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RZA had a Wu-Tang plan: Camp out in the hills of L.A. and return to the East with the Clan's third triumph. But the older, wiser Shaolin warriors weren't sure they could go to Hollywood and keep their street cred. Having slain the music industry, the biggest battle was within. Neil Drumming and Dave Tompkins transformed their pens into magic swords.

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Because the millennium actually begins now, we look forward to scenes of tomorrow and look back to how we got here

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COVER: WU TANG CLAN PHOTOGRAPHED BY MICHAEL LAVINE
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World Radio History



edited version available

DEVILED HAM

Oh, boo-hoo! Marilyn Manson (Nov. '00) cultivates the persona of the Antichrist and is then incredulous that when the lynch mob needs an Antichrist, they pursue...Marilyn Manson. I guess we have to add intelligence to talent and originality on the list of the qualities which he is sorely lacking.

Tom C. [New York]

Truth #1: HAL 9000 had more self-awareness than most rock stars. But then maybe the wacky contacts thing should've been a clue. —ed.

THAT PESKY SATAN-WORSHIP STUFF

Well, a new CMJ, a new spooky photo shoot, and a new Marilyn Manson song.

"Disposable Teens" is the crunchy hook-laden metal that Manson is known for. It is irreverent, contains foul language, is somewhat disturbing and...I listened to it cranked up in my car today four times. What can I say—it rocks. It is not the first time that a Manson song has caught my ear. "Antichrist Superstar" was a great song if you get past all that pesky Satan worship stuff.

But could I actually buy his disc? On one hand, all he promotes disturbs me. Alice Cooper and KISS always put on the show but you knew that they were more or less normal people when the show was over. That is, they were not Satan off of the stage. Marilyn does not seem to make the distinction between stage persona and real life. This is disturbing. But he does seem to really think through these bizarre things and try to make some social/political/religious statements. I may not always agree with those statements but then again the social/political leanings of some of my favorite bands (R.E.M., U2, Midnight Oil) have views that are different than my own. However, none of them claim to be the Antichrist. Although some have said Bono thinks he is Jesus Christ, but that is a whole different discussion. At this point I cannot say I will put my dollars down for Marilyn's new disc. Being a father of two small children I can only imagine what message that might send to my kids.

Randy Sharp [sharps@ccp.com]

Truth #2: Sneaking out to your car to crank up rock music? Giving deep thought to Marilyn Manson's social repercussions? Making up your own mind after deep reflection? Such things will certainly screw up your kids more than a few songs about worshipping the devil. Where's the harm in saying one thing and doing another? That's what being a parent is all about. —ed.

WHERE THE LORNE IS GREEN

Just when I was ready to subscribe to your magazine, along came Lorne Behrman to make me reconsider. His three articles in the Oct. '00 issue stick out like festering sores. First, he brags about heckling Billie Joe Armstrong of Green Day. Later, he trash-es the new Nada Surf album, using the tiresome Weezer comparison and then calling "80 Windows," one of the most highly regarded songs in recent years, "a jangly dirge." In his final piece, he boasts of his shoplifting prowess. While I respect frankness in a critic, Lorne Behrman comes across as nothing but a schoolyard thug who never grew up. I have no intention of buying your magazine again as long as it contains rubbish like this. Pity, because this month's compilation CD was terrific.

Todd J. Hunter [Donalsonville, Georgia]

Truth #3: Calling to do an interview that Billie Joe had, through his press agents, ostensibly agreed to and then getting hung up on after asking a logical question isn't quite the same thing as heckling. (I'm a Yankees fan, I know heckling. Trust me.) Truth #4: Some of my favorite songs are dirges, though few are jangly. Truth #5: Schoolyard thugs generally do not go on to be critics, whose fists are most often used for other purposes. Where most of civilization bears out the maxim that "history is written by the winners," pop music has been chronicled by those who've been stuffed into lockers. (But this doesn't really pertain to Lorne, a well-mannered young man of burgeoning talent. He says he's sorry he didn't call you the morning after, by the way.) —ed.

THE MAN IN THE IRONIC MASK

I'm a simple German boy which likes to hear masked rock groups. I hope for to hear in the future more masked rock groups.

Reinhold [powerwatt5000@hotmail.com]

DURST SNAKE

I wish to apologize to Fred Durst. He has been the victim of too many people like me who, on a daily basis, trample him underfoot. Hearing him whine has made me feel his pain. Today, I am resigning my CEO position and plan on wearing a baseball cap backwards to show "love" and "respect" for him and his kind of people. I trust this letter will find its way to him.

William Rappaport III

Truth #6: Reinhold and William Rappaport III now reside in a quaint chalet in the Swiss Alps. —ed.

Correction: January 2000's The Scene Is Now on Ghetto-tech was written by Hobey Echlin. We regret the omission.

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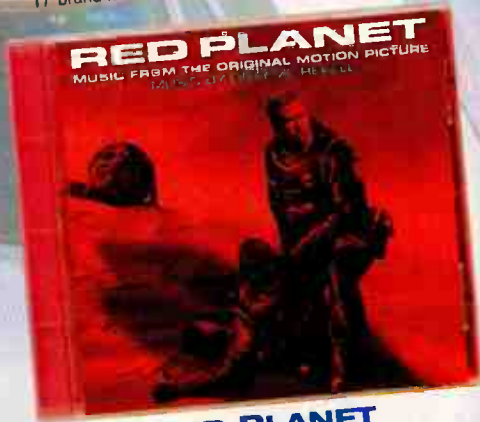
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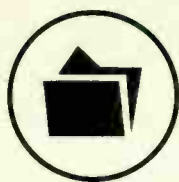
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DIDN'T YOU HEAR? THE PHARCYDE IS ALIVE AND WELL, AND MAKING A LIVING IN EUROPE.

STORY: JONATHAN PALMER PHOTO: JEFF MINTON

What do you do when critics place your group alongside rap legends like De La Soul and the Beastie Boys as one of the silliest, smartest crews in the biz? When you've taken your debut, *Bizarre Ride II The Pharcyde* (1992), to gold status and your live spots earn you near-mythical status? And then you prove you can get even more twisted on your 1995 follow-up, *Labcabin-california*?

You disappear for nearly five years.

When the Pharcyde first burst onto the scene, hip-hop's golden age was still in full swing. So it was hardly a surprise when Delicious Vinyl, the same label that had just given us goofball chart toppers like Tone Loc and Young MC, yielded a hit with the Pharcyde's sax-laden, sampladelic loser's lament "Passin' Me By." The Pharcyde certainly seemed poised for a long career. And that's happened, but not in the way you'd expect.

These rappers have been staying alive with the support of European audiences that consistently treat the group like hip-hop royalty. Romye, who along with Imani, leads the group's MC attack, chalks it up to going where the interest lies. "Hip-hop has been [in Europe] for a while," he says, in the studio again recently after a trip to Italy. "You go there and you see the graffiti on the walls. But it's still kind of new to people. They listen to it and they like it. It's like a present that they open, like a new bike that you just keep riding all the time: 'I got a new bike!' That's how they are, they're just hella excited. It's cool, because when you go to shows, you build off the energy they're giving.

"Here in the States, it's almost like a battle [for the audience's attention] when you go out on the stage.

They've already seen 30,000 hip-hop groups."

The rapper says it took a gargantuan effort—nearly two years of hard touring and significant promotional expense—to bring *Bizarre Ride* to its gold status Stateside, and

that's a reason for focusing on the continent. He sounds almost suspicious of the hype surrounding the group's third album, *Plain Rap* (Edel America). But there is no denying that the release, supported by a buzz clip for the leadoff single "Trust," could well return the Pharcyde to the head of the class in its homeland.

"We turned the album in and thought some people would listen to it," admits Romye. "But we weren't thinking it would get the press it's been getting, and the videos. The MTV and the BET and all that. It's just hella extra."

A lot of the advance praise for *Plain Rap* has focused on the Pharcyde's newfound maturity. While the group has not entirely abandoned its characteristic wacky side (as on the paean to pot, "Blaze"), it is now tempered with a sophisticated social conscience, lending the album the air of a hip-hop *What's Going On?*. One of the standout tracks, "World," shows a lyrical bent that could've been copped from Gil Scott Heron: "Now what the world needs is a love that's sweeter than the melody that makes you go around and 'round," the chorus coos. "I'm a conscious creature of creation," the rhyme continues, "Here with my imagination/ Living for my son/ Each one, teach one/ And it's love that completes the mission."

The new, grown-up version of the Pharcyde has already brought at least one new audience member into the fold: "My mom can get into it," says Romye. "I've pleased a lot of people. Now, I've pleased my mom. So I feel like this is going to reach a broader audience." **NMM**

SEND IN THE CLONES!

THINK NEW MUSICIANS RETREAD THE PAST? JUST WAIT.

While trolling the Internet for porn, we stumbled across www.clonejesus.com, a homepage for some well-adjusted folks who claim they're going to bring back the Christian savior, *Jurassic Park*-style, from a single piece of DNA salvaged from a holy relic. Maybe they're taking the God-helps-those-who-help-themselves thing a little too far, but it got us thinking: What if we used this technique to resurrect select deceased rock gods? Of course, horning in on God's people-making gig would not be without its consequences—those velociraptors terrorizing the kids at the end of *Jurassic Park* would be like Fluffy clawing the cabinet for more dry food compared to Mama Cass stuck in line at Au Bon Pain. >>>DAVE ITZKOFF



KURT LIGHTNER

Jim Morrison

PROS: The grand opening of the new Wal-Mart on Route 46 is just *that* much more exciting.

CONS: Having to stop for every hitchhiker you see, on the outside chance they're a vagrant rock legend.

Sid Vicious

PROS: The nation's drug crisis is finally solved when all contraband goes off the streets—and into Sid.

CONS: Gary Oldman is best remembered for his performance as Dr. Smith in *Lost In Space*.

Jimi Hendrix

PROS: Lenny Kravitz is so gonna get it.

CONS: The major heartburn remedies compete for Jimi's endorsement and his expert opinion on acid reflux.

John Lennon

PROS: Antisocial loners can resume reading *Catcher In The Rye* without feeling creepy about it.

CONS: Lennon's collaboration with Notorious B.I.G. is admittedly not as good as McCartney's duet with Puff Daddy.

Kurt Cobain

PROS: Grunge music fulfills its promise and the teen band explosion disappears as if it never happened.

CONS: Justin Timberlake is always screwing up your order at the McDonald's drive-thru window.

Elvis Presley

PROS: Presley uses his enormous cultural influence to make co-ed panty wrestling an official Olympic event.

CONS: Didn't you hear us? We said co-ed *panty wrestling!*

Jerry Garcia

PROS: A reunited Grateful Dead lineup forces Phish into permanent retirement. No, *really* permanent.

CONS: The excess weight causes the state of California to break off and fall into the Pacific Ocean. (Although that's also a pro....)

IN MY ROOM SUPA DJ DMITRY



When Deee-Lite burst onto the scene in 1990, it looked like the decade had found its ambassadors of style. But the band's *World Clique*, featuring "Groove Is In The

Heart," turned out to be more the flash of a supernova than a rising star. After they called it quits, bandmember Supa DJ Dmitry started spinning solo in clubs around the world, even picking up Ibiza's coveted DJ Of The Year award in 1998. His new mix CD, *Scream Of Consciousness* (TVT), strikes a balance between what Dmitry calls the "escape" of house music and the "harsh reality" of techno. He'll be taking his skills on the road soon, but for now he's working in his home studio, which he describes here. >>>STEVE GDULA

Portable recording equipment

I work on a G4 Macintosh [with] this program called Logic Audio. This new mix that I'm doing for this British group Trinity Hi Fi—I'm only using desktop instruments. Everything is virtual. I'm so excited about that: just being able to have your studio on a laptop. I look forward to taking it out to the desert and to places that are really inspiring.

More portable recording equipment

[My girlfriend] has a little tape recorder that she talks into when she remembers a dream vividly. For me, there have been many songs where I'd be working into the wee hours trying to get something done; I'd get very frustrated and give up and go to sleep and then [the song] would completely crystallize in my sleep and I'd wake up and put it down [on the recorder].

Pet sounds

My second favorite thing in my bedroom would have to be my dog and cat [his girlfriend being the first]. You gotta have a dog and cat. We have a Samoyed dog and a mutt of a cat. They say he's a black Siamese. The dog's name is Zoya and the cat's name is Diabolito.

Elephant's head

I really love Southeast Asian art, so I have a lot of that type of imagery and artwork and big wooden statues of Ganesh. I'm really into Ganesh. I have a huge mask, of [Ganesh's] elephant's head, it takes up like half of my wall. He's the protector of musicians.



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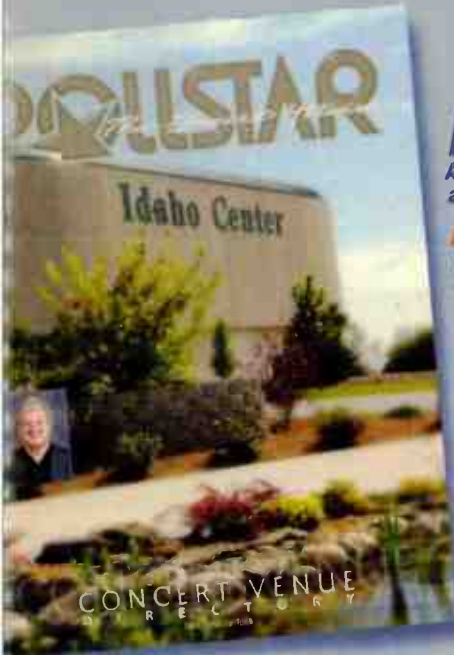
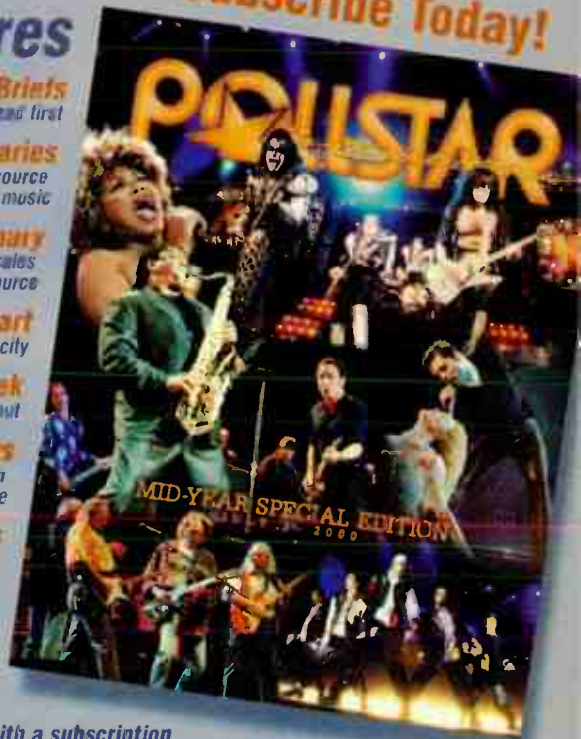
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LETHAL WEAPONS

THE HANDS OF KARATE BREAK BOUNDARIES, NOT BOARDS.



CHARLIE LANGELLA LOCATION: COURTESY OF SOLAS

For those who haven't yet been introduced to the Boston trio Karate, here's a quick word of warning: The rough-and-toughest thing about the band is their name. While their moniker boasts a black belt in rawk, the hopelessly vanilla bandmembers do not. Singer/guitarist Geoff Farina, bassist Jeff Goddard and drummer Gavin McCarthy are all well-educated, they sip their beers slowly, and gosh, they're just great pals (something that's reflected in the band's intricate interplay).

"Playing with these guys, it's a relationship that has been really important. And that's rare—finding that," Goddard says. "A lot of people I'm sure would love to find that, and [instead they] bounce from one thing to another constantly and never get in that situation that's really good."

Since the band's made up of three classically schooled jazz musicians, there's very little ass-kicking to be found on their four full-lengths either—including the new *Unsolved* (Southern). Instead, they've built their discography of flittering jazz guitar movements, tastefully plinked bass grooves and tightly wound drum rhythms.

