potential of the story. While every episode has the announcer backtrack a little after each commercial to set the table dramatically for the next show to drop, the dearth of any actual history of this band necessitated the announcer to backtrack almost to the beginning after each commercial break just to fill the hour. And not only was there very little to say here, but there was little clarity to what needed to be said. Creed is supposedly a Christian band gone secular but other than showing that lead singer Scott Stapp has a father in the ministry they never really demonstrate any actual overt religious content in the lyrics (only vaguely uplifting, spiritual stuff). And the show also fails to give enough explanatory background about the Christian Rock scene and how Creed and their audience fit into it. Perhaps Creed never was really an overtly Christian band, but I think it is also possible that Creed's people want to downplay the specifics of their early career and told BTM what content to include. I really don't know, which isn't what I should be saying after seeing a biographical documentary. My initial reaction to this was that I did not enjoy this episode at all, especially because I found Stapp, and his bogus Christ poses, obnoxious and unpleasant. Then I realized that there was one moment of the documentary that actually was pretty amusing. Early in Creed's career Stapp, without the band's knowledge, took the ample band funds and invested it all in a pyramid scheme bankrupting the band. Now there are a lot of stupid rock stars, but c'mon! "Choking on your own vomit" stupid is one thing, but this is a whole different league of stupidity. Creed may or may not be God's messengers, but one thing is for sure: when the good Lord was passing out brains Stapp was off somewhere posing in the mirror with arms wide open. (JA)



IMAGE FOUND IN A GOOGLE SEARCH FOR "CREED".

JOHN LENNON: THE LAST YEARS (12/3/00) This is actually a superb episode. Obviously you can't do a Beatles BTM, it is simply too huge a subject. Instead they offer us an ultra-focused exploration of the last few years of Lennon's life where he atones for his misdeeds as an absentee father and bad husband by becoming a doting stay at home dad to Sean and a respectful collaborator with Yoko. After taking years off from music he eventually records an album, and though the stories about that are great, it is the archival, primary source material pertaining to his home life that is best. An audio tape of him telling his toddler about the Beatles is priceless ("...no, Ringo sang that one...") and an interview he did with a kid journalist is really revealing. Because this episode did such a warm, genuine job of covering Lennon's family life it doesn't come off as heartless when it goes into great detail about his assassination. In fact, the show delves into perhaps the best journalism/documentary filmmaking in BTM history, as virtually every principal is interviewed, including both policemen on the scene (who drove him to the hospital), the doctors who worked on him in the trauma unit and an amateur photographer who spoke to Mark Chapman while shooting Lennon photos. Though the doctors try to keep his death secret so that Lennon's kids won't hear it in the media it leaks out and Howard Cosell

announces the death on *Monday Night Football* (that footage is included in this show). We see sad footage of Julian arriving at the scene too late, trying to connect with his deadbeat, and now dead, dad (one of the rare unclassy parts of this show is when they use leftover Julian footage from his BTM where he is surrounded by pretentious candles, which don't fit the spare, honest tone of this documentary. Overall this was a really excellent, focused show, and kudos for not featuring the other Beatles at all, except for a postscript about the "Free As A Bird" sessions with Jeff Lynne years later, which was really unnecessary. This told a much smaller story than other BTM's, but it made you really feel the importance of the subject and the loss suffered by his absence. (JA)

EVERCLEAR (12/10/00) Stay away! This episode is so boring and unmoving that even the most steadfast Everclear fans (if there are any such creatures) will have a hard time stomaching it. All of the band members come off as total tools—there's Art, the brooding yet wholly uninteresting, vacant, unlikeable, coke-addicted, wife-beating frontman; Craig the stoner-voiced, greasy-haired, lives-with-his-parents bassplayer/resident dumbass; and Greg, the second-string, Warped Tour, personality-free drummer. These three players perform a bunch of songs about why forty-two year old Art still hasn't been able to get over the fact that his dad wasn't around while he was a kid, and when that proves not to be enough to placate him, Art goes on to "work" for the social services organization for kids that wants to use his song "Father of Mine" in their commercials. It takes some effort to rouse yourself to care when the band almost breaks up. A textbook example of why MTV flavors-of-the-week should rarely, if ever, be given their own *Behind the Music* episodes. (EF)

2000 (12/17/00) While this looked like it might be a ragtag "year" episode when it launched with the noncommittal, "it was a year of dizzying diversity," this one was actually pretty focused. Instead of giving profiles on artists who had big years they did several longer coherent segments, that weren't brilliant but at least were ambitious. One interesting one covered Napster, the demographics of mainstream records and the way listeners in their early 30s felt unserved by the music biz. Better was a segment on Moby, N*SYNC, Sting and artists who were licensing their music to TV commercials as an alternative or a supplement to radio play. David Wilde of Rolling Stone and others pontificate on what selling out means in the 21st century, and there's no clear answer. (JA)

RUN DMC (2000) This episode is incredible because it proves that what makes BTM magic transcends even the most manipulative corporate synergy, with all its meddling and manipulation. This episode was designed, executed and labored over because it was supposed to coincide with the release of RUN-DMC's comeback album, a guest star-laden event designed to mimic recent albums by Santana and Whitney which made long money using the same ideas. But when this episode was aired the album not only was delayed, but it was destined to be a failure. And the reasons for the failure are devastatingly clear from the content of this show. Instead of being the expected advertisement for the album this episode tells you NOT to buy the record because it can't be good. And the reasons for this? Band dissent, failing health, ego problems...ahhh...the very heart of a great BTM! The main thing that is wrong with the then current RUN-DMC was apparent as soon as they interview DMC, who speaks now in a nasal, thin, damaged voice. It seems he had been rapping out of his register for two decades and destroyed his vocal cords (the label thought it was psychosomatic and sent him to a shrink). He also was an all malt liquor alcoholic, drinking a case a day (he likened it to Popeye's spinach) and that messed him up as well. The new happy-to-survive DMC can't rap like he used to and doesn't want to be tough or bad on wax any more, and in fact he has developed a new mature rap style, demonstrated by his song "Cadillac Car," which states, "up in the morning hit the treadmill...cooling with my kids and my wife." So Run basically did the album all by himself, rejecting the use of any of DMC's gentle Mister Rogers-style raps. Though the present day footage was fascinating I don't want to downplay the great early years material, with nerdy friends making it big in rap by being original and humorous, yet still hard (though Jam Master Jay was by far the most authentic street dude, he protected the other guys before they got big). The episode takes the angle of trying to answer the question "is there a way for a b-boy to become a b-man," and in fact they all do seem to have become mature adults with nice wives and adult activities (preaching, producing, parenting). But Run still has that hunger, and he LOVES the spotlight (when he tells about his suicide he just sounds like he wants to tell a good BTM story for the camera... "I bought a bottle of poison" sounds awfully vague. What did he do, go to the poison store?). One of the most jarring things is seeing Jay laughing about getting shot, years before he was executed by a gunman. He seemed like the most together charismatic member of the group (certainly the most handsome) and his death may be hip hop's biggest tragedy. (JA)

SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (2001) I love this episode for several reasons. As they tell the story of how this film persevered despite production problems (the original director had to be fired) and personal woes (Travolta was dating an older woman at the time who died of cancer) we get to experience some great artists - Travolta and the Bee Gees - at crucial career crossroads. While the Bee Gees were adults at the time and have always acted in a very similar manner, super young Travolta and contemporary Travolta are different species and I love seeing period interviews with kid Travolta. Unlike his tough, or dumb, characters from that era, real life young Travolta spoke in a gentle, nerdy, happy cadence that was tremendously charming. He seemed intelligent and sincere in interviews, and his mature relationship with (the mature) Diana Hyland makes it seem like he had some substance. I also love seeing interviews with other actors from the movie. It is such an amazing film and you feel so connected to the characters so seeing them decades later is interesting. Also, unlike some of the other BTMs about movies this actually goes behind the music that proved to be the best selling of the era. On a postscript this may end up being the episode with the longest life because a version of it is an extra on the *Saturday Night Fever* DVD, which is certain to be in print forever. (JA)

GREASE (1/21/2001) VH1 must have expected to do a 20th anniversary *Grease* special (and they did something called "*Grease- Where Are They Now*") but basically this came out a couple of years later and felt warmed over. What is best about this is that it starts off with the playrights, two normal guys, and it tells their story or humble beginnings, a modest, fun idea, and the climb to mighty heights (and some of the lies and double crosses

that go with Hollywood dealings). When it gets to the actual Travolta days it becomes a fun but inconsequential show that points out racy lines and suggestive hot dog animation and the like. Still, for fans of the movie this is more interesting than it had to be. (JA)

HUEY LEWIS AND THE NEWS (2/4/01) I love this episode because it is about humility and enjoying being in a band. After decades the News is still intact with original members, and they are still just a bar band that enjoys hanging out together. I'm amazed to learn they sold over 10 million copies of "Sports," especially since I wouldn't buy one if it had free poontang tickets in the sleeve, but I have to say I totally respect this band after watching this. Huey grew up in the Bay Area with real beatnik-minded folks. His dad is something called a "part time radiologist" and his mom is a free spirit who took him to the Fillmore to see Beat poets and hippie artists, and they both seem like cool old people. One thing is that they were sort of hustlers, they seem to never have had money but Huey lived like a rich kid, going to prep school, and going to bum around Europe as a teen (he got the music bug while busking with a harmonica in North Africa). He goes to Cornell, fails at engineering but succeeds at being in a frat band. He draws straws and is forced to personally fire the bass player who isn't working out and that negative experience leads him to decide that insane loyalty to band members is more important than the band being good, a philosophy that oddly enough served him well. After flopping with a hippie band called Clover he relaxes and forms a house band at a club called Uncle Charlie's that eventually becomes the biggest band in the world without changing much. Today Huey plays golf, is nice to people and plays 60 gigs a year with his buddies. No tragic or dramatic arc at all, but what a nice story. (JA)

JOURNEY (2/18/01) The BTMs devoted to 1970s album-rock acts often follow a similar pattern: an overambitious lead singer slowly transforms a hard-rock band into a mushy power ballad machine. The lead guitarist knows it's corny, but goes along with the decision anyway, bitching all the way to the bank. When the inevitable reunion happens in the nineties, the lead singer backs out due to illness; his bandmates, against his wishes, get a soundalike and press on without him. Both Styx and Journey followed this template, but at least Dennis DeYoung was with Styx from the gitgo. Steve Perry was imposed on the band after they'd been established, gradually tried to take over the reins from lead guitarist Neal Schon, and then has the raw nerve to claim he always felt like an outsider! The next time this is rerun, watch out for a key scene: by '86, the band was down to Perry, Schon and keyboardist Jonathan Cain plus two session musicians. The live footage shows that only Perry, Schon and Cain were allowed to play under a spotlight! The bassist and drummer are, literally, toiling away in total darkness! The bassist in the shadows, by the way, was Randy Jackson, who is now one of the judges on *American Idol*. (JP)

DOOBIE BROTHERS (2/25/01) No, there's no trivia about the band's career-defining appearance on the 70's sitcom *What's Happening!!!*, and we'll never know if Rerun's bootleg tape was ever retrieved. Despite that glaring omission, this is one of the more successful BTMs ever made. You've got the expected drug and drink problems (true to their name, there's seemingly umpteen hundred photos and home movies of the band passing joints), at least one death (another latter-day member passed on since this episode), plus the obligatory New Member Who Changes The Band's Sound (also see: Journey, REO Speedwagon). In this case, it was Michael McDonald, whose creamy-smooth, quasi-soul, middle-of-the-road style clashes with at least two lead guitarists. Unlike Journey, REO, etc., everybody had kissed and made up by the time this episode aired. And when they reunited in the late 80's (sans McDonald), they reverted back to the (sorta) hard rock sound they had before Michael McD showed up. Something for everybody - lotta drug-induced scandal and shame, a happy ending, and more kitschy 70's hippie fashions than you can swing a dead cat at. (JP)

ROD STEWART (3/4/2001) Not being particularly spiritual, I don't think a lot about things like the afterlife, or the beforelife, or where I am on the karma ladder. That was before seeing the *Behind The Music* on Rod Stewart. Now every *Behind The Music* cobbles the smut and glitter of a fabulous music career into a tidy oval of early promise fulfilled, ego bloat, loss of identity and, finally, personal redemption. You really need the big moments to make this spirograph/biograph work - the scary overdose, the reunion with the calm and thoughtful hot stranger who turns out to be your offspring, loss of limb to the rhythm section. If we can't see our heroes live in '75 and catch their crystal sweat, we at least want to taste their tears on TV now (or a facsimile therein, because it is actually our own tears, salty and real). And this is why Rod's *Behind* doesn't really work, because NOTHING BAD HAS EVER HAPPENED TO THIS MAN. They must've had the VH1 interns burning up the Lexis/Nexis lines looking for some tragedy in this guy's life, because it just ain't there. We go from his birth in war-torn London (he effectively avoided the War) to his embrace of American rhythm and blues to his 'shy' start with talented-but-curmudgeonly Jeff Beck and the Faces. So far, so good. Then, a million wacky, crooked photographs of him dating Every Single Cute Girl in the 1970s. He is a bleached dervish having a constant climax behind the mic stand, or making the ladies laugh with a rocks glass in his hand. The ladies look like they have never known such bliss. (His moles apparently appear and reappear, but you KNOW they're all benign, or that would be the show's keystone, Rod's spandex dance around the Reaper.) His albums have titles like "Footloose and Fancy Free" and "Never A Dull Moment." This goes on. He divorces a wife, and gives her the rights to "You're In My Heart" as a settlement. He cruises into disco, and comes out golden, with Carmine Appice on drums and a short Asian bassist wearing red leather pants and vest who makes Rod look seven feet tall. "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy?" "Young Turks," and the string of hits and trim continues. All the current interviews with him are shot with a major Doris Day filter on the lens, with a golden hue approximating candlelight, which makes you-the-viewer feel like YOU are drunk and about to make out with the divine Scotsman. (They don't talk about the bucket-of-sperm stomach pump myth, by which someone tried to clip tail off Rod's shooting star, or the fact that Rod became FDR (sans polio, naturally) while Jeff Beck became Herbert Hoover, and Ronnie Wood became Ronnie Wood.) But this is *Behind The Music*, so here we go: Big Tragedy #1 is in the mid-80's, when his, like, 20-year-old wife Rachel Hunter breaks up with him. He goes on about this like it is Hiroshima. His ego, clearly, has never experienced such trauma. He manages to get Rachel to provide some back-up vocals for

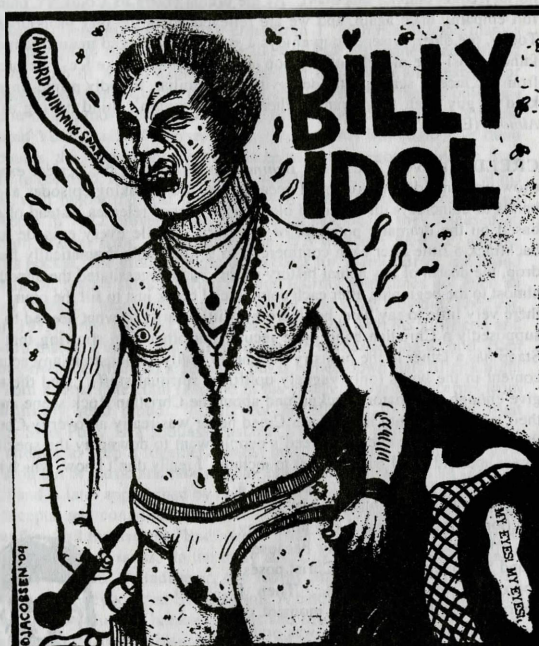
his hit "Lost In You." They're clearly still on good terms, because Rod was man enough to get over it, and Ms. Hunter clearly realizes she that she was young and foolish to ever reject Rod. Big Tragedy #2 is that suddenly, at the age of 89, Rod's father DIES. (Maybe not exactly 89, but up there - the guy was old.) Rod is shaken to the core by this display of mortality within his own bloodline. He just can't believe his dear dad is gone. He realizes he can wear more somber colored suits as well, not just neons and pastels. He tucks his beloved father into the boggy peat of his native land...and then goes back to L.A. So, reincarnation: what did this man do in a previous life to have afforded him such a ride? I'm telling you, it must have been amazing and completely selfless. Robert Plant can name-check all the Eastern themes he wants, but Rod is Krishna-esque. The Buddha don't have to be fat, and the gold may just be in his hair. This canonized wonder now has tackled the charts once again by ripping through the canon of the "American Song Book." Just know, as he smiles that quizzical smile at you from his boyishly akimbo and charming pose on the cover, that Rod knows the answers, and all the dogs are smiling back at him, and the applause you hear is all the single hands clapping. (SL)

FLASHDANCE (3/11/01) Nary a mention of Lee Ving! That's one complaint about this episode. Plus, they could have shown a few more of the audition tapes from prospective lead actresses. Hubba hubba. Anyway, the making of this "Rocky for women" is the typical "writer/director's vision vs. Hollywood producer's reluctance to take any kind of chance" story. But thanks to Adrian Lyne's perseverance, we have *Flashdance* as a cultural touchstone. Let's see, break dancing, the fashionably ripped clothes fashion, and uh, artistic stripping were all popularized by the movie. Plus scenes have been homaged from the time of the film's release in 1983 up until J Lo's recent aping of the climactic dance number. I thought Ving was the real star, though. (CB)

BILLY IDOL

(4/18/01) Beyond a few good original songs and some spectacularly unnecessary covers, Billy Idol is totally unmemorable as an artist, and his *Behind the Music* matches him well in this sense. When we hear about Billy cheating repeatedly on the mother of his child, overdosing on GHB on the Sunset Strip, and nearly losing his leg in a motorcycle accident when he'd been riding around after drinking and taking sleeping pills, he just kind of seems like an asshole. The fawning cameos by Downtown Julie Brown, Adam Sandler, and the guy from Matchbox 20 are annoying and unpersuasive, and the appearance of Legs McNeil is confusing. (TA)

MEGADETH (4/25/01) Though, on the charts and in the hearts of fans, Megadeth always came in second to their arch thrash-metal rivals Metallica, their *Behind the Music* episode beats out Metallica's by a mile when it comes to sheer heavy-metal chaos and depravity. Bleak, depressing, and nihilistic - even by BTM standards - with a barely-sympathetic anthero in crazed band leader Dave Mustaine, this episode makes for punishing, but riveting viewing in the vein of films like *Monster* and *Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer*. In the early 80s, Mustaine - the deeply troubled son of an alcoholic father whose idea of discipline involved pliers, earlobes, and blacktop - answered an L.A. newspaper ad seeking a guitarist for a metal group. That band turned out to be Metallica, and Mustaine impressed leaders Lars Ulrich and James Hetfield with his impossibly fast, screeching technique. The group became stars in the local metal underground (which defined itself in opposition to the "faggy" glam rock of Mötley Crüe and Van Halen). The smoky, harshly lit footage of early Metallica shows serve as a potent reminder of just how dangerously intense the now-hopelessly sold-out dinosaur act used to be. While recording their demo tape in L.A., Mustaine beat the piss out of the band's three other members (simultaneously), then drove them up a wall during a cross-country van tour during which Mustaine would pick fights with locals at nearly every bar, gas station, and restaurant along the way. Upon arriving in NYC, where the band had intended to relocate, Lars and James informed Mustaine that he was fired, and drove him straight to the bus terminal, where they bought him a ticket home. Though this might seem like an unforgivable betrayal, it's impossible to feel any sympathy for Mustaine, especially when his chilly personality in the present-day interviews (the lights are on, but nobody's home) is contrasted to the affable, relaxed Ulrich and Hetfield. It took Dave two months to stop drinking long enough to put a band together. Mustaine recruited next-door neighbor David Ellison after hurling a flower pot at Ellison for playing Van Halen basslines too loud at ten A.M. (he then made nice by buying the underage Ellison a six-pack). With the addition of junkie jazz-fusion veterans Chris Poland and Gar Samuelson, Megadeth soon claimed Metallica's recently-vacated local



throne. Signed by Metallica's label, who were hoping to replicate the success of Metallica's *Kill 'Em All* (on which, to Dave's unending rage, the band included several Mustaine compositions), Megadeth embarked on what would become a never-ending tour/drug binge. Mustaine consumed everything he could get his hands on – hash, acid, mushrooms, opium, morphine, demerol, cocaine, heroin, even crack (the editors even throw in a picture of Mustaine with a blackened crackpipe hanging from his lips). And while this aggravated his propensity for violence, his bandmates were crazy enough in their own right to dish it right back. It's easy to see how they scared the crap out of tour-mate Alice Cooper (classy as ever in his brief appearance): the backstage pictures of Megadeth in their heyday seem pulled from *Fangoria*, rather than *Rolling Stone*. In defiance of the usual BTM plot arc, Megadeth's music just kept getting better the further they fell over the edge of infighting and drug abuse. Their debut "Killing Is My Business... And Business Is Good" became a metal classic, as did the follow-ups "Peace Sells, But Who's Buying" and "So Far, So Good, So What?" In the early 90s, the band made history when their album "Countdown to Extinction" debuted at #2 on the pop charts. But Dave's moment of triumph was cut short when Metallica's "black album" topped it at #1 a few weeks later. Eager to settle the score, Megadeth's people met with Metallica's people and arranged a "Battle of the Bands" tour for the two million-selling thrash-metal groups. Upon discovering that their audiences were mostly one and the same, Dave, Lars, and James buried the hatchet and have become friendly towards each other again, if not necessarily friends. Inspired to enter rehab by Gar's fatal overdose and his own 8-day, heroin-induced coma, Mustaine claims his days of reckless drug use and random violence are behind him. But, knowing all that came before, and looking into his vacant eyes, one can't be sure. It's enough to make heavy metal scary again for even the most de-sensitized headbanger. (EH)

BLUES TRAVELER (5/27/2001) I always considered John Popper the worst harmonica player ever but here I learn that he always thought he was the best harmonica player ever. In this episode we meet the band, with Popper at times looking like the fat twin on the motorcycle in the *Guinness Book of World Records*. It is encouraging for aspiring jam bands that all these average looking guys (especially the one who died) managed to land super hot wives (VH1 appreciates this and has the beautiful women talk on camera A LOT, so that the show looks like professional TV and not some weird access show with ugly guys sitting around griping). One interesting thing here is that the band uses the term "partying" relentlessly as a metaphor for drug and booze abuse, to the point where narrator Jim Forbes starts saying it. One Traveler died mixing barbiturates, cocaine and heroin...some party! This show was hard to watch partly because I didn't find the music the least bit interesting but also because Popper (now thinner thanks to a stomach staple) is such a dick...even his boasting of a semi-heart attack while jerking off to porn is pure ugly arrogance. (JA)

1981 (6/3/01) Bob Marley is losing his battle with cancer, John Lennon is gone, Disco is dead, punk is sunk, Eagles and Doobie Brothers are failing fast. Foreigner, Journey, and Styx keep on chugging. *Paradise Theatre* quickly goes to the top and James Young lets us know that his is the only band to sell out the Checkerdome in St. Louis. For Ross Valory, arena touring for *Escape*, "was an incredible experience, being on the stage and having all these people singing all the songs, being so familiar with it." But hold on to that feeling indeed, because REO Speedwagon's chance on a piano ballad ends up the best-selling album of the year. Video arcades threaten the record industry and it'll take 200k in sales to break even. The Rolling Stones take on Jovan as corporate sponsor. Lee Abrams leads the introduction of focus groups and surveys to radio, as passion takes a backseat to statistically maximized profits. Cold, capitalistic, Reaganomic shit, but essential foregrounding for the era when the next generation will pay for the new thing, right? It's not called new wave for nothing, and after the sketchy implication that Rick Springfield starring in *General Hospital* was some kind of ur-video for "Jessie's Girl," the shuttle blasts off, the moon man is an icon, and video has killed the radio star. MTV only has 100 videos to fill their daily schedule, and the Buggles, the Cars, the Police, the Pretenders, Duran Duran, Devo get HEAVY rotation. And yet, the more things change, the more they stay the same. MTV forces the compromise of music for eye candy, and Christopher Cross is but one of the fugly artists who fell by the wayside. Let's not forget about the male gaze as Pat Benetar and Stevie Nicks take the lead with the Go-Gos, Bangles, Cindy Lauper and Madonna on the way, and Joan Jett's so hard her video is in black and white. Kim Carnes' synth "Bette Davis Eyes" is the number one hit of the 80s. Ozzy Osbourne does the dove thing and reinvents himself with "Crazy Train." Crüe, Poison, Whitesnake all follow, and David Lee Roth puts it best: "We're not interested in broadening anyone's musical horizons, we're not interested in expanding the future of music, we just want to rock." Men At Work, U2, Human League, Billy Idol, and at least ninety-nine different sideburnless haircuts round out this blowout episode. (EB)

1987 (6/10/01) With a backdrop of Reagan-era greed and capitalist shenanigans explained by the greatest minds of the era, including historian Doug Brinkley and economist Tawny Kitaen, we basically get a treatise on the stupid, unimportant hair metal bands who came and went but were put to shame by brilliant genius bands like REM, U2 and The Grateful Dead (?), who were all embraced by the mainstream that year. The problem with this theory is that on other VH1 rock histories they explain that Grunge is what usurped hair metal, and on this show they illustrate the absurdity of the glammy bands by showing a series of acts that came out in '88, '89 and '90! This episode is a good example of why you actually need an idea before you decide to make a show, rather than deciding to make a documentary about something and then coming up with some cockamamie hypothesis after the fact and manipulating things to vaguely fit the subject. (JA)

1994 (6/17/01) This is one of the better "year" BTMs, built around a pretty long and well crafted report on Cobain's suicide, and focusing the rest on scandals and news that shaped the attitudes of the public that year. One reason this is more successful than other "year" shows, particularly "1992," is that instead of trying to mention every artist who had a good year they worked their songs into the background of legit subject matter that helps the narrative along. Sheryl Crow sings "All I Want To Do Is Have Some Fun" while we hear Paula Jones' accusations against the President. Coolio sings "Fantastic Voyage" as OJ's Bronco drives around. And I learned that white rock critics like Nirvana and Smashing

Pumpkins and Green Day and seem to have rather low opinions of Mariah Carey and Ace of Base and Boyz II Men. (JA)

RICK NELSON (6/24/01) It may seem that Ricky Nelson had all the breaks; a T.V. star at childhood, good looks to compete with Elvis, a father who supported his move to music, plus the adulation of millions. With that setup he probably could have made it if he were only marginally talented, but this was not the case. Ricky, much like The Everly Bros., was also a lot cooler than his detractors claimed. The original sitcom smartass, before Eddie Haskell, his near-posthumous punk cred would not be attained until The Cramps covered "Lonesome Town." Lux and Ivy openly idolized Ricky, and saw beyond the white bread image he seemed to convey. This segment goes deep into uncovering how and why Ricky paid the price for "overnight success." Ricky, of course, literally grew up on television, playing himself, with his real-life family, on the beloved series, *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriett*. He was a household name, and had already immortalized the phrase, "I don't mess around, boy," before he'd taken a notion to pick up a guitar. The innocent circumstances surrounding his move toward music could have made a good T.V. movie on it's own (and I don't mean the anachronism-packed biopic that coincided with this documentary). Here was a then-teenaged Nelson, a bonafide T.V. star, who basically had the world at his feet, but was unable to impress the girl of his fancy, who, like so many others, had fallen under the spell of Elvis Presley. Though Ricky could scarcely conceal his own admiration for Presley, it was plain for him to see that he'd have to follow in his example as a Rock n' Roll singer to compete in a world turned upside-down by the object of his lady-friend's adoration. When Ricky told his father, Ozzie Nelson (yeah, there was a T.V. Dad called "Ozzie" a half-century ago, and his kids had TALENT!) that he was interested in getting beyond the boundaries of T.V. comedy, and trying his hand at this Rock n' Roll thing not only did his Dad give him his blessings, but he immediately started setting things up so they couldn't fail. He quickly assembled a crack band (featuring renowned studio guitarist, James Burton, who would later find himself in Elvis' employ), and featured Ricky performing his first song on prime time T.V. Ricky's rendition of Fats Domino's classic, "I'm Walkin'," was a huge hit. It didn't sound as tuff as Elvis, but he wasn't mining Pat Boone territory, either. Nelson had established a happy medium on the first go-round, and would go on to release a plethora of tasteful, yet rockin', hit singles. As an actor and a singer who could appeal to both kids and their parents, Ricky proved he could have it both ways. He later met Lorrie Collins, of the fantastic Collins Kids, and began his first whirlwind romance, one that threatened both their careers. Who knows what could have happened? They sure looked good together, and Lorrie was a welcome guest on The Nelson's show, until the two drew dangerously close to marriage, a move neither party's parents or managers were too keen on. Lorrie follows "Sir" Paul McCartney in a latter day interview clip, admitting she thought marrying someone else without even formally breaking it off with Rick was a no-class move, but one she was pressured into. Rick took it hard, but how long did anyone think one of America's most eligible bachelors was going to let it get him down? I might add, that while Lorrie looks pretty good in the interview portion, I've met her, and she looks a LOT better in person. Though his professional life carried on as before, by the early sixties, he'd hit a brick wall. Unable to come up with a hit for two years, he managed to bounce back with smash-hits like "Travelling Man," promoted, as always, in musical spots on the T.V. show. The late Ozzie Nelson is described, accurately, as the creator of some of the first music videos. Ricky was having his first comeback, and he wasn't even 21 years old. By the time he had made 21, he found himself the recipient of an unprecedented twenty year contract with Decca (who, incidentally, had previously turned down The Beatles), only to have it all blow up in his face with the arrival of The British Invasion (D'OH!!). Rick (as he was then called) was spiraling downward fast. The hits weren't coming, and the T.V. show was cancelled, but above and beyond all this, Rick fell in love with a friend from childhood, Kristin Harmon. The two were married, and set about raising a family. Their daughter, Tracy, would go on to be a successful actress, while their twin sons, Gunnar and Michael would become briefly famous as teen idols, like their dad, under the heading of "Nelson" (the less said about that, the better, Rick stayed focused on domestic life, though the music jones wouldn't let him alone. He formed The Stone Canyon Band, one of the first Country-Rock groups, and played The Troubador in Hollywood, becoming a very popular act, with or without a hit. He was soon booked to play a Richard Nader Rock n'Roll Revival show at Madison Square Garden, which should have been a triumph, with Rock Royalty like Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley sharing the bill, and with the likes of John Lennon in attendance. But, the dread specter of nostalgia loomed over the proceedings like a black cloud. Nelson wasn't well received by some for his shoulder-length hair and more contemporary attire (never mind that Little Richard, Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley at least TRIED to dress hip, yet they were still accepted). His newer material was greeted by silence and boos from some, though others got it, but Rick was embittered by the whole affair. Still, Rick would have the last laugh, as he wrote a song about this experience, "Garden Party," which turned out to be a monster hit. Still, this would prove to be yet another comeback gone sour. In a few years, Nelson was broke, and his father's death, and his own impending divorce, would only compound his depression. Still, he soldiered on, giving his fans what they wanted. An appearance on *Saturday Night Live* served as a potential vehicle for another comeback (he had learned, early in his career, that life was a series of comebacks). Rick was remarkably good humored about the whole thing, telling the T.V. viewers that if they didn't recognize him from the old days, that they should adjust their set from color to black and white (You could do that, back then). He also did a great "Twilight Zone" parody, portraying himself, searching for his T.V. home and running into The Cleavers and The Ricardos along the way. It seemed like he'd really found his home again, through television, but his version of Bobby Darin's "Dream Lover," the hit that should have been, wasn't released until five weeks after he performed it on SNL, killing it's momentum. Around this time, however, Rick started flirting with Rockabilly again, a personally, if not financially, rewarding move. He assembled a crack Rockabilly group, reportedly his best band since the James Burton days, and set out on the road again. Then the band made the incredibly poor decision to hire a World War II-era plane (that almost couldn't be started at all) to take them to Dallas for a New Year's Eve concert. Even if you'd never heard the story, you could guess what happened next. The plane became engulfed in flames before the pilots could attempt an emergency landing. The plane crashed into a field, and everyone but the pilots (who were both critically burned) were killed. The image of Rick as a polite, milk-

drinking. All-American Boy could only be tarnished in death. Even though his ex-wife brought cocaine use to her list of complaints when she filed for divorce, the report that Nelson had experimented with drugs while his career went in and out of decline never made for big print. That is, until he was no longer around to defend himself. I remember, personally, how the vultures in the press had a field day, playing on the (never confirmed) suggestion that Nelson had been freebasing cocaine on a plane that probably would have gone up in flames if somebody had lit a cigarette on board. Friends and family members deny the allegations in taped interviews, and even if (and I say IF) they were merely in denial about what happened, how many Rock n' Roll stars, much less former child stars, fell prey to occupational hazards? As it stands, the circumstances surrounding the death of Rick Nelson, and the members of his last, great, backing band will remain one of the great mysteries in Rock n' Roll, comparable to Bobby Fuller and Brian Jones before him, or Del Shannon and Johnny Thunders after him. Bottom line: Rick was true to the Rock, even after Elvis had virtually disassociated himself from it. He kept his cool and did his thing, and he did it well, something this program succeeds in demonstrating. "You see, you can't please everyone, so you've got to please yourself..." (JB)

NOTORIOUS B.I.G. (7/8/01) We can't get enough of the early photos (especially those with a flat top, and they never do tell us that the baby on *Ready to Die* ain't Biggie) but they end in the pre-teen years, long before Christopher Wallace makes the transition to Biggie Smalls. His mother Voletta makes everything past the stoop off-limits, but once Christopher starts hustling, he's addicted to the game. The street video of the 17-year-old realizing his skills as a battle rhymers on the corner is a treat. A demo tape made with friend 50 Cent makes Unsigned Hype, whetting the appetite of the newest and youngest A&R at Uptown Records. Still hustling to support baby mama Jan and little Tianna, Puffy advises Biggie that he "don't need (drug dealing), that right there is short money, right there." Love at first sight with Faith Evans leads to a marriage on August 4, 1994. As *Ready to Die* blows up, Biggie builds a suave, sophisticated image and as Method Man points out, "it got to a point where you forgot he was fat or ugly, then it got to a point where he wasn't ugly." Their friendship was common knowledge, but you may not have known that Biggie slept on Tupac's couch when the latter was debuting in *Juice* in NY. The explanation of East vs. West is mostly alright, hitting on Biggie and the Junior M.A.F.I.A. working in Quad Studios as Pac is shot in the building lobby, "Who Shot Ya?" followed by "Hit 'em Up." Big avoiding the answer record for a real conversation, then backstage in a scuffle at the Soul Train awards, when Pac whispers that this beef is only a marketing tool, and a rather effective one at that. The *Twin Peaks*-style minor chord progressions that accompany the onstage volleys between Suge, Biggie, and Snoop at the '95 Source Awards are a bit much. Viewers who knew where they were on March 9, 1997 may get bored when *Behind the Music* starts acting like *Unsolved Mysteries*. Voletta's loss is clear and unending, and the footage of all of Bed-Stuy reminiscing over him would've made a more touching R.I.P. to this story of B.I.G. (EB)

GREEN DAY (7/15/01) This one is great because to have any controversy they have to focus on the idea that his band is considered a sell out by its d.i.y. punk rock fans. But to explain that, this corporate Viacom show has to explain to the viewers what d.i.y., punk and "selling out" mean as if they are explaining it to Martians. While light on controversy and tragedy this features an articulate band, some decent music and best yet, a romance with a woman who looks like a regular pretty lady and not a model (as seen in most BTMs). Trivia: Green Day cursed the second most of any band on *Behind the Music* (27 times) which is fifty less than Oasis. (JA)

NEIL DIAMOND (7/22/01) Neil Diamond started from relatively humble beginnings. Raised by loving and musical parents (known for crashing weddings just to dance to the bands!) in Brooklyn, acquiring a thirst for musical knowledge while at camp in Upstate New York, eventually winning a scholarship (though for fencing, not music), and even a wife, having written his first original song in the form of a marriage proposal. There didn't seem to be a single bump in the road, at least, not until Neil dropped out of College to work as a songwriter in Tin Pan Alley. Young Neil had answered his true calling, to be sure, but with competition like Goffin/King and Mann/Weill, who were all stars in their field already, Neil would not be able to attain the kind of recognition they had overnight. Even after he'd penned a minor hit for Jay and The Americans, he was quick to dismiss his early efforts as "sophomoric." With a wife, and now, a child, to support, Neil decided that his only option was to come up with a bonafide hit. Ellie Greenwich and her husband, Jeff Barry, collectively one of the most prolific and successful songwriting teams of their day, got Neil signed to Bang Records (an Atlantic subsidiary). His first release on Bang, "Solitary Man," was not the breakthrough he'd hoped for, though it was well-received, and would go on to become his signature song. "Cherry, Cherry" soon followed, and it's irresistible rhythm pattern became the patented "Neil Diamond Sound." There's some great footage here from that period, which demonstrates why he came to be known as "The Jewish Elvis." He presented himself as an introvert, with seemingly limited facial expressions, but, when he hit the stage, something very exciting happened that could only be compared to Presley in his heyday. He had good hair and sported some cool, sparkly shirts, too (critics would later berate his stage clothes, but Diamond practically thanked them, as their petty whinings left them little time to put down his music). Don Kirshner, then in the early stages of developing The Monkees, contacted Diamond about writing a song for his new protégés. The result, "I'm a Believer," went on to become his first #1 hit record as a songwriter. Meanwhile, Neil continued to chalk up more hits for himself and The Monkees, and even Deep Purple would have an early hit with his "Kentucky Woman." Despite his apparent crossover appeal, Neil could have been forgiven for going into culture shock when he found himself having to follow Herman's Hermits AND precede The Who(!), well into their gear-smashing phase. "I would never smash a guitar, I like 'em too much..." sez Cool Head Neil, "But, I thought, 'Yeah, they can follow me.'" Though his marriage and his relationship with Bang soon came to an end, Diamond soldiered on, releasing his first Top Five single, "Sweet Caroline" for Uni Records. Eager for new challenges, Neil tried his hand at acting. In the midst of a very rough time in his life (no doubt attributable to the loss of his family), he auditioned for the role of Lenny Bruce, a part he no doubt felt an affinity for, despite his then-unfashionable disassociation with the drug scene (in fact, he'd previously written an unintentionally hilarious anti-drug song called "The Pot Smoker's Song," which incorporated actual

testimonies from recovering addicts in an early form of "Cut and Paste" songwriting). The precious little footage from his audition show him to be a natural for the role, bringing to mind the laid-back, "dirty" stylings George Carlin (himself a student, and onetime friend, of Lenny Bruce) was making popular at the time. Still, Diamond's efforts posed no threat to Dustin Hoffman, who'd eventually score the part. Still, it is a real joy to hear Neil Diamond say "shutp" on T.V.! While still at the peak of his popularity, Neil did the unthinkable, and announced that he was retiring from the concert stage, wanting to devote more time to his new wife and child than he could have afforded the others during his ascent to fame. He stayed out of the limelight for four years, later calling it the best period of his life. Neil had developed a reputation as a loner, someone who follows his own chosen path, but his willingness to put a lucrative performing career on ice either confirms or dispels that description, though it's hard to say which. His farewell live LP, "Hot August Night" was a huge success, as was his soundtrack to the movie, "Jonathan Livingston Seagull" (though the movie bombed...how many movies consisting entirely of untrained birds ever were a hit at the box office?). By the time he returned to the stage, and began recording more frequently, he found himself still the object of scorn where the critics were concerned. His performance in the remake of *The Jazz Singer* was panned, though the soundtrack outlasted pot in some states. Like Rick Nelson at about this time, he knew his best bet was to ignore the critics and just give his fans what they wanted. Shaking his less than hip image, however, proved to be a less than Herculean task. In time, younger fans got hip to the fact that Neil was already hip himself, and a new generation of musicians found inspiration in his mastery of the lost art of songwriting, and his gravelly but resonant voice. Neil Diamond isn't a Neil Diamond joke anymore, a point that was driven home to me a few years ago when I saw him for the first time, courtesy of the *Rolling Stone* editor's mom, who scored a bunch of free tickets for her family and the rest of us freeloaders. Even from up in the very last row, none of us could deny the man's charisma, and his ability to reach everybody in the place. Even on the slower songs, Neil ROCKED. I came out of there with a better understanding. Besides, if you ever went on a road trip with your family in the early-to-mid seventies, you no doubt heard a lot of Neil on the car radio. Now, he can be the soundtrack for the good times you're still having. (JB)

BOYZ II MEN - VH1 says this episode exists, and I know it was worked on (a found an online diary of someone who crewed on it) but I don't think it ever aired.

