

DIW

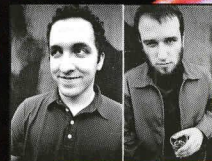
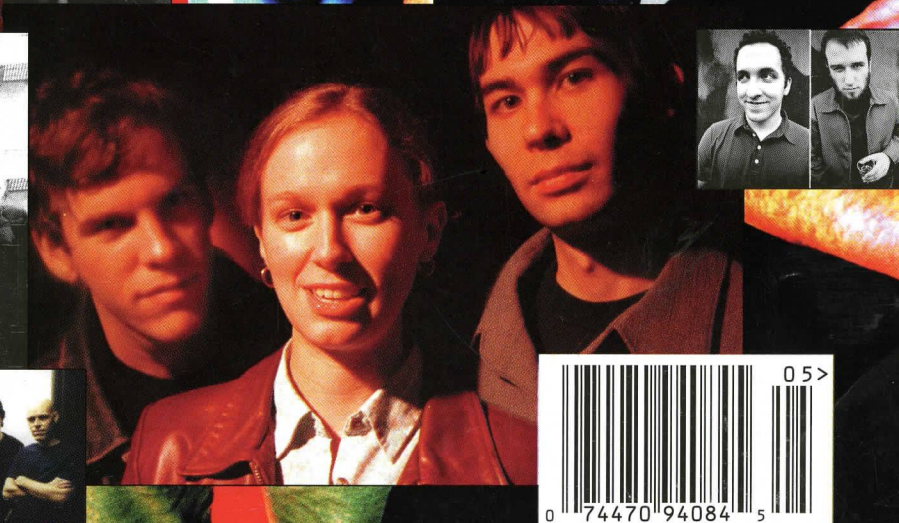
Devil in the Woods

WINTER 2001
ISSUE 3.1

INDEPENDENT THOUGHT ON INDEPENDENT MUSIC

THE NEW FACES OF ROCK

Featuring Death
Cab For Cutie,
Creeper Lagoon,
Rainer Maria,
The Get Up Kids
and more



The Get Up Kids

on tour with

Weezer

2/21 - Austin, TX

2/22 - New Orleans, LA

2/24 - Fort Lauderdale, FL

2/25 - Orlando, FL

2/26 - Tampa, FL

2/27 - Athens, GA

2/28 - Winston Salem, NC

3/02 - Washington, DC

3/03 - Philadelphia, PA

3/04 - Lowell, MA

3/05 - New York, NY

3/07 - Cleveland, OH

3/08 - Detroit, MI

3/09 - Chicago, IL

3/10 - Milwaukee, WI

3/12 - Omaha, NE

3/13 - Denver, CO

3/15 - Phoenix, AZ

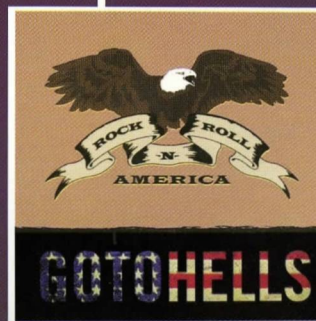
3/16 - Los Angeles, CA

3/17 - San Francisco, CA

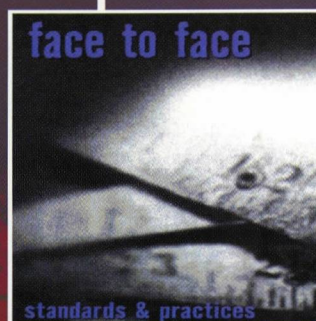
Rocket From The Crypt
The Get Up Kids
Split 7"
12.19.00



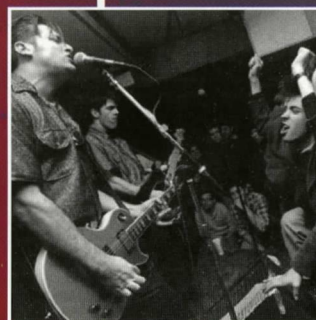
Gotohells
"Rock N' Roll America"
2.06.01



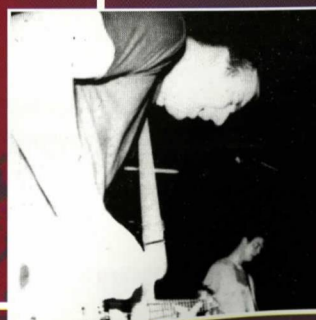
Face To Face
"Standards and Practices"
2.20.01



Rocket From The Crypt
"Group Sounds"
3.06.01



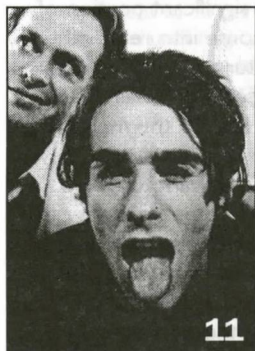
Alkaline Trio
"From Here To Infirmary"
4.03.01



Vagrant Records • 2118 Wilshire Blvd #361 • Santa Monica • CA 90403 • Order on-line at: www.vagrant.com

Contents

WINTER 2001 ISSUE 3.1



11



17



24



22



82



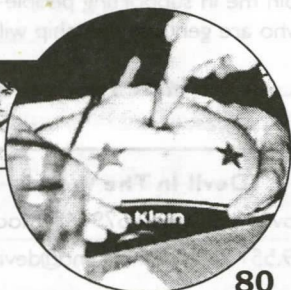
34



30



58



80



93

3 Dear DIW

5 The Good Life

Home At Last
By George Zahora

5 The Party Of Helicopters

A Ride With
The Maiden
By Michael Dammers

6 Broadcast

Worth The Wait
By Jon Pruett

6 The Jim Yoshii Pile-up

Catch 'Em If You Can
By Hilary Goldstein

8 godspeed you black emperor!

More Than Words
By Aaron Clark

8 Karate

Three Against
Nature
By Kimberly Chun

9 Cinerama

Out With The New,
In With The Old
By Jon Pruett

9 Mark Robinson

Back To The Basics
By Melanie Covey

11 Self

Toy Soldiers
By Brian Conant

13 Low

Baby Steps
By Chris Slater

15 Coldplay

Worthy Of The Buzz
By Annie Zaleski

17 The Twilight Singers

Everything's Gonna
Be Alright
By Marc Hawthorne

18 Spoon

The Toughest Lesson
By Kimberly Chun

20 The Danielson Famile

A Famile Affair
By Jon Pruett

22 The Donnas

Barely Legal
By Kimberly Chun

24 Sigur Rós

The Icemen Cometh
By Jon Pruett

26 Rocket From The Crypt

All Fired Up
By Marc Hawthorne

30 Stephen Malkmus

Steppin' Out
By Jon Pruett

34 Scott Kannberg Vs. Cole Marquis

By Marc Hawthorne

38 THE NEW FACES OF ROCK

Death Cab
For Cutie
By Marc Hawthorne

Creeper Lagoon

By Chris Slater

Rainer Maria

By Melanie Covey

The Get Up Kids

By Erica Jewell

The Anniversary

By Erica Jewell

Bright Eyes

By Debi Waltman

Pedro The Lion

By Richard M. Juzwiak

Polyvinyl Records

By Brian Conant

Grandaddy

By Brian Conant

The Jealous Sound

By Erica Jewell

Tristeza

By Gordon Downs

The Faint

By Heidi Anne-Noel

Koufax

By Erica Jewell

Mates Of State

By Marc Hawthorne

Saddle Creek Records

By Debi Waltman

Japancakes

By Brian Conant

Fiver

By Donovan Pierce

Tiger Style Records

By Donovan Pierce

74 Frank Black and David Lowery

Sunrise, Sunset
By Jeremiah McNichols

76 Jim DeRogatis

The Write Stuff
By Ian MacKinnon

80 Breakfast With ... The Murder City Devils

By Leah Reich

82 Rock 'N' Roll Moments

By Mike Cloward

83 13 Questions

The Orange Peels
Momus
Luna

86 Record Reviews

95 Moving Pictures

DVD Reviews
By Nick Dedina

95 Old Enough To Know Better

Reissue Reviews
By Pat Thomas

96 The Last Word

Just What You Needed
By DIW Staff and Contributors



INDEPENDENT THOUGHT
ON INDEPENDENT MUSIC

Winter 2001 Issue 3.1

Published by Devil In The Woods

Publisher: Mike Cloward

Editor-In-Chief: Marc Hawthorne

Art Director: Kelly Marquis

Photography Editor: Peter Ellenby

Web Master: Peter Beck for Saint Vitus

Contributing Editor: Jeremiah McNichols

Senior Writer: Erica Jewell

Layout Assistant: Cole Marquis

Systems Support: Pat Reilly

Contributors:	Matt Fink	David Rudolph
Heidi Anne-Noel	Tom Fowler	Deke Saxon
Matt Barber	Erin Geiger	Laura
Susan Berg	Hilary Goldstein	Sensabaugh
Kimberly Berhorst	Kurt Hernon	Max Sidman
Hari Berrier	Adam Hobbs	Chris Slater
Josh Bloom	Richard M. Juzwiak	Kristopher Somera
Vincent Buzzini	Ian MacKinnon	Pat Thomas
Kimberly Chun	Steve Marquis	Randy Tinkerman
Aaron Clark	Barbara Mitchell	John Vanderslice
Brian Conant	Karen Nicoletti	Debi Waltman
Melanie Covey	Melissa Piazza	Melinda
Michael Dammers	Donovan Pierce	Whitehouse
Nick Dedina	Jon Pruett	Mark Whittaker
Gordon Downs	Mariah	George Zahora
Jimmy Draper	Robertson	Annie Zaleski

Hear and see us on the Web:

www.diwmagazine.com

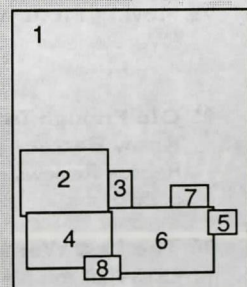
For advertising inquiries please contact:

Mike Cloward

Phone/Fax: 209.551.2634

e-mail: mc@devilinthewoods.com

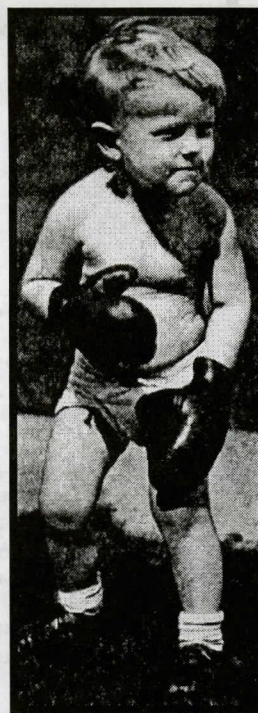
On the cover:



1. Death Cab For Cutie
2. Creeper Lagoon
3. Mates Of State
4. The Get Up Kids
5. Pedro The Lion
6. Rainer Maria
7. Japancakes
8. The Jealous Sound

1-5 by Peter Ellenby
6 by Maria Robertson

FROM THE EDITOR



Despite the fact that the possibility of another rolling blackout sweeping through my neighborhood is forcing me to type this message as quickly as possible, I can honestly say that I love living in California, and more specifically, San Francisco. Sure, a lot of it has to do with the weather and the general beauty of the Bay Area, but the main thing that keeps me dumping a significant portion of my modest income into rent is the city's liberal nature. As with any big city, San Francisco has its fair share of intolerance. But for the most part, people are allowed to be who they are and what they want to be, so much so that it's sometimes easy to forget just how progressive our local social and political climate is. That's why I've had such a difficult time comprehending the reality that George W. Bush is our new president. Silver lining aside—more than once I've heard people mention that

the best music is made when conservative presidents are in office—it seems that the next four years are going to be pretty fucked up, with Dubya determined to reverse every progressive step made over the past 40 years.

I'm particularly horrified by how out of touch with reality our new president is. Bill Clinton may have fibbed a bit and done a couple of naughty things, but at least he seemed human. George W. doesn't appear to have a sincere bone in his body. It's truly baffling how impressed our society seems to be by people who are so far removed from everyday life. Turn on MTV, and you'll see what I'm talking about. Most of today's rock and pop stars are just as clueless as G.W., and pose a similar challenge: How can I be expected to connect with songs written and/or performed by people who are stuck inside the famous-person bubble, where their everyday needs are taken care of by others and their best friends are all other famous people? This is exactly why I'm attracted to the artists we write about in *DIW*, because they're more concerned with passion than posing. Bands like Death Cab For Cutie, Bright Eyes, The Anniversary and Pedro The Lion—all of whom are included in this issue's "New Faces Of Rock" feature—don't have to pretend to know what it's like to live in the real world, because they're down here in the trenches with us. They're the real deal, and it's reflected in their music.

Since you picked up this magazine and actually opened it up, I suppose I'm preaching to the converted. But please do me a favor and continue to join me in supporting people—including artists and politicians—who are genuine. This ship will most certainly go down if we don't.

Marc Hawthorne, Editor-In-Chief

Devil In The Woods

Attn: Mike Cloward, P.O. Box 579168, Modesto, CA 95357

Phone/Fax: 209.551.2634 e-mail: mc@devilinthewoods.com

DEAR DIW

Your review of Longwave's debut album, *Endsongs* [a six-pitchfork review by Kurt Hernon in issue 2.2], was right on the mark! I too believe that it is the best album I have heard in a long fucking time. I have been following Steve Shiltz's career for a long time. I first saw him play in a Rochester, NY, band called Dizzy Monk. They have a CD called *My Favorite Sin*. That was five to six years ago. He was just 17 years old, and his style just blew me away. I went to 95 percent of his shows with that band until they unfortunately disbanded. He kept me on his mailing list and I learned of his next project, Deaf Aides. They put out a couple promo tapes but no full-length CDs. The current bassist, Dave, played with him in that band. I managed to catch about a half-dozen shows in the Rochester area. Now I travel good distances to watch this incredible band live. They get better and better every time I see them. I have been to New York City, Buffalo and Syracuse to see them live. The album is awesome, but the live show kicks its ass. They play a lot of stuff that is not on *Endsongs*. Oh well, it was great to read such a raving review. I have been telling people that

for so long now. It's good to see that they are getting recognition from the industry. Take care and definitely catch them live!

Peter Van Der Woude, Rochester, NY

Review of issue 2.3 from *Splendid* e-zine:

It appears that the fine folks over at *Devil In The Woods* have seen fit to save the best for last, so to speak. Their fall 2000 issue, which I am assuming will be the final issue of this calendar year, is filled from cover to cover with top-notch content—not to mention a super-neato indie rock trading card (courtesy of Insound, if we recall correctly) for you to stick in the spokes of your bike, or trade with your other in-the-know friends. I'm looking for an Ian MacKaye rookie card myself.

But anyway, lame jokes aside, this issue is literally jam packed with news, reviews (including a couple by *Splendid* head-honcho George Zahora) and interviews. For starters there are interesting interviews with Jets To Brazil, The Weakerthans, Sea And Cake and Versus. Add killer Q&A sessions with Guided by Voices, Grandaddy and Jimmy Eat World and an entirely overdue feature on whiteboy funkmaster Har Mar Superstar. However, despite all that worthy content, the centerpiece and high point of this issue is Jeremiah McNichols' in-depth interview with Magnetic Fields/6ths mastermind Stephin

Merritt. Focusing mainly on The 6ths and their *Hyacinths And Thistles* album, McNichols does a great job wrenching insights and anecdotes out of the master of gloom-ridden pop.

The only real disappointment of the issue comes in the form of a sub-par interview with At The Drive-In guitarists Jim Ward and Omar Rodriguez. Sound-alike questions and a seeming desire to go absolutely nowhere plague the interview. With the increasing amount of press these boys are getting, you really need to be creative and well researched to make an impact. Ultimately, this article fails to live up to the high standards set by the rest of the magazine.

If they keep cranking out issues like this, we expect to see great things from *Devil In The Woods* in 2001. Hey, does anybody have an Ian MacKaye to trade for two Jeff Mangums and a Minder to be named later? Oh, never mind.

—Jason Jackowiak

Letters

DIW Magazine, P.O. Box 579168
Modesto, CA 95357

Or send an e-mail to marc5@sirius.com.

Please include your first and last name, the city and state in which you live, and your age.

DIW reserves the right to edit letters.

BACK ISSUES

Each back issue is \$3.95. Sorry, seven-inches are not included (because we don't have any more!).

Quantity

- | | |
|-----|--|
| 1.1 | QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE, Sebadoh, Mogwai, Sloan, Janet Weiss and more |
| 1.2 | SUPERCHUNK, Guided By Voices, The Flaming Lips, Momus, Nina Hartley, The Promise Ring, Cadallaca on tour, Stereolab and more |
| 2.1 | SLEATER-KINNEY, Death Cab For Cutie, Trembling Blue Stars, Mary Timony, Creeper Lagoon, The Mountain Goats and more |
| 2.2 | RED HOUSE PAINTERS, Modest Mouse, Versus, Ian Brown, Supergrass, The Anniversary, Bright Eyes and more |
| 2.3 | STEPHIN MERRITT, At The Drive-In, Jets To Brazil, The Sea And Cake, Sonic Youth and more |

Total

X \$3.95 = \$

Send check or money order made out to *DIW Magazine* to:
DIW Back Issues, P.O. Box 579168, Modesto, CA 95357

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

SUBSCRIBE NOW!

Subscribing to *DIW* is the one way to assure that you will receive our **limited-edition, hand-numbered seven-inches** featuring exclusive tracks by some of today's most exciting artists (past and present contributors include **Death Cab For Cutie, Fiver, Red House Painters, Sunday's Best, Arca, Grandaddy, Persil, Beachwood Sparks, The Preston School Of Industry**—aka **Scott Kannberg, Cole Marquis, The Anniversary** and **Koufax**). And pretty soon it will be the *only* way. In addition, you won't have to run around town looking for the best magazine dedicated to covering indie and underground music, film and culture. Sign up today—you'll be glad you did.



DIW MAGAZINE:
Making your
life better on a
quarterly basis.

TO SUBSCRIBE FOR A YEAR (4 issues) send a check or money order for **14 DOLLARS*** made out to *DIW Magazine* to:

DIW Subscriptions Department, P.O. Box 579168, Modesto, CA 95357

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

*For overseas orders, please contact mc@devilinthewoods.com for cost of shipping.

SPOON Girls Can Tell

THE 6THS Hyacinths and Thistles

THE CLIENTELE Suburban Light

ANNIE HAYDEN The Rub

PAUL BURCH Last of My Kind

ASHLEY STOVE All Summer Long

PORTASTATIC looking For Leonard



**** MERGE RECORDS**
PRESENTS **LIVE** at BIMBO'S
for **NOISE POP** in SF
Saturday **MAR 3 ****

SUPERCHUNK

SPOON

MATT SUGGS



+ new albums on the way from
Third Eye Foundation
The Ladybug Transistor
David Kilgour
The Clean
The Spaceheads

MERGE RECORDS
SPRING 2001

www.mergerecords.com

THE GOOD LIFE: Home At Last

Cursive singer/songwriter Tim Kasher needed an outlet for his "coffeehouse" material. He'd accumulated several years' worth of quieter, gentler songs, and he was proud of them, but knew they wouldn't fit on a Cursive album. Cursive's latest LP, *Domestica*, which tells the tale of romantic collapse that parallels Kasher's recent divorce, is dominated by hard-edged angst rock, but there's no room for lush, introspective melodies.

The answer? Start another band. Thus The Good Life were born, and Kasher's sad, mellow songs had a home at last.

"I've always written in plenty of different styles, and this is a style that I've been doing for 12 years," says Kasher, holed up in a booth before a recent Chicago performance. "It seemed like a big rock band was really where my heart and soul was, but this was always stuff that I did."

The Good Life's debut LP, *Novena On A Nocturn* (Better Looking), will surprise Cursive fans who pegged Kasher as a hardcore guy. Filled with intricate melodies,

complex rhythmic shifts and romantic imagery, *Novena* is unexpectedly ... pretty.

"I expect there will be love and hate," says Kasher. "I think there'll be plenty of Cursive kids who'll be let down, and there'll be people who don't like Cursive who'll pick up on The Good Life. I like hard music and soft music, and I like to write both styles of music, so I'm mostly interested in reaching fans who can see the crossover of songwriting and not discriminate against certain styles."

There have been some unexpected reactions. Many listeners, hearing Kasher's throaty vocals and the tearful grandeur of such songs as "The Moon Red Handed," have compared The Good Life to The Cure. This has taken Kasher by surprise.

"It was completely unintentional," he insists. "I completely grew up on The Cure, and I guess I'm just wearing my influences on my sleeve. I think I'm not aware of how much keyboard we actually use, so it gets into that whole lush Cure sound that I didn't really realize we were doing. I think it's a big compliment, to be honest with you. I feel like maybe we came up with something better than I even thought it was."

Despite their differences, *Domestica* and *Novena* share a distinctly downbeat mood. Having been in charge of two of the saddest albums released last year, Kasher must be one depressed guy, right?

Wrong.

"I don't like to mope around at all," he insists. "I tend to keep a lot of things inside, but I'm actually a very happy person. I don't want to pigeonhole myself into one emotion, but sad songs are my favorite kind of music, so I guess that's what I like to write the most." —George Zahora

THE PARTY OF HELICOPTERS:

A Ride With The Maiden



PHOTO: RYAN SANTOS

"What is it about this goddamned record?"

My friend and I are listening to The Party Of Helicopters' *Mount Forever* (Troubleman Unlimited) destroy my speakers with a frenetic swath of guitar that reaches into the cookie jar of metal, punk and classic rock. "Must be those long hours down in their Kent, Ohio, basement!"

Three weeks later I'm in contact with guitarist Jamie Stillman, who is kind enough to discuss the anatomy of The Party Of Helicopters' tremendous, perplexing sound. "Yeah, usually me and Ryan [Brannon, bassist] come up with the basic structure," he begins to explain. "Then we go into the basement and 'space jam'—everyone needs to do this—for an hour, and then we can usually get the song together as a band with a few tries."

Joe Dennis' vocals have been described as Ride meets My Bloody Valentine, and in a way that's a fair assessment. But the music is something else altogether. One might find the urge to blurt out "Classic rock!"—but you'd probably get your ass kicked if any of the hardcore kids heard you.

"Probably the biggest misconception about us is that our sole influence is hardcore, and that we like shit like The Promise Ring," says Stillman. "We don't. Never have, never will. Some people think we sound like Iron Maiden meets My Bloody Valentine, which I appreciate because they are two of my favorite bands. But I would just like to be perceived as a band that rocks."

—Michael Dammers

BROADCAST: Worth The Wait

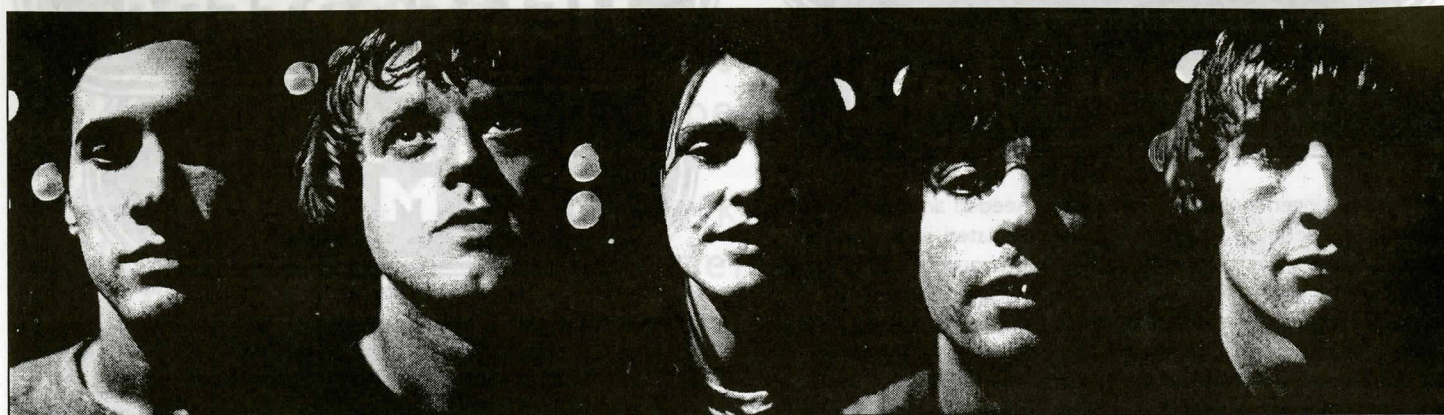


PHOTO: PETER ELLENBY

England's Broadcast make music rich in the sounds of dusty analogue-drenched soundtracks and more modern digital manipulations. Their first proper LP, *The Noise Made By People* (Tommy Boy), and the accompanying singles comfortably jump from removed pop to mechanized, bubbling, head-bobbing instrumentals. According to the band, drum 'n' skronk pioneer Tom "Squarepusher" Jenkinson had a lot to do with how the record came out.

"He came down to actually help us record 'Come On, Let's Go' for the album, which we recorded as a faster live version," says vocalist Trish Keegan. "But it didn't work out and we didn't use it. But what we did do is co-write tracks together and record them. Just watching him work in the studio was really refreshing, and that was a massive influence on us. He came at the time that our new drummer arrived. In April '99 our original drummer, Steve Perkins,

left." (Perkins took off to join surreal exotic-poppers Pram.)

Bassist James Cargill further explains why it took so long for them to finish the much-anticipated *The Noise Made By People*, which follows up 1997's singles compilation, *Work And Non Work*.

"We started out with these producers and they never worked out," he explains. "That took about six months out of the process, and it was just starts and stalls after that. After that we set up our own studio and set everything up and had to find a pace and then figure out how to record, because we didn't have any kind of expertise in recording."

It's this blank-slate approach—and the band's willingness to chop up and restructure proven pop formulas—that makes *The Noise* so appealing. As Keegan says, "Sometimes it's a bit unfulfilling just to write a pop song." —Jon Pruett **Ψ**

THE JIM YOSHII PILE-UP:

Catch 'Em If You Can

The Jim Yoshii Pile-Up have not one, not two, but three guitarists. For a band that writes songs that begin with a whisper, this line-up might initially seem excessive. And then the softly burning melodies give way to crashing crescendos that fill the room. They begin to rock, and suddenly it all makes sense.

"One of our strengths is that we don't all listen to the same music," says lead singer/guitarist Paul Gonzenbach in reference to comparisons to other indie bands with that "post-rock, melodic" sound. Gonzenbach and his bandmates—bassist Frankie Koeller, guitarists Sikwaya Condon and Ian Connelly and drummer Ryan Craven—are proud of their diverse and often conflicting musical influences, which include bands ranging from The Cure to Pink Floyd to Rush.

Formed piece by piece over the past four years, the San Francisco Bay Area quintet is about to issue its first full-length, *It's Winter Here* (Absolutely Kosher). Following the release of its self-titled debut EP in 1998, Connelly joined the band, adding even more texture to The Pile-Up's already dynamic compositions. *It's Winter Here*—which includes

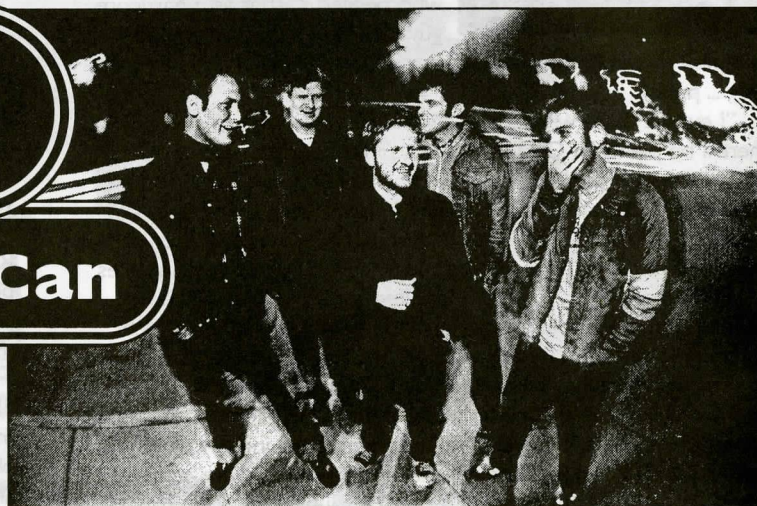


PHOTO: PETER ELLENBY

such standouts as the poppy "Hello" and the slowly erupting "Before I Left, After I Got Back"—beautifully documents the outfit's move toward a denser and more complex sound, and is proof that The Jim Yoshii Pile-Up are worth watching out for. Though you may have to do a bit of searching to find them.

"We're anti-self promotion," admits Gonzenbach. "We never make fliers. We never give our tapes out to anyone. We're afraid of coming off too cocky. Like, 'Hey, we're the greatest band.' Because we've been involved with other bands in the past who think they're the shit, destined for greatness, and it's embarrassing. Whether they are good or not, it's so unattractive to have someone so in awe of their own band." —Hilary Goldstein **Ψ**

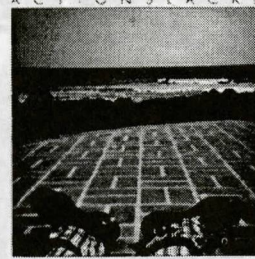
3

STEP ELEVEN Actionslacks, *The Scene's Out Of Sight* CD
 Bay Area foursome brings the rock (and some lovely slow jams) on their third album. Produced by J. Robbins.

"This Bay Area foursome has produced an eclectic rock and roll hook-fest of the highest order"
 -- **Rollingstone.com, January, 2001**

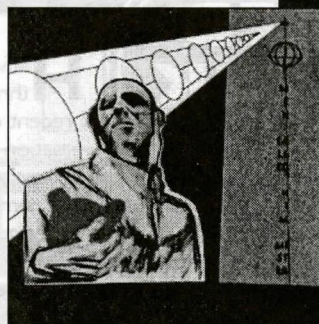
"Actionslacks are hitting their stride."
 -- **CMJ New Music Monthly, February, 2001**

ACTIONSLACKS



THE SCENE'S OUT OF SIGHT

A few steps in the
Personal Success Program,
 from your friends at
The Self-Starter Foundation.



STEP EIGHT Haywood, *Men Called Him Mister* CD
 Skillfully done rock. As simple as that.



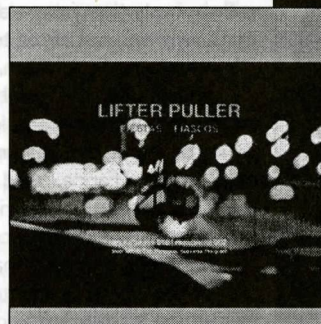
STEP THREE Les Savy Fav, *3/5* CD
 The flagship, as they say. This is where it all began.

A few more steps...

STEP FOUR The Mooney Suzuki, "Taking Me Apart" 7"
 The debut release of this New York overboard-retro-garage-jam-jangly-nutso band.

STEP FIVE The Pork Guys, "Four Lights" 7" Connecticut hardcore featuring Moby on drums. Yeah...that Moby. Moby Moby.

STEP SEVEN Enduro, *Half Rack Of Sugar* CD
 Blistering Texas rock (sex) machine. Gritty, raunchy...technically in the same school as The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion... but definitely not in the same league. Add more AC/DC or something.

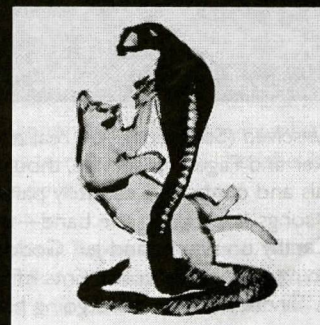


STEP TEN Lifter Puller, *Fiestas + Fiascos* LP/CD
 Like waking up in the grass with the assless chaps.

Coming in March, 2001...

STEP TWELVE Enon 7"

STEP NINE Les Savy Fav, *The Cat And The Cobra* LP / CD
 Smarter, stronger, better. Kinda all over the place, but all in a style distinctively Fav.



The Self-Starter Foundation
 PO Box 1562 New York, NY 10276
www.selfstarterfoundation.com





PHOTO: LAURA SENSABAUGH

GODSPEED YOU BLACK EMPEROR!:

More Than Words

looked between his legs, noticed his fly was unzipped, cursed, and zipped it back up. In some ways this is the band in a nutshell, for although godspeed aren't afraid to wear their hearts on their sleeves in concert, backstage they're not as eager to put out—just when you think you're getting close enough to really see something, they push it back in and zip back up. Still, the reclusive band's wordless concerts

Halfway through a recent conversation with Dave and Aidan (no last names please!) of godspeed you black emperor!, the nine-piece instrumental outfit from Montreal, Dave

and anti-P.R. attitude certainly give one pause in an age where self-promotion is as common as people who can play a couple chords.

"We talk to a lot of people," retorts Aidan when it is mentioned that they're often portrayed in the media as standoffish and hostile. "It's more like we don't like to be part of corporate culture. We just try to be selective to who we talk to."

Despite the band's reputation, godspeed have won the hearts of fans and critics alike—their most recent album, *Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas To Heaven* (Kranky), was one of the most praised records released last year. The 87-minute, four-song double disc features slow-building, hypnotic soundscapes topped off with everything from AM/PM gas station announcements to fanatical Mormon mumblings. Though band members come and go along with their instruments, godspeed's sound is usually made with four or five guitars, drums, cello, violin and glockenspiel.

"Godspeed is not perfect," says Dave. "We're a nine-piece band, we fight all the fuckin' time, but at the most basic level we're also a community." —Aaron Clark **Ψ**

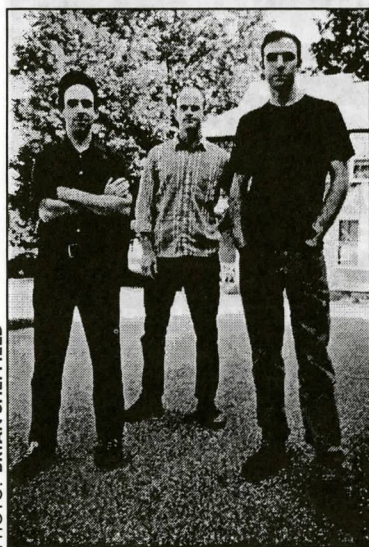


PHOTO: BRYAN SHEFFIELD

Karate guitarist/vocalist Geoff Farina is more concerned with honesty than image, and that's why he's not afraid to admit he loves Steely Dan.

"With Steely Dan, it's hyper-structured, and each one knows what the other one is going to play," explains Farina. "And they all do these very intricate arrangements, and I kind of feel like we're more on that side of the jazz-rock spectrum. Everything is really worked out, and we actually write stuff out. That's why we write eight or nine songs a year—it's a painfully slow process."

Listening to Karate's fourth

LP, *Unsolved* (Southern), you realize that Farina isn't just giving Becker and Fagen lip service, though his detached, semi-shouted vocals and controlled, carefully parsed solos also bring to mind Slint. The songs are tugging the band—which also includes Gavin McCarthy on drums and Jeff Goddard on bass—in new directions, straining against the constraints of conventional verse-chorus structure. "There's a little more going harmonically," says Farina. "And

improvisation-wise, there's a lot more guitar solos and a little more impressionistic guitar stuff. But it's still based on songs, even though at this point I think we all kind of wish it wasn't."

After playing nearly 500 shows over the past seven years, the Boston band comprised of past and present Berklee College Of Music students is looking forward to staying closer to home and making less structured music. Farina, who grew up listening to punk rock, is more inspired these days by dub, jazz horn players and improv.

"What I'm listening for is this kind of phrasing that comes from improvisation and that type of thing," he says. "It's difficult for me to make music or think about music that doesn't have a groove to it—that kinetic, forward motion to it. I love to listen to all different kinds of drummers for different kinds of that feeling, drummers that play really behind the beat to have a really swingy feel. I think that's why I'm not really interested in mainstream music, because you rarely, rarely hear it. Everything sounds so white-bread and just so right on time." —Kimberly Chun **Ψ**

KARATE:

Three Against Nature

CINERAMA:

Out With The New, In With The Old

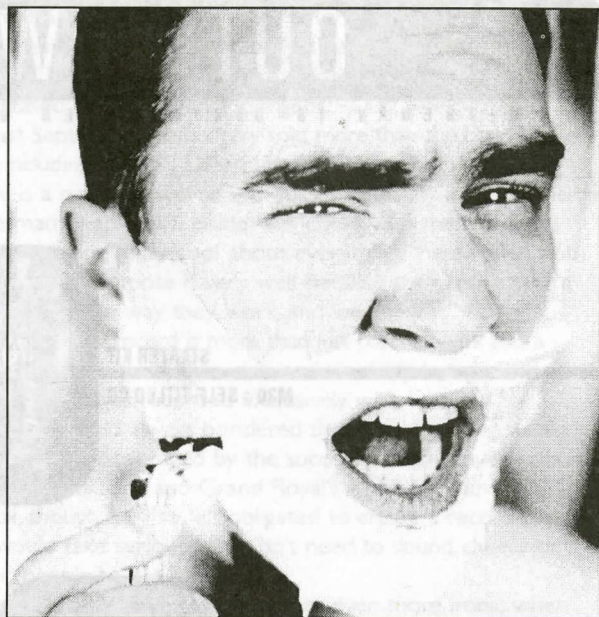
Cinerama were originally formed to give ex-Wedding Present leader David Gedge something more cinematic and orchestral to drape around his film-worthy meditations on relationships. But on Cinerama's new LP, *Disco Volante* (Manfiesto), Gedge has steered the band back toward the place it was trying to get away from. As a result, fans of The Wedding Present will be more impressed with *Disco Volante* than they were with 1998's *Va Va Voom*. At least Gedge is.

"When we did the first record, I had convinced myself that there was no point in trying to do a Wedding Present record on my own," he says. "I was trying to get as far away from that as I possibly could. I was trying to not be influenced by the things that I am usually influenced by. As a result, I'm not particularly happy with that record. I think it's okay, but I think the new one is a lot closer to what I had imagined it to be. I like electric guitars. I like [producer] Steve Albini's sounds. I've kind of combined influences on this record."

Gedge has recorded with Albini before (he engineered The Wedding Present's *Bizarro* and *Seamonsters*), and I was curious about the reputation the producer has for being difficult to work with.

"I think he's quite aware of that and he quite likes it," says Gedge. "I think he likes the idea that he's a bit outside of the rest of humanity. He's always been pretty nice to us. I remember when The Wedding Present first worked with him, we had this idea of what he was going to be like—he had that reputation. But he wasn't like that. He was a really nice bloke. He's really sound. He has sound ideological principles."

Maybe those principles are what helped make *Disco Volante* such a successful record. Gedge sings with a lusty conviction over a perfect mixture of light orchestration and dramatic arrangements, only to be interrupted by the noisy pop he's known for. Maybe it is just The Wedding Present with strings—but what the hell is wrong with that? —Jon Pruett **Ψ**



MARK ROBINSON:

Back To The Basics

He's well-known in the underground as the leader of Unrest, Air Miami, Olympic Death Squad and Flin Flon, but now Mark Robinson has settled on a new name that fits him quite nicely—his own.

"I've used so many names in the past few years that I figured I'd put a stop to that and just use my own name," explains Robinson. "My first solo album was done under the name Olympic Death Squad, and I no longer like that name. So I figured I'd better avoid that happening again. Mark Robinson is pretty easy."

It's also easy to understand why fans of his past work will enjoy his new full-length pop gem, *Tiger Banana* (Teenbeat). Robinson has taken very simple, smart pop tunes and made them somewhat exotic by playing with time signatures, incorporating Latin rhythms and injecting a bit of jazz. *Tiger Banana* recalls all of your favorite elements of Unrest and Air Miami, and includes contributions from the members of Versus. Album highlights include the catchy "Volunteers Conquering Fires" (featuring vocal accompaniment from Versus bassist Fontaine Touns) and the swirling "Putting Up Good Numbers."

"I think my writing has become more focused, more structured, makes more sense," says Robinson. "Whether that's good or bad, I don't know. The songs on the new record are pretty simple—minimal if you will. My live performance on this past tour for the album included two guitars and a drum machine. So the performance is even more minimal than the album. Live I like to improv a lot, so the songs where there is no drum machine are more fun. We used to improv tons in Unrest."

In addition to working on the follow-up to *Tiger Banana*, Robinson is preparing to release the second recording from his experimental, four-part EM series. He also continues to run Teenbeat—the label he founded in 1985 in Virginia—from his new home in Boston.

"One thing we don't do anymore is our own distribution," admits Robinson. "I used to be packing records in boxes all the time. Now I just do the same old graphic design, talk to the bands, the manufacturing plants, etcetera. It's really great fun, or a kick in the pants, as the kids say." —Melanie Covey **Ψ**

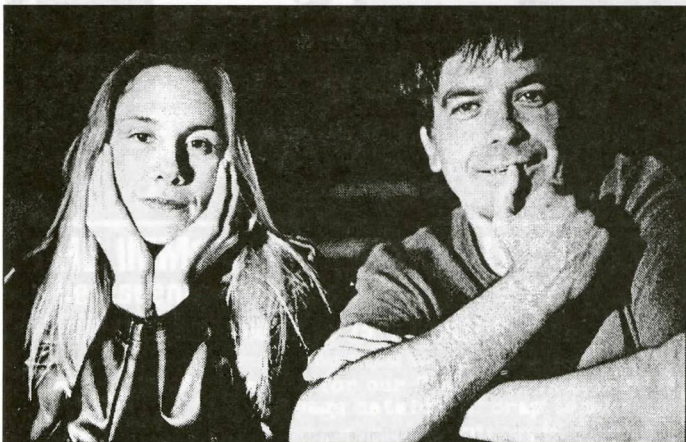


PHOTO: MARIAH ROBERTSON

OUT NOW ON M-THEORY

M-THEORY IS DISTRIBUTED BY SOUTHERN, NAIL, AND SAUL GOODMAN

STARTER KIT

M30 : SELF-TITLED CD



"Starter Kit is one of the brighter stars on the indie horizon. Its infectious, tuneful pop skips with the perfect balance between energy and intellect ...without being the kind of my-aren't we-clever crud many bands try to pass off as smart songwriting. I wish Jeff Pending played piano; then he could trump Ben Folds and prove that sincerity triumphs over sarcasm any day."

-John Graham, Willamette Week

ALIEN CRIME SYNDICATE

M29 : DUST TO DIRT 12" LP
ON LTD. EDITION PURPLE VINYL



MARS ACCELERATOR/SUPLEX

M26 : SPLIT 7" ON BLUE VINYL



ALIEN CRIME SYNDICATE/ORANGER

M28 : SPLIT 7" ON GREEN VINYL



NEW: CREEPER LAGOON

MTHE31 : WATERING GHOST GARDEN
LIMITED EDITION 12" EP ON WHITE VINYL



SLACKJAW

M25 : THE CURVATURE OF THE EARTH CD



RICK BAIN AND THE GENIUS POSITION

OR001 : CROOKED AUTUMN SUN CD



COMING SOON:

Suplex may be no more, but the legacy lives on with Gordie's new band, *Woke up Falling*. Look out for a new release on M-Theory in March.

ORDERING INFO:

Order online at <http://www.mtheoryrecords.com>
or you can check out your local indie record store.



PO Box 500802 San Diego, CA 92150 • PH: 858.483.8858 • FX: 360.397.8755 • labeldaddy@mtheoryrecords.com • <http://mtheoryrecords.com>

SELF: Toy Soldiers



PHOTO: BECKY MOORE

Self frontman Matt Mahaffey gives victory speeches Bush could only dream of delivering. "In a way it's a pretty satisfying 'fuck you' to the label," he says, referring to the success of Self's new independently released LP, *Gizmodgery* (Spongebath). Just weeks after its release last September, *Gizmodgery* sold more than the band's other two LPs, including its 1999 DreamWorks LP, *Breakfast With Girls*.

There is a pause, however, and quickly Mahaffey is overcome by the statesman deep down inside. "I'm down with them, though, and they are being really cool about everything," he admits. "With *Girls*, they didn't promote it very well because they didn't hear a big single. That's the way they work, and we knew it."

Indeed, the new record is more than just payback—it's also a display of Mahaffey's production skills and his ability to tap his inner child. *Gizmodgery* was recorded exclusively with toys and toy instruments. He had always pondered the idea of making such a record, and was encouraged by the success of such novelty albums as *The Moog Cookbook* and Grand Royal's *At Home With The Groovebox*, though he also felt obligated to create a record that people would take seriously. "It didn't need to sound cheesy or stupid for people to get it," he says.

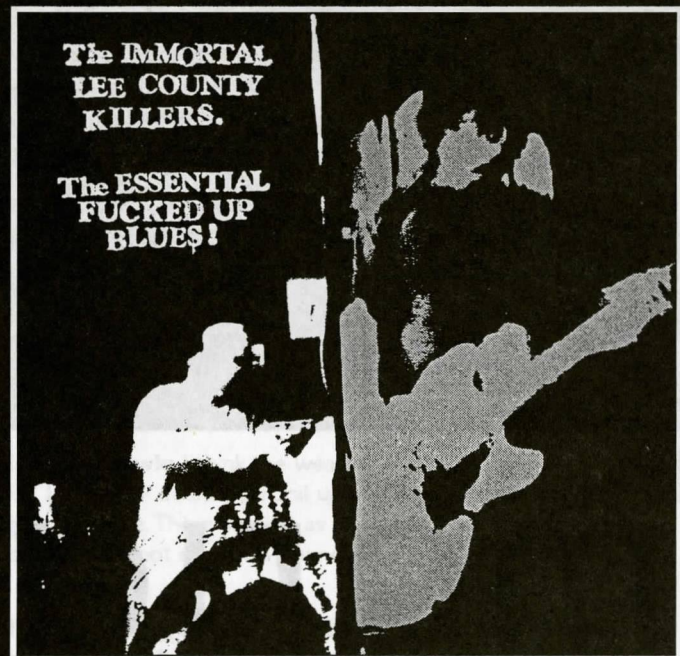
The success of *Gizmodgery* becomes even more ironic when Mahaffey reveals that it was recorded during sessions used to vent and relax after Self's "real" *Girls* sessions. They never expected the record to be a success, which is the real reason Mahaffey released it on Spongebath, the label he co-owns.

"A lot of time, money and second-guessing went into *Girls*," he says. "We tried too hard. We were trying to make a *Sgt. Pepper*. You can't try to do that. We were doing the toy sessions on the side and just goofing off and letting it happen. We were having fun and letting go and not thinking too hard about how it was going to be perceived, and we are happy it has all worked out."

—Brian Conant **Ψ**

**The IMMORTAL
LEE COUNTY
KILLERS.**

**The ESSENTIAL
FUCKED UP
BLUES!**



THE IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS
"The Essential Fucked Up Blues!" LP/CD ES1276

GARAGESHOCK 2001: MAY 25-27 AUSTIN TEXAS (EMO'S)

ATTN STORES: Estrus is now distributed by Touch And Go Records...call 773-388-8888

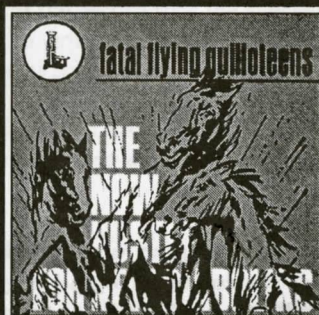
write for our **FREE** mind-numbing 16-
page catalog o' crap today!

P.O. Box 2125 Bellingham, WA. 98227-2125 U.S.A.

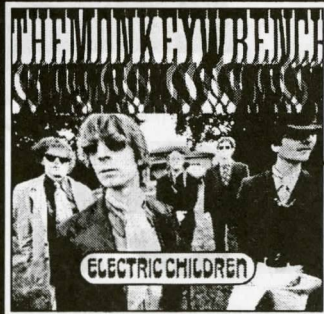
web-heads check: www.estrus.com



THE MOONEY SUZUKI "People Get Ready"
LP/CD hi-energy rock'n'soul redemption! ES1273



THE FATAL FLYING GUILLOTINES "The New
Hustle For New Diaboliks" LP/CD ES1277



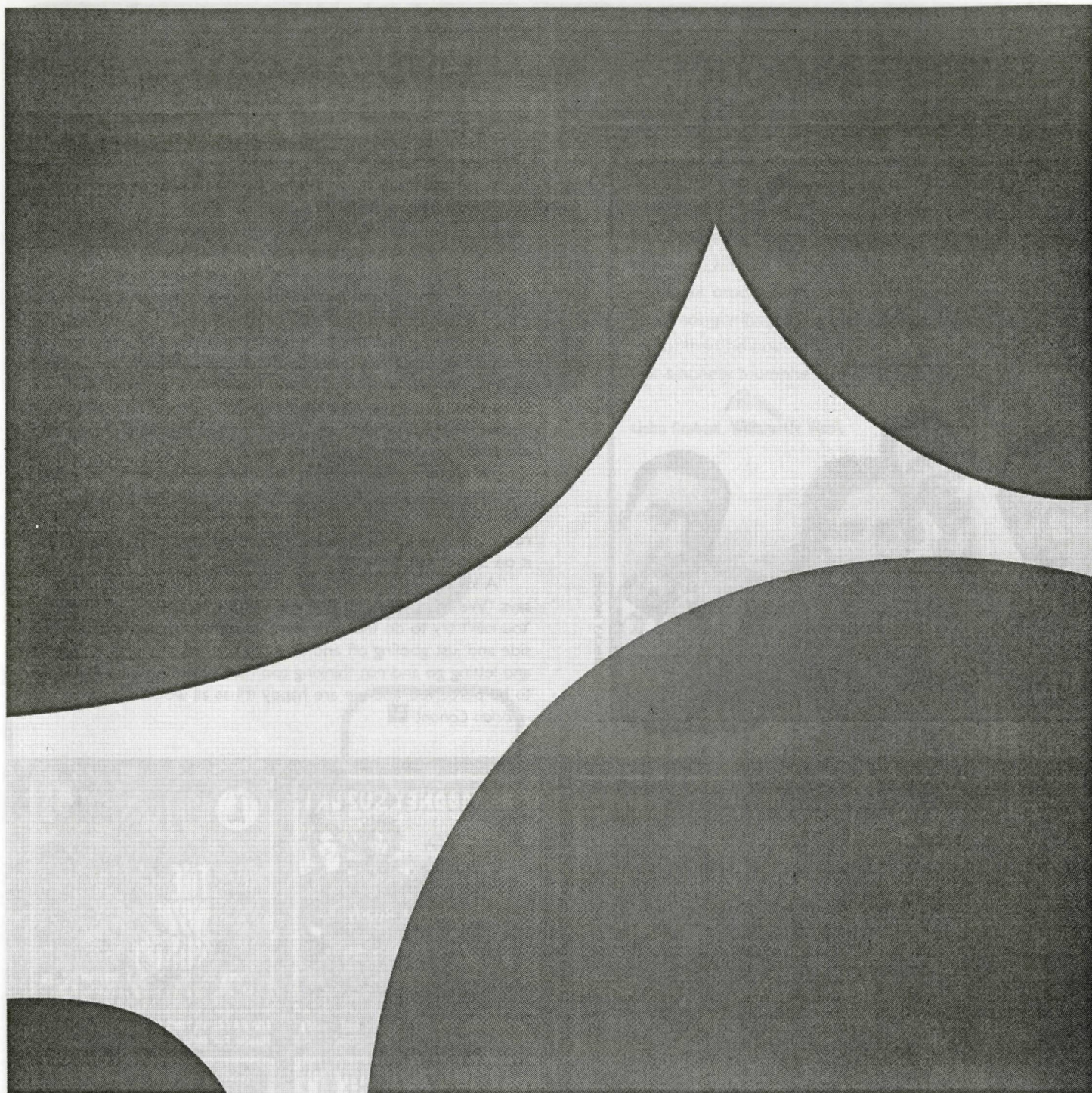
THE MONKEYWRENCH "Electric Children"
LP/CD bring on the judgement day! ES1269



FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM "Total Fucking Blowout"
LP/CD cranium meltin' sonic deconstruction! ES1265

ALSO OUT NOW: THE INSOMNIACS "Get Something Going!" LP/CD, THE SOLEDAD BROTHERS LP/CD, THE VON ZIPPERS "Blitzhacker" CD, THE BOBBYTEENS "Not So Sweet" CD IN THE WORKS: GASOLINE "Fake To Fame!!" LP/CD, THE CHERRY VALENCE LP/CD, FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM LP/CD, MAN OR ASTRO-MAN "Beyond The Black Hole" CD, SOLEDAD BROTHERS LP/CD, THE MONKEYWRENCH LP/CD, THUNDERCRACK LP/CD and MORE!
PRICES: \$9.50 LP's and EP's / \$12.50 CD's (\$10.00 CD ep's), \$4.00 7" ppp. in U.S.A.

ON TOUR: MOONEY SUZUKI, IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS, FIREBALLS OF FREEDOM, GASOLINE...check website for details!



rainer maria

a better version of me.

The third album, in stores January 23.

PRC-039 LP & CD



www.polyvinylrecords.com

© 2001 Polyvinyl Record Co.

Baby Steps

Over the past six years, **LOW** have continued to evolve as sound architects and songwriters. Chris Slater recently spoke with singer/guitarist **ALAN SPARHAWK** about the band's two new arrivals—its fifth studio LP, *Things We Lost In The Fire*, and Sparhawk and drummer/singer **Mimi Parker's** first child, **Hollis Mae**.



PHOTO: DANIEL CORRIGAN

It seems like the name says it all. Low—singer/guitarist Alan Sparhawk, drummer/singer Mimi Parker and bassist Zak Sally—have become an underground fave by making music that is slow, minimal, introspective, quiet and sometimes downright depressing. But give their new Steve Albini-engineered *Things We Lost In The Fire* (Kranky) a few spins, and you'll start to hear that there's more to this Duluth, MN, trio than sad songs and long winters. Low imbue their music with a steady, burning intensity, and then graft personal, spiritual lyrics on top. And after six years, they sound better than ever.

DIW: How is Duluth this time of year? Do you think the weather has anything to do with your sound and style?

Alan Sparhawk: I think the weather is perhaps an influence. I think the detached, rural upbringing is perhaps just as big an influence. There are just as many loud, fast bands here, though, so I'm not sure how sound the theory is.

DIW: Your songwriting on *Things We Lost In The Fire* is far more sophisticated than anything you've ever done. Has the process of songwriting changed in any way since you started?

AS: I'd like to think that over time we're becoming better songwriters—not that bridges, chords and string arrangements are what makes a good song. I think it's mostly a confidence we feel about the whole process. I think in the beginning we would have

liked to write songs like this, but we were new to it, and stuck with what we knew we could pull off. Earlier, also, we were maybe more focused on making the song fit into what we thought Low was.

Now we are more open to let the song become what it wants to become. I think both approaches can make nice things happen.

DIW: A friend of mine thinks your music is getting happier. For instance, "Dinosaur Act" seems a lot more positive than your previous work. Do you detect any "cheering up" in your music?


AS: I think we are becoming a little more confident and letting the songs become what they want to be. "Dinosaur Act" is definitely one of the boldest songs we've ever done, but the rest of the record runs the spectrum.

I recently had to write out all the lyrics for this record, and I was surprised at how violent it is, so I'm not sure how much we've cheered up. We did have a baby—that's a joy that can be heard a little, I think, on the record. I don't know. We're still the same people.

DIW: Do you bring your daughter on tour? How do you juggle band responsibilities with baby responsibilities?

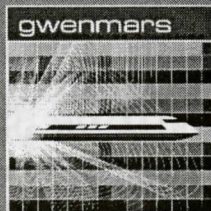
AS: We are now a little more organized. We bring a nanny on the road with her. We set up hotels beforehand—which we didn't do so much before—and it makes for a long day. No matter how late the show goes, she's up at 8 a.m. I'm also a bit more concerned about financial stability. Things change when you're suddenly responsible for the well-being of a person who can't provide for herself.

DIW: How much input did Steve Albini have during the recording of *Things We Lost In The Fire*?

AS: More than he'd admit to. He is very insightful when it comes to arrangement and getting the right feel. He has this reputation for being so "I'm just the guy setting up the mics and pressing play," but I think if you are confident with what you are doing and not looking to him for advice and help, he opens up and can be very intuitive. 

gwenmars
DRIVING A MILLION

"A breakneck trek through Gary Numan's icy hooks, My Bloody Valentine's entrancing guitar layers and Echo & The Bunnymen's soaring sonics, pierced with the gut-wrenching eruptive energy of punk rock."



Free MP3s at www.seethrubroadcasting.com

SEETHRU
BROADCASTING
www.seethrubroadcasting.com
info@seethrubroadcasting.com

coming soon:



Thou
Put Us in Time

also available:



Mike G.
Sugar Daddy

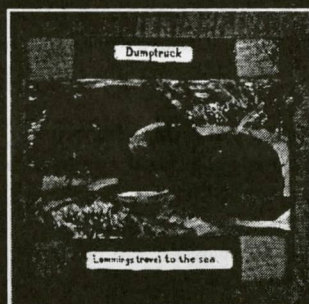


Starlight Mint
The Days That Start
Like Magic O's

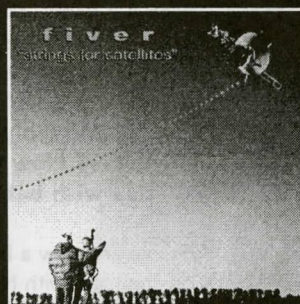


Enon
Believe

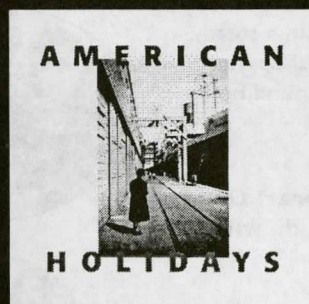
CATCH THE DEVIL!