That's not a complaint—there's an undeniable elegance to the way Farina punctuates the sparse-but-striking accompaniment with brainy verses like "to candles cling tentative flames," and the band's as precise as an X-Acto blade. Their flawless sense of melody is as beautiful as it is skin-tight, and it's kept the band in shoegazer all-star status since the release of their debut in 1996—following in the footsteps of stunning mopers like Codeine. Not surprisingly, they're not big on attention; all three convey a barely muted disdain for the interview/photo shoot process. It's Karate's in-band love that's pushed them through eight US tours and seven years of bothersome press attention, and they plan to ride that out as long as it'll go.

"I don't know that I would be doing it if it weren't for this band, if we weren't still going," explains Farina. "It's just something that's really valuable, and you want to see it through to its logical conclusion. There'll probably be a point where it doesn't work or we're not going forward musically, but I think we'll all feel pretty good about having done what we set out to do." >>>NICOLE KEIPER

THE DJ'S NEW CLOTHES
Kruder & Dorfmeister get decked out.



5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CHICAGO HOUSE

In the early days of club culture, Chicago was to dance music what the Mississippi Delta was to the blues. The new compilation, *Rewind 1984: Chicago* (UC Music), mixed by DJ Rick Garcia, collects many classic tracks and pays homage to that seminal house sound, which has since spread to the far corners of the globe in as many incarnations as there are countries. >>>GEORGE MASEK

It's all about the 909.

Chicago DJ Frankie Knuckles—on the recommendation of his friend Larry Heard—took up the DJ spot at Chicago club the Warehouse in the late '70s and pioneered a technique to keep a waning dancefloor in perpetual motion: Mix together a set of underground disco, funk, soul and classic Philly tracks and then beef up the beats with a 909 drum machine, blending in original rhythm tracks created on reel-to-reel tape recorders.

Larry Sherman held the key to vinyl.

As the popularity of this new sound spread, a former musician by the name of Larry Sherman, who owned Chicago's only vinyl-pressing plant, set up the Trax label to distribute work by up-and-coming producers like Larry Heard, Farley Jackmaster Funk and Marshall Jefferson. Thus, Chicago tracks like "Can You Feel It," "Washing Machine," "Love Can't Turn Around" and "Move Your Body" found a home.

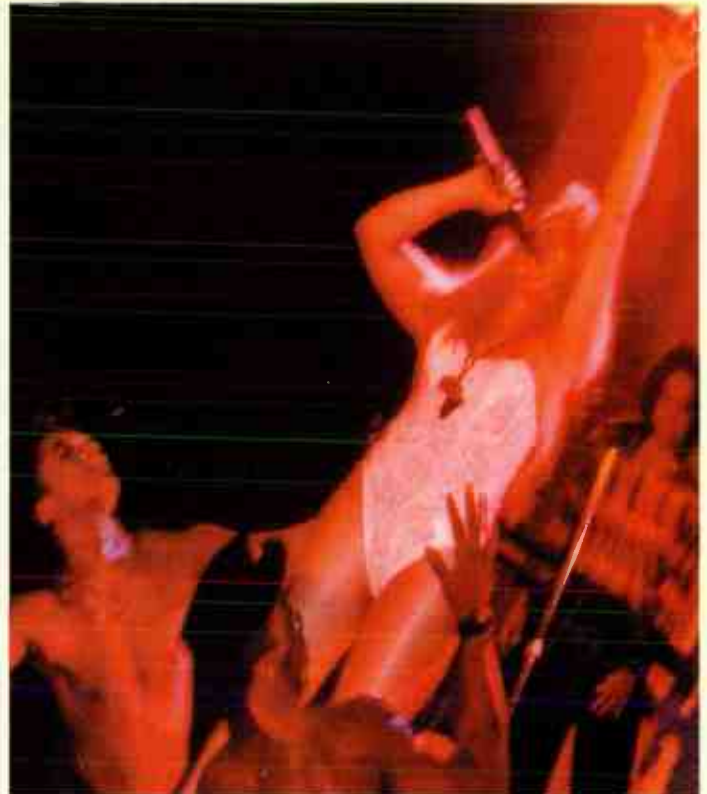


DJ RICK GARCIA

Kruider & Dorfmeister's laid-back beats are as ubiquitous in boutiques and bistros from Miami to Milan as *doppio macchiato*. So who better than the Vienna duo's G-Stone label to help translate the sounds of style into the fashion?

Enter Cuttings, the G-Stone-supported clothing line launched in early 2000 by Sarah Littasy, Richard Dorfmeister's girlfriend, and her partner, Martin Ginzel. Littasy, a Vienna native who also designed the cover for *Suzuki* (the recent album by Dorfmeister's Tosca project) is all about snazzing up the simpletons and keeping the jetset in line.

"You have these fashion people who are completely overdressed,



SCREAMIN' RACHAEL

If you've got a Corvette, you've got a label.

One of Trax Records' earliest artists, Rachael Cain (Screamin' Rachael), recalls that Larry Sherman actually aided his most notorious rival, Rocky Jones, in starting the imprint DJ International. "Rocky actually traded a Corvette to Larry for 10,000 records," explained Cain. Sherman responds, "Sometimes I'm looked at in this industry as the devil's incarnation and sometimes I'm looked at as the man who gave life to house music. So I take it all in stride and try not to dwell on what I did in the past."

Who needs masters when you've got live cassettes?

Test pressings often got their first run on acetate at the Music Box (Ron Hardy's club) and many of the initial recordings were mastered from a simple cassette tape. "Some of the releases are like the old jazz records that were just recorded live," admits Cain. "They did it and that was that."

Reuse, reduce, recycle for that Chicago snap, crackle and pop.

Sherman used recycled vinyl to press Trax records, and thus the "signature sound" of a Trax original pressing is a rough, organic sound, usually undercut by a current of crackling noises. In addition, the records themselves often skipped at the slightest nudge of the stylus, and DJs would weigh down the needles to avoid interruptions.

and the music scene is in the other direction, especially the guys," she says. "It was important to find something that both sides could wear." Cuttings' elegant, clean lines are built of luxurious cashmere, cheese-cloth and a new cellulose-based fabric called Lyocell.

Dorfmeister, who was decked out in Cuttings when he DJ'd at their London launch party, describes the relationship between K&D and the clothing line as "a simple love affair," relating that the G-Stone label eschews fashion in favor of quality. "In a way, Cuttings is doing the same thing," he said, "following their simple and brilliant ideas." >>>ERIC DEMBY

ELECTROMEDIA I WANT CANDY

Halloween may be a very long time away, but it's always the right time of year for incredibly strange candy. *Stupid Candy* (www.stupid.com/stupidcandy.htm) is ground zero for the weirdest stuff made of sugar that you can put in your mouth. The site sells, among other things, a sucker half the size of a human head, a "hands-free" headset lollipop holder, and a sort of bubble-gum/label-maker hybrid. There's also a "museum" of discontinued stupid candies, like gummi maggots. For real.

The Shrine Of Weird Candy (www.geocities.com/NapaValley/3665)

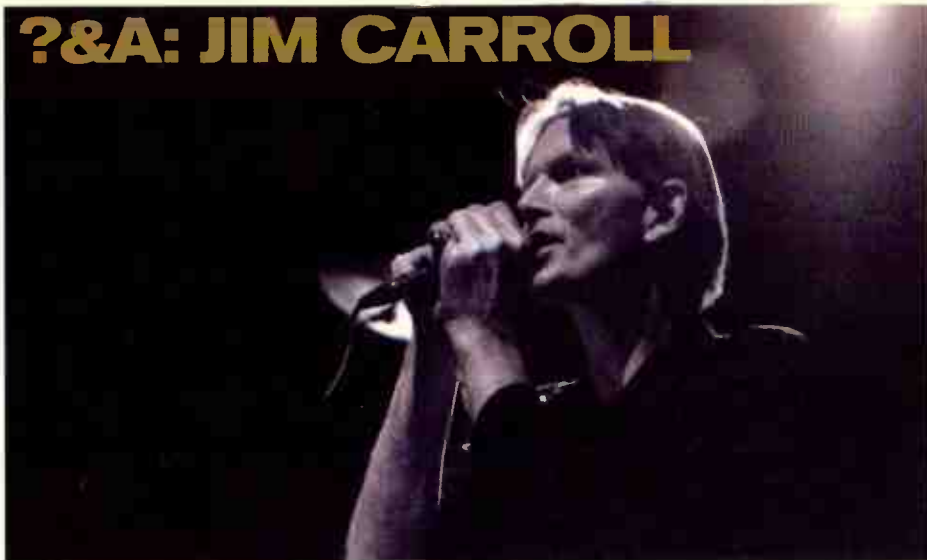


covers the same general territory; they don't sell the things they cover, but their photo-documentation of Scandinavian dog-shit-shaped candy and American fish-flavored candy doesn't exactly make one want to sample the wares anyway. Thankfully, there's better bizarre global bon-

bonage. Those who crave the sweets of the Far East can go to *Japan Candy* (www.japancandy.com), an American mail-order center for the likes of Eiwa yogurt marshmallows and the amazing Indonesian chewy ginger candy *Ting Ting Jahe*. *Iceland Treasure Chest* (www.icelandtreasurechest.com) offers *Opal*, a licorice-based chew whose stunningly attractive packaging doesn't quite make up for its chloroform overtones. And back in America, *Lightvision* (www.lightvision.com) offers hologram lollipops—they claim there's nothing but candy ingredients in them, but they give us the fear.

Prefer to stick with M&Ms? Console yourself with *The Ultimate Bad Candy Web Site* (www.bad-candy.com), an extensive and brutal guide to the sweets that give children nightmares ("We could attempt to design a candy with the SOLE PURPOSE of tasting worse than Happy Plum, and we would fail"). They haven't yet quite roused themselves to the challenge of tasting the Mexican candy *Cisne* yet, thanks to its slogan of "Has Vegetable Salty." But give them time; they will suffer for our sweet teeth. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK

?&A: JIM CARROLL



A full 20 years after his success with the *Catholic Boy* album and 14 years after last crooning onstage, 50-year-old punk poet Jim Carroll recently sang at a semi-improvised concert that can now be heard on the *Runaway EP* (*Kill Rock Stars*). Along with a few of his classics, the author of *The Basketball Diaries* warbles through the album's title track, the Del Shannon original. "As a kid, listening to my little transistor radio, I always thought that Del Shannon—next to Roy Orbison—was the greatest singer ever." >>>TOM LANHAM

As you age, are you drawn closer to or pushed farther away from decadence?

Drugs and sex and stuff were just things that consumed my life when I was young—it was the environment I was around, I guess. I was precocious, kind of the token prodigy poet and stuff. And I was around the whole Warhol scene, which was bizarre, but not as bizarre as some people think—after Andy got shot, at least. Then I moved to California and went through this real recluse period. I'd gotten on Methadone in New York and then I got off Methadone in California, so I was clean from heroin, not doing anything except smoking grass, really. But then I got into rock 'n' roll while I was on the West Coast. Getting into music was kind of a fluke.

Now you're back into rock 'n' roll almost by default. Your recent *Praying Mantis* record was all spoken word.

I put a record out on Mercury a couple of years ago when my last book of poems came out. It was called *Pools Of Mercury*, and it was spoken word with music—it actually

had five rock songs on it. The only problem was, a month after the album came out, Seagrams took over PolyGram and it promptly disappeared. But they were pretty good songs, and the album was definitely worth listening to. The *Runaway* thing was a complete fluke. I was doing a reading out in Seattle, and this guy Robert Roth from the group *Truly* said, "Why don't you do a couple of songs, too? I'll get a band together." And I thought they were just going to do two songs, but this band had been rehearsing for a week before I came out there and they had practically the whole *Catholic Boy* album and a few other songs learned. So I read for 40 minutes, then they came out, and the only rehearsal we had was at sound check. And they had songs that I didn't even remember the lyrics to, y'know? I had to study my own lyrics all over again. It was a terrific band, and it went over really well.

In addition to the *Runaway EP*, you've got not one, but two new novels on the way.

After all these years of trying to get a sustained plot for a fictional novel that wasn't autobiographical, it finally came to me—a straight narrative novel. Then within a month I got this idea for a completely different novel that was more fragmented, more arty. And so I did research for four years for both of them, because they required a lot of reading into arcane religious shit and occult stuff, grail things for one book, the other one was more Gnostic Gospels. So at a certain point, my agent from William Morris had lunch with me for a literary intervention: "You have to decide which novel to pursue, which one you're actually going to start writing right now." So I chose the artier one, in some defiant sense. It's called *The Petting Zoo*.



THEY'RE NOT REALLY BRUJERIA, BUT THEY PLAY THEM ON TV.

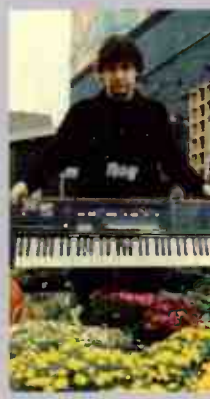
AP WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

VIVA LOS ROCK BRUJERIA, MEX-METAL'S BEST KEPT SECRET

Mexico. Birthplace of Montezuma's revenge, the drug cartel and Brujeria—the meanest *pendejos* in metal. These masked marauders claim ties to the supply side of the drug war and are rumored to include numerous luminaries from the international metal underground (such as former Faith No More bassist Billy Gould and Fear Factory guitarist Dino Cazares). However, their true identities have long been both a closely guarded secret and a precious marketing gimmick. Drummer Pinche Peach claims that the band ain't frontin': "We do it the way we see it.... [Frontman Juan] Brujo writes what he sees, he writes what happens around him, what happens to us—it's more real, I think, whether people take it seriously or not." Never mind that Brujo was rumored to have been murdered after 1995's *Raza Odiada* (which translates as "hated race"). The act's new machete-metal comeback, *Brujerizmo*, might be the harshest Latino death-grind-thrash epic since Sepultura's *Arise*, reportedly including contributions from Fear Factory's Raymond Herrera and Napalm Death's Jesse Pintado and Shane Embury. Pressed for the scoop, Peach stonewalls—and only after much prying does he make the all-important judgment: chalupas or gorditas? "There's no Taco Bell in Mexico," Peach replies, wisely. "But I'll take a real Mexican gordita any day." >>>CARLY CARIOLI

TOYS IN THE ATTIC KOUFAX'S KEYBOARD KISMET

Nestled deep within the electro-symphonic pop of Koufax's debut, *It Had To Do With Love* (Heroes & Villains) hides a sound that doesn't square with the quintet's fetish for the new wave of Square Peg, Joe Jackson and the Cars. (Hint: Start singing "I get up / And nothing gets me down" about now.) Referring to his beloved Roland JX-3P, keyboardist Sean Grogan reveals, "In between songs sometimes, if those guys are tuning up, I'll bust out 'Jump.'" For this skinny-be band, Moog synths are a must to recreate those classic robotic tones, but the Roland JX-3P's versatile texture palette—chimes, bells, strings and brass sounds—as well as its pitch-bend capabilities, have earned it a place in the collective Koufax heart. "We've been guilty of using the traditional grand outro, like Bruce Springsteen with Clarence Clemons playing sax," says vocalist Robert Suchan. "Sean takes Clemons's role." >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



SONJA PACHO

IN MY ROOM JASON MOLINA OF SONGS: OHIA



The stark acoustic guitar and rural, plaintive vocals that have come to define Songs: Ohia could easily lead you to envision songwriter Jason Molina as an anxious, smalltown geek in a tucked-in button-up. But think again: *Ghost Tropic* (Secretly Canadian), Molina's fifth album as Songs: Ohia, has taken care of any neat-freak aspirations, allowing the singer's muse to get the better of the "little Chicago pad which I share with my girlfriend." Here, he recounts the descent into disorder. >>>MIKAEL WOODY

Easy listening

There are stucks and stacks of demos that people have given to me and have sent me recently, and I am in the middle of separating them by ones I have heard and ones I have to get to. One that I received in Holland is by a songwriter calling himself Lion. I think it's fucking amazing.

What couture?