PAT BENATAR (8/5/01) This episode features the most shocking moment in BTM history. As we hear of the salad days of Benatar's career we learn that she and her guitarist Neil Gerardo became an item and were married. Cut to a contemporary interview and there Benatar and Gerardo are sitting together...THEY ARE STILL MARRIED! I didn't see that coming, and for BTM that was a real twist. Also nice here is Pat's supportive attitude towards her daughter who is in an unremarkable girl teenybopper vocal act. (JA)

REO SPEEDWAGON (8/12/01) For a multimillion selling arena rock band from the early eighties, this band's fall was really dramatic, and this BTM doesn't sugarcoat the facts. In the early nineties, when other such bands were smart enough to fade from view, this band was touring abroad...playing in a small dive bar...on the same bill as a ventriloquist. All while various pundits were claiming 1993 as one of several Years That Punk Broke. But then, they struggled so long that quitting wasn't in their vocabulary. As with several other stadium rockers on BTM, there's a tension between the poppish lead singer (Kevin Cronin) and the hard rocking lead guitarist (Gary Richrath), to the point where relations were still strained when this ep was filmed. As far as visuals, REO were really good about saving mementos, including a hilarious candid of one member in shorts talking on the phone (and even a hippie era shot of another member sprawled out on his bed listening to Clear Light!). This episode is really prime, since they seem to spend as much time on the struggling years (1971-79) as they do the commercial heyday (early 80's). As with the Doobies, Journey and other such bands profiled on this show, the crowd shots tell it all. In the seventies, they're rocking hard for Jeff Spicoli/Jim Anchower-ish stoners, but as soon as they started hitting their stride with the power ballads, clean-cut preppie chicks took over the front row. If you want a primer in how the music business changed over 20+ years, hunt down this episode. Not only to see how 70s hard rock got eased out by 80s new wave, but also to see how patient record companies were back then. Epic, REO's label, stayed with them an unfathomably long time, with almost a decade of mild-selling albums before they finally made #1 on the charts. These days, they would have shown REO the door if they didn't start moving *Thriller*-style from the beginning. (JP)

TWISTED SISTER (8/19/01) "Twisted Sister became the poster child for everything wrong with rock and roll," laments Dee Snider in reference to Twisted Sister's notorious 1985 'battle' with the PMRC. Well, maybe. The Parent's Music Resource Center picked a band they figured would be a slam dunk in the effort to convince record labels to put warnings on music. I mean, look at the singer. He looks like a reject from the 'Road Warrior' cast, and he's wearing women's makeup. And this video where the father (brilliantly played by Mark Metcalf, who I think should get at least half the credit for any success the band had) gets thrown out the window. This is just terrible. Dee, however, had a dark secret he was ready to unleash on Tipper Gore and company. "I'm 30 years old, I'm married, I have a 3 year old son. I was born and raised a Christian and I still adhere to those principals. Believe it or not, I do not drink, I do not smoke, and I do not use drugs." And while the censors were totally underwhelmed by this revelation, the bands' fans, who had related to the anti-establishment messages, were quite willing to give them the heave ho. Dee's testimony before the PMRC is the "and then tragedy struck" moment of this *Behind the Music* episode. But what amazed me were the attempts made at redemption. I don't remember this, but in 1986 Dee had his front teeth filed into fangs. The first single from the next album was a cover of 'Leader Of The Pack.' MTV wouldn't play a video they made with Alice Cooper. They were pretty much finished by '87. (CB)

HAIR (8/26/01) The highlight of this odd BTM about the infamous play/not infamous movie is cast member Andre Deshields (Broadway vet who played the Wiz in *The Wiz*) relentlessly naming specific types of acid and marijuana they used. Unlike the *Grease* episode that focused on the triumph of the writers getting their play made this is framed as the transformation of a socialite millionaire who was liberated from corporate life and

embraced the hippie ways by becoming the producer of *Hair*. They act as if he changed, though he did a mainstream Broadway play and twice fired his cast for un-"cool" reasons (once because they missed a show to attend a cast member's funeral, and once when they missed a show during a huge demonstration). Look for nice cameos by Melba Moore, Meatloaf, The Fifth Dimension and the Cowsills. (JA)

BLIND MELON (9/9/01) Wow. A truly great episode. Blind Melon's *Behind the Music* is deeply moving and boasts a great soundtrack to boot—Blind Melon's own music is featured, of course, alongside some surprise selections from Shannon Hoon's Indiana homeboys Guns n' Roses. Perhaps the episode's strongest and most unique feature is the inclusion of a large amount of footage from Shannon Hoon's personal home movies and tour videos. These tapes, in combination with bits read aloud from his surprisingly poetic journals, serve to paint a sweet, vivid picture of the late singer. VH1 has an established penchant for transforming a given band's *BTM* episode into a biopic of the lead singer (See Genesis, Goo Goo Dolls, Everclear...), and that same pattern is certainly at work in Blind Melon's installment, but here the unremitting focus on Shannon is not problematic. The episode plays like an affectionate, effective and ungrudging memorial to Shannon, constructed through the virtual gathering of his family and friends. A canonical addition to the *BTM* pantheon, and not to be missed—you don't have to be a Blind Melon fan to love this episode, and that may be just about the highest praise that can be bestowed on a *BTM* installment. (EF)

JUDAS PRIEST (9/23/01) *Behind the Music* clearly had a lot to work with here, and they did rather well with it: Rob Halford in the closet, a subliminal-messages lawsuit, a tribute band singer replacing his idol, and a Marky Mark movie tie-in. While they spend a disproportionate amount of time on Rob's drug crisis and homosexuality, there's also a lot of discussion of Judas Priest's often neglected early period ("Rocka Rolla" especially). There's nothing in the fan suicide-pact wrongful-death litigation part that isn't covered more thoroughly in David Van Taylor's *Dream Deceivers*, but the ambulance-chaser who filed the lawsuit against Judas Priest and CBS is given ample screen time to betray the laughable foundations of the 80s-era hysteria over heavy metal and D&D dork culture. (TA)

SEAN "P. DIDDY" COMBS (10/7/01) After father Melvyn is shot in Central Park in a deal gone wrong, the surviving Combs family moves on up from Harlem to Mount Vernon. The incredibly glamorous Mrs. Janice Combs works three jobs to keep her brood afloat while a young and enterprising Sean John pulls his weight by negotiating a takeover of the neighborhood newspaper store. Later, went to clubs to dance, and soon gets scouted to dance in videos for Stacy Lattisaw, Father MC, and Fine Young Cannibals. And he can dance. After meeting Andre Harrell on a video set, Puffy's dedication to the game isn't fazed by the four-hour commute from Howard University to Uptown Records. The Heavy D charity basketball trampling tragedy made Puff think suicide? Biggie knew Puffy harbored a desire to rap, and always encouraged him to get on the mic, and it proved essential to the grief process. Regrettably, the Club NY assault scandal proves fatal to J-Lo's love for Diddy. But he's got lil' Justin and he'll always be fellow hustler Martha Stewart's favorite neighbor from East Hampton. Don't worry, complaints have been filed regarding the absences of Bentley Farnsworth and Ma\$e. (EB)

AALIYAH (10/14/01) Produced shortly after the young R&B singer died in a pointless plane crash (this documentary looks into why so many people were jammed into the small plane) this is an eerie episode in that the "archival" footage of the deceased subject looks, and is, just as new as any interview you would see with a living star. In fact, other than some very Jon Benet type footage of her on *Star Search* as a kid, nothing has any air of history or weight to it, it all just seems like very run of the mill promotional interviews and incidental footage with a current mid level star. This is partly due to the fact that the video shoot on which she had her fatal accident was being documented by B.E.T. (VH1 has all that footage at their disposal, since Viacom had acquired B.E.T.). However, part of Viacom's plan in bringing MTV, VH1 and B.E.T. under the same umbrella was to make B.E.T. a Black MTV, with their own versions of *TRL*, *Cribs* and *Making the Video*, but all done noticeably cheaper. Thus, we have this amazing footage shot just before Aaliyah died, but it doesn't seem like it was earmarked to be important footage. However, the film crew being there does capture vibrant, living footage of the non-celebrities from her entourage who died on the plane with the young star, so at least they get a fitting tribute. One thing that is wonderful here is that you learn that people really liked her (their testimonials are more convincing than the ones you hear about most dead folks on this program). Other than some vagueness and smoke and mirrors from her ex-husband R. Kelly, you hear nothing but wonderful, touching things, especially from her beautiful brother, from Missy Elliott (it is something else when Missy laments, "So real...so sad...") and from the prominent choreographer Fatima who was on the video shoot with her. The only moment where I thought this show got super weird was when Fatima shows a picture of Aaliyah and tearfully talks about how in this picture she is "so beautiful." It is a picture of a nice looking girl made bizarrely grotesque by a smattering of thick pink makeup. It is a weird thing to include because though you are certainly sad for Aaliyah's friends, family and fans, it feels like a cruelly comic moment. (JA)

SINEAD O' CONNOR (10/21/01) O'Connor's striking face and expressive eyes make for a pretty attractive talking head, but she doesn't have much of a story to tell. Her career ascendancy was halted when she made a covert anti-Pope statement on live American TV, and while that event is depicted here, it pretty much spoke for itself. This episode gives much more voice to the specifics (or un specifics) of O'Connors very difficult relationship with the Catholic church (by *BTM*'s closing notes she has been ordained as a renegade priest) but there is nothing here that is as powerful a television moment as her notorious one. While her story does involve some Rock n Roll romantic shenanigans and a hard comeback trail (which doesn't go anywhere) and maternal conflicts, it doesn't really have enough action or arc to make it one of the better *BTM*'s. (JA)

BRIAN SETZER (11/01) There's a certain integrity with this episode that I don't normally see on this show. Setzer (ex-Stray Cats) does have tales of unsuccessful comebacks and marriages (this one's pretty light on drinking and drugs), but you get the impression that

Brian would have been in the mix even if he didn't become a superstar. Why? Because unlike most of the artists on this show, Setzer wasn't following a popular trend of the day. He wasn't in some broke-down metal band that lost its audience to grunge, he wasn't some producer's toy with more looks than talent, he was just some guy playing the roots music that he loved. As this ep points out repeatedly, he revived older music forms at least twice. He didn't do it singlehandedly - there were other latter-day rockabillys besides the Stray Cats, and more neo-swing bands besides the Brian Setzer Orchestra. It was mainly through image, marketing, and right-place-right-time that he blew up as big as he did. If he hadn't had hits, he would have still been in the game with a solid niche of his own. Because he's a working musician who managed to keep his focus (and his fans), this doesn't have the out-and-out scandal and shame of most *BTM*'s. (JP)

SALT N PEPA (11/01) This episode is not a perfect *BTM* because there's no real tragedy or controversy or even meteoric rise or fall. They never got too big and they never fell too far. But it's very fun to watch for several reasons. The girls have a mentor who assembled them, basically as a school project for music class. Hurby Luv Bug is such an arrogant dick the whole time, with no shame, that this show is pretty amusing. He even boldly states that he had a sexy girl DJ initially but that caused jealousy, so he hired Spiderella because she was too ugly to cause problems! I'm almost positive this is the only *BTM* where the magazine covers they show to indicate the group's ascension to fame are *Jet*, *Black Beat*, and *Right On!* Another key moment: PePa went to Utah as a youngster and somehow that influenced her to get into AC/DC (and thankfully not the Osmonds). (JA)

LINDSAY BUCKINGHAM (11/11/01) Is this really necessary after a Fleetwood Mac and Stevie Nicks episodes? Maybe not necessary, but certainly worthwhile, as Buckingham (as opposed to Mr. Fleetwood or Ms. Nicks) is strange, timid and sensitive, with a weird gentle speaking voice and an odd perspective on the whole journey. As a young teen, while lost in the shadow of his Olympics swimming star brother, he won a talent contest singing "Black Slacks." He briefly met Stevie in high school (they sang a duet of "California Dreaming") and eventually he had her join the band he was in The Fritz Raby Memorial Band (the name cruelly mocked a living schoolmate). Fritz was led by a Chicano, and possible L & S were the only Anglos in the band, so it's a little uncomfortable that at one point a producer decides that they are the only ones worth anything and has them break up the act. *BTM* shows us an 8-Track tape of the unsuccessful Buckingham Nicks album, the failure of which leads them to join Fleetwood Mac, who already had 20 albums out when the "classic" lineup materialized! The drama about "Rumours" being the best selling record on earth and Stevie and Lindsay breaking up their romance and "Tusk," Lindsay's arty statement, tanking at only 4 million copies sold, is sort of old hat after the two previous episodes, but Lindsay's solo career, with him as an intense "studio hermit" is pretty interesting. One odd note is that though they all took drugs, by the mid 80s he could function better under the influence than the others, so he was more together than the other Macs. A real highlight is Buckingham sending messages to his former bandmates through solo albums, and he's sure Mick Fleetwood got his message from an insulting tune, but Mick seems to have never even considered it (possibly never even listened to the record). LB ends the show in typical *BTM* fashion. happy and married with child, but clearly his underappreciated solo work leaves a bit of a hole in his life. (JA)

MARY J. BLIGE (11/18/01) The marriage of passion and pain is evident early on. Mary's parents may abuse each other, but they still dote on the children. Early promise becomes clear when jazzist father Thomas introduces her to funk: "Mary, one year old, singing Earth, Wind & Fire and hitting the notes." In '88, Mom's new boyfriend's coworker Jeff Redd gets Mary's mall-karaoke-booth-recorded demo tape. He hears "a lot of pain and a lot of joy at the same time, which was and still is the voice of young America." Andre Herrell gets the tape in '89, but Uptown hasn't signed a female artist and doesn't know how to market Mary. She befriends young intern Sean Combs, and when Puffy turns an opening in A&R into a promotion, his beats to back her and Mary Queen of Hip-Hop Soul is born. Soulful and street, "Real Love" climbs the charts as Mary still climbs the stairs of the Slowbomb projects in the spring of '92. *What's the 411* arrives in the summer and quickly goes platinum. Mary moves the family into Jersey suburbs and half-brother Bruce has trouble getting used to the quiet... and the crickets. Defining what it means to be ghetto fabulous, Mary's public persona walks with a similar gait: you can take the girl out of the ghetto, but you can't take the ghetto out of the girl. The duet with K-Ci Hayley of Jodeci on *MTV Unplugged* in '93 lets everyone know they've got passion and intensity, while Mary's extra-long intermissions world tour let Andre know they've got beef, too. Arriving late, drunk, demanding and sunglassed during interviews becomes the norm, but it'll take the dark but multiplatinum *My Life*, a chance encounter with an apologetic Dad at a Michigan show, Veronica Webb implying alcoholism in *Interview*, and a drug binge where the devil shows up and threatens to kill her before Mary learns to love and respect herself. Mary decides not to compete with Faith Evans for Puffy's production attention. *Share My World* follows, and Aretha, Elton and Clapton line up to get on board for *Mary*. And now there may be *No More Drama* but she'll always have material. But wait, who forgot to get a quote from Meth? (EB)

SUBLIME (12/9/01) This is a pretty interesting episode, because though it has real *BTM* tragedy (the main figure in the band, frontman Brad Nowell, dies on an overdose) it falls out side of *BTM*'s scope because the band was not a mainstream success while it existed. Brad died before the band's breakthrough record was released and they don't really have much pro-shot footage of the act, certainly Nowell never was videotaped by paparazzi or at an awards show or by MTV. The one interview they draw from looks like it was done for public access. But not being able to use publicist engineered interviews as source material results in a very honest show. The surviving bandmates (two of the ugliest guys ever to play rock, and that's saying something), his young widow and especially his grief struck, put pragmatic (they knew he was a junkie) parents tell a story too grounded in reality. We learn how an ADD suffering surfer kid dealt with his parents divorce by taking some drugs, but also by taking a sailing trip with his dad to the Caribbean where he got hooked on Reggae. He started a totally terrible band that played house party after drunken house party and seemed to have little ambition other than to rock Long Beach parties, smoke pot, surf, and eventually do some heroin. Their non-ambition is betrayed by Brad's decent

times after reaching the top, means that, yes, you see a giant, corporate Rock inc. show, but not the same as with the Stones...this band appreciates what this success means. This footage alternates with a very detailed history of the band and their drug abuse, creative highs and lows, management issues, multiple impregnations and the complex love affair between Joe Perry and Steven Tyler. While this isn't good enough to be a theatrical documentary that you would pay money to see, it is one of the most ambitious episodes of BTM and it breaks the rote formula successfully. Everyone is interviewed extensively, but fantastic archival interviews are mined, including an amazing early 80s clip where Tyler wishes good luck to Joe Perry's post-Aerosmith band and pledges that the Perry-less Aerosmith is A-OK, but his face unambiguously tells another story. There is also very convincing footage demonstrating how awful Tyler could be live when he was at his druggo worst. One of the amazing subtexts of this thing is the fact that all the members of the band currently function and are coherent after the years of excess. After they describe the drug cocktails they consumed like air during one recording session in a spooky mansion you wonder why they don't have permanent, obvious brain damage at this point! Ultimately Perry and Tyler, even clean and sober and doing Dianne Warren songs, are awesome at striking the pose of Rock & Roll Gods on stage, and that is what this is all about. I wouldn't say this is the best BTM (they were lucky enough to never experience the kind of tragedy or depths of failure that would allow it to be), but it is one of the most compelling. (JA)

CYNDI LAUPER (9/8/02) What is most striking about an episode featuring kooky Cyndi is that it is mostly about dignity. Cyndi today is such a grounded, together, proud woman that you realize she always has been together and just because she acted nutty doesn't mean she was a mess. Cyndi has a nerdy manager/mentor/lover named David Wolff (he appears in her old videos) and I was sad when they broke up, but then Cyndi had a little girl and I was happy again. If you can watch this and not root for Cyndi you have a cold heart! (JA)

HOOTIE & THE BLOWFISH (9/22/02) Hootie (Darius Rucker) explains that "the most important thing is the music but the second most important thing is not to compromise...believe, believe believe!" So it's a little hard to watch this and be invested when I don't believe in the music so it's not important to me at all. Then again, I'm not that big a fan of Chicago, but at least their long career provided ups and downs and twists and turns that made for a good story. This is a little interesting because Rucker has had to deal with racism, his mom's death and with his band becoming reviled after they became #1, and it is admirable how loyal all the members are to each other, and they all seem pleasant. But really, there's not much story here. (JA)

MATCHBOX TWENTY (11/17/02) What a deathly boring story about completely uninteresting musicians. It is almost only about the lead singer, Rob Thomas, and maybe they decided to not cover the other guys lives because perhaps they might have been interesting or something. Thomas "struggled" for years in a shitty band called Tabitha's Secret, then made it big with a band that may actually be worse. (JA)

BRITNEY SPEARS (11/9/03) Obviously it is ridiculous to have a Britney Spears BTM. As a totally overexposed media icon there is nothing we haven't seen or haven't heard her say. As a performer so close to her salad days she has no perspective (not to mention that her "people" would muzzle any genuine secret-revealing). And she also hasn't experienced any real tragedies or failures...she hadn't even been fake married at the time of this episode, and that was more of an inconvenience than a tragedy. Instead of a regular BTM, then, we are treated to Britney giving us the backstage stories of her most famous professional moments, which are mostly award show performances. If you consider it profoundly interesting how it felt to touch a big snake, or whose idea it was to kiss Madonna (Madonna's) and that the most nervous she ever was performing was at the Superbowl halftime with Aerosmith, than this is the BTM for you. I guess Britney seems sort of dumb as she's talking, but that may not mean she is actually dumb, she just doesn't have anything to say and they are treating her like she does. They do sort of make her look bad by showing her clumsily plunking away like a five year old at a piano that is a stage prop in her tour. Sitting behind the piano is the universal symbol for rock genius (that's how we know that Alicia Keys is the real deal) so perhaps showing that Britney can't play (reviews of her concert noted that she mimed the piano solo) is a symbol of her being a non-genius. The show ends with Britney beaming with pride describing her bizarre ten-day camp for ghetto kids in which she has her personal choreographers and vocal coaches prepare them to do a show for Britney's family. So if you think poor black children are enriched by learning how to do the "Hit Me Baby One More Time" dance than you need to recognize Britney's greatness and she deserves this career retrospective. (JA)

SPICE GIRLS (11/23/2003) When this aired BTM was not really in production and only the Britney show had been made in the previous year. So it seemed like perhaps a Spice Girls show might be a long-in-the-works, high profile attempt to jump start nostalgia for 1997. Instead this is a real cheap knockoff episode. They tell the Spice story in a very rudimentary way and don't interview all of the Spices, mainly basing all the spoken parts on a recent interview with Sporty Spice, who in many ways has the least investment and least to say (Scary and Geri were the leaders and controversial members and Baby and Posh had the racier sex stuff, with Baby allegedly romancing management and Posh retiring from the biz by marrying a sports superstar). Most telling of the half-assedness of this episode is the interview segments with Geri Halliwell all seem to be five year old footage left over from their unaired (in the US) BTM2 episode about her. (JA)

TLC: THE FINAL CHAPTER (3/13/04) This sequel (it opens with, "as anyone who's seen their first *Behind The Music* knows...") follows TLC through the bizarre twists and turns that followed the release of "Fan Mail" (the album their first BTM was designed to sell). Basically what happens was Lisa "left Eye" Lopes goes deeper off the deep end then ever before, following a healer/guru named Dr. Sebi in the Honduras, fasting for a month and a half, hooking up with Suge Knight, disappearing whenever she is needed for TLC business and making it very clear that she did not seem to like or respect T or C. Throughout all of this, even though she is obviously making reckless, dangerous decisions

that seem to point to her being too much for this world and destined to crash and burn, you can't help but be drawn to Lopes. The wilder she gets the more beautiful she seems to become, and there is footage here where she is so striking that she is almost glowing. She also makes everyone around her seem boring and kind of weak (Tionne didn't want to come live in a hut in the Honduras commune not for the obvious reasons but because they don't have TV there and she can't miss *CSI*). This BTM is very successful, but does feature a new low for the series: one of the talking heads is MTV host Carson Daly, who wasn't a friend or active participant, but is presented as an "expert." Ecceh. Which brings us to some amazing footage of T and C appearing on stage together at the MTV awards soon after Lisa's untimely death in a Honduras SUV accident: The women are crumbling and weeping, in obvious deep pain (though they were pretty estranged from Lopes, these tears seemed very real). Cut to the audience and not surprisingly, Britney Spears' reaction is a vacant stare, but Mary J. Blige is feeling profound empathy, her face cracked with pain. Then cut back to the stage, and pathetic Carson gives the most impotent one-second long tiny pat on the shoulder to one of the girls, seemingly giving no comfort or support to them or anyone watching. Though he obviously appeals to some demographic, Daly always struck me as soulless and unpleasant. This footage really confirms my opinion. (JA)

THE JACKSONS (2004?) Indications were that this was in production at press time.

BTM2: Launched as a companion to Behind The Music that would tell tales of popular new stars too young in their career to warrant full, melodramatic BTM treatment, this show was stylized and young but not very compelling. The problem of presenting interesting biographies of stars at the beginning of their careers was solved later with the series DRIVEN that features childhood friends and colleagues from pre-fame recounting the tale of how the subject made it to their current state of greatness. BTM2 lasted less than a year. (all reviews JA)

MARY J. BLIGE (2/15/00) This tells Blige's rough and tumble story, but became moot when Blige later became the only BTM2 to graduate to BTM. However this episode does establish the short-lived signatures of BTM2: photos taped to trees and lamp posts, bad theme music, the moving around, "verite" camera during interviews and an inferior announcer than BTM's Jim Forbes.

ENRIQUE IGLESIAS (2/00) This half hour special has little time to do anything but fawn over EI's beauty, try to paint a picture of some kind of tension between he and his father and introduce us to Enrique's hunkier brother, Julio Iglesias, Jr.

DIXIE CHICKS (3/7/00) This episode about the traditional-bluegrass-band-turned-flashy-country-superstars is pretty interesting because you see that they were a legit roots music act and you meet the woman they had to kick out to go pop, and she's not as bitter as you would expect. When they add the brassy, younger Natalie Maines (a music exec's daughter) they become big stars but this episode seems to demonstrate (through nervous, insincere laughter, and awkward joking around) a tension (stemming from something between resentment and hatred) between the original Chicks and the Joey Heatherton of New Country. Ultimately the Dixie Chicks got some very traditional songs on the radio, so it would be unfair to say they sold their souls to make it, but that is certainly one of the subtexts of this episode.

SMASH MOUTH (3/14/00) Highlights include the lead singer boasting with defiant obnoxiousness about not only stealing to get gear and selling drugs to get gear but also stealing drugs to sell to get gear. Also we learn that their main champion is the never charming Carson Daly, who was an LA deejay at the time of Smash Mouth's ascendancy.

TORI AMOS (3/21/00) Amos, according to this show "a rebel who became a role model," proves to be an unhelpful subject in that while she obviously had inner turmoil that she got out in song, Ms. Amos had a happy childhood, studiously became good at music, never became a drug addled mess and handled everything in her career with dignity. She was in a rock band that failed, but the failure was relatively quick and painless followed immediately by her becoming the Tori Amos her fans know today. Even her romance with her producer was something untorrid that ended mutually with Tori's modest heartbreak channeled into a hit album and not a bottle. This shows why the half hour format is reasonable: any longer and they would have really had to stretch to keep up any semblance of drama. Tori has talent and devoted fans but her music is what is compelling (if she compels you) and certainly not her life story.

COUNTING CROWS (3/28/00) I'm glad this was only a half hour because I couldn't take any more of that Counting Crow guy whining. Poor baby, you went septuple platinum!

PAULA COLE (4/5/00) Other than good footage of her as a precocious youngster performing they had VERY little to say about this woman and her one hit song.

BUSH (5/2/00) It is less than four years later and the music has not aged well. My favorite thing here is you learn how they were insulted in the day, as "Nirvanabes" and "Teabag Grunge" and told that their first album had "no singles, and no album tracks" on it either. They seem like nice guys, and Gavin deserves to be cocky (he's pretty, he's good at rocking out on a stage, and his wife is hot) but this is not an episode featuring fascinating people and there's not much drama here. However, I will give Bush member Nigel Pulsford credit for having the Britishest name I ever heard.

BECK (5/22/00) This worked as a half hour show, because the primary resource material allowed them to make some points very succinctly. They demonstrate his bohemian background (his Warholian mommy raised Beck in a home where all the punk, arty and weird youth hung out) by showing old footage of his grandfather's conceptual performance art pieces. To demonstrate the creative, strange excitement of Beck's early D.I.Y. aesthetics they can just use his underground film-like cheap early videos. And to show that he became a funky dancer they show him dancing funky. Other things I learned were that "Loser" is a "modern masterpiece," his first LP which went Platinum cost \$350 to record and his brother is handsome. (JA)

looks (not cultivated, he was always a little doughy and shirtless and stayed dirty and unkempt) and more importantly his ability to write incredibly catchy ska-ish songs that addressed the horrors of contemporary California lowlife (lots of rape and abuse in his tunes), as opposed to the sunny pop of earlier eras. One dumb journalist calls them the "Beach Boys in a postmodern era," which doesn't mean anything. There are many definitions of postmodern, but she means "in a fucked up era" where drugs and dysfunction and shitty stuff happens (and though their music didn't reflect it, try to find more dysfunction or drugs than the Beach Boys experienced...they helped Manson!). Anyhow, the band becomes more popular and signs a modest contract but still has to do grueling, bad tours, which we know because the motel that Nowell overdoses in is a shithole. After his death the record comes out and is a multi platinum smash. While I suppose that counts as a sort of redemptive ending it really isn't. There are a number of very strong elements to this episode. One is his rotund, bearded father and his mom describing their failed interventions, giving a very tangible look into the family of an addict. The other is the amazing story of Lou who makes the show a super success. At some point Brad adopts an abused dalmatian named Lou who becomes his sidekick and the band dog. Not only do they mention him in numerous songs but the pooch is on stage at his master's feet at every concert! It is the coolest dog you've ever seen. Now, undoubtedly these guys were the type of dudes who would think it was funny to get a dog high or drunk, which I usually hate, but I guess it's better than being put to sleep, or being physically abused, and this dog really loved Nowell. I guess you can look at Lou as symbolic of why you shouldn't take heroin and die. It's tragic for parents to outlive their child but it's fucking crazy to also be outlived by your dog. (JA)

THE CULT (1/20/02) The Cult story starts when young Ian Astbury moves from the UK to Canada and becomes obsessed with Native Americans to the point that when he returns to England as a punk teen he starts Southern Death Cult, a band he fronts in Native American couture, moccasins and face paint that could belong to a KISS member named The Indian if such a member existed. As a BTM Native American he is no Robbie Robertson or Shania Twain! After hooking up with Billy Duffy (Theater of Hate, Slaughter and the Dogs) The Cult eventually becomes a driving hard rock band, with Ian's Jim Morrison-meets-Tonto shtick leading the moody, spiritual way. Though there are a few unusual audience projectile shenanigans (Metallica fans pelt the band with piss bags, and Ian's sensitive girlfriend is taunted with live fish hurled onstage for her to rescue) mostly this is an uneventful tale of tedious dissatisfaction, not the most compelling narrative. This was done before Ian became Jim Morrison, fronting the reactivated Doors, which might have been a more interesting ending.

HALL AND OATES (1/27/02) I guess the most shocking revelation of this episode is that at some point over the last couple of years Darryl Hall took the off ramp from the Cute Highway and parked his ride at the corner of Haggard and Aged. Not that he lived a hard life that left his mind and soul frazzled, on the contrary, he seems like a sharp nice guy. He's just not as pretty a she used to be. John Oates is a bit upset about how they were manipulated visually during the MTV age, but he mostly comes off as a well-rounded, together guy as well. The most interesting part of this is the story of Sara, as in "Sara Smiles" (shades of the real life Donna in the "Day The Music Died" episode). Apparently Sara's relationship with Darryl was pretty strained by the band's ascension up the Blue Eyed Soul charts and she wasn't smiling the whole time. (JA)

BUSTA RHYMES (2/17/02) The main theme (to me) of this episode is that despite a musical reputation as an absurd clown, Busta considers himself a very serious person who has been through many "sufferations." Growing up as a West Indian 7th Day Adventist, who was often disciplined by his dad before pops took off, Busta was a dancer who started a rap act after moving to Long Island and being encouraged by Chuck D. (Chuck named him after a college football player who had that exact name). I once saw his act Leaders of the New School perform, and they were the jumping act I've ever seen in my life, bouncing around like popcorn. But it wasn't all happy jumpin' around! After the 17 year old dropped out of high school to record an LP about being in high school his band had limited success, which was rough when he got his girl pregnant (their preemie baby died). The band self-destructs when group leader Charlie Brown denounces his bandmates on *Yo! MTV Raps*. Busta then has years of solo success, with many seriously titled LPs (invoking Biblical apocalypse imagery and anarchy) and he has grief with gun charges, a paternity suit, and problems with child support. One odd thing here is that instead of becoming an excellent dad because his father wasn't there for him he instead seems to bond with his father and forgive him because he now understands how easy it is to be a sub-par dad. Also note that unlike the sad Leif Garrett episode where drugs were always his problem and the fact that he is clearly baked during his interview is tragic, here drugs are never considered a problem in his life, so his blunted, eyes-nearly shut state during most of his interviews seems unproblematic. (JA)

ANTHRAX (3/10/02) Scott Rosenfeld's mom wanted him to be a dentist, but he used his bar mitzvah money to record a heavy metal demo, changed his name to Scott Ian, and Anthrax was born. This wasn't one of my favorite episodes. I got the distinct impression that VH1 didn't feel this band merited an episode of BTM but gave it to them only because of the fact they share a name with an infectious disease spread through the mail in September of 2001. The introduction was the same hackneyed "kid from the neighborhood" bullshit. I mean, I love KISS as much as anyone, but how many times do I have to watch Jersey kids in Ace Frehley makeup throwing the goat interspersed with scenes of Gene Simmons spitting up blood? The answer- every time a band from New Jersey (or the boroughs) is profiled on VH1. I predict that in ten years, we'll all be watching footage of Kurt Cobain smashing his guitar in the "Smells Like Teen Spirit" video repeated endlessly on each and every episode of BTM. If the beginning was weak, it got worse in the middle, when I was treated with reused interview footage from both the Metallica and the Megadeth episodes about the recording of "Kill 'Em All" and the tragic death of Cliff Burton plus additional stock footage of the Chernobyl meltdown (apparently they were on a European tour at the time) to pad out the twelve minute segment. Let me say, too, that VH1's blatant self-contradiction in this episode did not go unnoticed. In both the Aerosmith and the Run DMC episodes, it was claimed that "Walk this Way" was the

birth of rap-metal, but in this episode, the Public Enemy/Anthrax collaboration "Bring the Noise" gets the credit/blame. Will we ever settle the issue of who's responsible for Korn, the Deftones, and their ilk? Like another great national tragedy, the JFK assassination, no one can believe a lone gunman could have brought down such devastation on our cultural landscape. The big climax, accompanied by 9/11 news clips and headlines and the obligatory midnight visit to ground zero, was Anthrax deciding not to change their name to "Kornhol'd" or "The Mook-lords" in the wake of the five anthrax related deaths in 2001. I wasn't caring by then, and the prospect of an incremental spike in record sales based on newfound notoriety for this washed up metal act didn't have me rooting for them. Where was the anguish here? One of the guy's nephews was shot and killed, but we didn't even know him, and they fired their lead singer when he was two years sober! The pieces are here (sort of), but they're put together all wrong. I'll give it a C. (BC)

SHERYL CROW (3/17/02) This is a great episode. The story itself is juicy enough that VH1 doesn't have to subject the viewer to ominous music followed by the words, "and then tragedy struck." Instead, we are taken through Sheryl's life with substantive interviews and lots of great behind the scenes and music video footage of the artist's career from her early days singing duets with Michael Jackson to the height of her success, singing duets with Stevie Nicks. The strength of this episode is the wealth of pictures and video the producers were able to dig up. They even had pictures of her from her high school drama club! Unlike some of the other bands documented on BTM, Sheryl Crow rose to fame in the hyper-documented world of pop music in the 1990's, giving the producers ample raw material to work with and re-edit, and the show is better for it. Because there's just not enough scandalous revelations to warrant an A, I give this one a B+. (BC)

GARBAGE (4/7/02) This is sort of presented as the inspiring story of a powerful woman, but on the other hand, it seems pretty clear that this is a band that is made up of talented male musicians too old for the industry who hire a pretty face to front their music. That said, Shirley Manson looks much better on camera than Butch Vig and the boys, so I'm glad they focused on her. The band was so recently minted when this was shot that there was little band drama to play up, but the text and subtext of this show finds Ms. Manson struggling in her life with the not-so-serious problems (she was in a fucking awful, way embarrassing band) to the serious (she has a mental illness/compulsion where she cuts herself on purpose) to the profound (she recently changed her hair color again). (JA)

FOREIGNER (4/28/02) I watched this episode twice. The thing that impressed me about it the first time was the spot-on use of Foreigner songs to highlight the various twists and turns in the band's career. The question is- does the fact that "Head Games," "Midnight Blue," and "Jukebox Heroes" represent certain episodes in the Foreigner story so well say more about the BTM producers' talents or the self-obsessed songwriting of Mick Jones and Lou Gramm? I'm willing to give some credit to VH1 on this one. It's hard to make the dynamics of two drug-fueled rock and roll egos at loggerheads with each other not end up as a recapitulation of the Lennon/McCartney or Jagger/Richards story. *Foreigner: Behind the Music* escapes this pitfall by putting the band in the context of the arena rock era and its self-congratulatory culture. I give it an A-. (BC)

BOB MARLEY (6/30/02) When BTM originally began there was a companion series called *Legends* which differed in that it lionized great rock stars, presenting them in an ultimately positive light, not trying to dwell on any tabloid gossip. This episode should have been one of those shows. The BTM theme of being ripped off of the money you deserved is familiar, but because of the admiration that his family, friends and fans have for him, other facts that usually would be highlighted with an ominous BTM musical note (his drug use, his adultery) are presented without any negative connotations. Even though this episode doesn't fit into the series, it is an impressive Marley documentary, deeply invested in speaking with as many living principal figures as possible and sparing no expense at location shooting and research. Interviews include Bunny Wailer, Rita Marley, Bob's mother, Bob's children (including Ziggy) and in an echo of what weakened the Peter Tosh episode, Keith Richards, giving credibility to Marley by giving the Rolling Stones' stamp of approval (though Keith makes a funny joke about how blonde Norwegians skank about to Marley's music, proving its universality). I've seen far worse Marley documentaries, and I'm pretty sure this is the only VH1 show to get an NAACP Image Award nomination. However, the most negative thing I can say about his show is that I've seen a better Marley documentary...on VH1! VH1 had a show called *Ultimate Albums* that featured Marley and gave a much more intense, revealing look at him by focusing in on specific recording sessions and music creation. (JA)

BTM 5TH ANNIVERSARY (Parts 1-6, 7/26-7/31/02) These six 30 minute episodes celebrated the series five year mark by virtually assuring that there would not be five more years if quality programs. More of an ironic epitaph than a celebration, these shows each focused on one scandalous subject matter (near death experiences, band break ups, going broke, crazy sex) and listed the top 10 nuttiest examples as seen on BTM. Sure, everyone laughs at the absurdity of these hard luck stories, but for BTM itself to present drug overdoses, car accidents and things that drove artists to consider suicide in a tongue-in-cheek manner hurts the integrity of the program (one of the hosts, Cedric the Entertainer, a non rock figure, made goofy jokes as he counted down the awfulness). The only "important" episode of the six was an update episode that showed the further slide of some BTM subjects since their episode aired (poor Leif, ridiculed again). The update show was hosted by Jillian Barbiere, who at least has skanky rock chick cred. Overall these specials, while paying the way for a number of popular VH1 series of countdowns and lists that have followed, dragged BTM farther from *A&E Biography* and closer to *E! True Hollywood Story*. (JA)

AEROSMITH (9/1/02) Given a bountiful two hour format this leisurely tells the tale of the Boston bad boys and is afforded the luxury of telling two parallel stories that meet up in the end. In one we get to really follow the day to day life of an older megastar band as they tour around, work their families into the schedule and appreciate adulation and excess without any actual debauchery. This being Aerosmith, a band that has hit bottom several

DETENTION ROOM FUNNIES

By Rob Syers

THE HEAD in a JAR

PART TWO: WE'RE COMIN' TO GET YOU!