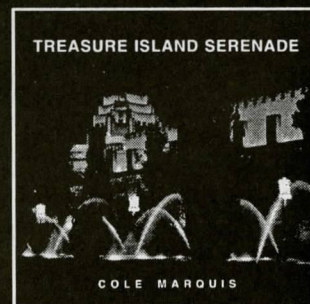
**Dumptruck Lemmings Travel
to the Sea** — Available now!



Fiver strings for satellites
— Available now!



American Holidays debut
seven-inch — Available now!



**Cole Marquis Treasure Island
Serenade** — Available Feb 2001!



DIW Magazine— a quarterly publica-
tion covering independent artists and
underground music

**American Holidays • cruiser • Dumptruck
Earlimart • Experimental Aircraft • Fiver
KaitO • Cole Marquis**

See and hear it all on our website:
www.devilinthewoods.com

Devil in the Woods
P.O. Box 579168, Modesto, CA 95357

emusic

Worthy Of The Buzz

Anyone who pays attention to Britain's music press knows that when they say a band is the Next Big Thing, they actually mean Flavor Of The Month. London-based COLDPLAY, however, deserve all the attention and accolades they've received. Their mellow pop is not only beautiful, but also thoughtful and timeless, and if these youngsters can keep up the good work, they have an amazing career ahead of them. Annie Zaleski spoke with guitarist JONNY BUCKLAND about the band's quick rise to stardom and its amazing breakthrough in America.

Every year a British band manages to bubble just under the surface of the American musical underground, spurred on by the perpetually whispering lips of the cool kids who read *NME* and *Q*.

As 2001 begins, London's Coldplay are poised to assume the roles of this year's buzz-worthy Brits.

The band, whose oldest member is merely 22 years old, is already a success overseas—its mature debut album, *Parachutes* (released on Nettwerk in America), has sold a staggering million copies worldwide. But the band also has tasted success briefly on this side of the pond—the album's "Yellow" became a minor hit, and the video even managed to crack the teen-pop-saturated MTV airwaves.

The universal appeal of Coldplay lies in the warm and comforting sound found on *Parachutes*. Led by Chris Martin's distinctive, delicate crooning, the album succeeds on the strength of its restrained, melodic guitars, moody piano and subtle hooks. Though its melancholy sound mixes the aching sparseness of Jeff Buckley with a mellow Travis vibe and the pop sensibilities of early Radiohead, *Parachutes* remains timeless in its execution.

"Yeah, that's kind of what we wanted as well," laughs guitarist Jonny Buckland. "We just wanted to make it quite live, but get a real sort of feeling to it, and not just produce the life out of everything and polish it until it's horribly clean and perfect. We wanted to have quite a simple album, but with depth as well. We wanted to keep it warm and sort of human."

Indeed, Coldplay's accessible sound is a reflection of the honesty, simplicity and utter lack of pretension inherent in the band itself.

"I mean we can't really ... if you had the weight of a million albums on you—we can't really live up to that," Buckland explains.

"So you just have to do what you can. We try to be as good as we can in every area and try to have control over every area that we do. It's important that it's all us."

This mentality was forged when the four members were in college together in London during the late '90s. Martin and Buckland started playing guitar and writing songs together and were later joined by bassist Guy Berryman and drummer Will Champion (who had never played a kit before joining the band). The band, which stole its name from a friend before he could use it for his band, soon found itself wowing label scouts and *NME* writers at its first gigs. An independent single, "Brothers And Sisters," caught the attention of British label Parlophone; Coldplay's Parlophone debut EP, *The Blue Room*, soon brought them airplay and a



PHOTO: TOM SHEEHAN

fanbase, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Despite Coldplay's prodigious rise, Buckland does express amazement at their success.

"It's great, it's quite surprising, but it's really good," he says. "When we came to record [*Parachutes*], we felt like we were ready to do it. We spent quite a while after we got signed, you know, six months of puttering about—writing, a few tours, lots of writing basically, 'cause we realized when we got signed that we didn't really have enough good songs to do an album."

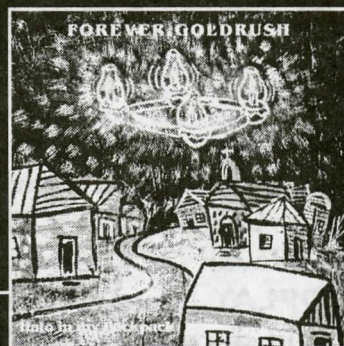
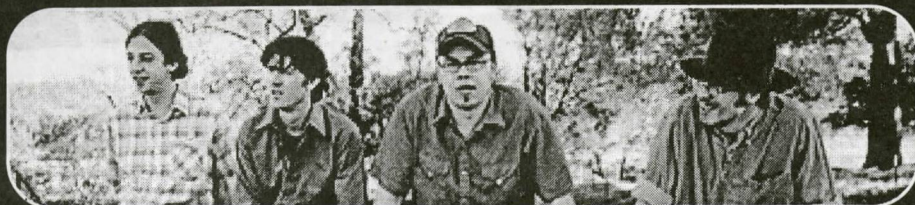
Not ones to tinker with a good thing, Coldplay plan to continue their cycle of touring and writing later this year after a headlining tour of America in February.

"We're really looking forward to going and touring," Buckland says. "We were quite tense, I think, about it a few months ago. But, you know, it's going well out there, so we're looking forward to it." 4

HEADHUNTER RECORDS

WWW.CARGOMUSIC.COM

Forever Goldrush *HALO IN MY BACKPACK* CD HED-090



Think backwoods Nick Cave fronting sideways Creedence Clearwater Revival on a sour mash-fueled Brecht-Weill honky-tonk bender in Virginia City.

• Tower Pulse

In some way, the Old West has simply evolved into the New West. Forever Goldrush---three drinkin', swearin', smokin' country boys who call the Mother Lode home---are products of the latter, but with a firm grasp on the heritage of their surrounding. It's roots-rock meets cowboy poetry.

• No Depression

Forever Goldrush On Tour

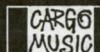
Feb-03	San Francisco, CA	Hotel Utah
Feb-08	Binjin, WA	The Northshore
Feb-10	Portland, OR	Berbatis Pan
Feb-11	Eugene, OR	John Henry's
Feb-13	Sacramento, CA	Old Ironsides
Feb-14	San Francisco, CA	Café Du Nord
Feb-15	Berkeley, CA	Starry Plough
Feb-17	Grass Valley, CA	NorCal Center for the Arts
Feb-23	Mill Valley, CA	The Sweetwater



also check out
**LOU FORD'S
ALAN FREED'S RADIO**
CD HED-093

Cargo Music, Inc. 4901-906 Morena Blvd. San Diego, CA 92117-3432 e-mail: info@cargomusic.com Ph: 858.483.9292 Fax: 858.483.7414

Mail Order: CD \$12 postpaid M.O./VISA/MC



A great taste in the morning is such a fine beginning.

unwound
leaves turn inside you



2x Enhanced CD / 2x LP in Stores April 17

Kill Rock Stars • 120 NE State St #418 Olympia, Wa 98501

www.killrockstars.com • www.leavesturninsideyou.com

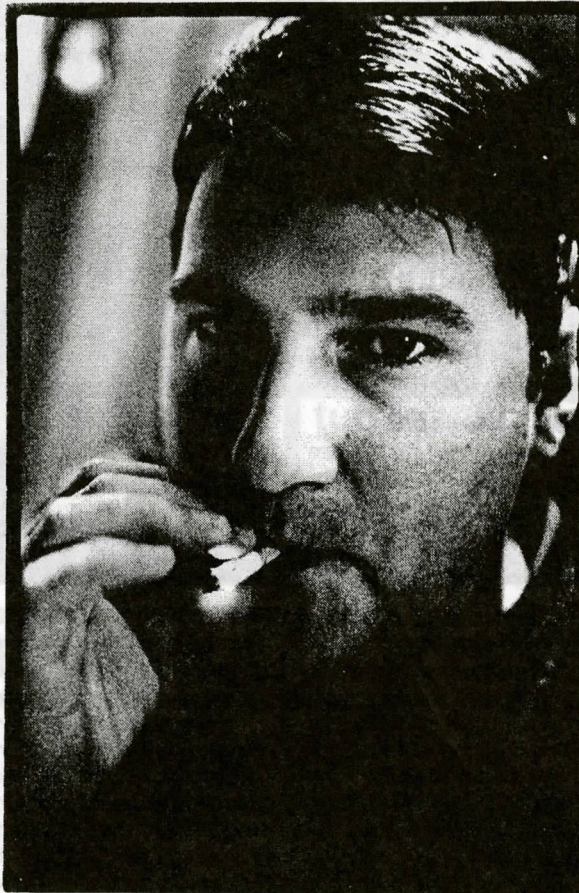
EVERYTHING'S GONNA BE ALRIGHT

GREG DULLI went to hell, came back, and proceeded to create two of the best albums made in the past three years—*The Afghan Whigs' 1965* and more recently, *THE TWILIGHT SINGERS' Twilight As Played By The Twilight Singers*. Marc Hawthorne spoke with Dulli about broken relationships, kicking smack and what it's like to work with two guys with funny accents. Photo by Peter Ellenby.

Greg Dulli never wants to go back to being the person he was in the first half of 1997, but in order to finish *Twilight As Played By The Twilight Singers* (Columbia), his almost-solo debut released under the name The Twilight Singers, he was forced to revisit his dark and dismal past. When Dulli started working on the project four years ago with Harold Chichester (Howlin' Maggie), Shawn Smith (Brad, Satchel, Pigeonhed) and a handful of other players, he was suffering from an intense stomach ailment, heartache and severe depression, and had picked up a heroin habit to numb the pain. So it was more than a little eerie last February when a cleaned-up, healthy and happy Dulli decided to pull out the demo tapes and complete the record in England with Steve Cobby and David McSherry, otherwise known as British electronic duo Fila Brazillia.

"It's like going back and visiting an old friend you haven't seen in a while, and then discovering that that is you, that was you," explains the extremely personable Dulli—better known as the ex-frontman for The Afghan Whigs—backstage before a Singers show in San Francisco. "I went and started listening to it, and I really felt a lot of empathy toward him, me. Like, 'Wow, you're down in the dumps, tiger!' [Laughs.] Because that material, compared to [The Afghan Whigs' 1998 LP] *1965*, is night and day, man. '65 is very celebratory—probably the most optimistic music I've ever done. And then to finish it and fill in the holes—put the new songs in—I couldn't turn my back on the first guy. I mean, I didn't have to 'method' do it and do heroin to be like that guy, but it was strange. I knew him, but I didn't know him, you know what I mean? It was really weird."

After spending five weeks in Fila's studio in Hull, Dulli emerged with one of the finest records made in 2000. The 12-track LP



features lots of piano and plenty of smooth beats, dreamy strings, gorgeous melodies, sensual rhythms and some amazing vocal interplay between Dulli, Smith and Chichester. Though only one song—the rambunctious "Last Temptation"—seems like it could have been recorded by The Whigs, supporters of Dulli's former band's move toward a more soulful sound won't be surprised by *Twilight's* smoothed-out grooves. The 35-year-old Cincinnati-bred, Los Angeles-based singer and songwriter says his interest in creating a record with an "ambient, dreamy mood" made it easy for him to convince Fila—discovered through fellow *Monument Ave.* actor Jason Barry—to work on *Twilight*.

"I think had I first sent them like Whigs tracks, like rockin' Whigs tracks or something, they'd had been like [makes buzzer sound]," says Dulli. "But because of the nature of the *Twilight* material, they were really very receptive to it. Lots of room to move around for them, because it's pretty atmospheric—a lot of space."

Though Dulli ditched close to twenty percent of the lyrics he had originally written ("They were bleak—I didn't feel that way anymore," he says), the ones he chose to keep paint dreary

portraits of relationships in decay. Or perhaps it's more accurate to say a relationship in decay, because most, if not all, of the songs were inspired by the drug-induced breakup of Dulli and his girlfriend.

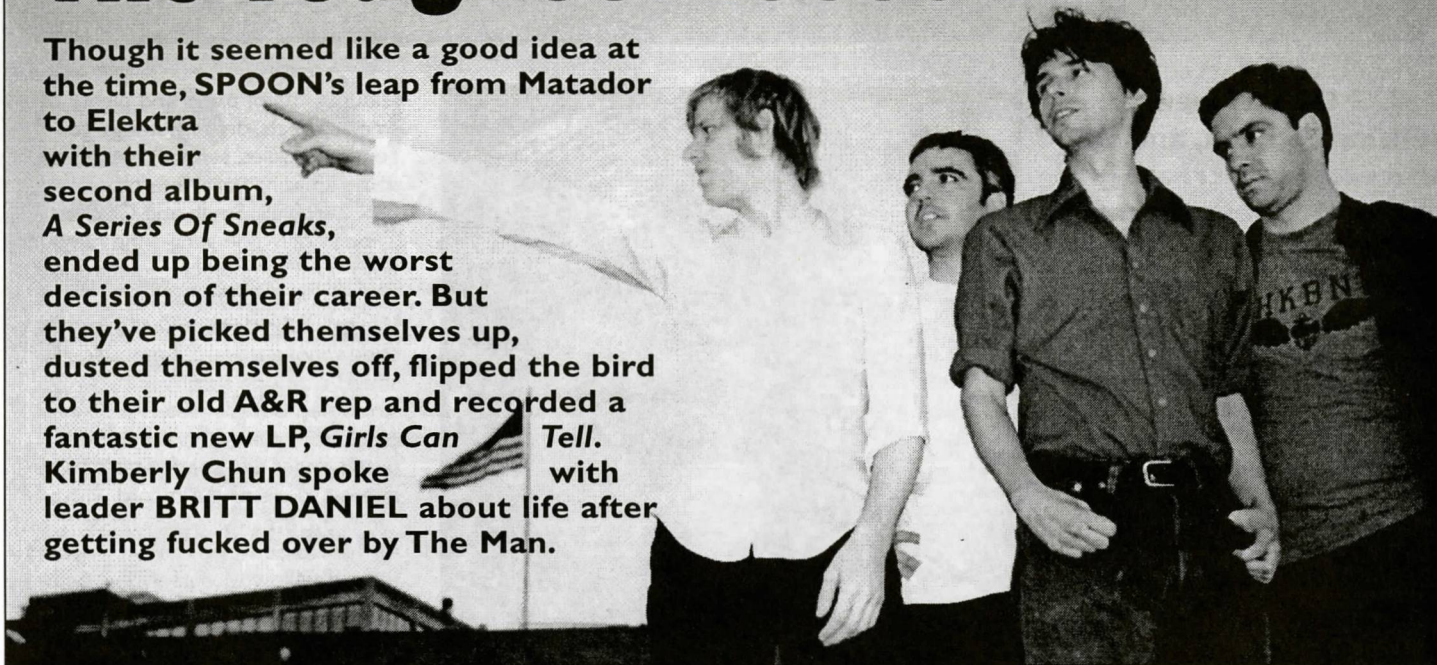
"I had broken up—well, my girlfriend broke up with me right before that," he says. "She just couldn't take it no more. I don't blame her. We're friends again now. It took a while. She dumped me—I would have dumped me too. So I sort of thematically tried to tie it between—so I guess ultimately she left me, but I had left way before she did. I just left. All I was doing was self-medication. I don't know if you've ever done [heroin] before, but it's not a very social drug. No one would see me for fucking months. I didn't want to be seen, I didn't want to see anybody. I didn't want to talk to anybody. I unplugged my phone, didn't answer the door."

But that was then, and this is now. After passing out in Seattle-Tacoma Airport in June of 1997, Dulli finally received the medical attention he needed—where he discovered that the stomach pain was a direct result of his depression—and now he's doing better than ever. Whereas just a short time ago he was trying to drink and drug himself to death, Dulli can now confidently stand behind the line he repeats over and over again at the end of *Twilight*: "Everything's gonna be alright."

"I was definitely, in retrospect, trying to convince myself, comforting myself somehow, and ultimately proved that at least for now, it is," he says. "I feel very mentally and spiritually healthy. And physically healthy." **Ψ**

The Toughest Lesson

Though it seemed like a good idea at the time, SPOON's leap from Matador to Elektra with their second album, *A Series Of Sneaks*, ended up being the worst decision of their career. But they've picked themselves up, dusted themselves off, flipped the bird to their old A&R rep and recorded a fantastic new LP, *Girls Can Tell*. Kimberly Chun spoke with leader BRITT DANIEL about life after getting fucked over by The Man.



Spoon singer/guitarist Britt Daniel makes the kind of dishy pop music that hearkens back to the days when AM radio waves were teeming with catchy melodies, juicy hooks and all-around classic songwriting. Start with the Knacks-like title of Spoon's third LP, *Girls Can Tell* (Merge), and stay tuned to the band's engaging brand of pop, which is made up of equal parts sweet '70s-naïf Raspberries, driving '80s-slick Romantics and dramatically minimal '90s-post-punk Pixies. From the sound of it, Spoon seem poised to be scooped out of the "Best Albums Of The Year You've Never Heard" category and ladled onto playlists throughout the country. But Daniel's experiences in the music industry have been anything but friendly, radio or otherwise.

"I'm not saying we're the only band that's been fucked over," the 29-year-old Austin, TX, resident says laconically on the phone from New York where he's visiting friends. "It happens a lot—way too often."

After a miserable day—laid over in the Midwest for four hours, getting locked out of his friends' apartment, and waiting for his hosts in the 30-degree weather outside for an hour—Daniel sounds understandably weary about covering this same stale territory: the nasty trajectory Spoon took after they released their critically praised album, *A Series Of Sneaks*, on Elektra in 1998. Around that time, their A&R rep stole out of the company without warning, and about four months after the album's release, the band was dropped from the label like a bad habit.

"Maybe it would have been better if it never came out—there's just a certain momentum kill when you get dropped," explains Daniel. "But to me, when *A Series Of Sneaks* came out, there was a lot of bad stuff associated with it, but also for the first time people in the press started giving us some praise. *A Series Of Sneaks* was sort of a turning point in a very small way to at least getting critically acclaimed."


Still, it was enough to make Daniel write a vengeful single (released last year by Saddle Creek) dedicated to the man at fault, Ron Laffitte, now the director of rock A&R at Capitol, complete with such humorous yet enraged song titles as "Laffitte Don't Fail Me Now" and "The Agony Of Laffitte." But in spite of the single—a very public way of expressing disappointment that Laffitte had lied to them about staying at Elektra, according to Daniel—the vocalist doesn't feel the least bit vindicated. "I don't feel purged, because that motherfucker is still earning a couple hundred thousand dollars a year in A&R," he explains. "That's the deal with those people.

They just bounce around. Bands to them are just some kind of commodity, and they'll always have a job at some other company. He obviously treated us like it didn't really matter."

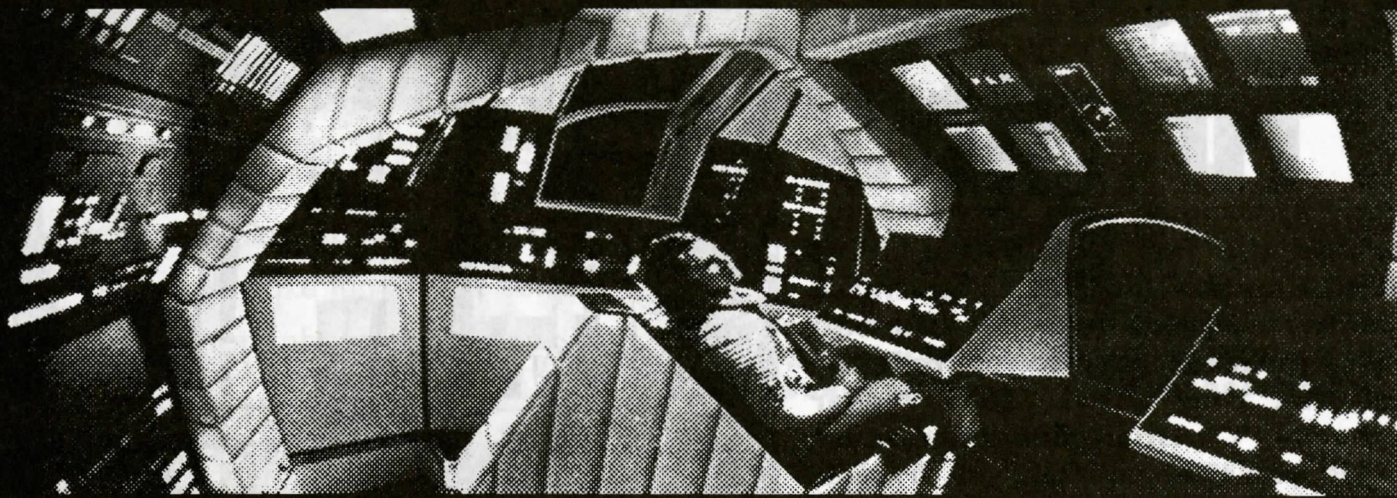
In any case, Daniel is trying to rise above the bitterness and look ahead with drummer Jim Eno, with whom he formed Spoon in 1993. They spent the last year and a half working on *Girls Can Tell*, while Daniel moved back and forth between Austin and New York for work. After Daniel moved back to Austin for good, the band finally finished the recording, which was co-produced with Mike McCarthy. (*A Series Of Sneaks* bassist Joshua Zarbo played on the album, but he'll be replaced on tour by Roman Kuebler.) It's tempting to assume that the Elektra experience and the prospect of following up *A Series Of Sneaks* led to this lengthy polishing period in the studio, but Daniel says Spoon didn't feel any pressure to top the last album.

"I was purely writing these songs just for myself," he says. "They're way more emotional than anything I have ever written, and the lyrics are a lot more honest. That's the way it should have been, but I've never really written lyrics like that before. Lyrics don't come easy to me, so I would write whatever lyrics I could come up with that wouldn't make me cringe while I was singing them onstage—whatever sounded reasonably cool."

Pop styles come and go, explains Daniel, who otherwise holds down a day job as an online editor, but what turns him on is a good song. As we spoke, The Beatles were ascending to the top of the charts once again, more than 30 years after they broke up, another irony in a pop-culture environment that would probably be hostile to latter-day lads from Liverpool. And Daniel doesn't think it's going to get better anytime soon, partly because, as he puts it, "the people who are at radio and record companies are not, for the most part, music people, and they're some of the cheesiest people I've ever met. They're not in it for the right reasons."

"I think that's great [about The Beatles]," he continues. "But I wish the powers that be that control distribution in this country would realize that people like that kind of music. I wish that radio programmers would realize that you don't have to compress the fuck out of your music in order for people to like it. And I wish that record companies would realize you don't have to sound like, well, everything else on the radio in order for people to like them." 

BIG TOP 2001



orangedrive hospital sessions

switzerland's orangedrive present a handful of well crafted pop gems. their's is a sound that evokes thoughts of beach boys and early pavement. touring the states this spring. CD

tugboat annie the space around you

energy and tension, desperation and hope...you can hear the pixies, husker du and replacements yet you also detect hints of oasis, the verve and blur. CD

also available: the up on in steps for the light CD the wicked farleys make it it CD/LP

BIG TOP RECORDS

955 MASS AVE PMB 115 CAMBRIDGE MA 02139 BIGTOPRECORDS.COM
CD \$11+LP \$10 POSTPAID U.S. CAN/MEX CD+1 LP+2 EUR CD+2 LP+4 WORLD CD+3 LP+5

find our new releases in the trees

p.o. box 63 allston, ma 02131
www.esporerecords.com

espo
records

rose of sharon

"even the air is
out of tune"

7 song cd
the beauty lies within
\$7ppd



cash/mo/check to "espo"

The Lot Six

"the hot spot"

3 song 7"

the 10 legged, over
\$0 foot tall, crazy
rockin' machine
with their debut

\$3ppd



A Famile Affair

Perhaps the fact that **DANIELSON FAMILIE** make fantastic pop music that is simply too strange to fit into any musical category stems from the fact that they answer to a higher authority. "Christian rock that doesn't suck?" you may ask. Oh yes, friends, and a whole lot more. Jon Pruett tracked down leader **DANIEL SMITH** and spoke with him about the band's new record, religion, John Fluevog and the power of songs.

When was the last time you felt anything close to pure joy? This doesn't include nights you might have spent hopped up on goofballs, hugging whoever and whatever and speaking half-truths to strangers. We're talking about pure, unadulterated joy. Joy that makes you look foolish and makes the world look beautiful. Maybe you've never felt anything like that. Maybe you're a soulless drone. Or maybe you've just never listened to The Danielson Famile.

My introduction to The Danielson Famile came a couple of years ago when a friend played me "Idiot Boksen," a track off *Tri-Danielson!!! [Omega]*. The song turned out to be typical Danielson fare, with Daniel Smith hooting and hollering about the dangers of television and the music all aflame with bells and harmonies. But it was the voice that immediately grabbed me. Smith's high-pitched praising and screeching is what causes an immediate reaction to the band's music. Think of a giddy Black Francis circa "Broken Face." The other people in the room at the time, which happened to be located in a major-label office, quickly cleared out with a mixture of those *What the hell is this?* looks and labored eye-rolling. The others were scared, but I had found something completely enthralling and moving about The Famile's brand of jubilation, despite—or perhaps due to—the lyrics' heavy dependence on Christian themes.

That's the other thing about The Danielson Famile: religion. They make no effort to veil their feelings for the Lord. But just as you don't have to be Joe McChurch to appreciate the sheer power of gospel music from the '40s and '50s, you can be an unbeliever and still love The Danielson Famile. While most Christian music these days is a hot, weak tea that's part Hallmark sentiment and part youth-group witnessing, The Danielson Famile get their point across without resorting to clichés. They say what they mean and mean what they say, and that's something everyone can appreciate.

Daniel Smith started The Danielson Famile (aka Danielson, aka The Danielson Family) in college, and eventually used the band's recordings for his senior thesis. The thesis turned into Danielson's first record, 1995's *A Prayer For Every Hour* (yes, there are 24 songs). Since then, The Danielson Famile—which presently



includes Daniel, David, Megan, Elin and Andrew Smith, Melissa and Chris Palladino and Rachel Galloway—have recorded four records: 1997's *Tell Another Joke At The Ol' Choppin' Block*, 1998's *Tri-Danielson!!! [Alpha]*, 1999's *Tri-Danielson!!! [Omega]* and the upcoming *Fetch The Compass Kids* (released by Secretly Canadian, which also is reissuing the three previous albums, all of which were originally put out by Tooth & Nail). In addition to the new record, The Famile also have been working with John Fluevog Boots & Shoes Ltd. to make a Danielson Famile shoe. Yes, a shoe. An EP about feet in general is to follow.

Fetch The Compass Kids, produced by Daniel and Chris Palladino and engineered by Steve Albini, is stylistically similar to the *Tri-Danielson!!!* records. The songs are jumpy and hypnotic—the vaguely disjointed arrangements are dressed up in horns, piano, banjo and violin—and the completely unpredictable harmonies leave you questioning the seriousness of it all. The record makes several references to the *Compass Kids*, who Daniel simply refers to as "the reinforcements."

"This one has a lot more personality," says Daniel. "In the past, it's just been myself writing with a guitar. And this one Chris and I wrote quite a bit together, and it's more of a meeting between piano and guitar. Chris and I spent a long time laying down the ideas and the arrangements, and then The Famile came together and we took it to the studio. I'm extremely excited about it. I'm just really happy. I think for me, I tend to go back and forth. I have two approaches to records. I like to have long, drawn-out experiments—like *A Prayer For Every Hour*—and then after that I have this great desire to reign it in and use everything I learned from that and make a catchy little record filled from beginning to end with little bursts of energy. For me, that's a record like *Tell Another Joke At The Ol' Choppin' Block*. Now that this is done, I want to go and make something long."

Every Danielson record has been a celebration, and *Fetch The Compass Kids* is no different. Considering the negative vibes exuded by so many people making music today, it's easy to understand why Christians and atheists alike are attracted to the band's quirky yet uplifting music. "Certainly that comes from the joy and the strength of the Lord," says Daniel. "Although it's not something we do purposely, I don't really think about trying to sound happy. We try to poke fun at that sometimes. We're dead serious about being happy."

But let's get back to the shoe. It was Daniel who originally approached Fluevog; the man and his company liked the band's

music, and a deal was made. Daniel helped design the shoe (dubbed the "Familevog" and due in stores in April), which is influenced by the nurse outfits the group wears onstage. Those who purchase the shoe—made of white leather and sporting a red heart—will receive the foot-themed Danielson Famile EP (the record also will be made available later in the year via their web-site (www.newjerusalemmusic.com/danielson) or through their newly established record label, Sounds Familyre).

That's the same label that will release an album by the man that Daniel describes as his biggest musical influence: his father, Lenny. "We've been recording it for seven to eight years now, and

"I don't really think about trying to sound happy. We try to poke fun at that sometimes. We're dead serious about being happy."

the whole family is backing him up on it," says Daniel of *Deep Calls To Deep*. "I'm really excited about that coming out. Music has always been in my family. There has always been a big emphasis on songs. The power of songs. The writing of the song."

Despite its bad rap, religion has been responsible for some of the most powerful music ever made. Look at the Sacred Harp Singers, The Mighty Clouds Of Joy, Soul-Junk—and The Danielson Famile. Sure, there are major sonic differences, but there is an impassioned streak that runs through them all. With The Danielson Famile, as Daniel is quick to point out, the music is inseparable from the message. You accept one with the other, as long as the end result justifies the means. And it does, brothers and sisters, it really does. **ψ**

busy beaver

1" buttons and rubber stamps

Button prices

\$25 for 100

\$100 for 500

This includes 1st class postage and black ink on any standard color paper (white if you don't say).

multi-color or colored ink add \$5/100 (so \$30 for 100 buttons or \$125 for 500)

It's Easy!

----> your art

just send

----> check, MO or cash (to Busy Beaver)

----> your address and phone #

turnaround generally 7-10 days after I get the order

Busy Beaver

PO Box 87676

Chicago, IL 60680

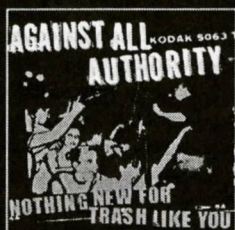
www.busybeaver.net

buttongal@earthlink.net

info line 415 789 8235

phone 773 645 3359

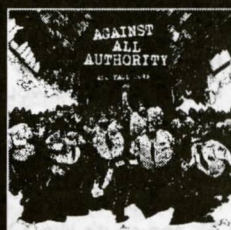
AGAINST ALL AUTHORITY



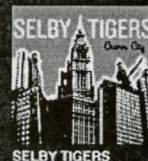
SC017-cd



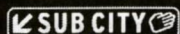
HR642-lp/cd



HR626-lp/cd/cs



HOPELESS SAMPLER



order online at www.hopelessrecords.com

also new from Hopeless Records

Barely

THE DONNAS are finally 21, and they're ready to drink you under the table. Kimberly Chun tapped the San Francisco Bay Area quartet's keg to find out more about its new LP, South Bay debutantes and what it thinks of fellow ex-Palo Altan Stephan Jenkins. Peter Ellenby captured these beauties on film.



After they've toured the world, rocked bagel shops, fended off the beerified attentions of goons and geeks in dive bars from Topeka to Tallahassee and even gotten into a good colleges, what is there left for The Donnas to do? Well, there's the little matter of becoming legal to drink in the States. Since the all-girl band has pretty much grown up under the gaze of the indie-rock public, why not celebrate the latest coming-of-age milestone by naming its new, harder-edged Lookout! Records LP *The Donnas Turn 21*?

Turning 21 is a turning point for The Donnas, who have been playing for years in clubs where they might not have been otherwise admitted. "Now you can order your own drink and you never have to worry," says drummer Torry Castellano, otherwise known as Donna C. in the comic-book world order originally established by The Ramones. Petite, longhaired and still looking all of 16, she'd actually been busted at one club for drinking when she was underage. "There's always that little worry, if we'd play clubs and maybe have a beer or something. You had to drink it backstage or you couldn't walk around with it."

"A lot of times, we'd be able to play, then we'd get kicked out," interjects guitarist Allison Robertson, or Donna R. "Clubs would have a 21-and-over thing later, and then we'd have to leave."

"You'd have to get all your gear and get out of the club really fast," adds bassist Maya Ford, aka Donna F.

"It's kind of the joke of the album," Robertson explains. "We already did all this stuff before we were 21, and so it's like, 'Oh no, The Donnas are actually turning 21. What will they do next?'"

Robertson is the analytical, highly verbal Donna, the most obvious example of the fact that The Donnas are both "high and low IQ," as she says, in the sense that the band members maintained high GPAs in high school while rocking out in the spectacularly sim-

ple rock 'n' roll tradition of "Louie Louie," "Blitzkrieg Bop" and "Wild Thing." Castellano, Ford, Robertson and rangy, vivacious vocalist Brett Anderson, or Donna A., come across as bright, friendly and chatty young women, quick to laugh and even quicker to all chime in with "No way!" and a jumble of other opinions, making an interview a cacophonous kind of coffee klatch. No taciturn Neanderthals, attitude princesses or bloodthirsty biker chicks here. The Donnas are more like the brainy but hip girls who sat next to you in social studies and got all As, but were too cool to brown-nose teachers during office hours or go out for varsity cheerleading.

Now made up in their best glam style with silvery eyeshadow and immaculately groomed eyebrows, the band has obviously grown out of its kindercore beginnings. Produced by soundman Robert Shimp (who also produced the band's cover of KISS' "Strutter," which was featured on the *Detroit Rock City* soundtrack), *The Donnas Turn 21* includes such harder Motörhead-style speedfests as "Do You Wanna Hit It," the poppy, almost Go-Gos-like "Drivin' Thru My Heart," the hilarious sing-along "40 Boys In 40 Nights" ("I got boys all over the road/ I got boys helpin' me unload") and a cover of Judas Priest's "Living After Midnight." "We wanted the drums to sound huge," says Robertson. "We wanted Torry to sound like she was an awesome hairy man. She's beautiful and little, but you know what I mean. But you want to think, *Oh my god, those are girls playing?* People assume that girls are going to be so dinky."

Friends since elementary school, Robertson, Ford and Castellano hooked up with Anderson in eighth grade and began Ragady Anne as a way to horn in on the all-boy lunchtime show at their middle school in Palo Alto, CA. "It's so boring there," says Robertson of the town that sits in the middle of Silicon Valley and is home to Stanford University. "People are so rich that it's really weird to grow up there and not be rich, you know?"

"People shop every day and will have a different outfit every day for school," Castellano adds.

"Your moms all have to be friends,"

Anderson finishes. "And they'd have all these weird mother-daughter parties. It was really debutante, kind of crazy."

Peers mocked the quartet, Castellano says, but the girls liked practicing and continued anyway. Eventually Ragady Anne morphed into The Electrocuties, who played regular gigs at the local community theater and teen center. They caught the eye of girl-group fans such as Stanford radio DJ John McGuire, who recorded their first single, and then Darin Raffaelli, a local

we're stupid because we talk a lot and we're kind of like valley girls."

Two albums later, with Raffaelli happily moving on to his own projects, the band has graduated from local benefits, shows at the legendary East Bay punk co-op 924 Gilman and appearances at The Chameleon in San Francisco, where they'd compete with "Simpsons" night, to bigger venues like the legendary Fillmore. But The Donnas still do their share of dues-paying in Europe and other parts of the country, Robertson says, detailing a particularly cramped, dangerous show at a bagel shop/live-music venue in Columbus, OH; there they fled after

"I think if we were really ugly and didn't care about how we looked, people would be like, 'Oh yeah, they definitely write their own music.' But I think because we care about how we look and we're kind of bubbly, sometimes people think we're stupid because we talk a lot and we're kind of like valley girls." —Brett Anderson, aka Donna A.

music lover who proposed that they play some of his simple Ramones-esque tunes as part of a side-project called The Donnas. After much persuading, the foursome decided to collaborate with Raffaelli, recording their first singles for his Super*Teem label at his South Bay workplace, Mailboxes Etc. "People would come in to pick up their mail from P.O. boxes, and we'd be sitting there with our instruments, and they'd be like, 'What the fuck?'" recalls Castellano.

When the thousand-copy pressings of the three singles sold out, the band had to consider merging its two bands: The Electrocuties, who sounded noisier and faster and involved more complicated song structures, and The Donnas, a hybrid of Raffaelli's love of classic poppy punk and the girls' harder rockin' tendencies, the byproduct of years of MTV hair bands. "The first time the first single sold out we were confused, because we didn't think it was good at all and we didn't really like it," Robertson says. "Our own band was cool. We were so into ourselves that nobody understood our real band, because it was so weird and creepy. Cute lyrics about teddy bears and scary music." (The Electrocuties' only album, *Steal Your Lunch Money*, was finally released by Sympathy For The Record Industry in 1999).

So the group decided to combine the two bands and defer college when they were offered a chance to make a record for Berkeley's Lookout!. But as a result of their strange evolution as a band and their friendship with Raffaelli, The Donnas still have to fend off accusations that they couldn't play their instruments or write songs. Especially at the beginning, Raffaelli was often portrayed as a Kim Fowley-like Svengali. "I think if we were really ugly and didn't care about how we looked, people would be like, 'Oh yeah, they definitely write their own music,'" says Anderson as the entire band laughs and starts to talk at once. "But I think because we care about how we look and we're kind of bubbly, sometimes people think

only a few songs because people were tumbling onto their floor-level stage.

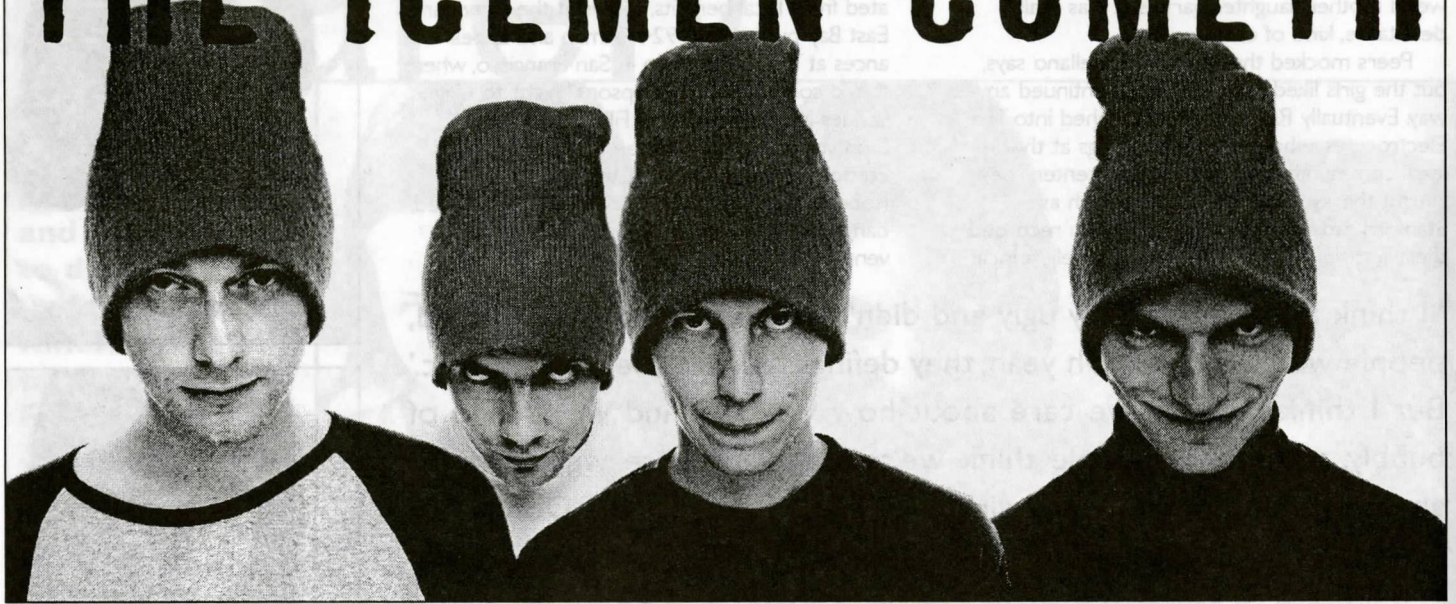
"Sometimes there's not even a backstage, so we have to be out and be nice," she says. "But there's nobody there to protect us or help us. You know, it's just people coming at us, and we're in the middle—we can't have a body-guard. And there's people who are really messed up, really drunk, and we have to deal with gropers, and all this stuff, all by ourselves, and it's on a daily basis. Then if we don't come out from the dressing room, people complain about you, like, 'What a bitch. She's such a rock star.' I mean, they like us, but they don't like us to be stuck-up or anything."

So how does it feel to be appearing in such films as *Jawbreaker* and working their way up the rock 'n' roll food chain to a spot beside such Palo Alto-bred musicians as Joan Baez, Stevie Nicks and Stephan Jenkins of Third Eye Blind? Well, teen embarrassment doesn't end at 19, according to The Donnas, who say Jenkins mocks them when they're all at the San Francisco studio Toast. "He just shows off, sings really loud and talks on the phone," cringes Robertson. "He seems really sarcastic about us too. He's always like 'Hey guys.' Like he doesn't even know us well or anything, and he's like 'Palo Alto. Paly!' It's almost like he thinks we're really lame."

As for *Jawbreaker*, the band did find Marilyn Manson, who acted in the black comedy alongside his then-paramour Rose McGowan, shyly knocking on its trailer to have his Donnas CD autographed. But that pleasant memory is obscured by the humiliation that came with the fact that the band was closer to the age of actual high school students than the lead actresses in the movie: The production crew laughed at The Donnas because they looked so scruffy, Robertson recalls, and they were turned away from the catering truck because security thought they were students from the real-life high school location. "They were like, 'Go back to class.'" **Ψ**



THE ICEMEN COMETH



So you think that Iceland's only good musical exports are Björk and The Sugarcubes? Well, maybe you should check out SIGUR RÓS, whose beautiful, otherworldly music is taking the entire world by storm. Richard M. Juzwiak spoke with bassist GEORG HOLM about the band's most recent treasure, *Ágætis Byrjun*, and found out about its plans to change music forever.

In the fall of 2000, Icelandic quartet Sigur Rós were asked by Radiohead to support them on their European tour. Though largely unknown to wide audiences, Sigur Rós had been generating a reverent buzz from rock critics and music fans alike. The band accepted the offer, though according to bassist Georg Holm, the prospect of playing with the most loved band in the world made Sigur Rós apprehensive.

"We supported different bands in England before, and it's always been really difficult," says Holm. "A support band is often like a second-hand thing. But touring with Radiohead was completely different. We were standing in front of 13,000 people. We thought maybe 15 would like our music and the rest would boo us off stage, but that didn't happen. In France especially, where I was a bit scared of playing, the crowd was so receptive. They just went crazy."

Listen to the band's latest LP, *Ágætis Byrjun* (FatCat), and it's clear what European fans and new fans worldwide are going nuts over. *Ágætis Byrjun*, which was released in the U.S. in 2000 (distributed by Bubble Core), follows 1997's *Von* and the 1998 remix album, *Von Brigdi*. The band's second album proper presents delicate melodies swathed in a dense, ambient sound. Lead vocalist Jón Thor Birgisson wails like a siren while he plays his electric guitar with a cello bow. Holm's bass and Orri Páll Dyrason's drums keep the songs' watery structures together. Keyboards by Kjartan Sveinsson add an ethereal sheen to the already unearthly music. It

might be the ultimate rock-crit cliché to say that Sigur Rós sound like nothing that's come before them, but in this case, it's more or less true.

Still, Holm laughs at rock critics who have taken Sigur Rós' experimentalism as an entry into the sub-genre of post-rock.

"I don't think we are post-rock," says Holm. "The thing is, I don't know what we are. I think categorizing music is shaky business, because sometimes you just don't know what it is. A lot of different magazines have said a lot of different things about our music because they have different opinions. One of us said once that we are 'pop music of the future,' which I think is funny. Maybe that's what we are."

The band's defiance of genre most certainly stems from the members' approach to making music. Formed in 1994 in Reykjavik, the band started its own label and released *Von* soon after. Holm says that instead of one main songwriter, all four members of Sigur Rós have always had equal say when it comes to writing songs.

"There's not one of us that walks into the rehearsing space and says, 'Hey, I have a song,' and then plays it on an acoustic guitar," he says. "The songs just happen, and they almost never happen if one of us is missing. We never strive to write a song, we never sit down and really think about what we're going to do. It just always comes floating out. It's very easy for us."

Sigur Rós have built up an impressive fanbase, particularly in their homeland. In Iceland, *Ágætis Byrjun* has spent nearly a year in the Top 10 and sold over 7,000 copies, reaching gold status. However, Holm claims that Sigur Rós aren't regarded as stars in the country they call home.

"I think it's very difficult to be a rock star in Iceland," he says. "It's such a small country, and it's funny in a way, because the people here tend to distance themselves from everybody else. They try not to notice people. That's probably why a lot of pop stars from England come to Iceland. They can just walk down the street without bodyguards. No one cares. Nobody will even look at them."

The solitary atmosphere of Iceland is echoed in the band's recording environment. At the time of the interview, the band was

busy building its own studio in a small rural town outside of Reykjavik. Holm explains why having their own recording space is important to the band's members.

"When we work in the studio, we just lock the doors and keep everybody out," he says. "The studio has to be a special environment, and preferably, it should be like home. If it doesn't feel like home, it's not comfortable, and a band can get restless or bored. In building our own studio, we're creating our own atmosphere, so we can sit there for hours and not get bored."

Though Sigur Rós had planned to tour America in early 2001, the construction of the studio has taken more time than expected. They've never played in the States, though Holm says they are anxious to come. According to Holm, American audiences can expect Sigur Rós to show up on these shores sometime in 2001, perhaps as early as summer.

In the meantime, the band will continue to build its studio and work on its third album. Holm says that most of the new songs are almost two years old and the band is eager to begin recording them. He adds that listeners should expect Sigur Rós' music to continue evolving.

"We're always experimenting with recording," he says. "When we started out, we recorded one part at a time, so our playing wasn't live at all. *Ágætis Byrjun* was mostly live. All the basics were live—bass, drums, most of the guitars, and some of the keyboards. Then we overdubbed a lot. The plan for the next album is to do it very much live, with as little overdubbing as possible."

So will their next LP show off a more minimalist side of Sigur Rós? Holm answers the question in his typical quirky, almost paradoxical fashion.

"The last album was very detailed," he says. "This album will be even more detailed, but in a different way. It will be more detailed, for example, in the dynamics and the way of playing the music. The songs will be more minimal, but they will have more detail in themselves. Not the detail of overdubbing, but the detail of the songwriting."

Holm also notes that he believes the songs on the new record will be "much better" than those on previous recordings—not a surprising statement from a man who posted a notice on his band's website that proclaimed, "Sigur Rós is simply gonna change music forever, and the way people think about music."

At the mention of the quote, Holm's tone changes. He becomes a bit more quiet, perhaps sheepish, as he attempts to justify such a claim.

"I actually wrote that a long time ago," he says. "Recently, I asked our webmaster to take it off the Web page. I think it's a little too tongue-in-cheek at the moment. It doesn't fit our way of thinking anymore. But still, I think it's right in a lot of ways about what we do."

Again, Holm examines the group's genre-defying status. Like Sigur Rós' deft ability to sculpt otherworldly soundscapes out of a basic rock-group set-up, Holm crafts humbleness out of braggadocio. "I don't think we fit into a genre, so maybe that's part of changing the way people think about music," he says. "When they listen to us, hopefully they won't have to decide what kind of music they want to listen to—they'll just listen to it because they think it's good. Also, I wasn't trying to say that we are the band that will change music, but maybe we will help or inspire another band for the future that will change music. We are not the band, but we'll be part of the change." ♣



new music from victory records

find out more at www.victoryrecords.com



reach the sky

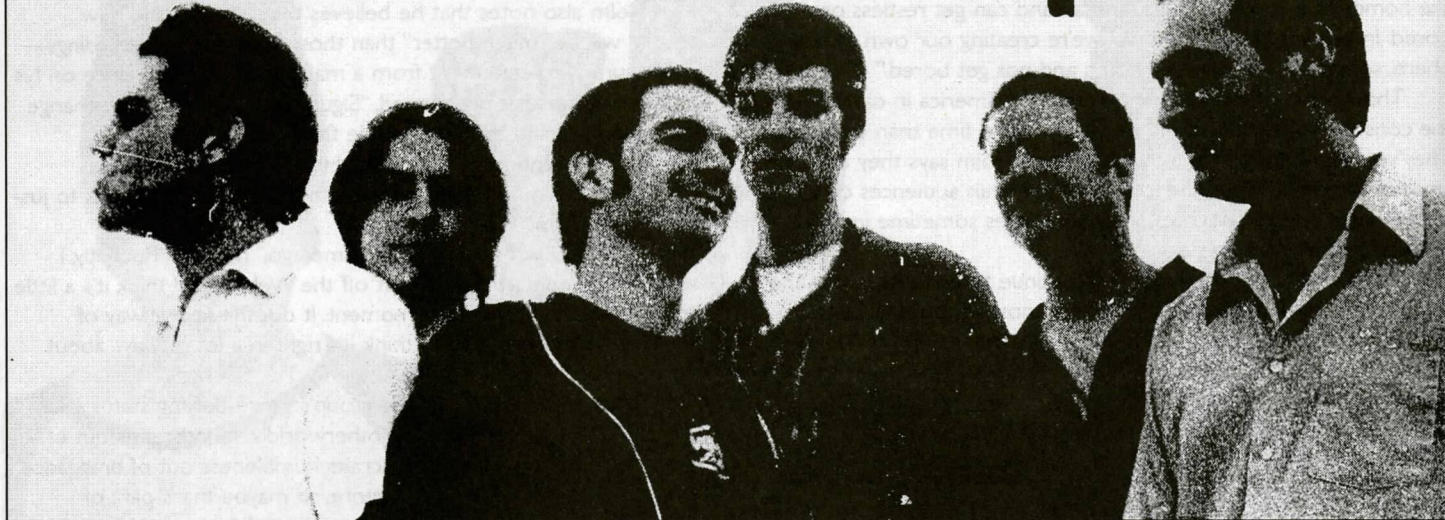
Friends, Lies, and The End Of The World
CD/LP AVAILABLE MARCH 20, 2001



THURSDAY

Full Collapse
CD AVAILABLE April 10, 2001

All Fired Up



After changing labels and switching drummers, San Diego dance-rock revivalists ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT have returned with their gritty and enthusiastic sixth LP, *Group Sounds*. Writer Marc Hawthorne and photographer Mariah Robertson followed the band around its hometown before dragging singer/guitarist JOHN "SPEEDO" REIS and guitarist ANDY "N.D." STAMETS down to Tijuana for some cheap food, cheap liquor and cheap love. Well, two out of three ain't bad.

There are only about 15 miles separating San Diego and Tijuana, but as we cross the border and head toward Avenida Revolución, it feels more like 1500. Less than half an hour ago, Mariah and I were hanging out at Rocket From The Crypt singer/guitarist John "Speedo" Reis' comfortable house on Golden Hill; now we're in the middle of an extremely rough-looking, dirty town. Even though Reis and Rocket guitarist Andy "N.D." Stamets assure me that driving into Mexico is no big deal, I'm having a hard time shaking the feeling that perhaps this whole trip is a bad idea. But after parking the car, Reis and Stamets lead us to a relatively nice restaurant and two mellow bars. Of course, every time we change locations we are accosted by unwashed children peddling Chiclets and overzealous doormen trying to convince us to enter their cheesy dance clubs. There's also the bar that Stamets ducks his head into and then quickly moves away

from, bringing back the news that there are people onstage wearing diapers. But most of our time is spent in moderately inviting establishments with a familiar feel, to the point where it seems like we could very well be back in San Diego or San Francisco.

Rocket From The Crypt's sixth studio LP, *Group Sounds* (Vagrant), is not too different from our Tijuana experience. It starts out rough and gritty, as "Straight American Slave," "Carne Voodoo" and "White Belt" punish your senses with gargantuan guitars and knock-you-in-the-gut energy; these first seven minutes feel about a thousand miles away from the band's cleaner, less edgy 1998 album, *RFTC*. But as the 13-track album unfolds, the songs begin to bounce around and explore some well-known territory, and suddenly you feel as though you could be inside 1995's *Scream*, *Dracula*, *Scream!* or 1992's *Circa: Now!*. And just as we were shocked that the border patrol didn't smell the alcohol on our breath as we headed back home, *Group Sounds* ends with a bit of a surprise, the piano-driven ballad, "Ghost Shark."

Very much and very little has happened in the world of everyone's favorite flash 'n' burn party crashers since they finished touring in support of *RFTC*. They've been busy minding their internal affairs—in addition to severing ties with Interscope

"Being unable to function the way we'd been functioning for the last 10 years has been like somebody taking your breath away. It's so awesome to be able to play with Mario. We tried out so many people and it was looking really grim, and he just came in and we pretty much instantly knew that he was the guy." —John "Speedo" Reis

and inking a deal with up-and-coming indie Vagrant, the band replaced longtime drummer Adam "Atom" Willard ("It was getting hard for him to financially do the band," says Reis) with Mario "Ruby Mars" Rubalcaba (who has worked with Clikatat Ikatowi, The Black Heart Procession and several others)—which means that aside from the *All Systems Go 2* compilation and a couple of new songs released on a comp, seven-inches and the *Cut Carefully And Play* EP (a

12-inch record that you literally had to cut out of the sleeve), the sextet has been more or less out of the public eye. By last summer, Rocket were getting just as antsy as their fans, so they

started to work on *Group Sounds* before they even hooked up with Rubalcaba. They called in a temp—Superchunk drummer Jon Wurster—and they finally got back to the rock.

"It was really weird, but it was like one of those things where it's like, we just had to move on," says a slim and trim Reis, who was involved last year with full-length releases by Back Off Cupids (his solo project), Sultans (which also includes Stamets) and Hot Snakes (featuring fellow ex-Drive Like Jehu member Rick Froberg). "A lot of the shit we were working on with Adam was terrible. And I firmly believe a lot of it had to do with the fact that we were in hell for so long, you know, with our record company, and just everything. It was just kind of dim times all the way around. And I think it was kind of evident in the music. [To Stamets] All that stuff we worked on? You know what I mean? Imagine going back to some of those songs now. I'm fucking glad we didn't record a record at that time."

Refocused and re-energized, the band bashed out a handful of tunes at Sound City in LA with Chad Blinman (The Get Up Kids, Face To Face) before moving the party to Memphis to record with Stuart Sikes (Jets To Brazil, The Promise Ring).

"We've always wanted to record out there at Easley," says Reis. "We did a record called *Hot Charity*, and we wanted to record that record out there. It was killer. We really cherish and romanticize rock 'n' roll lore and legend, and for us, recording in Memphis—where you have Stax and Elvis and Sun Studios—it's like, those are things that we really revere. So going to Memphis to record is kind of more like a retreat for us. I know that sounds kinda cheesy."

"That was part of it though," agrees Stamets. "We wanted to get out of town and kind of focus on it and stay there for a week or two."

The group then brought its sounds back to San Diego and began the final recording sessions—with Rubalcaba seated behind the drums—at its practice space.

"We recorded some of it on this boom box that we hot-wired through an eight-track tape machine," explains Reis. "We recorded all the bass and the drums and the guitars on that, and we took the tapes up to West Beach [with Donnell Cameron, who the band has worked with previously] and did all the vocals and little overdubs and stuff, and mixed it."

Creating *Group Sounds* in three different cities was not an afterthought. After having recorded *RFTC* over the course of a

"I think what I was going to suggest was that we all just cut off our pinkies, 'cause it's the ultimate bond. It's the ultimate symbol of unification—losing a digit. Just put everyone's in a jar together and put it on the bar right next to the pigs' feet and the eggs."

—John "Speedo" Reis

month in one place—at Avatar in New York with producer Kevin Shirley (Aerosmith, The Black Crowes)—Reis & Co. were ready for a change.

"The initial inspiration was we put out a compilation called *All Systems Go*," says Reis. "We've actually done two of them. And especially on the second one, we really liked the way that it was just all over the place sonically. Musically as well. It wasn't cohesive. It didn't really hold to any kind of cohesive sound quality from song to song. And I liked that—it was cool. So we all kind of thought that the best way to achieve that is by going to other places."

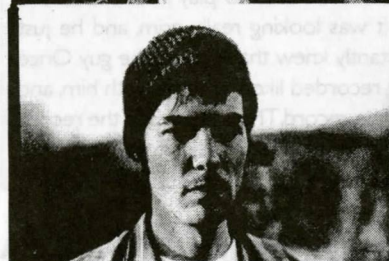
However, it wasn't until Rubalcaba signed on that the band finally knew it had a finished product.

"Being unable to function the way we'd been functioning for the last 10 years has been like somebody taking your breath away," says Reis. "It's so awesome to be able to play with Mario. We tried out so many people and it was looking really grim, and he just came in and we pretty much instantly knew that he was the guy. Once Mario came into the picture, we recorded like five songs with him, and all five of those songs made it to the record. That's like when the record kind of took more of a shape. Before, we didn't feel like we really had a record."

As Rocket From The Crypt—which also includes Pete Reichert (aka Petey X) on bass, Jason Crane (JC2000) on trumpet and Paul O'Beirne (Apollo 9) on saxophone—head into their second decade as a band, it's obvious that they have their work cut out for them. In addition to no longer having the support of such mainstream outlets as MTV—which, as hard as it is to believe now, once played the band's videos—Rocket also find themselves having to win back fans who were turned off by *RFTC*.