Since I got back from tour I had to run out and get some decent threads to wear to a wedding I am going to attend. After seven weeks of wearing nothing but black jeans and black t-shirts, I couldn't even understand the concept of a suit, so that stuff is all thrown around the place making it look even worse.

String thieves

I was positive nobody would come to see Songs: Ohia at [the CMJ Music Marathon] since Low and PJ Harvey were playing that night—and then there was a packed house. But in the most convenient turn of things, someone stole my guitar right before the show. They were great thieves, as far as that goes, so now I'm trying to get one guitar together that works enough to take on tour, since I can't afford a new one.

Reconstructive surgery

I have destroyed this place. I came home from this long-ass European tour and once I started to unpack from it I realized that I should not even bother keeping anything and just threw it all away. When my girlfriend is at work I'll try to make the place look like a human could live here again, but the cat is even shaking his head at me.



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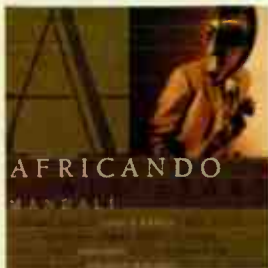
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AFRICANDO ALL STARS

Mandali

Stern's Africa



Out

December 1

File Under

Afro-Latin fusion

R.I.Y.L.

Salif Keita, Medoune Diallo,
Kofi Olomide

When Africando began in 1993, the idea was to revive the careers of veteran African salsa singers using top-flight Cuban and Puerto Rican musicians in New York. Four albums later, the group stands as one of the most vital acts in the African salsa craze it helped launch. Guest singers on the newest session include Malian superstar Salif Keita, Congolese vocalists Kofi Olomide and Lokua Kanza and Senegal's vastly underrated Thione Seck. Africando veterans Medoune Diallo (Senegal), Sekouba "Bambino" Diabate (Guinea), Gnonas Pedro (Togo) and Ronnie Baró (Cuba/US) also contribute here. Boncana Maiga's punchy, playful arrangements and the band's flawless execution make the music brisk and powerful throughout, although the persistent up-tempo son feel becomes a bit relentless. It's the vocal performances that distinguish each track: Kanza morphs cheery Afropop into transcendent Afro-Cuban music; Olomide purrs in the manner of classic Congo rumba; and Keita retrofits a number he first sang with his 1970s band, Les Ambassadeurs. More successfully, Bambino and Seck marry the passion of West African griot singing with the crank of Afro-Cuban dance—Seck's track, "Sey," is as good as any Africando effort to date. In all, a fine realization of a winning formula. >>>BANNING EYRE

BRASSY

Got It Made

Wiiija-Beggars Banquet



Out

January 16

File Under

Grrrrl-power hip-hop

R.I.Y.L.

Elastica, Le Tigre,
Luscious Jackson

Brassy frontwoman Muffin Spencer is an American expatriate (and the sister of the Blues Explosion's Jon Spencer) who's spent the past 15 years in Manchester, England soaking up twice as many years of influences. On *Got It Made*, those influences converge seamlessly as she and her British bandmates splice together the boastfulness of late-'70s rap, the insistently catchy choruses of '80s new wave and the self-confident rock swagger of early-'90s riot-grrrl punk. A foundation of sleek electronic beats coupled with the lo-fi deck action of Jonny Barrington (a.k.a. DJ Swett) insures plenty of danceworthy moments while conjuring up the welcome ghosts of hip-hop past. And the interplay between Karen Frost's tightly melodic basslines and guitarist Stefan Gordon's consistently catchy riffs provides more than enough hooks for Brassy to hang each groove on. But it's Spencer's charisma, snarling singsong and smart, sexy persona that is at the heart of the album's 17 tracks. If *Got It Made* has a secret weapon, it is its exhilarating unpredictability. "Put You Right" could be a disco diva's anthem, "Who Stole The Show" begs for a snotty answer rap, "Good Times" plunges into vintage Blondie territory, and "Nervous" and "I Gotta Beef" round things out with a potent dose of explosive, pogo-worthy punk. >>>LOIS MAFFEO

GAMMA

Permanent

Big Dada-Ninja Tune



Out

October 31

File Under

Brit-hop underground

R.I.Y.L.

Roots Manuva, Company Flow,
Mos Def

Gamma, featuring rapper/producer Ebu (a.k.a. Blackitude), Lord Redeem, Juice Aleem and co-producer Mr. Mitchell, is the latest from the UK's forward-reaching Big Dada label, home to Roots Manuva, New Flesh For Old and recent work from New York MC Mike Ladd. Ebu and Mitchell's productions rely on minimalist electronic beats propelled by deep bass pulses and punctuated by tweaked keyboards. Aside from the group's thick British/Jamaican accents, Gamma sound like they could have come out of the New York or West Coast hip-hop underground, as they mainly rely on abstract methods to get their boasts across (on "Back & Third," Blackitude rhymes "Lo-fi/ High-tech/ Out to intellect, inject/ The machinations to mash down/ The nations"). But there is substance behind the braggadocio. "Black Atlantian" for example, spits quickly rhymed stanzas about the Afro-British link to the spiritual motherland ("I find the beauty in Brazil/ And then pass through Jamaica/ Them people check for me still/ While you were sleeping/ Traveled 25,000/ Waded in the Nile/ And swam the Caspian"). "Don't Send A Bwoy" and the above-mentioned "Back & Third" fortify hip-hop beats and rhymes with reggae basslines and choruses. "Godly Food" utilizes a backdrop of Asian strings to talk about body-as-temple ethics. And "Filter 731" is chock full of creeped-out acid visions, with edgy music to match. >>>BRIAN COLEMAN



PLAID

Trainer

Warp

Plaid's birth in 1991 marked the onset of electronic music's inward focus, a shift that would soon incorporate co-introspectors ranging from Aphex Twin to Autechre. The 26 tracks on *Trainer* follow the duo of Ed Handley and Andy Turner from '89 to '95, through their various musical incarnations, many of which pre-date their work as Plaid. The two CDs display the duo's extraordinary ability to blend influences as disparate as electro, samba and Detroit techno. Reviewing this archaeological evidence, Handley and Turner appear to have forged their fair share of prototypes: "Small Energies" could easily be an early Aphex Twin outtake; the jazz vibraphone and looped funk break of "Summit," complete with rolling snare, predates the first Mo' Wax release; the Latin flavors on "Slice Of Cheese" came eons before the current bossa-lounge-groove deluge. From the foreboding, angular melody of the previously unreleased "Uneasy Listening" to the muted acid jabs and Space-Invaders jingle of "Soft Key," *Trainer* can ultimately be distilled to an advanced rave soundtrack for cerebrals. Percussive magic pops up everywhere on the compilation, the sort that establishes Plaid as true visionaries in realm of imitators. >>>ERIC DEMBY

Out

October 31

File Under

Playful electronic

R.I.Y.L.

Aphex Twin, Plastikman, Boards Of Canada



SELF

Gizmodgery

Spyglass

If Self's Matt Mahaffey isn't careful, he's going to end up like Flaming Lips leader Wayne Coyne when he grows up. The 20-something Mahaffey's already got the same keen openness to sonic possibilities and experimentation, a wicked, uniquely skewed knack for songwriting and conceptual savvy enough to record the entirety of *Gizmodgery* using only toy instruments. (New Yorkers Pianosaurus, on 1987's *Groovy Neighborhood*, were the last to attempt the feat.) Self's adventurous effort isn't some silly lark or goofy exercise, though; Mahaffey's songs are far too involved, intelligent and rocking for that. He's a power-pop/hip-hop freak (and major Prince fan), and he revealed his power-pop side on Self's fantastic 1995 debut, *Subliminal Plastic Motives*. With *Gizmodgery*, Mahaffey's more into alchemy, moving from big hip-hop beats (a mad production genius, Mahaffey gets Synsonic Drums and other toy beats to sound full on "Chameleon") to quirky, catchy new wave ("Dead Man") and Local H-ish thump ("Trunk Fulla Amps," for all its force, throws in a deliciously unexpected bossa nova bridge). Some tracks, like the heavily Prince-inspired "Pattycake," match the toy instrumentation concept with lyrics about ice-pops and childhood, while a sharp take on the Doobie Brothers' "What A Fool Believes" is kitschy kool. With or without the toys, *Gizmodgery* would still rock. >>>MARK WOODLIEF

Out

October 31

File Under

Toys-R-Us freak-pop

R.I.Y.L.

Early Prince, Beck, late Flaming Lips,

STATE OF BENGAL

Visual Audio

Six Degrees



When Britain's Asian Underground movement surfaced on the 1997 *Anokha* compilation, its participants were cast as saviors of both electronica and modern Indian music. While Talvin Singh has been prolific ever since, much of the *Anokha* crew has been slow to deliver on the promises of the Asian Underground. It's taken Sam Zaman's State Of Bengal a full three years to deliver *Visual Audio*. Not that he's been idle—he's toured with Björk, remixed Massive Attack and others, and recorded and performed with the late sitar great Ananda Shankar. But *Visual Audio* was worth the wait, even if two of its tracks, "Flight IC408" and "Chittagong Chill," already appeared on *Anokha*. They remain a vital part of an adventurous, challenging album that merges East and West in rhythm, melody and concept. "Burn Your Toes (Vocal Version)" dips into lighthearted *filmi* territory with a whimsical vocal, and "Hectic City" is as frantic a portrait of modern Calcutta (the capital of Bengal) as you'll find. Zaman layers ideas and moods inventively, and the complexity of his beats helps him circumvent the stylistic dead end of drum 'n' bass. The result is a thoroughly modern-sounding album that, with Zaman's use of harmonium, tabla and sitar, wears its Indian roots proudly. >>>CHRIS NICKSON

Out

November 7

File Under

New sweat funky Ali Kahn

R.I.Y.L.

Talvin Singh, Ananda Shankar, Tabla Beat Science

SAMIA FARAH

Samia Farah, a Paris-based singer of Tunisian heritage, refuses to mince words in any language: "To write a good love song, it's really hard. Many people try to do that, and sometimes it gives stupid songs. I didn't want to do that for my first LP." Instead, her self-titled debut—just released in the US by Sony after raking in French accolades—is "about society, people, and what is touching me." Even if you can't make out Farah's French lyrics, her straight-ahead attitude propels a sultry and sweetly fluttering voice reminiscent of Billie Holiday and Macy Gray. Diverse influences, from Nina Simone ("She's really crazy, in a good way") to Egyptian composer Mohamed Abdel Wahab, ripple through these everything-goes arrangements of cool jazz, echo-laden dub, summery bossa nova and punchy hip-hop. Farah co-wrote the music with collaborator Giovanni de la Hunda, calling in producer Adrian Sherwood for a few tracks. And she cheerfully defends her genre-spanning style against pigeonholers who'd like to box her in. "It's my way to survive," she says. "If I'm in a box, I think I want to breathe." >>>LISA GIDLEY



AMEN

Blink-182 are not a punk-rock band by definition—my mother loves Blink-182, and my mother hates [punk] music...” explains Amen vocalist Casey Chaos. You probably won’t catch his mama singing along to any of the 14 tracks on his L.A.-based quintet’s debut, *We Have Come For Your Parents* (Virgin-I Am). This post-punk supergroup came together in 1999 when Casey and guitarist Paul Fig hooked up with former Snot guitarist Sonny Mayo and bassist John “Tumor” Fahnestock, and ex-Ugly Kid Joe skin-pounder Shannon Larkin. Roadrunner released the album through Slipknot/Korn/Limp Bizkit producer Ross Robinson’s imprint, I Am, and then jettisoned the band six weeks later. But Amen found a new home when Robinson moved his imprint over to Virgin. Even though Mr. Rap-metal produced *We Have Come For Your Parents*, you won’t hear any sign of the *au courant* rhyme and grind here. Punk in spirit, vaguely metal in execution, it’s an anti-everything record that riffs somewhere between early Rollins Band and the Stooges. Casey boasts: “Anything that had any sort of commercial appeal Ross would hear and go, ‘Whoosh! Out.’” >>>LORNE BEHRMAN

HOT ROD CIRCUIT

When Hot Rod Circuit bassist Jay Russell removes his sneaker to display its sole—partially covered in dog doo—it becomes clear that there's something slightly sick about this Connecticut-by-way-of-Alabama pop-rock quartet. But as guitarist Casey Prestwood ("My goal is to play on the street and get arrested"), vocalist/guitarist Andy Jackson (real name: Michael Jackson), and drummer Mike Poorman laugh hysterically as Russell exits to cleanse his sullied footwear, it's obvious there's something undeniably fun about them too. *If It's Cool With You, It's Cool With Me*—the band's second full-length on Triple Crown Records—is a refreshing dip in

rock's otherwise rapcore-drenched waters. "We're just trying to bring back the straight rock 'n' roll," says Prestwood. They've been doing just that in speedy style, forming in 1997 under the name Antidote (they became HRC thanks to some good weed and an even better episode of *The Simpsons*) and releasing their first record the following year. After just three months on the East Coast, HRC had a record deal and a booking agent. "Moving out of Alabama was probably the best thing we did," admits Jackson. But Russell's still got fond memories of the band's roots: "The liquor stores are open until 2 a.m., and I like getting drunk, therefore I like Alabama." >>>DYLAN GADINO



JASON TODD

ANTIBALAS

We've always considered Afrobeat as funk and soul," says Martin Perna of New York neo-Afrobeat collective Antibalas. "Our first show was in Harlem, and we had all these old men who didn't know Afrobeat saying, 'Hey man, that was cool.'" With a name that loosely translates as "bulletproof" in Spanish, Antibalas's 14 members sweat out muscular, life-affirming performances that swing with sliding trombones and congas that would do Fela Kuti proud. And not only does the group take musical cues from the father of Afrobeat

on their new EP, *Liberation Afrobeat* (Afrosound), they've learned his political lessons as well. Many of the members are involved with El Punte, a progressive Brooklyn school and community center, where at various times they've taught English, radio broadcasting and Kung Fu. For the future, though, their aspirations are as much global as local. "We'd love to play the Shrine," Perna confesses, referring to Fela's storied Lagos, Nigeria nightclub, recently reopened by his son Femi. "We feel like we have the spirit of Fela on stage." >>>JON CARAMANICA



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World Radio History

THEIR BASSIST SURVIVED A COMA AND THEIR LABEL DEAL FLATLINED, LEAVING THE HONEYDOGS SITTING PRETTY IN THE TWIN CITIES.





STORY: BILL SNYDER
PHOTO: JASON TANAKA BLANEY

The tired and sweaty guys yawning through a late night between sips of their cocktails on this Minneapolis Monday don't particularly stand out from the working crowd in smoky Herkimer's pub. If there's any glamour left in rock 'n' roll, it's certainly not sitting at this dimly lit corner table.

These are the Honeydogs, one of the Twin Cities' biggest draws since 1995. They may only have played bar-brand roots-rock at first, but they did it with the confidence and swagger of national stars and often attracted bigger crowds than top-shelf touring acts.

Such stage presence always suggested that the Honeydogs aspired to something greater, and that finally manifests on their fourth album, *Here's Luck* (Palm Pictures). A monumental work of dark, moody pop, the orchestral layering liberally steals tricks from the Beatles songbook and takes lessons from professor Brian Wilson. It's as if the bandmembers finally mastered the syllabus of McCartney, Bowie and Big Star they grew up on, and learned to use those influences to create their own personal thesis.

"We made a beautiful, pretentious record," laughs drummer Noah Levy. "That's all I wanted. It's grandiose. I didn't want to be afraid of that."

Still, beneath the bombastic glory of *Here's Luck* lies an uneasy frustration. It manifests itself violently in the snarling guitars and more delicately in the elegiac tone of the strings. And nowhere is it more obvious than in the pensive "Wilson Blvd.," as Noah's brother Adam Levy sings, "A piece of string holding everything together/ Unraveling/ About to give way."

"There's definitely a lot of that feeling," the singer says. "The band was in an insecure position [during the 1998 recording sessions], and it was kind of tenuous as to whether we would even have a label deal."