© And TM And All That shit Rob Syers 2007

Our Story so far:

Gumballhead the Cat is decapitated while joy riding with Riff Randal, his head is spirited away by Manny Hack to the laboratory of Dr. Lazar, who keeps it in a jar for his reasearch. He shows off the prize to Dr. Celic, who wants it for his own! Cheerleader Squad Zero rescue Riff and put Gumballheads body on ice. Manny Hack tells mafia big shot "Mr. Boathitch" about the head of his one time nemesis floating helplessly in a jar of clear liquid. All the while a witch watches in a crystal ball.....



Jesus, Lazars place is creepy as a fuckin' Morgue

I Don't know Boss, I think it looks like an out patient clinic.

Some Day Manny. I swear to god, I'm Gonna pop you



yeah, shut up Manny.

ok, sure, it looks like a morgue

Here's the creeps Lab.

SHH! there he is!



He's out cold!

Let's make the score and get the fuck outta Here!

AA-HA-HA-HA-HA

What the...? you said Dr. Freak Here Lives Alone.

He does.

well, who the fuck is that?



Mr. Boat Hitch!
What a pleasant
surprise!

Mr.
Boathitch...

Quite the strange nickname that is.

I know you
Too, Dr. Clark
Celic!

HA! it's Fuckin' Anton
oy vay

it's LA
VAY, you moron
Like you're singing!

Like you
know.

Shut UP
you two!

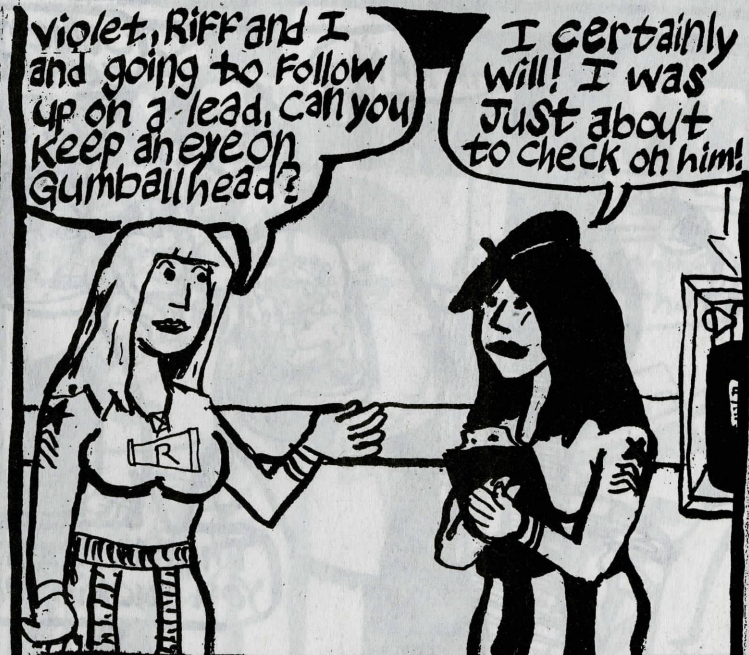
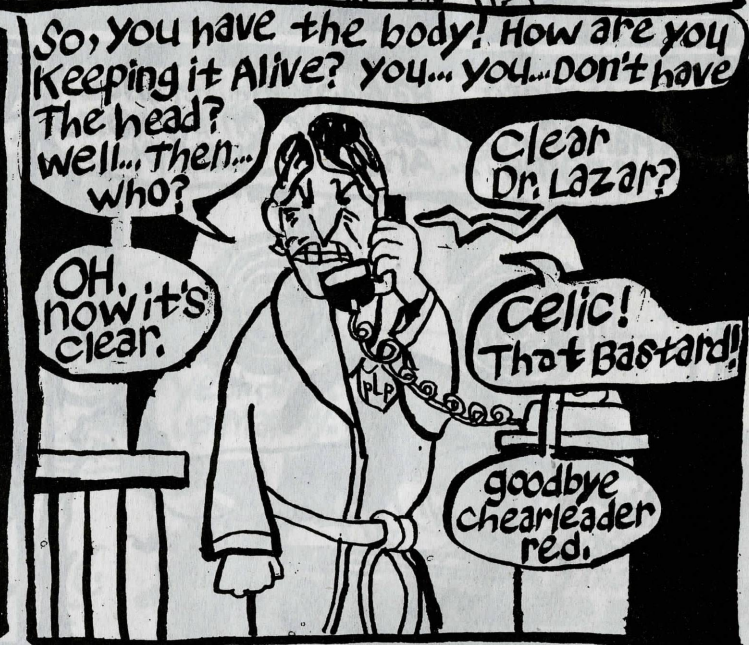
you... MAFIOSO... Have such... Strange
nicknames... concentrate on my voice
your name... And... SLEEP!...

HEY! stop trying to hypnotize us
and hand over the CATS HEAD!
you FAT FREAK!

HA HAA!

Come now sir, surely you don't think I'd
come after such a valuable prize Alone do you?

I
Thumb, Manny!
you Fuckin' morons



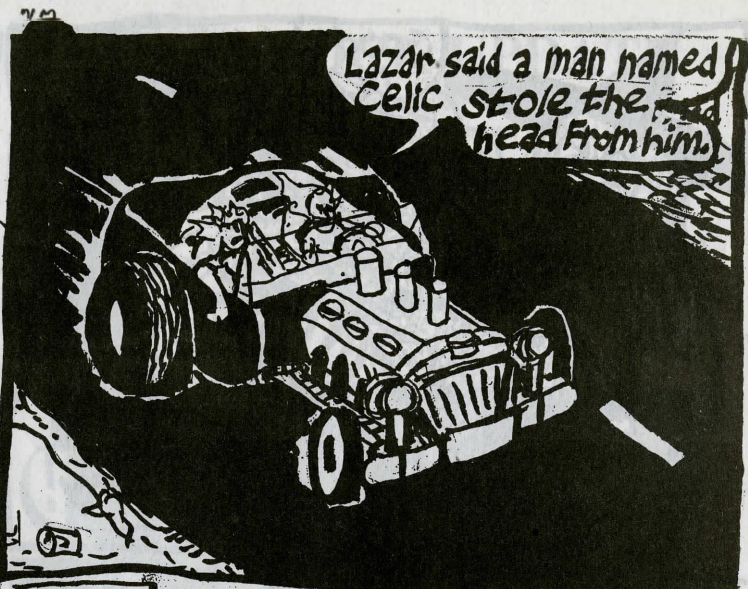
Dr. Lazar is an unscrupulous scientist, he just may have caused your accident to get Gumball's head for research. I wouldn't put it past him!



There's a Dr. Clark Celic, a local scientist. He could be the thief!



Back at The riverwood science institute.



SOON...
Dr. Lazar, we'd like to have a word with you!



I don't have time for this!

Hello pretty young thing!
Ma'am, you could have used the door.





Rob Syers 2004



NEXT : THE CULT OF **OROBOROM**

UPDATES

Thanks to Bob A, Gentleman John, Joe L, Dr. Mark & everyone else!

ONE MAN BAND UPDATE:

THE BIG SQUIRT is a 1937 Columbia short subject starring Charlie Chase (who was in Laurel and Hardy's best flick, *SONS OF THE DESERT*) and it features a one man band.

RAINY DAY SAINTS - Solo studio act with 60s pop leanings.

SNOOZER - Contemporary lo-fi indie pop one woman band.

STRANGEBONE - New Orleans one man band who plays a bizarre homemade golf cart organ machine. Formerly of Crash Worship.



MONKEY ROCK UPDATE

MORE MONKEY ROCKERS: Steve Gibbons (Steve Gibbons Band), Mike Gibbons, The Go Go Gorillas (Badfinger) Gorilla (70s band), Gorilla (90s Garage band), Sleepytime Gorilla Museum

MORE MONKEY SONGS: "Bad Time For Bonzo" - The Damned, "Bonzo Goes To Bitburg" - Ramones, "I Go Ape" - The Rockin' Vicars (sic) (Yes, Lemmy once played on a Neil Sedaka cover, and, of course, it kicks ass), - "Lucky Monkeys" - Iggy Pop, "Monkey Jam" - 76% Uncertain (on LP called "Estimated Monkey Time"), "Monkey Tennis" - Cervaris, "Primate Chow" - America Is Waiting, "Run, Red, Run" - The Coasters

The GoGo the Blue Gorilla Show (1978) LP of by Michael Olmstead and Peter Derge on Blue Gorilla Records (BG 2031). This local children's LP, features appearances by Steve Goodman, Wah Wah Watson, Pee Wee Ellis and Terry Garthwaite. It is about a gorilla who becomes a rock star and it features a great painting on the cover of Go Go. See it: <http://www.gogothelbluegorilla.4t.com/index.html>

The Green Gorilla - A Chicago 60s teen club

Kiddie Spectacular - St. Louis Zoo - In August 1956, the same week Elvis appeared on Ed Sullivan, youngsters enjoyed this TV special which featured chimpanzees playing Dixieland Jazz!



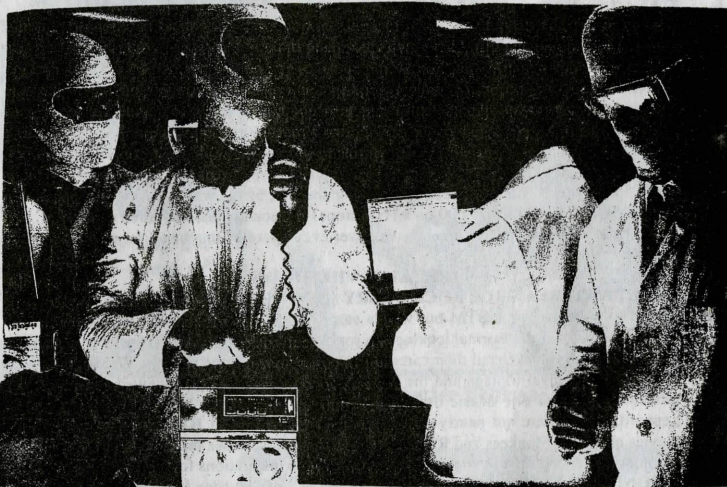
ROBOT ROCK UPDATE

More Robot Records: "Do The Funky Robot" - The Real Thing (this single just sold for \$211.30! Also, in James Brown's "Mind Power" he says "Do the funky robot"), "Mechanical Body" - George + Gwen McCrae, "Muzak For Robots" The Vindictives, "Robot Dance" - Marvin Wright

MIDGET ROCK UPDATE

MINI-KISS - An NYC based all dwarf KISS band with awesome Kiss banter. They mime with their instruments, so if your dream is to be the first all-dwarf, all live KISS tribute band, your dream still lives.

TINY TUNES Mini-Kiss
rock & roll all night at
Lillie's in Red Hook.



MASKED UPDATE

THE BOLIDES are masked futuristic scientist rockers
R. KELLY is now a masked bandit of love

SAMMY DAVIS JR. UPDATE

At the end credits of the 2003 movie

BRUCE ALMIGHTY, in the obligatory outtakes, Jim Carrey morphs his face into Sammy Davis Jr. and sings a few lines from "The Candy Man."

There is a picture of Sammy Davis, Jr. holding a camera in the title sequence to **AUTO FOCUS** (2002)



A St. Patrick's Day Story by Phil Milstein

I saw a funky-ass dude in the post office this morning, a very short, middle-aged black dude with a mustache, dressed like a old-time doorman or elevator operator -- cap, long coat with brushed epaulets, monogrammed lapel, the works -- only with more eccentric versions of those threads than an actual professional would be wearing. Behind him he tugged a little briefcase-on-wheels that was plastered with stickers promoting a Sammy Davis, Jr. impersonator. I'd been seeing posters, very similar to these stickers, around town, and become curious to catch the act. When it dawned on me that the little uniformed man who stood behind me on line was the SDJ impersonator himself, I thought to ask him if he had any gigs coming up, but my turn at the window came up before I had a chance, and I got so preoccupied with the packages I received that I left the P.O. without asking, as well. Oh well, I'm sure I'll see another of his gig posters (or stickers) sooner or later.

But later, on my way back up Beacon Hill after lunch, I spotted the same cat in the window of a convenience store, where he was using the photocopier (despite the fact there's a Kinko's, with far cheaper prices and much better machines, just a hundred yards or so further up the hill) to copy his tax returns. This time, however, he had added a few more accessories to his sartorial display, apparently in honor of St. Patrick's Day -- a green necktie, green-framed and tinted sunglasses, and a shiny green rounded hat (replacing the chauffeur's cap I'd seen him in earlier). At first I thought that he looked like a leprechaun; then corrected that to realize he looks more like a pimp; then finally realized that what he really looks like is a combination of the two: a PIMPRECHAUN!

True story.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 85

GERI HALLIWELL (2000) I don't think this episode ever aired (I watched every time it was scheduled and it was always replaced with something else at the last minute). The interesting thing about the promos on the VH1 website for this was that they were distancing themselves from the show, saying things like, "Why would we do a BTM2 about the ex-Spice Girl? We don't know." I'm pretty sure the footage from this reemerges in the Spice Girls BTM. (This definitely aired in the UK, by the way).

CAEDMON'S CALL (11/31/00 on VH1 Europe) Obviously this only aired in the U.K. as I (a voracious American consumer) have never even heard of this band, let alone seen the episode.

RELATED VH1 SHOWS:

SWEETWATER: A TRUE ROCK STORY (1999) VH1's first "movie" was the story of a band too obscure for a BTM but with a story perfect for one. Using attractive actors playing the parts of this normal looking 60s rock band that opened Woodstock but then had a series of misfortunes derail their career, this ended with a special *Behind The Music*-style feature with archival footage and the real band members being interviewed. There were subsequent *Behind The Music* dramatic movies of Meat Loaf, M.C. Hammer and Def Leppard, which were not nearly as compelling as the original BTMs. They also made movies about the Monkees and Ricky Nelson, but in those cases the BTM's were made as promotional tools for the movies, rather than being the inspirations for the movies. (JA)

BEHIND THE MOVIE: VH1 looked at their BTM's of *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease* and decided that they worked as something else, a new series called *Behind the Movie* that was structured identically to BTM. The non-Travolta episodes include **BEHIND THE MOVIE: TOP GUN**, **BEHIND THE MOVIE: CHICAGO**, **BEHIND THE MOVIE: RISKY BUSINESS**, **BEHIND THE MOVIE: AMERICAN PIE** and **BEHIND THE MOVIE: ANIMAL HOUSE**.

CHRIS GAINES - BEHIND THE SCENES (11/24/99) When Garth Brooks decided he was going to release a poppy non-Country LP he came up with the high concept idea of releasing it under a different persona...a dreamy, mysterious singer with a poetic name fitting a moody enigma...Chris Gaines! Basically choosing a boring name for his alter-ego was indicative of the weaknesses of the endeavor; everything about the Gaines project was a misstep other than that the idea itself which was funny and promising. VH1 cooperated by making a fake *Behind The Music* (which they wisely called "Behind The Scenes," saving a bit of integrity). The whole thing was embarrassing to Brooks because the ideas were so bad, but VH1 shares the blame for executing this so poorly. Gaines was supposed to be in an 80s band Crush that was big until a member died and Gaines disappeared, had an accident that required plastic surgery that apparently made him uglier and fatter (thus Brooks emerges replacing the handsome young Gaines) and returns with a brilliant album (Don Was reminds us of his greatness again and again). This was super sloppy. The 80s photos of Crush have all the clothes and hair wrong and when the show the Billboard charts with Crush's fake hits they didn't even bother to get an 80s chart, the other songs on the chart are from the 90s. But little things weren't the problem, basically this should have been funny, a "mock"-umentary is supposed to have humor and satire and this had nothing. (JA)

POP UP VIDEOS BEHIND THE MUSIC SPECIAL (1/2000) This combined two of VH1's most popular shows, featuring *Pop Up Videos* text commentary on the great Leif Garrett episode. We learn all kinds of crazy stuff that perhaps demystified BTM too much

for them to repeat this experiment. For example, we learn that VH1 totally knew he was still drugged out. They show us that he is wearing a hat in one interview session and a bandana in another and they remind us to be aware that one session is under the influence. We also learn that during his tearful reunion with his wheelchair friend Leif's mom secretly asked the motivated, together wheelchair boy to help get Leif off drugs. (JA)

KISS BEHIND THE MAKEUP (7/1/01) KISS likes to control the presentation of their history and before this VH1 had aired some of KISS' own productions with a little tinkering so they looked VH1 shows. This, however, is the full BTM-type treatment. Bigger than a BTM this was a two hour special that celebrated the band but also asked a few "tough" questions here and there, making it more than a promotional puff piece. It did not use the exact BTM format or announcer or signatures, however. (JA)

BEHIND THE MUSIC PARODIES: Because of the absurdity of the hard luck tales and the rigidity of the classic BTM story arc, there were numerous BTM parodies. Most dedicated was **BEHIND THE MUSIC THAT SUCKS**, a web-toon (an internet based series of short, cheap, computer animations) that made fun of pop, Metal and rap stars within the framework of a BTM send up. While not super funny, and sometimes racist, this series has been seen on cable and has made it to the video shelves in compilation VHS and DVD releases. Of the many other parodies only a few were "official" (where they actually used Jim Forbes as the narrator and used the name "Behind the Music" and not a derivative like "Behind the Beat," which was on *The Jamie Foxx Show*). The best known was **THE SIMPSONS** episode that perfectly sent up BTM as they also addressed the show's own vulnerabilities (like the disturbing amount of real violence Homer subjects Bart to). **SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE** did two BTMs, one about Fat Albert and the Junkyard Band that was mainly notable for the grotesque costumes and prosthetic fat suit Tracey Morgan wore. *Behind the Music: Rock 'n' Roll Heaven* was a skit that told of the dead musicians jamming in a band in heaven and awkwardly fit that into the BTM format. Most absurd was *Behind the Music: George Washington* on the Comedy Central show **TV FUNHOUSE**, which boldly made no historical sense and had nothing to do with music. There is also a 2001 episode of **THE CHRIS ISAAK SHOW** where his band tries to get him on BTM by giving juicy gossip to the possible documentarians.

BEHIND THE MUSIC HOME VIDEOS: There have been VHS and DVD releases of several BTM episodes. *Behind the Music: Shania Twain* was a bestseller, and *Behind the Music: Blondie*, *Behind the Music: Motley Crue* and *Behind the Music: Megadeth* (an extended version on DVD) were also released.

BEHIND THE MUSIC CDS: In 2000 and 2001, when VH1 was exploring BTM as a brand, they decided to lend their name to a bunch of "best of" compilations. It had been noted that artists who were BTM subjects had a huge spike in back catalogue sales, so this seemed like a natural, though they may have shortened the life of this experiment by focusing too much on MOR boomer acts instead of some of the classic rock acts. CDs included *Behind the Music: Harry Chapin*, *Behind the Music: Jim Croce*, *Behind the Music: John Denver*, *Behind the Music: The Go Gos*, *Behind the Music: Hall and Oates*, *Behind the Music: Jefferson Airplane/Starship*, *Behind the Music: KC and the*

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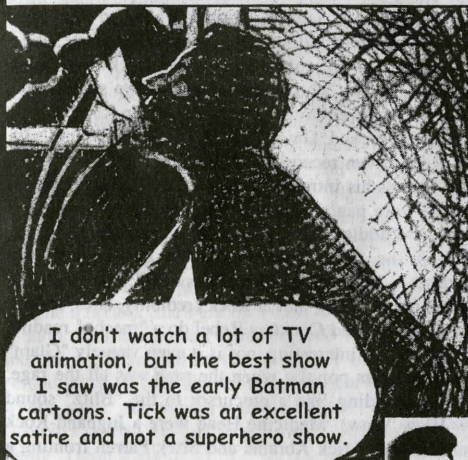
10 quick & DIRTY ones

WITH
COMIC LEGEND □

MARV WOLFMAN!

BY: HANDSOME KEN TEXAS
& BIG DAVE PICKARD
WWW.EVILEMPIRERECORDS.COM

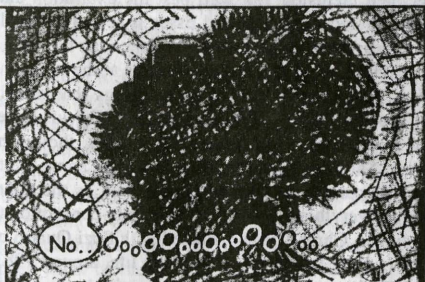
3. I'm of the opinion that the best Superhero cartoon ever was "The Tick." What's your opinion?



I don't watch a lot of TV animation, but the best show I saw was the early Batman cartoons. Tick was an excellent satire and not a superhero show.

Handsome Ken says: Gimme a break, Marv...

6. Did anything "Spooky" ever happen to you while you were writing for "Creepy"?



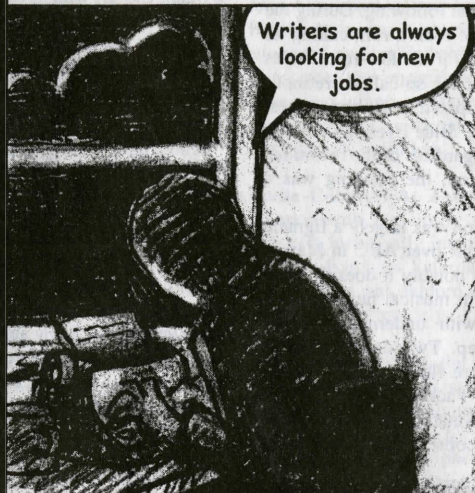
No... OoOoOoOoOoOoOo

7. Again, I'm suspicious. You sure you didn't change your name to Wolfman just to get a job at Warren publishing?



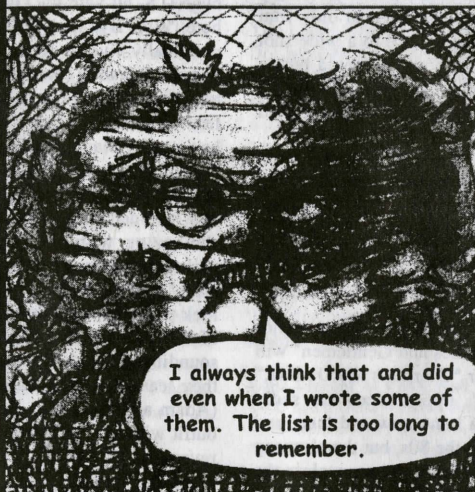
No. It's real.

1. On your website you have a resume, but not a standard bio. (Makes me wonder if that cool name is your given name or not!) Are you just always fishing for a job?



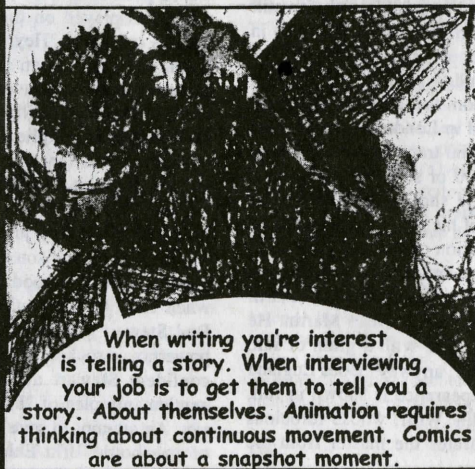
Writers are always looking for new jobs.

4. Do you ever look back at something you wrote 20-30 years ago and wonder "What was I thinking?" Which goofy characters or storylines would you take back?



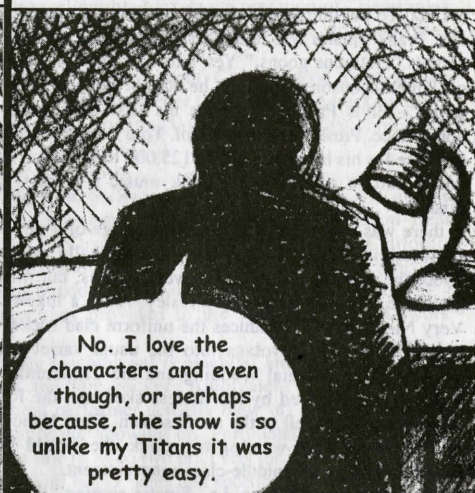
I always think that and did even when I wrote some of them. The list is too long to remember.

8-9. I liked your interview with Larry Niven on your website. How does conducting interviews differ from your normal writing in your mind? For that matter, how does writing for an animated show differ from comic book writing?



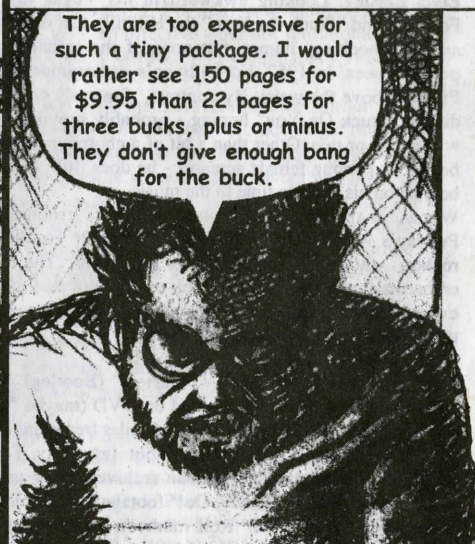
When writing you're interest is telling a story. When interviewing, your job is to get them to tell you a story. About themselves. Animation requires thinking about continuous movement. Comics are about a snapshot moment.

2. You got a Teen Titans cartoon coming out soon. Does it feel odd to you to be writing a new cartoon based mostly on characters that you worked on nearly 25 years ago?



No. I love the characters and even though, or perhaps because, the show is so unlike my Titans it was pretty easy.

5. If you were to express one gripe about modern comics, what would it be?



They are too expensive for such a tiny package. I would rather see 150 pages for \$9.95 than 22 pages for three bucks, plus or minus. They don't give enough bang for the buck.

10. Who's the better Wolfman... You or Lon Chaney Jr.?



Surely you have better questions to ask.

Handsome Ken says: Dare I say it? No I don't and stop calling me Shirley.

ROCK N' ROLL TV ON DVD

The Frank Sinatra Show AKA The Timex Show 'Welcome Home Elvis'

(MVD) To put things in historical perspective, consider the following. During the 50s, Frank Sinatra was notorious in his disparagement of rock'n'roll, calling its singers "cretinous goons." Yet, when he wanted a boost for his low-rated series of Timex-sponsored specials, he sought out the king of the so-called cretinous goons, Elvis Presley, to make his first highly anticipated post-Army guest appearance. Presley's manager Col. Tom Parker made Ol' Blue Eyes pay through the nose for his hypocrisy too - \$125,000 to be exact. Regardless of the record fee and Sinatra's concession to rock music's greatest icon, the booking was a mistake.

If there was ever proof that the Golden Age of Television was largely a figment of nostalgia, this archival DVD is it. Originally broadcast over ABC in May of 1960, the show is a flop from several angles, but most notably it doesn't make good use of either Sinatra or Presley. After a lukewarm musical number, "It's Very Nice," which introduces the uniform clad rocker with undermiked vocals, the show quickly devolves into the usual variety crap. Two dance numbers celebrating an Oriental Wedding and the Chipmunks are flat out time wasters. Further, as evidenced by the lifeless sketches, the Rat Pack's fabled chemistry doesn't translate well to the small screen. Even Nancy Sinatra, not yet the tough talking go-go boot wearing hip-chick she would become a few years later, presents boring, safe middle-class entertainment.

Still, some moments shine, i.e., Sinatra singing "Witchcraft," Sammy Davis Jr. - who basically steals the show - doing his celebrity impressions and offering a number from *Porgy and Bess*. That said, the event is built around the return of Elvis Presley. Looking awkward in his Vegas tux, and singing "Fame and Fortune" and "Stuck On You," the Hillbilly Cat demonstrates professional chops and self-mocking humor, but none of the cathartic abandon of his pre-Army performances. In 1957, Ed Sullivan's cameramen were instructed to only film Presley above the waist. By contrast, Sinatra's crew panned out to a wide shot during "Stuck On You" hoping - probably praying - that Presley would bust a wild move or two. Other than a bit of a choreographed flourish during the song's bridge - to strong female screams - he does little more than snap his fingers and bounce on his heels in time to the music.