"I think people felt alienated by the last record because they weren't ready to just completely embrace the party," says Reis before being temporarily cut off by a mariachi trio that, at his request, plays a scorching version of "El





Reloj." "I mean, we pretty much put our money where our mouth was as far as like making a record that was completely live, totally subscribed to trying to create this party, fun atmosphere, you know? It's kind of like a dance party. We tried to idealize this dance party. I don't know, I mean, it was a bit maybe ambitious to think that people were going to completely surrender to our positive message, but it was so positive. It was so like trying to spread the goodwill through good times. I think it's something that everybody needs in one form or another, to have that community with other individuals."

Though *Group Sounds* probably won't be the record that convinces teenyboppers addicted to Britney Spears and *NSYNC that rock is cool—especially since there aren't any pop numbers a la "Break It Up" or "On A Rope"—it will most definitely appeal to old-school Rocket followers who wanted a tougher follow-up to *Scream*, *Dracula*, *Scream!*. *Group Sounds* is as explosive as it dynamic, and it's hard to imagine any other record this year coming close to matching its energy.

"We were really enamored with trying to get this like ghetto-blasted recording, but filtered through the sensibility of modern technology and having it sound in-your-face, and have all the right kind of equalization

that you want to have," explains Reis. "You know, just make it sound really alive and vibrant and exciting. That was kind of part of the inspiration for some of the recordings we did with Mario—and that was like, 'Okay, that's how we want this to be different from our other records.' But all of our records we try to do that. We always go in there with the intention of recording an electric guitar so that not only does it sound like it's gonna take off your head, but it also sounds like a real instrument being played by someone, and not a robot filtered through a computer."

Unlike most of the underground bands that signed to major labels in the mid-'90s and then found themselves homeless after mergers and acquisitions raised the Mendoza line to 1,000, Rocket From The Crypt asked to be let go by Interscope, who they felt had dropped the promotional ball with *RFTC*.

"It just became a nightmare," says Stamets. "They went from having like eight bands to like over 400. We would try to call them on the phone and they'd get back to you in three weeks."

"The leash got short," says Reis. "It was bad. I mean, there was a huge merger, and then everything just slowed down to like a crawl. There was no light at the end of the tunnel, and we just got fucked really hard."

"I think we'll do better on Vagrant," continues Reis, who runs his own label, Swami, with Long Gone John from Sympathy For The Record Industry. "I think we'll sell more records and we'll make more money, because we'll actually spend less on trying to sell records, therefore we'll be actually able to maybe recoup our advance for once. Here's a number: two million dollars. That's how much money we ended up being in the red with Interscope. That was their accounting of their expenditures on the band Rocket From The Crypt. I mean, for a major label to fucking make a poster, a two-color poster, costs like a million dollars. [Laughs.] It's sort of like the government or something—so much useless spending. People working at major labels are just like those people that are working on the side of the road who are never working, and just always fucking hanging out in the ice plant waiting for their foreman to come by and tell them to get back to work. I don't have a problem with major labels. I don't feel betrayed by them at all. What happened to us was not a worst case scenario. As bleak as it sounds, it really isn't. [But to get off the label] it took a year and it took 30,000 dollars in legal fees that we don't have—it totally fucked us even more. But in the end it's like, the day that we got off just felt so great. It was like, 'Fine, we can do this again.'"

Something else they can do again is tour—an integral part of the Rocket package. Their raucous performances are magical events that can reaffirm your belief in the power of rock 'n' roll. The band is both fun and funny, and has been known to inspire even the most timid concertgoer to leap into the swirling pit that inevitably forms in front of the stage. It's not an overstatement to say that Rocket From The Crypt are probably the best live band in the world.

"Recording's weird," says Reis. "It's like taking a photograph. It's a snapshot of a song. To me, it doesn't signify the song's life, because we play so much that it's the live version that I consider the real version."

And what should we expect from the band this time around?

"We're going to strip it down considerably," says Reis. "I think we're going to tend to be pretty chintzy on the props and the rock 'n' roll paraphernalia."

No matching outfits?

"I don't know," he says. "I don't think so. I think what I was going to suggest was that we all just cut off our pinkies, 'cause it's the ultimate bond. It's the ultimate symbol of unification—losing a digit. Just put everyone's in a jar together and put it on the bar right next to the pigs' feet and the eggs."

But seriously ...


"We're going to try to do primarily all-ages shows, which has never been a real priority on my agenda, because the band always seems to get so much of a better response in places where the majority of the crowd is inebriated," says Reis. "But people get older. Those people don't come out anymore, 'cause now they all have jobs and kids. They're grown-ups. Now is the time for Rocket From The Crypt to once again knock on people's doors, tell people to listen, you know? Preach the gospel and see who follows." 



Photo: Anonymous
Additional artwork: N.D.

Does Your Mother Know?

Five things you should never do in Tijuana that we somehow ended up doing (and lived to tell about):

1. Visit on Saturday night. If you've ever experienced the insanity on a Tuesday afternoon, you know what I'm talking about.

2. Drive your car into town. Every tour book, travel website and person with half a brain knows that you should never, under any circumstances, bring your car over the border, especially without buying Mexican insurance. It's very easy to park on the U.S. side and walk over, but Speedo told me to keep going, so I did.

3. Eat the food. Okay, so maybe they just say not to drink the water, but for some reason that warning makes me a little squeamish about eating the food. I suppose being a vegetarian restricted my access to anything potentially lethal, though I did consume several dairy products.

4. Let the singer of a rock band buy you the "house special" at a bar. The rum-based mystery beverage served up at Bar Nelson gave all four of us the power to simply mention an artist (e.g., Rush, Bob Seger, Journey) and then magically have one of their songs played on the jukebox.

5. Drive back over the border after indulging in muchas bebidas. Seven drinks over the course of a couple hours isn't that bad, unless you were sick as a dog and woozy to begin with. —Marc Hawthorne

Cursive EP in the Spring....Full-lengths from The Faint and Son, Ambulance in the Summer 2001

Oh Holy Fools

The Music of **Son, Ambulance**
and **Bright Eyes** - 4 Songs Each

Available on CD and LP

LBJ-34

releases available from bright eyes....

Lbj-34 CD - \$9 LP - \$9	Lbj-32 CD - \$11 LP - \$9	Lbj-30 CD - \$8.50 LP - \$8.50	Lbj-23 CD - \$11	Lbj-19 CD - \$11

Prices include US fourth class shipping - For international rates, please check the website
Secure credit card transactions available online at www.saddle-creek.com
Well-concealed cash, check, or money order payable to saddle creek
Check our website for releases from The Faint, Cursive, and Lullaby



Saddle Creek
PO Box 8554
Omaha, NE 68108-0554

He's no longer Malkmus in the middle. **STEPHEN MALKMUS**, the force behind seminal indie faves Pavement, has stepped directly into the spotlight with the release of his new self-titled solo record. After touring in support of 1998's *Terror Twilight*, Malkmus dissolved the band, got together with bassist Joanna Bolme and drummer John Moen, and made an alluring record that was completely on his own terms. Jon Pruett spoke with Malkmus about irony's entertainment value, Swedish reggae and jumping in front of speeding bullets.

Steppin' Out

I'm surprised to find Stephen Malkmus happy to talk about anything within the spectrum of music, his official "past" with Pavement, whether or not it's advisable to buy a horse (it's not) and how he's like the drummer for Matchbox Twenty. The subject we dwell upon most is his first solo record. This LP comes fairly fast on the heels of the recent announcement that Pavement is a nonfunctioning entity. There was much speculation over the title of the record last year. At one time, Matador had gone ahead and announced the title as *Swedish Reggae*, and that the band's given name would be The Jicks. Only a short time later, both titles were reneged; the record is now called *Stephen Malkmus*, and Malkmus has ditched the Jicks moniker in favor of his own name. I ask him about the name changes, curious if perhaps he had felt the possibility of retaliation from an unsympathetic Swedish reggae community.

"I just thought it was this absurd kind of meeting," he says. "I just couldn't imagine Swedes playing reggae. They weren't very big colonial expansionists. They weren't down in the Virgin Islands. The title went with this different cover sleeve that I was going to use where I looked a little more ABBA-esque and it was a little more 'funny' or something. Not that the way the cover is now is not unfunny, because it is my face on the cover."

He refers to the cover as being "a bit Jandek," but I'm curious if he wants to go for the iconic status of say, a Richard Ashcroft solo

record. "Well, my face is big, but I didn't want to look that good," he says. The different cover is what led to the name change, fearing that the album would be construed as "too Ween." A band he likes and respects, but he'll let Ween be Ween. As for The Jicks—well, the Jicks name is still inside the record, but in the end, Malkmus felt the need to "jump out in front of the speeding bullets that were coming and take them all."



PHOTO: MOSES BERKSON

Any gunplay should be minimal, and those who have appreciated Malkmus' use of odd couplets and unpredictable subject matter should be happy: Agamemnon, Yul Brynner, Turkish pirates, Dire Straits fans and shepherds that herd in real time are all treated here with flair and intelligence. The bass and drums come respectively from Joanna Bolme and John Moen, both chums from the homebase in Portland. Musically, the record is typically diverse—riffs aplenty are enhanced by flowing guitar lines, hand claps, analog squawks, pop songs, rural English-style ballads and even some fake steel drums. The parental record collection is embraced, but it is filtered through

Malkmus' skewed historical sketches, modern tales of love and Volvos and, on some tracks, real beauty.

The first single is the distinctly Cars-like and fairly straightforward "Discretion Grove," which runs contrary to the single-friendly pop sounds of such tracks as "Phantasies" and "Troubbble." The former is almost bizarrely poppy, with background vocals, faux marimbas and what sounds like a talking keychain.

Unavoidably, there is a definite Pavement feel to *Stephen Malkmus*, but there is something new to it; perhaps it's the sound of a man with more freedom to indulge his whimsy and Royal Trux-ish boogie. At one point on the record he appears to be actually channeling Brynner before dropping in with some guitar work that can only be called "chooglin'." But the stylistic lapses are brief, and the man who helmed the indie favorites of the '90s hasn't strayed too far from his scattershot, noisy pop roots. In fact, some of the songs have filtered their way down courtesy of the Pavement pipeline. The track "Church On White" was something that came up around *Brighten The Corners*; "Trojan Curfew" is in the same tuning as *Crooked Rain*, *Crooked Rain's* "Stop Breathing"; "The Hook" was presented during the *Terror Twilight* sessions, but remained unused because it was too "classic bar-band sounding." Indeed, this last track kicks off with a cowbell and a stride that is pure "Honky Tonk Woman."

This embrace of classic rock is something Pavement had flirted with in the past on such tracks as *Terror Twilight's* "Cream Of Gold" and earlier b-sides such as "Easily Fooled." Malkmus has always been straightforward about his admiration for such bands as Creedence Clearwater Revival and The Groundhogs, but for the most part, pure rock experiments have been something for the other kids. Did he feel any desire to deliver a straight narrative and kick out the jams, sans irony?

"I'm never going to be able to do the straight, y'know ... [begins singing in funny rock voice] 'Got a girl from Tokyo,'" Malkmus says. "That's going to be a little boring. You've got to twist it a little bit right now to keep people's interest, to keep your own interest."

Unsurprising from a man who attempted to inject a little Willie Nelson into the Greek-mythology-inspired "Trojan Curfew." These knowingly ironic juxtapositions of style, in contrast to the more restrained work on the last two Pavement records, makes one wonder if irony is just something that Malkmus can never get away from.

"I just think that's just entertaining to me," he says. "To me, that's funny. Or to me, that's cool. In some ways, I just thought it wasn't a bad time for a record that had this kind of stuff in it. No one else is doing it. No one else is doing it well. Plenty of people are trying to be angry or say how fucked up the world is. Plenty of people are singing about nothing, absolutely nothing—just mumble-gumble bullshit. To me, it's better than singing platitudes, rock platitudes, or singing about nothing. It's a really good avenue in the right hands. In the right hands, that's good songwriting. John Lennon was ironic and no one bugged him about it. Everyone thinks he's great."

But you can't help but wonder if Malkmus will be reaching new fans or just satisfying old ones. The congregation will remain converted, but what are the

chances of a newer audience that will buy the record not out of faithful obligation but a fresh interest?

"It can be done," Malkmus says. "Even from a Matador perspective—they're like, 'Look, we just have to let you know: A lot of people don't know who you are. There are a lot of Pavement fans who are Pavement fans and they know. But to other people, they don't know you from whoever the bass player is in Matchbox Twenty. No one knows his name. They kinda know the lead singer, but still ...'

I'm the equal of the Matchbox Twenty drummer trying to say, 'I've got this history of doing all this good shit. C'mon, buy mine instead of the new singer/songwriter on DreamWorks that we've never heard of before.'"

And given the new material's relationship to the old, can he now admit to having felt inhibited, as far as lyrical expression is concerned, while writing for Pavement?

"I was just trying to have the lyrics blend in

with how the music sounded, and I was just having a lot of trouble," Malkmus says of *Terror Twilight*, Pavement's final record. "This new stuff, I didn't have that trouble. I felt like, 'This is how it's going to be.' There was no talking about *what* it was going to be. This is what it was. I made the songs more in my range; that helped. There's only one, 'Jennifer & The Ess-Dog,' [which is actually titled 'Jenny & The



PHOTO: MOSES BERKSON


Ess-Dog'], where I was struggling to hit notes. That was great. I was prepared for some reason. I have like three or four funny narrative ones like 'The Hook' and 'Jennifer' and 'Phantasies'—ones where they are telling a sort of psychedelic story. I felt like I was progressing in that way because I wasn't just doing the vague mumbley-gumbley that was Pavement. In a good way, that's what Pavement is."

It's hard not to notice the present tense in which Malkmus addresses his former band, but I also can't help noticing his referring to the band as "I" and rarely, if ever, "we." Minutes later, however, he is explaining that he often refers to himself in the third person. "I do this thing," he says. "They always make fun of me in the studio. I used to do it in Pavement too. I call the guitarist 'that guy,' even though it's me. 'That guy is over there and he's going to play this part.' I don't know. I try to separate myself from it and create all these players. It's like a fantasy group. It's fun. I used to do that when I was a kid. I would make basketball teams and I would play these one-on-one things and I would pass it to myself and I'd be like Dr. J or I'd be the Sixers or something. It would always come down to the end and I would normally win, but it would be a one-point game or a foul. I'd do whole NCAA tournaments. Fully bracketed things. My teams would be like Arkansas or LSU. I apply that—that youthful boredom of having no younger brother to play with. It's helped me in this."

So what difference was there between recording with Pavement and recording this solo album? "There was precious little group interaction in Pavement ever, so what there was, I can't even remember," Malkmus says. "It was pretty similar for this record. There was us in a room getting the basic tracks and then I would do all the singing and the keyboards. We didn't have enough time in Pavement. I knew where it was going, so I'd zip it all out. This is pretty similar—we're doing the basics as a band, and then I was the guitarist and I'd do the high-end additions and have [Pavement drummer] Steve West or John do a little shaking or whatever. It just got built up to a level of satisfaction, to what I think is a done record. That's why it ends up sounding a little like Pavement still."

Will this post-Pavement brigade be storming through America and beyond? "Yeah, we're all excited to roll around some towns," he says. "[Pavement percussionist Bob] Nastanovich is going to be my tour manager in America, so that's cool. We'll have him. It's going to be weird, but we're going to do it. That'll be the weirdest part, more than making the record: the live shows. Maybe it'll be great. Maybe we'll be this really great rock band. We don't know yet. Maybe it'll just be, 'Oh, okay, the album is better.'"

There's no reason why the world shouldn't be ready for Stephen Malkmus. Pavement managed to make some of the most enduring, intriguing records of the '90s, all of which owe much to Malkmus' abilities as a songwriter and guitarist. As obscure lyricism is being buried under day-to-day vignettes about driving or parking cars, shouldn't there be hope for the literate, ironic guitar rockers out there?

"As long as my friends like it, I'll be happy," he says. "I think they do. Everyone is really happy for me. It doesn't seem like people are liking it because they should or something. I think some people don't want to like it and they still like it. So that's good." 

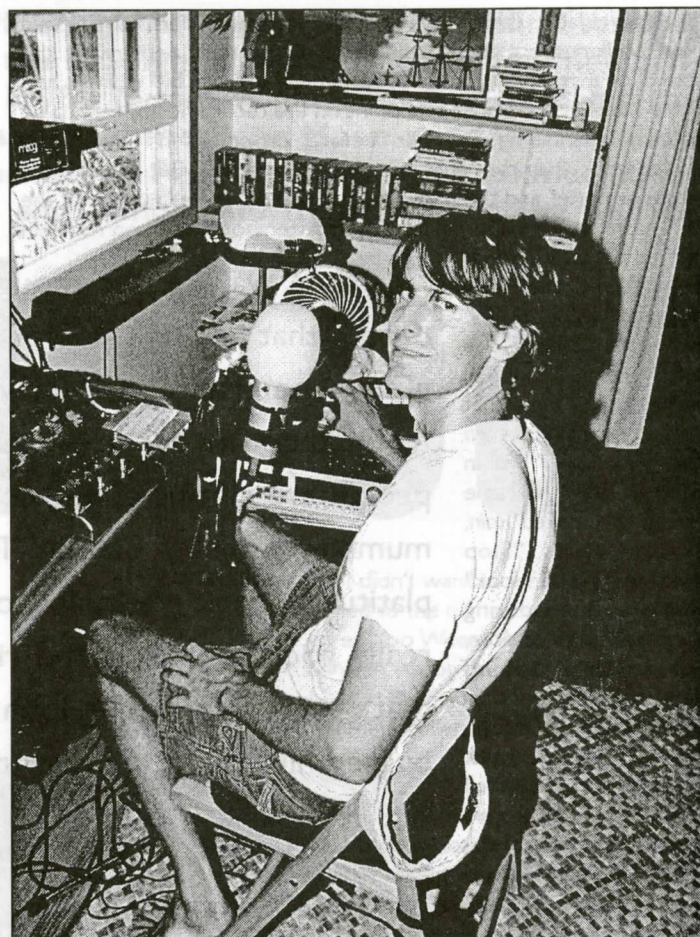


PHOTO: MOSES BERKSON

ramona the pest



RECIPE for indie folk:

A **healthy** dose of Leonard Cohen or Nick Drake inspired acoustic darkness

A **dollop** of pop sensibility. à la Liz Phair

A **pinch** of Geraldine Fibbers style angst

Whisk together. Heat until sonic. Consume and be soothed.

new CD "Little Knives" \$12 ppd

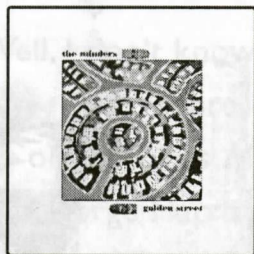
KingTone Records P.O. Box 9578 Berkeley, CA 94709
www.kingtone.com

**orange peels
so far**



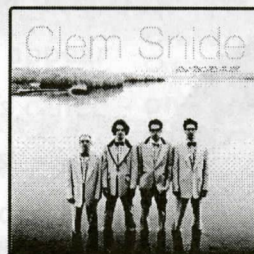
The newest full-length effort from this Californian band, So Far continues The Orange Peels tradition of classic, dreamy, 60's inspired guitar pop. Out now!

**minders
golden street**



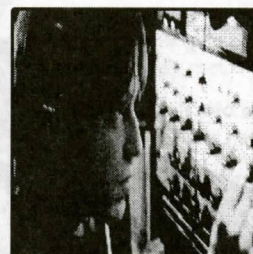
Packed with magical hooks and rich arrangements, Golden Street is the highly anticipated new album from these Portland faves. Out March 20th!

**clem snide
your favorite
music**



This fantastic album features "sad, country-ish ballads with mournful guitars & excellent lyrics," according to Rolling Stone magazine. Out March 20th!

**jason falkner
necessity:
the four track years**



A collection of previously unreleased rarities, demos and b-sides from power-pop master, Jason Falkner. Out April 3rd!

Download every spinART release for \$9.99/month through the spinART/EMusic Unlimited Subscriber Program. www.spinartrecords.com



contact us for a free catalog!
spinART records
PO Box 1798 NYC 10156
info@spinartrecords.com

the spinART online Super Store
www.spinartrecords.com/store.html

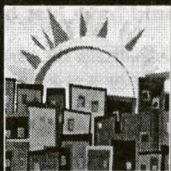
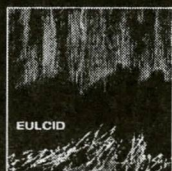


Apples in Stereo, Frank Black, Cinerama, Creeper Lagoon, John Doe Thing, Flashing Lights, Lilys, Lotion, Marbles, Poster Children, Small Factory, Wedding Present and more...

Try before you buy! Email info@spinartrecords.com for free downloads of spinART songs!



SECOND NATURE RECORDINGS P.O. BOX 11543 KANSAS CITY, MO 64138 WWW.SECONDNATURERECORDINGS.COM



the casket lottery "blessed/cursed" cdep \$5
kid kilowatt "hit single" 7" \$3.50
anasarca "discography 1994-1997" lp/cd \$8/\$10
the higher burning fire "in plain song" cd \$10
waxwing "one for the ride" lp/cd \$8/\$10
eulcid "the wind blew all the fires out" lp/cd \$8/\$10
the blood brothers "this adultery is ripe" cd \$10
reggie and the full effect "promotional copy" lp \$8
krakatoa "channel static blackout" cd \$10
the casket lottery "moving mountains" lp/cd \$8/\$10
the casket lottery "choose bronze" lp/cd \$8/\$10
reggie and the full effect "greatest hits '84-'87" lp/cd \$8/\$10
isis "the red sea" 8"/cd \$7/\$7
waxwing "for madmen only" lp/cd \$8/\$10
sharks keep moving "desert strings and drifters" cdep \$6
coalesce "002-a safe place" cd \$7
coalesce "functioning on impatience" lp/cd \$8/\$10
grade "separate the magnets" 10"/cd \$7/\$10
the get up kids/coalesce split 7" \$3.50
grade "and such is progress" lp/cd \$8/\$10



SCOTT KANNBERG VS. COLE MARQUIS

What happens when you take the gloves off two easygoing artists and stick them in a room with lots of beer? Let's just say the clean-up crew is still trying to get the blood out of the walls. Marc Hawthorne refereed the match between former Pavement guitarist/singer SCOTT KANNBERG and Snowmen leader/solo artist COLE MARQUIS while Peter Ellenby took care of the photographic evidence.

After spending most of your musical career playing in a band, it's sometimes difficult to take that great leap into the world of solo artistry. That isn't the case, however, for Scott Kannberg and Cole Marquis, both of whom seem revitalized by the projects they're conducting on their own. Kannberg—who spent the better part of a decade playing guitar and singing with seminal indie outfit Pavement—is in the process of putting the final touches on his first solo album, *All This Sounds Gas*. The album, which will be released under the moniker The Preston School Of Industry (release date and label TBA), was recorded with the help of bassist Jon Erickson (The Kinetics, The Moore Brothers) and drummer Andrew Borger (Tom Waits, The Moore Brothers). Marquis—who used to play with 28th Day (which also included Barbara Manning and Devil In The Woods Records

owner/DIW publisher Mike Cloward) and The Downsiders and still fronts Snowmen—is finally issuing his second solo LP, *Treasure Island Serenade*, which was recorded with some of the Snowguys and is being co-released by Devil In The Woods and Kannberg's Amazing Grease Records (which he runs with Oranger's Matt Harris). The intense and intimate record—which at times recalls Red House Painters, American Music Club and Belle And Sebastian—features some of the most beautiful, dreamy songs you'll hear this year.

Scott Kannberg: I really wanted to review that Steve Malkmus record.

DIW: Have you heard it?

SK: No. That's probably the only way I'd listen to it.

DIW: I should have just brought you a copy of it.

SK: No, I mean, that's the thing—I wouldn't have listened to it unless I had to review it or something.

DIW: Yeah, we've already assigned it.

SK: Everybody says that it sounds just like Pavement.

DIW: Yeah, it's pretty similar.

Peter Ellenby: Mike Cloward thinks it sounds like Jimmy Buffet. [Everyone laughs.]

SK: Somebody e-mailed me the lyrics, and yeah, I can see that. Well, he spent like three months in Hawaii, so that's probably why.

DIW: I think he went to Hawaii after he finished the record, because I think he did most of it in Portland with his new trio. Yeah, it just sounds a lot like poppy Pavement stuff—nothing really edgy.

“I’ve totally got a concept. Well, I don’t know if it’ll appear this way, but my concept is the triple record, and it’s called *All This Sounds Gas*. It’s a play on *All Things Must Pass*—the George Harrison record. The George Harrison record has 24 songs, and I was thinking about doing 24 songs. But I don’t know. We’ll see how it goes.” —Scott Kannberg

SK: That kind of surprises me, because I really thought he was going to go off and be self-indulgent or whatever.

DIW: There’s a couple kind of silly songs too, which I was surprised by considering the tone of *Terror Twilight*.

SK: Yeah, he doesn’t have the rest of us to kick around anymore [Laughs.] He’s happy. [Lowers his voice to sound like a tabloid TV reporter.] Or is he? [Everyone laughs.]

DIW: So Scott—you started recording your solo record at [original Pavement drummer] Gary Young’s studio, but ended up doing most of it somewhere else.

SK: We went out to Gary’s, and Gary—it just was kind of tough to kind of get everything sorted out. Gary was sober for like over a year—he totally had his shit together. But the day we got there I guess he wasn’t sober anymore. So nothing got done. There was like this huge drama about trying to get Gary well again. I went out there again and got about four or five songs tracked, and we’re gonna use like three of them I think. And then we just decided we didn’t want to do that anymore. I mean, Gary’s great—he’s got his shit back together again, but we went to this place Wally Sound. [Owner Wally Wojohowitz] used to have a place [in San Francisco] over in the Mission—I forget what band he’s in, but he used to do live sound for Camper Van Beethoven back in their glory days or whatever. His studio is in Oakland. It was great. We did like four days there—got 20, 24 songs recorded. We just powered through them all.

Cole Marquis: That’s great. So you’re going to pare it down, or you’re gonna release the double gatefold? [Laughs.]

SK: Well, no—see, that’s the concept. I’ve totally got a concept. Well, I don’t know if it’ll appear this way, but my concept is the triple record, and it’s called *All This Sounds Gas*. It’s a play on *All Things Must Pass*—the George Harrison record. The George Harrison record has 24 songs, and I was thinking about doing 24 songs. But I don’t know. We’ll see how it goes. I’m just doing all the overdubs on ProTools at this guy Jon Erickson’s. It’s just like a rehearsal space, and we brought the computer in there, and he’s got good mics.

CM: What kind of studio does Gary have? Is it still basically the same studio Pavement originally recorded in?

SK: No. His original studio was just this kind of suburban house in Stockton that was totally trashed, and it was in his garage. And like his laundry room was the control room. It was cool—it was great. But then he moved out to the country, and kind of built what used to be the garage, I guess, of this place into a really beautiful studio. His brother is like this big-time studio producer in New York, so he knew how to build a really state-of-the-art studio. But Gary was supposed to have this place built when we were going to do our *Crooked Rain* record, and nothing got done. So I ended up—Steve and I were in there trying to get it done, and it just sounded like shit. So nothing ever got done, and that was like the end of Gary. But his studio now—he’s got his shit together. He’s got ProTools out there, he’s got a digital board, and he’s got a nice tape machine. And a nice playing room. But the best thing about it is he’s got a big sliding glass door that overlooks the pool. He’s got a pool house that

you can stay in, and it’s out in the middle of the Stockton orchards.

DIW: How did you meet Cole?

SK: I don’t think we’ve ever really met.

CM: No, no. In passing I’ve seen you hanging out with Oranger and stuff, but we’ve never really met.

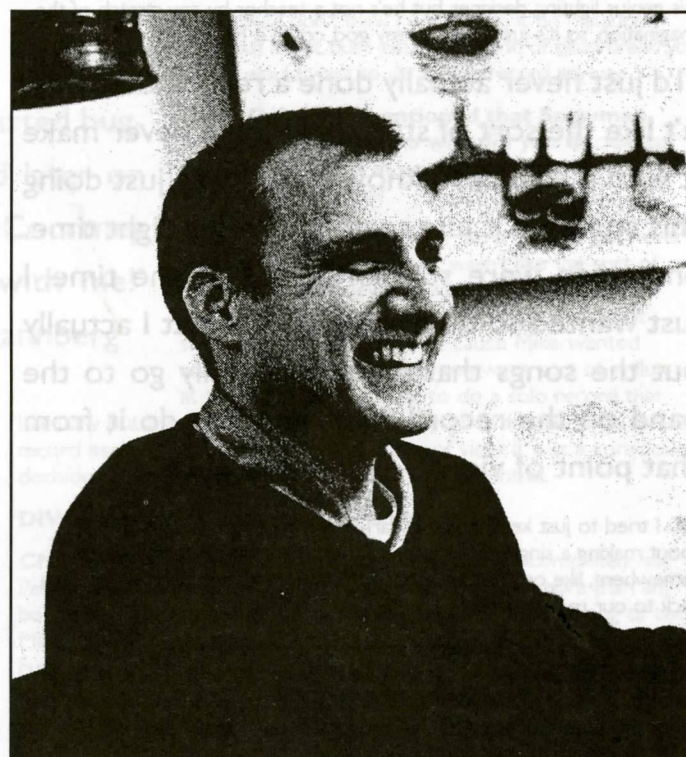
DIW: Were you familiar with Cole’s old stuff before you decided to release his new record?

SK: Not really that much. I’ve heard some of it, but I’d never heard your previous solo record.

CM: It’s hard to get your hands on it. [Laughs.] It’s not as readily accessible as Pavement, unfortunately.

SK: I mean, I knew the 28th Day stuff. I saw you guys a long time ago. I think it was—did you ever play at the Crest Theatre?

CM: Yeah, we did. You were at that show? Oh my god, that was a weird show. It was a punk-rock show. It was like five bands, and the guy at Clear And Distinct Productions, he used to do shows out of this weird warehouse place in Sacramento.



SK: Yep, I used to go there all the time. With the skate ramp?

CM: Yeah, the skate ramp. Club Minimal. This place was like this totally trippy, weird punk-rock club in Sacramento. Total warehouse district. It was like in a big roll-up warehouse basically, with a roll-up door. And we used to go down there and play. We played shows with weird like ‘80s kind of bands. San Francisco bands—Big City and Minimal Man, and all these kind of weird bands. But then he offered us to do this show at Crest Theatre, so we were totally psyched, and we were the opening band. And it was a total punk-rock show, and we were not a punk-rock band. We were like pop—‘60s pop-rock kind of band or whatever. So my amp blew like right away, before we even played. So I had to borrow an amp. Somebody—I think Operation Ivy or somebody was playing. I had to borrow an amp from this total punk-rock band. I totally didn’t know anybody. I was like, “Dude, you know, can I borrow your amp?”

SK: Was it Social Distortion?

CM: Them, or TSOL, or some band. But man, there were all these

skater kids and shit, and they were just screaming at us: "Fuck you!" And totally being dicks, and Barbara just totally was screaming at these kids. They were like, "You suck!" And she's all, "I suck a lot better than you!" It was brutal. I think just because Barbara was just so mean that they actually, you know—it turned out okay at the end.

DIW: So 28th Day was Cole's first band. Scott—was Pavement your first band?

SK: Pretty much. I mean, I had this other band with Steve called Bag Of Bones. That was like us after we graduated from high school or something—that summer we had this band. We had one show over here, and that was about it. Actually, I was going to school in Arizona, and that's kind of where I started—I mean, I didn't start Pavement, but I mean, it was like, I had this band called Pavement before. We played like two shows in Arizona. And then I got together with Steve later after I dropped out, and then we just kind of made Pavement. Just kept the name.

CM: Fellow dropout. That's always good. *[Everyone laughs.]* Music just got into my veins.

SK: I almost finished. I was like a semester away.

CM: I went for four years, but I was a horrible student. But I was a theatre major, and so we were just always at the theatre. Theatre classes are absolutely the worst, because they're like lighting class. This guy was this genius lighting designer, but he's not a teacher by any stretch of the imagination, so it's just like, "Oh my god, could it be any more boring?"

"I'd just never actually done a record that wasn't like the sort of stuff that would never make it with a band, you know? And I was just doing this stuff, and it just seemed like the right time. Snowmen were sort of in flux at the time. I just wanted to do a solo record that I actually put the songs that would normally go to the band on the record itself, and just do it from that point of view." —Cole Marquis

SK: I tried to just keep it going. Early Pavement stuff was really just about making a single really fast and then doing like a two-week tour somewhere, like on the East Coast or something. And then we'd come back to our regular lives.

CM: You guys did a number of singles before the first record. 'Cause I remember Barbara—the first time I ever heard Pavement was through Barbara. She had a couple of your singles, and she was like, "You've gotta check this band out." I guess that must have been really early on, like definitely before *Slanted And Enchanted*.

SK: I think we played a show with her, or she came to one of our early shows.

CM: She might have come to one of your shows, 'cause she was totally into you guys. And the singles I heard were very cool. And plus the packaging—I mean, that was a huge part of it too. The packaging was so cool.

DIW: I remember the first time I saw Pavement play. You opened up for Sonic Youth and Mudhoney at Castaic Lake near LA. I also remember Kurt Cobain came out and played an acoustic song too. But yeah, that was the first time I experienced the insanity of Gary.

SK: Oh god. Gary was legendary that day. Did you see when he jumped off the stage?

DIW: He jumped off the stage? I just remember seeing this crazy old man jumping onto the stage from the crowd, and I was like, "Somebody's gotta get that guy off the stage right

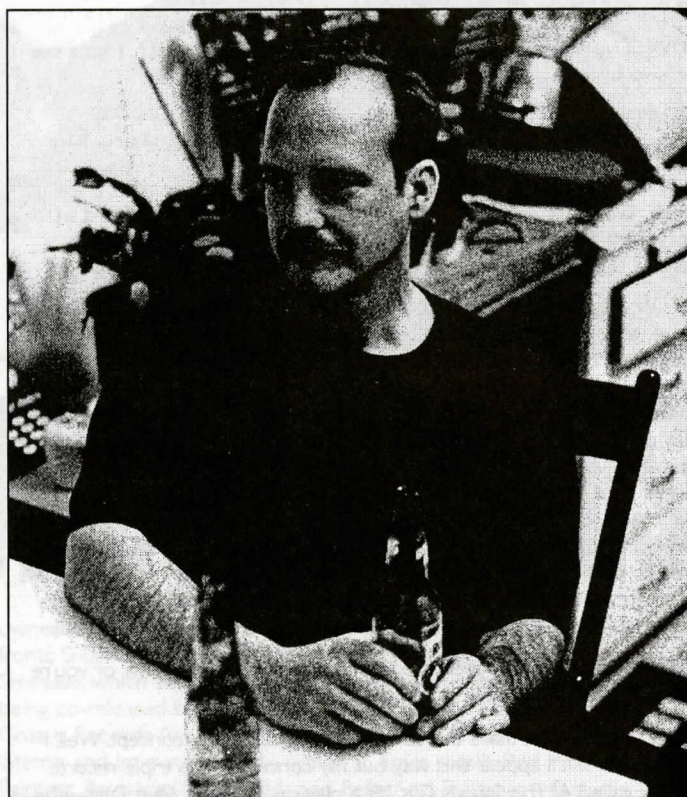
now, 'cause there are gonna be some problems. The band's gonna be pissed, 'cause that guy's going to do some weird stuff with their gear." Then slowly but surely the rest of you guys showed up, and you started playing with Gary.

SK: Yeah, he would always come out beforehand. But when Sonic Youth played he came out and jumped off the stage. But the reason he's legendary that show was because Courtney was there too. Courtney Love came up to Gary and started hugging him, saying like, "I love you Gary, ahhh." And later on Gary comes up to us and he's like, *[in a drunken voice]* "Who is this Courtney Long bitch? She seems to have fallen in love with me!" I mean, he had no clue who this was. Also, do you know who Todd Marinovich is? Do you remember who he was? The Raiders' quarterback?

CM: He's gonna be in the XFL. I think he's playing with the Demons.

DIW: He got busted for drugs, right?

SK: Oh yeah. He's a huge fuck-up. He was back in the trailer with everybody totally getting high. And this is when he was playing for the Raiders.



CM: Nothing new there.

SK: That show was amazing. That was just like pure entertainment.

CM: The first time I saw Pavement was at the Kennel Club, and Gary was classic. 'Cause I was waiting in line with all these people, and there's this fucking dude out there smoking a joint, leaning up against the wall, going like, "What are you people here for? You don't even know who the band is!" I actually smoked some pot with Gary out there in line, and then I went in and there he is. It was great. That was a great show. That was really fun.

DIW: Scott—your solo record will be the first time you've recorded an album that is made up entirely of your own songs. I mean, you had a couple songs on each Pavement record—

SK: Except for the last one. I was banned from the last record. *[Laughs.]*

DIW: Really? Did you show up for any of it?

SK: Yeah, I showed up. I was totally supportive of that record. I mean, I really don't think that record would have been that record without me

being there. But it was really weird, because we got this kind of big-time producer, Nigel [Godrich, who has worked with Radiohead, R.E.M. and Beck]. He was cool, but Steve played this weird dynamic with him where he just kind of wanted it to be his thing. We rehearsed before that to try and get the record together. We tried the record at Larry Crane's, and it just didn't really—Pavement never rehearsed, we never got together, and Steve never wanted to send tapes to people and say like, "Let's practice. Let's get together." 'Cause we all lived in separate places. You know, "Let's get together and practice and work this shit out." He was never really that way. But [with *Terror Twilight*] we kind of tried to do that, and it didn't work. Steve was like, "Well, let's get this producer." And we got the producer, and it was just like the two of them against me. [Laughs.]

CM: Did you ever really work with producers that much before that?

SK: No, not at all. It was just these engineer guys, and we pretty much just told them what to do.

DIW: So then having that much time off from being really active with a record, obviously you had a lot of ideas stored up.

"Courtney Love came up to Gary [Young] and started hugging him, saying like, 'I love you Gary, ahhh.' And later on Gary comes up to us and he's like, 'Who is this Courtney Long bitch? She seems to have fallen in love with me!' I mean, he had no clue who this was." —Scott Kannberg

SK: Yeah, I don't know. You know, I was fine with not doing my songs for the record. It was—I mean, I don't know how to say this without getting in trouble. [Everyone laughs.] From the very beginning I was always comfortable with Steve, like saying like, "I'll write my songs. If you want to sing them, you can sing them." I would rather have him sing them, because I was just shy and I didn't want to sing them. But as time went on, Steve was like, "No, no, you do your songs, I don't want to really have anything to do with them." So I did my songs, and it was good, because it pushed me to do my own songs. I would have never done my own songs. And as the last Pavement record came along, I kind of was in that same position where I was just like, "Okay, well, you know, you do your songs and I won't do my songs." And so I just wrote all these songs kind of around that time, just kept them, you know, storing up, storing up—I think it happened when I first got back from the last Pavement tour. I just started writing songs, and it just flowed from there.

CM: I'm glad you're putting all 24 on the record. Because I used to read about like Bruce Springsteen, and he'd go, "Well, we recorded like 96 songs for the new record, and we pared it down to 15." What happened to the 81 other songs?

DIW: Scott, some of Pavement's poppiest songs were written by you. Is that what we should expect on your solo album?

SK: Yeah, there's some real poppy stuff. But on the other hand, there's like some pretty retarded guitar freak-outs. Today I heard the Mission Of Burma on the radio. And I was just like, "Oh my god." So I got all my Mission Of Burma records out, and I was like, "Oh man, why didn't I make my record sound like this?"

DIW: Do you know who's putting it out?

SK: No. I don't know, we'll see. Drag City maybe. They've been interested.



That would be kind of cool. I don't think I want to do it on Matador. They're gonna want to put it out, but I just want a kind of clean break, you know? I don't think they would want to do a triple record anyway.

DIW: Cole, you mentioned that *Snowmen* haven't broken up. So why did you decide to take these songs in particular and make a solo record with them?

CM: Well, basically I'd never done that. I'd just never actually done a record that wasn't like the sort of stuff that would never make it with a band, you know? And I was just doing this stuff, and it just seemed like the right time, 'cause Mike wanted another record, and *Snowmen* were sort of in flux at the time. I just wanted to do a solo record that

I actually put the songs that would normally go to the band on the record itself, and just do it from that point of view. It was a conscious decision to try something solo and be more in control.

DIW: I assume it's not just you on there.

CM: No. *Snowmen* played basically on like—well, not completely, but Patrick [Main] plays on like four or five songs. He plays more than anybody else. Patrick is totally indispensable. I play drums on a song or two, Mike [Ehrhardt] plays drums on a couple songs. Kyle [Statham from Fuck, who helped engineer and mix the record] plays drums on a few songs. I play guitar—I play a lot of stuff, but Patrick plays all the keyboards basically. I didn't want it to be a totally solo record.

DIW: So the *Snowmen* guys were fine with you doing the solo record?

CM: Um, yeah. They were pretty fine about it. And Patrick was totally cool about it, 'cause he's such a mercenary to a certain extent anyways. His whole mentality is—he doesn't get bummed about that kind of stuff at all. I think the other guys were maybe a little bummed about it, but it's either you be bummed and not play at all or play on this and let's have fun.

SK: You've just got to be positive about it. There's no reason to be bummed about something like that.

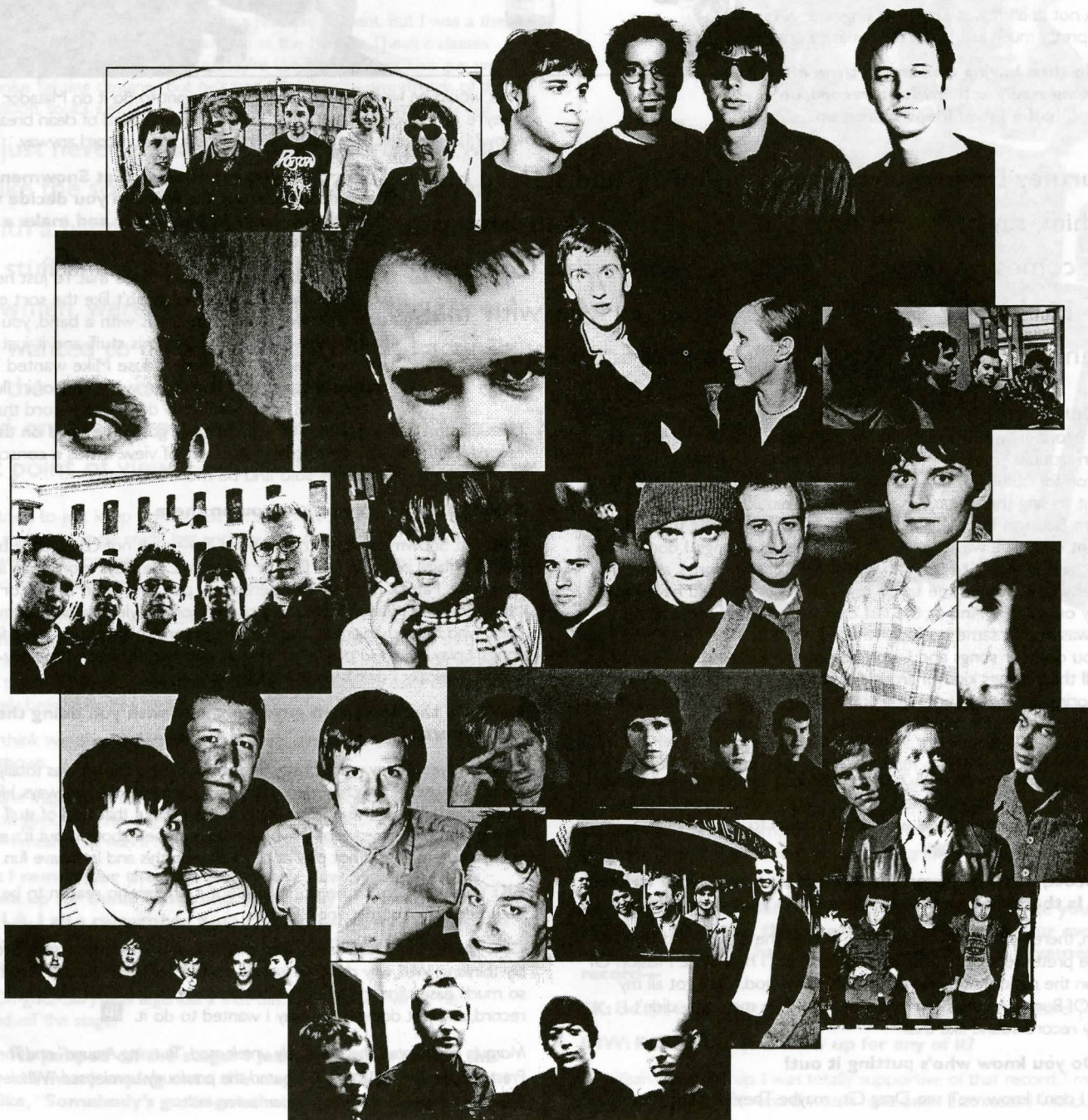
CM: There was a little essence of that. But, you know, they were probably thinking, Well, why don't we just do another *Snowmen* record? But it was so much easier for me to deal with, like just doing a Cole Marquis record, and just doing it the way I wanted to do it. ♪

Marquis contributed the previously unreleased "Running Around" and The Preston School of Industry contributed the previously unreleased "Whale Bones" to this issue's limited-edition seven-inch.

THE NEW FACES OF ROCK

The New Faces Of Rock

Contrary to popular belief, rock 'n' roll isn't dead. It's so alive and well, in fact, that it's hard to imagine a better time to be a music fan. Sure, commercial radio sucks and MTV is even worse, but if you're willing to dig a little deeper, you'll find that the underground is producing some of the most original and arresting music ever made. As the *real* new millennium gets underway, we've decided it's time to highlight some of the best new artists and labels working just below the radar. If you've read *DIW* before, you're probably familiar with many of the folks we've picked out as "The New Faces Of Rock," though there may be a few that you haven't heard of. There are inevitably many great up-and-coming bands that we left out (yes, we are aware that all the bands included are from America), but our intention here is to focus attention on artists who are doing something extra special, and who are likely to be influential in the years to come. Most of the bands and all of the labels we've covered here are independent—only Grandaddy, Creeper Lagoon and The Jealous Sound have signed to majors—which to us is further proof that indie rock is thriving in 2001. Come on everybody, it's time to rock.



The New Faces Of Rock

ON THEIR OWN TERMS

DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE have become one of the most popular bands in indie rock, and they've done it by writing dynamic and passionate pop songs and playing by their own rules. **Marc Hawthorne** spoke with singer/guitarist **BEN GIBBARD** and guitarist/producer **CHRIS WALLA** about Death Cab's hectic schedule, their soon-to-be-recorded third LP and the possibility of making it big in Japan. Photos by Peter Ellenby.



Death Cab For Cutie officially began in the summer of 1997 in Bellingham, WA, when Ben Gibbard decided to record some songs with his friend Chris Walla. The result, *You Can Play These Songs With Chords*—a dynamic, pop-fueled, eight-song cassette released by Elsinor featuring Gibbard playing every instrument—was well received in the Pacific Northwest, and soon after Gibbard assembled a proper band with Walla on guitar and backing vocals, Nick Harmer on bass and Nathan Good on drums. Since then, the quartet—which is now based in Seattle and features Michael Schorr behind the drum kit—has released two LPs on Barsuk, 1998's *Something About Airplanes* (co-released with Elsinor) and 2000's *We Have The Facts And We're Voting Yes* (as well as the recently issued *The Death Cab For Cutie Forbidden Love E.P.*), and has quickly become one of the most revered outfits in the American underground. In 2001, however, Death Cab For Cutie have their sights set on getting a bigger piece of the pie.

"This year's gonna be Death Cab going international," Gibbard excitedly proclaims from his parents' home in Bremerton, WA, where the family has just finished opening Christmas presents. The band has finally secured distribution deals overseas, which means it

will be touring outside of North America for the first time. "That's really exciting," continues Gibbard. "This will fulfill one of my indie-rock daydreams—to get somebody to fly us overseas to play some shows."

Death Cab For Cutie's growing popularity doesn't come as much of a surprise. They are first and foremost a pop band, but there's a certain edge to their music that makes it some of the most memorable material ever committed to tape. Everything they do—which includes both quiet, reflective numbers and more spirited rock tunes—is dizzyingly beautiful and thoughtfully executed. They're emotional without being emo, and they write songs that are catchy as hell without the aid of pushing all the standard pop buttons. The icing on the cake is Gibbard's pretty yet forceful voice that is perfectly suited to deliver his vivid portraits of forbidden love (in case you were wondering, the band was poking fun at Gibbard's favorite subject matter when it named its new EP).

If everything goes according to plan, 2001 will prove to be an extremely busy year for Death Cab. Following back-to-back U.S. tours that will keep them on the road through March, the band

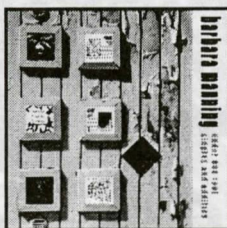
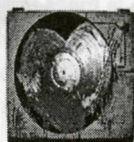
If you **MUST** buy CDs, **BOY** these...

STEVE WYNN

Here Come the Miracles

This all new double CD is Steve Wynn's Exile on Main Street, his Zen Arcade, and yeah, his Physical Graffiti. Which is to say that this could be Wynn's most resonant recording, the one the heads'll still be listening to ten years from now.

steve wynn | HERE COME THE MIRACLES



BARBARA MANNING

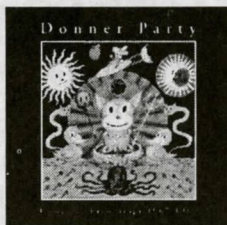
Under One Roof

Collecting the best of Barbara's numerous 7-inches and compilation tracks on one long and satisfying CD. Most of these songs have never been on CD before! Guests from Bettie Serveert, X Tal, Cole Marquis, and others!

DONNER PARTY

Complete Recordings

Before Quasi and his work with Elliot Smith, Sam Coomes was the guiding light of SF's Donner Party, who recorded three fine albums — all collected here on this magnificent 2CD set. Liner notes by Mr. Coomes himself!



MAP OF WYOMING

Trouble Is

From Greenwich Village to Joshua Tree and back again, The Map are a high-flying collision of California country and Brill Building pop smarts. Featuring the triple threat talents of Dale Duncan, Chris von Sneidern, and Tom Heyman...

TOM HEYMAN

Boarding House Rules

Ex Go To Blazes guitarist creates a marvellous lullaby for loveable losers on his debut solo release. With a voice reminiscent of the Man in Black, Heyman explores the soft white underbelly of hard living. Features Virgil Shaw of Dieselhed.



INNERSTATE RECORDS
Only high-quality *scheisse*
since the late 20th Century

www.innerstate.com



For a FREE catalog, send a S.A.S.E. to:
Innerstate Records, POB 411241, San Francisco, CA 94141

JAGJAGUWAR



MANISHEVITZ

ROLLOVER

Adam Busch creates backwoods pop on a taut canvas stretched between Arthur Lee's Love and the Red Krayola.

RICHARD YOUNGS

MAKING PAPER

Youngs is the king of the progressive minimalists, and on this full-length he sings and plays piano.

ONEIDA

COME ON EVERYBODY LET'S ROCK

Conjures up the spirit of a forgotten past, from the heaviness of Deep Purple and Blue Cheer to the attitude and dirty swagger of early Alice Cooper Band.

ROBERT CREELEY

ROBERT CREELEY

The internationally renowned poet reads a selection of new and previously uncollected poems.

CDs \$10 postpaid • www.jagjaguwar.com • 1703 North Maple, Bloomington, IN 47404

SECRETLY CANADIAN



ALASDAIR ROBERTS

THE CROOK OF MY ARM

CD/LP

DANIELSON FAMILIE

FETCH THE COMPASS KIDS

CD/LP

DAVE FISCHOFF

THE OX AND THE RAINBOW

CD

HAVERGAL

LUNGS FOR THE RACE

CD

SONGS: OHIA

GHOST TROPIC

CD/LP

CD \$10 LP \$9 post paid!
1703 North Maple Street Bloomington, Indiana 47404
www.secretlycanadian.com info@secretlycanadian.com

will begin making demos in April, record its third full-length in May, and then tour Japan for a week. After some much-needed rest and relaxation in July and August, Death Cab hope to visit Europe in September, release the album in October, and then do America all over again. It's easy to become exhausted just thinking about it all, but Death Cab are staying sane by keeping their priorities straight—simply put, they're focused on what got them here: the songs.

"Right now I have maybe nine or 10 songs in four-track mode," Gibbard says. "I think things are coming together really well, and I think we're all really excited about this third record. I think it's going to be a lot different—a step away from what has been Death Cab stuff. There's some songs so far that are really a lot more rockin', and some songs that are a little bit more angular than stuff we've been doing. I think people are going to either really like it or they're gonna be kind of turned off to Death Cab after they hear this record."

Is it really going to be that much of a departure?

"Well, you know, we're not going Radiohead *Kid A* on anybody's ass," Gibbard clarifies. "I think that there are certain elements of Death Cab, musically, that I'd like to try to grow out of rather than just kind of wallow in. I think tempos are one thing that I've been trying to—there's definitely like a certain meter to a lot of Death Cab songs that I'd like to try to branch out of. That's a pretty basic one. Lyrically I'm trying to avoid certain words and phrases that I've totally drilled into the ground. And also trying to take things away from writing kind of forbidden-love-type songs. Like very girl/boy love songs. I'm trying to address some larger subject matter. Not like, [sings melodramatically] 'Pollution's killing us!' But just kind of trying to grow as a writer out of 'woe is me' type of songs."

Gibbard isn't the only member of the band who is making a concerted effort to change his ways. Walla, who has engineered and produced all of Death Cab's material at The Hall Of Justice—which until just recently has been the name given to whatever room the band happened to be recording in—admits he has a hard time listening to his past work. In fact, he says the only album he's recorded that he still enjoys listening to is The Revolutionary Hydra's *The Antiphony* (a delightfully quirky pop record recently released by Elsinor that includes appearances by Walla, Gibbard and Good).

"I don't dislike *We Have*

The Facts, I really like the record," explains Walla from The Hall Of Justice's new permanent residence, which happens to be the same studio that housed Reciprocal Recording (where many of the most popular grunge albums were done, including Nirvana's *Bleach*) and John And Stu's Place (where Built To Spill, Bikini Kill, Low, Unwound and many other notables spent time). "I just can't listen to it. It's

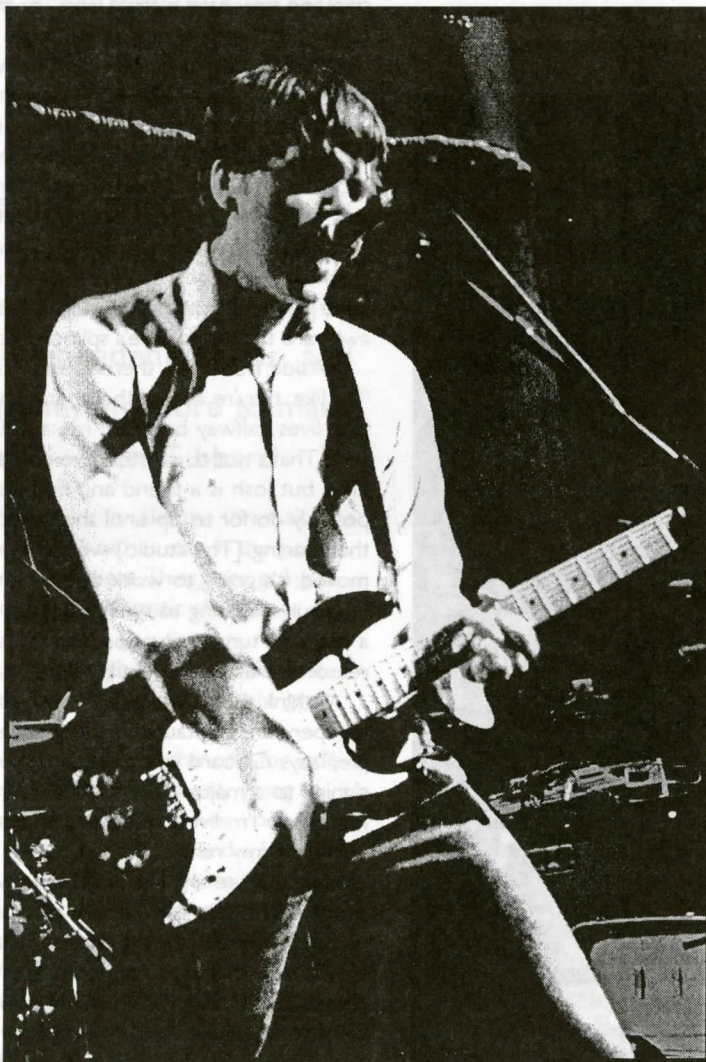
"We're all really excited about this third record. I think it's going to be a lot different—a step away from what has been Death Cab stuff. There's some songs so far that are really a lot more rockin', and some songs that are a little bit more angular than stuff we've been doing. I think people are going to either really like it or they're gonna be kind of turned off to Death Cab after they hear this record." —Ben Gibbard

really weird, 'cause when I got done with it, there were all these things that totally bothered me about it. And I listened to it a couple weeks ago, and now there's a whole different set of things that bother me about it. Like the shift from one place to another—all the things that bothered me to begin with were really picky and

detailed, like little places where something doesn't fade quite naturally or I was a little late punching something out or there's an obvious color change from here to here. That sort of thing. And now all the stuff that I hear is ... for the most part it's all about energy. It's about how the energy translated from what was being played to the final mix. And I'm kind of overcareful in that respect. I tend to favor precision over energy a lot of the time, and that's something that I'm trying to work out."