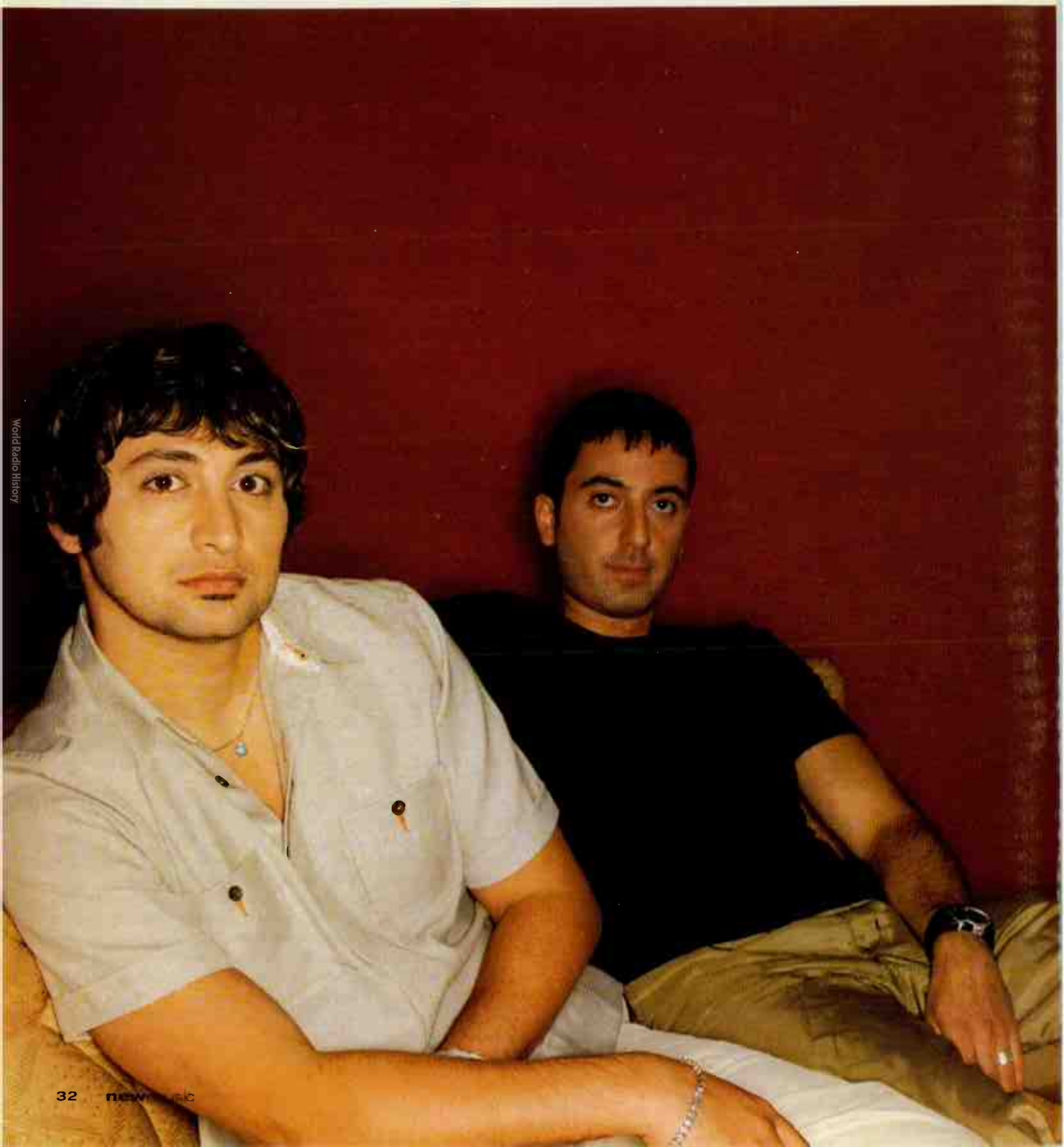
Since signing to Mercury and releasing *Seen A Ghost* in '97, the band's career has been unraveling much like that metaphorical string. In June of 1998, the band split with longtime guitarist Tommy Borscheid, in a move that they describe simply as "personal" and "painful." Then, in August, bassist Trent Norton suffered a near-fatal asthma attack, lapsing into a coma for three days. If all that weren't enough, the execs that signed the band had left Mercury just as the infamous merger between Universal and PolyGram (Mercury's parent company) reared its head.

The chaos, however, forced the band to reinvent itself. Not only were they working as a trio, but they were on their own: Where *Seen A Ghost* had been recorded amidst label A&R requests, this time the band and producer John Fields were left to work things out. "It's kind of ironic," Trent points out, "but the breeding ground for *Here's Luck* is that they forgot about us."

By late September, the album was finished and already gathering a buzz among the local musicians and critics who heard it. The merger left the Honeydogs on the newly formed Island Def Jam label in early '99. "Between March and June we couldn't get anyone [at the label] on the phone to commit to a release date," Adam recalls. "That summer, we decided to get off the label. It took us from August 1999 to March 2000." In May, the newly freed band inked a deal with Palm Pictures, and plans were made for a release.

Sitting around the barroom table, however, the band seems weathered, not dismayed. When I mention that this seems like a saga still waiting for an ending, Adam quickly corrects me. "I've spent the last two years working and supporting my family, and having to bust ass just to play music," he says. "Now I'm going to get a paycheck for making music, and that's a pretty good cap to this story." **NMM**

h o l d t h e c h e e s e



World Radio History

D.C.'S DEEP DISH SERVES UP PLATTERS OF SUBTERRANEAN SOUNDS, NOT PHATTY CALORIES.

STORY: STEVE GDULA PHOTO: CARLOS AMOEDO

Never mind that Deep Dish is so hot right now that the duo boasts residencies in four clubs around the world (two in England, one in New York and another in Ibiza). Never mind that Lady Madonna herself hand-picked the Dish boys to drop their underground grooves into a remix of her single "Music." Deep Dish is on a mission of urban renewal, or more exactly, urban dance-scene renewal.

Iranian-born partners Ali Shirazinia and Sharam Tayebi want their adopted hometown of Washington, D.C. to be a dance music Mecca like the places where they travel regularly to spin. The city may boast an international populus, but Tayebi fears that such a crowd feeds too much on a diet of hokey, Eurotrash disco.

The problem stems from DJs and promoters who go after "the rich Middle Eastern market," contends Tayebi, who moved from the Middle East as a child. "I like the cheesy stuff myself, but if you shove that sound into people's heads for eight hours a night, that's all they're gonna want to listen to.... The promoters are afraid that a couple of underground songs are going to cut their bar tab in half."

Neither Tayebi nor Shirazinia ever gravitated toward the lowest common denominator, preferring subterranean house with a dark, electronic edge. When the two met through mutual

friends at a party in '91, they were "both running away from the scene, but in different directions." Not only did they bond as Middle Eastern immigrants, but also as two people who were into the "renegade, fuck-off music" played most often in early-'90s D.C. at the Sunday night Kindergarten party where punk-house diva Kevin "Rhythm Is My Bitch" Aviance held court. There, boys, girls, blacks, whites, straights, gays, Arabs, Asians and Hispanics all grooved as one. "It was like New York right here in D.C.," recalls Shirazinia, a.k.a. Dubfire. The mix of industrial, pre-techno and deep house further cemented the boys' desire to do something different.

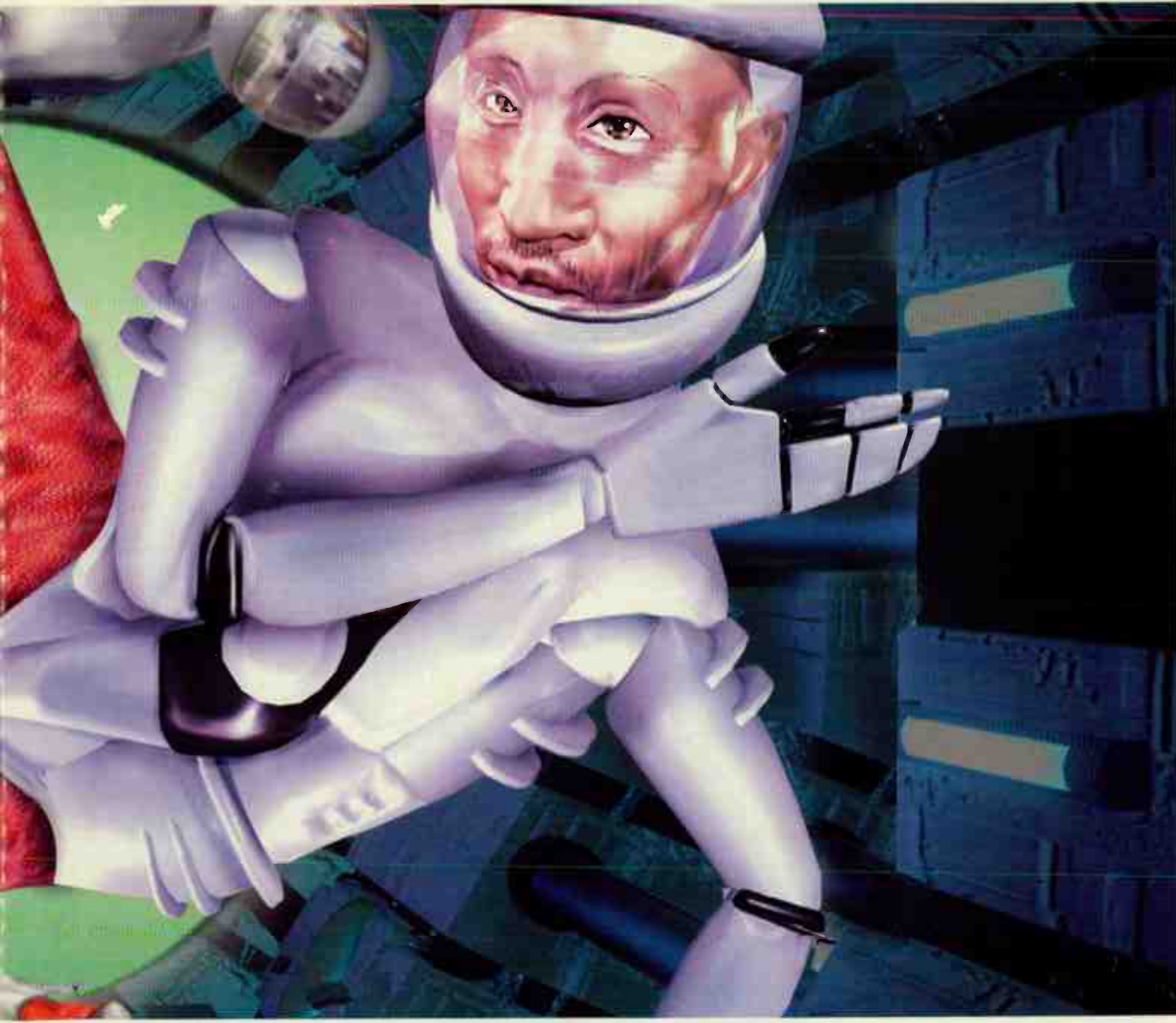
Unfortunately for D.C.'s dance world, many of that scene's movers and shakers moved on. Others, like Shirazinia and Tayebi, driven by their love of deep grooves and heavy beats, started making music for the betterment of the Beltway scene. "It was sort of like *Field Of Dreams*," Tayebi muses. "We built it and people came." Rather than try to tag along with the dance music scene in New York, Deep Dish decided to release their tracks them-

selves on their own label. It wasn't long before New York DJ Danny Tenaglia took a liking to their sounds and introduced them to the Tribal label, which propelled them even higher.

Almost 10 years later, considering Deep Dish's international success, it's almost funny that Shirazinia and Tayebi are still ruminating about what might have been—and should be—in their own backyard. Their album, *Renaissance Ibiza* (Yoshitoshi), just released domestically, has already been a smash abroad, and the new *Yoshiesque 2* (Yoshitoshi) is a command performance to follow their wildly successful *Yoshiesque*. Even if D.C.'s dance scene doesn't completely fall in line with Deep Dish's thinking, the city's denizens seem to appreciate that Deep Dish stayed in town. "We're signing autographs in our home town," says a stunned Shirazinia. "Autographs," Tayebi echoes. "It's really strange to get that in D.C." **NMM**

An epic drama of adventure and exploration

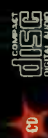




CMJ PRESENTS
A STORY BY NEIL DRUMMING AND DAVE TOMPKINS
ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALEX OSTROY

WU thousand one

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Many hip-hop generations ago, nine warriors discovered modern East Coast rap in a monolith with *36 Chambers*. After two successful missions, Captain RZA has transported this ragtag Wu-Tang fleet west for an epic odyssey that may be their only hope of survival in the next millennium.

In his social analysis of Los Angeles, *City Of Quartz*, futuristic theorist Mike Davis says “To move out to Lotusland is to sever connection with national reality.” Well, the Wu-Tang Clan has been fucking with the “national reality” for eight years now; relocating to Hollywood was their way of escaping a New York where recording would be nearly impossible.

“Niggas was resistant at first,” admits RZA, the Wu-Tang producer, spiritual abbot and travel agent who advised the change in smog. “But they came around.” He wasn’t searching for a split with reality, but an escape from the diversions of home. Explains Raekwon, with a tip of his Packers ball cap, “We needed to get away from certain people who always want to be in the studio when we’re recording, you know?”

You wouldn’t think it would be hard to convince this Clan to relocate to a gangsta’s paradise, a seven-chamber Hollywood Hills mansion where “killah” means a nice view that comes with a swimming pool, chandeliers, closets built for yellow linen suits and a cream baby-grand that’s just begging for R. Kelly to sit down and play.

“I can’t write in chandeliers and gold statues. I need roaches and low ceilings,” complains rapper U-God, a.k.a. “Golden Arms.” Give that man a dank stairwell and a crawl space. Method Man took advantage of the patio and bought a \$400 grill even though most of the group’s members are vegetarians. Ghostface Killah wrinkles his nose at the memory of Lala-land: “I was better off trying to write [in New York].... I couldn’t produce nothin’ in L.A.; my thoughts were shot.”

The two and half months at Wu’s Pharcyde Manor West were a far, smoke-ravaged howl from the slum-pa-pa-pums of Shaolin on New York’s Staten Island, the dank lair canonized in Wu lore since their ’93 debut, *Enter The Wu Tang (36 Chambers)*. Well, perhaps not everything changed: Clan members played dice on the pool table, old Muhammad Ali and Sugar Ray Leonard fights played on the TV, and one night, Ghostface got played: “I got mad drunk one night and acted a fool and they got me on tape. It was funny and embarrassing too because it goes out of my character.” RZA says he won’t release the tape, but who knows when *Rap’s Funniest Home Videos* will come calling.

Maybe the Shaolin crew needed some James Ellroy in their rhyme criminology. “L.A.’s a weird place,” says RZA, “but you can’t get engulfed by the evil atmosphere.” Later he’ll concede that the group just laid down

demo tracks there and verses were re-recorded in New York. “The album didn’t get serious until about three weeks ago,” he laughs, knowing that *The W (Loud)* is just a couple of weeks away from official release.

L.A. provided the Wu with a rare opportunity to live under the same roof, which the members haven’t done since ’97’s *Wu-Tang Forever*. “It was good getting everybody together and getting to feel each other out,” notes Ghostface Killah. “Like a reunion.” That fraternal atmosphere also fostered sibling sniping. “Some niggas fly home for the weekend and see their family,” recalls RZA. “Niggas come back, ‘Yo, who the fuck was fuckin’ in my room!’ There was some arguments based on stupid shit like that.”

Things have changed a lot for the Wu family in recent years. Many of the members are in their 30s and have children. Though the rappers have issued a steady stream of material, the climate of hip-hop has changed around them. The second collective Wu album, ’97’s *Wu-Tang Forever*, sold reasonably well, but many fans regarded the double CD as too long, too lyrically dense, and too experimental.

“Everybody knows this is important,” says Ghostface, admitting that the group’s legendary status might be on shaky ground. “*The W* means a lot to a lot of people. We were saviors, especially to the East Coast. We brought that hip-hop back.”