Worse, in the duet spot featuring Sinatra crooning "Love Me Tender" and Presley's version of "Witchcraft," the older vocalist effortlessly out sings the rocker, who can't seem to hit his low notes. The result, while not completely embarrassing, provides a textbook example of how poor showcasing can hamper even the most talented of performers. For that lesson alone, this DVD is worth tracking down and studying. (Ken Burke)

Rolling Stones "Ultimate T.V. Masters" (Bootleg) A few of The Stones' major films have been officially released on DVD (maybe "Ladies and Gentlemen" will finally get it's due, but don't expect similar treatment for "Charlie Is My Darling," let alone "Cocksucker Blues!"), but the early T.V. appearances are sadly overlooked. Sure, the Ed Sullivan archives throw us a bone now and then, and some choice "Ready, Steady, Go!" footage used to air in the 80s, but there's many more great T.V. Rock n' Roll moments that won't see legit release, unless the powers that be get hip to the fact that it's their own stubbornness that's keeping those nasty bootleggers in business (is it any coincidence that Allen Klein FINALLY did The Stones' catalogue, with GOOD sound, after an excellent series of boots, taken from the mono masters, turned up in Germany?). This "unofficial" DVD opens with the band's notorious appearance on *Hollywood Palace* with Dean Martin, who gets in a plethora of cheap shots, directed at The Stones, who respond with hot n' mean sendups of "Not Fade Away" and "I Just Wanna Make Love To You." No doubt it sobered Dino up pretty quick. It's still kind of funny to take in Martin's insults in full (you can hear part of his intro in "12x5-The Continuing Adventures of The Rolling Stones") but you can tell the band wasn't laughing (Keith Richard still harbors a grudge, even though his best revenge has been outliving Dean Martin). Red Skelton was another old guard performer who hosted The Stones on his show. Filmed in London at the London Palladium, The Stones are seen lip-synching in the palatial trappings of the lobby, not the main theatre, standing on the stairway with 100 or so (obviously hired) females screaming and crying, but never blowing the shot by getting in The Stones' space. The lone male, Skelton, appears in one of his goofy stage costumes and makes funny faces, but doesn't detract from the action on "stage." Visible in the background are posters for a Herman's Hermits gig, and even *The Black and White Minstrel Show* (a blackface troupe that managed to stay on British T.V. til 1981!). To his credit, Skelton isn't nearly as mean-spirited as Dean Martin. He makes jokes about the band, but they're meant to be taken with a grain of salt. The best joke he tells is: "What is the deal with that hair, anyway? Does England have socialized haircuts?" The legendary *Shindig* appearance is shown in full, with the other performers *deleted*, except for Howlin' Wolf, whose ferocious sendup of "How Many More Years" definitely separates the master from the

pupils, though I'm sure The Wolf appreciated The Stones' insisting to the network that he be their special guest. Ironically, The Stones precede Wolf's appearance with their version of "Little Red Rooster." Actually, only Jagger appears in this segment, which takes place in a haunted house movie set (probably on loan from William Castle) with spooky lighting (very atmospheric, very effective). *Shindig* houseband leader Billy Preston, who would tour and record with The Stones ten years later, sits in on a rousing "Down The Road Apiece." As great as the *Shindig* segment was, the real deal is The 1964 *NME Pollwinners' Concert*. This is the early Stones, raw, live and swigging pint glasses of piss and vinegar. The bands that performed at this prestigious event, even The Beatles, were straddled with barely audible, unmiked equipment (but you read The Troggs' and The Yardbirds' rants about that in these very pages.). It's obvious The Stones can't hear each other for shit (the bass and drums are basically inaudible), but they're playing twice as hard to compensate. Their set culminates with a ravenous "I Just Want To Make Love To You," where Jagger and Jones (Who was actually doing some vocals at the time, while he still had some control over the band) screaming their lungs out, sounding very much like Johnny Rotten on the intro to "Anarchy in the U.K.!" From there, we get later, color clips of the band performing live from *The David Frost Show* and *Top of The Pops*. It's all very cool, but not as exciting as the '64-'65 stuff. There's also some footage from *Shivaree*, another cool (tho' lesser known) Rock n' Roll T.V. show, in early '65. This is a great collection, overall, and the quality is outstanding. If you can find it, check it out... (John Battles)

Glam Rock: The DVD (UK) First of all, the title is a WEE bit misleading. Of course, there's lots of primo stuff, all taken from the great German TV show, *Musikladen* (where performers usually played live to small studio audiences), but it could be argued that many featured acts, while undeniably good, don't really fit the bill. Case in point: The Bay City Rollers. Sure, they took some of Glam's hooks, then took most of the Rock out of it, conquered Europe, and later had a huge U.S. hit with the Glam-Pop anthem, "Saturday Night," which isn't included here. "Bye, Bye, Baby," The Rollers' contribution, is too sweet for my taste, and I practically live at Krispy Kreme. It's got to be the dullest track here, with Showaddywaddy (the British Sha Na Na, who actually had the Pop sensibilities to get into the UK charts with their watered-down take on American Rock n' Roll from The 50s) coming a very close second. David Cassidy, well, what can I say, he's openly slandered Glam Rock (even recently, calling The New York Dolls "out of tune and in drag" on VH1 as his intro for a classic Dolls clip, also from *Musikladen*, in which the band wore pants, and weren't even heavily made-up, and sounded great), no doubt befuddled by his Half-Brother, Shaun, openly shmoozing with the cream of the Glam crop (and even getting his start performing some of their songs!) at Rodney's English Disco. Still, his "Rock Me Baby" (not the B.B. King standard), an early shot at Rock credibility, does, in fact, rock pretty good, at that. Steve Harley and Cockney Rebel do a "macho" reading of "Here Comes The Sun." It's not that interesting, nor is it even vaguely "Glam" sounding. Though Cockney Rebel was popular when the rage was all the rage, they leaned more toward Pop, sounding like a precursor to the "Blitz" sound (Adam and The Ants, Bow Wow Wow). Medicine Head were a Jugband-Rock outfit with more frizzed-out hair than Mick Abrams and Mick Farren fronting a revamped Jimi Hendrix Experience. Their song is pretty cool, tho', light years from that parking space that reads "Reserved for Glam." Nazareth (whom I actually like) checks in with their hit version of Don and Phil's "Love Hurts." Again, what's the connection? Dave Edmunds, who was planning his next move, while no doubt ignoring Glam Rock altogether, at the time, does "Here Comes The Weekend," a much-appreciated inclusion, but well past the expiration date for Glam, even the Pet Brand evaporated variety. David Essex is seen awkwardly commandeering a mike stand, sans a backing band, to his one American hit, "Rock On," a good song (I remember, vividly, reading Charlton Comics at the newstand while this played on the radio), but arguably one of those things that merely borders on Glam. "Hey, did'ya Rock n' Roll?" Uhh, no he didn't, David. James Dean, of course, is an icon in Rock n' Roll and Rockabilly circles, though he eschewed R n' R in favor of Jazz. Sal Mineo, on the other hand, cut some pretty credible Pop-Rockabilly sides, comparable to Charlie Gracie, but, as the Glam Rock movement implied, image is everything. Smokie, whose only connection to Glam Rock was that their lead singer, Chris Norman, dueted with Suzi Quatro on her only U.S. hit, "Stumblin' In" (a song I've heard once in my life, around 1983-84, and I thought it was new). Their track isn't anything to write home about. You may think I've just written the book on anachronisms, BUT, would you believe, Tom Robinson also checks in here with the apolitical Power Pop of "2-4-6-8 Motorway," a good song, to be sure, and a UK hit, but it came out at a time when Gary Glitter couldn't get arrested (yet). Weirdness abounds even still, as Rod Stewart (minus The Faces, who at least flirted with Glam) belts out that powerhouse rocker, "Tonight's The Night." Yes, I'm kidding. Seeing the usually confident Stewart awkwardly contort his body and mime the words to his gentlemanly plea of "I really luv ya, baby, so get yer knickers down" is a laugh riot. An attempt to save this video clip (From itself) comes in the (shapely) form of uber-hottie, Britt Ekland, doing her best Jane Birkin imitation. Do any of you

guys STILL think Rod was "that way"? (NOT that there's anything wrong with that). Okay, I've told you what's wrong with this DVD, now I'm gonna tell you why it's still one of my favorite new music DVDs. You've got T-Rex performing great, raw, renditions of "Jeepster" and "20th Century Boy" (I intend to stay one until I get my rocket car and my robot slave) that prove, contrary to popular belief, that Bolan could actually play guitar, holding the band together without a second guitarist. The Sweet and Suzi Quatro have one amazing clip each, even though The Sweet is lip-synching on theirs. Plus, they're all wearing killer silver lamé outfits, with bassist, Steve Preist, sporting a patch that looks remarkably like Mojo Jo Jo! Brian Connolly works the mike and the floor like the born performer he was accused of never being. Roxy Music come on dressed to kill (Even though Bryan Ferry looks like he inadvertently created the "Saturday Night Fever" look) and prove they can generate the same weirdness of their best (EARLY) tracks, "Virginia Plain" and "Do The Strand," in an intimate studio setting. Eno lurks around like Uncle Creepy, (obviously) providing visual inspiration for Riff Raff, and infuses the proceedings with crazy flying saucer attack sounds that still work in a "Rock" context. Still, the recently reformed band appears to be getting along fine without him. Just a tip, fellas - it's a proven fact that Roxy Music will put your girl in the mood a lot faster than "Tonight's The Night." The Alice Cooper Group does, no doubt, the finest televised performance of it's short, sick career with "Public Animal #9." Radically different than the record, this version has an intro similar to The Velvet's "Heroin," slow at first, then picking up steam, with Dennis Dunaway doubling up on the bass like Lemmy (who'd befriended Alice around this time while touring the states with Hawkwind) with two right hands. Glen Buxton kicks in with some stinging leads and Frau Alice, bedecked in silver spangled pants, black leather jacket and Wonder Woman t-shirt, screams the praises of the damned. This clip has some of the best visual effects I've ever seen, simple by today's standards, but entrancing to this day. A bubble machine produces, well, bubbles, but multiple images of Alice and the band appear in those magic bubbles, changing shape and form, going from the previous "Elected" video to the present taping. The images change colors in an effect that's comparable to the chromatic innovations of "Angry Red Planet." You'll be "TRIP-UN!" as Richard Pryor, and the last few Deadheads standing, would say. Mungo Jerry was hardly a fixture on the Glam scene, but leader Ray Dorset absorbed many seemingly disparate influences of the day, and brought them all together in a way most of his peers couldn't even begin to fathom, and made it all make sense. Songs like "Wild Love" and "Baby Jump" are definitely the missing link between The Equals and T-Rex. "Alright, Alright, Alright," performed here, is a classic example of a song that could have been Glam, in fact, it sounds readymade for Slade. It's not as hard-edged as that, but it remains one of MJ's finest moments, and a great thing to have. Lulu also turns up here, doing her version of Bowie's "Man Who Sold The World," an oft-ignored gem (Nirvana? Gimme a break). She's got on a LOT of makeup here, and sorta camp "gangster" apparel that's not entirely flattering (and she was lookin' GOOD at the time. Hell, she still does), and her moves are limited and robotic (I get the feeling Bowie was behind all this). The funniest thing is, Lulu is the only person you see, til the end, where some guy who resembles Chris Wilson from the latter-day Flamin' Groovies is seen lip-synching Bowie's own backing vocals from the record. Go figure. (John Battles)

Johnny Cash At Town Hall Party (Bear Family) The lengthiest and most satisfying of the Bear Family video sets, these performances - recorded in 1958 and 1959 respectively - showcase Johnny Cash at an early peak before he fell into a chasm of drugs and spiritual torment.

Cash had just left Sun Records in Memphis for Columbia when he first came to California to perform on *Town Hall Party*. Along with the Tennessee Two - Marshal Grant and Luther Perkins - he blends sterling renditions of Sun classics "Get Rhythm," "You're the Nearest Thing to Heaven," "I Walk the Line," and "The Ways of a Woman in Love" with gospel songs and current hits "All Over Again" and the western-flavored "Don't Take Your Guns to Town."

Surprisingly, the trio's sound benefits from the single mike set-up, bringing it together pretty much the way it sounds on recordings. Cash, not yet attired in black, is something of a cut up, using the passive Perkins as the butt of his on-stage humor. More important, he is more comfortable talking directly to the audience than anyone else seen on this series. Not looking a bit like the skeletal speed freak of the 60s, he connects with a palpable mix of honest warmth and stoic authority.

Cash's undeniable star power flames brighter still during the 1959 show. Such Sun hits as "Guess Things Happen That Way," "Big River," and "Folsom Prison Blues" brilliantly mesh with great Columbia releases "I Got Stripes," "Five Feet High and Rising," and "Frankie's Man Johnny." With enigmatic Sun pianist Jimmy Wilson (of Billy Riley's Little Green Men) assisting, Cash seems especially cocky, and his confident, electric performance provokes screams of rock concert proportions.

It's important to note that major headliners like Cash were expected to do more than sing - they were supposed to be entertainers as well. On that score, the Arkansas-born superstar is surprisingly effective. Introducing Grant as "the best

bass-player...on stage right now," Cash assures the viewers that "He's a good boy, too. Everything he steals he gives to his mother." Yet the comic highlight is Cash's "impersonation of a rock'n'roll singer impersonating Elvis," which garners applause at its mere announcement. With hair combed down over his face, lips sneering, and hips swiveling, his burp-laden rendition of "Heartbreak Hotel" provides a satirical portrait more viciously pointed than anything attempted by Stan Freberg.

In a career that encapsulated epic rise and descent, Cash went on to far greater fame - and infamy - but never really got any better than this. When tracking down concert footage on the late legend, this riveting collection merits first choice. It's that good. (Ken Burke)

Eddie Cochran At Town Hall Party (Bear Family) Country music's uneasy alliance with rockabilly and early rock'n'roll is clearly displayed on Bear Family's historically important DVD series. Staged live in Compton, California during a five-hour Saturday broadcast over KTTV, channel 13 in Los Angeles, the program was seldom seen outside the West Coast during its initial 1952 - 1961 run. Fortunately, kinescopes provided to the Armed Forces Network survive.

Although quite short, the Eddie Cochran set is essential viewing because very little live footage exists of the late rocker. Ambivalent to publicity, the Minnesota-born, Oklahoma-bred performer actually blew off an appearance on the Ed Sullivan show by simply not showing up. Fortunately, on February 9, 1959, the young guitar-phenom saw fit to do two brief sets for *Town Hall Party*.

Looking dapper in a dress suit with baggy pants and sporting a pompadour to die for, Cochran lays down some vibrant versions of his two biggest hits ("C'mon Everybody," "Summertime Blues") as well as pleasingly raw takes of songs associated with Chuck Berry ("School Days"), Fats Domino ("Don't Blame It on Me"), and the Drifters ("Money Honey"). For his slow numbers, Cochran employs his foggy voiced ballad style on effective - but not sensational - covers of Gene Autry ("Be Honest With Me") and Red Foley standards ("Have I Told You Lately That I Love You?").

Dot recording artists Dick D'Agostin and the Swingers provide spirited back-up, though both band and star are hampered by the show's crude single microphone set up. Triumphant over technical snafus and genuinely enjoying his interplay with D'Agostin, Cochran exhibits loads of natural charm, humor and intelligence. The latter quality is especially evident during a somewhat condescending interview with country singer Johnny Bond, who asks the 20-year-old Cochran if rock'n'roll music will last. "I think rock'n'roll will be here for quite some time, Johnny," the singer opines. "But I don't think it's going to be rock'n'roll as we know it today."

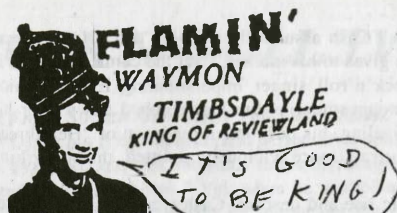
Cochran never lived to see the truth of that prediction. The following year in England he died in a car crash that re-injured Gene Vincent's already game leg. The discovery of this long forgotten video not only provides some joyous moments, but is a sobering reminder of what rock music lost. (Ken Burke)

Gene Vincent At Town Hall Party (Bear Family) The three live segments on this 19-song DVD catch Gene Vincent during his final days as an American pop music force. The first show, from October 25, 1958, showcases the Virginia-born bopeat with his last version of the Blue Caps - Johnny Meeks, Grady Owen, Clyde Pennington, and Cliff Simmons. It's interesting to note that Vincent had abandoned the original 1956 arrangement of "Be-Bop-A-Lula" pretty early in the game, but that it and "Dance to the Bop" cook with greasy raw energy galore. A frustrated rhythm & blues singer at heart, Vincent cuts loose on Huey Piano Smith's "High Blood Pressure" and Little Richard's "Rip It Up," before delivering a stunningly beautiful rendition of Jerry Butler's "For Your Precious Love." The biggest surprise? Vincent's spot on imitation of Jerry Lee Lewis - complete with Simmons' pumpin' piano homage - doing "You Win Again."

By July 25, 1959, the hits had dried up and Vincent could no longer afford to carry his own band. Backed by the show's house musicians - which included Merle Travis - and looking less gaunt than during his previous appearance, the rock pioneer gamely rocks through such worthy non-hits as "Rocky Road Blues" and "Pretty Pearly" before indulging in a fair cover of Jerry Lee Lewis's "High School Confidential" and a monster r&b rendition of Judy Garland's "Over the Rainbow." The distortion of this segment's ancient kinescope soundtrack is annoying, but provides a clear example of the type of music that the artist felt was important to include even on a country-western show.

Better technically is Vincent's final brief appearance on November 7, 1959. Aided by his last collaborator of note, guitarist Jerry Merritt, he confidently plows through a jaunty cover of Chuck Berry's "Roll Over Beethoven" and his upcoming Capitol single "She She Little Sheila." However, the perfect Vincent moment comes via his reprise of "Over the Rainbow." Singing with the tender desperation of a lost soul, he allows years of personal pain and disappointment to leak into the song, transforming it from a wistful plea to a heart-wrenching anthem of loss.

Not long after this show, Vincent left for England. Producer Jack Good dressed him in black motorcycle gear and enhanced his tough guy image by advising him to openly display the brace on his badly gnarled left leg. The ploy helped prolong his career for several years, but when he died at the age of 36, Good's leather jacketed recreation of Vincent was better known than the sweet voiced r&b chanter of the 50s. Fortunately, this compelling performer's anguished ambition and resilient soul are captured for posterity on this fine archival set. (Ken Burke)



Actionslacks "Full Upright Position" (Selfstarter Foundation POBox 1562 NYC 10276) I wouldn't say this band actually made my pants move (as their name would imply) but the solidity of their song craftsmanship had my toe tapping here and there. The "important" slow songs were a little challenging, but I tip my trousers to their lush pop.

Keith John Adams "Sunshine Loft" (DCBaltimore 2012 Records 52 Glenville Av #1 Allston MA 02134) Spare, fresh acoustic skiffle! Skiffle-rific!

Adolescents "The Show Must Go Off!" (Kung Fu, kungfurecords.com) This is maybe the best shot episode of this live concert DVD series, with lots of excellent close-ups and good switching between cameras. While it's easy to chuckle at an old and fat punk band, the fact that the Adolescents sound so good still and are actually named "the Adolescents," makes their age a positive thing at this stage in their career. This is a band that always had good songs with really clever songwriting, and they never overdid the hardcore elements, while also not submitting to full-on poppiness. So to summarize: well shot, good band, good songs. Plus this comes with a CD of the show.

Ahleuchatistas "on the culture industry" (angurasound.com) Ah! Leuchatistas! Improvo-strumentals that go all the from jibbery jabber to tumbleweed dreary to coffeehouse snapalong.

Alkaline Trio/One Man Army split (BYO POB 67609 LA, CA 90067) One Man Army delivers some solid songs here, (despite a cloying singing voice) but Alkaline Trio makes Chicago proud by delivering some of their most rocking recordings in a while, winning this Battle of the Bands easily.

Davie Allan And The Arrows "Restless In L.A." (Sundazed P.O. Box 85, Cocksackie, NY 12051 www.sundazed.com) Davie Allen's still the boss of the sounds of iron hoss and iron cross, and if you don't give a toss, well, that's just your loss. Davie's put out quite a few independent releases in the last few years, but this latest effort shows him getting dangerously close to the sound and the vibe of his original, great, Tower LPs (Which are FINALLY being reissued, also by the fine folks at Sundazed, so look out for 'em!). Seeing as how Davie produced this session himself, it's not surprising that the classic Arrows ("We call it arroz, you call it rice") sound has not been tampered with. Longtime drummer, David Winogrand, and bassist, Bruce Wagner, both put in solid performances, joining Davie on the ultimate ride through Dante's 'Inferno' ("We call it Hell, you call it L.A."). The fuzz and the skronk and the sustain threatens to burn a whole in your psyche as well as your speakers. As always, there's songs here that scream (And how!) to be used in a new movie or two (J. Michael McCarthy, are you reading this?). While not awarded the visibility "Pulp Fiction" has afforded Dick Dale and Link Wray, Allan is as good or better than either one on stage, and his recorded output since the early 90s has remained consistent. The fuzztuned frenzy of "The Toxic Terror," "Demente," "Quiver," etc, never let up, while Allan and Wagner grace us with (would you believe?) some vocals, dueting on a strong cover of "I Had Too Much To Dream (Last Night)" and an Allan original, "Wicked Woman" (a song Allan himself recorded twice previously) sung by Wagner, that actually lives up to the promise of it's title. Davie Allan remains an underrated composer of movie scores and movie soundtracks that should have been (and could yet be!). He's taken inspiration from his main musical man, Henry Mancini, and put it in a Rock context. It's Rock n' Roll that's always melodious, never malodorous. Whether you ride, or you just believe that all God's children should be FREE to DO what they want to DO, Davie Allan's got the soundtrack for you!

Mike Allen "cirrhotic" (Sunseasy) If for some reason you ever decide to assemble a subtle haunted house this is the subtly scary music you need to play in the background.

America Is Waiting "In The Lines" (Die Die Diamond pob 161925 Austin TX 78716) I think they should be the new buzz band because they sound like a swarm of bees buzzing.

Anal Pudding (POB 638 Kenmore NY 14217) This is the best New Wave novelty momma-insult humor CD to ever come out of upstate New York. How can you deny the power of this lyric from "Your Momma's Got A Strap-On": "What's wrong with your momma/Got it wrapped around her waist, hanging above her flibber-flobber."

Fred Anderson & Hamid Drake "back together again" (Thrill Jockey, thrilljockey.com) Fred Anderson is a wonder, a saxophonist whose improvisations can be free and kinetic while simultaneously seeming ordered and profoundly dignified. Hamid Drake is an amazing percussionist whose innovative, joyful work can powerfully drive a combo without ever overtaking his bandmates. Drake and Anderson have played together for many years and as a duo they have an affectionate musical relationship that results in some tremendously wonderful music. I have been playing this record non-stop in my home, and one thing I notice is that small children really hear this as a percussion record, dancing to it like it was James Borwn. The album actually has an almost opposite effect on me. Even at its most intense I find this CD incredibly soothing, I'm almost mesmerized into a blissful state when I experience Anderson and Drake's organic interactions. Like much of Anderson's work what this is ultimately about is an exploration of the challenging nature of free improvisation, but done in such an honest, warm way that it is tremendously accessible without being compromising. I would strongly recommend this record to anyone.

Anfall "the crusher" ep (G-Force) A garage wrestling song about the Crusher, but not a cover of THE garage wrestling song about the Crusher, and while this song would eventually get pinned by the classic, this German band makes sure their tune swings folding chairs and connects hard a few times before they go down. The other songs are actually in German which makes even poppy punk sound a little scary.

Anterrabae "Shakedown Tonight" (Triple Crown 331 W. 57th St. PMB 472 NYC 10019) When this band goes off they sound like a squirrel caught in a power mower. And I don't mean an Alvin and the Chipmunks-voiced squirrel, but a husky, huge fucking squirrel.

Antelope "Crowns" w/ "The Flock" (Dischord) Geometry New Wave formulas that make you dance without changing facial expression.

Antietam "Victory Park" (Carrot Top 935 W. Chestnut, suite LL15 Chicago IL 60622) This is so good that I am Priotietam!

Askeleton "Angry Album or Psychic Songs" (Goodnight POB 690 Murphy Avee #88 Atlanta GA 30310) No bones about it, Askeleton is a cutesy pop, Casio-core king! Instead of allowing computers to make a cheap recording sound expensive this guy appears to have used modern technology to make a record that sounds like it was recorded on one of those Radio Shack calculators from 1978 that looked like an owl.

a sort of homecoming by damon hurd with peter camello (Alternative Comics 503 NW 37th Ave. Gainesville, FL 32609) The dysfunctional marriage between would-be introspective writing and soulless, goofy, hamfisted art supports the idea (which I don't usually agree with) that underground comics should be written and drawn by one person. Even if the writer can only draw stick figures I bet this would be more honest if he drew it himself.

Atombombpocketknife "lack and pattern" (file 13 POB 804868 Chicago IL 60680) This rocked me like a hurricane but crept me out like an ill wind blowing.

Azita "life on the fly" (Drag City POB 476867 Chicago IL 60647) Azita has such an entrancing voice; it's tough and disconnected in some ways, but at the same time it is lush and intensely engaged. More upbeat than her last album, these features her singing over the kind of jazzy music that would make sense in a Max Fleischer cartoon.

Baby Snakes DVD (Eagle Eye) Halfway in I had a lot to say about this Frank Zappa concert DVD, but this thing was so long and tedious and charmless that after it was over all I could remember was that Zappa fans may be more annoying than Phish fans.

Badawi "Clones and False Prophets (ROIR POB 501 Prince St. Station NYC, NY 10012) Dynamic improvisational ambient dub that applies an avant garde sensibility to Middle Eastern audio themes. Though vocals are rare on this album these tracks seem so narrative and dramatic that I feel Badawi's "storytelling" is his best talent.

The Banner "Your Murder Mixtape" (Blackout POB 620 Hoboken NJ 07030) Zombie Metal that sounds like it's sung with a mouthful of brains! Horrific and Horror-ific.

Igor Baxa "piramide" (slusaj najglasnije) Pretty much pretty.

Beauty Pill "The Unsu sta i n a b l e Lifestyle" (Dischord, 3819 Beecher St. NW WDC 20007) Worked more like a Sleeping Pill.

The Behoovers "that's right!" (Dive POB 4218 Sunnyside NY 11104) Beauty may be in the eye of the beholder, but annoyingness is in the voice of the Behoovers.

The Bellakun "...cantar para espantar la soledad" (Has Anyone Ever told You? Pob 161702 Austin TX 78716, hasanyonevertoldyou.com) If you like your music smart and dreary you'll be all achin' for Bellakun

Belle and Sebastian "I'm A Cuckoo" ep (Rough Trade) What a nice single! This features the featured tune (a classy, lovely charming thing), a strange remix (instead of building it up dancier, they break it down with what I assume are aboriginal field recordings) and a video. Then a couple of other 60s Country rock poppy tunes round it out. This rang my Belle!

the bigger lovers "this affair never happened..." (Yep Roc) I usually love everything on this label, and I liked the cover art and the song titles and was pumped for this, but it turned out to be grating Power Pop which the singer is delivering in a nasal frequency that automatically sets off painful brain firings in my cranium. Ecchhh.

Big Meat "hell's half acre" (Sit On My Two Faced Bitch Records) If you like plodding, ugly music MEAT your new favorite record.

Bingo "The Cicada" (Cravedog POB 1841 Portland OR 97207) If I don't hear this Cicada for another seven years that's OK with me.

Black Cougar Shock Unit (Newest Industry Unit 100 - 61 Wellfield Road - Cardiff CF24 3DG UK) Pummeled, melodic Motorhead-inspired rock-hammers that sound better than Clint Black, John Cougar, Michelle Shocked and G-Unit combined.

Black Dice "Miles of Smiles" b/w Trip Dude Delay" (dfarecords.com) While this is pretty good noisy ambience (or ambient noise) I challenge any Black Dice superfan to honestly say they expected or really dug these two epic improvs.

The Black Keys "The Moan" (Alive, alive-totalenergy.com) An EP of some damn sexy Bloozemanship. It's true what they say...the blacker the keys the sweeter the bluiice.

Black Mass of Absu "Demo 1995" (POB 638 Kenmore NY 14217) Sweeping, s-l-o-w Evil Metal dirges that slice off your head with Satan's razor sharp penis.

Black Velvet magazine (336 Birchfield Rd. Webheath, Redditch, Worcs B974NG England) Surprisingly mainstream zine that covers hard music with the passion and innocence of a teenager but also with a nice ear for good journalism. They are loyal enough to old rockers like Enuff Z'nuff and the Bach-less Skid Row but also way into new bands like Lost Prophets and Nickelback. And they review tons of demos - always a good thing! (I won't do it, but I'm an asshole, these people seem nice).

Art Blakey "Jazz Legends: Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers" DVD (MVD) This is a bit mistitled, as it contains two half hour sets shot for a New York Jazz TV show in 1982, one of the Messengers and one of the Johnny Griffin Quartet. These are absolutely beautifully shot concerts, the cameras comfortable in the club (Blakey is at the Village Vanguard) and the band and crowd not playing to the lens but rather just going about their fantastic business. Unfortunately this doesn't feature Blakey interview footage,

for while he was not at his absolute drumming peak in the 80s he was one of the sharpest, boldest spokesmen for Jazz and himself. Your enjoyment level of the set fully depends on how much you dig Wynton Marsalis. As the arranger and featured soloist in the Messengers his presence defines this set, with the hard bop drumming taking a backseat. I admire Marsalis as a leader and philosopher and visionary, but he is not my favorite music maker, so I was a little cool on this. However, my tastebuds (which clearly favor the unsuited) exploded hearing Griffin's set. The fastest Bebop sax in the Western hemisphere (though rarely in the US, he took the expatriate route decades ago) is supplemented with muscular drumming, and tough bass and piano that almost make you want to put an unlaut over one of the vowels in "Hard Bop" (I can't decide on Härd Bop or Hard Bop). Griffin is a protégé of Blakey (everyone was in the Messengers at some point, and Griffin played in numerous major bands over his career) so these two sets go well together. Many a jazzbo will seriously dig this release.

Blizzard Blue #1 compilation (Yawn POB 35854 Tulsa OK 74153) This is a weird comp that's EVERYWHERE! Ska, emo, pop, exoperimental, dirgey stuff, math stuff. Everything. I guess that's good, a total strange lack of unity which somehow leads to a weird cohesion. Ed Kemper Trio, Dropsonic, Sciffu and the aptly named Johnny Reliable deliver the best stuff, but even the bad stuff is good based on being in such a weird comp.

The Bloody Hollies "Fire At Will" (SFTRI) Bloody awesome screaming yet solid Garage that seems to still have youth and piss and nut running through its system.

Blue Epic "Local World News" (TVT 23 East 4th Street, 3rd Floor I New York, NY 10003) Moody melodic magic from manchildren who make mystical, mature music.

Blue Suede News magazine (Box 25 Duvall WA 98019-0025) This is one of the leading roots/rockabilly magazines, and sadly this issue is jam-packed with well written, insightful obituaries and tributes to legends great and humble, from Johnny Cash to Ronnie Dawson to Frank Starr. It's a real shame to see all these greats go, but it's a real pleasure to read how inspirational and unusual they were.

The Bobbyteens "Cruisin' For A Bruisin'" (Estrus) Four super sexy teenagers make J.D./V.D./O.D. girls-in-the-garage trash rock that had the nerve to cover Vanity 6 and the guts to have harmonica solos that rival van Halen solos.

the bolides "science under pressure" (Dionysus) Spazzy science club New Wave that apparently wears masks and labcoats, making them a new Wave I want to surf.

Bonnie "Prince" Billy "sings GREATEST PALACE MUSIC" (Palace/Drag City) Mr. Oldham got an idea in that beautiful, big, long head of his to re-record Palace songs as slick, pleasant Country songs and it's a hoot (and a pleasant listen). Gathering his kin and talented friends (including Andrew Bird and Bobby Bare Jr) he has made a great Nashville album. This isn't necessarily drawing on classic Country & Western (the fiddle-happy "I Am A Cinematographer" sounds more like Lyle Lovett than an old Bob Willis record), but it all sounds ready for *Austin City Limits* (if not the Grand Ole Opry).

Book of Knots (Arclight) Eat oranges as you listen because you are susceptible to scurvy playing this nautical naughtiness. This is a dark concept album where a cacophony of sea sirens, pirates, enchanted fish and infected seamen create waves of powerful dissonance. Bring Dramamine, too.

Born To Rock by Todd Taylor (Gorsky Press POB 42024 LA, CA 90042) This book, mostly consisting of interviews with punk bands from the last decade, is interesting to me because it is from the perspective of a totally devoted punk rocker, but one who started in punk over ten years after what I consider the American heyday. While obviously there will always be new kids on the scene, the punk Mt. Rushmore hasn't really been re-carved, and even new punk kids seem to pay homage to the Ians and Albins and Biafras and the Misfits logo leather jackets. The book of interviews from *Punk Planet* a few years ago clearly nodded to the early 80s despite PP's 90s birthdate. But Taylor is no punk-assed punk putting out a book just because computers made it easy. Despite only getting into the punk/zine trenches in '96 he was a fan, but not a truly active d.i.y./community guy before

that) he has earned his stripes. He worked for years at *Flipside*, moving from shitworker to 2nd in command/managing editor. After that nightmare ended (he was unpaid, devoting all his time to it and living in a hovel eating nothing but tuna) he started *Razorcake*, a zine that features many of the best writers in punk zine history. My favorite parts of this book are the opening and closing essays because they set and clear the table so well. After starting with a brutal childhood story involving a near-fatal car crash (in which Taylor demonstrates his chops by describing his own bloody, excruciating pain) the young boy from a good family learns to question authority (the Boy Scouts screwed him over) and gravitates towards punk. This eventually leads to the too short but still interesting *Flipside* section. I am really into tales of magazine publishing. I much prefer celebrations of enigmatic, visionary publishers like Forest Ackerman, William Gaines, Hugh Hefner and Tim Yo (of *maximunrock'n'roll*, who is interviewed in this book). But I also like to read tales of fuck up awful publishers. The story of the absurd shenanigans at *The Source* in the book *Gunshots at my Cookbook* were amazing, and the brief passage in this book about Al *Flipside* being devilish was pretty good. I never really liked *Flipside*. It never seemed particularly punk to me, it always felt kind of Hollywood. *Maximum* seemed to have the better writers and better taste (their comps killed the *Flipside* comps, even when *Flipside* comps had good bands it would be shitty songs). I'm no purist, I never stopped liking Kiss or Motley to be into punk, but I just always wanted my punk zines to have a certain integrity. That said, Taylor does seem to have that integrity, even if he didn't know to bail on *Flipside* years earlier. The interviews in here are well researched, interesting conversations, and you don't have to know the music or like the music of the bands to be engaged in their conversations. Dillinger Four, NOFX, Hot Water Music and Kid Dynamite are some of the subjects. The book ends not with a bang up essay to sum the book up the glass shattering way it opened. It ends with a tutorial on how to do good interviews. So instead of tooting his own horn he wraps things up by urging would-be writers in the punk community to hone their craft. If that ain't d.i.y. then i.d.k.w.i. (I don't know what is).

Boss Martians "The Set-Up" (MuSick POB 1757 Burbank, CA 91507) Once a surf band this act is now straight up Power Pop/PopPunk, with the only splinter of a surfboard remaining being some nice organ here and there. This is still more interesting than average 90s PopPunk by virtue of some really Brit-style poppy punk vocals (Buzzcocksian, in fact). These are pretty damn catchy songs and if you are a Popster this might your fave record this year.

Boxcar Satan "upstanding and indignant" (Dogfingers pob 2433 San Antonio, TX 78298 dogfingers.com) More hobo-mythical than devil worshipping, this Bluesies it and never loses it despite getting all artistic.

David Boyles "Bedroom Demos" (davidboyles.com) Maybe not the new Prince, but certainly good enough to be an less pretty new Terrence Trent D'arby!

Boyskout "School of etiquette" (Alive) Boyskout has girl's klout! These femmes are mighty fatale with a mix of creepiness and grooviness.

Breakup Society "james at 35" (Get Hip POB 666 Canonsburg PA 15317) Poppy Midwestern bar rock that adds a wrinkle to the "girls name" pop punk genre by making the entire album a nostalgic look back at the promise and innocence of young crushes and love-like obsessions. It's nice how he remembers everything through a rock & roll fog in which the music infects every memory. Musically this is charming, and it has integrity, but occasionally it gets a little close to the *Friends* theme.

brief candles (silent film soundtracks pob 10641 Peoria IL 61612) This music is prettier than Hawaiian sunlight and Jennifer Aniston combined!

Bronco Bullfrog soundtrack (RPM) This film looks fascinating. A *verité*-esque youth movie that sounds like a 1970 version of *Kids*, this thing looks great, shot in black and white with a real gritty feel, and naturalistic acting by the kids (there's a movie trailer for your computer included on the CD). The soundtrack is by a band named Audience who really deliver a nice mix of bluesy Country rock, pretty, Jazzy instrumental stuff and whatever you call what early Bee Gees did. There's lots of dialogue clips dropped in between tracks so listening too this is a pretty moving cinematic experience

even if you can't quite follow the story, but I think following the story might not be the point. Audience was only around for a few years, but that's a shame, they seem top be incredibly talented. This Bullfrog is full of kissed princes!

The Buff Medways "Merry Christmas Frit" (Damaged Goods 45 Colworth Leytonstone London E11 1JA) Billy Childish is no Billy Childlike as his X-mas single is devoid of innocent Elf-in-pixie dust Kris Kringle magic and instead is half bawdy and rousing in an adult hooligan manner and half nightmarishly creepy, in a 19th century orphanage manner. But it's still a better holiday record than Mariah Carey's and Destiny's Child's combined.

The Building Press "Young Money" (54' 40' or Fight! POB 1601 Acme MI 49610) Sloppy mathematicians with a minor in environmental science make good.

Bump-N-Uglies! "So Powerful...So Beautiful" (Steel Cage, steelcagerecords.com) This is an actual wrestling band - last time I saw them play they broke chairs over each others backs and sent one of the band members through a card table. All their nasty, driving scum rock tunes are either about professional rasslin' or being a loser band. The best songs are, of course, odes to wrestling scapegoats, injuries and philosophy (it ain't cheatin' if the ref ain't lookin'). This record made me put my dog in a full nelson and suplex my sister's eight year old!

Burden Brothers "Buried In Your Black Heart" (Trauma) *Heavy Burdens!* This hits you like a lead bat with raw, heavy rock grounded in some awesome drumming.

Eric Burdon "My Secret Life" (SPV GmbH P.O. Box 721147, 30 531 Hannover, Germany www.spv.de) Return of Super Geordie! Not that Burdon's been away, he still tours frequently, and there's a ton of live CDs out there, so much so that even the most hardened geeks must have a difficult time telling them apart, but this is his first studio release in quite some time. It's not as Blues-based as "Comeback," though it doesn't sound as "Funky" as "I Used To Be An Animal," either. At times, this resembles a Van Morrison solo venture, soulful, but not flat-out rockin', and, yeah, with more balls (were this 1964-5, Burdon and Morrison could fight it out to a natural draw in a "Battle of The Balls" contest, with none of their peers bothering to show). The predominant mood is the mid-tempo, Soul/Jazz-oriented stylings that both men are known for these days, but Eric could arguably be veering a little closer to Solomon Burke's recent groundbreaker on Fat Possum, and, people, that's goooood. I still think that Burdon has it in him to do a kick-ass R n' B album, backed by the likes of The Inmates or Dr. Feelgood, but he's always followed his own path, and worked with whomever he pleases. Most importantly, he's in good vocal form, still able to kick out with a Soul scream, a bit of Jazzy improvisation, or the same kind of moody intoning that made his work with The Animals stand out, because he'd studied it all-Blues, Soul, R n' B, Jazz and early Rock n' Roll, and found his own voice. While the first half of this effort is a lot more sinewy and seductive (play it when your girl or guy comes over. I ain't promisin' NUTHIN', but it might help), but things do start to pick up steam, and get a bit more interesting, in the second half. "Black and White World" rocks pretty good with a Rock Steady-derived rhythm and a cheesy Sir Doug/Mysterians styled organ, and plenty of shreddin' (on the vocal chords, I mean, not the guitar). "Heaven," would you believe, is the old Talking Heads track (hey, if Steve Marriott could do "Life During Wartime..."), and it's done in a smokey, Jazzy style, with Burdon improvising lyrics about the band in Heaven featuring his favorite departed musical heroes and heroines (So much for Heaven being a place where nothing ever happens). "Devil Slide" is a pretty cool Blues-Rocker Along the lines of "No More Elmore," while "Broken Records" is, in part, an homage to James Brown's trials and tribulations, and "Can't Kill The Boogieman," the one stone rocker in this set, is, not surprisingly, to John Lee Hooker what "No More Elmore" was to Elmore James. It's a true celebration of what John Lee Hooker meant to Eric, not the modest reverence of The Groundhogs' "Sir John," but a rockin', boogie-woogie-in, good time PARTY that clocks in at just under four minutes. There's also a great line about Eric and his friends wearing sweaters that read "John Lee Hooker For President!" in Art School. As the man said, there's got to be peace, love and understanding in our time, but if it ain't asking too much, please, DON'T FORGET TO BOOGIE!!!!

BURNTHESTRACK "The Ocean" (Abacus) This made me feel so bad I needed a bottle of EMO-dium AD.

Butchies "make yr life" (Yep Roc) Live the Butchies are a band with so much magnetism and charisma that I have always been disappointed that their recordings don't fulfill their promise. While this album still doesn't win you over unconditionally this is definitely their most solid record musically. These are all good radio songs that wouldn't be out of place on college indie radio but also would (or at least should) be at home next to top 40 hits. These solid songs highlight Kaia's talents really well.

The Buttless Chaps "love this time" (Mint POB 3613 vancouver BC Canada V6B 3Y5 This chap singing may not have a butt but he sure has balls. How else could he croon like a deep voiced Morrissey preaching to a nature-worshipping mad cult.

Candy Butchers "Hang On Mike" (RPM/Sony) Sweet!

Cannibal Corpse "The Wretched Spawn" (Metal Blade) Here's blood in your eye! Another brilliant stabbing of death metal technical brilliance and horrific Cookie Monster barking by the great Corpsegrinder. While this cover art is less nauseating than the last couple of albums (though still pretty disturbing) the songs are totally fucked and evil, as good as anything they've done in years.