Though the band is known for its boisterous and powerful live performances, its records have tended to be relatively more subdued. *Something About Airplanes* and *We Have The Facts* have their fair share of big rock songs, but in general the band has favored restraint in the studio.

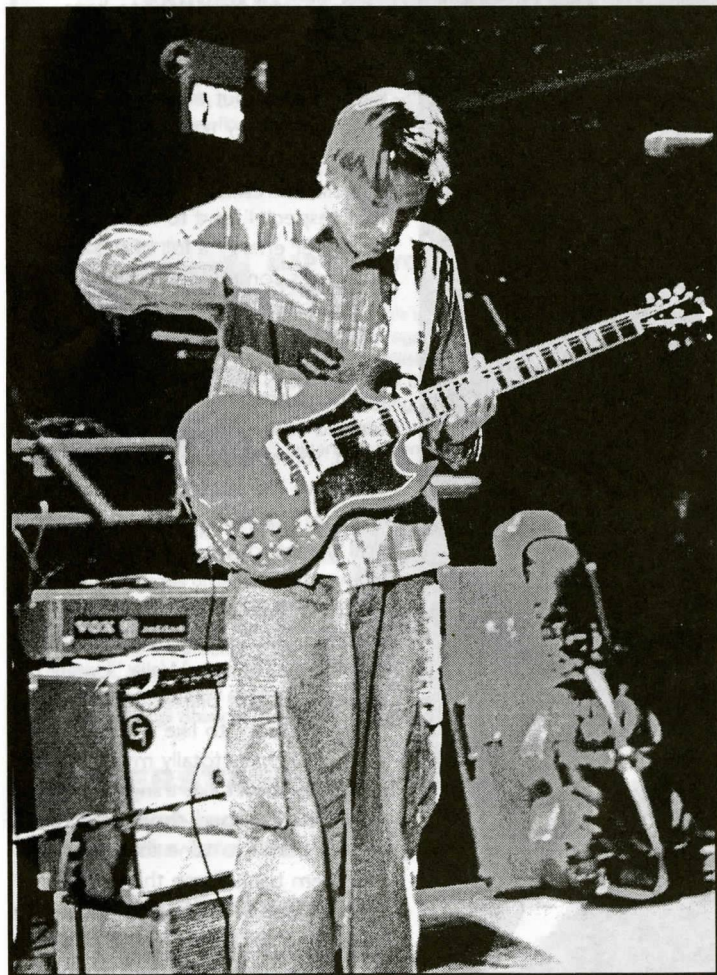
"I can take all the blame or credit for that, depending on how you look at it," says Walla. "I would say it's probably blame. Some people really seem to like it—I don't get it. But that's totally my doing. Just as a rule I don't like things that hurt my ears—like loud, shrill, distorted guitars. I tend to tone them down, pull them back. Same thing with cymbals. The rock songs end up being kind of dark and kind of a little bit mellower than they maybe



could be or should be. And I'm learning how to negotiate that a little bit better. I think having a second pair of monitors actually really helps, which is something I'm discovering for the first time too. But a lot of it's just learning to let go a little bit and not be such a control freak, and just like if something's a crazy noise, just letting it be a crazy noise and not trying to fuck with it until it's something that's pretty and clean."

"In talking to people that like our band, it seems like there's definitely two experiences," says Gibbard. "Listening to the record, everything is a lot more lush, and it's kind of easy to soak into it. And then the live shows are obviously more of a rock experience. I guess I've sort of wanted to have some rock stuff on there, but it's just kind of come out naturally. This burst of song-writing that's happened in the last half of the year has been, I think, maybe due in part to sharing a practice space with Juno [laughs], and like being friends with those guys."

"I think that having the new studio up and running and having as much time that we're going to have to do it is going to give us the opportunity to capture the songs the way they need to be captured," continues Gibbard. "With *We Have The Facts*, me being the drummer and having a lot of things on my mind, I think a lot of the performances on that album are really reserved. Which I think makes for a nice feel on the record, but I don't think was necessarily what we had in mind when we went in to record it. So when you listen to the record you have this reserved, kind of more lush sound, but when you go to a live show everybody's kind of making noise and having a good time. I think that because we've yet to really accomplish that, that's going to be a big goal in the recording session."



Songs that need to really be a full-blown rock experience like we have them live need to be recorded that way, while the songs that are really lush need to be lush like they always have been."

In addition to writing great songs, another impressive part of the Death Cab equation has been the DIY approach they've taken to their career. Though they're by no means rich men, they've proven that if you put out excellent records and you're willing to hit the road, people will come. (According to Josh Rosenfeld, who runs Barsuk, *Something About Airplanes* has shipped 12,000 copies, *We Have The Facts* has shipped 19,000, and the *Forbidden Love E.P.*

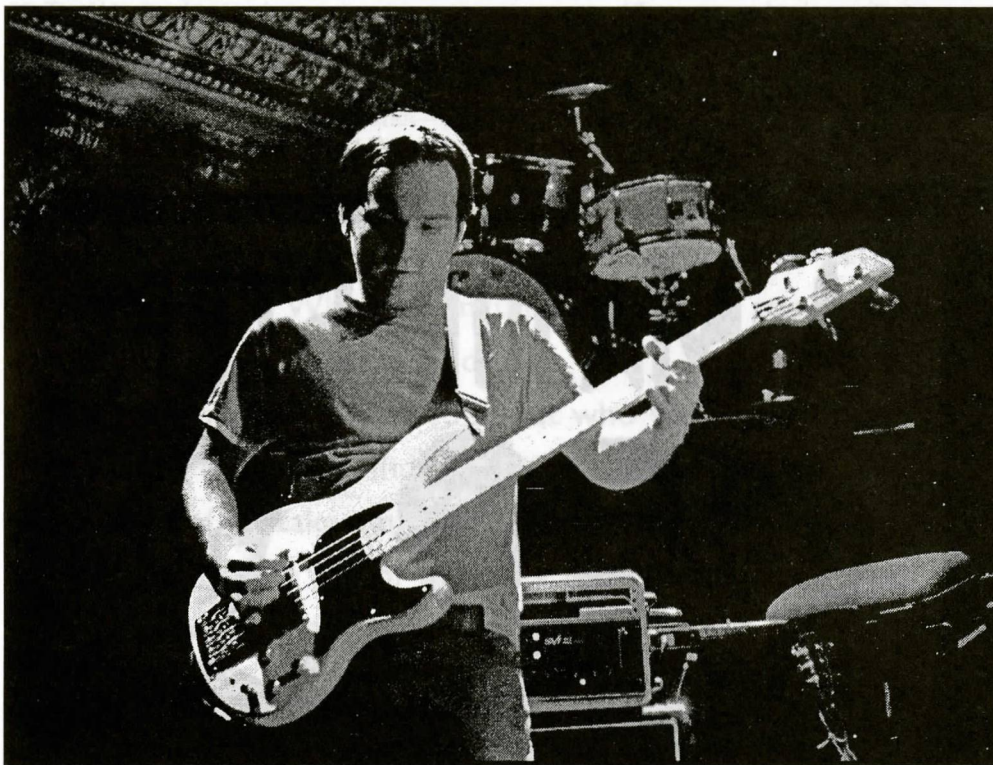
"Certainly we would sell a few more records if we were on Jade Tree. Certainly we would be a little bit higher profile, but it almost seemed to me—I was the hedging voice in the Jade Tree versus Barsuk sort of argument. I was the one who said, 'No this really isn't something we should do.'" —Chris Walla

has shipped 8,500.) They've been approached by bigger labels—most recently Jade Tree—but Death Cab have made the decision to stick to their guns.

"With Jade Tree—those guys are great and they run a super-tight ship, and they have a great label," says Walla. "But there was no real reason—it was almost a lateral move from Barsuk. Certainly we would sell a few more records if we were on Jade Tree. Certainly we would be a little bit higher profile, but it almost seemed to me—I was the hedging voice in the Jade Tree versus Barsuk sort of argument. I was the one who said, 'No this really isn't something we should do.' I felt really bad about it for a while, 'cause everybody else was really gung ho on it. But it just seemed to me like I was—I don't know, being that everything that we as a band have done from pretty much the word 'go' has been exactly on our own, and that that hasn't gone wrong for us, that moving to Jade Tree would be sort of an awkward thing. Jade Tree's split isn't as good Barsuk's is either."

"Aside from that, there are the other things," continues Walla. "It's like, they're across the country, which is kind of a drag. I mean, Josh lives halfway between me and Ben, and we can call him anytime. That's not to say that we couldn't call the Jade Tree guys anytime, but Josh is a friend and he's just done everything he could possibly do for us up until this point, and I don't see any sign of that waning. [The studio] would never have happened if we had moved. It's going to work out really well for us, but I think in the long run it's going to work out well for the label as well. We are in a really fortunate situation, and it just doesn't seem like there's any reason for us to move anywhere."

"I think that Chris put it best—it's like our position went from independent to staunchly independent in the eyes of a lot of people," says Gibbard when asked if the band would ever consider signing to a major. "And I feel very strongly about that as well. Right now I'm living out a dream that I get to, at least for the time being, pay my rent doing this, which is all I've ever really wanted. And I can't see any sacrifice being worth it at this point to all of a sudden have a larger amount of money in my pocket. It's just not worth it. There's nothing that somebody could offer me that would be worth signing a contract for. 'Oh, now I have 100,000 dollars in my pocket. Oh wait a minute—15 percent of that just went to my lawyer and my manager and I have to pay taxes, and now I made the same amount that I would have made in a year,



"I imagine what we've accomplished to date would have taken so much longer if it was even 10 years ago, just because of the Internet. So I think, if anything, the state of indie rock couldn't be better. Because there's so many free resources to use to get exposure, and I think that's what's really terrifying major labels, just because independent bands and labels don't need big money anymore to make a career for themselves." —Ben Gibbard

and I'm never going to see another check for like the three albums we've signed for. It's crazy. I think we'd all rather stay in the position where we are and just not rock the boat. Things are going so well for us, there's no reason in making any drastic changes to our operating philosophy."

Gibbard admits that the popularity of the Web has allowed his band—as well as other fiercely independent groups—to grow without the help of The Man.

"The Internet has opened up so many more channels for independent bands and labels to get exposure that it's only going to get better," he says when asked about the state of indie rock. "And it's one of the main reasons that a label like Barsuk and a band like us can do as well as we've been doing, because of communication via the Internet. The fact that you can hear our name somewhere, and somebody can just type it into a computer and all of a sudden you've got everything you'd ever want to know about us, and there's free music to download and pictures and when we're going to be playing. It's such a valuable resource to have as an independent musician. I imagine what we've accomplished to date would

have taken so much longer if it was even 10 years ago, just because of the Internet. So I think, if anything, the state of indie rock couldn't be better. Because there's so many free resources to use to get exposure, and I think that's what's really terrifying major labels, just because independent bands and labels don't need big money anymore to make a career for themselves."

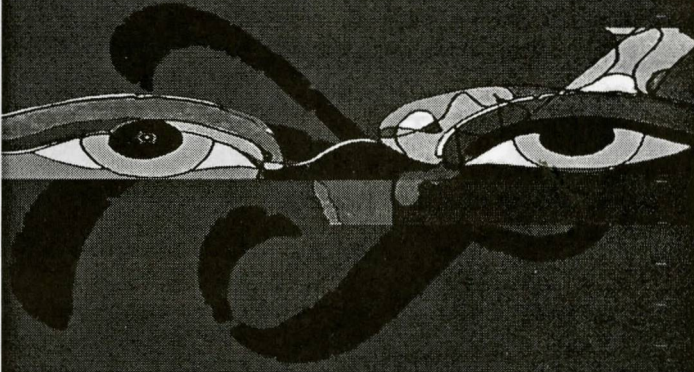
It seems that as long as each of the guys can stay healthy and remain in one piece—something they had a hard time doing in 2000 (Walla broke his foot, Harmer was left temporarily blind due to a freak boating accident, and Gibbard beat them both by breaking his arm and coming down with a harsh stomach bug that forced him to cancel a third of the band's fall tour)—they're looking to have the best year of their career yet.

"*The Facts* is doing better than I ever would have imagined," admits Gibbard. "If in the next year or so it cracked 20, it would absolutely blow my mind. It's great. It's really nice to know that we're doing something that

people are finding out about relatively organically. It's a dream come true for all of us. We're having a great time and trying not to take anything for granted." Ψ

HOPEWELL

The Curved Glass



"Sublime, Stabbing psychedelia...buffered by a sweet, off-kilter romanticism...Hopewell have located the spot where the personal and universal intersect, rendering each moment both introspective and transcendental...weaving their own very special magic." - NME

Priapus

Also out now:
 whip "song song" cd
 planetarium "age of anxiety"

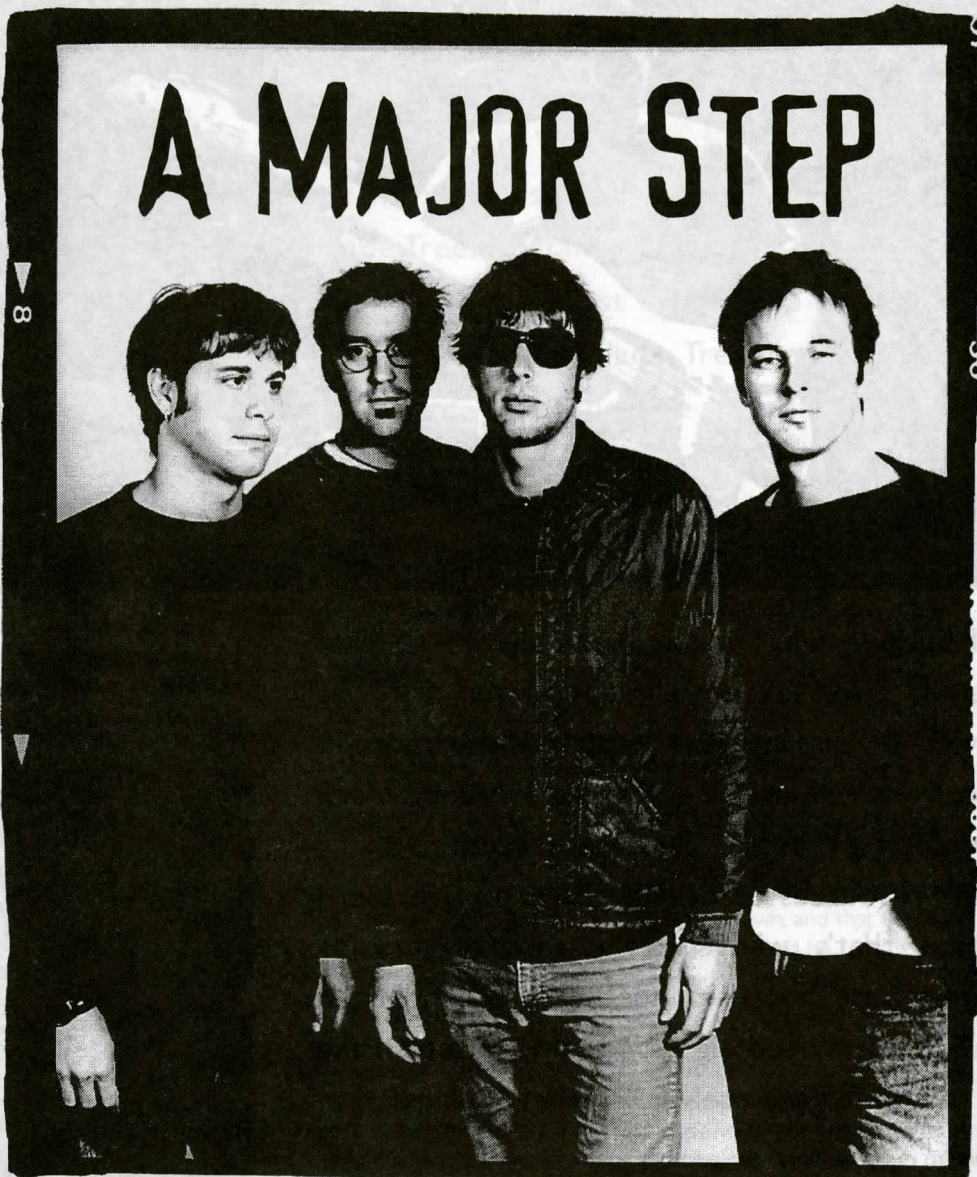
On Sale Now

priapus.com

www.indium.com/hopewell

The New Faces Of Rock

After what seems like a million years, San Francisco's **CREEPER LAGOON** have finally finished their sophomore LP, *Take Back The Universe And Give Me Yesterday*. Though it definitely sounds like a major-label record—DreamWork's money aided in making the production slick and sturdy—*Take Back The Universe* is a passionate and thoughtful recording. Nobody's saying Creeper are the next Nirvana, but we can all hope and pray that their songs will make it to the commercial airwaves and help usher in an era where interesting and intelligent bands are promoted to the masses. Chris Slater spoke with singer/guitarist **IAN SEFCHICK** about working with well-known producers, being overwhelmed by The Beatles and what it's like to fuck indie rock. Photos by Peter Ellenby.



During a recent interview, Ian Sefchick, singer/guitarist for San Francisco's Creeper Lagoon, summarized the shift in his band's music with three simple words: "Fuck indie rock."

The group—Sefchick, guitarist/singer Sharky Laguana, drummer David Kostiner and bassist Dan Carr—has indeed given indie rock the big "fuck you" on its major-label debut, *Take Back The Universe And Give Me Yesterday* (due out April 17th on DreamWorks). The album, which features soaring, epic, sing-along pop songs (including "Chance Of A Lifetime," "Up All Night," "Dead Man Saloon" and "Hey Sister") as well as some more subdued but equally dreamy numbers (such as "Cellophane" and "Naked Days"), proves that the band's songs are well-suited for big production. Creeper, who have long been considered the indie-rock darlings of the San Francisco music scene, haven't completely ditched their past—in spite of the changes, *Take Back The Universe* is still the distinctive product of the band that made such a splash with its wonderful first LP, 1998's *I Become Small And Go*. But the new record is more infectious and energetic, and it simply sounds huge, making I

Become Small And Go look like an awkward freshman book report next to this year's masterful senior thesis.

DIW: *Take Back The Universe And Give Me Yesterday* is full-on rock 'n' roll. It's much more energetic than your last album.

Ian Sefchick: Yeah, well, we toured with Rocket From The Crypt.

DIW: You think that had any effect on it?

IS: Yeah, we learned a thing or two.

DIW: Didn't you write these songs a while ago?

IS: Some songs were written a while ago, and some songs were written more recently. It was written over the course of, I dunno, three years or something. During the time it took to make the record there were always some new songs with the old songs. I mean, it took so long to make—some of those songs are old.

DIW: How long did you spend in the studio?

IS: That'd be hard to say, because we spent time in so many different studios. We've spent time in five or six studios over the course of a year. We did some writing in Stockton, and it was our dream to be able to make our own record there, but then we weren't that productive. We were getting cool sounds—you know, we could've made a really cool-sounding record. We could've done something ...

"We realized that we had an opportunity to go to 'recording college.' You know, 'Do you want to work with Jerry Harrison?' 'Sure.' Whether anything would be good that would come out of it or not, we didn't know. But we learned so much, and learned about who we are and what we're doing and what kind of music we want to make. We made a lot of mistakes, and we did a lot of cool things too. I think we made a lot of mistakes that we learned from, which is what happens in school."

but the thing was that we realized that we had an opportunity to go to "recording college." You know, "Do you want to work with Jerry Harrison?" "Sure." Whether anything would be good that would come out of it or not, we didn't know. But we learned so much, and learned about who we are and what we're doing and what kind of music we want to make. We made a lot of mistakes, and we did a lot of cool things too. I think we made a lot of mistakes that we learned from, which is what happens in school.

DIW: Did Jerry Harrison produce most of it?

IS: Not really. I would say he produced more than the other guys that we had work on it. He did maybe five or six songs, I think.

DIW: Who else did you work with?

IS: A guy named Greg Wells, Dave Fridmann [Mercury Rev, The Flaming Lips, Luna], and another guy named Mark Trombino [Drive Like Jehu, Jimmy Eat World, Rocket From The Crypt]. So those four.

DIW: Was it an overall positive experience with all of them?

IS: Yeah, it was very positive working with them. Like I said—the whole school thing. DreamWorks gave us a lot of freedom. We did these songs, and it happened that Jerry had another project coming up, so we could only finish a certain amount of songs. So we were like, "Hey, we need somebody else now," so they're like, "Okay, here's a bunch of people." Right after Jerry we went to Fridmann because Fridmann, in our minds, was the opposite of Jerry's style. I mean, Jerry was very professional—maybe a bit more conservative than you'd maybe think. And Fridmann, to us, was just the complete opposite. I mean, Fridmann let us do a lot ourselves. I was like, "Hey, I wanna put three mics on this amp." And he'd say, "Okay, go ahead, dig them out." So it was two different things, two different experiences, two different frames of mind. We were a little bit more sober with Jerry and a little more fucked up with Dave.

DIW: This record seems a lot less indie rock—what's up with that?

IS: I just want to make some money, man. I just want to make money, get my house and get my Lexus, and

be done with it as soon as I can so I can make music in my bedroom and not have so much pressure and freak out about it. So if one of those songs hits the radio, I'm gonna be happy.

DIW: Do you think the San Francisco scene is heading that way too?

IS: I don't think there's a scene in San Francisco anymore. I mean, what bands are good here? Just a handful. There's nobody to go to anybody's shows—there's nobody new coming out, and if they're new they don't get to play anywhere. They don't get to practice either. 'Cause there's no way anybody with any soul—which means you ain't makin' no bread—can afford a practice space to play in. So fuck it. Move to Portland or something.

DIW: Yeah, but do you think there's a trend where bands are moving away from playing indie rock and just playing rock? I mean, you guys definitely don't sound like an indie-rock band anymore.

IS: I think more about indie rock when I put on clothes in the morning than when I'm writing music. In music I want to strive to play things really well and sing things really well because I think you

can communicate to more people that way. You know, some things are great when you write them on a four-track, and there's this song, and it just has this feeling to it, and you try to do it in the studio and it loses it. But the song's still there—more people might listen to what you're saying in the song even though you've lost some of the soul of it. So the trick is to know your instrument and voice so well that just making four-track music like that, you're doing that in a larger arena. You're still communicating your soul and stuff—it's just easier to make it more accessible to people because you have better skills.

DIW: Were any of the producers helpful in doing that kind of thing?

IS: Only in doing takes over and over again. I think producers hinder your soul more than free it. Because they're there to keep it together, and I think music is something that needs to be blown apart. But



they're also there for a good reason, because the structure keeps you focused. For fucked-up people, sometimes you need that.

DIW: Who do you think has influenced Creeper most of all? Or maybe just you as a songwriter?

IS: You know what's funny? I was thinking about this the other day—in a lot of my chord structures and stuff, and the melody, The Spinanes. That record *Manos*. And definitely My Bloody Valentine. And then, I don't know. Later on in life, within the last five or six years, you know, The Beatles and Zeppelin, because I didn't really get into that in my teenage years. I was more into Squirrel Bait and Butthole Surfers and Negativland and all that shit. Which is really good, because you listen to that when you're learning how to make music—you're like, "Oh, I can do *anything*—anything goes. I don't have to be writing songs perfectly, like 'Dear Prudence' or 'Black Dog,' you know?" You're like, "Fuck, I'm gonna do art. I'm gonna get on this four-track and just lay down a beat and have like two delay pedals on my guitar. Then yell 'Pork roll egg and cheese' on it!" But as I get older, I mean, I should've never started listening to The Beatles. Of course, I've always heard The Beatles while growing up, but I didn't buy *The White Album* until I was 23 or 24 or something. Then I really listened to it, and it was like, "Holy shit!" Once I started listening to that I was like, "Fuck, I suck." My songwriting went down from there. [Laughs.]

"I think producers hinder your soul more than free it. Because they're there to keep it together, and I think music is something that needs to be blown apart. But they're also there for a good reason, because the structure keeps you focused. For fucked-up people, sometimes you need that."

DIW: You can't really get bummed out about not writing like John Lennon.

IS: The thing is, they were just writing how they wanted to write. And as much as people go, "You should be yourself, and do just what comes out of you," that's probably the hardest thing to do. There's always going to be some influences, always going to be something like, you just heard *OK Computer* in your car and you go to try to write something and suddenly you're singing long notes. And you're like, "Fuck! I don't want to be like them." But your own stuff is never, like, "right." "Cause it's not like somebody else, it's not popular; it's not worth it. You get some chord change going and you sing some melody over it and you're like, "Eh, that's not good enough." But in your youth you would've been like, "All right, sweet! Now I'm gonna put in this loop, and do it eight times over again." You know what I'm saying? It's sort of like when a baby is first born, it has no prejudices, no anger—it all gets shoved into his brain as he gets older.

DIW: There's a lot of extra stuff going on in these songs. Do you have any plans to bring additional people on tour?

IS: We're actually looking for a keyboard player. We've had it so Sharky's sitting there playing guitar, keyboards, and a sampler on it with his feet. We'd only do that maybe one every five shows because some shows are just like, "Fuck it—let's get up there and rock." We didn't want to take the huge keyboard in and set the sampler up. So we never practiced enough that he could actually do it all flawlessly. We played a show with Oranger and Carlos! not too long ago at Slim's. Actually, my roommate Patrick Main, who plays keyboards a lot with Oranger, was playing keyboards with them and it just fuckin' blew me away. I was like, "Wow!" But Patrick has a job that he really loves, so he's not gonna go on tour with us or anything.

DIW: Speaking of the San Francisco scene again, did you guys get shafted when Downtown Rehearsal [which served approximately 500 bands] closed down last fall?

IS: No. Right after that we kind of had our own thing going on in our practice space. We were in another place that was owned by some of the same guys who ran Downtown—actually, it was just a couple blocks over. There were some kind of squatter-type tenants living upstairs above us, and they wanted the whole practice space out of there, so they went through some legal battles. Eventually they closed down part of it, though luckily we were in the other part. And then the fire inspectors came and the practice spaces didn't have vents in them, so they've been closed down for months while they're installing these things. We've got a lot of shows coming up, and we've just been kind of bumming practice spaces from our friends. Which are ridiculously expensive—a room the size of your kitchen is going for like 975 dollars a month, so you're packing four bands in there. You've got three square feet to rock out in.

DIW: Everybody's standing on amps.

IS: Yeah, there's a drum set in each corner.

DIW: A lot of interesting bands have been getting squeezed out of San Francisco for a long time now.

IS: Yeah, it's nobody's fault but ... the yuppies. I dunno. I'm all bitter. [Laughs.] I mean, you come to San Francisco because there's culture, and then the people who come here just drive the culture out. I've only lived here for about eight years myself, so I'm not like some native or something that has any authority, but I know when I first moved here there was a lot more going on than there is now. And we've been definitely trying to add to it all and not subtract from it.

DIW: Do you ever think about moving away?

IS: Oh, we were thinking pretty hard about it. I was homeless for like four months, just kind of couch surfing and crashing in the practice space, 'cause I wasn't going to pay 800 dollars a month for a room. I just didn't make that much. Getting a job when you're sporadically touring—there's not much you can do. I've been bar-backing and door-guying, that kind of shit lately, just to have spending money. But the record-company money is very slim. We way over-spent on the record.

DIW: They don't tend to shell out extra money, do they?

IS: No, and usually the money that you get is from an advance, and we don't really get an advance—we're living off our publishing money. We've been living off that for a long time, and it's running out. We've always lived very cheaply. Me paying 800 dollars to live somewhere was ridiculous. But luckily I found a place for 475 dollars a month. I found a room, so now it's like, I think we can hang out for a little bit longer. But we were thinking LA or Portland for a while. We toured with The Dandy Warhols, and Courtney [Taylor] would tell me, "In Portland, man, there's like two-dollar pitchers." All right, that's all I need to know.

DIW: Other than releasing *Take Back The Universe And Give Me Yesterday*, what are your plans for 2001?

IS: We're gonna tour it, depending on how good it does. If it does well, we'll tour it for a little bit, and then maybe start writing something else. Who knows? If it does really well, we'll probably be on the road for a whole year. Which is really bizarre because it took so long to write this record—I'm pretty much done with it. I'm like, "Okay, great, time for something new, need new songs now." But oh no—"You gotta learn 'em acoustically, and play radio shows, and you're gonna be touring all the time, and record stores." And I'm like, "Oh my god."

DIW: Still, that's a pretty nice day job.

IS: It can be. It can be bad though. The last tour we did I was very sick the whole time because I didn't know how to take care of myself. I was very depressed. It was very painful for me to be that way. But you learn how to keep it good. Or polite, so to speak. ♪



★Asian Man Records★

www.asianmanrecords.com

AMR a small DIY label run out of my parents' garage in sunny Northern California. We believe that music should be accessible and affordable for everyone! All CD's/LP's are \$8 or less postage paid, and we have a catalog full of our bands' t-shirts, posters, pins, patches & more. Please try mailordering--it's fun! For a copy of our catalog, please send us a SASE. Please support your local music scene, keep independent music alive, & be nice to each other! PEACE & UNITY! --Mike Park & Asian Man Records



☆SLAPSTICK☆

"Reunion Video" \$10

Recorded live at the Fireside Bowl in Chicago. Slapstick was one of the best skapunk bands of the 90s! The band broke up in 1996, but reunited a year later for a benefit show that raised over \$6000 to help a family in need. See their last show ever! Also features rare clips and photos. We sold 100 of these videos in less than 4 days! Get your copy now!

out now!

★PUSHOVER

"logic & loss" CD \$8

The second full length by this L.A. band, featuring former members of Mealticket. It's got horns, keyboards, and a lot of rock!

ASIAN MAN RECORDS VIDEO SAMPLER

"10 Minutes to Ogikubo Station" \$10

The long awaited Asian Man video collection is here! Contains rare clips, live footage, and never-seen-before videos by Alkaline Trio, MU330, Blue Meanies, Link 80, Potshot, Knowledge, Softball, Slow Gherkin, The Chinkees, Slapstick, Dan Potthast, Polysics, Korea Girl, Lawrence Arms, Honor System, The B.Lee Band, & King Apparatus...All this at the ridiculous price of \$10!

★COMING SOON!★

CHRIS Murray

"4-trackaganza"

AM-068 CD \$8

This is one of the best albums to come out in a long time! A 4-track, an acoustic guitar, and his incredibly smooth voice are the keys to his trademark old-school sound (total cost to make this record was \$12 to buy tapes!). Reggae, ska, soul and a sincere, honest approach to songwriting.

The PeACOCKS

"angel"

AM-071 CD/LP \$8

From Switzerland, this band plays psychobilly-influenced, stand-up bass-driven music with a flair for catchy pop melodies, lots of punk rock energy and hints of ska. Think REV. HOR-TON HEAT meets ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT & ELVIS COSTELLO! They are one of the best live bands in Switzerland right now!

★polysics CD out April
crazy devo-like rock from Japan!

★mU330 live! CD out April
"before & after"

★ALWAYS AVAILABLE★

ALKALINE TRIO "S/T" CD \$8

HONOR SYSTEM "Single File" CD \$8

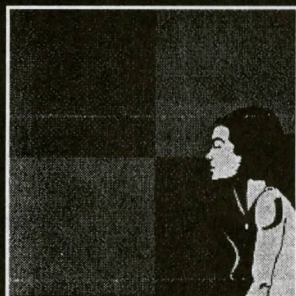
LAWRENCE ARMS "Ghost Stories" CD \$8

LINK 80 "Struggle Continues" CD \$8

To order, send cash, check or money order payable to: Asian Man Records. Orders outside U.S. please include extra money to help with shipping costs. Shipping is free in U.S., but extra to help with shipping costs is always appreciated! For creditcard orders, please visit our website: www.asianmanrecords.com or call us and place your order 9am-7pm pst, M-F: (408) 395-0662. You can also FAX your order anytime (408) 395-5952 or (425) 963-5753. There's lots of band info, tourdates, photos, fun, contests, and label updates at our website. Email us with any questions or to get on our mailing list: brucelee@pacbell.net THANKS!

ACHTUNG!

MAGWHEEL RECORDS: NEW ADDRESS, NEW RELEASES



GRAIG MARKEL

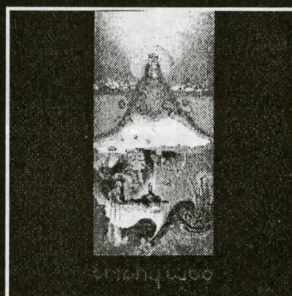
"Hard Grammar" MAG033CD
More tuned up than last years album by ex NEWSWEETBREATH frontman. Still full of shining pop masterpieces.



TAGGING SATELLITES

TAGGING SATELLITES

"Abstract Confessions" MAG032CD
Second album of dark, experimental music topped off with Zera's beautiful yet icy vocal stylings.



TRICKY WOO

"Tricky Woo" MAG031 10" VINYL
Far beyond the valley of the "Stoner Rawk" tribe, further than the pools of classic Detroit sounds. & so much more...



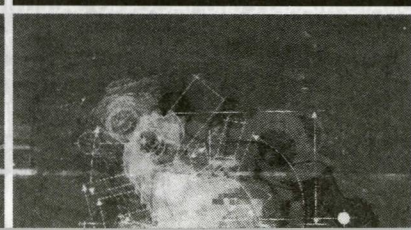
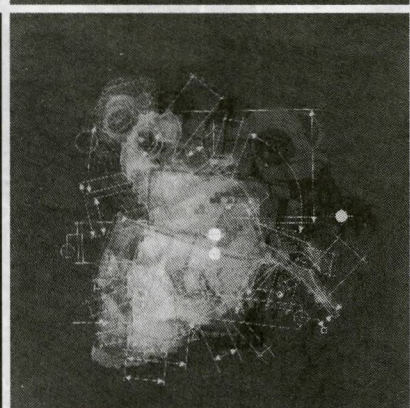
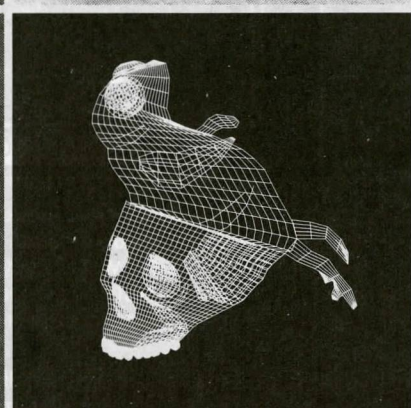
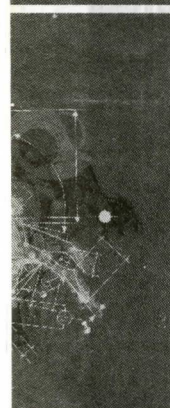
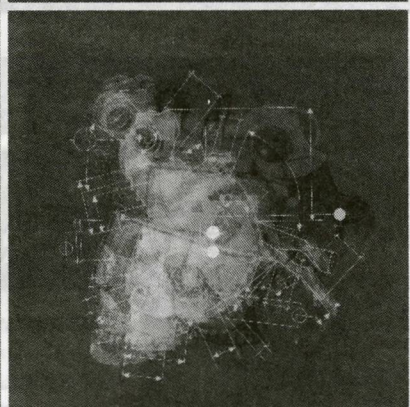
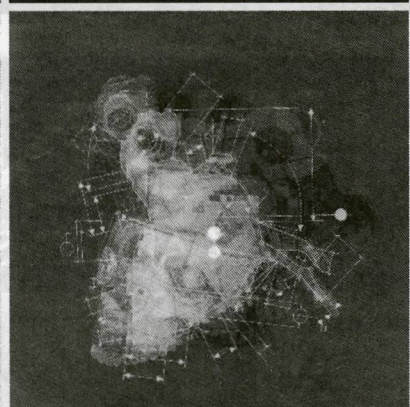
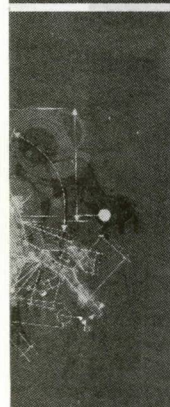
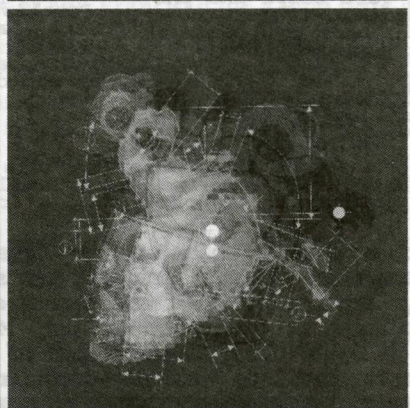
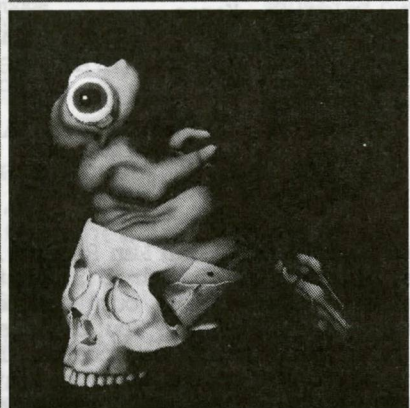
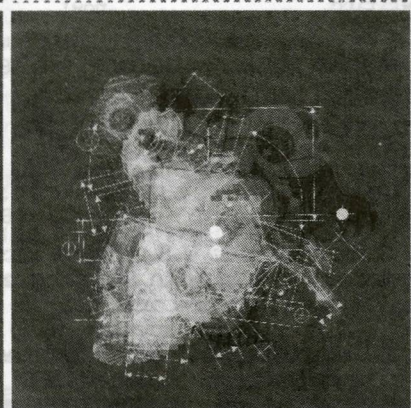
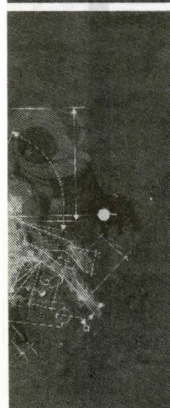
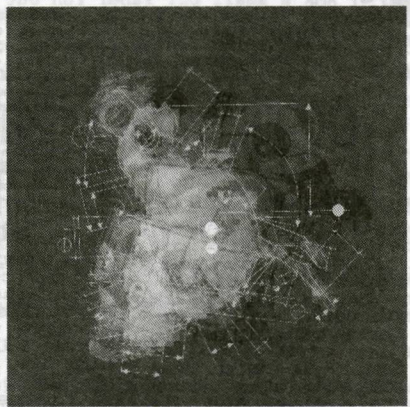
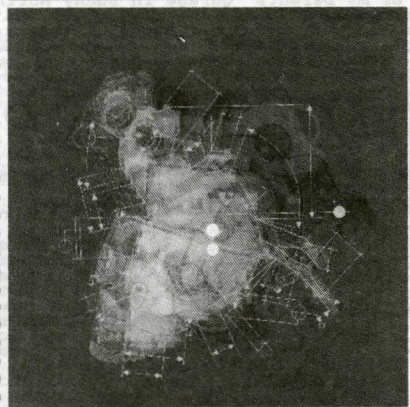
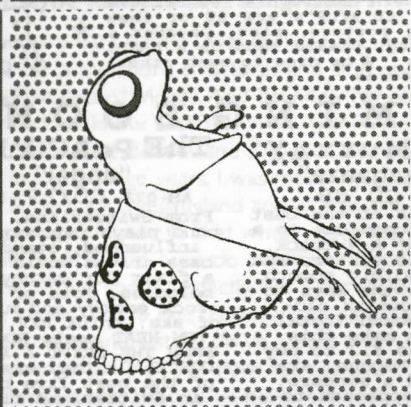
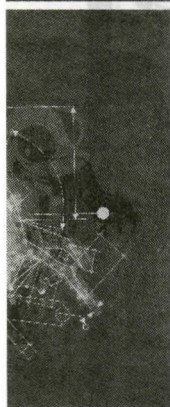
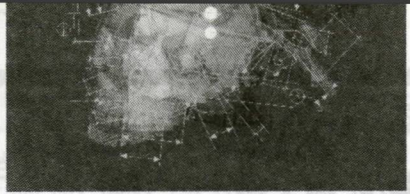
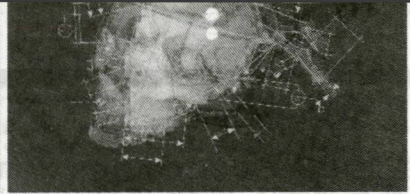
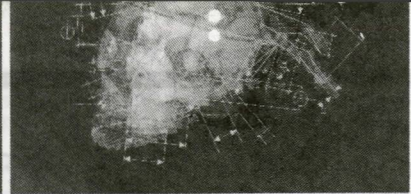
SPACE-AGE AIR-RAID

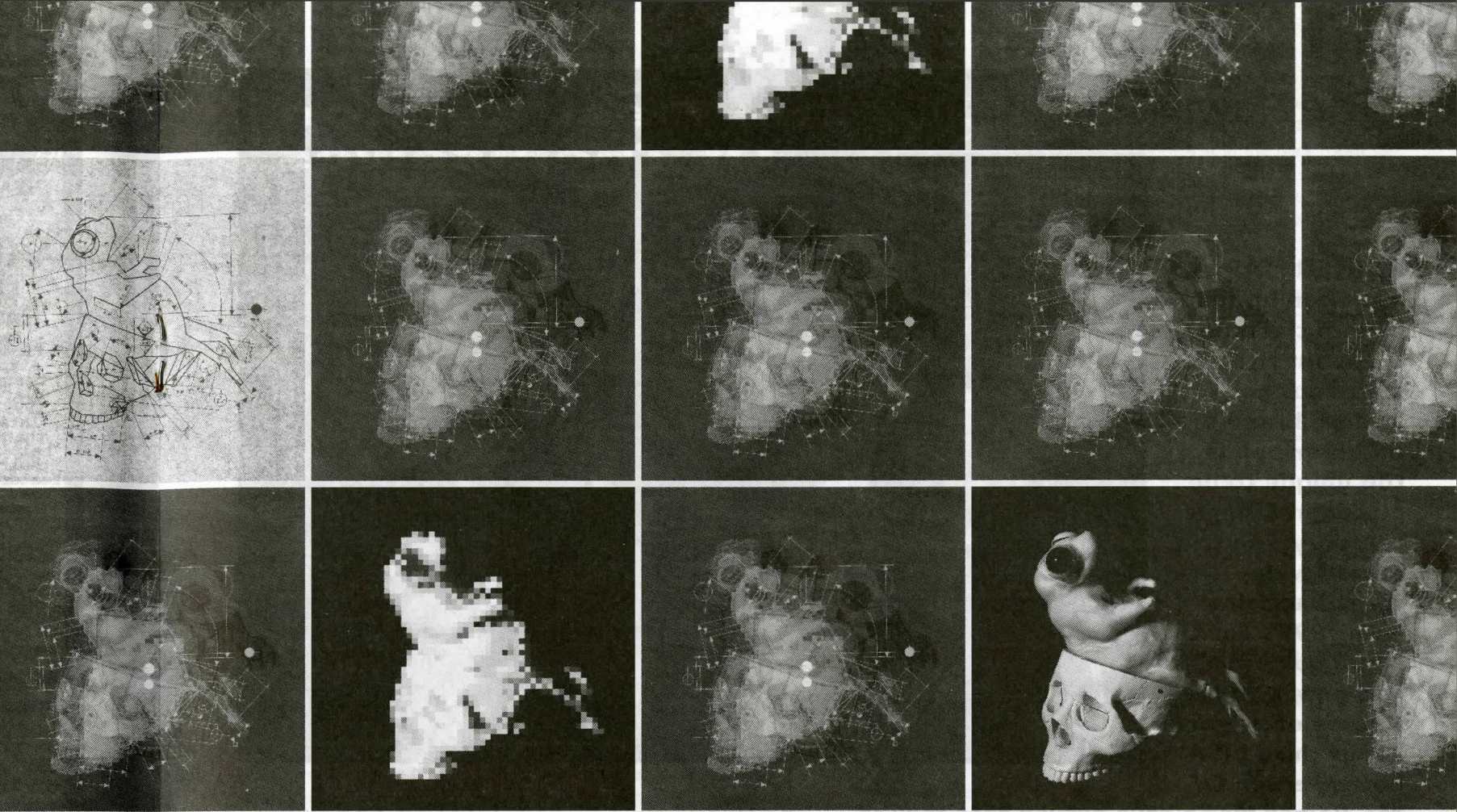
V/A "Space-Age Air-Raid" MAG030CD Montreal comp. W/ CHINO, TRICKY WOO, EXHAUST, SACKVILLE, PEST5000, FEARLESS FREEP, MISHIMA & 11 MORE BANDS.



And don't forget: The "Dead End Canada" 7" soundtrack, featuring THE VON ZIPPERS/LES SECRÉTAIRES VOLANTES, CHINO's "Mala Leche" CDEP, previous albums by GRAIG MARKEL and TAGGING SATELLITES, the last NEW SWEET BREATH release and a slew of others. FREE catalog if you want the full scoop, just contact us at: www.magwheel.com magwheel@hotmail.com

MAGWHEEL RECORDS: PO BOX 555 STN. P, TORONTO, ONT. CANADA M5S 2T1

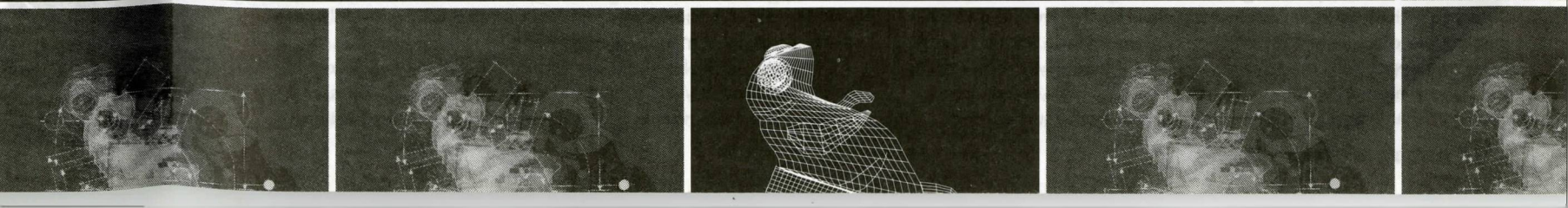




STEVE FISK

999 LEVELS OF UNDO

OF PELL MELL AND PIGEONHED
WWW.SUBPOP.COM SPCD 460. CD ONLY



RAINER MARIA are often lumped in with the emo crew, but their infectious and intense brand of off-kilter pop is too unique to be placed in a single category. The trio gained widespread acclaim with 1999's *Look Now Look Again*, and now with the release of its gorgeous third LP, *A Better Version Of*

Me, Rainer Maria have proven that they're one of the most important artists making music today. **Melanie Covey** spoke with guitarist/singer **KYLE FISCHER** about the anatomy of the perfect pop song, and discovered how the band's practices are a lot like taking vitamin C. **Photos by Mariah Robertson.**

"Have you ever secretly wished you could be a rock star?"

Rainer Maria guitarist/singer Kyle Fischer, who is on the phone from Connecticut, good-naturedly answers my somewhat silly question in feigned adolescent tones. "Doesn't everyone have that dream at some point?" he asks. "Where you're like, 'I wish I was famous, and Winona Ryder would ask me out, and I'd be so cool!'" Fischer and his partner, singer/bassist Caithlin De Marrais, are on their way to the train station to pick up Brooklyn-based drummer Bill Kuehn for an afternoon show they're playing. On a more practical note, Fischer continues, "I mean, that's part of the metaphor, I suppose, of where the term [rock star] comes from, but you have this like burn-out factor, where you go supernova and then you disappear—what do they call it? 'The cold black dwarf' or whatever—and that's no good. I've always been more the sort for the slow, steady climb, or longevity. That's where it's at. And hopefully the listeners are always willing to come along for the ride."

If you've had your ear moderately close to the ground over the past couple of years, the emergence of Rainer Maria to the forefront of independent music comes as no surprise. The members of the band are entering their sixth year as a solid unit, quietly garnering critical praise from all directions, and they've just released



their third—and most accomplished—full-length, *A Better Version Of Me* (Polyvinyl).

The trio's popularity certainly isn't due to any larger-than-life rock-star attitudes, but rather its unapologetic brand of sonic and lyrical sincerity.

"The most important aspect of Rainer Maria as a 'new face of rock' is that they've kept their integrity 100 percent," explains Polyvinyl Records owner Matt Lunsford. "They are a band that has worked really hard to put themselves on tour and sell records at shows. They've spent weeks at a time just writing in the pursuit of perfect songs. For Rainer Maria to be having a successful record is a real payment for hard work in an industry that so often looks at hype instead of credibility."

Rainer Maria were one of the first bands to appear on Polyvinyl, signed soon after they released their first demo in 1995. Lunsford's interest was already piqued by his familiarity with Fischer and Kuehn's previous band, Ezra Pound. Five years later, Lunsford describes his work with the band as a "family thing." Fischer concurs. "It's been a fortuitous meeting of the minds," he says. "We've always gotten along very well, and we've done a good job pacing one another growth-wise, which I guess makes sense, because a label and a band is a kind of symbiotic relationship."

Rainer Maria's recent relocation to the East Coast (from Madison, WI) represents a shift in their ability to dedicate themselves to their musical endeavors.

"I'm not going to overstate it," explains Fischer. "But the band sort of freed us from our day jobs. None of us really has to do the 40-hour-week thing anymore. We do a little bit of stuff here and there, but basically we were sort of able to graduate. I mean, at this point it demands so much time."

"Now that Bill lives an hour's train ride away, it is different than when we lived in Wisconsin and his house backed up ours, and we could just walk across the yard to practice," continues Fischer.

"Now we practice a whole day, he stays over a night, we practice the whole next day, we send him home. It's an interesting curve. Kind of like taking vitamin C—the first 500mg your body absorbs right away, and the second 500mg you only get half of. So it's like, if you spend an hour, you get a good solid hour. But if you spend eight hours, you get four good hours, because the curve gets steeper the longer you spend. But sometimes fatigue and desperation can lead to wonderfully brilliant, inspired moments."

Fischer and Kuehn have known each other since late adolescence, and Fischer and De Marrais met at a University Of Wisconsin poetry workshop. They took their name from poet Rainer Maria Rilke, and like most bands, started out playing house parties. Their first two albums—1996's *Rainer Maria* EP and 1997's *Past Worn Searching*—were warmly received, but it was 1999's *Look Now Look Again* that made the critics and fans go wild, and which has made *A Better Version Of Me* one of 2001's most anticipated releases.

The lure of Rainer Maria's music is sometimes difficult to pin down. Does it pivot on the fearless and poppy sound found on "Broken Radio" or the emotional explosiveness of "Feeling Neglected?" from *Look Now Look Again*? Or is it best explained by the steady bass and triumphant vocals of "Soul Singer" from their *Atlantic* EP? *A Better Version Of Me* is full of more questions than answers, but that's exactly why Rainer Maria continue to be such a fascinating outfit. The shimmering opening track, "Artificial Light," the plaintive "Saved My Skin" and the defiant "Hell And High Water" all grab hold of the listener in different yet equally powerful ways. Rainer Maria have a knack for developing complex rock songs that bring the listener to their own thresholds of rapture and feeling. The words written by De Marrais and Fischer are abstractions of emotional, intellectual and bodily experience, often explained in cosmic and geographic metaphors. As Fischer explains, "I could describe the sort of musical notions we favor as something like 'oblique motion.' We have a tendency to play these suspended chords. The melodic motion in the song is usually down in the lower register—sometimes it's all the way down in the bass guitar, and sometimes it's in the lower partial of the guitar chording. The upper half will sit tight a lot of the time, and then the motion happens underneath it. The other thing that I think is a really big part of our sound, musically, is the fact that there's only three of us. We have to do a lot more interplay within instruments."

A Better Version Of Me represents a band much more in command of their instruments and songwriting.

"The first album was sort of dictated by what we knew," explains Fischer. "Our limited knowledge of our instruments sort of told us where to go, and that can be a really beneficial thing. I mean, most bands, their sound comes out of their limitations, and that's a good thing. With this album, we knew a little more, so we could kind of control where we wanted the songs to go, like completely now. There's no question of the song pulling you by the nose somewhere that you didn't understand. Any time we're developing together now, it's obvious—we know the places that we all agree. We write songs really slowly because we're bastards about quality control. Like if it's not at 110 percent, we throw it out."

One of the most notable developments is the overall smoother, higher tone of De Marrais' vocals. The result is a commanding voice that is more self-assured and less strained.

"Caithlin was working at trying to establish a vocal tone for the whole record that was viscerally affecting without sounding pained, or painful to sing," says Fischer. "You know, there's this old punk-rock concept that kind of haunts you that says it's not emotionally affecting if it doesn't hurt. But when you have a voice that's as elastic and wonderful as Caithlin's, that's not the only way that you're capable of doing it. She was making a concerted effort to

develop a new style. Instead of taking [the vocals] into practice and bashing them out, kind of hollering over top of the instruments, we would track the stuff on a four-track, she would take it home at night, throw on the headphones, sit in the back room for four hours, and practice stuff at a volume level where she was comfortable. That made a huge difference for her ability to revise. I think the result speaks for itself. She created like an entirely new voice for herself. That's great."


De Marrais also was given more free reign on developing the lion's share of lyrics. On previous records, writing and vocal duties overlapped much more with Fischer, and the lyrics more concretely represented themes inspired by their own relationship.

"Sitting down to write songs with anyone, even lyrics aside, trying to find a unified vision can be very difficult, because it's something you feel so passionately about," explains Fischer. "Lyrically there was a point at which, for a long time, Caithlin and I would sit down together, and like word for word write out the lyrics. That was kind of the *Look Now Look Again* thing. I mean, you get two full-time editors, so no crap gets through, but that can be really hard. So with this record, I knew that Caithlin had this obvious talent and knack for lyric-writing and I was like, 'Let's see what happens if we let her just run with it, and let's put me in more of an editorial capacity.'"

"We write songs really slowly because we're bastards about quality control. Like if it's not at 110 percent, we throw it out."

It's also important not to overlook the impact that Kuehn's drumming has on Rainer Maria's sound. "Bill is like the melodic drummer," says Fischer. "There's always this plethora of air drummers at our shows, because insofar as drums can be catchy, he's got this kind of snare/kick interplay that moves things along." Kuehn is the one that is up on the newest indie stuff, as well as being a "huge Velvet Underground disciple."

Of his own guitar playing, Fischer cites Jimi Hendrix and such bands as My Bloody Valentine, Chapterhouse, The Verve and Pink Floyd as influences for "music that has voltage involved. That sort of totally aerial guitar place is what I'm shooting for." Fischer also enjoys listening to Delta-based vintage blues recordings, and developing his own acoustic fingerpicking style. "You kind of have to have a music that you just come home and relax to," he explains. "I mean, Caithlin and I play music at home sometimes. I'm probably going to do some recording in the Midwest when I'm out there this winter, but it's more just for fun."

Finally, when asked if there are any misconceptions about Rainer Maria, Fischer says, "I think because of some of the bands that we're lumped in together with, people assume they're going to get one kind of music, and then when they see us live, they're almost always pleasantly surprised. I think because we come out of like the sort of 'underground'—you know what used to be called 'punk-rock' scene—but then punk rock got kind of spoiled, and now nobody knows what to call it. Some people want to call it 'emo-core,' but then there's all this diverse stuff that goes with it. The only place in which that tag made sense to me was not as a descriptor of music, but more of like a group of bands who were working contemporaneously, with different sorts of musical directions, but with a favored set of musical notions. So Rainer Maria, Joan Of Arc, Mike Kinsella, The Promise Ring, Braid and other bands had a certain similarity in spirit, even though the music came out sounding very different. And increasingly different as we all kind of go our merry musical ways. But that tag got stuck with a lot of us." 

VITAL COG RECORDS - SERVICE WITH A SMILE



Steven - "Steven Out West"
Read-along comic book & 7" record

**Duochrome
"Lackluster"** CD

John P. Strohm/Sonny Sinkiller
Super Heroes of Rock Team-up split 7"

The Diane Linkletter Experience
"Too Hard To Disguise" CD

**Duochrome
"Duochrome 2.0"** Box Set

Sonny Sinkiller
"This Is Your Heaven" CD

ditch croaker
"tranquil waters" CD

My Dad Is Dead/Duochrome
Super Heroes of Rock Team-up split 7"



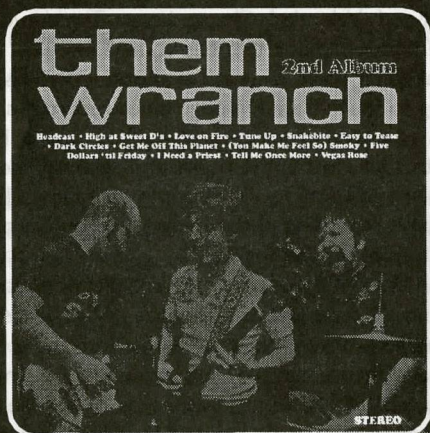
Coming Soon! new stuff from: MY DAD IS DEAD • TIZZY • AVISO'HARA • DUOCHROME • BLACK SONNY and more!
Vital Cog Records, PO Box 7846, Princeton, NJ 08543 available at independent retailers. Shop online at www.vitalcog.com



Them Wranch | Medium Rare

Garage rock from Columbus, Ohio

12"/CD



Little is known about Them Wranch, 'cept that on occasion they run with a rough crowd, drink in the way of gallons and wrassle the ladies with a very smooth swagger.