In the early days, the Wu was defined by hunger. Clan members originated on the shineless Staten Island, off the coast of Manhattan, which in ’92 possessed virtually no hip-hop history. Prison, narcotic sales and addiction punctuated several members’ resumes, but it was a mutual desire to better their situations—some very desperate, indeed—and make a mark on music that congealed these nebulous entities into a single creative force. That hunger growled throughout their initial single, “Protect Ya Neck,” a relentless posse cut featuring nine individual voices with one motivation: Make it happen. All clanging, bass droning and ferocious rhyming, “Protect” sounded like a fight in a project stairwell and got all the roughnecks in earshot riled up. The single was hustled through the streets of New York on white labels and while many record companies thought the group was too hard, Loud saw promise and negotiated a contract that enabled each of the members to sign solo deals with other labels.

The warriors modeled their debut album, *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)*, on the karate flicks that babysat young New Yorkers after Saturday morning cartoons went off (Channel 5’s *Kung-Fu Theatre*—act

(Continued p.40)



THE ORIGINAL 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY MGM MOVIE POSTER.

SPACE BABY JESUS

Staking out courthouses is an easy way to glean the best, er, worst of Ol' Dirty Bastard's extracurricular activities (crack possession, shoplifting, shooting at the po-po, terrorist threats). It's probably too easy. But the criminality isn't what makes ODB such a compelling spectacle, it's just how bizarre some of his extra-curricular antics are. Here are some of our favorites:

Got Me On The Run, October 2000:

ODB absconds from the Impact House drug rehab center—a non-lockup facility—while en route to the L.A. Criminal Courthouse with just days to go before fulfilling his sentence. Perhaps the Wu promotional tour beckoned too loudly?

Give The Drummer Some, Spring 1999:

Studio engineers describe ODB's *Nigga Please* recording sessions as near-chaos, filled with drugs, alcohol, hangers-on and groupies. According to one observer, a percussion sample used on the album was created by a woman banging into a drum while ODB enthusiastically took her from behind.

Ghetto Superstar, September 1998:

In L.A. for the MTV Video Music Awards, ODB nearly dies—twice. First, he drunkenly crashes RZA's Bobby Digital interview at a Chateau Marmont suite, perching himself gargoyles-style on the top-floor balcony overlooking Sunset Blvd. and nearly slipping. Two days later, he appears on the awards show before a national audience—as a fugitive with three outstanding warrants from Virginia. Doing "Ghetto Superstar," ODB is almost torched by onstage pyrotechnics before being saved by former Fugee Pras. We repeat: Saved by Pras!

Here I Come To Save The Day, February 1998:

ODB and another rap group come to the aid of a four-year-old girl struck by a car outside the New York studio they are recording at. ODB visits her in the hospital. Most media fail to find this funny and thus don't report the incident. However, the next day....

For The Kids, February 1998:

At the Grammy Awards, ODB steals the mic from singer Shawn Colvin, accepting her Song Of The Year Award for "Sunny Came Home." Apparently peeved that his group lost to Puff Daddy for Best Hip-Hop Album, ODB tells the world, "Wu-Tang is for the children.... Puffy is good but Wu-Tang is the best!" Indeed.

Bum-Rush The Show, Fall 1996:

ODB bum-rushes a show by the Roots, hijacking the mic for almost half an hour. Amidst more drunken ramblings, ODB proceeds to do his new, never-released song, "Hoes, Fuck 'Em In The Ass," as fans, record execs and the Roots look on, stunned.

Drop The Drawers, Summer 1994:

One of ODB's first solo outings, at an industry convention in L.A., turns into a nearly three-hour drunken sermon. After showing up hours late, ODB launches into the perfect anti-show—half-songs and indecipherable monologues—all with pants around the ankles.

Welfare Check, One-Two, What Is This? Summer 1994:

In perhaps his most classic moment, ODB takes the MTV News crew to pick up his welfare check—in a limousine. This just after the Wu-Tang album goes gold.

>>> JOSEPH PATEL

KUBRICK, PLEASE: ODB AS THE 2001 STAR CHILD.

like you know). Each Wu-Tang member developed a distinct “Shaolin” persona and their voices and deliveries were weapons. In the loose hierarchy, GZA/Genius was the “head” of the clan. The RZA was the producer, the auteur behind the Wu’s signature grungy sound. Having already attempted careers as recording artists and been spit out by the industry, both GZA and RZA brought experience to the battlefield and were hailed as the brains of the outfit. Their ninjas were charismatic craftsmen: Method Man could be casual, even fun, while Ghostface Killah and Raekwon The Chef violently attacked the mic with brutal metaphors. The way fans picked favorites, Loud should have sold trading cards.

When the East Coast/West Coast divide was a healthy creative rivalry and not a media-fueled tragedy, the Wu-Tang Clan ranked with Biggie and Nas as the East’s most respected champions. One album from the Shaolin soldiers could hardly satiate a growing fanbase. Neither was the Clan willing to chill after nabbing the world’s ear. As they spun themselves off to different labels and released solo projects, clan members expanded on the individual mythologies that began with *36 Chambers*. The Wu Tang superstars—Method Man, Raekwon, Ol’ Dirty Bastard—started to shine.

Method Man’s *Tical* (1994), a dark and meandering opus, was the first and most anticipated Wu solo. With his rugged good looks, grimy charm and more accessible flow, Meth became the first “face” of the Clan. However, Raekwon’s *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx* (1995) is, to this day, arguably the most complete Wu project, in which Rae embellished and amalgamated memories of his drug-dealing days into a colorful hustling epic. Shockingly vivid and original in everything from its sonic structure to its say-what vocabulary, *Cuban Linx* gave East Coast thug-rappers a template to bite for the next five years. It also made Rae a spokesperson for the crew. “People look at us as the most enthusiastic ones on stage as well as the most influential. You know Meth got a big fanbase. Rae got a big fanbase,” Raekwon says of his up-front status. “We’re like a real team that has its MVPs, and you look for your certain MVPs to take you to the Series, playoffs or pennant.”

Soon after Rae, Ol’ Dirty became the Clan’s other bigger-than-life character, first for his performance highjinks and later for his many run-ins with the law. ODB has since been arrested for more offenses than most judges can shake a gavel at, making him the fallback bread-and-butt of every third Chris Rock joke. Still, as any rapper will admit, jail-time, even if it causes you to miss shows and release dates, won’t hurt your credibility. In 1999, Dirty’s second album, *Nigga Please*, became a critical darling based on a slurred, drunken belligerence that certain hep music journalists interpreted as genius. But *Nigga Please* strayed far from the Wu esthetic, with more assistance from mainstream producers like the Neptunes and Irv Gotti than from RZA, and no cameos from the other major Wu vocalists.

In 2001, the Wu-Tang Clan characters are just about fully fleshed out. All but one of the original nine members, Masta Killa, has dropped a solo

album. Five have already turned in sophomore LPs, most to lukewarm receptions. RZA’s absence on last year’s efforts by GZA and Raekwon, and debuts by U-God and Inspectah Deck, left many worried about the Wu’s future.

“I told my brothers already, I think they made an error on that,” RZA comments. “With Deck, Loud kept moving [the release date] around and I never mixed those songs. But he wanted to get the shit out. GZA had to feed his side of the family with his album budget, Raekwon had to feed his side of the family. And I told them to do that. Regardless of that, the fans are gonna be upset if they don’t hear you in your natural habitat. And that’s what happened and there was flack. Then Ghostface gets in his natural habitat and kills it!”

Out of all of those solo projects, only Ghostface Killah’s gold-certified *Supreme Clientele* was embraced by fans. “The Ghostface album was an eye-opener,” acknowledges GZA, referring to that LP’s return to ol’ school breakbeats and classic loops that made listeners prick up their ears.

Still, Wu rappers don’t want to rehash the past. Notorious free thinkers, they’ve kept moving forward as their situations have changed. Raekwon, one of the pioneers of “criminology rap” admits that he’s working beyond the glamorized crime dramas that dominate the airwaves these days. “I can’t say I ain’t seeing what the ghetto is feeling. But when you got fans in so many creeds and colors, you tend to try to slack on that stuff,” he says. “Cause I don’t want to put that stuff in little kids’ heads, talking about coke every five minutes. I like to be educational. I’m like [black fiction writer] Donald Goines. I want to teach about the game, but I want to teach how to get away from the game. That’s just as important.” While that growing idealism is admirable, who knows if it’s the wisest business move for a family that made its name with rhymes more deadly than Bruce Lee.

The W has been a creative struggle for many Wu members. With his packed schedule, Ghost didn’t feel focused enough on the project. “When it came to *The W*, my thoughts were kind of cloudy,” he says. “People don’t understand. I need some downtime. I was on the road with Rae in November, then *Supreme Clientele*, back on the road in February, then on the Blackout tour with Red and Meth. It’s like, too much for a nigga. It’s all good, but I couldn’t produce.”

Even the historically arrogant Raekwon, possibly debilitated by the negligible impact of his second offering, *Immobilarity*, entered this new chamber with modest ambitions: “All you can do is give it your best. You can’t outdo yourself,” he says. “People want to see us do our best. But people are not going to understand everything. And you can’t please all the people all the time.” Method Man must have been somewhat spent from his high-energy side project with Redman, and the GZA admits to having come up against a wall of writer’s block. ODB was in a rehab facility during most of the recording (though he recorded enough to appear on two tracks). When the brains and the faces falter, the Wu’s backbone of foot soldiers must hold it down. Masta Killa, U-God, Inspectah Deck and ODB-substitute Cappadonna are still hungry to show fans how essential they are to the crew.

“Me, being in the trenches so long, it made me stronger,” says U-God gruffly. “So it’s going to also do, in turn, to my brothers.” Deceptively quiet, U-God is one of the Clan’s most confrontational members. He was in prison for “drugs and guns,” he says, while *36 Chambers* was being recorded—he only made it onto two cuts. Since then, he has fought to be recognized among the already established members. But in his mind, it’s only a matter of time before the spotlight falls on him, and some of the others have to sit out. “I had to swallow my pill. My brothers are going to have to swallow their shit. Either you’re going to do the knowledge, sit back, mope or get up and do something.” It sounds like infighting, but that competition—among themselves and with others—is part of what drives the Clan. And now it’s not just their own hunger, but also the growl of their children’s stomachs that motivates them.

“Everybody knows this is important. The W means a lot to a lot of people. We were saviors, especially to the East Coast.”
—Ghostface Killah

Sitting in the Loud offices' plush, glassed-in conference room, RZA pops in the video for the new solo joint from Mobb Deep's Prodigy, "Keep It Thoro." The now-patented Wu Kung-Fu effects—sword chings and fisticuff smacks—slice through edits and RZA beams at the obvious influence: "P. is killing it."

The producer's acute memory can mimic virtually every drum fill and sample he's used not only on Wu-Tang albums (even the skittery tremolo he taught a violinist for *Wu-Tang Forever*), but also work he's done with his side project, Gravediggaz, and with Björk. At one point, he asks that the tape recorder be turned off while he spits through the beat that never made it onto the album, which he refused to let anyone rap over even though several rappers "asked for it 10 times."

At his warped best, RZA embodies joy in looped repetition, bas-tardizing melodies and chopping the foot off the beat so it clumps about like a crippled crab. "Sometimes RZA's beats can throw you off," says the GZA. "But I'll take a too-advanced digi-stance beat any time. I like noise."

"I think I reached my sonic [potential] on the *Ghost Dog* soundtrack," admits RZA about his score for the Jim Jarmusch film, one of the projects he's worked in the past year. During sessions for *The W*, RZA learned how to play a little piano while hanging with Isaac Hayes (who tisks, "Stop all this crying and be a man" during "I Can't Sleep At Night.")

For the first time, Wu-Tang goes outside of the chamber to enlist guests (Redman, Busta Rhymes, Nas and Snoop), a reliable crutch long used on the solo albums but heretofore avoided on collective works. "Bringing in outsiders—that was my idea," says RZA "There was flack at first because Wu is Wu. We don't isolate ourselves from our peers—there's a new hip-hop generation eight years after *Enter The Wu-Tang*. We mix blood because we don't want to keep the hip-hop nation separated.... We're lettin' the culture slip away and we're not appreciating it. [Limp Bizkit] get down cooler with us than a lot of rap niggas."

**"The shit I did by myself could never master what I did with the group."
—Ghostface Killah**

On "Hollow Bones," the sound of classic Wu returns. RZA juxtaposes anguished, Stax soul moans—two loops from the same source—and puts no beat under it. There's also a bonus track where Raekwon just rips over guitar stabs, a good ol' fashioned Wu mangler. Elsewhere on *The W*, tracks completely mutate mid-verse, deceiving the ear's anticipation. No wonder Wu MCs sound like they're losing their minds. "This album is like *36 Chambers* in a way—it gets you interested again," says RZA. "And then I'll get back into more experimental stages and tryin' shit."

But who will still be in the game by the time the next Wu album is recorded? Raekwon is already looking forward to retirement and perhaps just making due as a ghostwriter: "I'm giving myself 35; 35 I'm chillin'.... My legacy will live."

The larger question may be that while groups like the Fugees have gone their separate ways in favor of lucrative solo careers, why does the Wu-Tang Clan still pull together to work on its legacy? "The shit I did by myself could never master what I did with the group," contends Ghostface Killah, even though his value outside of the Wu may be just as high at the moment, if not higher. "They don't wanna see Ghost; they wanna see the other eight motherfuckers. Our strength is in numbers." **NMM**

ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY ALIYA S. KING.

WU WHO? IT'S A SHAOLIN SWITCHAROO.

You think you know who's Wu? Try to guess which Shaolin Swordman drops these lines on *The W*. Just to make things interesting, we mixed in some of the guest artists. (Answers below.) >>> DAVE TOMPKINS

1. "I'm the animal Hugh Hefner created/ The only nigga Sade dated, the most hated."
2. "I like it red/ Pee in the bed/ I'm frustrated/ I'm 29 years, no educated."
3. "We show and prove/ Get paper, catch me in a caper on shrooms...handle your bid and kill no kids."
4. "Play the role with my drum sticks."
5. "Somethin' in tha slum rum pum pa pa pum."
6. "Ride through your hood in a Mr. Softee truck/ And pull a mack out of a box of sno-cones."
7. "Sacrifice me twice so my kids can see paradise."
8. "German Catholics white-washing Barbar Scotians."
9. "In a room full of crackers I might cut the cheese."



METHOD MAN...SAY CHEESE.

RISE ROBOTS RISE

The evolution of metal machine music.

STORY • TOM MALLON ILLUSTRATION • MICHAEL LOPEZ

By now, even schoolchildren know how mankind evolved from apes. But how many evolutionary steps did it take to get from *The Music Man* to Kraftwerk's *The Man-Machine*? Thanks to a select few visionaries who pushed the concept of the man-machine forward, now we know. So when we've all become soulless automatons with metal teeth and plastic for flesh, remember: You have more than Gary Numan to blame.

1. Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*

Fear of the future and industrial oppression never tasted better than in Fritz Lang's 1927 film, *Metropolis* (Paramount). While these concepts had been touched on before, this film brought them to the masses: Buildings grow mouths and breathe fire, machines eat the oppressed workers and sinister robots come to life under enormous pentagrams. (Sinister or not, that robot looked pretty hot.)

2. Kraftwerk

If you plugged the history of electronic rock into the formula of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, Kraftwerk would play the monkey that touched the monolith. It dragged the evolution of the man-machine ahead several million years with its herky-jerky brand of almost completely electronic rock, and with lines like "I am the operator of my pocket calculator," brought man and machine uncomfortably, er, close. The monkey kick-started evolution by braining its rival with a huge bone, and with 1974's breakthrough *Autobahn*, Kraftwerk brained everyone else.

3. Einstürzende Neubauten

With the advent of Einstürzende Neubauten (German for "collapsing new buildings"), yet another band of scary Germans pushed evolution ever forward. While not interested in electronics per se, they sure did love machines; in fact, their early shows consisted largely of them beating on gears and scrap metal. Plus, by being emaciated, dressing in black, making unholy noise and looking downright frightening, they paved the way for spleen-filled goths everywhere.