The Caribbean "William of Orange" (Hometapes home-tapes.com) Caribboringan

The Castle Broadway "towers and transmissions" (Souttrane.com) Postjazz soundscapes with a beat that can't be beat.

Catholic Boys "Psychic Voodoo Mind Control" (Trick Knee POB 12714 Green Bay, WI 54307) Desperate trash rock that doesn't literally break beer bottles over your head, they only musically break beer bottles over your head.

cat on form (Southern, southern.net) Sounded like cats on fire.

Ceiling Fan "Hot Streets" (imperialfuzz.com) This is genuine College Rock (as opposed to Alternative, which replaced the REM-led matriculation music scene of the 80s) with smart, poppy stuff that's not raw enough to be DIY. The drummer seems super pro, and the music here is too clever to be punk or rawk.

cervaris "dog eared" (Low Heat POB 2035 Old Chelsea Station NYC 10113) This is an album of oddly lovely fragile music that is brought home with an ambient song about monkeys playing tennis (one of my favorite tracks of the year).

Channel 3 "CH3 Live!" (Re-Force) CH3 were a west coast hardcore band in the glummy T.S.O.L. mode. That is, they were not as quick to distance themselves from glam and classic rock - they even had a Doors cover (included here). I didn't know the band made it out of the 80s, and maybe they didn't, but two members did make it to Europe in 1994 where they recorded this live album with local musicians filling out the band. Not being a pure hardcore band it doesn't seem inappropriate for them to do this, and the record is pretty fun, though obviously not as vital as their original records or shows.

Cheeseburger (Aerodrome 302 Bedford Ave PMB #133 Brooklyn NY 11211) Grilled me and made me greasy.

Jenny Choi "postcard stories" (Suburban Home) Ms. Choi has a lovely voice and her songs are playful and gentle while still seeming important and serious. Too often artists become less poppy when they become lyrically ambitious, but this is a perfect balance of thoughtful moodiness and light poppy infectiousness.

Chop-sakis "ghost town crowd" (Little Deputy POB 7066 Austin TX 78713-7066) Chopped and socked me with pop-punk vocals submitting to punk-punk guitars.

Chrash "the party" (Appletree) Chrappy.

Chromatics "plaster Hounds" (GSL POB 65091 LA, CA 90065) Inspiringly dreary futuristic mole-people music.

The CIA Makes Science Fiction Unexciting #2 (Microcosm POB 14332 Portland OR 97293) I'm not sayin' I believe

what this book has to say about the CIA and their connection to the causes and non-causes for A.I.D.S., but I am saying that if the C.I.A. denied this I wouldn't believe them.

Citizens Here and Abroad "Ghosts of Tables and Chairs" (Omnibus POB 16-2372 Sacramento CA 95816) Grand pop with a moody atmospheric patina that makes drones into dreams!

Coffinshakers "We Are The Undead" (Primitive Art) Silly horror-billy that loses some spookiness when the Swedish singer tries to hiccup in English and sounds more like a Muppet than a monster. Still, this is some upbeat, Country-style roots music that is fun all the way to the bottom of the grave.

Stud Cole "Burn Baby Burn" (Norton) Maybe, by now, you've heard the popular tagline that Stud Cole sounds "like Elvis backed by The Yardbirds." On one level, that's true, but it's only a small part of this equation. In these post-Kicks times (I'm not sayin' it's over for Kicks, cos personally, I don't know), I've met fewer people that dig Rockabilly and Garage equally. In fact, the line seems to be drawn between the two camps, and Stud Cole is standing right on that line saying, "Who wants to knock this block off my shoulder?" Of course, if Cole were alive today (sadly, he's not), he might share my view that trying to choose between the two is like trying to choose between Mom and Dad. Like Jack Starr, Donny B. Waugh, and later, The Cramps, Cole feels his natural Blues, Rockabilly, Garage, and proto-Psychedelic oats with no sense of contradiction. The opener, "Burn Baby Burn" sounds like The Yardbirds' instrumental, "Got To Hurry" (as does "The Devil's Comin'" with Cole's raving like a Psychedelic street preacher in an AIP picture, or, most likely, Vince Taylor in the throes of his own messianic complex. It doesn't sound much like Elvis, but, he does get in some macho croonin' ala Presley and Conway Twitty on other boss cuts. These recordings, all or mostly made in 1968 (With, I take it, Stud Cole playing everything), were done well past the expiration date (if only in the public eye) of such cool vocal stylings, yet, Cole, whose savage guitar playing bring to mind a far more primitive take on Jeff Beck, incorporated a lot of spooky, paranoid sounding vocal overdub effects that should have set well with the Psych scene. But, I think if any of those cats had a chance to hear it - which isn't likely - most of them probably couldn't come to terms with it (even, arguably, the likes of Joe Byrd). At times, this CD sounds like a trip thru Hell (And, as this was late 60s L.A., Hell was just a short drive). Stud Cole had the two important prerequisites for stardom, Adonis-like features and GREAT hair (both of which got Elvis AND JFK over like a fat rat in a cheese factory), and he didn't shy from his personal convictions when it came down to music (though then, as today, that could be less of an asset and more of a hindrance), adopting the great slogan, "Individual Integrity," a stamp he put on every track contained within, from "Feels Good," which does sound, flatteringly, like Elvis meets The Yardbirds despite a flute solo that recalls "Animal Instinct," probably Elvis' strangest movie track, to the flat-out Garage Punk of "Don't Do That," to the "Money Honey"/Heartbreak Hotel" in overdrive of "The Witch" (A perfect companion piece to Roky Erickson's Elvis covers on Norton's "Don't Knock The Rok") and the Conway Twitty in The Psychedelic Jungle sounds of "Hard Luck Games." It may not have at the time, but it all makes sense today. Obviously, Stud Cole was an extremely creative individual, more than five years ahead of his time. Maybe he could have got his due in his own time, but he was IN his own time already, and to make these supposedly "With it" cats with their talk of "Mind expansion" get even close to approaching where he was at, he would have had to have totally chucked his integrity out the window..... "Integrity, I like that. Even if you can't afford it!" "That MAKES it integrity!" (From the movie, "The Girl Can't Help It")

Comixville zine (POB 697 Portland OR 97207) If you love comix and youth and getting good mail and the smell of Xerox ink than this guide to ordering excellent minicomix is as important as air. Or at least as important as ice in your drink on a relatively hot day.

Alice Cooper "Brutally Live DVD/CD (Eagle Vision/Eagle Rock 22 W. 38th St. 7th Fl. NYC 10018) It is a new no secret that Mr. Cooper had stronger material earlier in his career (he was working with a better band who contributed more) but that is a reason to approach his new albums with wariness, not his concerts or this DVD: the new songs may not be his best musically but they were likely written with dramatic staging

in mind and are dynamic live. Highlights of this show include old stunts and new. Alice gets decapitated, there's a persecuted, eviscerated robot and a flaming drum solo. In addition to the concert being intense (he has a massive stage set up and big, powerful band) the concert is also shot remarkably well. The combination of clever staging and excellent shot selection make the theatrical presentation of songs like "Dead Babies" really captivating. And the most impressive thing about the show...Alice never gets tired. I guess golf really is good exercise.

The Cooper Temple Clause "Kick Up The Fire, And Let The Flames Break loose" (RCA) I prefer Alice Cooper Shirley Temple and Santa Clause to this boring, arrogant Brit artrock.

Cooterfinger "Three Chords and a...grudge" (Illbilly POB 924 Blue Ridge, GA 30513) Angry tough 60s Garage inspired bedroom rockers that have that great lo fo "recorded inside a tin can" sound.

Cordero "Somos Cordero" (Daemon) I loved the last Cordero record but his one is ten times better. Ms. Cordero sings like an angel (at times a seductively detached angel) and this band that combines Latin rhythms with poppy American indie rock makes truly captivating music. I know the "P" word may seem like a lift handed compliment, but this record is amazingly pleasant, and I often need some pleasant music in my life.

The Cramps "Live at Napa State Mental Institution" (MVD/Target) I got really excited about this, having only seen this legendary concert on a crappy dub of the original Target video. But the second I popped this in I, of course, realized that there is going to be no "DVD Quality Remaster" here, and Target would never claim there could be one. This was shot on shitty VHS with a shaky camera, was (minimally) edited on a primitive system, and "mastered" on shitty VHS. So it looks as shitty as ever, plus a couple of decades of degeneration. That said, THIS STILL RULES! It is the best Cramps live video ever, as they are playing for a few dozen people with their greatest lineup (though Bryan Gregory doesn't look super comfortable) and once Lux warms up it is like having them play their best songs in your living room. If your living room was filled with heavily medicated mentally ill people who either stood still like zombies or danced around like inspired two year olds (which is great dancing, but somewhat odd looking for 40 year olds). This also features a bunch of excellent Target clips of some of the best hardcore bands and extreme performance artists of the late 70s and early 80s. There will be some DVD releases of classic Target titles, but don't expect Black Flag stuff. I hear someone is being very stingy with that stuff.

Crime In Stereo "Explosives" (Blackout/Brightside blackoutrecords.com) Bottle busted over your head rock that should be illegal!

The Cry Of Jazz DVD (MVD/Atavistic) I saw this movie years ago and I have been obsessed with it since, though I feared I'd never have an opportunity to see it again (partly because I've been looking for it by the wrong title, anyone out there I asked about tracking down *The Death of Jazz*...never mind). Anyhow, I can't tell you how excited I was about the DVD release of this 1959 film by African American writer, composer, director Edward Bland. First thing I should say about this: *Cry of Jazz* is being marketed as a Sun Ra DVD. While Le Sun Ra (as he's called in this) appears briefly, and is excellent, he's not really in the movie more than a few minutes. Of course, it is ultra rare, fantastic footage of his 1950s Chicago combo, so it's a lot more satisfying to Ra fans than buying that Batman record he's supposed to be on. But Sun Ra or no SunRa, this film is well worth watching. It opens in an apartment on Chicago's South Side as a coffee and cigarette fueled meeting of a jazz appreciation society is breaking up. Everyone leaves but a handful of people, including simple Bruce, a white guy trying to pick up the seemingly drunk and racist Natalie by explaining how Rock n' Roll is jazz. Alex, a handsome African American, boldly corrects this foolish mistake, which causes John, an edgy, white jazz fan, to challenge the idea that jazz is inherently Negro. This leads to Alex delivering a treatise on jazz, a social ethnomusicology that concerns the nature of jazz and how it relates to the humiliating, dehumanizing life of Negroes in America, with constraint, improvisation and changes all relating to the limited ways African Americans can experience and express their joy. In a cool, almost clinical voice he explains this, eventually culminating his

manifesto by declaring that Blacks are the only human Americans and the only hope for the country's soul. While we hear this polemic we see beautifully shot images of poor Blacks on Chicago's South Side; children playing amongst cockroaches, young people navigating urban decay, and a joyous Baptist church services. These are balanced with stunning, dramatic close-ups of jazzmen playing the real gone sounds that support Alex's speech. While Alex is clearly lecturing to white people (though his knowledge is not presented as essentialist programmed Black consciousness...the other Blacks in the society also ask Alex to elaborate) he is not trying to appease whites, as he and the filmmaker make clear when he explains the impotence of white attempts at jazz, illustrated by hot Bop scoring dynamic footage of black men in a pool hall contrasted with soft, vanilla jazz playing while a rich woman grooms her poodle. When Alex takes a breath John and Natalie harshly challenge him, Natalie acting so ridiculous you expect her to smacked (instead she is just called dumb). Alex then lays out the history of jazz to the group, presenting Sun Ra as the ultimate culmination of all that has happened so far. The highly dramatic footage of the Arkestra playing, backlit with shadows cast across the club, is accompanied by Alex's endorsement of Ra's music and philosophy. He then declares the history of jazz over: jazz is dead! As he elaborates about the needs for whites to reclaim their souls by recognizing the moral superiority and unjust suffering of Blacks a frustrated John screams, "What's happening here!" Alex then calmly tells his white companions, and the whites in the audience, what time it really is.

If you think I blew the movie with such a long summary, believe me, there are dozens of unbelievable moments in this movie I haven't described. It is truly an amazing piece. And though obviously it is a didactic movie, resembling an educational film reel, it's far more complex than that. For one thing, Fay, a sympathetic white woman, is clearly trying to sleep with Alex, and he seems receptive. This certainly complicates the noble hero; if it is supposed to indicate that Alex views the jazz society as a way to pick up white women that compromises his role as noble race man, and if his sleeping with her is a political move to humiliate the white man (John shoots them a look) then he is kind of an asshole for using this good hearted girl. The director also makes it clear that another Black man who stuck around, Louis, is seething with rage and would as soon kill white people as smoke with them, which is interesting, but takes some focus away from the lesson. The actors are stiff, awkward amateurs, but they seem to be cast brilliantly so that each one's particular awkwardness magnifies their character's personality. In short, this is a multi-faceted, thoughtful, absurd movie. And even if none of this narrative interests you, get it for the tremendous music. This is one of my favorite movies of all time and I am giddy that it is widely available. Jazz may be dead, but this film will live forever.

Cudnovati DJ Zdena "Umetnost umentanja" (Slusaj Naajglanje!) Weird guy music that seems like an evil nerd is creating the folk music of an underground dwelling folk.

Jesse D "Going Back" (De La O records, 508 Meyer St. Victoria TX 77901) Fans of contemporary Christian Metal may find this a little spare and traditional, but fans of outsider music *I URGE YOU TO WRITE TO MR. DE LA O AND ORDER THIS CD!* It is an amazing, honest, raw testament to Jesus in the form of walling Metal leads and great, simple lyrics (he rhymes funny, money, sunny and crumby, then sings, "so crumby so crumby so crumby so crumby!"). I love this CD and fans of honest, original, inspirational music will dig it too.

Dagger zine (\$2, POB 820102 Portland, OR 97282-1102) This zine has been around forever, and it reviews zillions of indie CDs and has some very solid interviews. I seem to remember better design back in "the day," but once you get to reading this dense mag you forget how it looks.

Terence Trent D'arby "in concert" DVD (MVD) This is from a series of mid 80s German concerts done for TV. Most of the series features roots musicians well past their prime trying to update their sound with 80s guitar and mullet haircuts, so it is cool to see what happens when you have an artist at his complete prime (perhaps D'arby could have had another prime but the fickle public and his ego cut a rising career short). Well, the most glaring thing here is the fact that the TTD of videos and American TV may have been benefiting from good production values. He still seems like a beautiful, good dancing, strong voiced soul man (he was neo-soul when neo-soul wasn't cool), but on a small stage in front

of white middle-aged Germans (including a dowdy woman front and center who never moves an inch) brings him down to earth. His originals are still very solid and catchy, and his Fatback, Jackson Five, James Brown and even Stones covers are all bold, structurally sound and kinda funky. But there's not much genuine spark here. Notable is that Terence is now named Sananda Maitreya and at his insistence that name appears, often awkwardly, all over this CD, with explanations of his name change anywhere it will fit on the packaging. The spine actually reads "TERENCE TRENT D'ARBY" now Sananda Maitreya"

Dead Kennedys "Live At The Deaf Club" (Manifesto) Look, I'm not going to get in the middle of the Jello/DK thing, I honestly believe it is very difficult to know what the hell went on in court without being there, so basically, if you can't buy this in good conscience then steal it. It is worth having. This is a live DKs show from 1979, recorded at the Deaf Club in San Francisco. If you've heard the Deaf Club compilation LP you know some of the material here, but this is the entire set, and it is vibrant, exciting and absurd. DK songs you are super familiar with are played with, or still developing, the band messes around with covers of Beatles, Elvis and the Honeycombs, and Jello's banter, silliness and even impressions (OK, just one, but it is a Darby Crash impersonation) make this pretty spectacular.

Dead Poetic "New Medicines" (Solidstate) Hard-assed rock with a weird balance of yearny, fey emo-influenced vocals and ugly, gnarling Death inspired vox (often in the same song). This may not appeal to everyone, but at least part of each song will impress you.

Deadstring Brothers "Twenty Seven Hours" b/w "The Ballad of Wendy Case" (Times Beach) Two beautifully crafted songs that take your ears and beers from a sad, late night honkytonk, to a rowdy, midnight dive bar.



Death Metal A Documentary DVD (MVD) This documentary was made by the guys behind the *Grimoire of Exalted Deeds* magazine, and basically what they did was just interview lots of Death Metal guys and let their words speak for themselves. This is pretty hands-off, no narrator filmmaking. Most of the interviewees are super articulate, proud of the technical aspects of their genre, and no one is interviewed drunk or fucked up at a club. This is best when they touch on one subject that they have a lot of bands, including touring acts weigh in. This slows down when one guy (usually Peter Steele of Carnifex) talks on and on. There's definitely a New York bias to this film, but it is really a great survey of Death Metal attitudes today. This also has great videos, maybe a little heavy on the naked girls chained down and subjected to torture, but great nonetheless.

Decade: Ten Years of Fierce Panda (Fierce Panda/brashmusic.com) Apparently this record label has been good ears, as they put out early tracks by Coldplay, Polyphonic Spree, Bright Eyes and Death Cab For Cutie. This is a really solid listen and thought the bands are disparate the quality of the music is all soaring and excellent.

Decahedron "Disconnection Imminent" (Lovitt POB 248 Arlington VA 22210-9998) This is a Deca-hedron! DC-style mathematical punk with warm rock tones washing over it.

Deep Purple w/Thin Lizzy (Live, Chicago Theatre-2/24/04) Well, you might call me purpocentric for reviewing so many

things related to The Purps, but, in truth, I'd never seen 'em even once. During the Heavy Metal revival (which no one seemed to think WAS a revival) of the mid-80s, I wasn't too worked up about the Deep Purple reunion, having shaken my High School Metal jones (for the time being, anyway). Later, when I started listening to Deep Purple again, I didn't feel like being crushed at The House of Blues enough to go see them, and besides, Richie Blackmore had long since split the scene. Still, a double bill this strong was well worth a shot, even if Thin Lizzy is now down to one member from the classic lineup (in The U.S. at least, where original drummer Brian Downey refuses to tour, though he still joins them on stage in Ireland), and, as I found out at the show, Jon Lord no longer lays down his signature organ stylings for DP, which brings the classic lineup toll down to three (which is one more member of the classic Purple lineup than when I saw the pre-Hair Metal Whitesnake in 1980). Thin Lizzy, well, let's face facts, we're not going to see the likes of Phil Lynott again (you might get to buy him a pint in Rock n' Roll Heaven someday), and if you ever did, you've got The Luck O' The Irish. Me, I was standing outside of Comiskey Park in 1979 when I discovered I'd lost my ticket to a Rock festival being held there with Lizzy on the bill. I HEARD 'em, but that was all. The latter day Thin Lizzy serves Phil's memory well, guitarist John Sykes (who played in the final lineup, ca.'83) sounds a LOT like Phil when he sings, and more than ably does the twin guitar attack with Scott Gorham, but it could be argued that they're little more than a tribute band. I don't really buy into all of that, but, sure, they're representin' for Phil, and while they'd be closer to it with Downey on board, fuck me, they rock. The set list, admittedly, was a bit predictable (nearly identical to when I saw 'em recently at Double Door). A lot of my personal faves, like "The Rocker," "Do Anything You Wanna Do" and "The Emerald" weren't dusted off for the ravers, but they sounded great, especially on a rousing "Cowboy Song" and a lovely reading of "Still In Love With You Baby." Wish they'd given 'em more time, but, hey.... Deep Purple took the stage with a talented, tho' seldom audible, young keyboard whiz, longtime lead guitarist, Steve Morse (ex-Dixie Dregs. My brothers used to listen to them, and Bolin-era Purple, when "Fusion" was all the rage), drummer Ian Paice (technically, the only original member left), bassist Roger Glover, and, would you believe?, Ian Gillan with short hair (Looks good on him), in his bare feet, and wearing what looked like white pajamas or a modified Judo robe. He pulled it off, though. He's that cool. The first half of the show consisted largely of songs from their new album, "Bananas," which sounded good, but left me wanting, though a few hits, like "My Woman From Tokyo" and "Strange Kind of Woman," were thrown in for good measure. The band performed "Machine Head" in it's entirety in the second half of the show, accompanied by a slide show featuring everybody from a septuagenarian Groucho Marx to a youthful Peter Green's Fleetwood Mac. This really picked up the pace considerably. Gillan still howls and screams as well as ever, easily the Tom Jones of his realm, and, I've got to say, he comes on like a regular bloke, very good natured, someone you'd actually like to have a drink with. Morse really SHREDS, man, but he shreds tastefully, and has impeccable tone. Paice and Glover display remarkable dexterity and stamina for guys old enough to be my...UNCLES, anyway. As it was in the day, The Purps can solo away til the cows come home to jump over the moon, but it doesn't sound gratuitous. It all makes sense in a Rock n' Roll context. Best of all, they looked like they were all truly enjoying themselves. The encore was (as I'd hoped) "Speed King," stretched out to about ten minutes with Gillan throwing in parts of "Cathy's Clown," "It's Now Or Never" and ALL of "High School Confidential" (which I don't think too many people recognized, but it was BAD ASS!!), and returning to wail like Noddy Holder on his wedding night, followed by a top notch version of "Hush" (of course, Gillan didn't sing on the original, but he handled it like he did). PHEW! I was rocked and entertained at the same time. DUNT-DUNT-DUHH. DUNT-DUNT-DA-DUHH!!! Huh-Huh. That was cool.

The Defectors "Turn Me On!" (Bad Afro SANDBJERGGADE 11, 2200 KBH. N, Denmark) Throw a beer bottle in the air and have it land right in between organ driven 60s Garage and hard rock driven contemporary Euro-Garage and enjoy what bleeds out of where the glass shards flew. I love the singers mock 60s voice, rejecting post punk vocals in lieu of absurdly enjoyable Nuggets-isms.

Delta Masters (Dogfingers POB 2433 San Antonio TX 78298) This compilation features classic Blues chestnuts covered by progressive, fucked rock bands, and the more fucked the band the better the track. Rube Waddell and

Loraxx make disconcerting music here that almost throws away the source material. With Blues that's a pretty bold thing to do, as the foundation of rock & roll it is almost always treated reverently. Other standouts include Immoral Lee County Killers and Double Clutch (the blooziest track of the bunch).

Demon Hunter "Summer of Darkness" (Solidstate) Cinematic, dynamic, monstrous brutality as haunting as it is hunting.

"Demons" "Demonology" (Gearhead POB 421219 SF, CA 94142) *Gearhead Magazine* put out plenty of music that came with or celebrated the magazine's diesel injected love of hard punk-inspired rock n' roll. When they officially became a real label with real bands and everything that goes along with that these naughty Swedes were the first signing. Though associated with the Estrus-led Garage Rock revival of the 90s the Gearheads in fact have their roots in 80s hardcore punk (Mr. Gearhead was in one of my fave bands). What many see as the death of true American hardcore was the "crossover" era, where the thrashy nature of what was New Metal those days led to lots of hardcore bands adding shredding Metal solos and the spare original hardcore sound gave in to questionable things like a non-punk Misfits album and the big-hair major label version of T.S.O.L.. I go into all this to say that the 90s Garage scene, which initially featured a lot of 60s revivalists, hit its "crossover" era pretty quickly, with chunky riffs and 70s rock sneaking into the scene and then eventually overtaking it. Most of the Gearhead bands, and many of the Scandinavian bands (Hives being the exception) fit into this category. My first reaction to them is often unfair: I don't like them being associated with Garage because I want to hear Question Mark and the Mysterians-type bands. But putting my prejudices aside, the Gearhead bands, and "Demons" especially, are the kind of bands I dreamed of seeing in clubs when I was a kid: nasty, loud, powerful, ugly rockers with equal senses of grandness and humor. This record, of odds and ends from early "Demon" days, including covers of the Dolls, Pagans and Alice Cooper is a blast. Not a particularly original or groundbreaking blast, but a good old dumb Rock & Roll blast

Descendents "Cool To Be You," "merican" (Fat) The tracks from the new album are as good as but not better than other contemporary pop punk. But the two bonus tracks on the single are like Neil Young doing pop punk epics! The thoughtful album tracks will likely be inspiring to Pop Punk fans used to hearing mostly songs about girls, but longtime fans will only be pleasantly sated.

desoto reds "hangglide thru yer window" (Floating Man) There's such a thing as too eclectic and certainly you can be too cutesy and you damn well obviously can have too annoying a voice.

Detachment Kit "of this blood." (Frenchkiss, frenchkissrecords.com) They put the "accch" in "Detacchment."

Devilinside "Prelude" (Abacus 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd Hawthorne CA 90250) Hell no.

The Dexteens (Estrus) Fuck insurgent country. This is fucking *surgent*! While the vocal twang might belong on a Bloodshot record the guitars seem to have befriended Motley, MCS, 80s hardcore singles and drunk party blues riffs in a smoky room at two in the hazy morning. Dexteterrific!

the dials "sick times" (dials.us) Dial a hit! Spare poppy Garage that chirps and hiccups with sexy magic.

Ani Difranco "educated guess" (Righteous babe POB 95 Ellicott Station Buffalo, NY 14205) I wonder if Ani has kept or increased her audience as her music gets weirder. At it's best this is like Tom Waits playing a lesbian coffeehouse!

Dirtbags DVD, Metal Heads DVD (MVD) I really liked the *Death Metal* documentary directed by the *Grimoire of Exalted Deeds* magazine staff, so I was kind of disappointed with these comedy movies. In *Death Metal* the director prided himself on not including a narrative voice, and I can see why, the less he says the better. Mainly we learn in this video that Metal guys are fat but they get hot women who can be made to dance around in underwear (apparently the ultimate sex act...the underwear dance). *Metal Heads* is the more cohesive movie of the two, with an actual story and a punchline. *Dirt Bags* is bogged down by racist stuff about a "nigger history"

course at college ("I didn't even know they had a written language") and an actual white guy in blackface that's suppose to be a black drug dealer. If this was in any way funny, or if it was smartly making a real comment on racism, that would be one thing, but for something to suck this bad and be so racist is fucking pathetic. Pretty bad audio, as well, not agood thing for music guys.

The Diskords "Pink Palace" EP (Dirtnap POB 21249 Seattle WA 98111) This is gloriously ugly slop rawk. "Winnebago Man" is the standout here, as it has a good "Institutionalized" talking part and rhymes "loud and fast" with "I like ass."

Divine Comedy "Absent Friends" (Nettwerk) A sensitive dandy crafts lushly.

DKK "pusti me da blanjam (Slusaj Najglasnije!) Futuristic art school madness with hands that could crush you like Lenny from "Of Mice and Men" but a mind flush the mad inspiration of Van Gogh.



Dope Gun's and Fucking Up Your Video Deck Vol. 1-3 (MVD/Am Rep/Atavistic) Yes, I listened to it, but even back then I was never really fond of most AmRep music. While the intensity was appreciated, for the most part it seemed to me that bands like Surgery and Tar made overly aggressive, charmless rock. That said, what the kids currently call "hardcore" is certainly more influenced by these bands than by real hardcore punk, so this music was pretty influential. And I did have the first two videos in this series back in the early 90s. While the only bands on the tapes I really liked were Cosmic Psychos and Helmet, I did like the videos because they featured comedian Rich Kronfeld as the evil AmRep CEO Dr. Spinhizer, a brutal, gun-happy, post-Reagan version of SCTV's Guy Cabellero. Well, seeing these videos again doesn't change my minds about the bands (though it confirmed that Cosmic Psychos are good, and Helmet is OK, though not as good as I thought). However, being able to skip around on DVD from comedy skit to comedy skit is awesome! And the third video from '94 (when I had long abandoned this stuff) was the best yet, with the framing device being a great MTV parody. Though Kronfeld didn't work in his awesome Flock of Seagulls impersonation (his comedy bowling show briefly ran in Chicago, and later ran on Comedy Central though I don't know if he ever worked in his Flock bit for that show) he does a *hilarious* Gene Simmons parody. If that wasn't enough, bonus videos include actually fun acts like Servotron, Melvins and Supernova. Plus this includes what I always thought was the best thing Boss Hog ever did. It's a thirty second clip that completely sums up the band: it's somewhat funky and the hot chick takes her clothes off.

The Drapes "Swollen" (Orange, orangerecordings.com) Slurring Garage that's smoky and covered with residue.

Driver of the Year "some girls would say..." (future appletree POB 191 Davenport IA 52805) A triumph of Rock n Roll pleasantness!

Drop "Suckerpunch" (Dark Star 1736 Norwood Ave suite G1 Itasca IL 60143) Made me want to DROP my CD player out the window.

Drunkabilly label sampler (drunkabilly.com) Futuristic caveman music from some of the most damaged roots rockers on earth, including Phantom Rockers, Fifty Foot Combo and the Gecko Brothers.

The DT's "Hard Fixed" (Estrus, POB 2125 Bellingham WA 98227) Rock-Soul that will fill your holes. This has the kind of gutsy female vocals mixed with rawk ax-work that gives the term "Bar Band" a good name.

Duplex Planet zine (POB 1230 Saratoga Springs, NY 12866) Old is gold!

Neven Duzevic "Elektrosansone (Slusaj Najglanije) Romantic surfy wedding music.

The Dynamix "We See Us In the Next future" (Konnex) Free jazz skronk with a touch of shredding rock guitar that's Dynamit!

Eenie Meenie Records sampler volume 003 (POB 691397 LA, CA 90069) This is everywhere from rockin' to dreary to experimental to simple with interesting bands like DJ ME DJ You, From Bubblegum To Sky and High Water Marks. The highlight is the brilliant, bizarre electronic dance music of Seksu Roba.

8 1/2 Ghosts by Rich Tommaso (Alternative Comics www.indyworld/altcomics) The writing in this comic is spectacular, telling a solid, sordid, bloody tale of a z-movie director who cuts costs by using real ghosts in his horror film. This comic really demonstrates how much more important writing is over even beautiful graphics. This is demonstrated when Mr. Tommaso pays tribute to the stalwarts of contemporary indie comix by blatantly referencing Dan Clowes, Jaime Hernandez and Seth in his character designs. But unlike Clowes-student Adrian Tomine this story doesn't owe its writing style to anyone else, so it reads as homage not ripoff. The storytelling here is original, strange and bold. If you dig comix, and want to see how well self-contained, unusual stories can be told in this medium, then this is one you should definitely pick up.

The Ends "New Rome" b/w "Saw It Comin" (Dirtnap) This trash punk is so desperate and immediate that it almost isn't music, it's more like an audio manifestation of the human desire to spew rock.

England's Glory "legendary lost album" (Anagram) These early 70s recordings are being released because the singer and guitarist is from The Only Ones, but it should have stayed shelved, as this band should have been called England's Bore-ey.

Roky Erickson and The Aliens "Don't Knock The Rock" (Norton Box 646 Cooper Station, New York, New York 10276. www.nortonrecords.com) This is probably the most unusual outing from The Rokster yet, which is saying PLENTY. Two albums worth of performances culled from a typical (!!) studio session in 1978 with the aptly named Aliens. A whole slew of seldom heard originals share center stage with some of Roky's favorite 50s rockers, given the full Garage treatment. Roky's encyclopedic knowledge of "Oldies" material may surprise some people, but he's always been a hog for this stuff (My friends were once treated to an impromptu version of "Popsicles and Icicles!"). Opening with Dion's "Teenager in Love," Roky sings the last verse as "Why must I be a teenager in jail?," which is how he sang it a couple of times at his most recent live shows to date, about ten years ago, when he briefly appeared as a solo, acoustic act (once on a bill with Doug Sahm). We find out, in ex-Angry Samoan and early solo Roky enthusiast, Gregg Turner's liner notes, that The Four Preps sang it that way in an early cover version (you'll note that Ed Cobb, who discovered The Standells and The Chocolate Watchband, was in The Four Preps, so we've come full circle!). "Stand By Me" certainly rates as a song I don't need to hear ever again, but Roky necessitates that I lift this ban, at least for about three minutes. Even ultra-wimpy Teen Idol stuff like "Take Good Care of My Baby" and "Bashful Bob" ooze with sincerity and the childlike playful quality that Roky's loved so well for. "Heartbreak Hotel" gets a cool screamin' rendering, as does "Money, Honey." I'm reminded of an Elvis Death Week show in Austin, hosted by Teddy and The Talltops, all good friends (some even part of

his various backing bands) of Roky, who told the band he would consider doing some Elvis songs with them ("You Ain't Nuthin' But a Two-Headed Dog"?!). Caesar Rosas, from Los Lobos, also called to say he would try to cruise by with JOHNNY FUCKING CASH in tow, as they were sharing the bill at a nearby benefit. Neither Roky nor Johnny showed, instead we got Charlie and Will Sexton, but it MIGHT have sounded like this if The Rokster had made an all too rare appearance. Roky also wraps his pipes around two songs by one of his obvious faves, Buddy Holly (I'm pretty sure Buddy digs Roky, too), "You're The One" (he told an interviewer, around this time, that he'd like to release a version of this. Twenty-Five years later, he does!) and "What To Do," displaying an affinity for lesser known Holly tunes. Besides all the 50s covers, you get the music of the 70s (The 2070s, that is), and this collection features a lot of seldom-heard Roky originals, such as "Things That Go Bump in The Night" and "Wake Up To Rock n' Roll" (both reviewed last issue), and earlier versions of the Holly-esque "You Drive Me Crazy" and one of Roky's finest (semi-Horror) rockers, "I Can't Be Brought Down," which actually dates as far back as '72-'73, when Roky debuted it with a briefly revamped 13th Floor Elevators. Both songs eventually turned up on the excellent "Don't Slander Me" LP. "Bumble Bee Zombie," often referred to as Roky's strangest song reeks of the same mold and water damage fumes from old E.C. comics as "Things That Go Bump..." It rocks hard and horrifically, and is, incidentally, derived in part from a Voodoo chant heard in the Mantan Mooreland Horror-Comedy, "King of The Zombies." Another highlight is the previously unreleased "Untitled" (go figure), and this package would not be complete without Roky's Bizarro World reading of "Love Is Strange." How DO you call your lover-boy? WAAAAAAHHHHH-YEEEEAAAAHHH!!!! Roky, by the way, is still doing great, and a party was recently thrown in his honor, in Austin, to celebrate the release of this album. For you, the living, this mash was meant, too, when you plunk down your dough, tell 'em Waymon sent you.

Andre Ethier with Christopher Sanders featuring Pickles and Price (Sonic Unyon POBox 57347 Jackson Station, Hamilton ON Canada L8P 4X2) Rather than Ether, Andre seems to have stuck to whiskey, as this is a record of straight-up, no frills traditional Jazz/Country/Blues numbers that seem inspired by drinking and by hearing good stories. A Deadly Snake in his other life, Andre uses a more benign venom on these tracks.

The Evaporators "Ripple Rock" (Nardwuar/Alternative Tentacles) Yes, Nardwuar is a comical novelty guy, and certainly these are novelty songs, but a) they are super funny and b) they are as catchy as poison ivy. Most importantly, Nardwuar's absurd, bizarre singing style is actually quite unique and appealing. It is very appropriate that the Evaporators are on Alternative Tentacles as Nard's vocal style is not unlike Jello's. However, in lieu of the Dead Kennedys biting political content the Evaporators sing about cheese and cold testicles.

Evening "other victorians" (Lookout) Strange, challenging melodic electronic-based rock that could be the soundtrack to moody, brilliant progressive puppet shows.

eX-Girl "Endangered Species" (Alternative Tentacles, alternativetentacles.com) Japanese experimental dance/pop/electronic music that doesn't so much recall the Boredoms era of noise or the Shonen Knife cutesy stuff (though visually this has the pretty girls dressed up like Space-Barbie) as it does expatriate Yoko Ono's disco/rock-meets-art-fuck records.

The Fall-Outs "summertime" (Estrus POB 2125 Bellingham WA 98227) Flower psyche light on the psyche and heavy on the flowers that didn't make me exactly fall out but did have me skipping around.

Faun Fables "Family Album" (Drag City) Eeech. This sounds like the most annoying moments of Grace Slick singing on Airplane records but with spare, traditional music backing her with such a wispy translucence that all you really hear is the voice, and if you don't like that timbre or that kind of theatrical, dramatic phrasing you are in for a non-treat.

Federation X "Theme For A Nude Disintegrating Parachutist Woman" (Wantage) This sounds like a truck with no brakes zooming down a hill to its doom.

Fifty Foot Combo "Jennifer Jennings" (Drunkabilly) This sounds like a sitcom theme for a show about a surfer who falls in love with an enchanted, living mannequin.

The Figgs "Palais" (thefiggs.com) This band has been around forever, which allows this guitar pop/nerd rock album to have a poignantly weary sheen that makes everything sweetly sad.

The Firebird Suite "1996-1998" (Lucid) Fire them! Became Firebird Band and Braid, so if you like that music perhaps you will like this, and I guess I like this more than I like Braid but I don't like this.