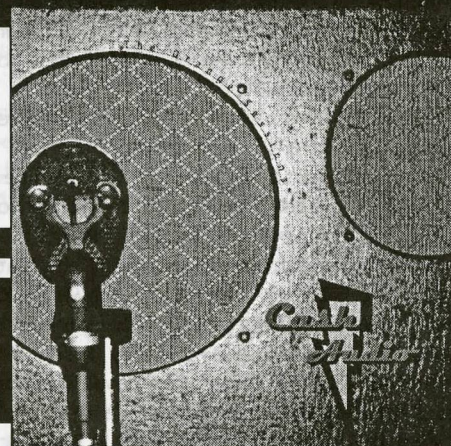
**THEM
WRANCH**

www.orangerecordings.com

Cash Audio | The Orange Sessions

CD includes an extra track, remastered 2x7" and an interview

10"/CD



**Cash
Audio**

They've been dogged and abused by promoters and bartenders in too many gin mills to mention. State troopers know them by their first names...

www.orangerecordings.com



IDENTITY CRISIS SC019-cd

THRICE

coming 3.6.01 on Sub City

on tour with Samiam in March
go to subcity.net for tourdates

P.O. Box 7495 Van Nuys, CA 91409 www.subcity.net



The Weakerthans

new cdep
out now



SC018-cdep watermark



SC011-lp/cd left and leaving



SC006-lp/cdcs follow

"The Weakerthans play pristine pop laced with deeply personal lyrics and impressively clever song craftsmanship" - *Jersey Beat*

"Pure fucking poetry in motion" - *HR List*

P.O. Box 7495 Van Nuys, CA 91409 www.subcity.net



THE NEW YEAR
NEWNESS ENDS

TG220-LP \$14 / TG220-CD \$14

FEATURES MATT AND BUBBA KADANE FROM **BEDHEAD**
Recordings available 2.20.2001. Touring this spring.

Mail Order this and other titles from Touch and Go Records.
Write for your FREE catalog, P.O. Box 25520, Chicago, Illinois 60625.
Visa and Mastercard orders please call 1(800) 3-TOUCH-U [usa only].



The New Faces Of Rock

THE GET UP KIDS may be living the good life, but their envious position in the world of indie rock hasn't been achieved by accident. In addition to being one of emo's premier acts, **The Get Up Kids** negotiated a sweet deal with **Vagrant Records**, they put out some of 2000's best records on their **Heroes & Villains** imprint, and they've made the road their friend. Erica Jewell spoke with singer/guitarist **MATT PRYOR** about how the band took control of their career, how they dealt with taking a girlfriend on tour, why he started **THE NEW AMSTERDAMS** and what the deal is with **REGGIE AND THE FULL EFFECT**.
Photos by Peter Ellenby.



The Get Up Kids are fast becoming the hardest-working band in rock 'n' roll. In addition to recording and touring as The Get Up Kids—which includes singer/guitarist Matt Pryor, guitarist/vocalist Jim Suptic, drummer Ryan Pope, bassist Robert Pope and keyboardist James Dewees—they have their own label, **Heroes & Villains** (distributed by Vagrant). And if that wasn't enough, Pryor has a solo project, **The New Amsterdams**, and he also does work with **Reggie And The Full Effect**.

As relatively fresh faces in the indie scene, **The Get Up Kids**—who formed in 1995 in Kansas City, MO, and have since relocated to Lawrence, KS—have proven to be both deal makers and deal breakers. After releasing their debut EP, *Second Place*, in 1996 and their highly acclaimed first LP, *Four Minute Mile*, in 1997, they jumped ship from Doghouse Records (though they did release one final EP on the label, 1999's *Red Letter Day*), were courted by the majors, and eventually brokered an envious deal with Vagrant.

Four Minute Mile was a sassy, at times brash, rock 'n' roll record. One thing **The Get Up Kids** have always been able to do is bring their live energy to their records. That carefree attitude gave way to gloss and polish with their second full-length and Vagrant debut, 1999's *Something To Write Home About*, which found Pryor taking a bolder approach to his vocals and the band capitalizing on the emo-pop leanings of the first record. Pryor's lyrics have matured as well, though love seems to be a common thread through most of their recordings. The band also added longtime friend Dewees on keyboards, which eased it away from over-the-top guitars.

Pryor makes it clear that **The Get Up Kids** wanted their second record to be all the things that the budget wouldn't allow for on the first one, which is one of the reasons they began to consider offers from some majors after *Four Minute Mile*. Mojo (which is

distributed by Universal) was the label they dealt with most seriously, but the deal eventually crumbled.

"They dropped the ball and we walked away," says Pryor. "We were basically on the phone every single day for six months, except for Saturdays and Sundays and Jewish holidays. And we were at the same point at the end of six months as we were at the beginning of six months with the negotiations.

"Basically it boils down to Erik [Jarvi] wanting to sign us, and he rules and he's a good friend, and if there's ever any way we could work with him again we would. But nobody else at the label wanted to touch us with a 10-foot pole. We're control freaks, and so it was like, 'No, you can't have that. No, that's ours.' They'd be like, 'Well you can have 75 percent of your publishing,' and I'd be like, 'How about we can have 100 percent of our publishing, 'cause we wrote the damn songs.' And they said, 'And if a member leaves the band, you take a royalty cut.' We were like, 'Uh, if a member leaves the band, we break up—that's how it works.' Everything was a battle, and it was possibly the most stressful thing I've ever been through in my entire life."

Once the deal with Mojo went South, **The Get Up Kids** began looking for another big label that would be more sympathetic to their needs, which included distributing **Heroes & Villains**. Vagrant wound up being the perfect fit for the band and its label, which presently boasts an impressive roster consisting of **The Get Up Kids**, **Reggie And The Full Effect**, **The New Amsterdams**, **The Anniversary** and **Koufax**. **Heroes & Villains** was created by Pryor and Robert Pope, but it became apparent that if they wanted to sign **The Anniversary**, the rest of the band would have to become a part of the label.

"Basically interband politics are that we could put **The Anniversary** out, but we'd have to take them on tour," Pryor explains. "And it wouldn't be a problem taking them on tour except that Adrienne, the keyboard player, is Robbie's girlfriend. So it's like, 'You can't take your girlfriend on tour' is just kind of an unwritten law. In order for us to get Ryan and Jim to agree to take **The Anniversary** on tour, we basically had to make everyone partners in the whole thing. It was

kind of like, I knew that that's what the deal was. And it's kind of like it's The Get Up Kids' label, which is cool."

Pryor is the first to admit that his role is more A&R, and that Vagrant handles the business side of Heroes & Villains. "We don't really do anything for the label," he says. "We find bands, we put our stamp of approval on the bands, and we take them on tour. Granted, taking them on tour helps a lot, but [Vagrant] handle everything. We don't do shit."

Despite Pryor's claim that he's relatively hands-off with the label, he's getting acquainted with the business side of things and how to deal with the bands.

"The Anniversary have a contract, but they haven't signed it yet," he grumbles. "Every couple of months we go, 'Uh, you guys really need to sign your contract.' The last time Vagrant was like, 'You guys need to sign your contract or you won't get your royalties,' and they sent him a fax that said, 'Yeah, we'll sign it about

"We're control freaks, and so it was like, 'No, you can't have that. No, that's ours.' [Mojo Records would] be like, 'Well you can have 75 percent of your publishing,' and I'd be like, 'How about we can have 100 percent of our publishing, 'cause we wrote the damn songs.' And they said, 'And if a member leaves the band, you take a royalty cut.' We were like, 'Uh, if a member leaves the band, we break up—that's how it works.' Everything was a battle, and it was possibly the most stressful thing I've ever been through in my entire life."

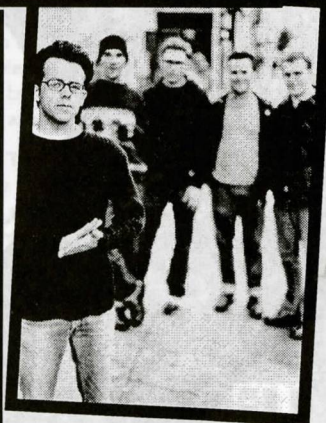
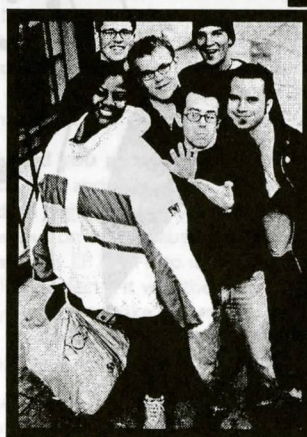
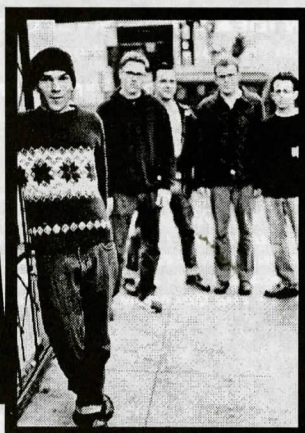
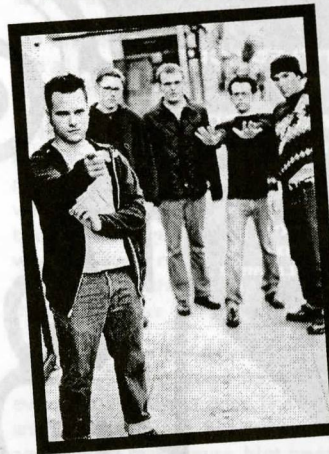
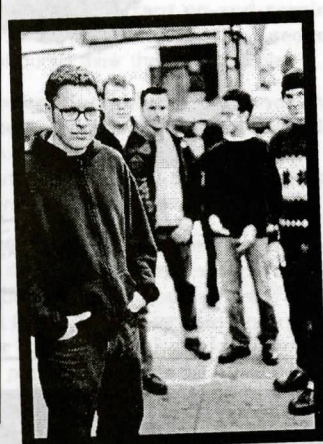
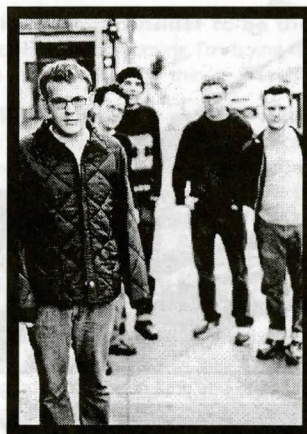
never o'clock,' and it had a picture of Janko the drummer's ass. It's just like, 'Sign your damn contract.'"

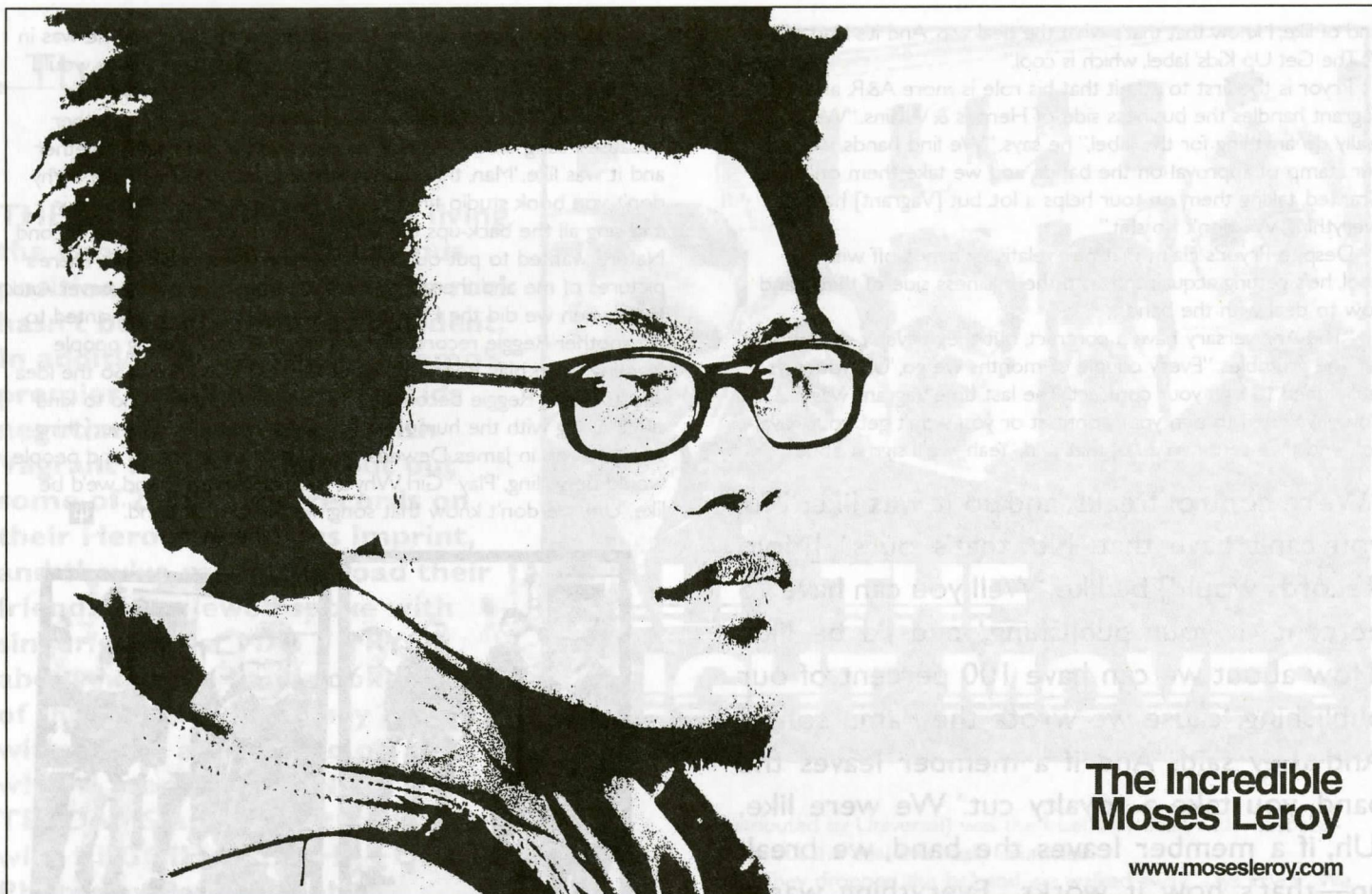
When Pryor's not spending his time with The Get Up Kids or doing nothing for Heroes & Villains, he fills his time with The New Amsterdams. Fans of The Get Up Kids may find it difficult to embrace this radical departure, which is what Pryor had in mind. "I wanted to do something that didn't have anything to do with The Get Up Kids or the way that we write music," he says. "I basically wanted to do a record that if I wanted to go play shows myself, I could."

Pryor's first New Amsterdams LP, *Never You Mind*, which began to take shape shortly after the recording of *Something To Write Home About*, is essentially an acoustic venture, featuring raspy vocals and delicate arrangements. Pryor is a respectable acoustic artist, but his charisma is too valuable for such a contained environment. At this point the future of The New Amsterdams remains up in the air. Pryor claims he might make another acoustic record under his own name, but he's not sure if that will happen anytime soon—which may have something to do with The Get Up Kids' heavy tour schedule in early 2001 (opening for Green Day and Weezer), their plan to release a new album later this year or early next year, as well as Pryor's commitment to tour with Reggie And The Full Effect.

Ah yes, the mysterious Reggie And The Full Effect. Members of The Get Up Kids have gone so far as denying the existence of Reggie. Very little is known about the band, except that it has released two records—*Greatest Hits '84-'87* and *Promotional Copy*. The music contained on these recordings is all over the place, combining metal, rap, pop and rock with doses of the humorous and the bizarre. When pressed for details, Pryor finally comes clean and admits that Reggie is the brainchild of Dewees.

"Long story short, before James was in the band and he was in Coalesce, he used to make all these demo tapes, and they would just be stupid songs that were really funny, but they were also really catchy," he confides. "So he and I started playing together because I sang on a Coalesce record, and he and I sang together and it was like, 'Man, this sounds kinda good.' And I was like, 'Why don't you book studio time for the Reggie stuff and I'll come in and sing all the back-ups on it?' It sounded really good, and Second Nature wanted to put out the first record, so we did that. There's pictures of me and there's pictures of James all over the cover. And then when we did the Heroes & Villains deal, [Vagrant] wanted to do another Reggie record, and we were already getting people wanting us to play Reggie songs at Get Up Kids shows. So the idea was to make Reggie become something else entirely, and to kind of go along with the humorous theme. It's just silly. It's everything that goes on in James Dewees' head. We'd be at shows and people would be yelling, 'Play "Girl Why'd You Run Away?"!' And we'd be like, 'Um, we don't know that song, we're not that band.'" **Ψ**





The Incredible Moses Leroy

www.mosesleroy.com

NEW IDEA SOCIETY "SELF TITLED" CDEP
(eulcid and cave in members go sebadoh)

POISON THE WELL "DISTANCE..." CD
(the repackaged reissue from reigning kings of hc)

UPCOMING 2001 AUDIO ARTILLERY

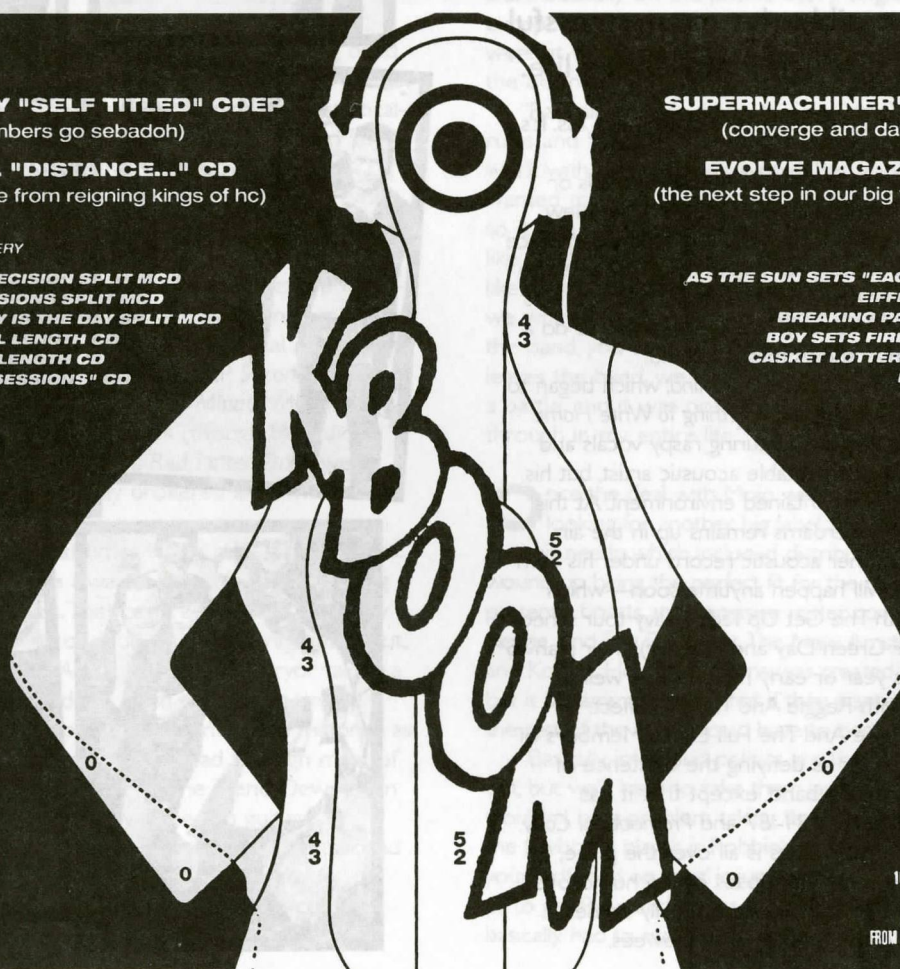
WALLS OF JERICHO / INDECISION SPLIT MCD
POISON THE WELL / 18 VISIONS SPLIT MCD
SUPERMACHINER / TODAY IS THE DAY SPLIT MCD
BREAKING PANGAEA FULL LENGTH CD
NEW IDEA SOCIETY FULL LENGTH CD
URTICA "THE OBLIVION SESSIONS" CD

SUPERMACHINER "RISE OF THE..." CD
(converge and daltonic members go sonic)

EVOLVE MAGAZINE & CD SAMPLER
(the next step in our big takeover - and it's free!!!)

PAST CRIMES AND CONVICTIONS

AS THE SUN SETS "EACH INDIVIDUAL VOICE..." CD
EIFFEL "AUDIBLENARCOTIC" CD
BREAKING PANGAEA "TAKE APART..." CD
BOY SETS FIRE / SHAI HULUD SPLIT 7" EP
CASKET LOTTERY / REFLECTOR SPLIT 7" EP
EULCID "THE CRANE" CDEP



UNDECIDED RECORDS
10895 LAKE OAK WAY BOCA RATON FLORIDA 33498 USA
[HTTP://WWW.UNDECIDEDRECORDS.COM](http://WWW.UNDECIDEDRECORDS.COM)
ALL OF THESE QUALITY RELEASES ARE NOW AVAILABLE
FROM ALL FINE INDEPENDENT RETAILERS AND DISTRIBUTORS

The New Faces Of Rock

THE ANNIVERSARY

Formed: 1997 in Lawrence, KS

Based: Lawrence, KS

Members: James David—bass; Christian Jankowski—drums; Josh Berwanger—guitar, vocals; Adrianne Verhoeven—keyboards, vocals; Justin Roelofs—guitar, vocals

Album(s): *Designing A Nervous Breakdown* (Heroes & Villains/Vagrant, 2000)

Sound: Keyboard-laden, raucous pop music

Why You Should Pay Attention: Virtual unknowns in early 2000, The Anniversary have managed to burst onto the indie-rock scene and become one of the best acts around. Though their association with The Get Up Kids (who signed them to Heroes & Villains and took them out on tour) got the ball rolling, The Anniversary have quickly made a name for themselves with their explosive brand of emo-ish pop.

While the band claims to have no official leader, Justin Roelofs and Josh Berwanger assume principal songwriting duties. Berwanger and Roelofs have distinctly different styles—the former has the better singing voice and makes use of distinct, storytelling lyrics, while the latter relies on a more sing/speak approach to telling his darker, cryptic tales. The common ground found in their music is the voice of Adrianne Verhoeven, whose melancholy vocals temper the fury of her bandmates. Verhoeven also deftly (wo)mans the keyboards, which are what make The Anniversary so dynamic. Their debut LP, *Designing A Nervous Breakdown*, had few rivals as the most compelling, refreshing album of 2000.

Q&A WITH JUSTIN ROELOFS

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in?

Popular music is, of course, pretty sad. I mean, there's always been New Kids On The Block, but this is unbelievable. When you're watching MTV and all it is are hour-long specials on Britney Spears—it's just a commercial for these people. Once this record came out and we were touring and making friends with people in the industry, you realize just how fucked up everything is. I had no idea. You can imagine what it's like, but once you start meeting and talking to people, it just blows your mind how warped MTV and radio are, and who runs it. I don't know, I just can't say much for popular music right now.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general? Independent labels are so crucial. We're thinking about releasing records now even, with bands we like. You realize it's not that hard at all—it's hard to get good distribution and whatever, but if you have a few good people. It's especially important now that there's like three major companies that own all major labels.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label? The only way we could ever do a major-label release is if we have four records out prior on an independent label and have this huge independent following. 'Cause every friend we've ever had, every band we've ever known, every experience we've ever shared, it's bad news.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star? Oh sure, yeah. Anyone who's ever picked up a guitar has, and if they say they haven't, they're lying. But to be a mega-star, you realize it would be the most horrible thing. I've seen bands like The Get Up Kids, where they go to shows and they have a hard time even walking outside because they get stopped every few seconds. And then you feel like a complete asshole not talking to everyone, but it's like impossible. Then if you get to the point where you're selling millions of records, you get completely cut off from your fanbase, which is scary.



Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? Up-and-coming, I'm trying to think. Mates Of State—they used to live in Lawrence, and they're friends of ours. I think they're incredible.

What is the most popular misconception about your band? That we sound like The Rentals, just because we have a keyboard player. And I mean, there's gonna be obvious comparisons like that, but I think people who see our band live never think that. That's the most annoying one. It's not like I don't understand it, I just think it's kind of ignorant.

What do you have planned for 2001? We're going home. Some of us are taking classes. So we're gonna go home for the whole semester. Some of us are done, Josh never went, Adrianne's gonna go full time next semester, and I'm gonna take two or three classes just for fun. So next semester we're gonna write a record and we're gonna tour for like two weeks. Right now we're planning on recording in June and hopefully putting it out in the fall. If we can't swing that we'll still record this summer and maybe have an EP come out and tour on that in the fall, and have the record come out in January.

Do any of you have any side projects that you're working on?

We all play. Like I play in another band right now, and I'm gonna try and record that in February, like before The Anniversary.

What do you guys think about Napster? For us it's been cool 'cause kids have been downloading songs that shouldn't be on Napster. We have recording demos from like three years ago somehow on Napster, and kids will be shouting out those songs at shows, which is cool and it's fun, because we're getting a lot of exposure that we wouldn't have had otherwise. But every now and then we're getting e-mails from kids who are like, "Hey, can I get the lyrics?" And it's like, "Those are in the CD." So obviously these people are just burning copies of the record, and that's frustrating.

What's it like for Adrianne being the only female in the band?

It's rough. She's so good about it—it's like a brother-sister relationship with everyone. We kissed once. The first month we met each other, like three-and-a-half years ago. But that was it. After that, we were starting a band and it didn't make sense. Not having a girl on tour at all is rough for her. She looks at it as being in a band with four brothers. But being in a band with four brothers, eight hours a day in a van, is like the worst thing you could possibly imagine. I think her problem is probably like the vulgarity that ensues. She's as dirty as any of us, but there's times I think she just definitely needs a rest, and a few of us are just a little unrelenting.

How did you get hooked up with The Get Up Kids? We're all from Kansas City, and some of us lived in the suburbs. We were all in rival punk bands in high school. A year and a half ago we were going to have this EP come out on a local label, and they came to us and were like, "Don't release this EP. Don't do it. We want to put out your record." And it was just like perfect—it was the nicest thing anyone could have done for us. They wanted to take us on tour. They were like, "We've got this plan. We'll take you on tour and we'll help you out any way we can—just give us a record." —Erica Jewell

The Anniversary contributed the previously unreleased "100 Ships" to this issue's limited-edition seven-inch.

The New Faces Of Rock

BRIGHT EYES

Formed: 1998 in Omaha, NE

Currently Based: Omaha, NE

Members: Conor Oberst—vocals, piano, keyboards, acoustic guitar, electric guitar with Mike Mogis—steel pedal, vibraphone, synthstrings, mandolin; Andy Lemaster—vocals, keyboards; Joe Knapp—drums, vocals; Jiha Lee—flute, bass

Album(s): *Oh Holy Fools—The Music Of Son, Ambulance And Bright Eyes* split LP (Saddle Creek, 2001); *Insound Tour Support Series, Vol. 12* split EP (Insound, 2000); *Fevers And Mirrors* (Saddle Creek, 2000); *Every Day And Every Night* EP (Saddle Creek, 1999); *Letting Off The Happiness* (Saddle Creek, 1998); *A Collection Of Songs Written And Recorded 1995-1997* (Saddle Creek, 1998)

Sound: Dark, introspective lo-fi pop

Why You Should Pay Attention: Conor Oberst isn't doing anything all that new—he's just doing it better than most of his peers. With brutal honesty and a willingness to expose his demons, Oberst writes lyrics that play on listeners' anxieties and keeps them coming back for more. Pushing buttons that make a generation of addicted, insecure fans quiver, Oberst is an expert at articulating feelings of loneliness, depression, despair and guilt. Unconventional word placement and phrasing express vivid images of cemeteries or star-crossed lovers setting sail into the ocean, and take the hopeful listener along for an emotional roller coaster ride.

In addition to unconventional, abstract, poetic lyrics, Bright Eyes also utilize instruments outside of the norm—pedal-steel guitar, mandolin and vibraphone are regulars on each album. With each listen you'll discover subtle sounds—a child's voice, or that of Oberst's Russian professor; a door slamming; laughter—that have been added, intentionally or not, in ways that complement the songs.

While Bright Eyes records are enthralling, their live performances are like nothing you've ever experienced. Granted, like many other road-weary bands, Bright Eyes can be hit or miss, but when they are on, it is an awe-inspiring, heartwarming and emotionally charged experience. Howling and wailing in his chair, standing only when the intensity of the song forces him to rise, Oberst becomes possessed by his songs when he's onstage. The whole experience becomes as therapeutic for the audience as it is for the singer himself. Troubled youths leave with a sense of belonging, the hounds of their perceived isolation temporarily beaten back. It's reassuring to find that we are not alone in our neurotic thoughts and actions, and due to this sense of community in the Bright Eyes fanbase, Oberst's expressive angst and longing has earned him a cult following.

Q&A WITH CONOR OBERST

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in? I haven't been too careful to keep up with all the different stuff happening with independent music lately. I seem to find myself buying older records, and really an equal amount of stuff on indies and on majors. I just want to hear shit with some soul, no matter where or when it's coming from. That may sound silly, but it's the truth. I hope indie labels continue to strive, because I still feel that they are in it, in most cases, for more pure reasons. And besides, why line somebody else's pocket when you can do it yourself just as good?

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general? For me, it's important to be on Saddle Creek not for the sheer reason of it being an indie—because there are lots of indies out there that are just as fucked up in their dealings and principles as the majors—but because Saddle Creek are my friends and family, and it is a manifestation of a dream that we had a long time ago and

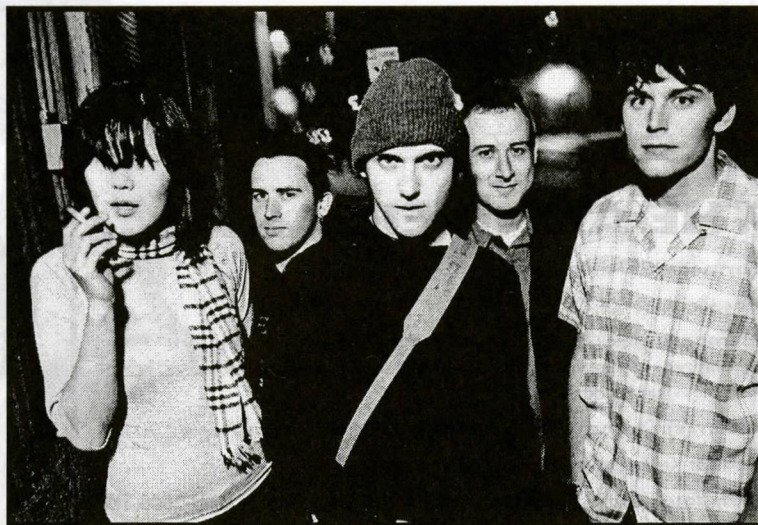


PHOTO: PETER ELLENBY

continue to live out and make more and more real with each subsequent release and tour and year. And I'm just proud that our label is based on love between friends and a desire to support each other's art and not on a profit margin or a sound or a scene. We make and release our own music because we love it, and it's all we want to be doing.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label? If I was to ever leave home, so to speak, I think I would consider major offers equally to indies. Most likely I would end up on another indie, but only because whoever it was, I would want to totally trust and for it to be someone who believes in the music apart from business.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star? I suppose there are times when fame has seemed appealing, but the more and more I am actually faced with it I realize it's not really for me. I would be flattered to be remembered for my music and writing. But rock star? No thank you.

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? Up-and-coming artists? Well, like I said, I'm kind of out of it. But of course I'm excited about the new Creek bands. And The Good Life. I think that they will prove to be an important band for all music. Also Son, Ambulance, Sorry About Dresden, Now It's Overhead. There is also a record label in Athens called Warm which is doing a bunch of cool shit—Azure Ray, Crooked Fingers, Empire State. I don't know, that's just what came to mind. I'm sure I'm forgetting many more.

What is the most popular misconception about your band? Unfortunately most misconceptions about my band are true.

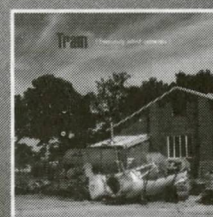
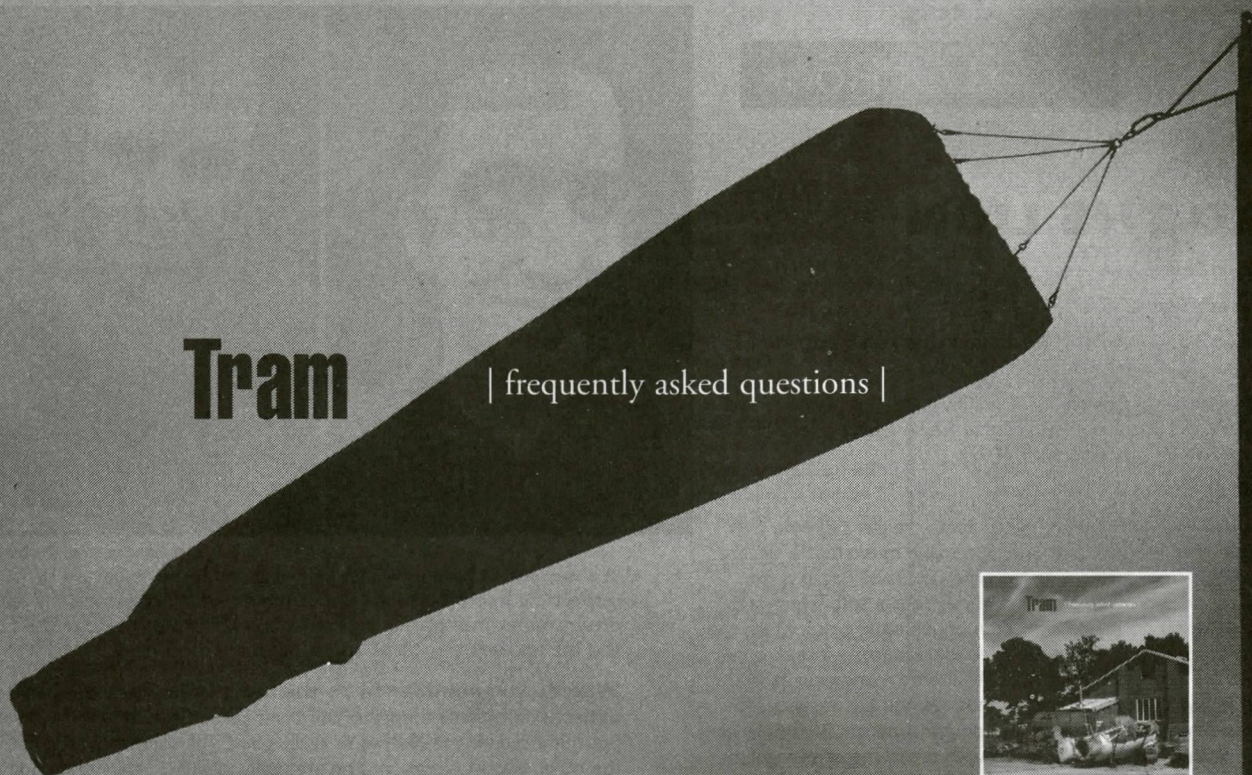
What do you have planned for 2001? Well, in 2001 we will be touring far less than 2000, but will probably do a few U.S. shows here and there, and return to Europe in late spring. As far as releases, we have the *Oh Holy Fools* split LP, as well as a seven-inch on The Blood Of The Young label. We also did that collaboration with Album Leaf, which will probably be out by summer, and we are also planning a different single of new stuff for Wichita, which is the label we are on in the U.K. We are planning on recording a new full-length towards the end of the summer for release early 2002.

How do you feel about the media practically swooning over you and all Saddle Creek endeavors? Is it strange to see something you started so long ago doing so well? I wasn't aware of tons of swooning going on, but if it's so, then I'm definitely proud. Because this is something we built on our own, and all the bands as well as Robb [Nansel] have worked so hard for many years to make quality music and operate a business with integrity. I am proud to be even a small part of a movement as pure as that, no matter how successful.

What's your favorite song to play and why? I pretty much always like to play my newest song the most at any given time. Last couple tours, however, we played "A Line Allows Progress, A Circle Does Not," since Joe [Knapp] was on tour playing drums and he sings on that song. We had never really played it live before, and I really liked playing that one 'cause it seemed to have lots of energy every night. —Debi Waltman

Tram

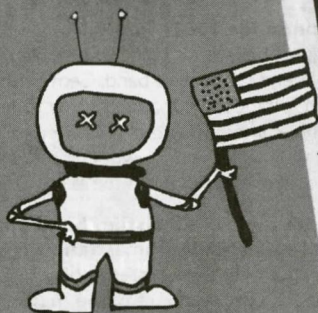
| frequently asked questions |



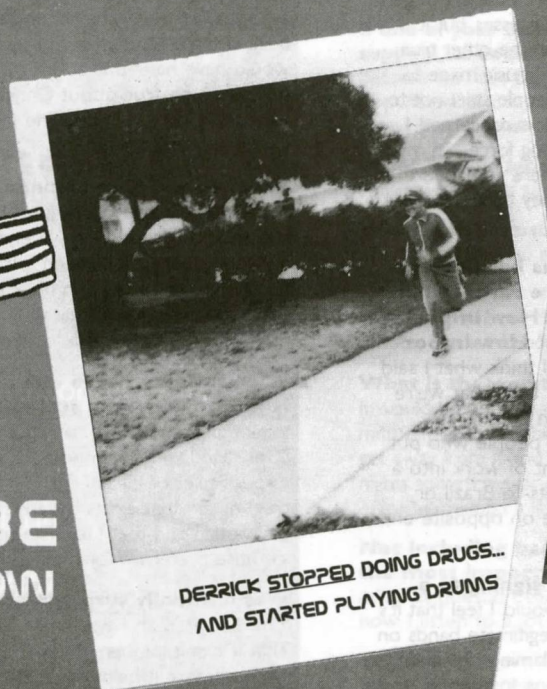
jetset records 67 vestry street new york ny 10013 jetset.sinnar.com



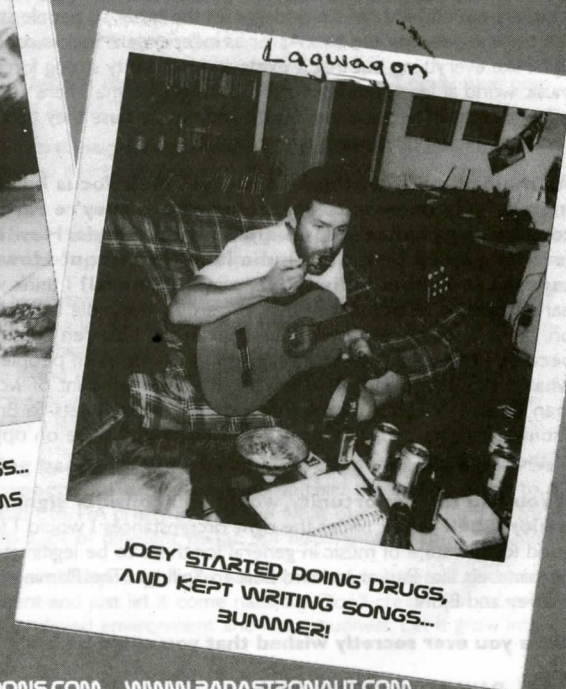
BAD ASTRONAUT



ACROPHOBIE
NEW CD OUT NOW



DERRICK STOPPED DOING DRUGS...
AND STARTED PLAYING DRUMS



JOEY STARTED DOING DRUGS,
AND KEPT WRITING SONGS...
SUMMER!



HONEST DONS
P.O. BOX 192027 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94119

WWW.HONESTDONS.COM WWW.BADASTRONAUT.COM

The New Faces Of Rock

PEDRO THE LION

Formed: 1995 in Seattle, WA

Currently Based: Seattle, WA

Members: David Bazan—vocals, guitar, bass, drums, keyboards with Trey Many—drums

Album(s): *Winners Never Quit* (Jade Tree, 2000); *The Only Reason I Feel Secure* EP (Made In Mexico, 1999); *It's Hard To Find A Friend* (Made In Mexico, 1998); *Whole* EP (Tooth & Nail, 1997)

Sound: Graceful, melodic, lo-fi indie rock

Why You Should Pay Attention: While apathy reigns supreme over much of the indie-rock world, Pedro The Lion make music that is sincere and emotional. Aside from a revolving tour line-up, David Bazan is the only solid member of Pedro The Lion. Bazan's voice is a soft, sweet and uncertain companion to his gentle and often understated lyrics, which the singer/songwriter uses to ponder his own life experiences—including his Christian faith. In the process, he has radically altered many indie fans' assumptions about what exactly Christian music is, and has earned a following that crosses religious affiliations and doctrinal beliefs. Bazan's lyrical approach to Christianity has nothing to do with preaching or evangelism, but instead explores the singer's relationship with God—he's always questioning, never casting judgement. Avoiding self-righteousness and esoteric complexity, Pedro The Lion's music seems downright simple when compared to many of his contemporaries. This is not to degrade Bazan's vision or artistic integrity, but rather to state that simplicity has rarely sounded this beautiful or felt this real.

Q&A WITH DAVID BAZAN

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in? In general when I think of pop music, I think of Britney Spears, 98 Degrees and *NSYNC, and I guess I think of rap-metal too. As always, it is an unfortunate counterfeit. There's the art of communication—the art of expressing one's ideas and feelings about people and culture, which I think is what songwriting and music was meant to be and should be. And then there's the art of generating profit, at which I think all those bands are great successes, but it should be recognized for what it is and not confused with the other true expression of what music should be. Unfortunately, I feel [music made to generate a profit] sort of subtly degrades the other, so people start not to see the line between the two. As far as independent rock is concerned, I don't like everything, but that it exists and is a pretty strong force—in my music world at least—is very, very encouraging to me. There are labels that will put out stuff because they love it and not because they think it will sell, and that's really unbelievable and great.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general? I think what I said earlier takes care of most of that. Regarding the indie label that we're on, I have a lot of respect for Tim [Owen] and Darren [Walters], because I think that they are really good examples of people who put what they want to put out. They put the same amount of work into a Joan Of Arc or Turing Machine record as they do a Jets To Brazil or Promise Ring record, and those two sets of bands are on opposite ends of the spectrum, sales-wise.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label? I think under the right circumstances I would. I feel that it's good for the state of music in general for there to be legitimate bands on major labels, like Radiohead and Built To Spill and The Flaming Lips and PJ Harvey and Björk.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star?

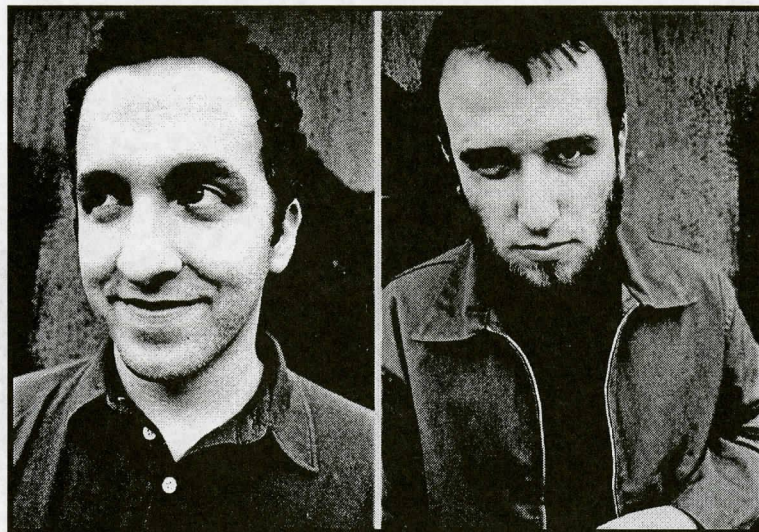


PHOTO: PETER ELLENBY

In a way, yes. To have a big cult following and to be respected by respectable music journalists is much more what I would call my secret dream, rather than playing big arenas and being like Axl Rose. The cocaine and the hookers aren't that appealing to me most days.

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? I have these friends in this band called Seldom who have yet to put out a record. I think they're really good. The songwriter is great, and the other two musicians and he are really talented. I think they ride the line well between progressive rock 'n' roll ideas and good songs. Death Cab For Cutie is totally awesome. I really love Ben's songwriting, and I like what those guys do to his songs.

What's the most popular misconception about your band? It's odd, because it's the same subject, but I think that there are misconceptions on both ends of the spectrum. It has to do with faith. I think that, depending on whether a person is a person of faith or not, we have such strong ideas about people of faith. People superimpose their own notions of Christianity on Pedro The Lion, whether they are Christian or not, and most times they're probably inaccurate. It's hard to say. That's the thing I'm most aware of, not necessarily sensitive about. People are just going to have the wrong idea usually, and I've accepted that. I don't get pissed off when people call us a "Christian band." I don't get pissed off when people call us an "emo band." Although I think that both of those are grossly inaccurate. For instance, I think that a lot of people that don't believe in the things that I believe in or that Christians believe in general would have hang-ups about me because they're afraid of what they believe to be true about Christians who make art. And vice versa. Christians look at Pedro The Lion and have their ideas about what a Christian should be doing.

What do you have planned for 2001? I'm working on the album now—it should be out in July. I believe it's going to be called *Control*. I'm recording a record for my friend Cameron's band, Gem Finch. I'm crossing my fingers because Damien [Jurado] said that he's going to let me record his next record, maybe in the summer. But that was the idea the last time, too, and for whatever reason it didn't end up working out. So it might not work out this time. We'll tour for the record in the fall.

Why is calling Pedro The Lion a "Christian band" inaccurate? Is it because of the state of popular Christian music? Yeah, I think that's the idea. It has to do with the pretense of calling something "Christian," and its connotation that the point of the music is to further a specific set of ideas, i.e. evangelism. In general, there are guidelines for creating art that exists because something is Christian. The fact that I am a Christian and that I feel like I understand my faith really well, it erases all those pretenses for me.

Was it initially surprising to you that non-Christians dig Pedro The Lion? Yeah, I was really blown away. I anticipated a harsher reception. That it didn't happen in general was really surprising to me. It was encouraging because it helps me feel community with other thinking people that weren't out to slam everything they could all the time.

—Richard M. Juzwiak

The New Faces Of Rock

POLYVINYL RECORDS

Formed: 1995 in Danville, IL

Currently Based: Danville, IL

Owner: Matt Lunsford

Current Roster: Pele; Aloha; Sunday's Best; Paris, Texas; Rainer Maria; Ivory Coast; AM/FM

Releases Will Appeal To: Fans of literate rock

2001 Releases: January 23rd: Rainer Maria *A Better Version Of Me*; March 6th: AM/FM *Mutilate Us*; April 17th: Various Artists *ReDirection: A Polyvinyl Sampler*; TBA: Ivory Coast LP

Web Address: www.polyvinylrecords.com

Why You Should Pay Attention: Of the many men and women who are making sacrifices for indie rock, Matt Lunsford has to be close to the top of the list. Lunsford is based in Danville, IL, where he can live cheaply by renting office space from his wife's parents. But Lunsford is happy to sacrifice his privacy (as well as his time and cash) in order to keep Polyvinyl a safe haven for engaging, literate rock. His goal is to make the label the kind of place where bands can mature with security, and where the label's dedication and support is never in question.

Q&A WITH MATT LUNSORD

Why did you decide to start your label? It's funny, because this all started by accident. The label started as *Polyvinyl Press Fanzine*, which was a 'zine myself and three other people were working on. By the time we got to issue number three we wanted to do a bonus seven-inch, and I got put in

charge of doing it, and I had more fun doing that than the 'zine itself. I think issue number five, which was our last issue, came with a giant 25-track CD and LP.

Considering the state of mainstream music and the narrow focus of major labels, do you think indie labels are more important now than they have ever been in promoting up-and-coming bands?

When you have major labels and today's dot-com mentality where things are either bang or bust, I think indie labels are a lot more important because an indie can put things together for a band that may never have any kind of chance at representation by a major label. Major labels these days are more about the stockholders and making one hundred percent sure that they make a profit. Artistic merit comes second to making money. They will throw 20 records at the wall, and when one sticks, that's what they go with.

Some significant indie labels have recently closed shop, including Simple Machines, Trance Syndicate and Amphetamine Reptile. How do you keep afloat? What is the secret to your success? We've been picking bands that we think are excellent bands, and then we work with them for a long time so they can develop fanbases and the ability to sell some records. We let bands grow, and we grow because at any point we have any number of bands that are on many different places on the food chain. We have a band like Rainer Maria, who are highly successful, but we also have a band like Sunday's Best, who have just finished their first record, which is getting some recognition and is starting to move up the ladder.

If one of your bands was courted by a major label, would you support its decision to sign? We would support their decision, simply because we have built the label up on a trust between label and band. We give the bands complete control over where they want to go and what they sound like, and we would support them in any decision they make.

What is your label's mission statement? We don't really have one. I guess you could say it's "Don't go broke."

What is the most popular misconception about your label? There are really no misconceptions to speak of. We've always been straightforward.

What is the best thing about running your label? Being able to contribute—to see bands grow and develop because you helped support them.

What is the worst/most difficult thing about running your label? It would be, as with a lot of independently owned businesses, the time commitment. You work brutal hours. It's such a part of your life you can never get away from it. You work here all day and then you have to come in at nights sometimes or go to shows. You can't get out of it. Getting this new office has helped a little, but it's still pretty time-consuming.

Not including bands on your label, who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? I'm a bad person to ask that question to. I'm pretty invested in what our label is doing right now. I listen to a lot of different things, but nothing really comes to mind.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to start a label? Be patient and just let it come naturally. Don't create a bottom line. Try to create a relaxed environment and not a business. Let it grow into a business. —Brian Conant

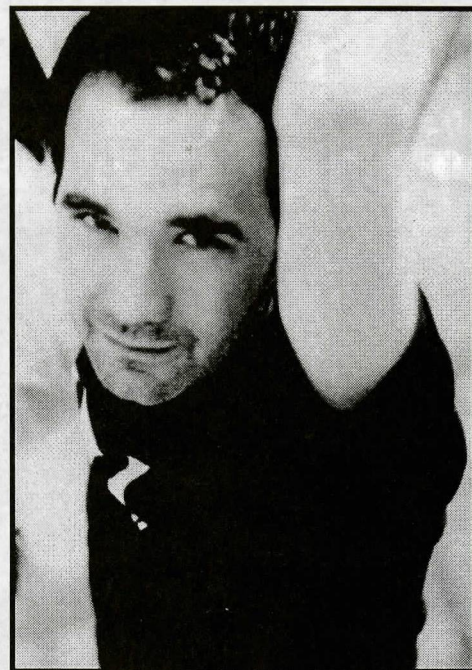


PHOTO: CURT SWANK

Tachist Records brings you
the hardcore ambient sound collage of

CHIKMOUNTAIN Porn On The Cob

CHIKMOUNTAIN'S debut 10 song CD
Distributed by Stick Figure

Available online at Insound.com
Or send a \$12 money order (PPD) to:
S. Phillips
1301 Massachusetts Ave. N.W. #107
Washington DC 20005

tachist@yahoo.com

PROPAGANDHI

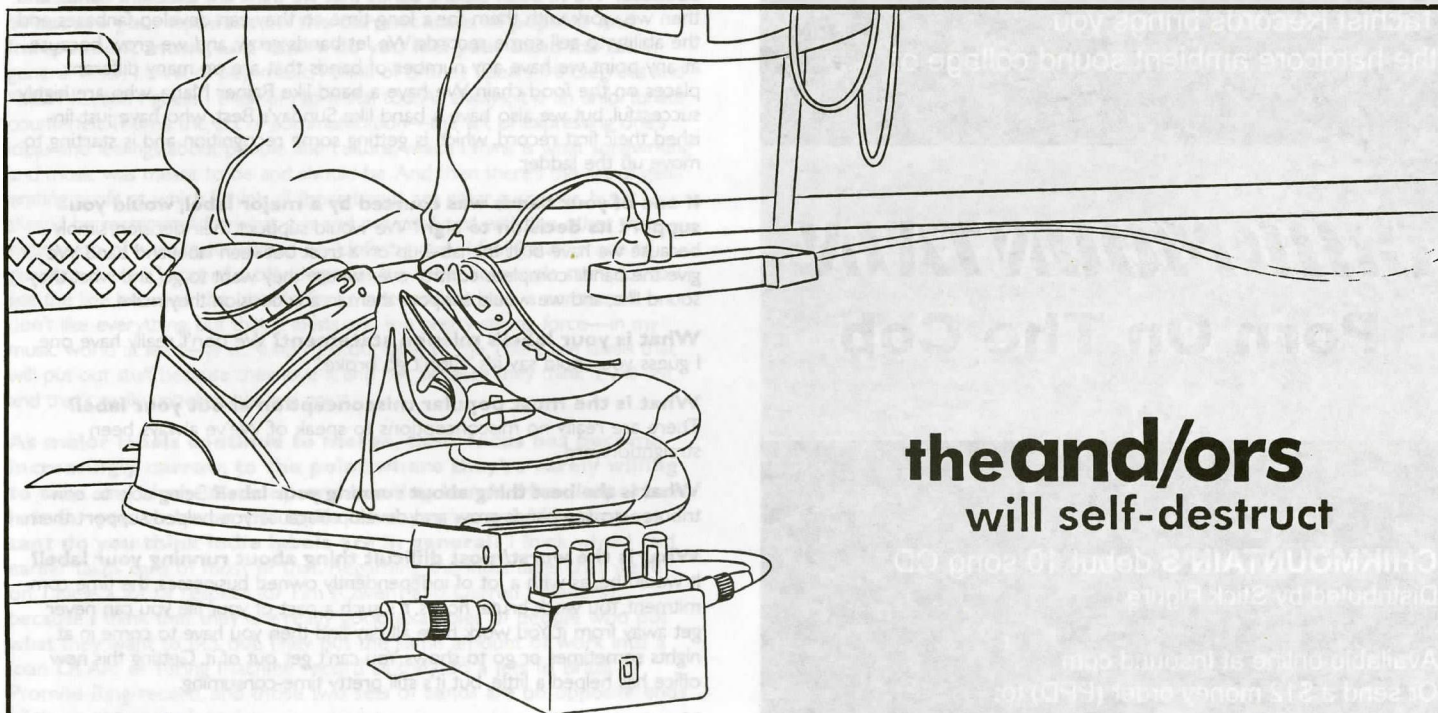
TODAY'S EMPIRES, TOMORROW'S ASHES

FEBRUARY 6TH 2001

CD/LP



FAT WRECK CHORDS P.O. BOX 193690 SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94119 www.fatwreck.com



theand/ors
will self-destruct

Better*
LOOKING
RECORDS

Lane Miller - Chris Wassell - Arabella Makalani - Daniel Black
Debut long playing record and compact disc available February 6 2001

11041 Santa Monica Blvd., PMB 302 Los Angeles, CA 90025-3525 betterlookingrecords.com

The New Faces Of Rock

GRANDDADDY

Formed: 1992 in Modesto, CA

Currently Based: Modesto, CA

Members: Jason Lytle—vocals, guitar, keyboard; Kevin Garica—bass; Aaron Burtch—drums; Jim Fairchild—guitar; Tim Dryden—keyboards

Album(s): *The Sophtware Slump* (V2, 2000); *Signal To Snow Ratio EP* (V2, 1999); *The Broken Down Comforter Collection* compilation (V2 U.K., 1999); *Machines Are Not She EP* (U.K. mail order, 1998); *Under The Western Freeway* (Will/V2, 1997); *A Pretty Mess By This One Band EP* (Will, 1996); *Complex Party Come Along Theories* (self-released, 1994)

Sound: Thick, sophisticated rock that incorporates prog, psychedelic and pop

Why You Should Pay Attention: Granddaddy mastermind Jason Lytle is an intimidating figure in spite of the melodic pastures his music manages to take us to. He and his bandmates always seem one step ahead of the pack, constantly pushing boundaries, toying with perceptions, challenging the status quo—and amusing themselves at the same time. Thus it makes sense that Lytle is often compared to such eccentric artists as Stephen Merritt and Lou Reed, but it makes even more sense when a romantic critic name-checks Ralph Waldo Emerson.

Q&A WITH JASON LYTLE

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in?

I listen mostly to classical/symphonic music and older country music. It just so happens that most of the newer bands that I like have been connected in one way or another to *Tape Op* magazine, which is a magazine devoted to creative music recording and bands who are heavily involved in their own recording process. These types of bands are the ones I feel are the most exciting out there today. This is where I think we fit.

Were you worried about signing to a major label? Ultimately, why did you choose to sign? First off, we trusted—and still do trust—the person who wooed us into signing with V2. Not really having much experience in the music industry, we didn't have much to go off of, and we weren't so concerned with getting on a label with loads of cool bands. We only knew what our then-manager had informed us of, but we also knew that coming from where we are from, geographically, we need more support and/or understanding from a label that one, had a little bit of money, and two, wasn't so big and evil and corporate that if we failed in delivering massive results from the beginning we would be canned. We've also managed to get a little better at dealing with all of that stupid shit that makes all of those purists hate the majors so much, which in the long run eventually equates to simply learning to deal with any of life's adversities, music-related or not.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star? No. I wanted to be Clint Eastwood.

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? It sounds as if I need to mention somebody young. Uh, we had Bright Eyes support us in the U.S., and considering his age versus content factor, Conor Oberst is a very impressive talent. We have a band here in our parts called Built Like Alaska that I'm really fond of. Age aside, I still feel Björk has much more magic in store for the world.

What is the most popular misconception about your band? That we are not aware of the fact that remaining in our not-so-happening hometown has in many ways made things more difficult for us as a band. We are in fact quite aware of that. To me, it is like this: Necessary self-deprivation leads to a greater appreciation of things—restaurants, clubs, bookstores, radio stations, coffee shops, record stores, museums. Our trips to the cities are richer experiences than those who are constantly subjected to it. And to top it all off, we get to get the hell out of Dodge when we're done.