4. Gary Numan

Numan debuted a new breed of machine—one fueled by pop, albeit paranoid, alienated, shell-shocked pop. In his claustrophobic (yet always hummable) world, the robots rule; "liquid engineers" grow people in the factories of "Metal," "rape machines" prowls the nightmare city of "Down In The Park," and he becomes one with his vehicle in "Cars." Luckily he didn't get *too* close to the machine—look what happened to Gary Glitter.

5. Herbie Hancock

Remember when the *2001* scientists approach the Monolith and are felled by a piercing noise? That's pretty much what happened to jazzheads who picked up Herbie Hancock's "Rockit." A huge early MTV hit, the song mated mechanical percussion and wicky-wicky scratching with the former Miles Davis pianist's jazzy synth, siring a video filled with fractured automatons and semi-ambulatory mannequin parts—and making *The Robot* a dance even suburban prom kings could do.



6. Revenge Of The Nerds

Before Anthony Edwards started playing doctor on *ER*, he participated in one of cinema's most triumphant robot-rock moments, when our heroes kick it Kraftwerk-style in the talent-show finale of *Revenge Of The Nerds*. The nerds score vital points against the evil jocks by doing The Robot whilst wearing drum machines and stylish yellow jumpsuits; add a searing synth-violin solo by a spiky Timothy Busfield, and even Trent Reznor might shed an oily tear.

7. Skinny Puppy

Torment and anger and rabies, oh my! Skinny Puppy took the noise innovations and dying-of-TB look of Neubauten and Throbbing Gristle and married them to a distinctly goth outlook, creating one of the blackest robot-rock hybrids ever. It's blood, addiction, mourning, rodents, dead flowers and even deader people set to music: Over this one, Trent Reznor *did* shed an oily tear.

8. Brent Spiner

(Data from *Star Trek: The Next Generation*)

In 1991, cyborgs faced extinction with the release of Brent Spiner's *Ol' Yellow Eyes Is Back*, an album of Tin Pan Alley standards. One song even featured the stupid-fresh vocal stylings of the Sunspots, a.k.a. LeVar Burton, Michael Dorn, Jonathan Frakes and Patrick Stewart. While the prospect of an android kicking out jams like "Zing! Went The Strings Of My Heart" briefly threatened the species' very existence, it was spared when everyone failed to notice.

9. Nine Inch Nails

If there's one thing Trent Reznor likes more than hate, pigs and decay, it's machines. He's been a *Pretty Hate Machine*, was once "caught in this big broken machine," has been known to be a "silencing machine," admits to "beating my machine," apparently has "circuitry," and it seems he's even "made up of wires." Does the government know about this? Has anyone noticed that a *cyborg* walks among us?

10. Goldie

Drum 'n' bass became the electro-man's most drastic mutation: Its initial purveyors decided to do away with the human element altogether, forgoing carbon-based input in favor of smooth machine precision. These days, they seem to be growing flesh again, but Goldie's still got a big-ass mouthful of metal, and that's gotta count for something.

11. Orgy

These fellas represent the latest evolution in cyber-rock: fourth-generation industrial rockers in the guise of glam superstars. Where their forefathers were content to simply slather themselves in cornstarch and be done with it, Orgy goes one step further, mixing their machines with Maybelline. At the very least, though, they prove that even sissy-fied nancy boys have a place in the man-machine pantheon.



FEAR THE FUTURE

We all know the music industry is getting predictable, but just how predictable? Well, we've already planned out our next decade of covers, and because we know you can't wait to see what's on the next issue of *CMJ New Music Monthly*, we've decided to serve up the highlights. Sorry, we couldn't fit the three-issue Christina Aguilera career retrospective.



PHOTOS: TIM LUTHE; ALAN; PHOTOFEST; UNION FEATURES; © CORbis OUTLINE; JASON HERRINGMAN/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY: PEARL JAM



FUSSIBLE



CLOROFILA



HIPERBOREAL

TECH-MEX

Nortec: Where Tijuana brass meets techno beats. STORY • ADRIENNE DAY

B lame Herb Alpert or the American media if you like, but there's a lot more to the Northwest Mexican border town of Tijuana than brass, whores and drug-related gunfire. In addition to being one of the busiest commercial and tourist centers in the world, it's also the birthplace of Nortec. Since early 1999, a group of musicians, visual artists, fashion designers and architects have (literally) sampled life on both sides of the border to develop a musical and artistic template that speaks to Mexican and US youth cultures alike.

Pepe Mogt, a computer geek, musician and one of the founding fathers of Nortec (who records under the alias Fussible), stumbled onto the sound quite accidentally at a wedding. Listening to Mexican music by a traditional *sinaolense* band, he was inspired to layer some rough sample sounds of *norteño* snares, tubas, accordions and congas over a German techno Burger/Ink track. The result was, by Mogt's own admission, "bizarre." Yet from this combination sprung what would become the first "drum 'n' tuba" Nortec track.

The Nortec esthetic varies widely. Some use a mix of live instruments and programmed samples for a more organic feel, while others rely pretty much on their laptops. But the fact that they share all their source material (a.k.a. samples) gives their music cohesion, and a unified vision for the future of Nortec. Palm Pictures will soon release *Nor-Tec Collective*, a compilation of Nortec music. In the meantime, here's the short list.

Fussible (Pepe Mogt and Jorge Ruiz)

"Nortec is when you walk down *Avenida Revolución* in Tijuana, and you hear a club playing hip-hop, another playing techno, and then marachi and *norteño* musicians on the sidewalk," says Pepe Mogt. "Then a pick-up truck with *federales* goes by with *norteño* music playing way too loud. That's Nortec." He and Ruiz play several instruments and run the results through an analog filter, their mellow grooves influenced by Cabaret Voltaire, Kraftwerk and current trends like electronic-influenced bossa nova and San Francisco house. "I sample a lot of strange percussion," says Mogt of their distinctive sound. "A lot of Tijuana musicians are low-paid, so their snares are homemade, the skin they put on them is too tight, the rim sticks too wide, so they sound different."

Hiperboreal (Pedro Gabriel Beas and Claudia Algara)

By day, Pedro Gabriel Beas is a building administrator; by night, he works on music or visits other musicians from Tijuana, where they drink red wine and discuss future projects. "The collaboration is great, it's been a learning experience for all of us and this is just the beginning." As part of Hiperboreal, Beas programs the beats and plays the synths, while Claudia Algara does vocals and works on general song structure. He cites artists like Stockhausen and Tangerine Dream, and styles like '80s electro and minimal techno, as well as regional styles like Mexican folk and tango music as influences. "We know we're not the first to combine electronic music with other styles," he says. "But we know a new sound has been born in Tijuana, and it sounds like nothing else we've ever heard before."

Clorofila (Jorge Verdin and Fritz Torres)

Verdin and Torres first met in '92 while working on a self-published arts and culture zine called *El Sueño De La Gallina* (*The Chicken's Dream*). For one issue, they decided to assemble a CD of local musicians; two years later, they're working on their own tracks. Although they're considered the graphic-design heavies in the collective—they design many of the flyers, posters, album covers and video backdrops that further the Nortec vision—they also have an ear for edgy, smudged-out basslines. "If it's a Clorofila track, it needs to have funkiness, trippiness and rawness," Verdin explains.

Panóptica (Roberto Mendoza)

Perhaps the closest in style and heart to the Rheinland, Mendoza cites German minimal techno labels like Force Inc., Kompakt and Chain Reaction, as well as the warm, warped IDM textures from the Atlanta-based Schematic label, as vital to his work. But he notes that "as soon as we started making Nortec, I began to notice Tijuana's more popular music like *norteño*, *grupera* and *banda*." He uses no instruments in the classical sense, preferring laptops and other electronics. "Tijuana was the place where rock en español was born," he says "This edge was lost for a while, but I think the city's electronic musicians have finally found it again."

BRAVE NEW WAVE

Weaned on angular riffs and obtuse style, '80s kids ride a new new wave. STORY • TONY WARE



LADYTRON

Remember the early '80s, when new wavers donned asymmetrical outfits to battle disco's tepid commercialism, rock's machismo and hippie-rock's noodling? The kids who teethed on new wave's retro-futurist synths and angular guitar riffs have grown up to take on some eerily similar present-day esthetic opponents. These *new new wave* bands may have dropped the geometric haircuts, but they take on bombastic pop overstatement (Britney, Kid Rock, etc.) with the tersely poetic, overlapping rhythmic textures that fueled new wavers and post-punkers from Devo and Wire to the more videogenic Duran Duran and A Flock Of Seagulls. "The new new wave could be seen as a rebellion to all music that is macho mainstream and the movement of the jam bands," says Colin English, drummer for the hyperkinetically rhythmic Atlanta-based band the Plastic Plan.

But while English says the straight-ahead instrumental new wave of the Plastic Plan is meant "to take what has been done and do it again," other new new wave bands are less eager to be pinned down, and their songs show it. "It is difficult to label [the new new wave] a movement because there is no common goal," says Adam Miller, bassist for Seattle's jagged, tightly wound six-piece the Vogue, who have weathered countless comparisons to the Fall (who they claim never to have heard). "People can judge us on our own merits," states Miller, "one of those being that we are not overly derivative of past musical movements." Not derivative, no, but traceable, as the Vogue and their contemporaries filter the rounded-corner solos of proto-punkers Television through the hardcore lens of Fugazi, all in the age of Elastica.



THE FAINT

Bands like the Plastic Plan and the Vogue do have similar attitudes, though: They and their new new wave brethren are wry and cerebral like many of their forefathers, and very conscious and critical of their post-punk influences and immediate peers. Their music developed out of a similar desire to dance and think at the same time. Blurring features from across new wave's impossibly broad landscape—a mod-ish melody here, a nerdy robot dance there—each band refracts the genre's skinny-tie tenets through the post-irony of the present.



JEFF WARTENBERG

THE RAPTURE

MY FAVORITE

New York-based My Favorite—Michael Grace Jr., Andrea Vaughn, Darren Amadio, Gilbert Abad and Tod—bonded over Joy Division in high school. They produce “crisis pop” for those “vaguely anxious about modern life” but unafraid of “futurism and poetry and subversion,” Grace explains. Mixing strings, sax and synths, My Favorite makes pop for “outsiders, whether political, social, emotional,” on their latest, *Joan Of Arc Awaiting Trial* (Double Agent), one of three planned EPs offering aggressively depressing variations on the story of Miz Arc. My Favorite’s songs flit from the melancholy of OMD to the teasing interlay of Human League, but act as “a kind of sense memory, full of signals and questions for my peers who lived through the same sort of things we did,” says Grace. “We want to make something complete, something beautiful—it is not about our record collections.”

LADYTRON

Liverpool’s Ladytron debuted with the EP *Commodore Rock* (Emperor Norton)—equal parts Air’s moog-driven “Sexy Boy” and the Pet Shop Boys’ opulent “It’s A Sin.” But the quartet’s oscillating electro-pop shares more with dance artists like fellow Englishman Les Rythmes Digitales than it does with Britpop. “We probably have more in common with labels like Bungalow, German stuff, Chicks On Speed, Disko B, etcetera,” says band-member Daniel Hunt, a vintage synth collector who feels that Ladytron’s main influences transcend new wave, though Devo, Duran Duran and hometown boys the Teardrop Explodes are exceptions. Assures Hunt, “When the album [*The Ladytron* (Shimmy Disc)] arrives it will be a hell of a lot harder to trace influences, because the group is still developing.”

THE RAPTURE

New York City’s the Rapture—Luke Jenner, Matt Safer and Vito Roccoforte—started in San Francisco three years ago. Now signed to Sub Pop, the band’s first album, *Mirror* (Gravity), drew post-punk comparisons, “...which is fine,” admits Roccoforte, “because [the album is] definitely influenced by those genres. But I would never consider our band in any of those categories...because we would be shutting ourselves off to a lot of other cool music.” Some of the Rapture’s heavily layered patterns, however, do evoke the chilliness of Joy Division, Public Image Limited and the manic art-school Bowery bands of the late ’70s, like the Talking Heads—and their album features a remix by Kid606, a po-mo nod that places them squarely in the present. “A guy in Louisiana said we sound like Gang Of Four fucking the Who up the ass,” reveals Safer. “I like that one.”

THE FAINT

Three-quarters of the Faint met at a Midwestern skateboarding contest in the ’80s, but in the ’90s the three skated less and played music more. Maybe it’s the skate-punk influence, but on *Blank-Wave Arcade* (Saddle Creek), the Faint, like their contemporaries the Calculators, marry synths to sinewy Dischord-influenced punk. The Faint’s dramatic delivery sometimes echoes nerve-wracked labelmate Bright Eyes, except the Faint’s delirium tremens are set to a Depeche Mode beat. Carefully packaged but determined to avoid pastiche, the Faint continues to cement its indie cred with a remix 12-inch featuring members of ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead and the Laces, among others.

DAYS OF FUTURE PASSED

Money Mark, the Dust Brothers and the Moog Cookbook celebrate great musical innovations that never happened—or did they?

STORY • MEREDITH OCHS

Long before CDs or MP3s, inventors were claiming that their innovations were going to change the future of music. Some, like the proto-sampler Mellotron, briefly influenced music history (listen for it on “Strawberry Fields Forever”); others, like the Fun Machine and the Optigan, may be celebrated now more by flea market rockers than they were when first introduced to the marketplace (see the band Optiganally Yours).

“We’re in love with new technology, but at the same time, musicians long for the interface of old equipment,” says David Kean, director of the Canada’s Audities Foundation, dedicated to the preservation of electronic music instruments. “A lot of this stuff was considered has-been in the ’80s,” adds the Dust Brothers’ John King. “But good, clean sounds are very boring, and this kind of gear gives instant, bad vintage sound.” As we enter 2001, we salute the lost future of yesteryear—musical innovations that may not have changed the mass market, but have influenced music and musicians in ways you never realized.

Optigan Music Maker

This early ’70s, lo-fi optical proto-sampler has “clear flexi-discs that you can see soundwaves etched onto,” explains the Dust Brothers’ John King. If you find one for \$50, it’s a bargain; on eBay it’s more likely to run \$300 to \$500.



Sounds like: Scratchy old easy-listening records. “We got a dark, rambling pseudo-Latin thing and conga sounds out of it,” recalls King, who used it on Sukia’s Dust-produced debut. Says Pea Hicks of Optiganally Yours, “It has a dreamy, haunting sound. It’s very pathetic; like a Keane painting, it practically forces you to feel sorry for it.” (www.optigan.com)

Who used it: Optiganally Yours, *Spotlight On Optiganally Yours*; Tom Waits, *Mule Variations*; Devo, *EZ Listening Disc*; Fiona Apple, *Tidal*; Blur, *13*; The Clash, *Sandinista!*

Why it didn’t catch-on: “It was a very unreliable instrument, built primarily as an adult toy,” Hicks says. “The idea went over fairly well, but it got a bad reputation with retailers, who got tired of customer returns.”

Maestro Sound System for Woodwinds

This 1970s effect unit hooks up to the reed of a woodwind instrument, octave-divides it, adds fuzz and partially filters the sound. Today, it costs around \$400.

Sounds like: Money Mark attaches a microphone to it instead of a woodwind instrument and makes it sound like a huge “bass kazoo.” It can also make a clarinet sound like a fuzz bass.

Who used it: Jazz saxophonist Eddie Harris can be seen holding it on the cover of his 1968 album, *Plug Me In*. The Beastie Boys used it on Ad Rock’s line, “Just plug me in like I was Eddie Harris” in their song “The Maestro.” Money Mark opens his live show with the Maestro, usually singing Deep Purple’s “Smoke On The Water” and Edgar Winter’s “Frankenstein” through it. “It’s so precious to me that I carry it on the plane when I travel,” he says.



Theremin

Electronic music pioneer Leon Theremin created this two-antenna wonder in the 1920s. Electronic synth pioneer Robert Moog still manufactures them today at his company Big Briar (www.bigbriar.com), ranging from about \$200 for a kit on up for deluxe models.