Henry Flynt & the Insurrections "I Don't Wanna" (Locust POB 220426 Chicago IL 60622) Flynt wasn't really an outsider artist, because he was well aware of the hipster underground music and art scene and certainly was inspired by his friends and compatriots amongst their ranks. Yet his recently unearthed recordings, dutifully being issued by Locust, certainly make him sound like one of the giants of Outsider Music. Recording at home he made haunting, rich, progressive music that would have been embraced by many if he made an effort to get it out of his basement. This album is from his (theoretical) protest music quartet the Insurrections. I say theoretical because if a tree protests in the woods and no one hears it is said tree really protesting. If you ever pondered that Dylan at his most vocally bizarre might sound good accompanied by Jandek here is your affirmation. In fact, I would venture to guess that Flynt was pretty inspired by the actual strangeness factor in Dylan's music that somehow wasn't being read as avant-garde. The anti-war, anti-imperialism lyrics are impressive, especially when sung over the dazzling, jerky, exciting drumming of sculptor Walter De Maria. If you've been looking for a can't miss starting point to experience Locust's swarm of Flynt releases this one may be perfect. It is strange and challenging but also incredibly accessible and warm.

FM Knives "Keith Levine" b/w "Valentine" (Dirtnap POB 21249 Seattle WA 98111) If Herman's Hermits weren't pussies this is how they would sound!

Folly "Insanity Later" (Triple Crown) Squigley, screamy, shrieky hardcore that screams and schemes, but does it dream? It's hard to tell what's really going on here. It's intense but doesn't actually sound angry.

Steve Forbert "just like there's nothin' to it" (Koch 740 Broadway NYC 10003) Pretty music and raspy singing and mature sentiments make this a good record for grown ups.

40 Below Summer "The Mourning After" (Razor & Tie LLC POB 503 Village Station NYV 10014) On a scale of one to ten I'd give them a negative forty.

Freezpop "Fancy Ultra-Fresh" (archenemmy POBox 802 Allston, MA 02134) They are called Freezpop because they make electronic funtime music that sounds like it should be played from a futuristic ice cream truck. Barbie 2020 will play this in her dreamhouse.

Friends of Dean Martinez "Random Harvest" (Narnack, narnackrecords.com) If Charlie Chaplin starred in a Sergio Leone movie then Moricorne would have been required to compose this as a score.

The Frequency (Noreaster Failed Industries) Freq of the week! This is "robot-with-human-emotions driving in the Tron car" music, with guitars that remind me of some 80s band from the UK that would be playing on a hill with wind around them in their video.

From Bubblegum Too Sky "Nothing Sadder Than Lonely Queen" (eenie meenie POB 691397 Los Angeles CA 90069) This is so good it's ridiculous. Sometimes it's so ridiculous it's good. All kinds of lushly not too lush pop brimming with a sense of whimsy and youthfulness. Chew on this!

Functional Blackouts (Criminal I.Q. criminaliq.com) An unholy punk rock mess that makes the concept "audiophile" obsolete (if you paid more than \$5 for your speakers you will not get the full effect of this record...it needs to be listened to on cheap walkman headphones as you fall down a flight of stairs). This is the first record that ever gave me gonorrhea! Not that I'm complaining.

Nelly Furtado "Folklore" (Dreamworks) She should just change her name to Genius von Brilliant.

further grickle by graham annable (Alternative Comics) These comic are super funny, yet sadly poignant and the drawings are spare and simple, yet complexly expressive. In other words, this tickled my grickle!

fuses "sex crimes" b/w "Are you blowing me?" (Shit Sandwich, 3107 N. Rockwell Chicago IL 60618) I wasn't super impressed with this raw New Wavish record til I figured out that they are "fuses" and asked "Are you blowing me?" Get it, blowing fuses! That's pretty good.

Galactic Zoo Dossier Compendium (Drag City) Steve Krakow is a visionary who has spent the last decade releasing hand-drawn and hand lettered magazines the likes of which have previously been seen only on the desks of brilliant but underachieving high school stoners. This collects the first four issues of his GZD and you are assured a contact high from the sensory overload. Krakow seems to know every psychedelic song ever recorded (no 60s snob, he likes contemporary bands as well) and his portraits of his heroes are always striking. He also gets turned on by comic books and his annotated collages of seemingly drug influenced superhero comic characters are highlights here. Curiously when Krakow ventures into more traditional narrative underground comics things fall a little flat. His obsessive encyclopedic appreciation of comix, records, and bizarre juvenilia seem to be his true muses and he works best when he's examining the greatest psychedelic clown songs or presenting the vilest garage bands in history. This issue also features bonus material (including pages he did for *Roctober*) and a CD of the lo-fi Garage Psyche music he and his colleagues included on cassette with the original issues. There are few truly original magazines out there and this is certainly one of them. Krakow is as blessed as he is blessed to find a benefactor in Drag City who is boldly making this obscure material more widely available.

The Gathering "Sleepy Buildings - A Semi Acoustic Evening" (Century) The gathering have a haunting voice singer woman so this relatively quiet album, with strangely minimal instrumentation, is basically just a showcase for her lovely, weird vocals. It's like someone singing you disconcerting lullabies.

The Gay "You Know The Rules" (Mint) Pure class!

Gecko Brothers "Stop Bitchin', Start Drinkin'!" (Drunkabilly) This sounds like a driving, energetic, trashy, rawky, bar band that would break a bottle on your head if you told them they weren't good, so I won't say it.

Gemma Ray Ritual "Radiology" (gemmaray.co.uk) With a voice as expressive and unusual as Bjork's and moody acoustic tracks that would make Bloodshot Records' loneliest cowpoke feel lonelier, this is a serious record.

Jeffie Genetic and his Clones "Need A Wave" (Dirtnap) This got me so excited I popped a cloner! This isn't New Wave, it's Fu Wave...as is Fu-ture!

Genetic Disorder zine(\$3, POB 15237 SD, CA 92175) This 3D cover-sporting, oddly shaped slab of genius is your guide to rock and decay in San Diego (which is really a symbol for the fucked-ness of the entire world!). Also, this features a guide to identifying youth culture subdivisions in order to halt the decay of our country's morals.

Ghetto Ways (Alien Snatch! Records) Soul music from evil souls.

Ghost "Hypnotic Underworld" (Drag City) Psychedelic lullabies that my 2 year old (illegitimate, thank you) loves to hear at bedtime. Thank you Drag City for getting Elmo out of my CD player.

Gigantor "The 100! Club" (Nasty Vinyl) "Trouble" (G-Force!) **Gigantor/Lolita No. 18** split 7". **Gigantor/Fuzz Bubble** split 7". **Gigantor/Easy Grip** split 7". **Gigantor/Stepmothers** split 7" (G-Force!) I understand that in their native Germany, and in Japan as well, this is a pretty popular band, but for some reason their perky punk with its occasional Ramones edge and perfect pop punk English pronunciation never made it over here. But they are as good as most of the Fat bands and an occasional bout of cleverness or foray into surf or garage that makes them rise above the pack. When they sing poppy happy stuff in German it's weird, because the language doesn't seem to have been

designed for the genre. They also have released a series of split singles, mostly with unremarkable bands. However it should be noted that Lolita No. 18 from Japan are incredibly strange and wonderful and that Fuzz Bubble made the unusual choice of doing a KISS cover in a perfect Peter Criss vocal recreation.

girlboy girl "forget the ladder, climb the wall" (kittridge) Girlbore girl.

The Glads "Bad Case of..." (Music For Cats, musicforcatsrecords.com) Then singer sounds like the biggest, hairiest biker you ever saw and the band sounds like the funnest, goofiest Garage revivalists you ever saw through your drunken rock club haze. Glads all over!

Gold Cash Gold s/t CD, "Vultures" b/w "Diamond Mind" (Times beach 118 E. Seventh St. Royal Oak, MI 48067) Should be called Platinum Cash Platinum because these records are going straight to the top! Dramatic boys who love their guitars deeply want you to feel the drama and the guitar love!

Goldfinger "The Show Must Go Off" DVD (Kung Fu) Just as I'm impressed by a *Behind The Music* that's fun watch even though I'm not interested in the band, here I am pretty impressed with how the great shots (lots of low angles and tight close-ups) combined with a genuinely apeshit crowd make this concert seem exciting even though this band's music is odious to me.

Jonathan Goldman "Chakra Dance" (Spirit POB 2240 Boulder CO 80306) Electronic semi-ambient dance music that is meant for good not evil. Literally, this is marketed as a holistic healing album, Goldman is a "Sound Healer." Well, I felt pretty good before I listened to this so I can't attest to the medicinal virtues, but the concept of making this excellent electronic music with all muted tones and sort of buried, repetitious vocals (frequencies and mantras designed to "balance and align your body") actually sounds pretty good, so old schoolers as well as new agers can dig this.

Gorerotten "Only Tools and Corpses" (Metal Blade 2828 Cochran St PMB 302 Simi Valley CA 93065) Vicious flesh-eating machinegun and hatchet brutality. Listening too this is like being slaughtered by a robotic zombie.

Green Day "1,039/smoothed out Slappy Hours" (Lookout) This is a nice packaging of the first Green Day album ("39/Smooth") plus some bonus material off early 7 inchers. I hope Lookout sells a lot of these because they seem like nice folks and I want them to bankroll more Go-Nuts albums. But to be honest Green Day is a band that actually got better and then subsequently got even better, so this is not essential if you don't have it.

Gypsy "Revelation," Scott Finch "Gods and Freaks" (Horizons) At some point rock-based music is so pointless and old and boring and bad that it may not even be music anymore. The Gypsy record is some awful musical rock interpretation of a Bible book, but the solo Finch record is even worse, because at least the other one is focused-awful.

Hammerlock "Compromise Is For Cowards" (Steel Cage) Southern Rock from south of a rock, as in "crawled out from under a..." This is Boogie for people with the DTs too bad to actually do any boogie-ing.

The Hangmen "Loteria" (Acetate 1221 S. Burnside Ave. LA, CA 90019) Absurdly *ROCK*, this is one of America's ultimate bar rocking, rock-lifestyle damage, thru and thru dedicated rock n' roll records. This doesn't sound exactly like any other band, but it sounds exactly what you would think of if you imagined a real, down and dirty, paid-their-dues band playing in your head. If you need a rock band in your movie...cast these survivors.

Happy "Sincerely Without Wax" (Double Plus God Records POB 3690 Mpls MN 55403) By releasing this album this label is reviving the Minneapolis tradition made famous by AmRep of putting out music that sounds absolutely terrible. This record made me anti-Happy.

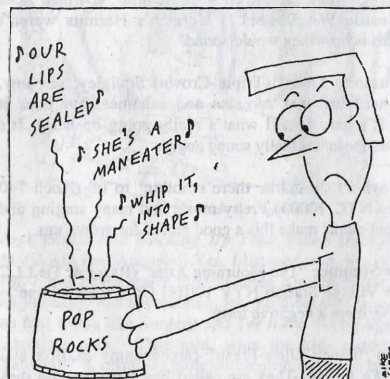
Haste The Day "Burning Bridges" (Solidstate) Waste The Forty Minutes.

Hawneytroof "Get Up Resolution: Love" (Retard Disco POB 461163 LA, CA 90046) This hardcore bounce record is so sexy you will actually attempt to fuck the CD.

hayes "ELEVEN" (Hayesmusic.com) Hayes is for horses...or for the birds!

Mitch Hedberg "mitch all together," "Strategic grill instructions" (Comedy Central 1775 Briarway NYC 10019) Hedberg's odd delivery and cult status may indicate that he's some kind of modern "comedian," building comic situations or making astute observations or pointing out the absurdity of life through the creation of comic scenarios he builds to a fever pitch onstage. But he's no "comedian"...this man is a joke teller! That's right, a Henny Youngman, a Redd Foxx! He may be an absurdist joke teller, perhaps a bit of a conceptual artist, but basically he is rattling off a bunch of one liners sprinkled with a few longer J-O-K-E-S! I love jokes, so these are some of my favorite comedy albums in along time. A funny, truthful scenario is good and all, but can it beat, "I saw a wino eating grapes, I said, man, you gotta wait..." Actually, his jokes don't transcribe well. Now I'm not sure what to make of his voice. It's sort of like the Black pimp voice white comics would do in the 70s. But I understand he needs to talk crazy to make the absurd humor fit into reality. If he talked like Tom Brokaw this shit wouldn't be funny.

Tom Heint "With or Without Me" (Leisure King, leisuering.com) This record is half original Country songs and half Karaoke versions so you can sing your own. That's actually a little intimidating because Heint has a near perfect truckstop cassette singer voice (the late Dave Dudley lives on in Heint!). Actually, a guy doing songs from the golden era of Country when Nudie suits met leisure suits is gimmick enough for me, who needs the instro tracks! There's an irreverent Tom T. Hall cover on this, and everyone loves Tom T. Hall and irreverence!



hey is dee dee home DVD (MVD) While filming his documentary on Johnny Thunders Lech Kowalski (*D.O.A.*) interviewed Dee Dee Ramone. What became very apparent, especially when the interview ended with the film crew's rousing applause, was that this interview was special (made more special years later when Dee Dee overdosed, making this film his epitaph). Kowalski realized that releasing the raw footage as a documentary that spoke for itself was worthwhile. In fact, I think this is in many ways better than the Thunders film because ultimately what you take away from that movie is that Thunders was a can't win fuck up (for which we could sympathize) but he was also pretty much a total asshole, which made it harder to love him (and he wasn't alive to defend himself). What you get from Dee Dee, who is clearly as damaged as possible, is that for all his fucking up he is basically a decent guy. Of course all junkies are liars and thieves at some point, but Dee Dee seems to have a sense of goodness and honesty, an honesty that allows him to honestly relate stories of his dishonesty, failure and pathetic exploits. His tells stories of betraying punk royalty (Debby Harry evicted him for pissing in the hallway, he stole Joey Ramones' TV for drugs) and he gives detailed accounts of drug use (reviving blue friends in bathtubs, heroin being sold in X-Mas wrapping at holiday time). Since he was being interviewed for a Thunders documentary he mainly talks about writing "Chinese Rock," a tune that became Thunders' theme song after the Ramones passed on it. While proud of the song he's not comfortable that it made him "a heroin guru" to many kids and also that Thunders continuously didn't give him proper credit for it. Dee Dee was always a little jealous of Thunders, partly because he had a cool haircut

and Dee Dee had to wear a Ramones bowl cut and partly because every girl (including Dee Dee's) wanted Johnny. Ultimately his hatred for Johnny subsides when during a tour he realizes that both Stiv Bators and Johnny Thunders are way worse off than him. "Sobriety is the best revenge," Dee Dee explained, well before his final fatal relapse. Though he lived a rough life and definitely did some ugly things, he survived with his sense of humor intact, he was still able to play his guitar, and he had a bunch of tattoos that each taught him an important lesson about life. You know he reached a lot of lows he's not talking about. At one point he discusses an incident that pissed him off and he pauses, weighs his words and then says, "I wanted to kill them all." Though he didn't do it, there is something in the serious way he said this that tells you he really has been to hell and back and is capable of some crazy shit. But he was also capable of sitting in front of hot lights, dramatically framing his damaged but still functioning body, and telling honest, funny, real stories in a charming Noo Yawk accent. He could make people laugh and he could laugh himself. Dee Dee was creative, destructive, serious and funny and this spare, stark hour long movie displays all of that sharply and with great warmth.

Hidden Tracks "The Sweet Sound of Excess" (disposablepoprevolution.com) Sugary rock candy pop that reminds me of a less self-conscious Violent Femmes. This jangles, but hardly dangles, if you know what I mean (and even if you don't).

Hi-Horse Omnibus Vol. 1 (Alternative Tentacles) This is a very solid comics compilation. Sometimes with shitty comic comps I try to be nice because I feel sorry for the pathetic bad artists, but this one is genuinely awesome through and through with mostly funny short stories (many backed up with some genuine content) by great artists like Damien Jay, Jeff Roysden, Karen Sneider and Zack Soto. There is a very healthy representation of female artists here and there are also a wide variety of styles. My only complaint is that I wish the editor's would have a statement or introduction. Curating an anthology is a serious endeavor and I'd like to know the philosophy behind the selections.

Ernie Hines "There Is A Way" (Baby Blue POB 7 Forest Park IL 60130) Hines made a brilliant Soul record in the early 70s and then disappeared (at least from most collectors' radar) He resurfaced because of heavy sampling of his tracks, and now he is back in full with a new all-Gospel record. While these tracks have the odd appeal (to me, some don't dig it) of electronic keyboard heavy production, Ernie's vulnerable, lovely, imperfect voice makes these stories of Christ as real as anything you can see at the movies. "Shed His Blood" is a great tune, but my favorite is "His Kingdom Will Come," which brings to mind early Prince guitar driven work.

The Hi-Risers "Lost Weekend" (Spinout) If you've been in high school since 1963 this would be the perfect band for your high school dance. Sure, your classmates 40 years your junior may not dig the fresh and clean pre-Beatles California sound as much as you, but everyone can move to "Finger Popping Time" and who doesn't like slow dancing to songs about dead surfer girl ghosts.

The Hollow Points "Annihilation" (Dirtnap POB 21249 Seattle WA 98111) Made me wish I had hollow speakers.

Hop on Pop "As Drawn By Ethan, Age 2" (Spade Kitty 322 S. Ridgeland Ave #3 Oak Park IL 60302) Hop on Pop is the tops with their mellow pop chops.

IFIHADAHIFI "No More Music" (Contraphonic) They should change their name to IFIHADAHIT then they should have a hit because this is awesome, futuristic and intense.

Iggy & the Stooges "Live In Detroit" (Creem/MVD) The spirit of *Creem* magazine lives on (I mean their early 70s heyday, not in the 80s, when they almost couldn't help but write about lousy music) with their informative website, and now, this live concert DVD, available through www.creemmagazine.com, which is an answered prayer for those who couldn't be at any of the reunion gigs, and for those who were, and wish they had documented proof that it even happened (I was at this very show, and I can STILL scarcely believe it). You get the Detroit (actually, Clarkston) homecoming gig, in it's entirety, professionally shot (So clear you can count all those wiggly veins in Iggy's torso) with superb sound (plus audio options) and, if that's not enough, there's a whole nuther concert in the extras! Along with the main event, there's an instore performance from the Tower

Records in New York, in which Iggy and Ron and Scott Asheton (the Jesse and Frank James of Rock n' Roll) perform a stripped down version of virtually the same set to an intimate gathering of fans (I can't believe there weren't at least 1000 people in and around the building, but it's impossible to tell, here). It's not "unplugged" as such, Ron still has his electric guitar and wah-wah, but Scott pounds away manfully on what appears to be one of those plastic container setups that subway performers use. It's very, very cool, though it was shot on video by someone who, unfortunately, wasn't standing at the best camera angle (Quentin fucking Tarentino wouldn't have been shown any favors in a crowd that size in a space that small, tho). The Stooges are really playing at their peak, from Ron Asheton's, soaring, abrasive guitar lines to Scott Asheton's furious, though concise, power drumming to Steve Mackay's Avant-Jazz free-form freakouts (played, we're told, on the same sax he used on "Funhouse") to newcomer Mike Watt who really holds down the fort in a manner comparable to when Ron was deputized to bass. The spirit of Dave Alexander guides his hand, but I don't think anyone would deny that Watt is the better musician of the two. I've seen Iggy many times, but I've never seen him work a stage or howl and yelp like this. It looks like it was hard work AND great fun for all of them at the same time. People who saw the band in the day have told me this was better. Why shouldn't it be better now? There's more at stake. If the original band had a bad gig, there was always the next one, but, this time, it's being treated as something truly rare by the band as much as the fans. That totally comes through on this DVD, again, if you were there, if you weren't, or, hopefully, if you will be.

Instrumental Quarter "no more secrets" (sickroom pob 47830 Chicago IL 60647) There's a great scrambled eggs robot song on here but mostly this is pretty much much too pretty.

Interference 3 "Tampere" (Konnex) InterGENIUS x 3!

In The Garden: The White Whale Story (Rev-Ola) The White Whale label's half decade history is mainly known for the Turtles' hits. But this isn't a Best Of overview, it is an exploration of a unjust obscurities. This was a label that delved into bubblegum, but also tried to use the bubblegum model of producer/songwriter crafted songs matched with sometimes faceless artists for more mature pop music as well. For example, when Warren Zevon, who recorded with a woman as Lyme and Cybelle, left White Whale, they just got a new Lyme. Paul Williams in the liner notes recounts the awful writers contract he signed, and overall this wasn't a visionary label that nurtured great acts. They released a bunch of singles by a bunch of soft rocking artists and hardly any did well. The best thing here is Dean Torrence's cover of the then unreleased Brian Wilson masterpiece, "Vegetables."

Into Eternity "Buried In Oblivion" (Century 2323 W. El Segundo Blvd. Hawthorne CA 90250) Balancing bleeping blooping guitar solos that sound like a late 80s video game in super fast mode with moments of actual Metal brutality and absurd forays into vocal harmony...this is a crazy fucking record! If I had to listen to this all eternity I would be into it.

I. Shithead - a life in punk by Joey Keithley (Arsenal 103-1014 Hommer St. Vancouver BC Canada v6b 2wn arsenalpulp.com) Joey Shithead of D.O.A. has spent the last quarter century as a hard working, idealistic Canadian punk legend. So, basically that means he's been roughing it. This is a pretty interesting chronicle of his career. Unlike other such books or spoken word acts by Rollins, Jello, John Lydon and others, Shithead/Keithley hasn't reached some plateau that's significantly loftier than where he was in the late 70s. He has continued to chug it out in the underground, and his punk ethics and spirit have seen to it that his lifestyle isn't one that he regrets. While that perspective makes the book unique what really makes this work is that Keithley appears to be some kind of savant when it comes to remembering minutia from tours over the last few decades. Whether it is something as big as listing all the times his guitar has been stolen then retrieved (he still plays his original ax) or remembering the door price, or who he talked to, at seemingly all of his thousands of gigs over the decades, Joey remembers. The book features appropriate song lyric transcriptions (they parallel the text of the memoir) throughout. D.O.A. is the rare band with lyrics that seem intelligent in written form. Plus archival flyers, photos, documents and a hand written band family tree make this book a pretty good read (though perhaps maybe not for the non-punk fan).

The Izzy's (Kanine, kaninerecords.com) This is a great, all-over-the-place record, with the band mixing and matching sloppy, imperfect recreations of Hank Williams yodels, Rockabilly twang, Bowery glam, Rolling Stones strut, and even a little U2 weight, lightly dusted over with Americana tumbleweed residue.

Jackie O Motherfuckers "Magic Fire Music/Wow" double CD reissue (Touch and Go) The "Magic" record sounds like the inside of a sad head and the "Wow" record sounds like the inside of a crazy head.

Jai Alai "Drive Safe" (SunSeaSky 307 West Lake Dr. Randon Lake, WI 53075) If someone told you this would get you Jai they lied! Made me sad because of its boringness.

Jandek "The Gone Wait" (Corwood POB 15375 Houston, TX 77220) Jandek makes me cheery when his music gets dreary! This new album echoes with more strangeness than some of his prime stuff, but is far more Jandekian than his recent spoken stuff...he is truly the king of the underground

japanese group sound! (Spinout 705 Farrell Rd. Nashville TN 37220) Unlike original 60 Japanese Group sound that was made up of rocking, tight Beatles impersonators this features some ridiculously raw happy Garage rock from the mighty 5,6,7,8s the Mach Kung Fu, Jackie and the Cedrics and others. When they want to be musically tight they can be (the Ventures trump the Beatles in Japan) but when this is best is when the 5,6,7,8s are making pureed potatoes out of "The Mashed Potato."

Jerra "the era of jerra" (jerra.com) Candy coated bubblegum porno soundtrack Power Pop bubblegum!

Jet Lag "Beatiful Scars" (Get Hip) Lags where it should Jet.

John and the Sisters (Northern Blues 225 Sterling Rd. unit 19 Toronto ONT M6R 2B2) Ambitious Blues-Jazz-Experimental-Cabaret music is technically impressive, but doesn't have the spark of Tom Waits or John Lurie, or even some Dr. John stuff that falls into this particular yard.

John Wilkes Booze "Five Pillars of Soul" (Kill Rock Stars) This is so good it's like a punch in the gut. A tribute to "the five pillars of soul," this is not a series of cover songs but rather a series of organ driven punk-Blues numbers about Melvin Van Peebles, Patty Hearst, Yoko Ono, Mark Bolan and Albert Ayler. Not at all mimicking the styles of each hero, these tunes merely capture the energy, vibe and danger of each pillar. This is absurd, idiotic, pointless...and BRILLIANT! I feel closer to all of these icons thanks to these loads of odes. How could a band with such a silly name be so visionary, and how can Indiana, the capitol of the KKK, produce the album that will save Soul Music?

Joseph Patrick Moore's Drum & Bass Society "Volume 1" (Blue Canoe) If you can make a worse record than this than you are a genius of bad.

Gary Jules "trading snakeoil for wolftickets" (Universal) Fans of classic Dylan take this singer-songwriter to heart - and you can keep him!

Kallikak Family "Vineland" (On Purpose POB 220053 Chicago IL 60622) A lyrical, spare, fragile, lovely exploration of the historical treatment of mental disease by a one man band that understands the minimalism and appeal of Mountain Goats but also has a layer of danger beneath everything, obtained as the K Family spent years skirting the edges of the Chicago noise scene.

mlinski kamen "ulicama stvarnosti" (Slusaj Najglasnije) To paraphrase Gary Glitter "Ka-men, Ka-men, Ka-men, Ka-men!" This is awesome guitar playing and powerful singing!

Ka-nives "Weasel" b/w "Dear Dad" (Lance Rock 370 Bruce Ave. Nanaimo, BC Canada V9R 3Y1) A warm, ugly mess of sloppy early 90s Texas Garage Revival meets classic Northwest garage Sonics-tude. Ka-nasty!

Mick Karn "More Better Different" (Invisible Hands) It's like being at a Karn-ival when this ambient-ish electronicat goes from "move your booty" to "be real moody."

The Kicks "Hello Hong Kong" (TVT) Kicky!

The Kids of Widney High "act your age" (Moon Man, kidsofwidneyhigh.com) The Kids of Widney High is ostensibly an outsider music act where mentally retarded kids mrite and sing pop music. Buut the appeal of outsider music is that the musicians are supposed to utilize natural, unusual instincts that are unique because they come from someplace original and unlike other stuff out there. These kids have a hamfisted hack of a svengali/band leader/teacher who corrects and structures their songs for them so that every tune is a polished piece of clever hackwork, completely devoid of charm. There's nothing appealing about this record, and I'm sure all of these kids could have recorded awesome songs if you just left a tape recorder on and left them alone. I'm appreciative that their teacher inspired them and taught them to sing on key, but he is really bad at knowing how to keep his hands off their songwriting.

Killer Klown "Evolution" (Scarey Records) This is why kids are terrified of clowns - because they make shitty bar rock.

Kill Henry Sugar "Love Beach" (Surprise Truck POB 4077 Hollywood CA 90078-4077) An art school recreation of scary mountain music, this might be killer but it sure ain't sweet. They should call it Kill Henry

Kill Me Tomorrow "The Garbage man and the Prostitute" (GSL) This is unbelievably good. By definition No Wave-ish futureshock music that balances chaos theory and electronic dance music is supposed to be sort of a mess, but this takes that mess, puts it in a blender, empties that into a syringe and shoots you up with awesomeness. The DVD included has a series of amazing, complex videos that reveal the album's themes of identity questions and excursions into excess (both good and bad). Super highly recommended.

Killowatthours/The Rum Diary split (Springman Records POB 2043 Cupertino CA 95015) In theory this is a great way to do a split release. The bands alternate songs and then in the middle they do a song together. The only problem is both bands are boring (though Rum Diary has a lot more sparkle) and when they play together they are so dull that it is almost inaudible.

King Khan & his Shrines "Smash Hits" (Vicious Circle) Soul out his hole, Khan releases an R&B discharge that infects earholes like a virus (or at the very least, like hungry crabs). This is a grooving, moving, Juke Joint burning powerhouse of a CD.

Kites "Royal Paint With The Metallic Gardener From the United States of America Helped Into An Open Field By Women and Children" (Load) These kites fly - they fly in the face of convention and expectations and say "Hah!" Or perhaps they would say something far more unexpected, but I not being Kites shouldn't have even conjectured. This combines the music of crickets rubbing legs together with the music of ice cream trucks gone horribly awry with the music of hillbillies who live underneath the hill. Kites win! Kites win!

The Krunchies "interrobang EP" (Criminal i.q. Records 3540 North Southport Ave Chicago IL 60657) A half dozen haphazard, screechy, minute-long 2x4's to the dome made my cerebellum go "krunch."

Audra Kubat "Georgia" b/w "since i fell in love with the music" (Times Beach) I'm batty for Kubat!

Kelly Kuvo "Limited Edition" (\$20ppd Kuvo 302 Bedford Avenue, PMB #67, Brooklyn NY 11211) These hand decorated CDs feature ten years (plus) of obscure brilliance from Kuvo and her many musical confabulations, including the Scissor Girls, Sweet Thunder, and Kelly as a little girl.. not to mention audio excerpts from Ms. Kuvo's mad mad ma d cable access projects. This ultra rare limited edition is a bizarre, confounding treasure!

Dennis Kyne "Support The Truth" (denniskyne.com) Kyne has produced a powerful set of protest music in support of American troops abused and ignored by the government they fought for. Combining the raw, rocking edge of Neil Young with vocals reminiscent of Vince Neil's Motley Crue ballads, Kyne makes a compelling musical case.

Last Vegas "Lick 'Em And Leave 'Em" (Get Hip) To me this is super ambitious, because working within the scummy context of Garage/Blues Rock/RAWK this strives to be a giant. This sounds like a band trying to conquer the world

with guitar rock and anything would be better than the current administration so I think they are electable as **KINGS OF ROCK!**

Bill Laswell "ROIR Dub Sessions" (ROIR POB 501 Prince St. Station NYC 10012) If the world music-y dub a dub dub Bill Laswell stuff makes your hashish sessions more meaningful more power to you. This collection that boils his key stuff down to its essence.

Leatherface "dog disco" (BYO POB 67609 LA, CA 90067) The great wicked and cunning voice on the Leatherface singer elevates what would be pretty standard working class English old-school punk.

Le Pepes "all fun things end" (Kittridge POB 662011 LA, CA 90066) Real early 90s indie rock (the 7" variety, not the CD stuff) with crazy girl singing and musical ability that tricks you into thinking it's worse than it really is and better than it really is at the same time. It's nice to hear this stuff again and I really dug some of songs, many seemingly about outer space.

Les Savy Fav "Inches" (Frenchkiss 111 East 14th St. #229 NYC 10003) Should be called *More Savy Favies!*

Lesser Birds of Paradise "String of Beans" (Contraphonic POB 2203 Chicago IL 60690) This is music that seems as sad as a lonely widow but alternately as innocent as a small child, and at its best it captures the beauty of both. So if you are into widows and sad kids this for you.

Let's Get Killed - A Cock Punch Records Compilation (Cock Punch 614 1/2 N. Mantua St. Kent, OH 44240) This is a pretty solid compilation of underground punk-type music. It's hard to say what these bands have in common, but a few tracks have women with great punk/New Wave voices singing, many have really good lo fi bouncy guitar sounds, and a recurring theme is love for the 80s scenes and the 70s scenes. Standouts include Radar Secret Service, Wred Fright, C.D. Truth and of course our good friends Crimson Sweet.

Herschell Gordon Lewis and the Amazing Pink Holes "2000 Maniacs" b/w "Moonshine Mountain" (Smog Veil) A silly masterpiece! Horror shlockster Lewis sings the themes from his own masterpieces ably and with hearty humor as those amazing prankholes the Amazing Pink Holes deliver the goods. Hillbillies of the world should unite to thank Lewis for his fine work promoting their lifestyle!

Life is Bonkers (Wad) This isn't so bad it's good, it is so bad it's so good it's bonkers!

Lights Out Asia "Garmonia" (Sun Sea Sky 307 West Lake Drive Random Lake, WI 53075) Ambient post rock is now officially New Age.

Little Feat "Kickin' It At The Barn" (Hot Tomato) Boogie stomping roots music for grown folk, the Feats are for folks too serious for Buffett, too traditional for NRBQ and too tasteful for Phish, but still committed to going to see an awesome live show that becomes a communal dance party for everyone from kids to codgers. This record captures their live vibe with good recording to capture the virtuosity of all Featured musicians.

Living Things "Resight Your Rights" (Dreamworks) Intense real rock that seems to actually have ideas or something in the lyrics.

Lostprophets "Start Something" (Columbia) I've seen this band and they jump around as good as anybody. Maybe that way it's harder to actually for them to actually hear this fucking awful music.

Love Story In Blood Red (Backward Masking 502 Maplewood Dr. Sycamore, IL 60178) Bloody lovely!

Lovitt Transmissions DVD (Lovitt) Lovitt has some of the best bands in the underground, and this classy DVD salutes their roster with live footage, arty video and interviews with visionaries like Fin Fang Foom, Rah Bras, Frodus and Sleepytime Trio. Like it? I Lov it!

Mahjongg "Machinegong" (Cold Crush, coldcrushrecords.com) This is so good it made me reinvest all

my assets into dosed gummi worms and postmodernism textbooks.

Holger Mantey "Foggy Day and Dirty Business" (Konnex Piano? PiaYES!

The Marlboro Chorus "Good Luck" (future appletree POB 191 Davenport IA 52805-0191) The Marvelous Glorious!

Jimmy Martin "Don't Cry To Me" (Thrill Jockey) The Martin documentary *King of Bluegrass* was one of the most striking documentaries of last year (see last issue for review) but what drove it was half Martin's brusque, unique personality and half his remarkable music. Hearing these rare, many previously unreleased, archival recordings is a joy because here it is just the music compelling you. Martin has as perfect a Bluegrass voice as anyone and the musicians that played with him over the last half century on the radio and live in concert (the sources for most of these recordings) were top notch. Most impressive in hearing recording from the last few years that may not have the lonesome, otherworldly power of his 50s stuff, but are certainly of equal musical quality, with some serious singing on them.

Mascott "Dreamer's Book" (Red Panda) It's for dreamers because it puts you to sleep.

Master Plan "colossus of destiny" (Total Energy) Andy from the Dictators and some of the Fleshtones make a Sha Na Na record. And by that I mean a fun Rock n Roll record, a little silly and disposable, but certainly a good time from one side of the groove to the other.

Maybe Chicago (Criminal I.Q. Records 3540 N. Southport Chicago IL 60657) I guess this is a real comp like 80s punk comps, where all the tracks are real, new songs recorded for comp. The best bands are Busy Kids, Phantom 3, Hot Machines, Functional Blackouts, and Tyrades, but all are recorded in their practice spaces by the same guy, so if somewhat shitty, but very in your face, recordings either appeal a great deal to you or make you cringe will determine if you dig this.

MC Lars Horris "Radio Pet Fencing" (Truck, truckrecords.com) The only way this is not totally fucking godawful is if this is supposed to be a scathing parody about what this guy thinks is totally fucking godawful about the nerdy white rap of MC Paul Barman. The problem is this guy isn't doing that and Barman's over-erudite raps are actually funny in the way early Dennis Miller would make too many references and the form, rather than the content, became the joke. This is copying Barman's form, so that isn't interesting or original, and it's not funny and doesn't sound good. Not a good formula Mr. Great SAT scores.

The Means "Divine Right of..." (Double Plus Good) The Means mean business and this thing rocks like the guitars are mops and the band is made up of janitors on crank. This record is ugly, naughty and nasty.

Ric Menck "The Ballad of..." (Action Music/Parasol 303 West griggs St. Urbana, IL 61801) Menck, the long man behind the little drums in Velvet Crush, is one of the only Power Pop guys that backed up his funky attitude with songs that were actual SuperPop charmers. This is a collection of lots of little singles and songs he did and his fake Byrds, Beatles and other "B" lifts appear to have come out of the womb with him as he was spot on even in his earliest tracks. This is a reissue with bonus tracks, so if you got Ric fever this may be the medicinal tea to brew.

Thee Minks "Songs About Boys" ep (Steel Cage, steelcagerecords.com) I had to check to see if my stylus was shot because I couldn't believe these gals were actually singing and playing as rough hewn, raspy and fuzzy as they sounded. These are tough, rough broads that will beat your ass into loving them.

Minus 5 "in rock," "Down With Wilco" (Yep Roc POB 4821 Chapel Hill NC 27515) Minus 5 superfans (or YFF superfans or Kurt Bloch superfans, or even obtusely, Wilco super-duper fans) may know of the "in rock" record from a few years back that was obscurely released, but this is the legit deal with some strong new tracks. It contains well written pop that manages to be upbeat with a patina of eloquent sadness that borders on dreariness. I'm pretty sure they mention Triffids at some point. Because of the obtuse Wilco connection of this release Yep Roc is re-pushing the fine "Down With Wilco"

record from last year, in which Scott's Minus 5 backing band was made up of post-Jay Wilco and Peter Buck. I actually like the other record better, even though this one is pretty in a "Beach Boys meet the Byrds and they all take some mellow-drugs" kind of way.

Mojo Gurus "Hot Damn!" (mojogurus.com) Blazing rock and rollin' rock n roll. If the jukebox was named Jo I'd say, "Gimme some mo' jo!

Monday's Hero "Love Carries An Ax" (Lucid 665 Timber Hill Rd. Deerfield, IL 60015) T.G.I.M.!

The Monsters "Youth Against Nature" (Voodoo Rhythm) Classic horror trash from the wild and evil band fronted by Lightning Beat Man, a fearsome solo artist, but a force to be reckoned with (and to get wrecked with and to contemplate your rectum with) when he's surrounded by spooky musicians well versed in scary 50s rockabilly, creepy 60s Garage and ancient Transylvanian alchemy.