What do you have planned for 2001? Tour the U.S. some more. Go to Japan and Australia. Maybe a few more U.S. shows, and then turn everything and everyone off and start devising the push to the summit.

Are there specific ways your skateboarding roots affect your



PHOTO: PETER ELLENBY

personal philosophies and music? And what stereotypes about skaters do you find distasteful? Skateboarding at its very best is full of independence, defiance and creativity. A famous skateboarder by the name of Jeff Grosso once said, "If you skate, you know." I don't know what the general public's view of skateboarding is. I don't really care either. I know I've skateboarded ever since I can remember. It's in my blood. It definitely molded me into a more independent, defiant, creative person.

How does the creative process work for you? I personally need silence and a clear head and my piano. There is a sort of transportation that occurs. A getting lost and then being found. These three ingredients are all I need for this sort of transportation to occur. —Brian Conant

There was no going back. He would wander the streets until morning. He remembers his mother telling him that it was ok to cry. He had cried when his father left. He was crying now. He had missed the show. He had missed

THE ATLANTIC MANOR



Lo-fi hero? Maybe. Fans of the off-kilter sect will find a new Champion in **THE ATLANTIC MANOR** midnight field recordings and bedroom rantings. Music for a perfect world. Lo-fi and different. Available now: **WHEN I AM A VIKING THE HATE WE GET GOING** \$7.00 each cd payable to Do Too Records 5013 sw 154 pl Miami Fl 33185 dotoo@bellsouth.net

• The New Faces Of Rock

THE JEALOUS SOUND

Formed: 1999 in Los Angeles, CA

Currently Based: Los Angeles, CA

Members: Blair Shehan—vocals, guitar; Pedro Benito—guitar; John McGinnis—bass, backing vocals; Michel Bravine—drums

Album(s): *The Jealous Sound* (Better Looking, 2000)

Sound: Radio-ready rock that we feel good about

Why You Should Pay Attention: The Jealous Sound cut their teeth on an indie, but they're making the transition to a major in record time. Led by former Knapsack frontman Blair Shehan, the band is attempting to cross over into other arenas with the help of Mojo/Universal—and they may actually succeed. The lyrics are biting and witty, Shehan's soft and subtle voice is mesmerizing, and the band's epic brand of emo-ish rock is just what the radio doctor ordered.

Q&A WITH BLAIR SHEHAN

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in?

It's a transition time right now. It's all super poppy and manufactured, and then there's like metal. But everything is shifting. I just feel like you had the beginning of decades—like the early '90s with grunge and Nirvana, and that became the mainstream, and then anything new was sort of underground, and that would be what the real kids liked, usually. It usually has to do with the economy and where the huge population burst is. So all these kids are like 14 and 12 and 13 and 15 right now, so I think we're running into a bad economy again too, and I think everything will be much darker, and every kid doesn't have a brand new fucking Bug in his driveway. So these kids aren't gonna be quite so bubble gum happy. But I think it's going to switch over to more introspective rock, more songwriting. More kids from that age group are going to college and growing up and have more real things going on in their life than just being a child. I think we make that sort of rock sound, that big rock sound, but at the same time, we pay attention to details and are not overt, and hopefully worthwhile. Hopefully we fit in somewhere in there.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. Why do you think your label decided to take a chance on you? The person who's going to sign us has always been a big fan of Knapsack and really loves music. You have to have somebody at a label that feels that way about you. 'Cause if you don't, it's only going to be about dollar signs, and they're only gonna sign something if it's gonna further their careers. So I think we're relatively palatable to mainstream, in some ways. That's sort of a factor, I guess, but I just think you have to have somebody who believes in you. That makes all the difference in the world.

Were you worried about signing to a major label? Ultimately, why did you choose to sign? No, not at all. But at the same time, everyone complains about it all the time, and you can get screwed so easily. But in general, it's like, they give you the basic tools to do things you wouldn't be able to do normally—some fuel in the tank, so to speak, so you can get your shit together. It's a lot easier than having everyone work really crazy and having to do it in your spare time and having no money and being on the edge of poverty. Personally, I made three albums on indie-rock labels, so to me, I don't want to spend so much time slugging it out and then try to go to another level and do something different. So this way you actually put up or shut—you do what you're supposed to do.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star? Sure. I think everybody that's ever played in a band wants to. It's a great feeling to play places where there's people and they want to see you. But being a rock star, I'm sure, is not everything it's cracked up to be.



Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? I just think in general there's a lot of bands—the possibility of At The Drive-In becoming a popular band, that's just so great to see friends become successful at what they do and actually have people you know changing things. So it's great to see a band like that, and I think they're totally important. Or even The Get Up Kids or Jimmy Eat World. They're gonna help change the face of what's going on, especially in regards to what I do. So it's helpful. They're just gonna broaden the appeal of the genre that we do.

What is the most popular misconception about your band? Um, some people will think that we're a buzz band or that we're really popular. But we're really a tiny band.

What do you guys have planned for 2001? Basically we're doing a tour in February, and then we come back and we have to go make a record and then tour our asses off. Hopefully the record will be done by June or July.

How do you feel about Napster? It's fine. It doesn't really bother me, and I don't think it affects record sales or anything like that. I think it's just a way for people to test things out. I mean, people will ultimately come see you or buy things. If they have a couple songs, they'll probably still buy a record and they'll come to your show, and they'll probably still buy your t-shirt. It just generates interest all around. Maybe if I was a totally established band, then I would think they were stealing money from me. But at this point it's just great exposure, so it doesn't bother me at all.

What happened to Tony Palermo, your old drummer? Basically Tony couldn't be there all the time. The conflict got to where we wanted to keep him, but he couldn't tour with us really, so we were kind of crippled as a band. So he just decided that he would rather do what he was doing and mess around a little bit, and we were kind of getting to the point where we couldn't do that anymore.

How did you come up with the name The Jealous Sound, and what does it mean? I don't know. That's actually a line in a song I had written, and we needed a band name so quickly, and so I just took it from the song. I think it sort of comes out of, kind of like being hungry for stuff, like wanting to be a part of things new. —Erica Jewell

POOR RICH ONES

happy happy happy



U.S. Debut Album
produced by
Mark Trombino



FiveOneInc. www.fiveoneinc.com

Out March 6th

POOR RICH ONES
happy happy happy



U.S. Debut Album produced by Mark Trambino. Out March 6th.



FiveOneInc.
www.fiveoneinc.com

The New Faces Of Rock

TRISTEZA

Formed: 1997 in San Diego, CA

Currently Based: San Diego, CA

Members: Luis Hermosillo—bass; Jimmy Lehner—drums; Christopher Sprague—guitar; Stephen Swesey—keyboards; Jimmy Lavalle—guitar

Album(s): *Dream Signals In Full Circles* (Tiger Style, 2000); *Insound Tour Support Series, Vol. 1* EP (Insound, 1999); *Spine And Sensory* (Makoto, 1999)

Sound: Dreamy and atmospheric instrumental rock

Why You Should Pay Attention: For the past three years Tristeza have used ethereal guitars, sophisticated drum beats and hallucinogenic keyboards to create some of the finest instrumental rock ever recorded. The band members' hardcore backgrounds lend their pretty and smooth songs a heavy dose of energy. Tristeza's remarkable recordings prove that you don't need words to make grand statements.

Q&A WITH JIMMY LEHNER AND JIMMY LAVALLE

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in?

JLe: I think that popular music is kind of suffering right now because there's lots of similar little groups. Whether it's hip-hop or boy bands or the hard-rockin' bands that are out right now—they're all way too similar, way too happy with now, you know? Indie music is pretty good, but I think the independent scene is kind of getting too much like the normal scene. I think we fit in a little under the indie scene, a little more underground.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general?

JLa: As far as important on being on Tiger Style, we'd like to be on a label that's 100 percent completely behind us. There's always like Thrill Jockey and Touch And Go. As far as major labels go, that's not something really important to us.

JLe: To me it's important to not go that route, to not fall for that.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label?

JLe: If we had to do a major, if that was the only choice we had, I'd want to go with Elektra. Just because of the history and the people who are on Elektra now.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star?

JLe: Yeah, sure, just because that's how you can relate to music at first. You get turned on by some big rocker, and you picture yourself as being that.

JLa: I think the whole rock-star thing is pretty stupid. Just because, you know, nobody's better than anybody else, everyone's on the same level. There's no reason to put anybody on a pedestal.

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist?

JLa: I've been listening to Broadcast. They're pretty much already up there, but I think they're going to reach a broader audience.

JLe: Because they just put out their first proper album. Yeah, they're the best band out right now.

What is the most popular misconception about your band?

JLa: That we're stuck up.

JLe: That we're just like a new-age, mellow band. There's a misconception that we're soft and mellow.

What do you have planned for 2001?

JLe: In February we're supposed to go to Europe for a five-week tour. And then on March 18th we're supposed to go to Japan for a week-and-a-half tour.



PHOTO: MARIAH ROBERTSON


What do you think of the scene in San Diego?

JLa: Here I don't think there's much support for one another. San Diego is a real lazy town.

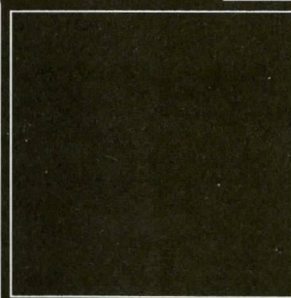
How do audiences in San Diego differ from the crowds on the road?

JLe: Sometimes it's pretty similar. If people are loose enough and tipsy enough, it'll be a good crowd. The worst crowds are the ones that are paying half attention. When in between songs, when you stop all you can hear is chatter and talking. Those are the worst crowds—there have been crowds like that here.

How important is the producer's role in the recording process?

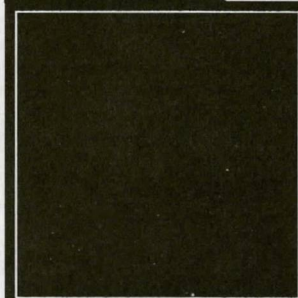
JLa: I think that producers are a very important part of recording, just because they can bring out things, suggest ideas. They're an outside source.
—Gordon Downs 

LOST KIDS



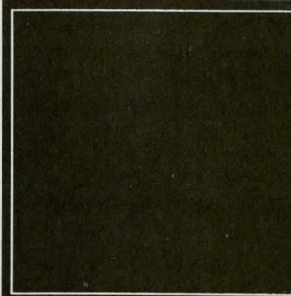
12"/CDEP EX-STARLITE DESPERATION

HEART OF SNOW



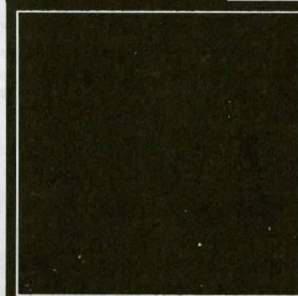
12" EP

THE LOCUST



7"/CDEP NEW LINEUP, NEW SONGS

THE PATTERN



7" EX-PEE CHEES, TALK IS POISON, CUTS



GOLD STANDARD LABORATORIES

available from **THREE ONE G MAILORDER:** www.threeoneg.com
available from **INDEPENDENT MUSIC DISTRIB.:** www.imuscd.com

The New Faces Of Rock

THE FAINT

Formed: 1997 in Omaha, NE

Currently Based: Omaha, NE

Members: Todd Baechle—vocals, synthesizer; Jacob Thiele—synthesizer; Joel Petersen—bass; Clark Baechle—drums

Album(s): *Blank-Wave Arcade* 12-inch remix picture disc (Saddle Creek, 2000); *Insound Tour Support Series, Vol. 13* split EP (Insound, 2000); *Blank-Wave Arcade* (Saddle Creek, 1999); *Media* (Saddle Creek, 1998)

Sound: The new new wave—indie-rock kids trade in their guitars for synthesizers

Why You Should Pay Attention: The Faint are helping to bring back new wave, and are making it sound new again in the process. They've also been able to translate their recorded sound into a phenomenal live experience filled with energy, enthusiasm and about a dozen light bulbs. And if that wasn't enough, the boys are all cute as hell.

Q&A WITH TODD BAECHELE

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in? The independent-music scene seems to be pulling out of a rut. We are expecting more originality and great things to come from the indie world, which in turn will fuel the major labels with talent. Although we don't sound like any of the other bands on Saddle Creek Records, they're the only musical community we feel a special bond with. Other than that we try to avoid squarely fitting into any specific musical genre.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general? Indie labels are based on a love of the music. They are crucial to the creative momentum of music. It's great that any-

one can put out anything, although it can make it difficult to find the quality acts. I don't expect major labels to invest or participate in the artistic aspects of music. It is a monetarily motivated business, but I think it's great when they do support bands that I find credible. They have such an enormous power over what people listen to.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label? It would be a very unfair deal for the record label. We drive a hard bargain.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star? What do you mean "wish"?

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? Bright Eyes.

What is the most popular misconception about your band? That we sit around listening to new-wave music every day.

What do you have planned for 2001? We are writing a new record now that we plan to record in March. After we finish the artwork we will learn how to play our songs and update our live show.

Some of you spend part of your time as Bright Eyes' backing band. If you could be the backing band for any other artist, living or dead, who would it be? If we could back any band, it would probably be Motley Crüe—first two albums only.

How do you feel that coming from Omaha has helped or hindered your career as a band? Omaha is a bustling metropolis. It's the next big music city. You know, Detroit, Seattle, Austin ... Omaha! It's helping us—we are riding the wave. —Heidi Anne-Noel **LU**

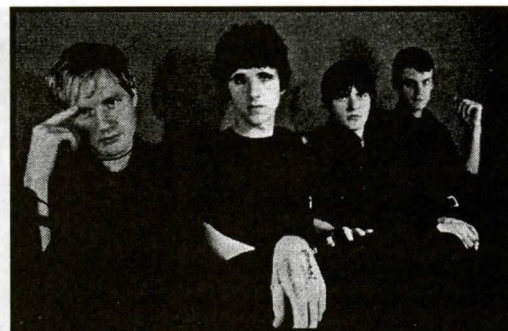


PHOTO: JIHA LEE

- 1 MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD/The Dropper
- 2 REEVES GABRELS/Ulysses (Delta Notte)
- 3 ARSONWELLES/Inside the System is the Spark
- 4 GARAGELAND/Do What You Want
- 5 GOOD LIFE/Novena on a Nocturn
- 6 MODEST MOUSE/Night on the Sun 12"
- 7 KILOWATTHOURS/Strain of Positive Thinking
- 8 ROCK*A*TEENS/Sweet Bird of Youth
- 9 DOVES/Lost Souls
- 10 FRENCHKICKS/Young Lawyer
- 11 YO LA TENGO/Danelectro
- 12 MARK ROBINSON/Tiger Banana
- 13 SERATONIN/Uptake
- 14 SONGS: OHIA/Ghost Tropic
- 15 BLACK WATCH/Lime Green Girl
- 16 MATES OF STATE/My Solo Project
- 17 SHIPPING NEWS/Very Soon, and in Pleasant Company
- 18 ELECTRO GROUP/A New Pacifica
- 19 LLAMA FARMERS/EI Toppo
- 20 RAINER MARIA/A Better Version of Me
- 21 GENTLE WAVES/Swansong For You
- 22 NOURALLAH BROTHERS/Nourallah Brothers
- 23 FRANK BLACK AND THE CATHOLICS/Dog in the Sand
- 24 JAPANESE/The Sleepy Strange
- 25 DEATH BY CHOCOLATE/Death by Chocolate

3WK Undergroundradio
most played albums
January 2001

(wouldn't you rather
be listening
than reading?)

internet-only radio



undergroundradio
www.3wk.com

The New Faces Of Rock

KOUFAX

Formed: 1999 in Detroit, MI and Northwest Ohio

Currently Based: Detroit, MI, Toledo, OH, and Bowling Green, OH

Members: Jared Rosenberg—pianos, organ, keyboards; Andrew Cameron—bass; Robert Suchan—vocals, guitar; Dave Shettler—drums, theremin, backing vocals; Sean Grogan—synthesizer, organ, keyboards

Album(s): *It Had To Do With Love* (Heroes & Villains/Vagrant, 2000); *Koufax* EP (Doghouse, 1999)

Sound: Unabashed piano rock

Why You Should Pay Attention: Koufax are throwbacks to the glorious days of '70s piano rock, and there isn't a pandering note in their act: their appreciation for such light-rock artists as Billy Joel and Elton John is completely genuine, and they pull off their derivation off without a trace of irony. The synthesizers and piano supply the loose, feel-good rhythms, while singer Robert Suchan despairs with whimsy about love. Their first full-length, *It Had To Do With Love*, is a lovely romp through the music of their childhood, with a pinch of emo added for extra flavor.

Q&A WITH ROBERT SUCHAN

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in?

The current state of popular music is very predictable. You have angst in teenagers, so they want aggressive music, and that will never die, whether it's punk or hard or heavy. But also, with popular music in the last year, it's like, what is popular music? Everyone right now is doing countdowns of greatest artists, as if music's done for. That music's already been made, you know? It's so over-characterized, it's taken way too seriously, and it's almost a parody of itself. Where we are as a band all has to do with The Get Up Kids. That being said, we're marketing towards who they sell records to. On the tour, I thought, *Okay, I don't want people buying the records saying we're a pop-punk, emo band.* I was just hoping we'd play shows and people would like what we were doing, and who cares what we are? Someone made the joke that we were adult contemporary when we put out this record, and it's not really a joke.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general? It's very important for us to know that someone is believing in what we're doing, and if it doesn't sell X amount of units by month two, that you're still going to have this feeling that there's a genuine interest from the company in what you're doing. Major labels are scary because it's a business, and I understand that. Anyone who doesn't is fooling themselves. That being said, with what we discussed regarding the state of popular music, it's very important for a band to be on an independent label if they want to do what they want to do.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label? Of course. Yeah, we would do it tomorrow. I mean, for us, it's the money. We're a very expensive band to record. That would be the impetus. We're a band that wants to work with a producer. We believe in the producer being the sixth member. And it costs a lot of money to work with someone whose work you respect and who works often. I mean, you also want to record in a nice studio with lots of time. Major labels can make all of these things happen. But the other end of it is that they can make all of these things happen and then make it end the next day.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock



star? Oh, of course I do. But the game now isn't how it was a decade ago. Back then you'd have a record in the charts for a couple of years. Now it's like five minutes. So that's something that's so depressing. I think I have a fear of getting to the top, to that level, and then dropping. And that comes with the territory of being on top. Someone is always going to be next in line.

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? I probably should have prepared for this. I'll just say right now, a band I really like because they are able to drag out all these influences are The Dandy Warhols. They don't take themselves too seriously, and I think they write pretty good songs.

What is the most popular misconception about your band? That our music is tongue-in-cheek.

What do you have planned for 2001? It's so boring. As of right now, I can tell you nothing. We have no plans. We're just going to continue to support this record.

Koufax seem to be heavily influenced by piano bands. Do you enjoy Billy Joel and Elton John? Yeah, yeah, we love that kind of stuff. But we like everything, and why not?

You're signed to The Get Up Kids' Heroes & Villains imprint. How did The Get Up Kids find out about you? I had been friends with The Get Up Kids for a long time. I had actually roadied for them. The older label that we were on, Doghouse Records, was the same one they were on, and I met them through the guy who runs Doghouse. I had kept in contact with them and it was like, "Oh, you're in this band Koufax—let's hear it." So the EP came out on Doghouse, they heard it and liked it, and wanted to work with us. At that point they sort of took us on and gave us the tour with them. We would really probably be doing nothing if it wasn't for them. We completely acknowledge that. It's so hard for a band to start out without somebody sort of putting on hype. We cut so many corners by having a very popular band take us on tour with them.

With a name like Koufax, I was wondering if you're big baseball fans. Sandy Koufax, unless you're a pretty big sports fanatic and/or Jewish, I don't think you really know who Sandy Koufax is. So it wasn't like naming your band Canseco or anything. It just really had to do with the word and how it felt and sounded. And if anyone asks, I just say Sandy Koufax was a left-handed pitcher for the Brooklyn Dodgers and he was Jewish. —Erica Jewell

Koufax contributed the previously unreleased "On The Bright Side" to this issue's limited-edition seven-inch.

The New Faces Of Rock

MATES OF STATE

Formed: 1997 in Lawrence, KS

Currently Based: San Francisco, CA

Members: Kori Gardner—vocals, organ; Jason Hammel—vocals, drums

Album(s): *My Solo Project* (Omnibus, 2000)

Sound: Quirky, playful, organ-fueled pop

Why You Should Pay Attention: Though Quasi are perhaps the best-known duo making glorious pop songs with organ and drums, Mates Of State have arrived to give Sam Coomes and Janet Weiss a run for their money. Ever since organist/singer Kori Gardner and drummer/singer Jason Hammel—who, unlike Coomes and Weiss, are headed toward marriage instead of away from it—formed the band while they were still playing guitar and singing in Vosotros, Mates Of State have started turning heads with their joyous, unorthodox tunes. The band's debut LP, *My Solo Project*—recorded at San Francisco's Tiny Telephone with John Croslin (Spoon, Guided By Voices, Creeper Lagoon)—is full of energetic rhythms, exquisite melodies and dreamy harmonies that are so well executed you'll kick yourself for ever thinking Mates Of State could be a novelty act.

Q&A WITH KORI GARDNER AND JASON HAMMEL

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in?

KG: I have this gut feeling that there's a huge upswing happening with independent music. I feel like it goes in waves, and I feel like the last five years it's kind of been down more, as opposed to like seven years ago. And that might be partly because we're introduced to different kinds of music living here, you know, and seeing pop as opposed to other stuff. I don't know what it's from, I just think that it's kind of on an upswing, and I hope that we're part of that.

JH: I would say that the state of popular music is in shambles right now. But right underneath the radar, though, there's a lot of activity, and I think it's exciting, and something could happen.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general?

JH: For me, with an independent label, what I like about it is you're working on your band rather than allowing somebody else to work on it. It's fun to call people and try to set up shows and do all the grunt work. That's fun, because you get this goal and you're like, "Yeah, we did that with all this hard work." And that's what feels good about it.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label?

KG: I'm open to hear things from anybody. I would never do something that didn't feel honest or feel right.

JH: It just depends. Every band's situation and their relationship with their labels are different.

KG: This is the first record we've ever put out. I don't really know how it works—anything, I mean, even as far as independent labels—we just know what we do. So I don't really know.

JH: I'm having a good time learning it ourselves. We don't really foresee that happening.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star?

KG: Yeah. Come on, everybody has. That's like saying, "Have you ever danced naked in front of a mirror?"

JH: Naked?

KG: Yeah, naked. Who hasn't done that? If people say they haven't done that, they're lying.

JH: Of course you want to play shows and have people see you. Otherwise you just play music at your house, and you wouldn't ever play out.

KG: My rock-star fantasy is so not how I am, and not what would ever happen anyway. Remember when we were at the practice space not too long ago and we were each taking turns taking the mic and dancing and running around the room? I would never do that in front of people, but it's fun to pretend.

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist?

JH: That Death Cab For Cutie—I think that's really good.

KG: This band's already like up and come, but Blonde Redhead. For years

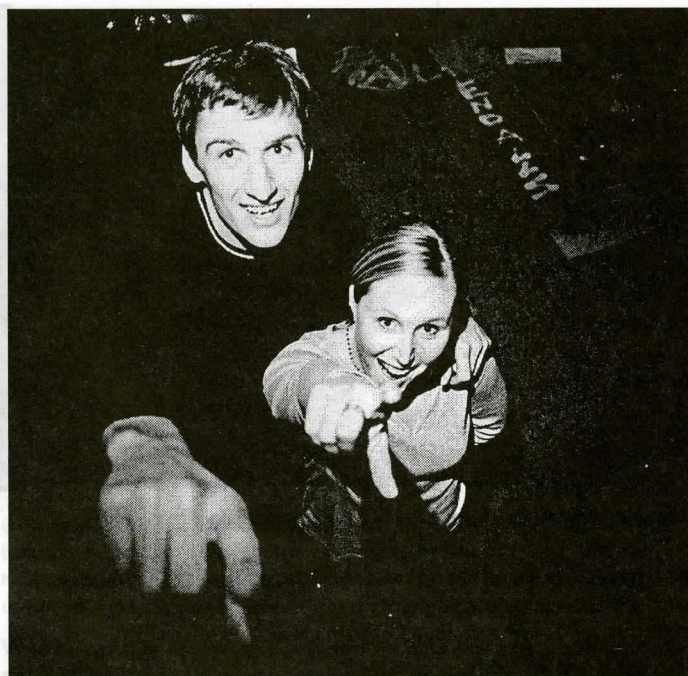


PHOTO: PETER ELLENBY

they've been a staple in the whole, whatever, scene. And they still, I think, are doing it right, and they still change and they still get better.

What is the most popular misconception about your band?

JH: The first impression people get when they hear what the instrumental make-up is and that we're intimate is that we're immediately comparable to that band that starts with Q.

What do you have planned for 2001?

JH: We're quitting our jobs [Gardner is an elementary-school teacher; Hammel works at a women's cancer center]. We're gonna go on the road.

KG: We definitely want to hit the road and have fun with that, and record another album.

JH: We're gonna try to write some songs and record them starting in like the beginning of the summer, and then release the record like in September before we hit the road.

KG: We're getting married in between then.

JH: Oh, I forgot that. In July we're getting married, so July is shot. Record maybe June and August. Hopefully we'll have the second record ready to go by the time we get on the road.

You mentioned that at one point you used guitars in Mates Of State. When you practice, do you just stick to the organ and drums, or do you sometimes pull out the guitars?

KG: We haven't dug any of the guitars out—I mean, they're seriously full of dust.

JH: Except for when we have to do the wedding songs.

KG: We've had a bunch of sibling weddings—

JH: They ask us to play songs at their wedding. Like country songs.

KG: We're actually thinking about putting an album out of all the cover songs we've done at weddings. Like "From This Moment"—Shania Twain.

JH: And Tim McGraw. I think they sent us the music once, where we actually had to learn their parts. Other than that we just listen to the tape and sort of modify it a little bit to our liking.

KG: It's fun. You know when you were talking about dreaming of being a rock star? The only way we can do those songs is like—when we're there, we'll be like, "God, this sounds horrible, I'm embarrassed!" And then we're like—

JH: "Do it like Shania would do it!"

What are the pros and cons of being in a band with your significant other?

JH: Are there any cons?

KG: I don't think there are any cons. We were talking about this earlier today, but it's like, I can't even remember what it was like being in a band with people who you didn't see 24/7. I know it was a lot harder though.

KG: Really, the biggest pro to it, I think, is being able to say whatever the hell you want to say and not feel like, "I can't say that, I'm going to hurt their feelings." If we don't like something we just flat out tell each other—it's not a problem.

JH: You can be really impulsive too, and it doesn't matter. You don't have to be as sort of considerate of your other band members, because we're kind of on the same schedule. On a whim you can do whatever. —Marc Hawthorne **Ψ**

The New Faces Of Rock

SADDLE CREEK RECORDS

Formed: 1993 in Omaha, NE, as Lumberjack Records—name changed to Saddle Creek Records in 1996

Currently Based: Omaha, NE

Owner: Robb Nansel

Current Roster: Cursive, Bright Eyes, The Faint, Lullaby For The Working Class, Son, Ambulance, Sorry About Dresden, May Day

Releases Will Appeal To: Fans of everything ranging from synth-pop to lo-fi singer/songwriters to alt-country

2001 Releases: January 22: *Oh Holy Fools—The Music Of Son, Ambulance And Bright Eyes* split LP; Spring: Cursive EP; Summer: *The Faint LP*; Son, Ambulance LP; Fall: *Sorry About Dresden LP*; TBA: *May Day LP*

Web Address: www.saddle-creek.com

Why You Should Pay Attention: Most of the best indie labels have gained prominence by successfully documenting a regional scene, and Saddle Creek follows in that tradition. If it wasn't for Saddle Creek, most of us would have no idea that Omaha has such a thriving and diverse musical underground. Though no two bands on the label sound alike, they all share a commitment to quality songwriting.

Q&A WITH ROBB NANSEL

Why did you decide to start your label? Saddle Creek started as Lumberjack Records in 1993. It was started by Conor Oberst and his brother so that they could release Conor's cassette. At that point it was more of a theory than a functioning label. However, over the next few years, the rest of our friends began to make really great music, so those records started coming out on Lumberjack as well. In 1996, I decided that there was too much great stuff coming out, and I wanted to make sure people started to hear it. I didn't want these records to get lost and not make it out of Omaha, so I took over the label and started seeking national distribution and really started to promote the bands. We ran across Lumberjack Distribution and we therefore changed the name to Saddle Creek.

Considering the state of mainstream music and the narrow focus of major labels, do you think indie labels are more important now than they have ever been in promoting up-and-coming bands? I think indie labels are integral in promoting up-and-coming bands. The major labels don't seem too interested in artist development and building careers. They seem more concerned with hits, and I think it is a good idea for bands to develop themselves and their fanbase on smaller labels rather than jumping to a major and putting the future of their band in jeopardy.

Some significant indie labels have recently closed shop, including Simple Machines, Trance Syndicate and Amphetamine Reptile. How do you keep afloat? What is the secret to your success? I am not sure why those labels closed shop, but I would guess that it had more to do with the label owners growing tired of the business rather than them actually going broke. I mean, none of those labels started putting out records to make a bunch of money. They started putting out records because they love music and they wanted to work with music as their life. However, when you start running a label and after you have run a label for 15 years, I am sure it starts to drain you, and I think people forget about why they even started running a label in the first place. It is a tough job and I think people get tired of doing it after a while. They would rather be fans of music again and not working in the music business. I still love music, but my outlook on it is completely different now than it was when I was just a fan. I would like to think that I will always do Saddle Creek, but I don't know if that is what will end up

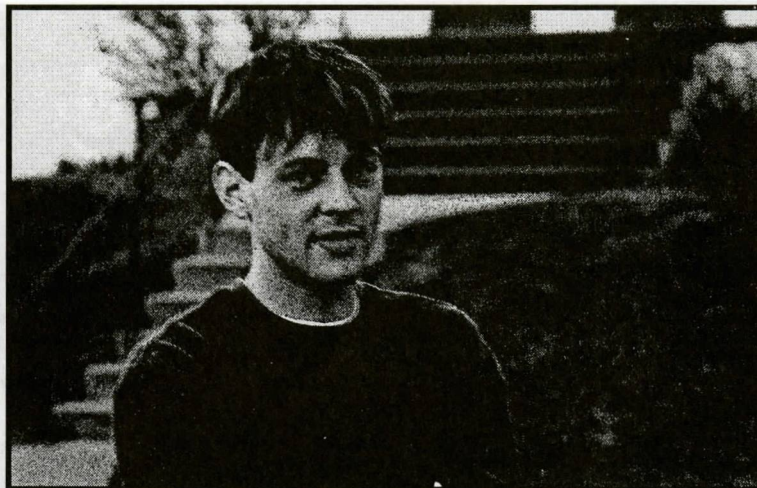


PHOTO: ROB WALTERS

happening. And at the point where I decide I have had enough, I don't know that there is going to be somebody else there with the same amount of passion that is willing to take it over. I would guess the people at Simple Machines wanted a change and wanted to do something else with themselves, and I think they were probably better off to end it at such a great point than to sell it or give it away to someone who did not have the same passion. At that point they would have watched it all turn into something they never wanted it to be.

If one of your bands was courted by a major label, would you support its decision to sign? It depends on the situation. I would want the band to do what they wanted and to do what was in their best interest. If signing to a major label was what they wanted to do, and we all thought it was the best decision for them, then yes, I would support it. However, there are so few situations where I would think that was in a band's best interest. There are exceptions though, for sure.

What is your label's mission statement? We don't have one per se, but we want to continue to put out music by people that we love and to continue to support the music and people that have always supported us.

What is the most popular misconception about your label? I don't think people realize that all the bands and myself are friends who all grew up in Omaha and continue to make music together. People think Saddle Creek is more of a traditional record label, where some guy came up with a business plan to start a record company and went around the country to sign bands. For us, Saddle Creek began as a hobby to document what we were doing musically, and that is essentially what it continues to be.

What is the best thing about running your label? The best thing about running Saddle Creek is getting to do what I want. I always wanted to grow up and be able to do Saddle Creek full-time, and now I do that.

What is the worst/most difficult thing about running your label? The most difficult thing about running Saddle Creek is time management. I mean, Saddle Creek is more than just my job. It is my life and my passion. So it is difficult to separate my personal life and the label because they are essentially one in the same. That is tough because I can never really escape it. I don't get to clock out at five and go home without my job. That is not an option. And to try and maintain separation seems to be the most difficult thing.

Not including bands on your label, who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? There is this band I just heard the other day called Radiohead. I think they are from Europe. I really think they are going to make a huge impact someday.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to start a label? Do it. If you want to start a label, then you should. But you have to love it. You have to be willing to give up lots of freedoms, and you have to realize that you are not going to get noticed for a long time. Things will be tough and you will wonder if it is worth it, but if you really love music and want to help bands, then it can be the most rewarding thing in the world. We need more passionate labels.

—Debi Waltman

The New Faces Of Rock

JAPANCAKES

Formed: 1998 in Athens, GA

Currently Based: Athens, GA

Members: Eric Berg—guitar; Brant Rackley—drums; Nick Bielli—bass; Todd Kelly—keyboards; Heather McIntosh—cello; John Neff—pedal steel

Album(s): *The Sleepy Strange* (Kindercore, 2001); *Down The Elements EP* (Kindercore, 2000); *If I Could See Dallas* (Kindercore, 1999)

Sound: Hypnotic and experimental instrumental music with wide range

Why You Should Pay Attention: Japancakes are proof that modern rock and Ritalin don't necessarily need to go hand in hand. Their unorthodox brand of instrumental music incorporates elements of classic rock, old-school country, classical music and a moderate dose of modern trance. Japancakes are heavy on the cello and pedal steel, and thrive on repetition—they often take time to develop melodies and harmonies over the course of 10, 15, or sometimes even 20 minutes of fiddling with the same chord progressions. Leader Eric Berg puts a premium on patience and experimentation. In doing so, Japancakes have crafted instrumental music that is so unique and interesting it loosens the longstanding stranglehold on the genre imposed by such European bands as Air and Mogwai, while at the same time challenging our perceptions about what instrumental music has to be.

Q&A WITH BRANT RACKLEY

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in? I'm a big fan of older music. I don't really buy too much of the newer stuff, but from what I've been reading and hearing, it seems like there are a lot of really good things happening, and I've been really happy about the way that instrumental music has sort of taken off. I guess it has always been there, but I'm happy that people are getting into it a lot more. I'm glad there are tons of smaller bands getting recognition. I hope it's not a phase. I hope we aren't seeing a lot of these little bands get a lot of attention and then there will be nothing left when this phase is gone.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general? I think Kindercore is really important. I think they have done great. I've been living in Athens for a long time, and I can remember when they were just making tapes in their basement. And now they are a pretty notable name in college music. It's pretty impressive, and I'm glad there are labels like these who have not given up. In the whole large scheme of things, having these little labels can be confusing, but if one or two of them can make some noise, I think it's fantastic.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label? We have talked to a few, and we are very interested in getting our record out to as many people possible and to get to the point where we are doing this for a living. But all in all, Kindercore has been great to us, and it's a tough decision. If you sign a deal you can end up in a Catch-22 where you aren't selling the way a label wants and you only get one record. When I think of major labels for us, I don't think about labels like Sony or Interscope, but more like Merge or Matador, where the labels are pretty damn big but they also seem to run things well and give a lot of freedom.

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star? I used to jump off my parents' bathtub to Van Halen. But as I got



older and have played in some bands and seen how things work, fame has become more scary to me. I like recognition for what I do, but too much might make me freak out. I'd probably become a hermit or something. I understand why people get weird when they get big and famous.

Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? Well, my particular favorite band right now is The Glands. They are from Athens too, and they got signed to Capricorn. The leader, Ross Shapiro, is insane. He's just got hundreds of songs that are fantastic ... classic in the sense of Rolling Stones/Tom Petty rock, but they have just a little bit to them that makes them sound like the new independent sound. If they can get their name out there I think they will have a big impact. I also like Grandaddy and Death Cab For Cutie. I can listen to the new Death Cab record over and over again. I'd also like to say Wilco, but I think that band has made it. [Laughs.] They've crossed the line.

What is the most popular misconception about your band?

Everything I read goes back to this idea that our first show was just us playing one chord for 45 minutes. It was a little bit different than that. We do actually write songs, they just run a little bit longer because we each take about five minutes to really start feeling what is going on. Then it becomes a 35-minute song.

What do you have planned for 2001? We're going to play South By Southwest, and then do some touring after that. But it will take us some time to get around the country. There are plans for an EP or two, and maybe a live album.

What about your name—are there misconceptions about that?

We were actually worried that people would think we were making fun of Japan. The actual story is that Nick [Bielli] and Eric [Berg] and I were all working at the same restaurant in town when our manager, Joe, called up one day completely drunk and told us he had a name for our band. He said, "Japancakes," and then threw up in the trashcan. It seemed catchy enough, so we kept it.

The new record will surprise people who are foolish enough to "expect" something from Japancakes. What can you say to prepare people for the changes in your sound? It's a lot less electronic. It's a little more stripped down. Melodies came towards the end of the recording this time, as where the first time we started with the melodies and they were kind of what the songs were based around. There aren't as many of those little samples or hooks that are going to be completely played through the song. I think that it was a lot easier to do this one. We wanted to do a more stripped-down record so that we could actually play the stuff live.

One way you might describe your band's sound is "soundtrack-ish." Are there any plans to get Japancakes on the big screen? I think Kindercore is starting a licensing department so some of the bands can get into commercials and the movies. I think Eric was approached by some bigger movies about getting a song on a soundtrack, and we would love to do that. When I think of music, I usually see it more visually, and I think our music really fits into that category. —Brian Conant

The New Faces Of Rock

FIVER

Formed: 1995 in Modesto, CA

Currently Based: Modesto, CA

Members: Dave Woody—vocals, guitar; Chris Doud—guitar; Zach Egenberger—drums; Luis Fregoso—bass; Dan Lillie—keyboards; Sean Duncan—keyboards

Album(s): *Strings For Satellites* (Devil In The Woods, 2000); *Eventually Something Cool Will Happen* (Devil In The Woods, 1998)

Sound: Dynamic and melodic pop that knows how to rock

Why You Should Pay Attention: Fiver have been very patient and are obviously paying as much attention to how they are growing as musicians as to music happening around them. What's unique about their sound can be found in the way they tap the shoulders of some of the more hip rock formulas only to dodge in another direction to avoid recognition. They are reflective and intriguing at times, but not with a strictly indie or emo aesthetic. Dynamically, Fiver rank right up there with more angular, explorative post-punk stuff, but they don't include dissonant chord structures and stop/start punctuation, preferring instead to move the listener from place to place with a gentle push and pull. The band has received a lot of attention in the last couple years for its two full-length releases, both of which just got picked up by English indie Fierce Panda. Expect more great work from this Modesto quintet, and keep an eye out for the bands that come tapping on its shoulders.



PHOTO: PETER ELLENBY

Q&A WITH DAVE WOODY

What are your opinions on the current state of popular and independent music, and where do you feel your band fits in? Music you are inundated with from the media is bubble gum crappy crap. The lo-fi, indie-type bands seem to be the people that used to be into punk that learned how to write really good songs, chord structures, and to play different kinds of instruments. I don't know where we fit in. We're just trying to write the songs as we like them and hope that other people appreciate them.

As major labels continue to merge, their focus has become increasingly narrow, to the point where they're rarely willing to take any chances on up-and-coming bands. How important is it for you to be on the indie label you're on? How important do you think indie labels are in general? The attitude of my label has been to be really supportive. They've really helped us grow and mature. I think indie labels are pretty much the only thing keeping good music alive.

If you had the opportunity, would you consider signing to a major label? [Devil In The Woods Records owner] Mike Cloward and I, we've talked about it before, and we've been like, "Well, Fiver could just do one or two records for a major label, and when they drop us, we can go back on Devil In The Woods." [Laughs.]

Have you ever secretly wished that you could be a big rock star? Well ... every kid does. You think it would be so awesome if I could just go up onstage and play a chord on your guitar and have everyone scream. Then you actually play in front of a hundred people, and you're shaking and nervous. Then your string breaks.

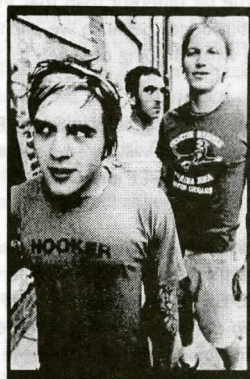
Who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? Death Cab For Cutie is probably on the top of the list.

What is the most popular misconception about your band? Sometimes people seem to think that there's this Modesto "scene" going on. Like, with Grandaddy and everybody. Of course they've been an influence, but when I listen to the music, I don't hear too many similarities. We're looking for our own sound, and I think we've found it.

What do you have planned for 2001? No tour plans. The U.K. release of *Strings For Satellites* is coming out in June, and we have some outtake tracks we recorded in July that will be released as bonus tracks on that album, or as b-sides on a few different things. We did a radio session in London in October, and that will probably be released as a limited seven-inch.

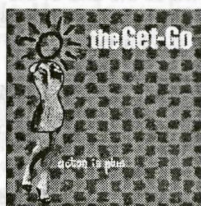
How do you feel a recognized scene might help a band? All the recognition for this city has totally helped us and made people pay attention to us.

At any time, did you ever wish that you were a San Francisco band? Do you think you could be as successful as an SF band? We don't make money off of the band, so it would be difficult to be there right now. For a while we were really into moving to SF, but over time we decided it's really nice to live in a small town that allows us time to grow and mature. To make an impact there, it seems you have to really get on it and do it right away. We had time to, y'know, kinda suck for a while first before we found our niche. —Donovan Pierce

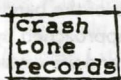


"...the Get-Go mix earnest pop whine with propulsive indie rock"

- NoisePop 2000 Program guide



Action is Plus
full-length CD
available now at Bay Area record stores and amazon.com



p.o. box 641421 • sf, ca 94164-1421
cd's \$10 ppd - checks payable to christopher banks
http://theGet-Go.com • email: info@theGet-Go.com

photo: Peter Ellenby

the Get-Go

The New Faces Of Rock

TIGER STYLE RECORDS

Formed: 1999 in New York, NY, as an outgrowth of Insound

Currently Based: New York, NY

Owners: Insound; managed by Mike Treff and Ari Sass

Current Roster: The Letter E, Aspera Ad Astra, The Mercury Program, Libranness, Ida, Her Space Holiday, Tristeza, The Album Leaf

Releases Will Appeal To: Fans of indie rock, electronica, dreamy pop, psychedelic, post-rock and shoegazer

2001 Releases: Spring: The Mercury Program *All The Suits Began To Fall* Off EP, Ida *The Braille Night* LP, The Album Leaf LP, Tristeza *Remixes* LP, Yume Bitsu/Andrew Reiger split 12-inch; TBA: Her Space Holiday LP, The Mercury Program LP

Web Address: www.tigerstylerrecords.com

Why You Should Pay Attention: Tiger Style is on its way to becoming the crash pad for today's more mature and progressive indie-rock, shoegazer, electronica, post-rock and dream-pop bands by giving genre-melding experimentation a place to land. The scion of online music, art and literature retailer Insound, Tiger Style has been targeting high-caliber artists since well before it even started. Like Insound, Tiger Style hasn't been shy about flaunting its knack for spotting a great band. The artwork and aesthetic of the label is top-notch, and the website is inviting and easy to navigate, designed to showcase its artists and their music rather than trap the user with incessant "buy now" links. It's like strolling into a swank jewelry dealer and casually looking over the displays as the attendant confidently waits for you to find the piece you just can't do without.

Q&A WITH MIKE TREFF

Why did you decide to start your label? We looked at where Insound was and the kind of things they were doing, like the Tour Support Series. It's tough for a band to tour, and having merch really helps. We split costs on EPs with touring bands and pressed 1,000 copies. The band had 500 to sell on the road and we had 500 on the site. We thought, *Why not just turn this into a label, work with the bands we really love, and create a really great label?* That's kinda how it started.

Considering the state of mainstream music and the narrow focus of major labels, do you think indie labels are more important now than they have ever been in promoting up-and-coming bands? Major labels put out up-and-coming bands all the time, it's just not the kind of music I'm into. Independent labels are getting bigger audiences by putting out quality music. They are taking people away from that mainstream world and offering them an option.

Some significant indie labels have recently closed shop, including Simple Machines, Trance Syndicate and Amphetamine Reptile. How do you keep afloat? What is the secret to your success? Considering we're only a year old, that question's tough. You need to align what you can do with what you want to do, and at the same time be realistic about what you consider success to be.

If one of your bands was courted by a major label, would you support its decision to sign? I can't make an across-the-board statement like that. If a band wants to go down that route and it makes them happy, I'm all for it. If I think it's a bad situation I'll voice that opinion very clearly.

What is your label's mission statement? We just want to put out records by bands we love, work with them over the long term to really build their careers, and build our label together. To really focus on artist development is pretty much where we come to with everything.

What is the most popular misconception about your label? People think we're a lot bigger than we really are.


What is the best thing about running your label?

Working with our bands.

What is the worst/most difficult thing about running your label?

The worst thing is we can't do everything we want, because there aren't enough resources. The most difficult thing is separating my work and my life, because that's impossible to do.

Not including bands on your label, who do you consider to be the most important up-and-coming artist? Up-and-coming, again, I guess, is coming from the indie perspective. Two electronic artists—While and Arovane. Sigur Rós is out of control. Dead Meadow are insane.

What advice would you give to someone who wanted to start a label? Make sure you're doing what you want to do and your heart's in it, or you're not going to be successful. Though I'm really not in a position yet to give advice to others. —Donovan Pierce 



endearingrecords

mp3's at www.endearing.com • free cd samplers with orders

new and upcoming (artist. description. résumé)

caribbean. skewed art pop from dc. members of townies and smart went crazy.

novillero. winnipeg pop 6 piece. members of duotang, transonic. (feb)

twlgs. melodic noise pop from norway. 2nd full length. (mar)

projektor. aggressive, moody, dark. members of kittens, leaderhouse and meatrack. (apr)

repressings (artist. description. résumé)

bonaudces. winnipeg melodic punk. 2nd album, members of b'ehl, kicker and the paperbacks.

painted thin. classic winnipeg punk record. members of the weakerthans, b'ehl and sixty stories.



po box 69009. winnipeg. manitoba. canada. r3p2g9
www.endearing.com info@endearing.com
 cds: \$13 cnd. 11 us. 13 usos lps: \$14 cnd. 12 us. 15 usos

Sunrise, Sunset

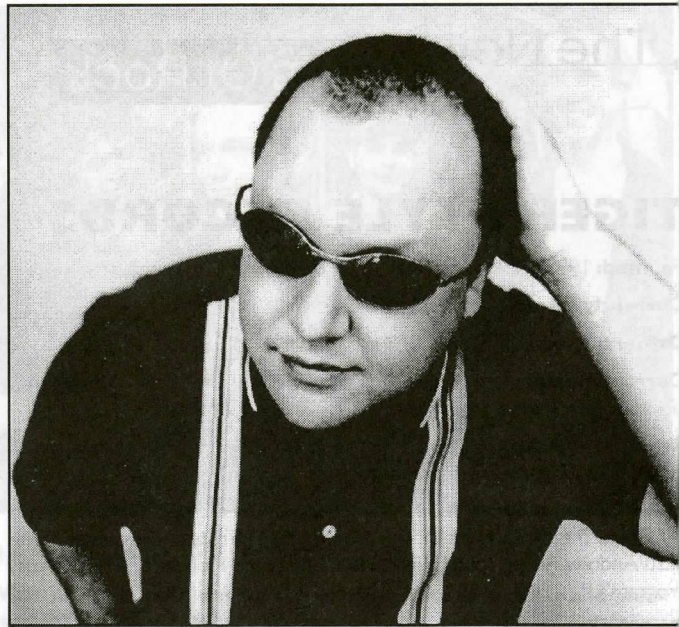
DAVID LOWERY and **BLACK FRANCIS** were the leaders of two of the most inventive, thought-provoking bands to get college-radio airplay in the '80s. But while **CAMPER VAN BEETHOVEN** and **THE PIXIES** seemed incapable of doing anything wrong, Lowery (with **CRACKER**) and Francis (who now records as **FRANK BLACK**) just can't seem to get anything right. Jeremiah McNichols digs beneath their fresh excretions to remind us of all the wonderful things they used to make.

It's a tired old saw, but it's true: We are made music lovers when we realize that music can do more than our parents let on. One day you're listening to Anne Murray and maybe Janis Joplin and certainly the tape of "Cats" that reminds you of the time you saw it when you were 10—and does have a few songs you really like—and the next day you're reciting "Wham Rap '86" while your father sets down his fork in horror. There's a good chance, though, that a kid who listens well will learn something more than how to flip the Oedipal bird that '80s hair bands and baby-boomer rock historians in Hollywood have conspired to present as teens' sole attraction to music. Infuriating our parents with our musical tastes only works as long as they get angry about it, and most of us, as

In the mid-'80s, Camper Van Beethoven and The Pixies were at the center of it all, and they worked together: If you couldn't figure out one of them, chances are you'd love the other.

much as we wanted to rebel, weren't lucky enough to have parents as aesthetically antagonistic as the classic Beastie Boys' call-to-arms allowed us to pretend. Rebellion may have brought us to the trough, but those who stayed for that alone were quickly weeded out by heavy metal, Satanism and teen pregnancy. What the rest of us really learned, beyond our desire to distance ourselves from our elders, was that music did not have to be confined to the concerns, the sounds and the forms of expression we learned at home. And for those of us who came of age between 1985 and 1990, chances are that this psychic rewiring had something to do with The Pixies, or with Camper Van Beethoven, or both.

When it comes to pop music, the primary things to be learned, or unlearned, have never changed—that songs can progress in unpredictable rather than tightly structured ways, can discuss subjects other than love or even human relationships, and can explain themselves through strategies that make repeated listening a cumulative experience rather than a simple, repetitive enjoyment of what was spelled out, however eloquently, from the start. It's a torch that innovative bands pass down from one generation to the next. In the



mid-'80s, Camper Van Beethoven and The Pixies were at the center of it all, and they worked together: If you couldn't figure out one of them, chances are you'd love the other. Each band's Californian leader had surf-rock in their blood—The Pixies' Charles Thompson, aka Black Francis, moved to Boston during high school; Camper Van Beethoven's David Lowery, now of Cracker fame, left Redlands, CA, and never got further than Santa Cruz—and, despite great forays into new territory, never quite got it out. But where Lowery and his compatriots turned the sensibility into a provincial cosmopolitanism, drawing everything from ska to polka to Eastern European folk into a countrified psychedelic tent revival, Francis pushed to strain pop tunefulness to the breaking point, to perfect the Tootsie Pop with a Wild Turkey center. The Pixies' *Surfer Rosa* and *Doolittle* are both energizing and frightening, luminously dark and, like Camper Van Beethoven's disorienting and delirious musical and lyrical ramblings, laced with a



humor that was the tapestry's best critic, reminding us of the porousness of their subject matter and sound structures and inviting us to participate in their deconstruction.

Neither band made it long, as bands go—less than seven years apiece, with Camper forming in 1983 and disbanding in 1990 and The Pixies coalescing in 1986 and falling apart in 1992—and, unfortunately, each seemed to self-destruct just as it was going through the painful stage of carving a lasting voice and tone out of its diverse influences and innovations. For Camper Van Beethoven, 1989's *Key Lime Pie* finally produced the stunningly sensible blends of musical styles and lyrical voice promised by their accomplished but shticky debut, 1985's *Telephone Tree*. *Landslide Victory*, and groped toward in their spotty but resonant penultimate album and first major-label release, 1998's *Our Beloved Revolutionary Sweetheart*; this final album glides effortlessly through themes of unrequited love, existential despair, surreal imagery and political portraiture with guitar and violin accompaniment that blend the sweet and the sour in invigorating arrangements, and proved the band could be seriously funny while remaining shockingly serious. The Pixies' swan song, 1991's *Trompe Le Monde*, showed Francis' songwriting at its precarious peak. The stylish, themed and imagistic album offers highly controlled rock sonatas in place of the reeling fervor and plotted menace of 1989's *Doolittle* and the

breakneck, playful *Surfer Rosa* (1988). And while spontaneity, real or feigned, had obviously begun to wane, cosmic energy persisted and grew wings on the album's stand-out tracks, "The Navajo Know" and "Distance Equals Rate Times Time," and proved, along with "Alec Eiffel" and "Space (I Believe In)," that something new was bubbling to the surface for the Boston four-piece. Both albums, which present their respective bands at wits' end, so to speak, were poorly received by fans and critics. Both require acclimation and a willingness to let goofy and eclectic people become "professional"—that is, to not begrudge studio time and production value to bands most appreciated for their half-cocked brilliance, for their previous willingness to take the damn ball, whatever it was, and just run with it.



But all good things must end, the old saw goes, and sometimes not even then. Cracker have stepped out of Lowery's past by repudiating Camper's innovative and eclectic worldliness, instead sidling close to blues and country—arguably our country's most "rooted" genres, in the heard-the-ending-in-the-first-four-measures sense—without putting anything back into the music that could enrich the frightening combination of a valley boy whose voice had grown permanently hoarse through smoking or nonsmoking and a backing band with Blues Traveler guitar straps. Through four prize-winningly underwhelming albums (1992's *Cracker*, 1993's *Kerosene Hat*, 1996's *Golden Age* and 1998's *Gentleman's Blues*) and a commemorative two-disc coaster set (*Garage d'Or*, released by Virgin last year) Cracker have proven themselves to be the next Crowded House, but without that certain *je ne se quois*. Black Francis has lived on as Frank Black, grimly trudging downward into the salt mines of obsolescence like a Stalinist sitting through a Five-Year Plan. A moderately moderate debut (1993's *Frank Black*) was followed up by the pleasant *Teenager Of The Year* (1994), marred only by Black's display of the Gordon Gano Aging Freak-Out syndrome. The following three albums—the seizure-inducing *Cult Of Ray* (1996), the unsalted, sugar-free *Frank Black And The Catholics* (1998) and the pouty, greaser-on-Robitussin *Pistolero* (1999)—lend credence to the increasingly popular suspicion that Frank Black has been replaced by a spy from Diesel. He and The

Catholics' new LP *In The Sand* (recently

released by What Are Records?), in contrast, will be broadcast from the Mir space station as an intergalactic foghorn, offering a gentle reminder to intelligent life in the universe to steer clear.

Drudgery and pain is relieved only by brief respites of canned and cubed adult contemporary, which are quickly shored up by more drudgery and pain. Had this album's lyric sheet been handed to Oompah Loompahs, this might have turned into something interesting. But the truth is, both David Lowery and Charles Thompson have fallen backwards out of the rabbit hole, and you're never getting them back. **4**

THE WRITE STUFF

In addition to writing about music for *Rolling Stone*, *The Chicago Sun-Times* and countless other print and online publications, **JIM DEROGATIS** has written two phenomenal books—*Kaleidoscope Eyes*, which was a study of psychedelic music, and the more recent *Let It Blur*, an enthralling biography of rock criticism's patron saint, **Lester Bangs**. **Ian MacKinnon** recently spoke with DeRogatis about Bangs, indie snobbery and the art of getting your opinions to make an impression.

Though Bill Haley And The Comets released "Rock Around The Clock"—often referred to as the first rock 'n' roll song—back in 1955, rock criticism essentially began in the mid- to late '60s with such magazines as *Crawdaddy!* and *Rolling Stone*. Rock criticism at its best can be some of the finest writing ever produced. At its worst, it can be just hype or malice. Jim DeRogatis is a rock critic and proud to be one, simply because he believes in his work. He also believes in the people who make music.

DeRogatis has written two books (*Kaleidoscope Eyes* and *Let It Blur: The Life & Times Of Lester Bangs, America's Greatest Rock Critic*), was an editor at *Rolling Stone*, is currently a writer for *The Chicago Sun-Times*, and has contributed to *Guitar World*, *Launch.com* and *Ironminds.com*. He co-hosts a radio show on WXRT in Chicago called "Sound Opinions," a talk show where the only topic is rock 'n' roll. DeRogatis is also a drummer. One of his old bands, The Ex-Lion Tamers (a Wire cover band focusing on the first three LPs), opened up for Wire during its second incarnation in the 1980s. He also has his own website, www.JimDero.com, where you can find archived articles and pieces on both of his books.

DeRogatis' first book, *Kaleidoscope Eyes*, was a study of the history of psychedelic music from the 1960s to the 1990s. It hit on all the biggies—The Beatles, The Beach Boys, The Byrds, Pink Floyd and The Rolling Stones—but it didn't neglect such lesser-known movements as the German Cosmic Music of the late 1960s and early 1970s (which was known in America as Krautrock and



included such bands as Can, Faust, Neu! and Ash Ra Temple) or the Paisley Underground bands of the '80s (The Rain Parade, The Dream Syndicate, The Three O'Clock, Green On Red, etc.) The way DeRogatis was able to tie 30 years of music together is somewhat remarkable, giving the reader a good reference guide to find music that challenges and satisfies.