Sounds like: Its eerie, almost “crying” tone comes off like a cross between a violin and a human voice.

Who used it: From Coal Chamber to Cornelius, from Phish to Pram, many bands use theremins: Beach Boys, “Good Vibrations” (electro-theremin); Air, *Le Soleil est Pres du Moi*; Captain Beelheart And His Magic Band, *Safe As Milk*; and the Lothars, who play four theremins and one guitar.

Why it didn’t catch on: No one could play the damn thing. “There’s no reference points, no fretboard, and every time you turn it off you have to retune it,” says ex-Waitresses member Chris Butler, who has used a theremin on solo recordings.

Chamberlin/Mellotron

Originally created by Harry Chamberlin in the mid-'50s, the technology was taken to England in the early '60s and mass-produced as the Mellotron. Using a series of tape loops, it was supposed to put an orchestra at your fingertips, but David Kean calls it "a chaos generator" most useful for its happy accidents. These days, vintage ones can cost \$5000. Sampled Mellotron CD-Roms are available at www.audities.org for \$199.



Sounds like: A prototype sampler, it replays whatever is recorded on the tapes that are in it—flute, cello, dogs barking, etc. "It screws up the sound," Kean says.

Who used it: The Beatles, "Strawberry Fields Forever"; the Moody Blues, *Days Of Future Passed*; Suzanne Vega, *99.9 F*; Tom Waits, *Swordfishtrombones*; XTC, *Skylarking*.

Why they didn't catch on: "They were mechanically unsound, and hard to tour with," says Kean. "The Moody Blues were legendary for showing Warner Bros. cartoons while Mike Pinder fixed their Mellotron."

Tel-Ray

This early-'60s electrostatic (non-tape) delay unit consists of a can with a rotating metal disc inside, filled with PCB oil, which was banned in the late '70s as a carcinogen. A ProTools version—without the carcinogenic oil, of course—is available at www.bombfactory.com for \$199. Originals cost between \$200 and \$300.

Sounds like: "Real watery reverb with lots of wow and flutter—more than just an echo," says Dave Amels, record producer/engineer (Lenny Kravitz) and co-founder of Bomb Factory.

Who used it: Producer Jon Brion is an advocate of the Tel-Ray, using it on Aimee Mann's *Bachelor No. 2* and the soundtrack to *Magnolia*.

Why it didn't catch on: "It was unreliable—oil leaked out—and they vary greatly in quality," Amels says.

Clavivox

Composer and electronic music pioneer Raymond Scott designed it to be a keyboard theremin, but by the time he patented it in 1958, it was basically a synthesizer, predating the Moog. There's only one in existence, and it's in the care of Audities director David Kean.

Sounds like: "Sometimes it sounds pure, sometimes it sounds cheap and a little cheesy. It's not capable of a tremendously wide range of sounds," says Irwin Chusid, director of the Raymond Scott Archives.

Who used it: Tom Petty "borrowed" the Clavivox from the Audities Foundation while recording his latest release, *Echo*, but it's hard to decipher on the album.

Why it didn't catch on: Scott tried to market it in the late '60s, but according to Chusid, the instrument's methodology was so complicated that it was difficult to build even one, and it didn't travel well.



Speak 'n' Spell

This toy, produced by Texas Instruments in the late '70s, enabled children to type in simple words and hear them pronounced by a computer voice. They're still very common in thrift stores, where you'll pay from 50 cents to \$6.

Sounds like: "Unmodified, it has cool grainy synthetic speech," says Pea Hicks. "You can come up with interesting ways to use its limited vocabulary to make it say all sorts of things. But the real fun starts when you get inside and re-wire the circuitry. You'll get an amazing musical instrument which spits out demonic streams of phonemes which can also be thrown into rhythmic loops."

Who used it: Kraftwerk, *ComputerWorld*; OMD, *Dazzle Ships*; Optiganally Yours's remix of Kahimi Karie's "Pygmalism."

Why it didn't catch on: It did—as a teaching toy.

Baldwin Fun Machine Organ

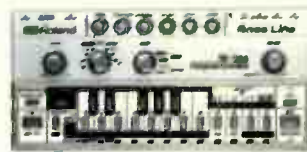
This late-'70s keyboard was like an analog synthesizer married to a mom-and-pop home organ, and since plenty were manufactured, you can find them cheap (between \$100 and \$350).

Sounds like: "It's a simple analog synthesizer on the right keyboard," says Brian Kehew (the Moog Cookbook/Air). "There's a funky drum machine/beat box on the left, and it has patterns that are hipper than most beat boxes. On the left is an auto-accompaniment section: This generates stiff robotic chords and basslines automatically, but it actually has quite a fat, warm synthesizer sound."

Who used it: The Moog Cookbook, *The Moog Cookbook*; Producers Mitchell Froom and Tchad Blake.

Why it didn't catch on: "It was too wacky-sounding for serious 'home music.' It has a very cartoony flavor and was very funky, which is not good for your visiting aunt and uncle," says Kehew.

Roland TB-303 Bassline



Manufactured in the early '80s to take the place of a bass player, much the same way that drum machines were intended to take the place of a drummer. On the collectors' market, TB-303s go for \$700 to \$1000.

Sounds like: "Screaming, squelchy acid analog synth madness," Pea Hicks says. "If you've ever heard techno music, you've almost certainly heard a TB-303."

Who used it: Heaven 17, "Let Me Go"; Ice-T "Rhyme Pays"; Phuture, *Acid Trax*; Hardfloor, *TB Resuscitation*; Madonna, *Ray Of Light*.

Why it didn't catch on: "It suffered from an impossible user interface and didn't sound anything like a real bass player," Hicks says.

Guitorgan

Through extensive wiring, this mid-'60s instrument combines the sounds of an organ and a guitar into the body of a guitar, usually a hollow-body. You'll find them listed in vintage guitar ads for between \$1200 and \$2400.



Sounds like: "Guitar and organ being played together, and the organ sounds are good sounds, not really cheesy," says Chris DiPinto, musician and owner of DiPinto Guitars in Philadelphia. "But when you see it played live, it's incredible."

Who used them: Teisco Del Rey, *Teisco Del Rey Plays Music For Lovers*; The Olivia Tremor Control, *Black Foliage*; Elf Power, *When The Red King Comes*.

Why it didn't catch on: The wiring is a nightmare, they're impossible to fix when they don't work, and they're very heavy, according to DiPinto.

TWO-STEP GARAGE

Artful Dodger's guide to drum 'n' glitz. STORY • M. TYE COMER

Good two-step (or UK garage, as it's often called), is like drum 'n' bass in drag. On the surface it's frilly and fabulous, flashing the same fluffy R&B vocals and optimistic melodies that decorate New York garage house, but those jerky breakbeats, gruff sub-basslines and occasional ragga toasts assure you there are balls underneath all the glitz. "There's nothing really new about [two-step], honestly," admits Pete Devereux of South Hampton, England's Artful Dodger, a pioneering two-step duo that takes its name from the pickpocket in Charles Dickens's novel *Oliver Twist*. "We just steal bits from lots of styles and make them our own."

Taking inspiration from the bass-heavy style of house known as speed garage (which dominated the UK club scene for about 15 minutes), the Dodger duo first made a buzz on UK pirate radio peppering their own taut and twisted beat structures with vocals from popular R&B tunes. "After about a year or two, UK garage became so big on underground radio stations that the mainstream *had* to pay attention to it," says the Dodgers' other half, Mark Hill. "When the media jumped on [speed garage] there were only really a few major tracks out there, and since nobody was prepared to back up the scene, it fell on its ass. But there's so much [two-step] for people to pick up on already. There's tracks being released in the UK now that we've had in our DJ box for three years."



The music is a bona fide British phenomenon, dominating television advertisements as well as posh nightclubs and pop radio charts (even the Spice Girls got a tad steppy on their recent single, "Holler"). Despite its allegiance to American R&B, two-step remains a top-secret sound for Stateside hipsters, as only a handful of US DJs—New York's DJ DB for one—have jumped on the bandwagon. But the Dodgers are hoping history will repeat itself on this side of the Atlantic when their debut album, *It's All About The Stragglers* (London), hits US shelves in February. "A lot of the scene is directed towards white label singles, and people haven't really been concentrating on albums," says Hill. "We brought in eight different singers who each bring their own styles to the songs, and we've messed around with some of the tempos, so I think there's enough on there to keep your attention while you're listening to it at home, rather than dancing in a club."

FOR ALL OF US YANKS WHO NEED A PRIMER IN UK GARAGE, THE DODGERS HAVE PUT TOGETHER A QUICK LIST OF SEMINAL TWO-STEP TRACKS:

Sneaker Pimps

"Spin Spin Sugar" (Armand Van Helden remix)

Armand Van Helden's take on this mediocre trip-hop track wields a bassline heavier than Gibraltar to support Kelli Dayton's pouty vocals. It's a defining moment in speed garage that gave UK new jacks a blueprint for their future. Hill says: "It was the first track to encompass that big, heavy bassline over a 4/4 beat. Very groundbreaking."

Roy Davis Jr.

"Gabrielle" (Live Garage Version)

Chicago house producer Roy Davis Jr. represents on this subtly seductive new-school garage gem. Devereux says: "It was one of the pioneering tracks for the whole scene. It's just got really soulful vocals. It's one of the big ones that always goes down well. It sounds like a typical, funky US house record apart from the fact that it has this broken drumbeat rather than a four-to-the-floor bass kick. It still finds its way into our sets, even though it's kind of a few years old."

K-Ci & JoJo

"Tell Me It's Real" (DJ Asylum remix)

DJ Asylum sliced and diced the mainstream cheese of mega-popular R&B duo K-Ci & JoJo into a jittery, jerky bootleg that became a staple on the UK club circuit. The saccharine soul sounds almost cartoonish atop the sneering bass and razor-sharp breaks, making "Tell Me It's Real" an archetypal two-step monster. Hill says: "Play this track out and it'll simply bring the house down."

Artful Dodger Featuring Craig David

"Re-Rewind"

Catchy as a cold and jiggier than a Brooklyn house party, "Re-Rewind" features UK R&B star Craig David crooning over Artful Dodger's peppy beats and loose basslines. The ragga chants of MC Allister keeps the shit tough enough for B-boys to bounce along. Devereux says: "Not to blow our own horn, but 'Re-Rewind' is a benchmark in the progression of two-step music and was quite a big track on the UK garage scene for some time."

ICE-T IS ICE OSCILLATOR

KOOL KEITH IS KEITH KORG/ DR. OCTAGON/DR. DOOM

KID KOALA IS SKIZNOD THE BOY WONDER

DEL THA FUNKEE HOMOSAPIEN IS DELTRON ZERO

SEAN LENNON IS WALT "CLYDE" MERCADO

MC PAUL BARMAN IS CLEOPIS RANDOLPH THE PATRIARCH

DAMON ALBARN IS SIR DAMIEN THORN

DAN THE AUTOMATOR IS CANTANKEROUS CAPTAIN APTOS

DELTRON ZERO: THE CANTANKEROUS CAPTAIN APTOS! SKIZNOD THE BOY WONDER! WARRIORS OF HIP-HOP, WANDERERS OF THE WASTELAND, DELTRON 3030! -- CRUSADING THROUGH THE CORPORATION-RAVAGED LANDSCAPE OF THE POST-APOCALYPTIC 31ST CENTURY IN THE NAME OF DELTRON 3030!

Scott Frampton presents: THE DEVASTATING DELTRON 3030!

THE VIRUS AND THE VILLAINS!!

SKRITCHA SKRITCHA

THE DOUBLE-AGENT ANALOG BROTHERS ON ONE SIDE, SELLOUT SIR DAMIEN THORN ON THE OTHER, RADIOHEAD'S HYPNOTIC DRONES LOOM IN THE DISTANCE. ONLY A BEAT CAN SAVE US!

SENSES-SHATTERING SCRIPT BY DOUGLAS WOLK
PULSE-POUNDING PENCILS BY JASON JOHNSON
EXACTING INKS BY JOE WEEMS
COURAGEOUS COLOR BY BAD\$\$\$
LICKETY-SPLIT LETTERING BY DREAMER DESIGN'S ROBIN SPEHAR & DENNIS HEISLER
EGO-ERADICATING EDITS BY NEIL GLADSTONE



WHO'S RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR HEROES' PLIGHT? SIR DAMIEN THORN VII OF THE COCKFOSTERS CLAN AND HIS WICKED DOMAIN, THE BLUR!

TIGHTEN UP THE BRAND IDENTITY OF THE INFERNAL REALMS, AND SHIP MORE PUFFY, PRONTO!

YES, SIRE!



LET'S SEE WHAT'S UP WITH THOSE THREE FOOLISH REBELS, DELTRON 3030...

HMM--THEY SEEM TO HAVE CHASED OFF THE SATURNIAN SUCKER MCS. PERHAPS THEY WILL PRESENT ME WITH A CHALLENGE!



WHAT'S HAPPENING, DAN?

!GASP! CLEOFIS RANDOLPH, THE PATRIARCH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

THIS MAGLITE SURVIVED THE APOCALYPSE! IT WILL HELP YOU DEFEAT THE CORPORATIONS AND FIGHT YOUR WAY TO THE BIG RAP BATTLE!



I WANNA DEVISE A VIRUS! CRUSH THE WHOLE COMPUTER SYSTEM AND REVERT IT TO POPYRUS!

WICKETY WICKETY WAAAAH!

THAT'S A GREAT IDEA, DEL! THE JIGGYOCRACY WON'T STAND A CHANCE!



CHIKAAAHI! CHIKAAAHI!

WHAT'S THAT SKIZNOD? YOU'RE WORRIED THAT THE VIRUS MIGHT CRASH YOUR ULTRA-DECKS?

LAY IT DOWN WITH SOUND-WAVES THAT POUND PAVEMENT!

COME ON—YOU KNOW ONLY I CAN INTERPRET THE KID'S SCRATCHES BECAUSE I TUTORED HIM AT THE HANDSOME BOY MODELING SCHOOL!



GIVE ME THAT MAGLITE AND I'LL FIGHT THE FORCE. YOU SHOULD GO BACK TO MODELING SCHOOL AND TAKE ANOTHER COURSE!

WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? I'M PROUD TO BE DEVASTATINGLY HANDSOME! MY PARTNER CHEST ROCKWELL ALWAYS TOLD ME...



STOP THIS NONSENSE!

WICKOWWY WICKY WICKY

SKIZNOD SAYS "GASP! WALT 'CLYDE' MERCADO!"

YOU MUST FIGHT FOR MORE THAN THE CASH REWARDS OF LOGOLAND. YOU MUST RISE UP FOR THE HONOR OF TRUE HIP-HOP!

AND YOU CAN START WITH THOSE GUYS!



HALLUCINATIN' GORILLAS...WALKIN' UP LIKE THE LOST IN SPACE ROBOT!

IT'S THE ANALOG BROTHERS—AND ONE OF THEM IS "KOOL" KEITH KORG, MY SOMETIME ALLY!

WE WERE TEAMMATES, BACK WHEN HE CALLED HIMSELF DR. OCTAGON...

EARTH PEOPLE! I WAS BORN ON JUPITER!

BUT THEN HE WAS DESTROYED BY HIS ALTER EGO, THE MURDEROUS DR. DOOM...

NOW HE'S HOOKED UP WITH ICE OSCILLATOR TO PIMP THE GALAXY FOR HORNY BEATS!

WIKKI WIKKI

AT LEAST THEY'RE NOT RUNNING UP A BODY COUNT!

ME AND KEITH'S FALLING OUT WAS A VICIOUS RUMOR SPREAD BY THE EVIL SIR DAMIEN, THERE'S NOT GOING TO BE A BATTLE!

PARDON—DID I HEAR MY NAME?

IT'S SIR DAMIEN AND THE CONFOUNDING RADIOHEAD! DIDN'T YOU USED TO WORK WITH THEM?

WELL, WE PLANNED TO—

WAIT! DELTRON HAS A PLAN!