Mottek "Hypnose" (Re-Force) This is a reissue of a German 1984 pre-crossover/kinda crossover hardcore LP. It's in *Deutsche* but it might as well just be in punk, because it sounds like he's just singing unintelligible English. There's a few super fast solos on side 2, and the guitar sounds may be somewhat Metallic, but this is definitely from an era when hardcore was still at the core and this is one of the most driving solid original h/c records that I never heard in the 80s.

Movieside Film Festival DVD (movieside.com) This DVD collects 20 independent short films that range from ultra silly to dire and profound but all are gloriously brief. Except one, and perhaps the longer they are the worse they are. The 16 minute opening film, *Knuckleface Jones*, is really the biggest failure here, stringing together a narrative based on a bunch of stuff that looks cool and seems weird rather than having an actual point. *Harry Knuckles*, on the other (hairy) hand, is an equally pointless series of cool looking scenes from a non-existent action movie, but at three minutes looking cool is reason enough to exist. Movieside is a local film fest of shorts and one of their most popular films is included here, *Monkey Vs. Robot*, a music video for a song by cartoonist James Kochalka in which a gorilla and a robot battle amidst a sunny urban landscape. It's a howl! Recurring themes include appropriation and recontextualization of found film and video and well-deserved Bush Bashing. A highlight of this subgenre is a performance of a song called "Damn You Mr. Bush" by Skizz Cyzyk that features some multi tracking double exposure play-with-yourself special effects that recall Sid Laverents classic *Multiple S/Dosis* (and that Outkast video).

The M's (Brillaint (POB 578780 Chicago IL 60657-8780) M-pressive! These guys have *not* Brit off more than they can chew, with this sweet Kinksian M-azing pop.

MTX "Yesterday Rules" (Lookout) If you liked MT VIII and MT IX you'll love this! I never liked California Pop Punk but I liked this band a little just because I liked Mr. T so much, but now that they've officially shortened their name I'm not too moved.

The Musician's Atlas 2004 (Music Resource Group) this is for independent bands who are willing to pay \$40 bucks for a book full of club contacts and music video outlets and e-marketing (whatever that is?) solutions.

My Fat Irish Ass zine (\$2, POB 65391 WDC 20035) I just like ass, so this magazine is good enough for me by title alone.

Narc! zine (10824 SE Oak #217 Milwaukie, OR 97222) Any zine that transcribes Paul Linde double entendre *Hollywood Squares* jokes is doing the world a service.

Narrator "Youth City Fire" (Flameshovel 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #276 Chicago IL 60647) Should be called NarraGREATER! Scrumby intense songs with all kinds of dynamic mess held together with spit that somehow holds strong till the songs end.

Nashville Pussy "Keep On F*ckin' In Paris!" (MVD) This is not a cheapo live video, this is a huge production, shot and cut perfectly to capture the giant, dumb, raucous energy of the group. This looks great, feels great, and while I won't try to convince you that the music or band is great (let's be honest...) I will say that if you want a video to demonstrate

what "Rock" is (as opposed to metal, rock & roll or anything else) other than AC/DC I don't know what would sum it up more than this video.

National Waste comix (c/o Paper Rodeo POB 321 Providence RI 02901) Should be called National Treasure comix! The Paper Rodeo's delve into actual comix stories that make sense and the results taste better than cheese fries! Cats and drinking seem to inspire the best comix! Though the actual champion comic strip here is about napkins.

NECRONOMITRON (Load POB 35 Providence RI 02901) Extreme intensity that tastes like biting into a highly concentrated evil gel caplet. This is wicked brutal and brutally wicked (the second wicked being the dictionary definition).

The Negatones "Snacktronica" Melody Lanes 50 S. 6th Syt. #1q Brooklyn NY 11211) Positively tone-tastic! Beautifully weird yet oddly ugly.

Newbeats "Bread and Butter - The Best of..." (Varese) This fantastic comp celebrates the amazing Newbeats who are best known for the sublimely absurd title track which features Larry Henley's amazing falsetto vocals perfectly utilized on one of the catchiest songs ever. It stands to reason that they would have a lot more good cuts, even though history has looked the other way. This CD unearths these gems, including ""(The Bees Are For the Birds) The Birds Are For The Bees" and "Hey-O Daddy-O." There are some silly but superb songs here. When the tracks are more "serious" they are often pretty interesting. On "white" type records Henley is often singing music that seems to be meant for a woman. On the more "Black" records that have either a sweet Chicago soul or a Motown feel he is more like a romantic man (and not the child from "Bread and Butter"). Most insane is that according to the liner notes (written by a very dependable historian) Henley wrote "Wind Beneath My Wings!" He must be a zillionaire from that, though if there was justice in this world he would get \$100,000 every month from the American Office of Culture for singing about enjoying toast and jam, and for the pain and suffering of catching his baby eating with another man.

New Black (Thick) This band is so good they make my teeth hurt. This is the kind of snotty, intense teen rock that makes you feel sexy and spasmodic at the same time.

New Radiant Storm King "Leftover Blues 1991-2003" (Contraphonic POB 2203 Chicago IL 60690) A rarities collection from a band that was born at a time when Indie Pop hadn't submitted to Indie Rock, yet had nothing to do with Power Pop, and a time when small bits of originality seemed more earthmoving than in the subsequent Alterna-years.

The New Year "The End Is Near" (Touch and Go POB 25520 Chicago IL 60625) These slow, minimal songs are seemingly effective lullabies, but then I had weird dreams.

Nomeansno/Hanson Brothers "Would We Be...Live?" (Punkvision.net) Nomeansno are Canada's pride for good reason. Though the energy of the show is sort of captured the way this was shot with several static cameras at awkward angles is not ideal. But it is good enough to see that these old guys are still comfortable playing punk and are still great at what they do. Being a dumbass I of course am a bigger fan of the novelty hockey stick alter ego act, but my DVD paler was acting up, and after taking so long to make it work, the band didn't seem funny. I wanted to hit the DVD player with a hockey stick.

Ode "On My Way To Learn" (odeband.com) I'm "Owed" 54 minutes of my life back for listening to this.

The One AM Radio "A Name Writ In Water" (Level-Plane POBox 7926 Charlottesville, VA 22906) If the music on your actual clock AM radio sounded like this you would use the alarm to put you asleep rather than wake you up.

The Orphans "Everybody Loves You When You're Dead" (Unity Squad POB 1235 Huntington Beach CA 925647) This is the kind of raw, stupid-simple punk that in two minutes sums up why it's worth cutting your hair in a way that will leave you unemployed. Welcome to the Orphan-age!

The Orphins "Drowning Cupid" (Goodnight) As smart as the Orphans with an "a" is stoopid, this is PoMo, not-quite-homo,

danceable punkish disco/pop/college rock with awesome drumming.

Ostomy "early werks" (POB 638 Kenmore NY 14217) Electronic insects that laid eggs in my ass n' tummy.

Outlie "Companions To Devils and Saints" (Porterhouse POB 3597 Hollywood CA 90078) The more serious side of poppy punk is explored here, bringing to mind Bad Religion more than the peppy girl's name songs that became Pop Punk's X. This is teen music grown up a bit.

Oxford Collapse "some wilderness" (Kanine 486 Graham Ave #31 Brooklyn NY 11222) Sounds like pleasant popcorn popping.

Paint the Town Red/Rise and Fall "Weapons" split CD (Join The Team Player Records) PTTR create 90s style AmRep-esque hardcoreish Metal that actually has some rich texture and humanity to their brutality. R&F successfully convey almost hopeless desperation with their pained, strained vocals. I would say that in this Battle of the Bands it is a tie with both guys bloody, or maybe one wins but they both go to the hospital, like in that Rocky movie.

Paisley and Twee (HHBTM POB 1035 Panama City, FL 32402/Bi-Fi bifirecords.com) A four band sampler/manifesto. Here's the breakdown: Elikabass have invented a new genre called "Nasal-edelia." The Poison Control Center have remade the soundtrack to a version of *Willy Wonka* performed on Vespas, the Red Pony Clock pay tribute to those Beatles twisted B-sides and fan club records, and I didn't like Ryan Anderson but maybe I just don't like people named Rvan.



Greg Palast "Weapon of Mass Instruction Live" (Alternative Tentacles) This spoken word album by one of the best anti-Bush investigative journalists working is ultimately a mighty work. As a comedian I'm not super comfortable with him, his glibness and arrogance are the exact things that fuel right wingers to believe the man behind the curtain despite the facts. But when he does what he does best, reveals the contents of smoking gun primary resource documents that damn the Bush Machine, he is powerful. It is really remarkable to hear him explain how he got, and the contents of, the damning documents (which are included as downloadable files here) that reveal the evil manipulation of the 2000 Florida election.

Papa M "hole of burning alms" (Drag City) A singles collection from the late 90s til now that soothes you...yet makes you think! Includes a seven and a half hour long Byrds cover.

Paris Texas "Like You Like An Arsonist" (New Line Records 116 North Robertson Blvd. LA, CA 90048) This is the best Wisconsin band of the 21st century! This sounds like the Archies meet Frankie Goes to Hollywood with a bunch of no wave and PoMo-semi-emo stuff filtered through some kind of weird wholesomeness. Better than the movie and the city of the same name!

Greg Parker "On The Break" (Whitewall POB 121963 Nashville, TN 37212) Young, handsome, of clear voice and possessed with a sense of Country and pop history beyond the scope of a lad of his age, Parker is positioned to be the next somebody, or the first him.

Brandon Patton "Should Confusion" (brandonpatton.com) Brand him a GENIUS! Joyfully sad poppy songwritery stuff.

Peachfuzz "about a bird" (Dionysus) Dreamy, hazy trippy 60s-style flower pop that at its best sounds like ambitious late Monkees stuff and at its worst still gives you a peach buzz.

Peanut Butter & Jeremy's Best Book Ever! By James Kochalka (Alternative Comics) This is Kochalka's best work. His simple tales of an arrogant hat-stealing crow and his neurotic, office-worker cat buddy update classic children's literature themes with 21st century anxiety. Crow-tastic and Cat-adelic! *

the peelers "THEGETDOWNSYNDROME" (Orange) This trash-rock band is so good that if you told me it was gorillas with musical instruments playing on this I'd believe you.

Playing Right Field - A Jew Grows In Brooklyn by George Tabb (Soft Skull) I thought this would be a collection of Tabb's columns from MRR over the years, which I would have welcomed, but it is in fact a more focused memoir with much broader appeal than his tales of punk rock absurdity. This is a collection of short pieces about painful days growing up in a crumpling family, dealing with cruel kids, a cheap dad and comic book fantasies. Fans of Tabb's writing are no doubt familiar with his rough tales of childhood, as often he would write about some contemporary indignity he suffered and then flash back to a parallel childhood or college experience. In many ways I prefer that framing device because it makes it so clear that things are going to turn out OK, you know that this boy will emerge with a sense of humor intact. I suppose you can still get this from the writing style here, especially the way he has childlike optimism and faith in his superhero role models even after numerous indignities, but it is hard for me to put myself in the place of a reader coming to this material with no sense of Tabb's work.

The Ponys "Laced With Romance" (In The Red POB 50777 LA, CA 90050, intheredrecords.com) Pony up to one of the best records of the year. Garage and 60s-inspired music are chopped up and then sewn back together with some amazing fiber optic wire. This is so real and so vital and so good that it made me gallop around naked.

Pork Dukes "Kum Kleen!" (Damaged Goods POBox 671 London E17 9GH) Tastefully crude servings of souse and chitterlings from these pub rock, punk attitude, pig rockers. This is a collection of demos, rarities and live tracks from 1976-1980, so if you want to see how pig meat tastes after feasting for a quarter-century check this out. The live tracks, while raw, are the best thing here as it really see demonstrates how bands that weren't making traditional punk music could still had the energy and feel of punk when they attacked a crowd.

The Powerknobs "Gas-Mask-A-Go-Go" (Wildebust) This party Garage-rocker made me dance so hard that my knob felt empowered.

Prairie Town "Season In Hell" (PRAIRIETOWN.NET, 5623 S. Melvina Chicago, IL 60638) I know that Americana usually refers to independent-minded Country-based rock (or rock-based country) but it should refer to this stuff: working class, regular guy rock rooted deeply in everything vaguely called rock & roll that was ever played on 70s and 80s radio. This has the poppiness of the Knack, the heart of John Cougar and the power of whatever was on the car stereo when you first got under that bra (or got your bra got under).

Lou Profa "das erwachen eines europaische neuen sonnigen tages" (Slusaj najglasnije Teskovec 27c, 10090 Zagreb, Croatia) I don't speak Coratian but I think the title translates to: "Very boring music."

Punch Drunk V (TKO 3126 W. Cary St. #303 Richmond VA 23221) This features some of the ugliest, loudest, hairiest bands on earth, including AntiSeen, Radio One, Texas Terri, the Krays, Limecell, US Bombs and a dozen more, including a live Slaughter and the Dogs track that will Oi the hell out of you. This is a record where everyone might as well be singing, "Somebody's Gonna Get Their Head Kicked In Tonight," because every track kicks you in the head.

Purple Hearts "smashing times" (Detour) Late 70s Mod revivalists with the right attitudes but a bit lacking on the chops necessary to be the new Kinks. Bad lyrics, too ("Gun of Life?"). Not an essential reissue but if you are a Mod-omaniac this is still solid enough to enjoy.

The Radio Beats "blow you up" (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston VA 20195) Sure Beats what's on the Radio. And by "beat" I mean with a baseball bat with a spike driven into it...and the beating is really, really fast.

Radio One (Disaster Records) Rousing Clash-esque (almost to the point of absurdity) classic punk that may not be original but sure is inspiring!

Rainy Day Saints "Saturday's Haze" (Get Hip) This one man band makes crunchy bubblegum, flowing flower rock and 21st century 60s pop all by himself, so I assume he's a schizophonic.

Raising The Fawn "the north sea" (Sonic Onyun POB 57347 Jackson Station, Hamilton ON L8P 4X2 Canada) This music is slow and quiet, but not laid back. Combining some Country twang with indie sensibilities (and whatever drugs make you move in slow motion) this is the most intense super-soft record you'll hear. That is, if your hearing is good enough. This emotionally drained me, so I need to get emotionally wet again.

Rambler 454 "No Name Café" (1280 SOM Ctr. Rd. #126 Cleveland OH 44143) Better at Mellencamp than Mellencamp, with better mellens and less camp.

The Ramblin' Ambassadors "Avanti" (Mint) "Avanti" is better than Ashanti! Motorcycle movie theme-music instrumentals that aren't afraid of a little roadburn.

The Ramones "NYC 1978" (King Biscuit Entertainment Group Inc. P.O. Box 6700 FDR Station, New York, New York 10150 www.kingbiscuit.com) Not much to say, is there? The Ramones in their prime, live, with great sound (I had a bootleg of this show, but, now, it's meaningless). A cloud of dust, a puff of smoke and a hearty "WUN-TOO-TREE-FOAH." Return with us, now, to those thrilling days of yesteryear when four leather-clad desperados embarked on a modest mission: Save Rock n' Roll (who among us believes that they didn't?). It's this simple, if you don't love The Ramones with all your heart and soul, there's something wrong with your morals, your sense of patriotism, or yer MUTHER! Who was that 6'6" tall man with the opaque shades, anyway? I wanted to thank him.

Rasputina "Frustration Plantation" (Instinct) So wicked and creepy it made my CD player sticky.

Red Eyed Legends "The High I Feel When I'm Low" (GSL) If your favorite Metal record was a midget and you put a pillowcase over its head and beat it in the dome with a wiffle ball bat for a half hour this is what it would then sound like.

Red Tyger Church "Free Energy" (Alive POB 7112 Burbank, CA 91510) This rocks so hard and so red it makes the Red Rocker himself look pink! Bloozey and oozezy, this is RAWK with a capitol "R." "A." "W" and "K!"

Lou Reed "Animal Serenade" (Reprise) This is fucking awful. I would still give a new Reed studio album a chance, but after hearing this I would NEVER go see him live. He is utterly charmless in his constant chatter between songs, and his guitar and voice make all of his material (from Velvets stuff to "New York" stuff to his newest material) sound grating and unpleasant. I can't believe I wasted two hours listening to this, but at least I didn't have to suffer in a club.

Reglar Wiglar zine (\$2, 1658 N. Milwaukee Ave. #545 Chicago IL 60647) I read it and then I eat it and it keeps me reglar.

The Reputation "to force a fate" (Lookout 3264 Adeline St. Berkeley CA 94703) Better than Fleetwood Mac, and the lady singing and writing is, thus, better than Stevie Nicks.

The Residents "Demons Dance Alone" DVD (MVD) This concert video is not particularly well shot which is bizarre for the Residents who I pretty much consider filmmakers more than concert artists. Oddly disappointing.

Retisonic "Return To Me" (Silverthree LLC PO Box 3621 Fairfax VA 22038) Awesome highbrow/lowbrow party music that could act as smart drugs for straight edge kids.

Riverwurst comix (\$4, POB 511553 Milwaukee, WI 53203) RiverBEST comix! This is a real Midwestern compilation, as the comics aren't slick or arrogant, they are all meat and

potatoes. This issue also contains a few columns and some classic strips by Denis Kitchen.

Lee Rocker "Bulletproof" (33rd St. Records 2052 Redwood Hwy Greenbrae, CA 94604) Nothing new or shocking from the big bass man from the Stray Cats (and Phantom, Rocker and Slick for that matter), but Rockabilly ain't supposed to have nothin' new going on. Rocker has a solid enough voice and I love when rootsy stuff is bass based so this is a very pleasant listen. The title track will have you and your bobbysoxer boppin in the backseat and there's a great Carl Perkins cover (and an obscure Johnny Cash one as well) so all you 'billys and fillys will be mighty sassed with this one.

Rocket From The Tombs "Rocket Redux" (Smog Veil, smogveil.com) This is a companion to the Rocket reissue and the Rocket tour, a documentation of the powerful contemporary RFTT playing their classic songs. The energy of the rust belt rockers playing live in front of genuinely appreciative fans is captured thoroughly in these excellent recordings done by Richard Lloyd. While this may seem extraneous I think it's an important document, and the weird, powerful, unique version of "Sonic Reducer" contained here alone makes this album worth buying.

Rockin' Rod and the Strychnines (4624 So. K Street Unti B Tacoma WA 98408) This is pure, uncut, grade A Garage Trash. This will rock your rod and make you go ga ga over Go Go.

Rocky Horror Punk Rock Show (Springman POB 2043 Cupertino CA 95015-2043, SpringmanRecords.com) This features the big names in poppy punk (Me First, Ataris, Groovie Ghoules, Alkaline Trio) and me being an advocate of *Rocky Horror* as the greatest rock musical ever composed I obviously feel that these songs are so strong that it is great to hear them performed by anyone. Of course, even with Pansy Division pinch hitting this isn't nearly gay enough to capture the real theatrical magic, and most of the bands love the movie soundtrack so much that this isn't particularly punk in the end (bands do their best to recreate the songs as accurately as possible). But for fans this of the movie or the bands this should be a super fun listen.

The Rolling Stones "Gimme Shelter" An outstanding Rock documentary, if only in that it signifies the end of an era. What starts as a good natured romp through the first leg of the Rolling Stones' first U.S. tour in three years (a long time, back then) results in a killing by the time the third act rolls around. Times had changed drastically since 1966, when The Beatles officially retired from touring, and The Stones did their last-ever shows with Brian Jones. In the interim, of course, Jones had died, and The Stones held off until new guitarist Mick Taylor was comfortable in his newfound position before embarking on a full scale tour. On the plus side, the technology for live sound had improved drastically (something The Beatles, firm on their "No concerts" stance, did not benefit from), but crowd control was still a major concern. The Stones had survived their first Iron Curtain concert in Poland, where most of the tickets had been given away to Upper Crust socialites, indifferent to Rock n' Roll, in an effort to keep young people out. Thousands of kids rioted, but the Stones got out with their skins. Still, nothing they'd seen in Europe could have prepared them for what was to come. Back on their feet, and in champion form, by late '69, The Stones' U.S. Tour should have been a greater series of victories than Caesar's armies' conquest of Europe. The Madison Square Garden footage shows a band still able to connect with an audience in a way that makes one forget this is a HUGE indoor show for the time (The gargantuan venues of today were still a gleam in a sponsors' eye 35 years ago). Incidentally, you can see a young Johnny Thunders in the crowd shots, if you utilize the "zoom" button on your remote. On a whole, this print looks much better than ones I've seen countless times on T.V. and at midnight movies. The fact that the original film screams for more footage from the New York gig is addressed with the inclusion of two bonus live clips. Now, you can loosen up your belt, so to speak. Of course, all those involved found themselves documenting more than just a Rock tour, but a day that would truly live in infamy. Being that it was the event that officially killed the sixties (with a little help from the Manson murders and the release of The Stooges' first album), Altamont proved too vast to give it any less screen time, even if it'd had a happy ending. As the film unravels, you can plainly see that the violence had started long before The Stones hit the stage. You see a lot of people being struck with lead-tipped pool cues, but it's usually not made clear what, if anything, provoked these attacks.

Sonny Barger (then-President of the Oakland Hell's Angels' chapter) gets the chance to tell his side of it, in the film, in a radio interview, and even in the accompanying booklet, but, to this day, nothing seems to be resolved. The far too hastily planned festival, in retrospect, was a recipe for disaster, only exacerbated by hiring The Hell's Angels as security (They later stated that no one had hired them as such), and the fact that there were reportedly a lot of bad drugs going around. This was 1969, the almost pure LSD of '66-'67 had been replaced by more lethal concoctions like STP. Haight-Ashbury was, by then, overrun with speed, heroin and other bullshit drugs. "This ain't the Summer of Love," amen. Poor judgment is displayed, too, when the Stones, or whoever represented them, consent to let The Angels act as security, partly because the British Hell's Angels (Who were largely ex-Rockers, and not recognized by the original, California-based Angels) had worked the Hyde Park show, virtually without incident, and also because the Grateful Dead (who, in the end, chose not to play, when they MIGHT have been the only outfit capable of calming The Angels down) had suggested them in the first place, as The Hell's Angels had done security for them, and for other Bay Area groups, like the Jefferson Airplane, whose lead singer, Marty Balin, was punched in the face for asking why some members of the audience were being beaten up. When The Grateful Dead get word of what happened to their friend, Marty, as well as random concertgoers, the best Jerry Garcia can come up with is, "Bummer." The movie itself, the accompanying booklet, and featured extras, raise the idea that, for as horribly awry as things went, many parties and factors could be blamed. The West Coast bikers and hippies had once been unsteady allies, the hippies even organizing benefits for bikers who'd been incarcerated, but the ties that once bound them were worn to a thin thread. The Angels were getting progressively drunker waiting for The Stones to make their entrance, which they didn't do until night had fallen, and if you've ever been to Frisco, you know what an oxymoron "on a warm San Francisco Night" is. Meanwhile, the audience wasn't getting any less loaded as The Stones wait two hours to go on (no doubt, they were terrified. Maybe they were being prima donnas, but, uh, it's not like they were getting paid). The film tries to show both sides of the story, though it can't help siding with the Stones and their fans. Who's to say who was the most at fault, "when, after all, it was you and me? Above and beyond all the horrors at Altamont, though, there are some fun private moments, like the band recording at Muscle Shoals Studio, or Jagger watching a great clip of Ike and Tina Turner (who opened several dates on this tour, along with B.B. King), with Tina Turner stroking the mike suggestively and saying what sounds like "Suck it...suck it...SOCK IT TO ME BABY!!" to Mick's schoolboyish giggling. The REAL treat, however, is in the extras, where we get to see some candid backstage footage of Jagger and Ike Turner swapping Blues licks on the guitar (surprisingly, Jagger holds his own). Obviously, The Stones, who were now working with Sam Cutler, one of the driving forces behind Woodstock, were keen to put on a Woodstock of their own, and as you see quickie negotiations being made, you get the sense that even if you didn't know what was coming next, the shit is going to hit the fan. *Gimme Shelter* is still a powerful document of what went wrong with the Love Generation, something the Stones never really felt comfortable being associated with in the first place. Cutler was quick to point out that this was, in fact, the Anti-Woodstock, but there were reports of at least threats of violence at Woodstock, too, when food and water supplies ran dangerously low, and vendors started charging about what The House of Blues charges today for food and drink. The final act, in which we actually see Meredith Hunter being stabbed on film, raises more questions than answers. Why was no individual ever implicated in the stabbing? Why had Hunter produced a gun in the first place, and did he really think the Angels wouldn't retaliate? Could a professional security team, or even some off-duty cops have detained Hunter without the end result being his, or someone else's death? These questions are about as easy to answer as "what went wrong with The 60s?." But, "Gimme Shelter" does a very good job in answering this, via some fine camera work (done, in part, by a young George Lucas), and a constantly on the spot documentation of every event as it occurs that make this similar to a "reality Show" IF there was one that actually dealt with reality.

Sterling Roswell "The Psychedelic Ubik" (Mint Microdot/Jungle) The heart of a radio pop star hides behind swirls of psychedelia signifiers and I liked finding him.

Sam Henderson's Magic Whistle (Alternative Comics) Henderson makes comics that are funny, which makes him a

super rarity in comix today. Instead of doing a few regular size issues this year Henderson printed one big book-size issue of new material, which is theoretically ambitious. But what makes this the bargain of the year is that he gets *genuinely* ambitious in content by utilizing a color section to do a absurd, compelling, fully-functional, complex narrative story about phased-out Sunday funnies characters. It is one of the best comix stories I've read this year, and though it is certainly as ridiculously dumb as anything Henderson does it's also very real in an unreal way.

Surrinder Sandhu "Cycles and Stories." "Saurang orchestra" (Resonator) Playing a rarely heard Indian string instrument called a sarangi, Sandhu makes a variety of interesting musical journeys on these CDs. When he approaches jazz, with the unique sound of his instrument leading the way, you have something happening that is really fascinating. When he works with orchestral arrangements sometimes it becomes muzak-ish, and "smooth" in the way you don't want anything to be. The sparer and the more empty space around the notes the better on the debut. On "Cycles and Stories" density is utilized much better, as the music becomes dramatic, and even melodramatic, in ways that are exciting, funny and moving. Sandhu is the san-dude!

The Scraggs "one with everything" (Won Ton) Scragged my testicles and ROCKED me!

Screaming Tribesmen "the savage beat of..." (Shock, shock.com.au) Not exactly savage, this collects two singles, an ep and a live set by an obscure Aussie early 80s band that only has about 2 and a half tunes resembling energetic, semi-punk (though the pop of the drums on the upbeat "I Don't Wanna Know" is pretty great). File under "Inessential." Or perhaps, "InAustrential."

Marc Seal (marcseal.com) This isn't guitar noodling, it's guitar *shmoodling*!

The 7-10 Splits "Yard Sale" (Big Neck POB 8144 Reston, VA 20195) Bowled me over with pure Rock 'n' Roll stoopidity. Good bowling alleys have serious bars and a lot of crashes and yelling, and this record would sound great if you were drunk and there were a lot of loud noises around you.

Sex Positions (Deathwish, deathwish.com) Apehit hardcore that brings to mind sex positions achievable by spastic octopi.

Silver "White Diary" (Bad Afro) This sounds like wanted Hanoi Rocks looked, but never quite lived up to. This is genuinely punked out, glamorous real Rawk & Roll.

Simpletones "I Have A Date" (Re-Force/Posh Boy) The Simpletones were a late 70s SoCal teenage punk band that were closer to stand up comedians than they were to The Germs. This is a silly but inspiring collection of pre-Pop Punk pop punk. Lots of songs making fun of Disco and California and punk elicit chuckles. Perhaps funniest and most absurd is a song about being pissed about Pope John Paul dying so abruptly. A nostalgic cover of a recent Dickies song ("I think back to a couple of a months ago...") and a nasty, lo-fi Seeds cover make this package pretty posh, boys.

Skoljke "U Korak S Vremenom" (Listen Loudest!) I don't speak Croatian, but I think this may be an anti-Nazi bar rock Rock Opera. Or maybe pro-Nazi, I can't tell.

Slade "Get Yer Boots On - The Best of Slade" (Shout Factory 2042-A Armacost Ave. LA, CA 90025) The only Slade collection available in the states before this was "Sladest," which came out decades ago and didn't include their 80s American hit, "Run, Run Away," so this collection isn't a luxury *it's a necessity!* Slade is possibly the greatest party rock band ever. They may have been bad at spelling but they were GREAT at rock, and the foot stomping gems "Gudbuy T'Jane," "Mama Weer All Craze Now," "Skweeze Me, Pleeze Me" and "Cum On Feel The Noise" are definitions 1 through 4 if you look up "Anthem" in the dictionary. Noddy Holder (which must mean what it sounds like) was the ultimate glam frontman because sure, anyone who looks gay and pretty can put on glitter, but for a burly yob to get sparkly really means something!

Slats "Pick It Up" (Latest Flame 1638A North Astor St. Milwaukee WI 53202) Slat-tastic! Art Wave that isn't scared to rhyme "Honda" with "Miata."

Slink Moss Explosion (Rattlesnake 114 East 1st #29 NYC 10009) Slink has made many records, some of them downright infectious. But this is his by far his rocking-est record and he has never had as good chemistry with a band since he became Slink. This is a modern, spare Rockabilly record that isn't afraid to break tradition and be more 21st century than most pompadour ponies allow themselves to be. Plus they mention bees, kats and ghosts (always genius Rockabilly themes!)

Small Hours "the anthology" (Detour) This collects rarities by a late 70s, early 80s Northern Soul revivalist act from London. Unfortunately instead of sounding like a cheesy but fun Commitments-type tribute act this band seems to have fell between the focus cracks, sounding more like Dexy's Midnight Runners or a Springsteen tribute band than a Stax combo. Even the live Don Covay cover is unconvincing.

Brett Smiley "Breathlessly Brett" (RPM) Smiley was a pretty boy who recorded some interesting tracks in the early 70s. His breathy singing and his precious looks (he was always photographed in blurry soft focus) fit right into the fake-gay side of Glam. The best songs here are likely the upbeat Bolan-esque stuff, but one gets the feeling that the melodramatic slower stuff, with real theatrical aspects, might have been Smiley's favorite children. Whether he was playing a space boy or a old lounge singer or Neil Sedaka he seemed to be fully invested in the characters and there's a gentle beauty to everything he did. A glam-itized Beatles cover included here actually is pretty interesting in the way it summarizes what glam was all about; excess, humor and a real appreciation of early rock & roll.

The Smugglers "Mutiny In Stereo" (Mint) Should be called the "Grape Smugglers" because these Canucks have BALLS! This is music that makes people dance and makes animals laugh and makes furniture nervous.

The Snags (alopecia) Snagged my testicles and ROCKED me!



Snoozor "winter stops all sound E.P." (Happy Happy Birthday To Me) This is an excellent One Man Band (though it's one woman) making lo-fi indie pop that understands the textures and powers of cheap electronics (she even harmonizes her voice at times with the keyboard's buzz). This isn't a grand, gloriously epic album, but it is a near-perfect example of a small, pleasant bedroom record.

Some Girls "All My Friends Are Going Death" (Deathwish) This record makes you feel like you are being shook by a paint mixer. All the songs are about a minute long yet each one is scarier than *Halloween III: Season of the Witch* in its entirety.

Soul On Fire DVD (Inak) This compiles performances from an 80s German live TV show, and while in many ways that is the worst era for guitar sound, clothes, hair and backup bands, you can't argue with the lineup: Curtis Mayfield, Tony Joe White, Bill Wyman's Rhythm Kings and even Terence Trent D'arby! While it is a flawed format (I have most of these full length DVDs, and I dig them, but always cringe a bit) it is far superior to have them on this comp than to own the full lengths and I recommend this.

Sounds Like Braille "Right Out Of Left Field, Straight To The Middle Of Nowhere..." (Contraphonic pob 2203 Chicago, IL 60690, contraphonic.com) If braille actually read like this sounded you would bloody your fingers with all the staccato syllables. In fact, I would say that a braille version of this album would be the Jazzercise for the digits that would cure carpal tunnel syndrome. Pleasant chaos marries pretty plucking.

soundtracks for kisses, trips and fits: a futureappletree compilation (Futureappletree pob 191 Davenport, IA 52808) An impressive pop sampler with jangle and jostle and Jukebox candy pop. All the bands are good but Marlboro Chorus has the best guitar sound, the Vow has the best drumming and Tenki's slightly Ska-sprinkled stuff impressed me.

Southern Culture on the Skids "Mojo Box" (Yep Roc) Boy, do I still dig this band. Sure you could say they are up to their rolled up overall cuffs in hillbilly schtick, but this is not mean or judgmental white trash minstrelsy, it's affectionate, respectful and reverential musical musings on trailers, old cars and the swampy lifestyle. If you don't dance around and have fun to "Smiley Yeah Yeah Yeah," or "biff BANG Pow" then you have a broken funbone.

Southkill (Noreaster Failed Industries) This thunders and then it poignantly drizzles and then it hits you with lightning.

The Spits (Dirtnap POB 21249 Seattle WA 98111) This spits on Joey Ramones' grave as a revenant sign of respect. Their last record ruled but this surpasses all expectations!

The Spooky Kids "Lunch Boxes & Choklit Cows" (Empire/Universal) If you thought that early, boring Marilyn Manson records were a little bit too good these pre-Manson demos are for you.

Sport Is Tom comix/art zine/CD (c/o Dennis Tyfus St-Paulusstraat 11, 2000 Antwerp Belgium) Juvenile genius awesome comix art from cave painters across the Continent. This is both sexy and vexing.

Starflyer 59 "I Am The Portuguese Blues" (Tooth and Nail) This is a fantastic record. Though this band has been drone in the past this is a majestic rock record (albeit, with a dark edge). This sounds more like T Rex, Aerosmith and Oasis than MBV or BRMC, but it also doesn't really sound like that stuff either.

The Stark Jehovah Ensemble "Hone" (Soutrane.com) A little too stark, if you ask me. I like ambient music and reflective composition as much as the next Heavy Metal fan, but I just kept waiting for action on this one. They do provide the dreamiest version of "Over The Rainbow" ever...yes dreamier than *Star Search* champ Sam Harris' version!

Step Forward "rubber bullets" (reaction records POB 362 Stockton NJ 08559-0362) Emo via Midwestern-style Power Pop. I'm not saying that if this singer got some Claritin and cleared up whatever makes him sing like his nose is stuffed up that they would sound like Shoes, but this is much more pleasant and warm than most stuff you hear these days.

Stepmothers "You Were Never My Age...And More- The Complete Posh Boy Recordings" (Re-Force T. Drescher: Woehlerhof 4 30900 Wedemark Germany) An early 80s project combining ex-Simpletones (see their reissue review) with a bold vocalist named Steve Jones (not from the Sex Pistols) resulted in a punk-like record that combined melodic pop with elements of English punk (pub chants, fast choppy guitar) and So Cal stuff (not only do some choruses bring to mind a more technically proficient Runaways, but Lita Ford, dating a Stepmother, even appears on one track). (Despite the name, this is an all dude band, by the way) Some tunes like "Inland Empire" are convincingly hard and insane (with wailing guitar solos, this couldn't be confused for hardcore) but most of these tunes are tough versions of sweet pop, and if you've never heard this stuff it is worth tracking down.

Stolen Sharpie Revolution (\$4, 5307 N. Minnesota Ave. Portland, OR 97217) This essential guidebook to help you on the production of your underground, d.i.y. zine (or, to be more accurate, d.i.y.w.h.f. t.e.g. - "do it yourself with help from this essential guidebook") is back, with better printing and a sturdier cover and some new features. Highly recommended for you would-be revolutionary publishers with something to say.

The Story of the Blues DVD (MVD) This is just like Ken Burns Civil War or Jazz documentaries. Except there's no interviews, the entire thing is comprised of stills and public domain footage awkwardly composed on some annoying video editing program that likely came free with a 1989 Tandy computer and they get the name of Lincoln's assassin wrong. Other than that this is perfect. If you don't get headaches from watching awkward zero-budget video wipes

and transitions, and you want to hear a minute or two of a couple dozen Blues tunes while an idiot gives a debatable history of the struggle of the Negro, than this is for you.

Strangebone "at the E-Z Organ" (Areola Autophonic Discs 713 Louisa New Orleans, LA 70117) This LP is of organ music made on a bizarre homemade golf cart organ machine. Strangebone was once a member of the intense Crash Worship, and the fact that he has a background in noise music rather than in the carnival makes this a much more interesting record than I expected. The aesthetics of the instrument and the photos of the tuxedoed player/driver indicate a Phantom of the Opera/Incredibly Strange Music type who I expected to make eerie chamber music, perhaps a spookier version of Quintron's non-dance material. Instead this is a man who is interested in the qualities of sound rather than in evoking feelings one gets from familiar music. This is a dynamic exploratory record, that fearlessly gets as quiet and minimal as it gets loud and wild. The wheels on his instrument look a little small, but if he can get some snow tires put on it, hopefully he can drive it around the country some day so we can all hear him play his magical music in person.

The Strap-Ons "Punk on Punk Crime" (Valiant Death 22543 James River Dr. Carrollton, VA 23314) If you like your punk fucked, stupid and stupider this is your thing. It sounds like Heartbreakers but with the heroin replaced with head injuries.