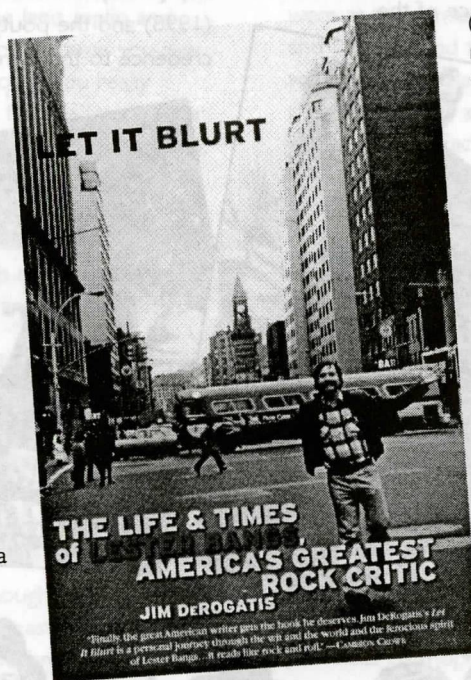
DeRogatis' most recent book, *Let It Blur* (Broadway), is a biography of his rock-critic mentor, Lester Bangs, arguably the greatest rock writer to ever put pen to paper. DeRogatis interviewed Bangs during his senior year of high school, several weeks before he passed away. Philip Seymour Hoffman used the tape of that interview to get Bangs' speech patterns down for his portrayal of him in *Almost Famous*. *Let It Blur* is filled with biographical detail, but it doesn't succumb to the banality of most biographies—it lives and breathes like Bangs' writing, showing the man for who he was and not just what he did. It is a wonderful tribute to a writer who has had an impact on the lives of everyone who has ever cared about music.

DeRogatis cares deeply for the history of rock 'n' roll, but that doesn't mean he doesn't appreciate and love the music of today. He did a very thorough analysis titled *Emo (The Genre That Dare Not Speak Its Name)* and has praised such artists as The Flaming Lips, Primal Scream, godspeed you black

emperor!, Beachwood Sparks and countless others. He continues to fight the good fight, turning people on to new things while giving them a bit of the history along the way.

DIW: While reading *Let It Blur*, I would go from loving Lester to not liking him to then feeling for him again. Did you go through that while writing it?

Jim DeRogatis: No, I never did. I mean, it seemed to me that he was coming from the Beats, and that one of the central tenets of the Beat writers, you know, especially Burroughs and Kerouac, was that they were showing themselves warts and all, and that they were flawed human beings just like every single one of us. But they had the courage to show that. And, I mean, knowing that Kerouac was a pathetic alcoholic with a mother fixation does not detract from the poetry of *On The Road*. At the end of the day, for me, the issue is always the power and the beauty of Lester's writing. I



would have never written the book, as interesting a life as it was, and as revealing as it was of different eras in musical history—I would never have written the book if the power of those words didn't have these incredible ideas. Which is why it really bugged me to suggest, as Robert Christgau did, that Lester was all about style and flash and not about substance. Because, to me, there were these great philosophical insights—these probing insights in his prose that live on, and that was the man at his best. And everything else, I didn't feel voyeuristic because he wrote about it. Nobody could call Lester an asshole more than Lester himself. And at the end of the day that only made me admire him more.

DIW: You once described Lester as a “proto Gen X-er.” So what do you think Lester would have thought about indie rock?

JD: That's a game I've always tried not to play. One of the reasons I call him a “proto Gen X-er” is because he's a perverse son of a bitch, and he was a dedicated contrarian, and trying to second guess him on anything just did him a disservice. He loved going against the grain and challenging assumptions. And people say, “Oh, he would have loved Nirvana and hated whatever.” I think that just shows they really don't understand his character—that he could never be pinned down—and I think that's part of his charm, always questioning things. And also the strength of his intellect was the fact that he could double back on himself, that he could say The MC5 was a hype—and to a certain extent they were, it was true—but then also he had the courage and fortitude to say, “Wait a minute, I was wrong about this band—this music is actually amazing.” And he did this again and again in his career. Some people would say that's inconsistency or sloppiness or just hotheaded opinion spouting off at the mouth, but I think that many of us are like that. Our relationship with music changes as we live with it, and the ability to say “My ideas change and I can reconsider and think things through and grow” is actually one of his strengths.

DIW: Especially when dealing with something like rock or art, where you've got opinion.

JD: Yeah, right. Or literature. And I think that's a hallmark of great art. You can argue that *Sgt. Pepper's* is the greatest album of all time, or you can argue that it's a piece of shit—both arguments are pretty much equally valid, and we gain insight if the arguer is a great intellect. We gain insight from either position.

DIW: What do you think of indie rock?

JD: Well, that's where I cut my teeth. I think that there are good things and there are bad things. The idea of “do it yourself,” the idea of creating a community based on art and a shared passion, is great. One of the things I love about Chicago is the way that it thrives here. With such diverse elements as Bloodshot and Thrill Jockey and Kranky and on and on and on, you could live and create here in all sorts of different directions. On the other hand, I never had much use, being a fat nerd myself, for the kind of elitism of indie rock. Like, “I'm cool and you're not.” I've always hated that—it's as obnoxious when it comes from geeky K Records fans in sweaters as it is from the asshole jocks and cheerleaders in high school. It's obnoxious wherever it comes from.

DIW: You interviewed Lester in high school, and you played excerpts from it on NPR [it can also be heard on www.JimDero.com]. It was interesting hearing Lester's voice after reading *Let It Blurt* and *Psychotic Reactions*

And Carburetor Dung [an anthology of Bangs' work]. He sounded much more caring.

JD: Well, I think he was at a particular point in his life that he was low-key Lester. Who knows if that night he didn't go out and was bouncing off the walls and was another Lester? But there were different sides to his personality, for sure. And I think the side that Cameron Crowe captured in *Almost Famous* is legit. I mean, that's the sort of—I saw flashes of that. That mentoring, caring kind of side, and there were also the raving asshole side and countless other sides.

DIW: Do you think that Philip Seymour Hoffman's portrayal of Lester in *Almost Famous* will make people want to find out more about Lester?

JD: I hope so. I think it's done good for my book. I think the book had a really good life and it was well reviewed, and a lot of people bought it. And then the movie continues to drive people to it. I think he was great. I think he was a good Lester—I think there's room for lots of other Lesters.

DIW: While reading *Let It Blurt* I would often reach for *Psychotic Reactions* and *Carburetor Dung* to complement it and to have a complete Bangs experience.

JD: They need to work together. I wrote my book to steer people towards Lester. I didn't write it to be a last word on Lester. A couple reviews here and there would say, “You know, there's not enough of Lester's writing,” which is an idiotic comment. It wasn't a compilation of his writing, it was a biography. It's a way to read Lester. It's a roadmap into knowing who he was and where the articles fit into his life and his career so that you can then go in and read *Carburetor Dung* and find some of the other articles. And hopefully someday there will be another anthology and it will all be out there, because I believe everything he ever wrote should be in print. John Morthland is his literary executor—he was one of his friends, and he hopes to do another anthology someday. I am sure it will be a great book.

DIW: I was first introduced to Lester's writings through *Kaleidoscope Eyes*. You mentioned Lester from time to time in the book. It's a fascinating book, especially since you were able to link three decades of psychedelic music and show that it still exists in modern music.

JD: Well, you see, I think that's the main challenge for critics who are your age and my age, our generation. You have this entire wave of baby-boom critics who are fond of enshrining their heroes in the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame. But there exists a generation of fans for whom Kraftwerk was more important than The Beatles, or for us The 13th Floor Elevators are an infinitely better band than the Jefferson Airplane—and the Jefferson Airplane are in the Rock And Roll Hall Of Fame and Roky Erickson is on skid row. There are myriad ways to look at rock history, and I'm disappointed that more people our age aren't picking up that challenge and saying, “Wait a minute, you can write a history of rock 'n' roll in which The Beatles don't even figure, but the pioneers of electronic music are the gods.” Or you can write a whole history of rock 'n' roll in which San Francisco 1967 wasn't the heyday, but London 1966 was. There's infinite ways to look at this, and it's sort of sad that it gets carved in stone and granite, and we're told this is the only way to look at history. As we know, Nick Drake five years ago was a marginal

figure who influenced no one, and yet people discover the music, and you're hearing his influence now in myriad directions.

DIW: Right, like I remember hearing Sebadoh cover "Pink Moon" on *Smash Your Head On The Punk Rock in 1992* but not really thinking much of it till a couple years later.


JD: Right, right, then he's sort of rediscovered, re-evaluated. Lester saw the importance of The Velvet Underground. There was that famous Brian Eno line, that The Velvet Underground didn't sell a lot of records, but everyone who bought one went out and started a band. And so, you know, the Jefferson Airplane may have sold a hundred times more records than The Velvet Underground, but The Velvet Underground became a touchstone that anybody who did anything interesting for the next 20 years had to draw on.

DIW: Let's go back to *Kaleidoscope Eyes*—what made you want to take that on?

JD: It was basically some of my favorite music. I think I'm bipolar—I bounce between these stripped-down minimalist punk extremes and the psychedelic transcendent extremes, which might be why I love a band like Wire so much, 'cause I think it sort of combines both. But, I mean, this was sort of my favorite music, and all the history books are "San Francisco '67, Summer Of Love, paisley, hookahs and dancing in the daises," and it's like, wait a minute—that's not the psychedelic rock that I love. The psychedelic rock that I love is like the Count Five and Roky Erickson, and Pink Floyd are infinitely more important than the

Jefferson Airplane and the Grateful Dead. And I see that strain today in the bands that I love, which are My Bloody Valentine and Flaming Lips and stuff like that. And I know how these dots are connected, but nobody does it. So it's like, here's one way to look at this history, but I think there are probably 20 other histories of the genre that could be written, and I'd enjoy reading all of them. I kind of wrote the book with two audiences in mind: I wrote it for the dad who thinks the last great psychedelic rock album was *Dark Side Of The Moon*, and I wrote it for the kid who thinks that there was nothing happening before a rave in 1994.

DIW: Both of your books are must reads for anyone who's passionate about rock 'n' roll, especially the underground or indie scene, because it all comes from there—the history is encapsulated in those two books. So are you thinking about doing another book?

JD: I kind of am. It's interesting that you said that—nobody's ever actually said it that clearly, and I don't even know if I've even thought about it that clearly. But I'd agree with what you said. I am thinking about another book that would be a lot more personal, kind of more of my memories. Basically the first sentence says it all—it would be like, "Everything I know about life I learned by playing in rock bands." Not that they went anywhere—that's irrelevant, they were nobody. I mean, The Ex-Lion Tamers are a footnote to a footnote to a parenthetical aside. Um, not the point of "Here was my glorious career in rock 'n' roll," but the point of like, "Here's a way of living that involves making music that has nothing to do with being success-driven." 

CRASH MY MOON YACHT by Cerberus Shoal
www.cerberus-shoal.com CD ppd \$10.00

Co-release by North East Indie and Pandemonium Records

RUDE GIRLS RIDE FREE by The Taxis
www.thetaxis.com CD ppd \$6.50

Coming soon... AUTOPILOT by The Taxis

NEW MUSIC SAMPLER 18 SONGS Various Artists
CD ppd \$6.50

CONCUBINE by Miravie
www.miravie.com CD ppd \$9.00

**Send check or money order to North East Indie
PO Box 10315
Portland, ME 04104**



www.northeastindie.com

Cargo MUSIC

Lou Ford
Alan Freed's Radio
CD HED-093
The album (*Alan Freed's Radio*) opening "Storz' Bar" unfolds like a meeting of those two most influential of B's, The Beatles and Big Star. Its follow-up track is a dead-ringer for post-Mark Olson Jayhawks, a lovely, enriched one at that.
• No Depression

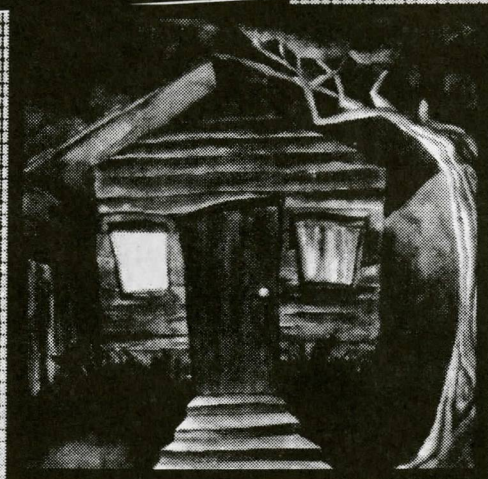
Mary Dolan
Long Way From Home
CD EAR-026
Mary's got a great voice - deep and impassioned, with shades of Melissa Etheridge and Ani DiFranco.
• Tail Spins

www.cargomusic.com
Cargo Music Inc. 4901-906 Morena Blvd. San Diego, CA 92117-3432 e-mail: info@cargomusic.com
Ph: 858.483.9292 Fax: 858.483.7414
Mail Order: CD \$12 postpaid M.O./VISA/MC

Earth Music  

REV:99

GAMEFACE



ALWAYS ON LP/CD

THE EXPLOSION

STEAL THIS

7 INCH
CDEP

REV
:98



ELLIOTT - FALSE CATHEDRALS
REV:95 ★ LP/CD



REVELATION RECORDS P.O. BOX 5232, HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA 92615-5232 • WWW.REVELATIONRECORDS.COM • ORDER DIRECT: 714-842-7584

THE EXPLOSION



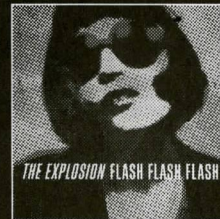
Euphone
"Hashin' It Out"
LP/CD JT1054



Joan of Arc
"The Gap"
LP/CD JT1053



Jets To Brazil
"Four Corned Night"
DBL LP/CD JT1052



The Explosion
"Flash Flash Flash"
LP/CD JT1051



The Explosion
"The Explosion"
CDS JT1047



2310 Kennwynn RD Wilmington, DE 19810
jadetree@jadetree.com / jadetree.com
Shop 24/7/365 at JADETREE.COM!

Distributed Worldwide by Mordam
sales@mordamrecords.com / mordamrecords.com

BREAKFAST WITH ... The Murder City Devils

Editor's note: "Breakfast With ..." is a brand-new addition to the DIW family. Each issue we will take one of our favorite bands out to breakfast to examine what they consume and how they consume it. Enjoy.

Photos: Peter Ellenby
Text: Leah Reich

Sunday, 11:30 a.m. Can anyone tell me why I'm not only awake, but out of bed and on my way to have breakfast with a bunch of guys I don't know? Rock 'n' roll, man! Okay, and free food.

Look, anyone who doesn't dig The Murder City Devils morning, noon and night isn't worth my time. You and I, because we're "in the know," don't care what time of day it is—if The MCD are there, we are. Even if that means getting up at 10:30 on a Sunday morning, head still buzzing from the previous late night. In addition to bassist Derek Pudesco, guitarist Nate Manny and singer Spencer Moody, Peter and I enjoyed our meals with those two equally crucial characters in the MCD line-up: Gabe the roadie and Merchbot (who, according to Manny, speaks a language only fellow poon-hounds can understand).


So there we were, straggling down skid row in San Francisco's beautiful Tenderloin District, making our way to Original Joe's.

When was the last time you were escorted by a bow-tied waiter to a giant, dimly lit, red vinyl booth for breakfast? First things first: We ordered drinks. Surprise! Then to the menus, where we covered all meal options, from eggs to pasta to burgers. Italian food was about to kick the hangover's ass.

Simple pleasures: Peter and I decided the best way to get breakfast rolling was with a sausage-eating contest. Crushing disappointment: No one wanted to eat that many sausages. I was slightly more upset, as the sausages were my idea. But then again, they always are.

Sausages or no, we still ate. And ate. And drank. We stomped all over that table and ate nearly everything in sight. Feasting completed, magazine and record



purchases admired, we slid back out into the sunlight. As we headed in our separate directions, one thing was for sure: I'll never eat scrambled eggs in a diner again, but I'll sure as hell eat my way through a Sunday morning diet plate (with 12 oz. of fried hamburger) alongside The Murder City Devils any time I get the chance. 



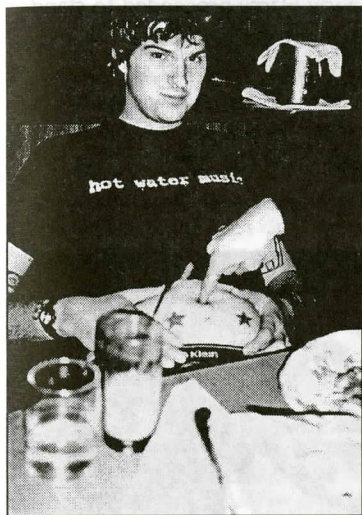
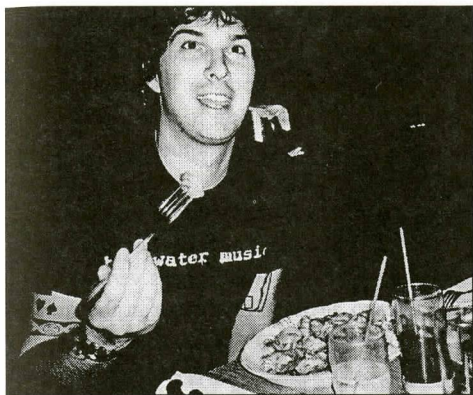


TABLE TALK

Interesting things overheard during breakfast:

Derek: "For the record, I'm a boy." **Support from the others:** "The she-male on bass is really a guy."

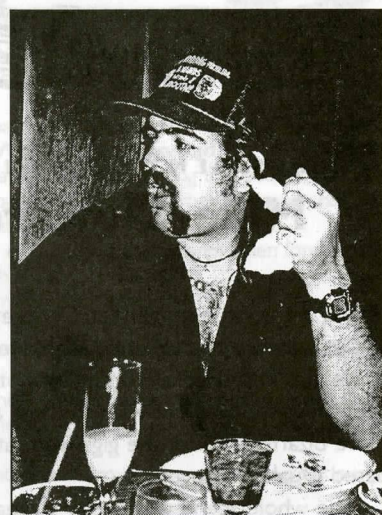
More on Derek: "No one will sleep with him. He doesn't snore, but he gets a leg up. He makes these noises like he's eating the best cookies."

Merchbot on why you should never order scrambled eggs at a cheap diner: "You know the egg bucket? The cook dips his balls in it."

Spencer: "I was the first guy to skydive and eat Chicken Parmesan at the same time. The other guy who claims he did it actually had cheddar on his."

Derek: "Can I just finger your straw a little bit?"

Spencer: "Touch it! Touch your burger!"



BREAKFAST IS SERVED

What We Ate:

Derek—tortellini with a mix of tomato and Alfredo sauces

Nate—steak and eggs (scrambled), side of spinach with garlic

Spencer—Chicken Parmesan with ravioli

Gabe—Italian sausage and eggs (scrambled), side of ravioli, side of spinach with garlic, side of fries

Merchbot—Italian sausage omelet, side of ravioli

Leah—"Diet Plate" (12 oz. hamburger, fruit and cottage cheese), side of spinach with garlic, side of mushrooms

Peter—Italian sausage and eggs (over medium), side of spinach with garlic

What We Drank:

19 mimosas

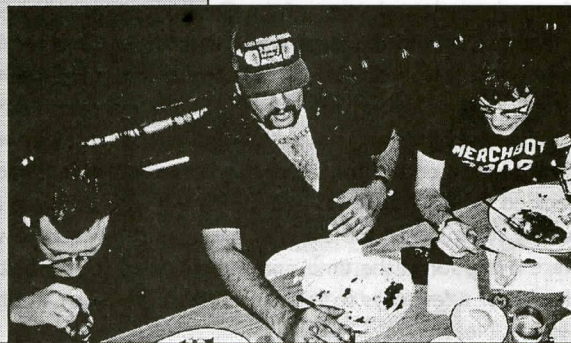
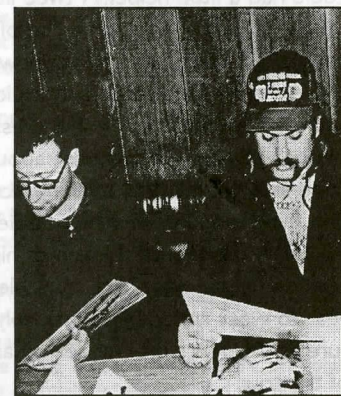
5 Bloody Marys

2 Godfathers (bourbon with amaretto, consumed by Gabe)

4 Budweisers

Coffee

Even Merchbot had coffee: "It'll make me puke out my ass, but I'll have it."



ROCK 'N' ROLL MOMENTS



RESIDENT STARFUCKER:

Mike Cloward

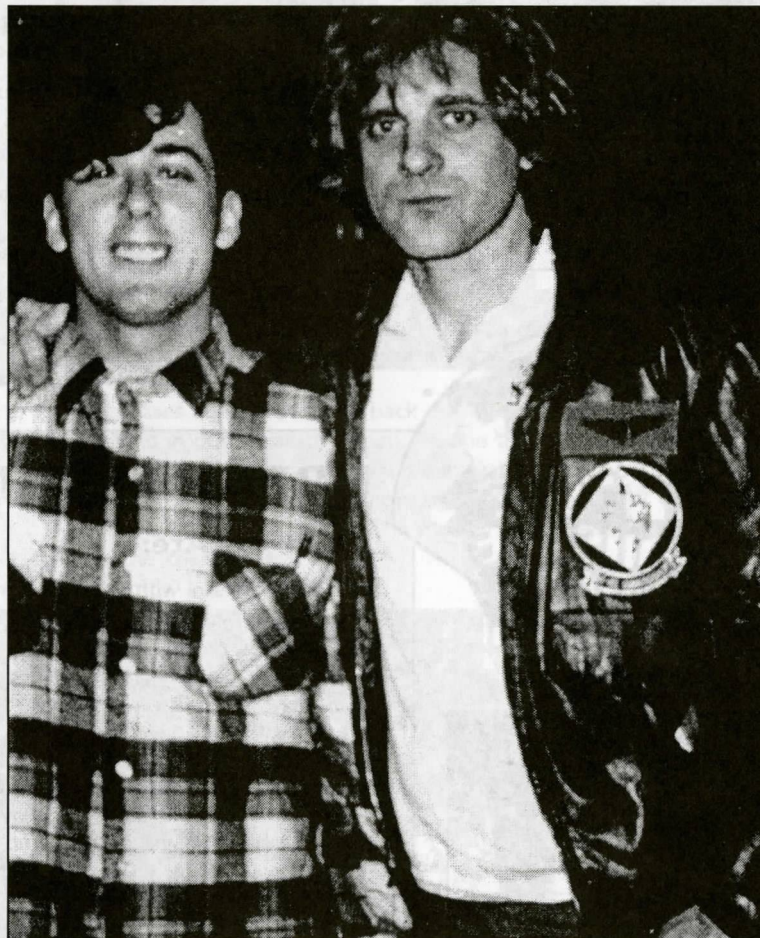
I was the tour manager for Concrete Blonde for a while. On our way to the East Coast we managed to pick up some gigs with Eddie Money. I'm not sure where the connection was drawn between the two artists, which was made more bizarre because the gigs were at a series of Pennsylvania-based Quaker colleges.

The whole scene was pretty surreal, as Eddie's crew seemed to be the last party washout on the rock 'n' roll river. Just about every cliché you could imagine existed. For example: Eddie had a little helper. A twee little man with a huge rolling closet (made by Anvil for those of you in the know or in need). Each night before the show Eddie would appear from somewhere—I'm assuming from lockdown on his tour bus—and this tiny little man would dress Eddie in his show clothes. Though rumors run rampant about Eddie's drug abuse, I never once saw the man do anything, not even drink a cool one. But one thing for sure, whatever Eddie did do when he was partaking totally lopped off the top of his head. I got the feeling that his little helper was there to: 1. Help Eddie decide what retro gear to wear and 2. (And probably more importantly) make sure Eddie didn't, uh, wander off and endanger the completion of the tour.

I remember those shows as one big eerie, blurry dream where some crazy-ass shit went down. You could imagine the disappointment and anger of the Quaker college kids when the arrival of Eddie to the stage was delayed by a bunch of filthy punk rockers from California. And I mean these kids were pissed. Imagine if your only concert of the year—Eddie Money no less—was put on hold by the rant of "Still In Hollywood" and "Joey." At the end of the set on night two, Johnette Napolitano decided to delight and reward the crowd with her bare ass before storming off the stage as the boos showered down. We were dirt poor at the time, and they decided to withhold our checks for a few days to teach us a lesson for such an obscene gesture. Neat.

On night three, Harry Rushakoff (Concrete Blonde's drummer) and I were sitting around talking with Eddie's drummer, and he was telling us how cool it was to play on cocaine. That night, during "Two Tickets To Paradise," a roadie went up to him with a straw and a surface and the drummer snorted a fucking line while playing! A+ for effort my friend!

As odd as it may seem, one of my fondest memories of that tour, outside of the strip search at the Canadian border and our temporary detainment in Columbia, MO, was Harry's verbal assault of a stoner in the Chicago airport. It was four in the morning and we were walking to our gate, spaced and exhausted because we'd been up for a day or so. Seated on a bench along the way was this stringy-haired fellow listening to some crazy metal music with huge, old-school headphones on. You could literally hear the music from 20 feet away. Harry proceeded to stand behind this guy and yell crazy shit about the guy's penis size and his mother for about two minutes while the guy just sat there staring off into space, completely oblivious to what was going on around him. I will never forget the look of the people walking by in the airport. Harry Rushakoff, where are you? ♨



Please e-mail your Rock 'N' Roll Moments to:
marc5@sirius.com

Feel free to mail in photos or other rock memorabilia to:
DIW Magazine, P.O. Box 579168, Modesto, CA 95357

13

QUESTIONS

THE ORANGE PEELS



It's been a while, but The Orange Peels have finally returned to the record shelves with *So Far* (spinART), their long-awaited follow-up to 1997's *Square. So Far*—the band's second LP as The Orange Peels (they also released an album in 1994 called *One Hundred Percent Chance Of Rain* under the name Allen Clapp And His Orchestra)—finds The Peels ditching the bubble gum pop of *Square* in favor of a more somber sound. However, the '60s pop influence is still unmistakable, and Clapp's lyrics remain as playful as ever. All five members of the band—Clapp, Larry Winther, Jill Pries, Bob Vickers and John Moremen—answered our 13 Questions.

1. What was the first song you heard that completely floored you, made you shiver, made you want to make music?

Allen Clapp: "Rocket Man" by Elton John. I was in like second grade, and it came on the radio, and I was totally mesmerized. I totally freaked out.

Bob Vickers: Might have been "Drive My Car" on The Beatles' *Yesterday And Today*, since that's the first song on the first Beatles album I owned.

Jill Pries: "Don't Bring Me Down" by ELO. It made me want to play in a band.

Larry Winther: Must have been "Bohemian Rhapsody" cranked in the fifth-grade locker room. Probably something to do with the acoustics, but the first time I heard that guitar I think there was a shiver or two.

John Moremen: The Beatles' "I Want To Hold Your Hand."

2. Who was the better Beatle—John or Paul? Why?

AC: I'd have to say Paul if it came down to it. I find myself humming his tunes more than John's.

BV: Both were equal, and it makes no sense to take sides.

JP: George. He's so underrated.

LW: John. He was the better songwriter, and he could belt out a rock song better than Paul.

JM: No comparison. Equally talented.

3. What's your favorite alcoholic beverage?

AC: Beer.

BV: A glass of red wine.

JP: Bass Ale.

LW: Tecate from the can. With lime and salt, of course.

JM: Red wine.

4. What album is on your stereo right now?

AC: Carole King's *Tapestry*.

BV: A Dean Martin Christmas CD.

JP: The Kinks' *Village Green*. I'm a sucker for the tried and true.

LW: Buck Owens' *Under Your Spell Again*.

JM: Cannonball Adderly's *Somethin' Else*.

5. What song have you written and/or performed that you're most embarrassed by?

AC: "Why Sting Is Such An Idiot." Because I always end up saying something stupid before we play it live.

BV: All of 'em.

JP: "Curio-Lou." No other comment.

LW: There was a time we played live on the radio. We weren't really in tune to start with, then about halfway through I broke a string, and the song just fell apart. I don't think we even actually played the whole thing. I can't remember the song, but it was pretty funny.

JM: "And The Sun Shines" and "All In Your Mind."

6. When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up?

AC: Fireman.

BV: A bigger kid.

JP: Astronaut or a spy for the IM Force.

LW: Fireman or a truck driver.

JM: Guitar player and/or drummer.

7. What's the worst day job you've ever had?

AC: Working at this creepy Microsoft website in San Francisco that eventually went under. The nice part was that I was an assistant to the wine editor, so we always got great wine. But the overall vibe of the office was very strange. I once overheard management debating about whether a particular employee was "Microsoft material."

BV: Waiter.

JP: Passing out shrimp at Bonanza. I had to wear brown polyester floods and an engineer's cap.

LW: I worked as an oven installer. I remember once having to pull fiberglass insulation out of this giant oven in 105-degree heat. That is the worst.

JM: Sandwich assembly line/soup maker at a bakery.

8. What happened on the best day of your life?

AC: Married my dream girl.

BV: My daughter was born.

JP: I pet a tiger.

LW: Got married.

JM: I got married to Suzie Racho.

9. What was your favorite album of 2000?

AC: The debut from Beachwood Sparks.

BV: The Apples In Stereo's latest.

LW: I didn't do my part to support the music

industry this year. I bought no new CDs!

JM: NRBQ's self-titled.

10. What was the worst song you heard in 2000? What made it so bad?

AC: That Britney Spears song that sounds exactly like "Woman In Love" by Barbra Streisand and Barry Gibb.

JP: Any of O-Town's three songs. Allen forced me to watch "Making The Band."

LW: Any Kid Rock song.

11. Are you pro-Napster or anti-Napster? Why?

AC: I think the technology is cool, but I don't think songs should be free unless the writer intended to give 'em away.

BV: Kind of anti-pro or pro-anti depending on my mood.

JP: I am Switzerland.

LW: I don't have a real strong opinion on it either way. I've used it. I don't think it is going to put the record companies out of business yet. Eventually it could hurt us if they get the sound quality up and they sell a lot of those players. Then the only way you can make money is on licensing and performing, which is a lot more work.

JM: Don't know if I'm pro or anti, but I use it occasionally.

12. Do you believe in God? Do you believe in a higher being?

AC: Yeah. Knock and the door will open, seek and you will find.

BV: Not currently, but I'm always open.

JP: Only one.

LW: Not really. I believe in other beings, but not one supreme being. I think us humans are only one of thousands of intelligent life forms in the universe. And we seem to be the least intelligent.

JM: Home is where the heart is—yes.


13. What is the freakiest experience you've ever had with an obsessive fan?

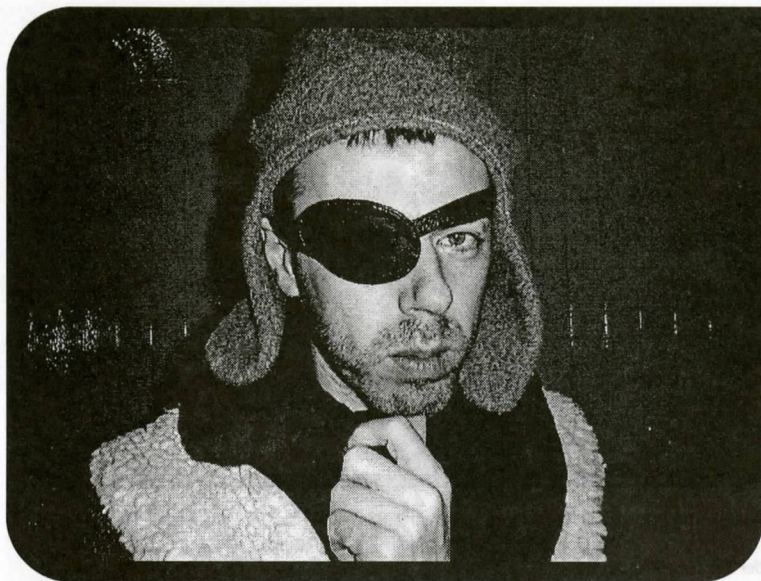
AC: I don't think this qualifies as freaky, but I had this girl who kept sending me letters bursting with shiny tickertape stuff and Hello Kitty stickers, and every time I opened one of them, the stuff would spill out all over the carpet.

BV: I've never been exposed to anything like that.

JP: That would be Glendon. Actually, his name was Glendon, but he thought it rhymed with "London."

LW: When I have one I'll let you know.

JM: Never had a freaky fan experience. I have been a freaky fan myself, however! 



13

QUESTIONS

MOMUS

Scottish-born Nick Currie, aka Momus, has gradually garnered accolades and lawsuits through the insistent exhortation of roughly an album a year since 1986. After 10 years (and, yes, 10 albums) Momus finally got his first U.S. release with *20 Vodka Jellies*. Now he's banging on America's door in earnest with his at once obnoxious, obsequious and utterly brilliant tie-me-up, tie-me-down tribute to Americana, *Folktronic* (Le Grand Magistery). The barbed-tongued Barabbas played pussycat for our 13 Questions.

1. What was the first song you heard that completely floored you, made you shiver, made you want to make music? I recently read an interview with Peter Handke in which he said that he didn't like being overwhelmed by art as much as being "almost overwhelmed." I'm the same. No epiphanies, but a constant sense of pop music as a sort of background radiation. In fact, I'd say that pop music makes up the fabric of my unconscious mind, so appropriate and telling are the songs that start up in my head in some situations. It's impossible for me to keep my feelings secret because the song I'm singing usually gives the game away, like some telltale parrot. How could I not make music, when music and truth are the same thing for me?

2. Who was the better Beatle—John or Paul? Why? I think I liked Paul as a kid but switched to John when I grew up. I think the Plastic Ono Band record is better than anything The Beatles did, mainly because it's so self-indulgent. And I could imagine myself living with a Japanese woman in New York much more readily than with Linda Eastman on a farm in Scotland. Hey, I do live with a Japanese woman in New York!

3. What's your favorite alcoholic beverage? I drink, but weirdly enough I don't really like alcoholic beverages. I much prefer green tea or a tall tapioca pearl shake flavored with red beans. Maybe the latter with a shot of vodka.

4. What album is on your stereo right now? I've just discovered the German band Tarwater and am listening a lot to their first album, *Silur*.

5. What song have you written and/or performed that you're most embarrassed by? Probably a demo I made for Mute Records in 1991 called "Peek A Boo." It was about outing people, and I think [Mute owner] Daniel Miller—with whom I was

sharing a girlfriend at the time—thought it was about him. It went, "Here comes Mr. Normal with not a thing to hide/ but it's a different story if you take a look inside." Miller's first band was called The Normal. For some reason I didn't get signed to Mute.

6. When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? Maybe a novelist. Or a botanist. Later I thought I would be a journalist or an industrial designer. Then I got into graphics.

7. What's the worst day job you've ever had? I had to sell books off a table under Waterloo Bridge in London. It got really cold, and seeing what people bought was depressing. Nine copies of *Lake Woebegone Days* for every *True Confessions of An Albino Terrorist*.

8. What happened on the best day of your life? I think I spent it in the Hotel Floriacion in the Aoyama district of Tokyo fucking some skinny girl sent from heaven.

9. What was your favorite album of 2000? Mamoru Fujieda's *Patterns Of Plants* on John Zorn's Tzadik label.

10. What was the worst song you heard in 2000? What made it so bad? The Mariah song at the end of *The Grinch*. Melisma.

11. Are you pro-Napster or anti-Napster? Why? Napster is just the traditional music industry minus the charges. It's a fine revenge, but we need to move on to something else. I'd suggest Folkster, a service in which you can download whatever you like on condition that you change—edit, add, improve, mess up—the files and upload the results. It would be like the oral tradition of folk music. Not so much peer-to-peer as bard-to-bard.

12. Do you believe in God? Do you believe in a higher being? God is just Santa for grown-ups. But when adults grow up they die. And that's where the need for God comes in. I believe the strength of our longing for a god is almost strong enough to bring one into being. Almost.

13. What is the freakiest experience you've ever had with an obsessive fan? I make friends with my freaky fans on the principle that the only cure for delusional obsession is the chance to witness reality. **ψ**



13

QUESTIONS

LUNA

Luna started out as a supergroup, and now they're just a great band. Formed as Luna² in 1991 by singer/guitarist Dean Wareham (ex-Galaxie 500), bassist Justin Harwood (ex-Chills) and drummer Stanley Demeski (ex-Feelies), the band instantly gained a cult-like following with the release of their first LP, *Lunapark*. Since then, Luna have undergone several line-up and label changes, but they've continued to make cool and mellow pop that is unique and entertaining. It's sometimes easy to forget what a solid band Luna is, but then you go to one of their mesmerizing performances and you're suddenly reminded of why you loved them in the first place—they simply write wonderful songs. Perhaps that's why they've decided to release live versions of their greatest hits. *Luna Live!* (Arena Rock), which was recorded at three different shows in 1999 and 2000, features songs from all five of their studio LPs, including such classics as "Anesthesia," "Bewitched," "Sideshow By The Seashore" and "Tiger Lily." It's a superb document of Luna's expert songwriting abilities as well as their amazing live show, and it also should do a good job of tiding over the fans while the band—which presently includes Wareham, guitarist Sean Eden, drummer Lee Wall and bassist/vocalist Britta Phillips—begins work on the follow-up to 1999's *The Days Of Our Nights*. Wareham answered our 13 Questions.

1. What was the first song you heard that completely floored you, made you shiver, made you want to make music? I remember liking "In The Ghetto" by Elvis Presley an awful lot as a child. The bands that really inspired me to make music were The Talking Heads, The Feelies and The Velvet Underground.

2. Who was the better Beatle—John or Paul? Why? George Harrison is my favorite Beatle, but of course John is preferable to Paul. Paul is the most annoying Beatle, but I have to admit he's a great bass player.

3. What's your favorite alcoholic beverage? A vodka martini.

4. What album is on your stereo right now? The new Madonna album, *Music*.

5. What song have you written and/or performed that you're most embarrassed by? "The Creeps" from Luna's *Pup Tent* record.

6. When you were a kid, what did you want to be when you grew up? A football player.

7. What's the worst day job you've ever had? Data entry at the YMCA.

8. What happened on the best day of your life? I guess there's just no such thing.

9. What was your favorite album of 2000? I really love the Hope Sandoval EP that just came out. But that's not an album, so I'll say B. Fleischmann's *A Choir Of Empty Beds*.

10. What was the worst song you heard in 2000? What made it so bad? "Fly Away" by Lenny Kravitz. The lyrics make it especially bad. I know it's not from 2000, but it's still plenty bad.

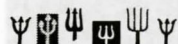
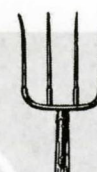
11. Are you pro-Napster or anti-Napster? Why? I look at Napster more as radio than as a threat to my career. Maybe if CDs weren't so expensive and radio wasn't so shitty we wouldn't have to download music from the Internet.

12. Do you believe in God? Do you believe in a higher being? I don't believe in God, but I do think that human beings are capable of amazing things.

13. What is the freakiest experience you've ever had with an obsessive fan? I can't talk about it, as it might encourage her: ☹

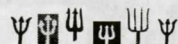
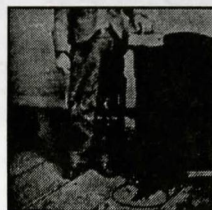
Reviews

DEVIL IN THE WOODS



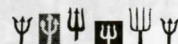
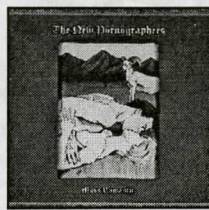
Bevel
Turn The Furnace On
(Jagjaguwar)

The solo debut by Drunk's Via Nuon is chock-full of sincere avant-folk. While Nuon has a limited vocal range, falling somewhere between Lou Reed and Gordon Gano, the majestic starkness of "Our Winter Correspondence" is perfectly tailored to him, as is his sympathetic mix of understated acoustic and electric guitars offset by the occasional drum, violin, piano and harmonica. "The Husband," which includes tinges of country and blues, and "Parachutes In September," which features intermingling banjo and atmospheric synth, showcase Nuon's surreal songwriting style, while the nice fingerpicked acoustic guitar on "Kite Lesson For The Dying" recalls early Dylan. Nuon is one of those rare artists who just might be able to add something to the American folk tradition from which he borrows. —Matt Fink



The New Pornographers
Mass Romantic
(Mint)

Featuring guitarist/vocalist Dan Bejar, previously of Destroyer, *Mass Romantic* enjoys the pop sensibilities of Smuggler Dave Carswell's and John Collins' production and musicianship. Whereas some might say that too many cooks spoil the broth, this album only gets merrier the more cooks there are (they can sure cram a lot of people onto a stage too). The record features the charm of Neko Case's sweet, country-inspired vocals and the punchy drumming of Limblifter's Kurt Dahle. Bejar, along with Carl Newman (ex-Zumpano) and Blaine Thurier, mix and match their catchy Beatles-esque songwriting skills. There are a few melancholy moments, as in "Execution Day," but overall this is a consistently feel-good experience which manages to wrap the raw, infectious energy of the band's live performance in tight, organ-layered, guitar-pop finery. —Melanie Covey

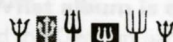
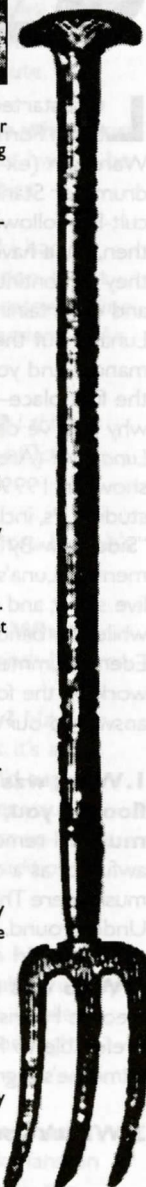
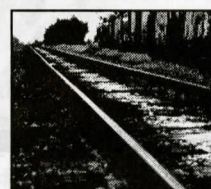
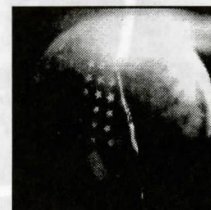


Red House Painters
Old Ramon
(Sub Pop)

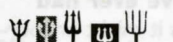
Mark Kozelek
What's Next To The Moon
(Badman)

After being held hostage by now-defunct Supreme and its parent company, Island, Red House Painters' sixth album, *Old Ramon*, has finally been emancipated by Sub Pop three years after it was completed. Though Mark Kozelek's songwriting has undergone a few minor changes in the past decade—the music isn't as tense and dramatic as it used to be, the arrangements are a bit more straightforward and the lyrics are more focused on recent events in his life rather than childhood memories—it's still fueled by unique and gorgeous melodies and expert storytelling. Highlights include the acoustic-based ode to his cat, "Wop-A-Din-Din," the dreamy rockers "Byrd Joel" and "Between Days," the page-out-of-his-diary "Cruiser" (about a brief relationship he had in LA) and the touching memorial to John Denver, "Golden." It's safe to say that Kozelek is one of the greatest singer/songwriters of our generation, if not the best. His relative obscurity means that he'll probably be left out of rock and pop history books, but those who have been touched by his emotionally gripping songs know that he deserves the same amount of praise heaped upon such luminaries as John Lennon, Paul Simon, Lou Reed and Kurt Cobain.

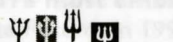
While he was waiting around for *Old Ramon* to get released, Kozelek started working on some stuff on his own. Last year saw the release of his first solo album, *Rock 'N' Roll Singer*, and now Kozelek has quickly followed that up with the 10-track *What's Next To The Moon*. While *Rock 'N' Roll Singer* was made up of three AC/DC covers (in addition to three originals and a take on Denver's "Around And Around"), *What's Next To The Moon*—featuring cover art that looks an awful lot like RHP's *Shock Me EP*—consists of all AC/DC remakes (including the three from the first album, though he's put a new spin on "Bad Boy Boogie" and "Rock 'N' Roll Singer"). Kozelek probably gets a kick out of tricking people into thinking that he wrote these songs—as in the past, he's completely reworked the music so that the tunes are essentially his own—but it doesn't really seem like he's playing the irony card. Sure, it's funny to hear Bon Scott get turned into a softy, but there's something so deeply passionate about these reconstructions that it's difficult to fight with Kozelek when he says that he simply picks songs that he connects with in some way and hopes to make better. Everything here is stripped down and acoustic, allowing for Kozelek's warm, rich vocals to take control. He's redefined the cover album, and in the process he's made one of the finest records you'll hear this year. —Deke Saxon



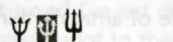
AMAZING



GREAT



GOOD



OKAY



WEAK

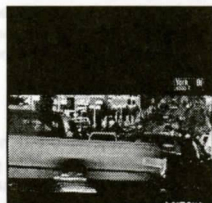


SHIT SANDWICH



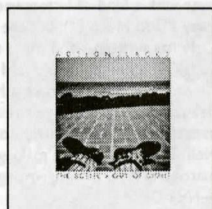
Acetone
York Blvd.
(Vapor)

Acetone have been perfecting their head-bobbing, atmospheric rock for over seven years now, and while this fourth proper album isn't a major departure, the band continues to dip into a seemingly bottomless well of involving guitar work and outer-space workouts, making the trio sound like an American pre-gospel Spiritualized. On the opening track, "Things Are Gonna Be Alright," the band lapses into a low-key boogie shuffle not unlike some of JJ Cale's work in the early '70s. Other tracks embrace full-fledged riffs, and the organ whirs and late-in-the-evening saxophone work are so distinctly Los Angeles you might find yourself craving some studio time and a pie tin full of herbs. —Jon Pruett



Actionslacks
The Scene's Out Of Sight
(The Self-Starter Foundation)

Here's a band that has figured out how to grow without losing what made them so likable in the first place. *The Scene's Out Of Sight* doesn't offer the same goofy yucks as 1998's *One Word*, but Actionslacks' new sense of whine-free emotion is welcome in today's indie-rock landscape. Speaking of rock, this album does that in spades, while producer J. Robbins strategically adds new sounds. One for the whole family. —Nick Dedina



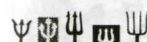
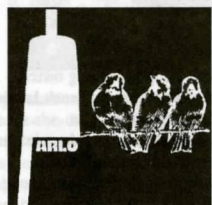
Add N To (X)
Add Insult To Injury
(Mute)

Once again, Add N To (X) have proven that there is no such thing as too many analog synths when it comes to laying down a record. Not to detract from their innate talent and dexterity, but they have the kind of gear that makes you want to go get a second job. Their fourth release, *Add Insult To Injury*, grooves like 10 beers at a British disco, but then Add N To (X) savagely manipulate an oscillator, and suddenly you're reminded that this trio is out for the kill. Touching on pop while simultaneously sticking to their "avant-hard" credo, this time around these electro-thugs have popped their esoteric pimple but still stare in awe at the mess on the mirror. —Adam Hobbs



The Aluminum Group
Pelo
(Hefty)

Previous efforts by Chicago-based duo The Aluminum Group were uneven in their balance of suave songcraft and AM radio pastiches, but *Pelo* is a more complete affair. Perhaps this is due in part to the warm mixture of blips, bleeps and undulating rhythms contributed by members of Tortoise, Brothers John and Frank Navin have managed to maintain their soft-rock harmonizing and soulful vocal interplay while adding a sense of inventiveness. It's this mixture of exploration and pop classicism that makes the record so rewarding. Sure, it's less heartwrenching than a Magnetic Fields record, but it's more fun than 10 by High Llamas. —Jon Pruett



Arlo
Up High In The Night
(Sub Pop)

If time was twisted so that it was 1991 again, Arlo would be the band reanimating rock music and making a name for

Sub Pop instead of the group that actually did. This isn't a prediction; Arlo simply don't have the benefit of time and place. In hindsight, we know that Nirvana were just a good rock band with highly memorable songs and the restless energy and abandon to drive them home, and so is Arlo. They've got crunchy power-chord kick, proving they're products of the '70s, and super-sticky hooks that land somewhere between Guided By Voices and Fountains Of Wayne.

—Matt Barber



Ashley Park
Town And Country
(Kindercore)

From the looks of the album cover, you might think *Town And Country* is a painfully honest tract by another hypersensitive singer/songwriter gal, but the pretty girl on the cover is a red herring. Ashley Park is actually Terry Miles, a mop-topped multi-instrumentalist with a penchant for—here's a shocker—bouncy Beatles/Beach Boys harmonies. And he nails them dead-on. This isn't another painfully lo-fi pop record, though. The production sounds lush and airy, buoyed by ample servings of Fender Rhodes, Hammond organ and a dozen other retro-fetish instruments, not to mention the requisite horns and strings. It's clear that Miles is a serious craftsman, taking pleasure not only in writing pop songs, but also in getting down among the waveforms and tinkering with his music at an almost molecular level. Ashley Park's sound is undeniably derivative, but it's distinguished by above-average care and enthusiasm, proving that it's not so bad to be derivative when you derive this well. —George Zahora

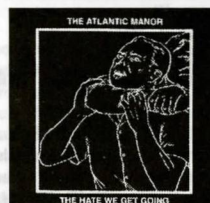
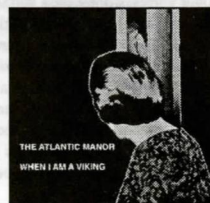


The Atlantic Manor
When I Am A Viking
(Doo Too)



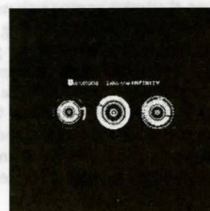
The Hate We Get Going
(Doo Too)

When *I Am A Viking* and *The Hate We Get Going* are lo-fi recordings in the most DIY of traditions, and Rick Sell, the man who is The Atlantic Manor, writes some of the best liner notes you've read in years. *When I Am A Viking* includes a slip of paper asking you to pass the music along to a friend or stranger if you are not touched by it, in the hopes that it will find someone it's supposed to reach. Unfortunately, the music missed me entirely. The mix features buried vocals and a prominent kick drum that only accentuates the fact little is going on there, and the songs are too repetitive and long to sustain much interest. *The Hate We Get Going*, however, greatly improves on almost all of *Viking's* shortcomings. The songs are shorter, the mix is better—though the vocals are still buried alive—and the arrangements are much more interesting. Reverberated slide guitar drones and dark lyricism affect sensations between full-on psychotic episodes and drunken contemplation and end up sounding like experimental blues heard while overdosing on Mandrax. Voice samples pop up occasionally and add to the effect. The best track, "Thirteen And Loctus," is a chilling semi-instrumental piece that uses voice samples and throaty wails and moans to convey a true sound of desperation. *The Hate We Get Going* will appeal to fans of My Dad Is Dead, Caustic Resin and Psychic TV's home recordings release, *Pagan Day*. —Donovan Pierce



Barcelona
Zero One Infinity
(March)

Washington, DC's Barcelona make geek rock, and that's a really good thing. But let's cut to the chase—any group that writes songs with such titles



as "I Have The Password To Your Shell Account" and "The Downside Of Computer Camp" is asking to be pointed at. It appears that only one member wears glasses, but there's no mistaking the computer-programming nerds behind this record and, again, that's a good thing—it's what makes Barcelona unique and fun in this age of serious, computer-crafted music. While Barcelona's music has plenty of crunch to it, these tunes do contain lots of computer-generated sounds, and the best part is that a lot of them are actually about computers and life with them. —Josh Bloom



The Beautiful South
Painting It Red
(Ark 21)

Why are Paul Heaton & Co. superstars in much of the world, but "too British" for modern America? Other than the fact that we are, of course, complete idiots, I haven't a clue. *Painting It Red* probably won't win them any new fans, but it will please their old ones. Heaton's songs still have bite, but they've become less bilious over the years. "Masculine Eclipse" is another lovely Heaton ballad about wonderful women and horrible men, while "Til You Can't Tuck It In" is an upbeat look at love and physical decomposition. Not every song here is as good as these two, but *Painting It Red* is another strong effort from one of the best bands around. —Nick Dedina



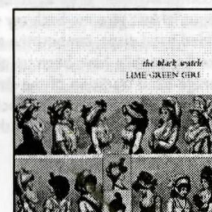
The Bevis Frond
Valedictory Songs
(Rubric)

Valedictory Songs features more heavy guitar rock from Nick Saloman and friends. Recorded with his touring line-up, it seems more rooted in classic rock than usual, but there's also some gold amongst the rubble. The Bevis Frond play with feverish conviction on "By The Water's Edge," and when they take hold of their pop roots and let the guitars chime in full on "Early Riser," they sound alive and well. Sure, it could be a lost Eagles outtake, but it works. There's also the jangly, star-filled "Artillery Row." Then there's the rest. If you want your guitar solos to noodle on and on and on—conjuring up images of Boston making love to Meat Puppets—this is your kind of record. —Jon Pruett



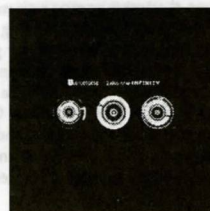
The Black Watch
Lime Green Girl
(Saltwater)

Judging from *Lime Green Girl*—which includes nine new tracks in addition to a handful of tunes from the band's four previous LPs—it would seem that The Black Watch have never been unable to produce an intelligently constructed pop song. Though the album isn't really '60s-influenced, it's easy to draw comparisons in degree of complexity and mood to such bands as The Minders and The Essex Green. John Frederick's tricky guitar explorations and J'Anna Jacoby's excellent violin work matched with the strong melodic backing of bassist Darin Danford and Randy Leasure's confident drumming help take the music into the atmospheric territories of Yo La Tengo and Dis. Jacoby and Frederick trade vocals and instrumental prevalence throughout the numbers, which feature shifting moods that are used to tell a complete story. —Donovan Pierce



Bluebird
The Two
(PacifiCo)

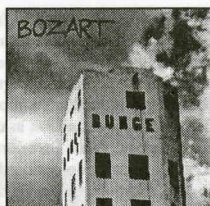
The Two, the first LP from LA-based quartet Bluebird, is the kind of record that makes you want to shake your ass. Such songs as "Skeleton Day Parade" and "Rider" thoughtfully pulsate with a raw rock rhythm, bringing to mind The Makers and At The Drive-In. *The Two* is enthusiastic and has a live-show feel, and is altogether a well-rounded effort—with a little sass on the side. —Hari Berrier





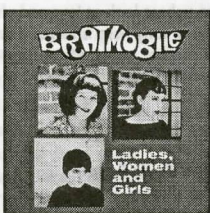
**Bozart
Bunge**
(Frenetic)

Bozart shine in their ability to create an unskinky sound as a two-piece, giving them full license to talk trash about other unsuccessful sub-species. The duo's second release, *Bunge*, gives us a more informed and melodic take on math rock (as it were), where progressive technicality sits sidecar to well-composed counterpoint. Derek Oringer's guitar style goes from jet-powered John Fahey to a chorus of Tony Iommi working overtime. Along with Peter Hawkinson's supplantation of odd-metered backbeats, these two mad scientists rock equations too smart for your average Texas Instruments. Not to mention a very clean recording at the hands of Tim Green, whose knob turning and slider sliding can be heard working for the likes of Melvins, Drunk Horse and his own Fucking Champs. Minnesota has a gem in Bozart—it won't be long before the ol' AAA throws them in the tour book. —Adam Hobbs



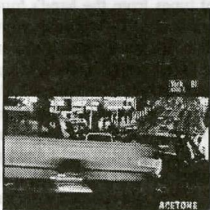
**Bratmobile
Ladies, Women And Girls**
(Lookout!)

Which Bratmobiler behind the wheel is a lady or a woman or a girl? I'll venture a scenario: First off, drummer Molly Neuman seems like quite the lady with her tight and tidy battering-ram beats—in a dark alley, she would pummel you into submission with her precision fills. Erin Smith is the woman of the band with her sexy, revved-up surf guitar complementing her androgynous mien like a little black dress. On "Eating Toothpaste," she squeezes out dangerous, Ventures-style riffs; on "Flavor Of The Month Club," crunchily thrash licks; and on "In Love With All My Loves," even some dreamy, reverb-drenched chords, all with the confidence of a full-blown female. And vocalist Allison Wolfe is the girl of the group—with a vengeance. Pouring herself into leopard-skin minis, she specializes in a plainspoken, almost petulant delivery that resembles both unadorned punk vocals and pouty teen-speak as she shouts, chants and occasionally even sings such lines as "Don't write a song about it/ just give me back my Cheap Trick records!" With added hand claps, tambourine and carnival organ, it sounds like Bratmobile have been up all night, tinkering with the garage-band tradition of the Pacific Northwest—and after putting garage rock up on blocks and souping it up in grand girly style, they've retrofitted the genre for a new age. —Kimberly Chun



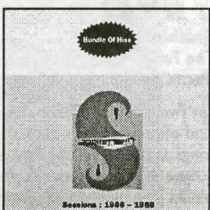
**The Buddyrevelles
American Matador**
(Motorcoat)

This standard-issue indie rock from the accomplished and polished Buddyrevelles is precise—these guys know how to weave a complex melody with interlocking bass and guitar—but the songs just sort of melt into each other, with textures so perfectly homogenous that you find yourself wishing somebody would just toss out a sour note. While there is nothing particularly offensive here, that may be the problem—*American Matador* is simply too safe for its own good. —Matt Fink



**Bundle Of Hiss
Sessions: 1986-1988**
(Loveless)

Bundle Of Hiss inspired many of the best-known grunge bands to come out of Seattle and included future members of Mudhoney and Tad. If you miss the glory days of flannel and ripped-knee-jeans rock,



then you owe it to yourself to add *Sessions: 1986-1988* to your collection. It'll make the other albums seem like polished knockoffs. This 15-song collection is all over the board with contributors, studios and thanks from established acts for BOH's underground sound that remained there. Their very noisy and heavy music, however, has not stood the test of time. Such songs as "Sleep No More" and "Amphetamine" reek of early Soundgarden—so much so that you may think of Kim Thayil is on there—but in general these recordings lack the craftsmanship that allowed their followers to break out and make it big. —Mark Whittaker



**Bunkbed
Nothing Ever Lasts**
(Let's Go)

The bedroom work of San Jose CA's Keith Krate is Bunkbed. His lonesome, whispered elegies to loneliness are both simple and effective. Drums are brushed, guitars are plucked, and soft-spoken vocals flutter about. You've heard this before, but the occasional starkness and the beautiful wide-open spaces are what keep you returning to it. Pastoral images float by as the acoustic guitars play light, engaging and intertwining melodies. A mixture of Jim O'Rourke's sensible side, Smog's early refractions and latter-day Spinanes. —Jon Pruett



**R.L. Burnside
Wish I Was In Heaven Sitting Down**
(Fat Possum/Epitaph)

R.L. Burnside's blend of traditional Mississippi blues—lots of soulful vocals, sloppy slide guitar, boot stomping and funky rhythms—and new musical tricks such as canned beats and vocal and mixing effects has garnered him a reputation among a whole new generation of blues fans. *Wish I Was In Heaven Sitting Down* is a bit of a return to traditional blues for Burnside. Though there's the inclusion of DJ scratches and scratchy canned beats, much more production attention seems to have been paid to his heartfelt and powerful blues songs with an undeniably independent feel. —Max Sidman



**Chicks On Speed
The Re-Releases Of The Un-Releases**
(K)

The *Re-Releases Of The Un-Releases* is the aural equivalent of flipping through the TV channels with a remote control, pausing only for a nanosecond at each station. Originally put out before *Will Save Us All*, this reissue—which actually includes most of the songs from the aforementioned exclamatory album—consists of a collage of interviews, song snippets and fully-realized songs mixed into a cohesive composite of noise pop. The result is a mixed bag from these ex-art students. However, Chicks On Speed completists will be impressed by most of the "new" compositions—such as "Lush Life," "Oh" and "Night Of The Pedestrian"—which are excellent new-wave-reminiscent blasts of analog synth and nonchalant vocals. —Annie Zaleski



**Meg Lee Chin
Junkies And Snakes**
(Invisible)

Little Meg Lee Chin is beginning to make a big name for herself. As one of the true survivors of the Pigface roller coaster, she's gone out and done the solo thing—and done it well. Forget about all that noisy industrial supergroup crap. What Meg creates—almost all on her own and recorded in her living room—is a melange of hip-hop, rock and good ol' bone-shattering poetry. *Junkies And Snakes* contains remixes of five songs from her amazing debut, *Piece And Love*, with two new tracks thrown in for good measure. The remixes don't sound that much different from the originals—Chin's music is simply too solid to be completely fooled with. However, the new track "And God She Created Civilization," which seethes and wriggles and touches on a hotly debated subject with bloodshot eyes and bared teeth, is worth all of our attention. —Mark Whittaker



**Circle
Andxelt**
(Metamorphosis)

Findland's Circle explore some of the same Krautrock territory that Trans Am are often guilty of appropriating, but without the irony. Vocoders are nowhere to be found, and the band manages to dig into its Teutonic influences with sleeves rolled up. The drums on *Andxelt* are thick, and within minutes the band is locked into hypnotic, trance-inducing rhythms and a linear guitar work. If you like what Thrill Jockey puts out, you'll most definitely enjoy this. —Jon Pruett



**Lloyd Cole & The Negatives
The Negatives**
(March)

There are some bad vibes on *The Negatives*, but it's brimming over with a kind of bittersweet optimism. There's one throw-away ("Too Much E"), but the rest ranks among the best Cole has written—and that's saying a lot. "No More Love Songs" is a gorgeous Leonard Cohen-style ballad, while "Impossible Girl" could be a hit single off Cole's *Rattlesnakes* debut. The Negatives are another batch of respected NY musicians, but past contributors such as Robert Quine and Neil Clark stop in too, making the guitars on the album match the level of songwriting. A truly beautiful work. —Nick Dedina



**Cowboy
Explosion And Collapse**
(Motorboat)

The first two tracks on Cowboy's debut LP, *Explosion And Collapse*, are mighty impressive. "Inertia" sports a haunting My Bloody Valentine instrumental build-up and "Large" continues where "Inertia" leaves off, adding more complex layers, wispy female vocals and even more rock. But it's all downhill from there. Songs such as "Flag Tattoo" and "(I Think I'd Rather Be A) Rock Star" are far too singsong, with cutesy (and intensely annoying) girly girl lyrics. They should have released a single and spent more time in the practice room. —Heidi Anne-Noel



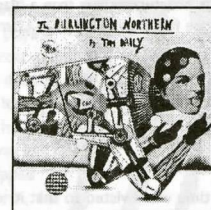
**The Cult
The Best Of Rare Cult**
(Beggars Banquet)

Ever wondered what separates true fans from casual listeners? It's box sets like *Rare Cult*, a six-disc collection brimming with Cult rarities, including the unreleased *Peace* album. For those of us with less disposable income or a more casual interest in Messrs. Astbury, Duffy & Co., there's this cherry-picked single volume. If you enjoyed The Cult's late '80s output, you'll find some goodies here, including the *Peace* remix of "Love Removal Machine" and the long version of "She Sells Sanctuary" (with which you can stage your own Nissan Sentra commercial in the privacy of your home). The tracks aren't arranged chronologically, so you can't actually hear the band evolve from a guitar-centric goth outfit to a Steppenwolf tribute band, but you'll get the idea. The thing you'll learn from *The Best Of Rare Cult* is that, beyond their propensity for writing the same four songs over and over again, The Cult were actually quite a good band. They just kept going far longer than they should have—much like a six-disc set of outtakes. Can a 10-volume collection of Zodiac Mindwarp rarities be far behind? —George Zahora



**Tom Daily
The Burlington Northern**
(Thick)

Tom Daily has a long history of playing in sturdy rock bands (Smoking Popes, Not Rebecca), and his solo releases are no exception. On *The Burlington Northern*, his second solo full-length, Daily set up his eight-track at home and invited a cast of musician friends



to come over and help out. The result is some pretty heady guitar rock with lyrics that reflect the complex images that roll through Daily's head. Whether the songs are happy or sad, they're always thought-provoking. —Michael Damers



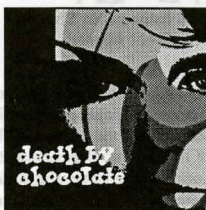
Dashboard Confessional
The Swiss Army Romance
(Drive-Thru)

The Swiss Army Romance is the debut album from Chris Carrabba, otherwise known as Dashboard Confessional. After spending time in such bands as Further Seems Forever and The Vacant Andies, Carrabba decided to pick up his acoustic guitar and get stripped down. *The Swiss Army Romance* is a collection of soul-searching tunes that needle their way in and open-mic you all the way to a big group hug. Carrabba has talent, but he whines a bit about his feelings, and doesn't really stir up the music for each moment. Nonetheless, he may be on his way to becoming the man-jewel of the 21st century. —Mark Whittaker



Death By Chocolate
Death By Chocolate
(Jetset)

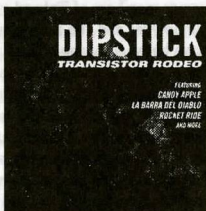
Angela Faye Tillet, a cute 19-year-old British lass whose promo photo shows her in pigtails holding an umbrella, has created an album of whimsical oddities that are part psychedelic and part kitsch. Word to the wise: Program your stereo to play every other song, skipping the tracks that are simply Tillet listing random things (mustard yellow, headaches and nausea, ice-cold cocktails, swimming pools, clean hair and chewing gum, etc.). "Maggie," one of the best songs on the album, could have easily been in an Austin Powers movie, and "The Land Of Chocolate" probably should have been on the soundtrack to *The Avengers*. The Dr. Seuss influence is also unmistakable, especially when she delivers such choice lines as "My friend Jack eats sugar lumps!" —Heidi Anne-Noel



Dipstick
Transistor Rodeo
(Weed)

This is what happens when a penny nickelodeon goes amok. Or perhaps this is the lost soundtrack to the "Joni And Chachi Mystery Hour."

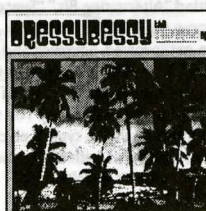
Whatever it is, Dipstick's *Transistor Rodeo* is cartoonish and loads of fun, following in the footsteps of the aging lounge scene and spy music. It's the kind of "Why the heck not?" mirth we all need now and then, and mostly now. No lyrics, no jabbing standard rock, just one man, Greg Reeves, spinning us through the rinse cycle of the strange things one can do with electronics, imagination and glue sniffing. Alongside the sideshow marimba and astro-rumba are moments of contemplation, such as the slight "Soft Shadow" and the airy "Sandblast." Everything else is a pure delight to the attendants of the Dia de los Muertos gopher dance party down the block. You're all invited, just wear a snappy hat and leave your pants behind. —Mark Whittaker



Dressy Bessy
The California EP
(Kindercore)

So sunny it could pierce the inky darkness of a winter's night, Dressy Bessy's new EP rolls merrily along with five more '60s-inspired pop tunes.

While their prominently vibrant percussion and sugary harmonies may at times echo turn-back-the-clock bubble gum groups, this plate of perfect pop isn't simply retro rehash. The intense, tempered fuzz of guitarist John Hill (also of The Apples In Stereo) and the snaking synth lines are distinctly



modern, while standout track "In The Morning" haunts with Tammy Ealom's lilting, catchy vocals and a hypnotic, warmly mechanized beat. A much too short and thoroughly intriguing breath of fresh air. —Annie Zaleski



Earwig
Perfect Past Tense
(LFM)

Records like *Perfect Past Tense* are the building blocks of music, making up the vast majority of content in any given genre. Neither shockingly good nor appallingly awful, this is a competent spin through bog-standard indie-rock territory, complete with big, rough-edged guitar lines, easily hummable hooks and well-enunciated vocals, though it's just a little bit too raw to be commercial-radio friendly. You've got to give the band credit, though—Earwig take the time to actually *sing* rather than indulge in that frightful raw-throated screaming that's all the rage these days. Ultimately, *Perfect Past Tense* makes pleasant, if passive listening; you'll enjoy it while it's on, but you won't remember much about it later. —George Zahora



Eastern Youth
Kumo Ineke Koe
(Toy's Factory)

If you thought the only thing missing from your Fugazi and Jawbreaker albums was the fact that they didn't sing in Japanese, well, *Kumo Ineke Koe* is the record you've been waiting for. Eastern Youth have put a new spin on indie rock by giving it the Godzilla girth it deserves. These guys are apparently golden idols back in Japan, a product of mixing thoughtful lyrics with Western rock and giving amazing live performances. Though you probably won't understand a single word they're singing, you'll most certainly be impressed by their fine and dandy alt-rock done to hermetic perfection. —Mark Whittaker



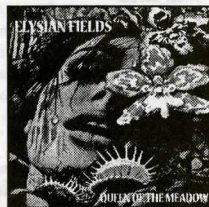
Echoboy
Volume 2
(Mute)

When electronic maven Echoboy hits his stride, the results are amazing—witness the beautiful haze of "Siobhan" that threatens to bust into New Order at a moment's notice, the bewitching, new-wave melancholy of "Make The City The Sound" and the gently majestic psychedelic spread of "Schram And Sheddle 262." However, such tracks as the watered-down "Turning On" (which sounds like an outtake from a Primal Scream/Chemical Brothers collaboration) and the tinny drum-machine-fueled "Kelly's Truck" are simply sputtering irritants that sound like derivative techno instead of grand experimentation. Thankfully, *Volume 2* contains more hits than misses, redeemed by the distinct infusion of tired '80s beats with a modern mix of musical nuances that span from ambient to industrial to rockabilly. —Annie Zaleski



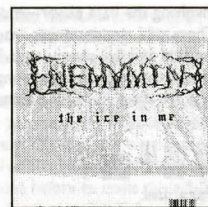
Elysian Fields
Queen Of The Meadow
(Jetset)

Jennifer Charles is a brooding beauty who puts plenty of thought into her controlled, hushed tones. Though famed New York musician Oren Bloedow does a good job of varying his arrangements, everything on *Queen Of The Meadow* is extremely lugubrious. You could write this off as make-out music for goths, but there is a lot to dig into here. Multiple listens reveal different shadings and showcase some genuinely intriguing songs, including "Bayonne," which oddly enough recalls The Beatles' "Across The Universe." —Nick Dedina



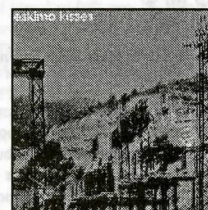
Enemymine
The Ice In Me
(Up)

The Ice In Me is a wonderful album, giving hope to the metalheads who are sick of the radio treatments given to the genre and enjoy alternative takes on traditional sounds. Enemymine deliver a blistering array of heavy change-ups, screaming vocals (which, at times, can be a bit trying), experimental feedback and, most importantly, good ol' rock-'em-sock-'em alt-metal. In between the rocking haymakers are pieces of instrumentation that piece the nail bomb together with golden thread—these snippets of slight sounds and grooves are what make the obvious rock-outs that much more powerful. The fact that the band consists of just a drummer and two guys playing bass is simply amazing. You'll never miss the lead-guitar antics. You'll never trust radio rock again. —Mark Whittaker



Eskimo Kisses
Eskimo Kisses
(Post-Parlo)

The first LP from Austin's Eskimo Kisses is a collection of punk-inspired, fuzzy, guitar-driven tunes full of quirky vocals, with a raw, poppy sound reminiscent of Superchunk and early Ash. Standout tracks include the strong and punchy "Elevator," the punky "Junebug" and the catchy, twisted "Promises." —Melanie Covey



Euphone
Hashin' It Out
(Jade Tree)

Much of Euphone's strength can be found in their songs' complex rhythms, and on their second LP, *Hashin' It Out*, the band has hit its stride in a very powerful way. The Chicago duo—made up of drummer Ryan Rapsys and bassist Nick Macri—has enlisted a number of local luminaries to help push its music toward a funkier sound that makes for a more entertaining listen. The songs hover somewhere between rock, jazz and fusion, and the additional vocal harmonizing further enhances the songs. —Michael Damers



Exist
There I Was. Hear, I Am
(Flamehead)

All you sad clowns locked away in some cold bedroom looking for an anthem and a songwriter who knows exactly what it's like to mope and hope for rain, cheer up: David Stoller's Exist is the gray shawl you've been waiting to wrap yourself in. With *There I Was. Hear, I Am*, Stoller has paved a slow and foggy road to the edge of Lonely Point. While the singer/songwriter gently weeps, we contemplate leaping off the edge of the earth. I'm not kidding—this is really unhappy, completely draining music. Not that this is necessarily a bad thing—the album is well put together and the songwriting is strong. But I feel sorry for Mr. Stoller. I hope he's doing all right. The album lets you go with "You Live Forever, But Things End." Sniff. Is there anything I can do? —Mark Whittaker



The Explosion
Steal This
(Revelation)

This record was released outside of the band's deal with Jade Tree as part of some sort of agreement struck to satisfy a contractual obligation



astounding range of musical capabilities, employed to complement the understated eeriness of Michael and Mark Polish's film about Siamese twin brothers and their strange courting of a young ingenue. The album's sensuality is comparable to Michael Danna's soundtrack for *Exotica*, and Matthewman is often measured up to Angelo Badalamenti, David Lynch's favorite music-man. The two (plus one hidden) tracks with vocals stand strongly on their own: the melancholy jazz number "When Did You Leave Heaven" and the sentimental folk tune "Don't Grow." Also included is a clip of dialogue from one of the film's most cathartic moments, following the death (whoops, sorry!) of one of the twin brothers. —Melanie Covey



The Mertons
Girandole
(Louisiana Red Hot)

Full of tight and twangy rock, The Mertons traverse the well-worn path cut by Son Volt, Wilco and The Jayhawks. However strong the songwriting hooks and thoughtful lyrics generally are, the songs tend to get stuck in a cycle of loud guitar and drums, with only a few lighter moments adding variation. The bar-band stomp of "Fitful" and "Anyway The Letterbomb" work well, but it's the stripped-down dobro and mandolin of "Kerosene Lamp" that at least temporarily sets this band apart from an ever-marginalizing sea of alt-country copycats. *Girandole* is a solid offering, but it doesn't break any new ground. —Matt Fink



Chris Mills
Kiss It Goodbye
(Sugar Free)

Chris Mills' third LP is so full of sappy slide guitar and honky-tonk swagger that on first listen one might suspect the Chicago-based singer of being just another alt-country miscreant itching to bitch about his divorce and dead dog. Yet while Mills is tricking us into thinking he is merely heart-broken, he is subtly playing on the clichés that come with melodramatic fiddle arrangements and layers of manic, cutting introspective lyrics. In the end, he's made a record that is as magical and intelligent as it is honest and dark. —Brian Conant



The Mr. T Experience
The Miracle Of Shame
(Lookout!)

This five-track EP is packed with all the ingredients that made you fall in love with Dr. Frank and the boys, with the addition of a Hammond organ and home-recording experimentation. The big-production number, "Leave The Thinking To The Smart People," contradicts the rest of the album with its mellow tempo and bombastic sound value. "Mr. Ramones" is a silly tribute to, well, you know, and the on-point mimicry is amazing. The white-noise pop of "Stephanies Of The VWorld Unite" engages and throws us off a bit before letting us off with the acoustic ode "I Don't Know Where Dan Treacy Lives," an almost sentimental treatment for the missing member of Television Personalities. This record will sound especially great in the waxing summer months as you drive through town, windows down, with nothing but a nacho stand dead ahead. —Mark Whittaker



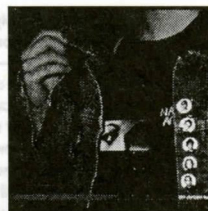
Moods For Moderns
Two Tracks Left
(Doghouse)

Featuring former members of King For A Day and Empire State Games, Moods For Moderns specialize in bouncy power pop buoyed by lush harmonies. What sets these Detroit lads both above and apart from other similarly minded trios are the little flourishes they employ—from quiet synth/keyboard interludes to rollicking trumpets, the band isn't afraid to augment its country-tinged rock with interesting sonic ornamentation. The result is a remarkably self-assured debut EP that foretells a similarly bright future for the band. —Annie Zaleski



The National Acrobat
Can't Stop Casper Adams
(Status)

The National Acrobat specialize in bone-crushing hardcore rock and blissful rackets. Led by Casper Adams, the band smokes its way through eight tracks in 14 minutes. These songs sway with melodic and tumultuous guitars as the vocals hug the clamor with sonic brilliance. Highly recommended. —Michael Dammers



National Skyline
Exit Now
(File 13)

It's hard to believe there are only four songs on an EP with such diversity and textural variation, and on one that mixes electronic and organic pop elements just so. Jeff Garber and Jeff Dimpsey (of Castor and Hum, respectively) really hone their songwriting experience to create a gradual, welcome mood swing. Starting with a catchy psychedelic guitar sound on "October," they move into crunching, danceable rhythms in "Identity Crisis" that parallel Beck. From there, "Ghosts" plummets into a build of ambient loops and soaring vocals that finally give way to the haunting, supremely memorable piano melody of "Karolina II." —Melanie Covey



The Nation Of Ulysses
The Embassy Tapes
(Dischord)

This recently unearthed 1992 recording session features The Nation Of Ulysses frontman Ian Svenonius—who, along with drummer Steve Gamboa and guitarist James Canty, went on to form The Make-Up after this group disbanded—throwing his entire being, for good or ill, into the task at hand, barking and screaming over rough-and-tumble punk-rock charges from a band for whom the ideologies expressed through their sound were as powerful as the sonic expression itself. The big drawback with this release is that it was originally taped on a four-track, and kinda sounds like shit. —Max Sidman



Beaver Nelson
Little Brother
(Black Dog/Louisiana Red Hot)

Beaver Nelson's high, clear tenor soars over songs of loss and pain as well as rollicking good times, tinged with enough late nights, smoke and whiskey to make you believe everything he says. Equal parts tender-songwriter moments ("Little Brother Blues") and cranking Texas boot-stompers ("Your Little Girl"), *Little Brother* demonstrates why Nelson has received so much attention from major labels for the past 10 years, while his questioning, hard-luck lyrics tell stories of lost love and disappointment at the hands of said labels. While none of these songs approach the downright perfection of "Forget Thinkin'," the amazing single from his 1998 solo debut, *The Last Hurrah*, they paint a fuller, rounder and more mature picture of an artist who clearly ought to be the next big thing, but doesn't seem to care about that at all. —Chris Slater



Niagara
02
(Bliss)

Jeff Davis of Niagara should have skipped on the easy-listening rendition of The Divinyls' "I Touch Myself." But lately I've really started to connect with the words of the song "Lady Macbeth," which repeat "Love never dies a natural death." That Davis guy knows what's up with heartbreak. *02* is a steadily mellow record with a lot of gurgling electronic sounds, beats and other noises woven through guitar, and soft but clearly

enunciated vocals. There is a touch of Northern Soul to it, reminiscent of Paul Weller, and suggestions that Davis has a bit of a lounge lizard inside him waiting to bust out. —Melanie Covey



Nine Inch Elvis
Nine Inch Elvis
(Invisible)

Yes, the aging Gothkateers haven't thrown away their Front 242 records yet, and hope lingers that one day that booming dance-floor stomp via KMFDM or pre-hardcore Ministry will rise from the dead. Let the fog machine roll on and break out those fish-nets, 'cause here comes Nine Inch Elvis! Is this a tribute album or just some strange excuse to get back to the black-dyed roots of yesteryear? In any case, what you get here is track after track of Elvis tunes done to industrial dance music. It's all kinda moody, you know, but when you hear the treatment given to such classics as "All Shook Up" and "Jailhouse Rock," you can't exactly deny the intentions by the kids over at Invisible Records to feed the gloomy monster that still lurks within with tongue pressed firm in cheek. A sunken, white-caked cheek of course! "Hound Dog" stinks of Trent Reznor, with that trademark tonal bassline and thudding beats. "Heartbreak Hotel" wriggles around like Dig Dug for a bit, then blasts away in crunchy guitars before selling out to complete dance-a-topics. —Mark Whittaker



90 Day Men
[It [Is] It] Critical Band
(Southern)

One thing the past 12 months are going to be remembered for is bands like 90 Day Men—outfits that take chunks of various genres, grind them up, and then spit them out to create their own niche that separates them from the clutter of unoriginal bands. Taking inspiration from their local Chicago scene, the band's rock is dissonant, noisy, jittery and jazzy while the vocals slither in rhythmically downtrodden spoken-word observations. A sneaky, aggressive release that gives equal attention to tender string bending as it does to slabs of stuttering noise. —Michael Dammers



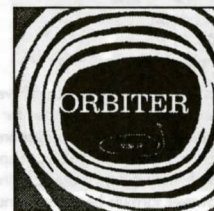
The Onlys
Tune The Blue Screen
(Desert Fish)

Just when you think you have this Austin band pegged, it throws you another curveball. Late '70s punk, Fall-style rants, ironic folk-rock, sweet, spacey country and more. Not everything works equally well, but it's all worthwhile. I keep going back to this one and wonder if The Onlys are just having a laugh or are really serious. The music is good regardless. —Nick Dedina



Orbiter
Mini LP
(Loveless)

They met in a karaoke bar, and somehow Harris Thurmond (ex-Hammerbox) and Fia McGann (ex-Goodness) knew that Orbiter would take form. Was it a drunken take on "Livin' La Vida Loca" that gave them inspiration to loop seductive guitar around soft, flowing prose and beats? Or was it just a simple hand of fate? You decide. Orbiter's debut album, *Mini LP*, is a seven-song collection that weaves narcotic grooves with beautiful tunes, the sort of late-night ambience you need when instrumentals are too sleepy and that extra bonus of whispered ideals seems potent. The album opens and closes with instrumentals, but only to bookend five tracks of fleeting drugstore trip-hop noir and erotic strings accompanied by McGann's vocal charm. Someone pass the port, I'm gonna jam for a moment. —Mark Whittaker





Palace Of Oranges
Prepare To Greet A Guest
(Rubric)

Palace Of Oranges swing between hard-rockin' tunes and druggy, distorted moodscapes. Hüsker Dü collide with Pavement and shameless cock rock. It's to the band's credit that they throw all of this together and stubbornly force it to make perfect sense. This would be good driving music, if only I had a car. —Nick Dedina



The Paper Chase
Young Bodies Heal Quickly
You Know
(Beatville)

If you want to relive that airline crash all over again, be my guest. Here it is, minus the last gulp from the complimentary cocktail moments before meeting terra firma. The Paper Chase come at you like art-school whip-it addicts who just happen to own instruments and every album by King Crimson. The sound is pure discord, like a bad Steve Albini junk-fix mix, with snotty attitudes toward jazz, rock and paying customers. They can fool us with their noisy experimental jive, that nerd-nik new jazz/flop punk warble, but when you sit back to enjoy *Young Bodies Heal Quickly You Know*, you feel as if someone is slowly plucking your armhair out. Are we supposed to like this? Is this amusing? Is this even good? "Ever Since The Turn" is admirable enough, taking a chance on rock and reconstruction, but it is the one shining tooth in a field of neglected cavities. —Mark Whittaker



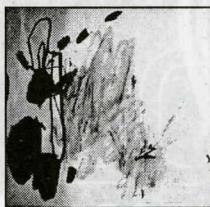
The Pets
Love And War
(Endearing)

A wildly sprawling pop masterpiece, The Pets' debut is an album of songs within songs, a 72-minute opus that bounces from densely textured Beatles-esque pop to new-wave punk and progressive rock, all interweaving seamlessly. *Love And War* lives up to its title: most of these tracks seem to be love songs, but a closer listen reveals sinister references to war, terrorism and the end of mankind. With its Johnny Mathis croon, "A Lighthearted Lovesong" is just that, though moods quickly change through the schizophrenic passages of such tracks as "Treasures" and "Somewhere In Tomorrow." With the Canadian band apparently on hiatus as Christopher Peters teaches English in Japan, *Love And War* could easily join the canon of obscure cult albums before he returns. —Matt Fink



The Places
The Autopilot Knows You Best
(Absolutely Kosher)

Take a ride with the Portland, OR's The Places, and enter an airy realm of ethereal samples that sound like jets taking off, dreamy rhythm guitar, swooping violin lines and crooned vocals. It's a nice place, as Places go. Listen closely as songwriter Amy Annelle—who resembles Margo Timmins in her whispery allure—gently moans lyrics about a friend who "turned off the phone/ and you won't check your messages/ Mailbox is full of people who want a piece of you/ and I want mine too" or ekes out an "Ode To The Exhausted" or a "Love Song For A Comet." One part heather-bedecked Nick Drake, another part earthbound Kate Bush, Annelle sounds like she's going places worth exploring. —Kimberly Chun



Poor Rich Ones
Happy Happy Happy
(Rec 90/Five One Inc.)

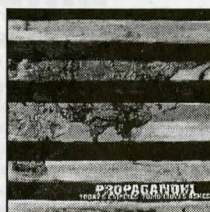
Touted as Norway's best-kept secret, Poor Rich Ones, with a load of Norwegian awards and accolades in tow, make their U.S. debut with their third full-length record. Led by the falsetto vocals of William Marhaug, the band delivers a strong set of precise pop that will remind some folks of early Radiohead and maybe those Irish newcomers JJ72. The production

is lush and eminently listenable, and all of this seems strangely radio-friendly. Poor Rich Ones will probably not appeal to the more adventuresome listener in search of gritty rock, but will fit nicely alongside any of your faves you hear on your city's alternative-radio Top 40. —Michael Dammers



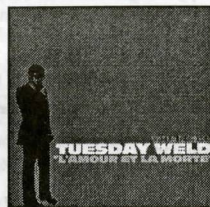
Propagandhi
Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes
(Fat Wreck Chords)

You know when you listen to punk-rock records and you sometimes find yourself questioning the band's motivation and anger-management skills? Well, Canada's Propagandhi are the real deal. The album's lyrical concept is heavily—and I mean heavily—political, ranging from U.S. foreign policy to their G7 concerns. A read of the lyrics and adjoining information is amazing just in itself. *Today's Empires, Tomorrow's Ashes*, which swings and sways with bursts of speed and dynamic breakdowns, will rock you even on those days you can do without the weighty lyrical content. —Michael Dammers



The Real Tuesday Weld
L'Amour Et La Mort
(Kindercore)

Stephen Coates, the man behind The Real Tuesday Weld, injects Rat Pack urbanity into pop music with a delightfully swanky selection of retro-flavored tunes. A cool, summery trumpet and whispering vocals burnished by antique samples populate the jazzy "The Days Of Me And You," while the lazy jazz guitar on "Epitaph For A Dead Uncle (George)" continues the languidly nostalgic vibe. The only hint that the timeless compositions on this EP reside in the 21st century is the electronic beats and muted synthesizers flowing through the tracks. But these modern touches blend perfectly with the 1930s atmosphere, sounding as polished as the authentic sentiments residing on any dusty 78 RPM record. —Annie Zaleski



Saint Low
Saint Low
(Thirsty Ear)

Mary Lorson's voice defined one of the most sadly underappreciated bands of the '90s, Madder Rose, in which she also played guitar and wrote lyrics. In Saint Low she does all of the writing, and by revisiting formative influences such as Big Star, Neil Young and Fairport Convention, it sounds as though she has rediscovered herself and her love of music. Her voice is sensual in a way that never seems self-conscious, and her natural tone and delivery fit perfectly with the rustic fiddle of Joe Meyer and the piano of Mike Stark. —Matt Barber



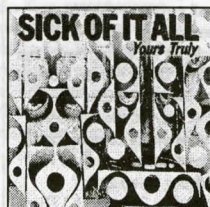
Adrian Shaw
Head Cleaner
(Rubric)

An unfortunate pairing of CSN&Y harmonies and Pink Floyd prog-rock, former Hawkwind and current Bevis Frond bassist Adrian Shaw's latest album has more than a few problems. Strangely, Shaw is a decent songwriter, vocalist and musician, but his songs suffer from muddled and tinny production that makes the drums and vocals come through as weak as instant coffee. While *Head Cleaner* is generally listenable, Shaw's melodies aren't all that sharp, with echoing vocals, humming synths and big guitar solos carrying his plodding new-agey psychedelic rock. —Matt Fink



Sick Of It All
Yours Truly
(Fat Wreck Chords)

All aboard the hate tank for pit-inspiring punk that relates to bleak existences everywhere and reeks of its self-created des-



peration: Sick Of It All frontman Lou Koller is back again to inject more relentless energy and venom into our lives with *Yours Truly*, the newest foaming offering from one of hardcore's finest outposts. No pulling punches, no backing out now, and no way are you gonna leave without a bloody appendage from such nailguns as "Disco Sucks Fuck Everything" and "Hello Pricks." The music is great. The message is dire. There will always be that group of hope-free maniacs that will take Sick Of It All's message a bit too far and manage to overthrow either themselves or some government. *Yours Truly* will lead them. —Mark Whittaker



Songs: Ohia
Ghost Tropic
(Secretly Canadian)

More of the same from Jason Molina on his fifth full-length release, *Ghost Tropic*, and "more of the same" may be this album's greatest weakness: You could plug this record into the middle of any of the last three Songs: Ohia albums and lose the chronology altogether, and I say this as a huge fan of Molina's work. His stark voice, intricate guitar work and outstanding wordplay make him one of the best in his genre, but by now we can expect a bit more from such a talent. —Michael Dammers



SubArachnoid Space
These Things Take Time
(Relapse)

San Francisco Bay Area-based SubArachnoid Space conjure up sounds found in your dreamiest musical fantasy. You imagine yourself standing in a smoky lounge. A haze settles between you and the act onstage. Your head bobs in time to the mellow notes in the air. As your body begins to sway, you become numb and settle into a cushy chair, too immersed in the band's brand of psychedelic space rock to hold yourself upright. Nothing can bother you now—not even the rowdy drinkers. It's just you and the groovy music, and it feels damn good. —Erin Geiger



Subset
Overpass
(Post-Parlo)

It's nothing earth-shattering, but *Overpass* will impress fans of tried-and-true pop. Rockin' standouts include such slugs as "Anchor," "Defeated" and "Off At Pleasant Valley." Other noteworthy tracks include the Buffalo Tom-esque "Outdated," the rather punchy "Disarmament," the charming "Winter '79" and the somber "Umbrellas, For Example." These guys really know how to write within their genre, and do it with a dedication that may get them out of Austin and onto the Sunset Strip, where they will surely run and hide to save their sensitive souls. —Mark Whittaker



Sunshine
Velvet Suicide
(Big Wheel Recreation)

Sunshine's revival rock is heavily laced with '80s-alternative and Euro-pop overtones. There are lots of big, hollow and fuzzed-out bass sounds to hold it all together, with added effects from dark and oddly melodic guitar lines and muffled screaming solos, light, gothicky keys and full-bore but almost tin-canned vocals. It evokes that serene, emotionally barren feeling of '80s alt-rock, but under its surface lurks powerful and rhythmic riffing, thunderous drumming and an attitude that can only come from a heart that beats rock 'n' roll. —Max Sidman



Tagging Satellites
Abstract Confessions
(Magwheel)

The steady slide to the sexy, dark and gritty side of rock continues in stellar fashion on Tagging Satellites' follow-up to the excellent *Shooting Down The Airways*. Led by the sultry vocals of Zera Markel, these new songs slip in and out of a rockish demeanor that is sometimes Mazzy Star, sometimes Garbage, and sometimes Medicine. Tagging Satellites are coming into their own; when *Abstract Confessions* is on, it's all there is going on around you. Very nice. —Michael Dammers



Jason Trachtenburg
Revolutions Per Minute
(Orange)

On the surface, Jason Trachtenburg's tunes—which cover subjects ranging from politics to nutrition to auto insurance to toothpaste—have “just for laughs” written all over them, and his numerous collaborations with Presidents Of The United States Of America founder Chris Ballew further that notion. But his own story is that of a well-seasoned musician who has spent years in and out of several musical movements. Trachtenburg moved to New York in the late 80s, where he became a part of the anti-folk scene, then skipped to Austin, where he began working with the one and only Daniel Johnston. After that, he headed back to the Northwest, where he teamed up with Ballew for four albums, including *Revolutions Per Minute*. His live show often features Trachtenburg's six-year-old daughter on drums, and his music reflects this deliberate innocence through folk-based, lo-fi acoustic tunes (with a few electric nods to Ween) that have a sense of humor. Funny enough, Trachtenburg is some serious stuff. —Josh Bloom



incarnations and The Brian Jonestown Massacre), The Warlocks are a large ensemble dedicated to making some of the most hectic '60s-influenced psychedelic music in recent memory. With four guitars (go wah-wah pedal!) and two drummers, Hecksher serves up a Stones/Hendrix/Velvets mix that borders on Canned Heat on some jams and then swings toward early Dream Syndicate on others. This is an amazing guitar workout that should have devotees of the genre very, very excited. —Michael Dammers



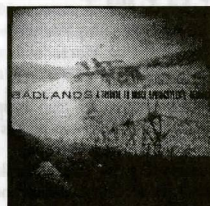
Wolf Colonel
The Castle
(K)

Showing a little more Elliott Smith influence than on his debut, *Vikings Of Mint*, Jason Anderson's songwriting sense is still well within the Bob Pollard camp. As such, *The Castle* is a powerhouse pop album, combining just the right balance of sly singer/songwriting humor, lo-fi spirit and '70s arena stomp. The straightforward, winning rock of “The Almond Gorilla” almost sounds like it could be a Tom Petty song, but Wolf Colonel make up for any perceived lack of innovation with excellent harmonies, concise arrangements and pseudo-profound lyrics riding enough hooks to kill a man. —Matt Fink



Various Artists
Badlands: A Tribute To Bruce Springsteen's Nebraska
(Sub Pop)

Nebraska has always been the Springsteen record for those of us too embarrassed to scream The Boss' name, its songs hushed and intense instead of bombastic and melodramatic. However, it still seems odd that this tribute album was made. Chrissie Hynde's surprisingly powerful reading of the title tune helps set the stage for the album, but also shows an obvious flaw of the entire project: Like Hynde, most of the artists here (including Son Volt, Deanna Carter and Ani DiFranco) showcase the songs well but don't bring anything new to them. At least that approach is better than Hank III's honky-tonk cover of “Atlantic City,” which destroys a great tune's narrative and melody. The album features three Springsteen tracks beyond those on *Nebraska*, and Johnny Cash's matter-of-fact reading of “I'm On Fire” steals the show. —Nick Dedina



Various Artists
Kindercore Fifty—We Thank You
(Kindercore)

To celebrate its 50th release, Kindercore has put together an ambitious compilation spanning three years, three CDs and three themes. Disc one offers the present and the new, featuring current bands on the roster. Winners on this disc include Dressy Bessy, Four Corners and Vermont. Disc two offers classics and some out-of-print rarities, including work by Kincaid, Vetran and Serious Teeth. Disc three, perhaps the best of them all, is all remixes—the old, the new and the future—and includes excellent reworkings of The Olivia Tremor Control and Of Montreal, as well as what may be the best song on the entire compilation, World Trade's remix of The Ladybug Transistor's “Meadow Porch Arch.” There

are definitely some throwaway tracks here and there, but for the most part it's a nice compilation from quite a nice little label. —Heidi Anne-Noel



Various Artists
Sculpting From Drake Vol. One
(Elsie+Jack)

Capturing the winsome elegance of Nick Drake without pedantry is a heady task. For the most part this record succeeds by burying the slight melodies and hushed vocals under bedroom drones, tweaked acoustic guitars and twee electronics. Those seeking a straight translation will be happy with Archer Prewitt's take on “Parasite” and The Autumns' loud/soft shoegazing version of “Time Of No Reply.” Those looking for a reason not to purchase the record at all will find it with the baffling, sub-techno version of “Pink Moon” by Ray Speedway, which, despite some interesting loops of the real track, sounds like a warehouse-party leftover circa 1991. —Jon Pruett



Various Artists
Shanti Project Collection 2
(Badman)

Shanti Project Collection 2 reigns in some of the most disarming female voices from the underground. The all-star roster includes Kristin Hersh, Low's Mimi Parker, Rebecca Gates, ex-Eric's Tripper Julie Doiron, Paula Frazer, Edith Frost and former Hole and Smashing Pumpkins bassist Melissa Auf der Maur (who uses the moniker MAdM). Many of these women are known for their darker leanings, and this record is no exception. Hersh, with her Grace Slick-inspired vocals, wails away, while Parker lulls us with her sweet, minimalist style. The standout on the album, however, is Frost. Her vocals are haunting on the dark “Ancestors,” but she perks up on the twangy “Cold And On My Mind.” *Shanti 2*—which, like its predecessor, benefits Shanti Project, a San Francisco-based AIDS/HIV assistance program—is an enchanting album for a rainy day. —Erica Jewell



Tortoise
Standards
(Thrill Jockey)

It isn't clear how Tortoise can bring so many different styles of music together and create art instead of crap, but they do. The down-home folks who found the connections between glacial Krautrock, suave, cool jazz and hip-hop are back with another winner. One number even takes a sole flourish from a good-time disco song and melds it into a vaguely Asian melody. This album is a reminder that Tortoise write solid songs, and the results continue to be rewarding and thankfully unpretentious. —Nick Dedina



The Twin Atlas
The Philadelphia Parking Authority Must Die
(Tappersize)

The Philadelphia Parking Authority Must Die is the product of over a year's worth of home-recording sessions between Philadelphia-based collaborators Sean Byrne and Lucas Zaleski. The result is a folk-flavored record with an original take on traditional sounds, shining with gentle vocal harmony, poetic sensibility and layers of shimmering guitar. Banjo, harmonica, mandolin and percussion give a nod to traditional folk structures, while sparse electronic buzzing and fuzz guitar hint at the experimentation at the root of their efforts. The tempos of the arrangements lack the variation required to strongly differentiate one track from the next, especially over a 26-song spread, but the songs carry a subdued complexity that can make each song its own treasure to attentive ears. Occasional background noises and intro counts typical of home recording give the album an added sense of intimacy. —Donovan Pierce



Vancouver Nights
Vancouver Nights
(Endearing)

Musically simple but emotionally complex, *Vancouver Nights'* debut album is filled with pristinely gorgeous compositions. Spearheaded by ex-Krevis singer Sara Lapsley's melodic, Liz Phair-ish vocals and enchanting piano, this Canadian four-piece weaves slices of catchy but uncloying indie pop that's as diverse as it is emotional. Highlights include the almost-acoustic “Final Hour,” the straightforward rocker “Unnecessarily,” the cheeky male-female vocal duet “A Room Of One's Own” and the delicate, expansive rocker “If, By Will.” Simply and unquestionably a gem of an album. —Annie Zaleski



The Warlocks
The Warlocks
(Bomp!)

Led by Greg Hecksher (who has spent time with early Beck



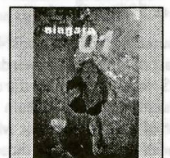
The San Francisco band's second release, *Niagara 02* is a unique stew of “rock” retro-futurism; warm, vibrating guitars, burbling moogs, brushes on drums, and intimate vocals...

“Sensual, angular songwriting...” (NME)

“Evocative, electronic campfire ballads...” (Melody Maker)

bliss

POB 7569
Berkeley, CA 94707
www.niagara02.com



Moving Pictures

DVD REVIEWS By Nick Dedina



Rock 'N' Roll High School
(Slingshot)

This extremely entertaining parody of '50s teen movies is even more enjoyable now than when I was a kid. P.J. Soles (*Stripes, Breaking Away*) is crazy for rock and The Ramones (who are described as "Number one with a bullet!"). Soles is the perkier, cleanest and coolest chick ever to do battle with a kinky, repressed school principal who hates rock 'n' roll. The movie is good-natured and full of surrealistic humor, including Clint Howard's men's room empire, exploding mice and Joey Ramone being force-fed alfalfa sprouts. The Ramones' concert brings the house down, and then the band helps bring the school down. The Ramones can barely enunciate a single line of dialog, but they are perfect. Famed character actor Dick Miller, playing the police chief, looks at them and says, "These are ugly, ugly people." Man, life doesn't get much better than this. The DVD is loaded with great extras, including interviews and additional Ramones songs.



Elvis Sinatra
(*Mostly*) *Live!*
(Enterprise)

Back in mid-'60s, George Leonard made international news by getting kicked out of high school for having Beatles-inspired long hair. The case went to the Supreme Court, where the kid lost. He never went back to school, but the publicity got him a record contract and a spot opening for The Rolling Stones. Fast-forward 35 years, and Leonard is now a dry-cleaning magnate who lives in a bizarre, windowless semi-mansion and puts on a multimedia lounge show.

Highlights include his tight big band and a hilarious dancing trio of dapper old men, the latter of which includes Leonard's uncle. The documentary contained on this DVD only tells part of that story, but the concert section showcases Leonard's winning songs and stupid/smart stage show. Elvis Sinatra sings more like Jack Jones than either of his namesakes, but his tunes resemble famous standards rewritten by such cranks as Randy Newman and Lyle Lovett. This lovable eccentric may be like something out of a PG-rated David Lynch movie, but Leonard has big and unique talents.



Frank Sinatra
A Man And His Music + Ella + Jobim
(Warner Bros.)

The reissue of this 1967 TV special is a real blast. It's got everything: an arty film montage of city noises leading into a percussion showcase, Ella Fitzgerald in a beehive hairdo, Antonio Carlos Jobim strumming his guitar, and Sinatra singing and smoking. A couple of highlights are Frank's low-key bossa nova sit-down with Jobim and Sinatra literally sitting at Ella's feet while she scats up a storm. A great star deferring to someone else's talent? You don't see that kind of class anymore. Of course, you don't hear music this good anymore either.



This Is Spinal Tap
(MGM)

This Is Spinal Tap is a great introduction to the world of DVDs. You get the letterboxed original movie and a furlong of bonuses: a hilarious audio commentary with the actors staying in character, deleted scenes, TV appearances, and music videos. The

deleted scenes fill in the story and show you more of actors barely glimpsed in the film, but they also prove what great editors Rob Reiner & Co. were. Fanatics & film students will want to own this one.



T. Rex/Roxy Music
The Best Of MusikLaden Live
(Encore)

There are miles of footage to be released from this old German concert show, and here are two of them. The T. Rex section is for die-hards of the band only. Marc Bolan & Co. rock, but the ultra-cheesy video effects and image collages they are stuck with quickly become a dose of really dull acid. Early Roxy Music were so wonderfully weird that they don't need any special effects (though Andy McKay's electric blue, pustule-ridden trousers may count as effects), so you get a straight-up live show from them. The band brings down the house with its still-fresh mix of Euro cabaret, avant-garde rock and punky lounge. Bryan Ferry looks like a cross between Frank Langella in *Dracula* and John Travolta in *Saturday Night Fever*, while the freakishly feathered Brian Eno resembles the Golem. Even after almost three decades, this is shockingly original music.

OLD
ENOUGH
TO KNOW
BETTER

REISSUE REVIEWS

By Pat Thomas

Today the subject is soul—and all of the artists in this column have lots of it. Believe it or not, once upon a time **Michael Jackson** wasn't a noseless freak, and it was during this era that he helped create some of the best R&B-influenced pop music ever made. The new **Jackson 5** two-disc collection, appropriately titled *Anthology* (Motown) and featuring 36 powerful songs from the glory years of 1969-76, is a current party favorite around my house.

Pianist **Les McCann** has been playing soulful jazz for decades, and tracks from some of his mid-'70s LPs have become classic samples and standard breakbeat edits in the hip-hop world. Last I heard, he was making more money from being sampled than he was from his own releases. Hopefully the folks at Label M—who are actively reissuing his best albums, including 1971's *Invitation To Openness*—will change all that. If such bands as Isotope 217 float your boat, and you've played *Bitches Brew* to death, then consider this a personal invitation to check out McCann's pre-post-rock sounds.

Grant Green isn't just an intersection in the North Beach area of San Francisco—it's also the name of an influential soul jazz musician. Wanna find out where such electronica icons as David Holmes or guitarist Charlie Hunter got inspired? What Miles Davis did for the trumpet, Green did for the guitar. His landmark 1970 live album, *Alive*, has just been expanded and reissued on Blue Note.

Okay, I'm going to end this sermon on soul sounds by plugging *The Sermon* by organist **Jimmy Smith**. Recorded in 1958 for Blue Note, this groove master made sounds that still sound fresh today. Long before Grateful Dead made jamming popular, Smith was releasing 20-minute cookers—such as the title track of this album. Fans of Beastie Boys' *III Communication* get a handful of the spirited organist on "Root Down," which samples Smith's own "Root Down (And Get It)."

slumberland
records

new address:
PO Box 19029
Oakland, CA 94619
www.dropbeat.com

now accepting credit cards
from 21 countries thru
www.paypal.com

out now

Aislars Set - "Terrible Things Happen" CD
and "The Last Match" LP/CD

coming soon

The Clientele/Saturday People split 7"
The Saturday People LP/CD
14 Iced Bears - "In The Beginning" CD
Acetate Zero - "Softcore Paradise" CD
kg(FR) - "Embryo.987.untitled" CD

Wally Filter will return next issue with

SWINGIN' SINGLES

SEVEN-INCH REVIEWS

THE LAST WORD

Just What You Needed

You've already flirted with the new cutie in HR twice and made an extended trip to the corner market for smokes and an Odwalla. Now you're sitting in your cube, wondering why none of your friends reply to your e-mails and instant messages, and agonizing over the fact that you've still got four hours left before the workday ends. What's an office drone to do? Well, perhaps you should fire up the ol' Netscape or Explorer and waste all your company's time with these addictive websites:

www.somethingawful.com/cliff/ihateyou

A page affectionately titled "Cliff Yablonski Hates You." An amazing array of truly odd photos of very ordinary people. There are 300+ photos with captions that may make you piss your pants.

members.aol.com/tazmo24/jive.html

One of many jive translators out there. Most effective when used to interpret official memos sent by the vice president via e-mail.

www.adcritic.com

Awesome database of pretty much every commercial you can think of from the modern era, as well as ones you've never seen, unreleased ads, and parodies of popular campaigns. One great thing about this site is that you can track down who came up with that weirdly hypnotic music you keep singing from that Volkswagen ad (or whatever), and in most cases they supply a direct link to amazon.com to buy the album.

www.theonion.com

Everybody already knows about *The Onion*, but it still seems worth mentioning in a list of ultimate time-killers. Still the funniest satirical news source known to man.

www.amihotornot.com

Another well-known site, but again, too damn good to leave off this list. For those who don't know, this site allows you to rank (from 1 to 10) the attractiveness of men and women who post their photos. A word of warning to those who decide to put their picture up: No matter how many times you tell yourself that it's just for fun and you don't care what score you get, you won't be laughing when you end up with a 2.7.

www.hatsofmeat.com

A site dedicated to a truly timeless art.

www.majorleaguebaseball.com

Already covered in *DIW* 2.3, but still worth mentioning. Among other things, this site features real-time pitch-by-pitch coverage of all games being played. Especially useful if you work in a quiet office.

208.177.130.81/dictator/dictator.pl

This is the ultimate waste of perfectly good time. How it works is you come up with either a sitcom character or an evil dictator in your head, and then answer a series of questions generated by the site to narrow down who you are thinking of. And it's usually right. Deceptively simple concept that has the potential to become weirdly addicting.

www.crimelibrary.com

The best feature of this site is the Daily Crime News, which compiles the most sensational crimes from around the world for your daily perusal. This is also great for downtime when you just feel like reading all about the life and times of serial killers, terrorists and spies from around the world. You've got your basic Night Stalkers and Sons Of Sam, but also lots of crazy shit that you've probably never heard about.

www.planetfeedback.com

This site has an automated letter generator that you can use to fire off an e-mail complaint (or compliment) to The Man about him keeping you down. Or maybe your french fries were soggy at McDonald's and Wal-Mart wouldn't take a return on a space heater. Provides e-mail addresses for just about anyone you could want to write to, and if they don't have it, they'll find it and snail mail your letter at their expense.

www.justatip.com

Send nasty, anonymous e-mails to your friends, enemies and coworkers about their irritating personal habits and/or hygiene.

www.disturbingauctions.com

A look into the frightening subculture created by eBay, et al. People are buying this stuff, and we're here to laugh about it. Excellent commentary on plenty of scary dolls and sexually suggestive folk art.

www.dopewars.com

The concept is frighteningly simple: You assume the role of a drug dealer trying to make cash by buying and selling every illicit substance designed to fuck up your mind. But throw in price jumps and drops depending on such factors as a Deadhead convergence, and you have one addicting simulation. One glance at the massive amounts of cash being tendered, and you'll easily see why people choose to deal drugs rather than take a desk job!

www.turntables.del.start.htm

Ever dream of rocking the wheels of steel and being an award-winning, blunt smoking, ho-magnet DJ? Well here's your chance. Go for the old-school version kid!

www.marksfriggin.com

An insanely detailed daily breakdown of happenings on The Howard Stern Show. The news page is the most essential part of the site for fans who want to keep up with The King Of All Media. If you live in a town where Howard has been ripped from the airwaves and you don't have the means to hook up a secret Real Audio feed of the show, then this site is for you.

www.cclabs.missouri.edu/~c510292/dead.milkmen/prglclickndrag.html

When it's three o'clock on Friday and you're toasted, this provides about 10 minutes of quality entertainment. Dress your punk-rock paper doll in the clothes of your choice.

www.divine-interventions.com/baby.html


This is just wrong, wrong, wrong. Really wrong. We'll leave it at that.

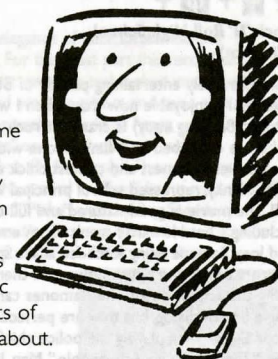
www.tvparty.com

This site is dedicated to TV shows of the past—photos, sound clips and video clips will provide you with a Bermuda Triangle for many, many hours.

www.mchawking.com

Physicist Stephen Hawking's gangsta rap alter ego. He blows off some steam on the mic and stomps the punk-ass bitches who think he's soft just cuz he's wicked smart.

Compiled by *DIW* staff members and contributors who need to get a life. 



ART: TOM FOWLER

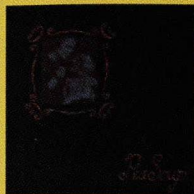
barsuk records.



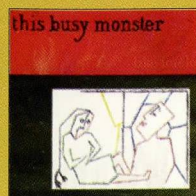
this busy monster
belated
(krang001 7", \$3)



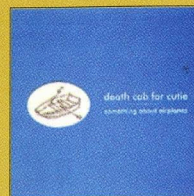
this busy monster
swing dream
(krang002 7", \$3)



pea soup
enigma
(krang003 7", \$3)



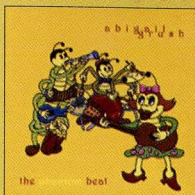
this busy monster
like icicles
(krang004 cd, \$10)



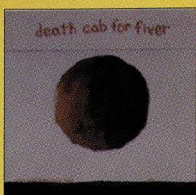
death cab for cutie
something about airplanes
(krang005 cd, \$10)



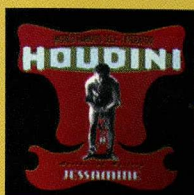
little champions
pillow
(krang007 cd, \$10)



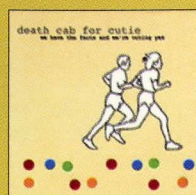
abigail grush
the phantom beat
(krang008 cd, \$10)



death cab for fiver
(bark9 7", out of print)



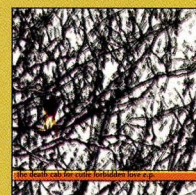
jessamine
houdini
(krang006 7", \$6)



death cab for cutie
we have the facts and we're voting yes
(bark11 cd/lp, \$10)



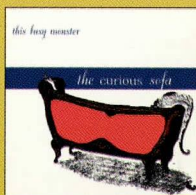
john vanderslice
mass suicide occult figurines
(bark14 cd, \$10)



the death cab for cutie
forbidden love e.p.
(bark15 cd-ep, \$6)



the revolutionary hydra
queen of the gravity urge
(bark12 7", \$4.50)



this busy monster
the curious sofa
(bark10 cd-ep, \$6)

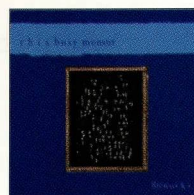
coming soon,
new records from
3 of our very finest.
pre-order now for
early delivery.



little champions
transactions + replications
(bark16 cd, \$10)

**ONE POSSIBLE BUT
FAIRLY UNLIKELY
HYPOTHESIS:
(POLVO + BLONDE
REDHEAD) x IDA + d.**

MARCH 2001



this busy monster
fireworks
(bark13 cd, \$10)

**ENIGMATIC,
UNPRECEDENTED POP
BROUGHT OUT FROM A
DARK HOLE IN THE
GROUND.**

MARCH 2001



john vanderslice
time travel is lonely
(bark17 cd, \$10)

**ANTARCTICA, SOLITUDE,
AMAZING SONGS, AND
PROBABLE POP GENIUS.
EVEN BETTER THAN
THE LAST ONE.**

APRIL 2001

stay alert for upcoming 2001 releases from **sunset valley**, **john roderick**, **death cab for cutie** & more.



death cab for cutie
abigail grush
jessamine
little champions
pea soup
the revolutionary hydra
sunset valley
this busy monster
john vanderslice

barsuk records
p.o. box 22546
seattle, wa 98122
usa

if you like,
you can mailorder at the prices
listed above (please add \$2
per item outside the US), or buy
online at **www.barsuk.com**, where there are also some very nice things to look at and listen to and read. and to wear.*

*and where you can even learn the previously-mysterious correct pronunciation of our name.

barsuk's 2001 tour of the west

dcfc, little champs, tbm
wed, mar 7 san francisco ca
thu, mar 8 anaheim ca
fri, mar 9 los angeles ca
sat, mar 10 san diego ca
sun, mar 11 phoenix az
mon, mar 12 tucson az

dcfc, jv, tbm, little champs
thu, mar 15 austin tx (sxsw)

dcfc, jv
sat, mar 17 lawrence ks
sun, mar 18 omaha ne
mon, mar 19 denver co
tue, mar 20 salt lake city ut
wed, mar 21 boise id
thu, mar 22 portland or

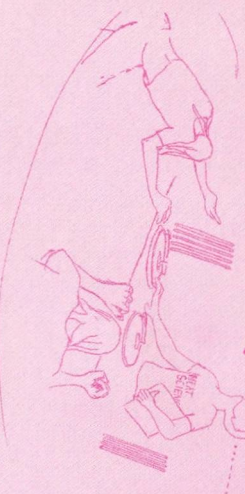
dcfc, jv, little champs, tbm
fri, mar 23 seattle wa



(KICK IN) THE INTERPRETERS

Get Up kids

Row to the JUDGE!



I can't wait for
napa ad athen
with an lanoa
sig going on seven
chamberlain
mucking etc

Oh I brought you flowers,
it's about at you for home
could it state at you for home
your baby, and your biggest fan

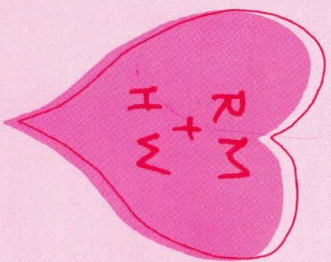


These little black and white photos show
the new hotel on your from the start,
the new hotel on your from the start,
and your baby's hands
and your baby's hands
and your baby's hands

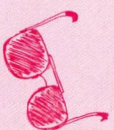
"K" doghouse records
www.doghouserecords.com

Big wheel recreation
www.bigwheelrec.com

"MAKE OUT MUSIC"



MOODS FOR MODERNS



SEAFOOD