Street Angel by Jim Rugg and Brian Maruca (Slave Labor Graphics, slavelabor.com) This is one of the best superhero comics I have ever read. This is related in spirit to the stylized, humorous, absurd superheroic antics of Cole's *Plastic Man* or Eisner's *Spirit*, but with a dark (but still cute), skatepunk edge. Street Angel is a diminutive teen skater girl who somehow is able to defeat hordes of ninjas (ninja is an ethnicity in this world - they play shirts and skin street hoops, all wearing ninja hoods) single handedly. Though she will solve a crime if called to do so, she won't interact with the authorities without being obnoxious (a scene where she is sitting in front of the mayor's desk talking at him through a bellowing bullhorn from two feet away is hilarious). The action in this comic is super bloody and violent but to call it stylized is an understatement and the writing is so sharp and makes the absurdity of the violence so clearly surreal that this is really age appropriate (even with the beheadings) for all but the youngest readers. The fact is, this is so good and original and convincing that it very likely will become a movie (the comics industry these days seems to be a loss leader for the motion picture industry) and that will be a mistake. The reason this works as a comic is that it doesn't make any sense for her to beat up all these ninjas and it is the unseen action between the panels that makes this work so well. The only jokes I don't dig in this incredibly funny book fall outside the narrative. The back cover is a pretty good gag displaying how a more exploitative publisher would try to sell the book, with Street Angel as a sexed out hottie in lowriding pants and thong panties. I get the joke, but it is kinda child porn-ish. More disturbing is a pretend ghetto biography of the authors (utilizing all kinds of clichés about drive bys and an incarcerated dad and selling drugs) which is closer to racist than it is to funny. But within the panels of the story this premiere issue is a near masterpiece.

Strong Come Ons "Yell a Lot and suck!" (Big Neck) A gloriously insipid incestuous lovechild of trash rock and the funnest 80s hardcore resulting in a mess that would only have been improved if there were eleven more songs on this 7", like other great hardcore singles of the past.

Struction (Noreaster Failed Industries 2406 Phillips Dr. Alexandria VA 22306) I'm Struc as if by a truck!

Subhumans "Live In A Dive" (Fat) The Subhumans still sound and look great. I guess by looking kind of normal to start with they still have dignity on stage 25 or so years later. Their live energy on this is excellent and as far as UK punk vocals go Dick from the Subhumans has the perfect punk accent. He also is an inspiration for punks who wear glasses. This is by far the best comic book they've ever had to accompany a CD in this series. Instead of an Image Comics style hero book it's a zine comix style illustration of the lyrics to "Subvert City." Also includes a good interview and live song video clip.

Supinetositi "Breakoutyourindicator" (Lovitt) Is this called Annoying-Core, because this guy sings like the sound Jim

Carey makes in *Dumb and Dumber* when he says, "Want to hear the most annoying sound ever...?"

The Swansea Mass "Silver Venus" b/w "Chessy" (Loud Device, loud-devices.com) The Swansea Mass have Swansea CLASS! This is a lovely post-shoegazer record, which basically is like an old shoegazer record but with much better shoes to gaze at.

The Sweet "glitz, blitz and hitz" DVD (Creem/MVD) If you ever see a bad *Behind The Music*, and I mean a super boring one like Hootie or Everclear, know that it is still a finely crafted piece of work. Apparently, as this documentary demonstrates, it is very easy to make a worthless piece of shit documentary on even a fascinating band. Now I've seen another Sweet special and it covered the band's story to its pathetic conclusion with the sorry decline of Brian Connolly demonstrated in heartbreaking depressing 3-D, and I don't need to see that again. But this suffers from not having anyone good to interview, yet depending on nothing but interviews. OK, the guitarist is actually a decent guy to talk to, but the song writer (interviewed reclining on a bean bag waering shorts, like he didn't know he was going to be interviewed that day) and the manager have far less to say than you'd expect. And since there is no one else to talk to they often will leave a camera on them for minutes at a time as they blabber without insight on minutia. Not to say this is completely worthless, you likely want to see the original promo films and TV performances of their singles, most unfortunately not in their entirety. Sweet were amazing both as a band and as a visual act so the "videos" are the saving grace of this terrible DVD. Creem also put out the excellent live Stooges DVD so I really trusted them and they seriously let me down.

Systems Officer (Ace Fu POB 552 NYC 10009) Quirky, spare compositions defined by a drummer who seems to have been influenced by a bowl of soggy Rice Krispies (you hear a pop every so often, after s muted snap and crackle) and vocals that sound like your speakers are broken.

Tad Morose "Modus Vivendi" (Century) Driving epic Metal that can punch it up like a pug prizefighter when needed but can also get all dramatic like a theater major when called upon.

Otis Taylor "Double V" (Telarc 23307 Commerce Park Road Cleveland OH 44122) Live at Old Town School of Folk Music (Chicago, IL) Otis is an actual, real life musical genius. The acoustic bluesman who plays hypnotic trance rhythms on banjo and guitar while telling tales of racial unrest had a prime main stage spot at last year's Chicago Blues Festival, but the quiet textures of his music got lost in that large space. He seemed much more at home in the intimate confines of the Old Town School. Either that room is an brilliantly designed acoustic wonder or Taylor is one of the greatest sonic geniuses in history. I think the truth is likely somewhere in the middle, as the mesmerizing sounds coming from Taylor's instruments had profound physical presence, really making the pain and history and power of his music tangible and exhilarating. I have seen many great shows in my life by artists that have seriously overwhelmed me with their talent and power and showmanship, from Patti LaBelle to Little Jimmy Scott to Joan Jett to AC/DC to Tony Joe White. These were all concerts that left me dumbfounded. But I honestly may never have been as physically affected by music as I was during Taylor's set. He is a tremendously important artist. In the abbreviated second set there was a great cameo from local harmonica whiz Billy Branch. The show was, shortened because the African headliner (the wonderful Habib Koite) ran overtime during the previous set, but even in a fifteen-minute space, his charisma came across. Taylor performed music from his new album which, of all his CDs, is the recording that comes closest to capturing the intimacy of his concerts. His songs tell profound stories that are historical and contemporary, from a funky tune describing a seductive dance Lewis and Clarke's slave did for the Native American women to a spare portrait of a poor woman eating dog food with a plastic spoon to the rousing story of Major Taylor, the great Black turn of the century bicycle champion (there's a weird movie about him starring Phil Morris of *Seinfeld*, by the way). His daughter also sings on this and her voice is amazing. The song "Mama's Selling Heroin," with her enchanting, pained siren song and his tough voice playing off each other creates one of the most striking recordings I've heard in while.



Ten Words For Snow "Spit On Electrics" (Boy Arm 28616 Dartmouth Madison Heights MI 48071) I have one word for GREAT: *This!* Mature, but joyful, postmodern noodling meets peppy ditty making.

Terror At The Opera "snake bird blue" (No Sides POB 257491 Chicago IL 60625) Despite being two pretty ladies and having some genuine musical ability and being a mostly accordion based act somehow this manages to have almost exactly the same haunting, striking, dreary magic as the music of Jandek!

Texas Terri Bomb! "Your Lips...My Ass!" (TKO 3126 W. Cary St. 303 Richmond VA 23221) If Texas Terri didn't exist someone would have to make her up to fill the void, because there really should always be a super badass, nasty, tough, rude Rawk chick drenching her nearly naked, tattooed body in absurd Rock clichés while pumping out intense music to drink and thrash around to. This almost can't be original or even truly outstanding, it just has to be exactly what it is: solid kick ass rock.

"Texotica!" (www.Texotica.com) I thought the Exotica/Lounge thing had run its course around the same time as The Macarena, but I guess I was wrong. Recently, a successful multi-venue "Tiki Fest" was held in Chicago, while Mark Ridlen (producer and compiler of this set) has been doing the same thing on a smaller scale, putting on his own happenings at Trader Vic's in Dallas. Ridlen sang and played bass with modern Psych gods, Lithium Xmas, for 12 years, and Post-Punkers, Quad Pi (who were also pretty psychedelico), before that. He's been omnipresent in the Dallas music scene since the late Seventies. The artists he assembled here read like a "Who's Who" of local stalwarts who got their start before The New Bohemians had a hit or Rev. Horton Heat clawed his way to the middle. Nobody is really trying to sound like Martin Denny, Esquivel, or even Combustible Edison. The idea is to bring some of those themes into the 21st century, and Ridlen, who was into this stuff LONG before it was "hip," is the man with the plan. The cast of characters is astounding. T. Tex Edwards, essentially the Godfather of the Dallas Punk scene, turns in a strange, warbly reading of Kevin Ayers' (one of his heroes) "Take Me To Tahiti." Former Drag performer and Warhol associate, Tangella (who was VERY good at his craft...many a straight guy gave him the "Queer Eye!"), does a giddy rendition of "Happy Talk" from "South Pacific" (Actually a hit for Captain Sensible in The U.K.). Peter Schmidt (late of local teen idols, Three on a Hill, and Funland, whose CD was illustrated by Peter Bagge) does a fine version of The Kinks' "I'm On An Island" and The Deathray Davies (too bad Davies didn't have a deathray to blast back at the punkass motherfucker who shot him) also represent The Dapper Gapper ably with "Holiday in Waikiki." Blues Diva, Cricket Taylor, and The Hip Death Goddess, herself, K.Y. Boyce (late of Lithium Xmas), perform a very sexy duet of "Bali Hai," also from "South Pacific" (I figured you knew that, but David Lee Roth said that most young people don't even know who Bloody Mary was!). Texas Avant-Garage band, The Norvells, also released a cool version in 1979. Chris Merlick (late of Fireworks and Lithium Xmas) turns up with The Gospel Swingers on a cool original, "Bava Lamp" (yes, it's an homage to Mario Bava. A-Plus!). Homer Henderson keeps his promise to Roctober by releasing yet another collaboration with Nick Tosches, "Out of My Dreams," and it's an out of the ballpark "homer!" The actually very well known Old 97's get into the act, too, with "Northern Line," also a cool track. Bruce Webb, late of The Peyote Cowboys (who were, along with Lithium Xmas, Dallas' finest train wreck Psych outfit of The 80s) turns up, I was glad to see, in The Out House Moans (Murray Hammond of The Old 97's also played in The Peyote Cowboys, and he

and Webb even backed our own John Battles in a one-shot group in '86, preceding Joe Bob Briggs at a literary festival!). The real coup, here, has got to be the inclusion of Mr. Peppermint, nee Jerry Haynes (beloved Dallas-Ft. Worth Kiddie Show host for many years, and, incidentally, Gibby Haynes' Dad), singing a lovely rendition of "Yellow Bird" which even includes a joking reference to The Butthole Surfers (Haynes used to attend his son's gigs in Dallas, whenever possible, and could always be seen grinnin' big!). Elsewhere, DJ Cheeky Puppy does a pretty funny Dance Mix with samples from a Rusty Warren LP (I don't know which one, I'm more of a Belle Barth man, myself), advising women that "Booze makes your boobies grow bigger!" (if that were true, some of my exes would have forced Russ Meyer out of retirement!). The biggest enigma (among many) here would probably be Charred, which started life in Denton, Texas in 1986 as a sort of No Wave/Experimental/Rock Opera ensemble that served as the houseband at Char-Hut, a converted Pizza Hut that served hamburgers and hot dogs instead. They were probably better known for instigating large tribal jams in public places, with invited participants banging on bits of metal. Once, at a party, they literally got about 50 people beating out a rhythm on parts of the house! Their ACTUAL drummer, Bruce Saltmarsh, later turned up in 68 Comeback, and has been more recently heard with The Porch Ghouls, touring with Aerosmith(!). Original guitarist, Jason Cohen, keeps the Charred name alive with "Pagan Cake Walk," and that's exactly what it sounds like (this just in, I'm told Charred did a reunion show recently). Not surprisingly, the "Hawaii Five-O" theme gets revisited, as "Jack Lord is My Shepherd," arranged by Riden, with samples of SNL's Mr. Mike. What IS surprising is that no one did a similar take on the "Hawaiian Eye" theme, or Radio Birdman's classic, "Aloha, Steve and Dan" Oh, well, I'm told a second volume is planned. Even if you don't know what or who the Hell I've been babbling about, this twisted Texan take on essentially Hawaiian and other Pacific Island themes is surely the wildest and most humorous take on the genre you're likely to come across....That is, unless the lost Hawaiian Sky Saxon recordings (with his version of "Are You Lonesome Tonight?" backed by hordes of barking dogs) ever sees a proper release.

Thank God For Astronauts "take it tough" b/w "18 Seismic Waves" (Best Friend Records pob 48214 Denver CO 80204) It's like a jangly Velvet Underground!

Thingmaker compilation (Gearhead, gearheadrecords.com) Read what I wrote about the "Demons" record to get my take on this label, and though I dig the heavy bands here I really like the standout sillier acts like Dukes of Hamburg, Red Planet, Hypnomen and the Hives. That said, the Nomads sure kick ass! This is a great low cost hi rock comp and you should buy one for your van and one for your muscle car.

Thrills "N.A.F.I.T.C." (Dionysus) This ultra obscure late 70s punk band from the Boston area had one single (which I've never heard before, but it is AWESOME, the title track, "Not Another Face In The Crowd," is killer) and luckily played live shows that were recorded remarkably well. So the ultra-generous Dionysus empire amazingly has enough material to present a full length album. The only benchmark I can give you to place this band is that Merle Allin, G.G.'s brother and latter day enabler, was the bass player. The reason this record is good is that the band isn't cookie cutter punk, they are into 50s rock and 60s girl group, but mostly they are knocking out post-Ramones rough and fun rock n roll. The ace in the hole here is vocalist Barb Wire, who sounds like Debby Harry trying to sing like Ronnie Spector after a rough night. Pretty good liner notes and excellent period photos make this a very worthwhile acquisition

Tight Phantomz "Nightfool" (Southern) I'm glad to see a band from the Midwest capture the NYC downtown Bowery hipster thing so perfectly. I hope this band ends up on the cover of every fashion mag soon promoting their wicked music, because this isn't just just music, it is *style*. And what is hard to capture on plastic is that the singer guy can move like a motherfucker on stage, obviously inspired by the phantomic tightness of the killer tunes.

The Tokens "Intercourse" (Rev-Ola) Unbelievable! Of course tons of bands must have been influenced to make insanely ambitious art records after "Pet Sounds" (or "Smile" to the insiders) and "Sgt. Pepper's" hit, but I've never heard as successful (or as Beach Boys derivative) a nutty gonzo artsy record before! Originally rejected by Warner Brothers (who maybe would have preferred an all "The Lion Sleeps

Tonight" concept record) and released in an ultra-small pressing by the band, this is totally worth hearing. The LP opens with a newborn being spanked by the doctor and the crying morphs into a Brian Wilson-esque ode to existence, "It's Great To Be Alive." Not to be outdone by "Pet Sounds" there is one track here with lots of animal sounds that aren't housepets! There's a horn/pop song that sounds like the Partridge Family meets Chicago that opens with the words, "I could swim, I could fly, I could eat huckleberry pie..." There's a Brute Force cover!!! Anyone who loves the weird period in the late 60s where Rock & Roll bands were trying to figure out what it meant to be Rock and important and gloriously made bold bizarre decisions than you CAN NOT pass this up, it is the reissue of the year.

The Torquays "Return Engagement" (Golly Gee 4001 Kennett Pike suite 134 #520 Greenville DE 19807) An extremely pleasant platter of surf and pre-surf instrumental music, with some of the nicest Exotica redux I've heard in a while. This is a fantastic overview of instrumental guitar music from the 50s and 60s done in the 21st century without a hint of condescension or tongue-in-cheekism. Better than the movie "Torque!"

Tortoise "It's All Around You" (Thrill Jockey) They are jamming in all senses of "jam" (except for the fruity preserve spread sense of the word). This is music for both your inner spaces and for outer space.

Toxic Reasons "Dedication 1979-1988" (Re-Force/G-Force) I recall hearing that members of Toxic Reasons were from a variety of backgrounds and could speak several foreign tongues. To which someone responded, "Yeah, so they can suck in three different languages." I don't have the original records, so I can't compare, but I think these may be re-recordings. Listening with fresh ears I have to give them credit for likely influencing Motley Crue's first record, and also for courageously being as crossover punk as crossover could be. And like 'em or hate 'em, you have to admit, Tufty has to be the cutest punk nickname of all time.

Towers of Hanoi (Barracuda Sound POB 11994 Gainesville, FL 32604) Hanoi shlocks.

Track & Fields - Kill Rock Stars compilation 2 (KRS) In these days when it costs nothing for a band to put out their own real-assed full length CD, compilations are less "important" than they were in the 80s when that was how you learned about punk scenes around the world. Now most comps feature previously released stuff or throwaway material. I like that artists take KRS comps seriously and the majority of the over forty tracks here are unreleased A-material. Highlights include his name is alive's Marvin Gaye tribute, a Gravy Train!!! big breast tribute, a Measles, Mumps Rubella gay dance music tribute, Sahara Hotnights' Ramones tribute and John Wilkes Booze (my fave new KRS act in years) saluting Sun Ra.

Trans Am "Liberation" (Thrill Jockey, thrilljockey.com) If this is the theme music that plays behind you then you are fucked. You are not living in an episode of *Columbo* or *Matlock*. You're in an *X-Files* or a student film...watch out!

Frank Tribes "By All Means" (S.E.N. 3257 W. Warner #3 Chicago IL 60618) The Tribes has spoken! Well, sung. And it's a fairly interesting variation on singer-songwriter, with interesting production giving depth, atmosphere and flavor to spare pop stories.

Tungsten74 "Aleatory Element" (Technical Echo) This is the Death Metal of psychedelic improvised space rock.

TV On The Radio "desperate youth, blood thirsty babes" (Touch and Go POB 25520 Chicago IL 60625) Not as bootyslaking and nuts grabbing as their EP, but this compensates by making genuinely sincere strange music, enchanting and entrancing and serious, yet still informed enough by joy.

TV Set "Regret Is For Humans" (tvset666@yahoo.com) New Wave so classic it's Old Wave but so perfect it's True Wave. Absurdly simple Casio-core that makes you feel like a happy robot.

Twisted Roots (Dionysus) This great album by an early 80s band made up of Pat Smear (Germes) and Paul and Kira Roessler (Screamers, Black Flag, respectively) is a definite progression from the absurd mess of early LA punk, which

was some of the ultimate high school rock n roll. But this isn't actually mature, it's more like the overambitious early college project where kids think they are now brilliant and get ahead of themselves. This still has simplicity and innocence even as it gets deep and smart. The vocalist, Maggie Ehrig, is a perfect frontwoman who can do anything this band asked, from scream-singing with indignation to talking singing like a tuff biker to damn near sing-singing on a coarse Country Rock tune, "It must Be The Weather." Mr. Roessler is an interesting songwriter, and when he co-writes with Smear the songs are really outstanding and memorable. I've never heard of this band or seen their singles so I'm really happy Dionysus is so committed to releasing unjustly obscure gems.

UGODZ-ILLA "presents the Hillside Scramblers" (Indiego 3650 Osage St. Denver CO 80211) Former Wu-Tang auxiliary U-God returns to stomp like a giant lizard over the Tokyo of hard Hip Hop. OK, maybe you can tell that he mostly is decimating a cute little scale model, but at least he spits some memorable stuff that eschews the complexities of the Wu for the kind of straight-forward, simple stuff Ice-T might have put out in his heyday.

UK Subs "Punk Can Take It" DVD (MVD/Cleopatra) A 1979 comedy short that treats punks as an endangered, novel ethnographic subject. Done in total professional British documentary style, with a BBC announcer and great production values, this is made AWESOME by amazing live footage of the UK Subs live in a wild concert. Their working class heavy rock was at its peak in 79, and this footage is intense. Funniest gag: a punk musician is taken to a fancy restaurant to woo him into a record contract. When he is told not to use ketchup on his food he cuts his arm and covers his meal with blood. The best thing about this movie is that every joke they make about the persecution, hypocrisy and absurdity of punks is true. Includes a violent punk dwarf woman.

The Umbrella Sequence "the disappearing line/Athena" (Ohev POB 772121 Coral Springs FL 33077 ohevrecords.com) It might be an umbrella but it's "all wet" to me.

Underoath "They're Only Chasing Safety (SolidState) Catchy hard-emo from these formally apeshit Metal/hardcore kids. There's a nice balance between wimpy melody singing and evil monster screaming here, so though this may not be the intense record Underoath's hardass dude fans would normally dig, but it may be the record they can play when their girlfriends are around.

Unfinished Business: The Life & Times Of Danny Gatton by Ralph Heibutski (Backbeat Books 600 Harrison St. San Francisco, CA 94107). While I'll admit to being a Danny Gatton fan while he lived, I hadn't listened to him in years when this bio came my way. It's a tribute to the author that while my Gatton albums continue to gather dust, this book has given me some of the most engrossing reading of the past winter. To be blunt, Gatton was one of those guitar heroes that no one but other guitar geeks would want to listen to. He was rooted in rockabilly and 50's R&B, which is where I came in, but listening to him again (ten years after his death) one fact was glaring: he wasn't about the song, he was about the technique. I probably let him slide back then because he was at least playing something up my alley (if he were another heavy metal warrior like Joe Satriani, I would have slept on him). These days, he sounds a tad too impressed with himself, but he was still a great guitarist. According to this book, even though Gatton tragically killed himself, he appeared to have no personal demons (like his rival, Roy Buchanan). He was just a family man who took care of home, the cars in his garage, and was always on the quest for The Ultimate Guitar Riff. Ego is a big part of most musicians - you have to be seen - but even the most technical-minded instrumentalists know how to package themselves. Gatton didn't. No one went to a Danny Gatton show to hear their favorite song; they were there to ooh and ahh at his dexterity with the guitar. Which is good as far as hot licks go, but where's the song at? At one point during his career, the highlight of his set was a thirty-minute version of "Linus & Lucy." This may have been fine for other musicians to see, but it explains why the general public never really warmed up to him. While he apparently was one of the nicest guys you'd ever want to meet, the book is filled with onstage tales of Danny stepping on somebody's vocal just so he could impress the guitarist at the table in the corner. As they used to say on *Fat Albert*: NO CLASS. Heibutski's book does a great job of dealing with how Gatton must have felt trying to harness his ideas. While the man had his self-indulgent moments, his accomplishments were just as

frequent.

The Unintended (Voidoo) Beautifully spooky.

The Vandals "The Show Must Go Off - Live at the House of Blues" (Kung Fu) This series of punk concert DVDs has some things going for it, most notably that they are shot so super-pro that it's better than being there (and with some of these bands anything is better than being there). On the other hand, as an old fart, it seems a bit unpunk to be shot so elaborately. But what really sits funny with me is that almost all of these are shot at the House of Blues on a vast mammoth stage, and to me punk only looks like punk when all the band guys are crammed together. That said, this is the flagship band of the label, and the main Vandal is the director of these videos, so no surprise that they are the only band to have two Shows that Must Go Off. Though this one is shot a million times better than the first one I felt that the earlier concert DVD by them was a little more exciting because it featured a bunch of updated material so that the kids who bought the VHS wouldn't feel ripped off. But this is a good concert, with the band's Super Drummer drumming super, and a really funny rubber-legged guitar solo. Not to mention a bonus CD of the concert so you can listen while skateboarding (unless you have one of those new Hummer skateboards with a DVD player built in).

Vee Dee (Criminal I.Q. 3540 N. Southport Chicago IL 60657) The way the Misfits were definitely different form, and in many ways superior to, the early 80s hardcore scene in general, Vee Dee stands out from the current Chicago Nu-Garage horde. Of course, they do it by sounding a lot like the Misfits, but that works for me. This is a superb, supertuff record and you should get Vee Dee today!

Velcro Lewis and the 100 Proof Band "Ruin Everything" () "Genius" is a word that has been cheapened and violated by overuse and indiscretionary bestowment. However, cheapness and violation can be artforms in and of themselves, and within these floor sticky-ing mediums artists can rise to the level of brilliance that earns them that lofty title. On this seminal (and semen-al) slice of audio pie VELCRO LEWIS AND HIS 100 PROOF BAND have achieved that elusive level of artistry. The ominous bass of Halden Spoonwood, the thunderous and lightningish guitars of Phil Hunger and Paullly Rocco, the cowbelloidic drumming of Bill Roe and the husky, curdling vocals of Velcro Lewis form a beast with five backs, gloriously climaxing in a daisy chain of Rock, redefining what it means to be a man in post-industrial America and reconfigure what it means to be a woman in their vicinity. The punctuation on "Rockin' and Drinkin' (tonight)" is testament alone to this band's greatness. With such a title one need not even listen to the song to appreciate its magnificence, and perhaps one shouldn't. To call a song like "Neutral Drop" epic is to insult the band with understatement. The song is longer than all the Lord of the Rings movies combined, and better. This is a band that rose to the top of the Chicago Rock heap much in the same manner in which they made it to 2004 Battle of the Bands finals...through a series of disqualifications and scheduling conflicts. And that's how it should, nay must, be. It is rare that an album can make me love. It is rarer that an album can make me hate. But on "Ruin Everything" VELCRO LEWIS AND HIS 100 PROOF BAND have done the rarest of rarities. They have overcome me with waves of shame and nausea. To paraphrase the great Gayle Sayers, "I love VELCRO LEWIS AND HIS 100 PROOF BAND, and I want you to love them too." They are truly the Brian Piccolos of local rock!

Velcro Lewis/Dutchmen split 45 (Shit Sandwich) This is a two sided serving of such Big Rock that it becomes a serving of two big rocks - boulders even - representing the huge testicles of the Chicago Bar Rocker Scene!

Velvet Crush "Free Expression (Action Music/Parasol) This is a deluxe reissue of this Providence-based pop band's late 90s album recorded with their collaborator Matthew Sweet, but without their guitarist Jeffrey. While Sweet's presence added some sweet, restrained Power Pop Perfection, Jeffrey's absence also meant that his charm was missing and missed. What is great about this album is the Country Rock laid back easy feel. The idea of tons of hooks rubbing against you instead of a few big ones smacking you around is intriguing. This reissue features a second disc of demos, and they sound like demos, and I don't expect to play them that often - the songs sound good in this form but not better than the fully produced versions. Though it's fairly lush, the "real" album certainly addresses sparseness, so these demos are a bit

redundant.

Vincebus Eruptum (Load, loadrecords.com) In many ways this belittles some of the most brutal forms of Metal and extreme music. Yet, in many ways it Bebiggins them as well. This record made me feel like I'd been crucified with dull spikes. Yet it also made me feel like I had just read a really funny "Drabble" on the comics page.

The Vindictives "Muzak For Robots" (Teat POB 66470 Chicago, IL 60666) This is the soundtrack of a porno starring R2D2 and the Jetson's maid.

Volumen/No-Fi Soul Rebellion split 7" (Wantage, wantageusa.com) Two bands that redefine funky. Volumen make Newer Wave music that has some grit to go with the sharp angles, and No-Fi Soul Rebellion makes some kind of mutated underground Hip Hop that certainly Hops, but has little relationship to Hip. Church organ becomes an odd organism in their paws.

Tama Waipara "Triumph of Time" (Obliq Sound) Waipara's deep resonant voice brings to mind the late Celia Cruz but it's hard to find a comparison for her music, which take an Acid Jazz approach to different aspects of world music (with a variety of rhythms rarely heard on such a modern record).

Wantage USA's 21st Release Hits Omnibus (Wantage) This double CD comp celebrates the greatest Montana record label ever! Featuring noise, soul, RAWK, and a bunch of crazy shit, these dozens of band all sound different but all have hearty, meaty, husky presence, that I suppose you need to possess to survive in Montana, even if you only live there in the form of a mastered disc. Heroes include Japanner, Volumen, Juanita and the Family, Fireballs of Freedom, Le Force, Blood Hag, and Oneida's moving, though abstract, tribute to Aaliyah that actually made me cry.

What The Punk ?! 2 DVD (MVD) MVD releases ALL the music DVDs out there, so their punk video sampler contains clips from some of the best ever punk/rock videos (the great documentaries on Dee Dee Ramone and Wesley Willis, the excellent DOA retrospective) it also releases poorly shot, bad sounding things like the live TSOL and the uneven Sublime documentary. Thus, there are great moments on here, but bad ones as well. But it has to be the first release with G.G. Allin, Dead Kennedys, Peechees, Pogues and Meat Puppets all on the same comp.

White Magic "Through the Sun Door" (Drag City) Mellow yet disconcerting Soul music from enchanted Caucasians.

The Whiteouts "Solid State" b/w "Coffin Nails" (Shit Sandwich 3107 N. Rockwell Chicago IL 60618) Should be called the Knockouts because this floored me!

Whizzbanger Newsletter, (1 stamp) **Aftermath and Beyond** (\$6), **America's Nazi War Crimes** (\$4), **Flashpoint** (\$10, all from Shannon Colebank Whizzbanger Productions POB 5591 Portland OR 97228) Shannon's **Whizzbanger** Guide is a post-Factsheet Five guide to underground publications, but her newsletter and her books are something else altogether. Shannon is a radical soldier in the wars against injustices regarding gender, racial, environment and human rights issues. **America's Nazi War Crimes** is perhaps the most unique book here; a series of xeroxes of letters and reports (some data more convincing than other data) mostly on genital surgery on "hermaphrodite" kids, demonstrating American policies of atrocity.

The Wildhearts "Riff After Riff" (Gearhead) A bizarre hybrid of Cheap Trick and Motörhead.

Wonkavision zine (\$3, POB 63642 Philly PA 19147) This isn't my fave zine, mostly because it covers modern punk-esque bands that I'm not into, but this issue is impressive as it has a series of interesting pieces addressing the current state of hardcore as it seeks an identity. This kind of focus and ambition is rare in slick modern punk zines, so I tip my Mohawk.

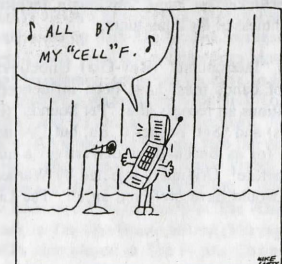
Woodbox Gang "Born With A Tail" (Rolling Machine Records) A spare, acoustic jugband with pop, jangle and bang. Plus the best kazoo solo of any record reviewed this issue. GET WOOD!

The Yardbirds "Live! Blueswailing July '64" (Castle Music/BMG Entertainment, 1540 Broadway, New York, New

York 10036) I didn't see any press about this (maybe because I hadn't read any guitar magazines recently), but it should be treated like the major discovery that it is. This CD consists of a VERY early Yardbirds gig, recorded shortly after Clapton joined (Chris Dreja once told me that no recordings with their original guitarist, Top Topham, were ever made. In fact, I've never even seen a photo of that lineup, have you?). Unlike the "Five Live Yardbirds" album, the band sounds like they either didn't know they were being recorded, or were only planning to use the tape for reference purposes. It's a great performance, make no mistake, but a bit too off the cuff to have been made into an official live release. Mind you, I LIKE that about it, but, real anal retentive types might say, "Why do we have to listen to several minutes of Eric Clapton re-stringing his guitar?" Because that's how it went down, bubba. You hear everything that appeared on this recently-unearthed recording, and while it couldn't possibly be the whole show (It clocks in at just under 35 minutes), it's as close to being there as you're possibly going to get. The audience patter that precedes the gig can be heard coming in and out of the mix, actually enhancing the performance instead of detracting from it. The sound quality is remarkable, though the liners apologize somewhat for the drums being less audible. I think they sound fine, especially given the technology of the day. Jim McCarty (NOT he of Fugs or Detroit Wheels fame) proves, even in this early example, that he's one of Rock's great unsung drummers. Just to set the record straight, I don't particularly care much for the vastly overrated Clapton's post-Yardbirds work (barring John Mayall's Bluesbreakers), but in 1964, he could do no wrong. Chris Dreja gets in some tasty fills, too, saying nothing of the big, badass bass of Paul Samwell-Smith. The set doesn't vary much from the other '64 set, with the exception of "Someone To Love" (The Groundhogs did this, too, but I forget who did it originally), which, of course, lacks the fiery leads that Jeff Beck would add to the second recorded version by The Yardbirds, which was so good, it warranted a "Part 2," and was even redone as "Lost Woman." It sounds great, live, here, for the first time, but it stops abruptly, obviously not yet finished, but who am I to tell the 1964 Yardbirds how to do their gig? It'd be a whole month before I'd even start my life! "Too Much Monkey Business" and "Smokestack Lightning" are rave-ups of the highest order, possibly out-acing the well-known "Five Live Yardbirds" versions. Poor Keith Relf, who had bad asthma and eventually lost a lung, has his work cut out for his trying to be heard over this very loud musical aggregation (by the standards of the day), but he emerges triumphant, working WITH the music instead of against it. It's no accident that nearly every U.S. Garage Punk singer that wasn't taking a tip from Mick Jagger and Van Morrison found inspiration in Relf. When I was a teenage Buddy Bradley, I thought he was saying "I'm a punk!" instead of "Army punk!" on "Monkey Business" and, even then, I thought, "He WAS a punk, man," and I STILL think so. Solid send-ups of "Got Love If You Want It" and "Good Morning Little Schoolgirl" are followed by a nitro burnin' "She's So Respectable" (by The Isley Bros, not The Rolling Stones...sorry, I'm just being a smart-ass again) which includes a few verses of "Humpty Dumpty" (yeah), and the set closer, "The Sky is Crying," not the Elmore James classic (*¡Muy infeliz!*), but still a nice, Bluesey capper to what must have been a wild evening in just pre-Swingin' London. As any fan dool noze, Eric Clapton would soon go on to leave The Yardbirds, accusing them of "Going Pop" and The Yardbirds would go on to become one of the most innovative and influential groups on both sides of The Atlantic. Peter Green later got a beautiful shot in when he called Clapton's solo work "A bastardization of The Blues."

Young and Sexy "presents Life Through One Speaker" (Mint) Should be called Young and Sensitive. Then again...I guess the gentle, sensitive manner in which these pop pleasantries are crafted is in fact sexy in its own subtle, yet seductively powerful, way. Either way I end up losing underpants.

Zao "Legendary - The Best Of" (Solid State) A stellar sampler platter of Solid State's most righteously brutal band. Zow!



The Cruise Continues on...

The ROCKIN' ACE

Vol. 3 No. 3

by
SLINK
MOSS



Ace and Captain Sami
search the boat for
Grace Hill.

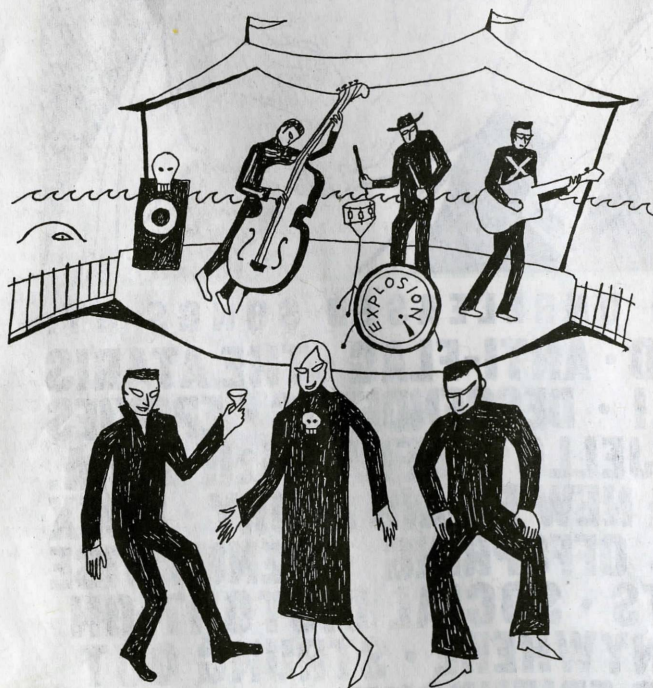


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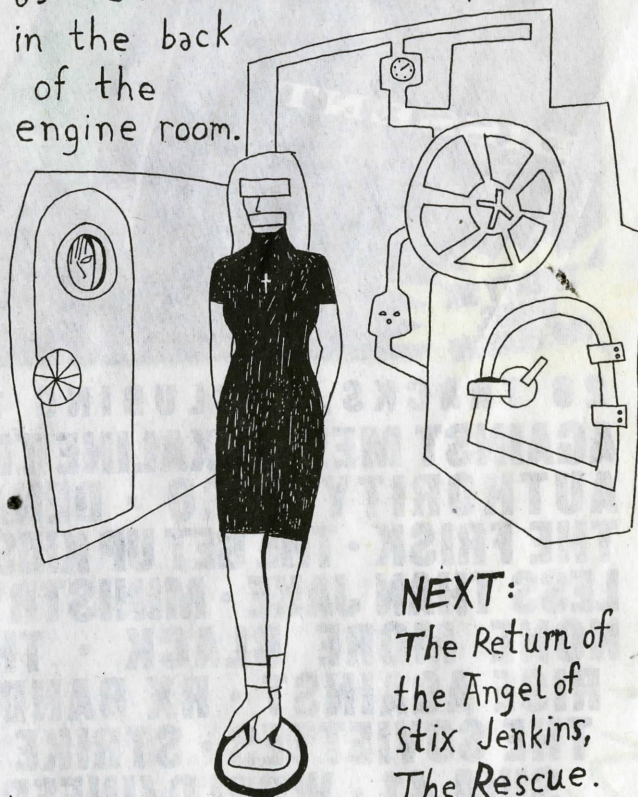


The Evil 3 party on deck...



3.

as Grace Hill is imprisoned
in the back
of the
engine room.



4.

NEXT:
The Return of
the Angel of
Stix Jenkins,
The Rescue.

ROCK AGAINST BUSH

VOL 1



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