UPGRADE YOUR GRAY MATTER 'CAUSE IT MAY MATTER IF YOU'RE EVER GOING TO MAKE ANOTHER WORTHWHILE PLATTER!

IS THAT THE EVIL GOODNESS OF THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD TWINKIES@? I HAVEN'T HAD THEM SINCE 1976. HOW CAN I RESIST?

MY ACHILLES HEEL! MUST GET A HO-HO!

QUICK, SKIZNOD—USE YOUR ROCK!

WIKKI WIKKI I GOTTA—I GOTTA I GOTTA ROCK!

TO BE CONTINUED.

6GIG

Tinçan Experiment *Ultimatum*

It probably took a little corporate muscling, but Ultimatum got to test-drive the fledgling Portland, Maine hardcore quartet 6Gig in front of thousands by securing them an opening slot on a Goo Goo Dolls bill before signing the band. And it's no surprise that the ever-discriminating Goo Goo fanbase lapped up the 5-month-old band's heavily padded heft and blatant hooks. What 6Gig does with hardcore is analogous to what the Goos once did with punk. "Hit The Ground," the big single, stitches a textbook ominous grind (straight out of Modern Metal-Influenced Hardcore 101: see Strife) to an arena-anonymous big chorus that's keep-on-keeping-on gushy. To be fair, you can't fault someone for writing a catchy song—there are many "authentic" hardcore bands that should spin the 6Gig disc for songwriting pointers—but you can fault them for writing the same song 11 times, and, on the 12th time, just slowing things down and adding strings. The Goo Goo Dolls wrote better records and eventually gave up the pose, opting instead for big-screen ballad-y mush. For 6Gig the story has just begun—vocalist and lead guitarist Walter Craven sings with a boyish, raspy, just-got-out-of-bed urgency and the songs are dipped in syrupy production that calls to mind the late, great Doughboys. It's a package that most will see through and still enjoy. Stash it with your other guilty pleasures. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



Out
October 24
File Under
Accessible and angry
R.I.Y.L.
SR-71, Waterdog, Blink-182

A3

La Peste *Columbia*

The Brixton-based collective A3 delivers such a trippy, sensuous rush of techno-country blues that it's hard to take the agit-prop of their press material too seriously. After all, this is the group that provided the hit theme for *The Sopranos*, "Woke Up This Morning." *La Peste*, the follow-up to their 1997 debut, *Exile On Coldharbour Lane*, continues to provide some very fancy cheap thrills indeed. The opening, "Too Sick To Pray," is the logical successor to "Woke Up This Morning," from its whooshy synth and country-plucked guitar opening through its name-checking of Hank Williams, trip-hoppy beats, positively irresistible gospel chorus hook, and into the final fade of a B3 soul organ. Singer Rob Spragg's raspy white-blues-preacher delivery is another calling card. When he sings "Don't call a doctor/ I'm gonna get better/ Don't run for the priest/ I'm gonna find some faith," he's tapping into the motherlode of rock's imagery of romantic dissipation. Nothing goes better with those boogie-rock riffs than a steaming heap of existential dread. The cover of "Hotel California" should be a very big hint—that and A3 originals like "Cocaine (Killed My Community)" would be great anti-drug messages if they weren't so seductively narcotic. It's like saying *The Sopranos* is anti-Mafia, which it sort of is. >>>JON GARELICK



Out
October 24
File Under
Techno-blooze preacher rock
R.I.Y.L.
The Sopranos theme,
R.L. Burnside, the Gun Club,
"Layla"

ADD N TO (X)

Add Insult To Injury *Mute*

Add N To (X) are a cheeky bunch, playing with their vintage analog synths and writing electronic pop so laden with winks it appears to never have a clear view. It's a formula that's worked for them before; their last two albums played like soundtracks to a J.G. Ballard comedy (one can dream, no?)—firm, scratchy and titillating. Nevertheless, they've been hard-pressed to shed their ironic veil. Although "Plug Me In," *Add Insult To Injury*'s sex-obsessed first single, shimmies like the best vintage electro-pop, replete with snipped-and-juggled vocals, it still smacks of art-school chicanery (especially with its ironic porn-verité video featuring hipster lesbians exploring the intersections of sex and technology). It's nowhere near as vibrant as "Metal Fingers In My Body," from 1999's *Avant Hard*, which conveyed computer lust with Krautronic authority. Here, the sentiment is far more processed, delivered to full-fill expectations. Elsewhere, the group's winks get less interesting: "Brothel Charge" rips off the screeching stabs of the Beastie Boys' "Sabotage." On "The Regent Is Dead," the 16-minute closing track, an utterly British funeral march is delivered with synth twiddles, mock bagpipes and disinterested vocoder-heavy vocals. Sure, it's not as reverent as the standard funeral march, but it ain't exactly the Sex Pistols either. >>>JON CARAMANICA



Out
October 17
File Under
Mechanical Animals
R.I.Y.L.
Devo, Les Rythmes Digitales,
Gary Numan

AMEN

We Have Come For Your Parents *Virgin*

The latest trends in metal may suggest that combining razor-sharp guitars, hip-hop rhythms and rap wordplay is the new standard for commercial success. But England's Amen are happier with a more old-school approach that leaves hip-hop to the rappers and zeroes in on raging, art-punk guitars, drugged out glam-rock hooks and nods to young and old vets alike, including Fugazi, Rollins, Helmet, Warrior Soul, the Stooges, Dead Boys and the Sex Pistols. *We Have Come For Your Parents*, produced by Korn/Limp Bizkit studio wiz Ross Robinson, finds the band focusing all those influences into a powerful metallic assault—it would be selling the band short to merely call this metal or punk. Singer Casey Chaos spews out lyrics that are seething with enough anger ("Get up and set fire to your church" from the song "Justified") to match Marilyn Manson's nihilist antics. More often than not (see "The Waiting" and "In Your Suit") he comes off as nothing less than a deranged psycho-villain from some forgotten film noir. And he gets plenty of support from axe dudes Mayo and Fig, whose regular guitar heroics make Amen a less angular, more headbangable version of Slipknot. >>>MARTIN POPOFF



Out
October 31
File Under
Chaos punk
R.I.Y.L.
Dope, Glassjaw,
Guns N' Roses

THE ANANDA PROJECT

Release *King Street-Nile Grooves*

Something happens to club hags when they hit 35: They forsake the pill-fueled house-music all-nighters for too many weak martinis, a bit of cocaine and a more "sophisticated" sound—namely jazzy, whooshy house with vaguely Latin-flavored rhythms and zero basslines. Blasé and decidedly unsexy, this failed cultural simulacrum has little to do with dirty ass-shaking or feelin' the funk. It is for this reason precisely that the Ananda Project stands vividly apart from the rest. On its full-length debut, producer Chris Brann (of the Atlanta-based Wamdue Kids, Wamdue Project and P'taah) perfects the marriage of Latin and Brazilian syncopation with traditional house components: gospel and R&B vocals, thick four-on-the-floor beats and enough bass to burn the roof down. The music is real, fastidiously crafted with warm, bittersweet analog melodies and just the right amount of live percussion. Tempos range from the slower, sensual "Bahia" to more pumping dance-floor diva tracks like "Falling For You" and the album's centerpiece, "Cascades Of Color." Brann spent two years working on this album, and it shows: These cuts aren't disposable club fodder, they're tracks sophisticated enough to keep you going when the pills run out. >>>AMANDA NOWINSKI



Out

November 1

File Under

A house in the Latin Quarter

R.I.Y.L.

Kerri Chandler, Joe Claussell

BARE JR.

Brainwasher *Immortal-Virgin*

Bobby Bare Jr. is the son of one of the hardest working men in showbiz, country star Bobby Bare, but his namesake band's second album is a paean to slackerdom. *Brainwasher's* string-and-piano overture is so goofy that it does justice to the shenanigans to come. When Bare isn't describing white-trash characters like a lecherous boss who makes fun of him for having green hair and a mean woman who forsakes Jesus for cable television, he's penning twisted love songs, like "If You Choose Me" ("If you choose me over him... I'll shelve my records and stay really clean") and "Dog" ("I wish I was your dog/ Because you treat him better"). Garage-rock power chords and metallic crunch are offset by Bare's raw, melodic vocals and humorous lyrics, but the band's secret weapon is Tracy Hackney's electrified dulcimer, which can project alt-country melancholy ("Gasoline Listerine") or sound downright evil ("God"). *Brainwasher* is more of an exercise in mid-tempo pummeling than Bare Jr.'s raucous debut, *Boo-tay*, but the band makes up for it with the hardtwangin', sloppy sing-along "Why Do I Need A Job," an anthem for musician layabouts everywhere ("My girlfriend is a stripper in Abilene/ She likes me to stay home and watch TV" and "We play too loud/ There's never a crowd"). >>>MEREDITH OCHS



Out

January 24

File Under

Country rawk

R.I.Y.L.

Black Crowes,

the Replacements,

Steve Earle

THE BEAUTIFUL SOUTH

Painting It Red *Ark 21*

The Beautiful South's brand of impure pop seems based on the idea that the band doesn't need any new ideas, they just have to remember how the old ones work. But they've perfected that concept to the point where they can continue to churn out appealingly curdled songs until their knack for variations starts to fade. *Painting It Red* finds them in fine fettle, mixing pop and soul clichés of yore to misdirect our attention, dipping into the universal language of disposable product while their lyrics remain literate and sometimes bitter reminders of their eternal outsider status. Unfortunately, this very blend, which has made them chart-toppers in their native UK, will probably keep them a cult item here; class-conscious, nimble ironists are a hard sell in the US, especially when they come from a foreign context. Meanwhile, *Red* hits some signature heights: a ballad which steers a course between loopy and heartfelt ("The River"); a good-natured put-down draped in the tinny insincerity of '60s pop ("Til You Can't Tuck It In"); and a not-so-good-natured love song that turns vicious at the last minute ("Closer Than Most"). Even when the lyrical discontent starts to sound rote, the songs (all 17 of them, all by vocalist Paul Heaton and guitarist David Rotheray) still glide along by dint of their well tended-to melodies, insidious hooks, and groovy textures, abetted by keyboardist Damon Butcher and the band's sorely underused femme singer Jacqui Abbott. >>>RICHARD C. WALLS



Out

October 31

File Under

They don't mean Georgia

R.I.Y.L.

The Housemartins,

Elvis Costello with

Burt Bacharach, Squeeze

BIKERIDE

Summer Winners, Summer Losers

Hidden Agenda

Satellite photos from high above California have revealed a strange and wonderful new talent with the unlikely, Scorsese-character-like name of Tony Carbone. As leader of the unwieldy Bikeride collective, Carbone's assembled the latest in a line of uncategorizable Golden State pop masterpieces. Employing elements of country, lounge, spaghetti Western and space-rock, with added orchestral flourishes and sweet, pithy lyrics ("I got skinny 'cause she broke my heart"), Bikeride cruises through 19 songs and as many styles in the course of an album. As the title suggests, the theme is summer, and nearly half the tracks settle in the middle months, rejoicing in the sun's bright glare and lamenting the vicissitudes of romance that the season induces. Carbone's scope is wide. He's straight-up reverent on the aptly named "Carl Wilson Suite," the carefree "Country Driving" and the wonderfully whimsical "A Summer Song," which plucks out a singsong melody on acoustic guitar. And he's decidedly more complex elsewhere, crooning country-style about how his "baby's got the nicest butt" on "Fine And Dandy," evoking Bacharach on "Continental Divide," and straying into a punkier punch-with-a-wink reminiscent of Thinking Fellers Union Local 282 on "You Stepped On My Guitar." *Summer Winners* merely collects previously released (though rare) material from 10-inches, Japanese B-sides, and the like—surprising given the gently cohesive thread that holds it together. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



Out

December 5

File Under

Country post-punk diva rock

R.I.Y.L.

Jim-Bob Joe's Country

HoDown, Willie Nelson,

Neko Case

R.L. BURNSIDE Wish I Was In Heaven Sitting Down

Fat Possum

It's no shock that R.L. Burnside's latest is a great blues album—he's been the leading practitioner of the Mississippi hill country's hypnotic one-chord stomp for two decades. The twist is that it's also a pretty fair trip-hop record. Burnside's no stranger to mixing electronic beats with blues; that was the text of 1998's *Come On In*, which teamed the 73-year-old ex-farmer with Beck's producer Tom Rothrock and earned a radio hit with "It's Bad You Know." But that was more project than album—a forced gene-splice that used old recordings to make a new monster. This time Burnside and his collaborators worked from the ground up, embracing the psychedelic pull of the groove and twisted sonics while honoring the spiritual core of blues. So we hear plenty of Burnside's worldly voice, recorded by producers John Porter and Andy Kaulkin with great delicacy and expression, telling stories ripped from the bitterest parts of his life. There's also lots of funny shit, because R.L. is a witty raconteur. What we don't hear is his guitar. But L.A. hotshots Smokey Hormel and Rick Holmstrom and R.L.'s sidekick Kenny Brown blend tradition with trippy, bone-cutting slide and Beck's DJ Swamp does the same with his scratching. Think of this as a successful triple-bypass for a dangerously moribund genre. Maybe the blues really will never die. >>>TED DROZDOWSKI



Out
October 24
File Under
Mississippi burning
R.I.Y.L.
Junior Kimbrough, Beck,
Othar Turner

DON BYRON A Fine Line: Arias & Lieder

Blue Note

Downtown New York renegade jazzman Don Byron has long argued that music is "objective": It doesn't care who's playing it. That's why he's been able to cross genres with authority, melding klezmer, jazz, classical and urban-funk with spoken word. On *A Fine Line: Arias & Lieder*, the clarinetist/composer ventures some of his most daring juxtapositions yet. Ornette Coleman's "Check Up" leads to Robert Schumann's "Zwielicht," to Leonard Bernstein's "Glitter And Be Gay" (from *Candide*) and so on, right through Roy Orbison's dramatic "aria," "It's Over," and the Four Tops' "Reach Out (I'll Be There)." Byron sustains musical and emotional unity without sacrificing the pieces' oddball differences. He does it through a great ear for segues and restricted instrumentation: his own clarinet and bass clarinet with Uri Caine's piano (sometimes in some wonderfully affecting duets, like Byron's own "Basquiat"), plus bass and drums with a mix of voices (including Cassandra Wilson, perfectly cast in Sondheim's "The Ladies Who Lunch"). Post-modern experiments like this one are often knocked for being tongue-in-cheek, but Byron's comedy is too grand for that—when soprano Patricia O'Callaghan takes off on Bernstein's coloratura flights backed by the band's hard jazz swing, it's musical comedy suffused with sweet melancholy. >>>JON GARELICK



Out
November 7
File Under
Uncompromising
juxtapositions
R.I.Y.L.
Uri Caine, Dave Douglas,
Bill Frisell

CIRCLE

Pori Feidspar

Progressive rock is hardly fashionable right now, but that's mostly because the virtues of its original '70s incarnation (instrumental power and control, complicated structures, refusal to pander) were outweighed by its excesses (conceptual pretentiousness, meaningless noodling, facial hair). The long-running Finnish group Circle, which appears as a six-piece with guests on this 1997 recording, is unabashedly prog: extended instrumental jams are its meat and potatoes, and the best piece here, "Vesitorni/Kaupunginsairaalaa," hammers and scratches away at the defenses of a single chord in dizzyingly syncopated 10/16 time for eight minutes. There's even a foofy analog synth doing the WEE-ooo-WEE-ooo thing. Circle's modern innovation is its ruthless all-business attitude: It builds its pieces from the rhythm up, laying in the sonic bonuses (sax, xylophone, strings, even a voice or two) only where they make the beat sound harder. The instrumental parts are usually in separate orbits, crossing paths like the components of a mobile, but the band never shows off. They'd rather ratchet than noodle, and they'd rather lurk than parade. Pori is inconsistent—the slow tracks know where they're going, but take too long to get there, and a couple of quasi-ambient interludes get pretty dull. When Circle is on, though, nobody flies the prog flag more efficiently. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



Out
September 12
File Under
Prog-rock, stripped down
and pounding
R.I.Y.L.
'70s King Crimson,
Faust, Tortoise

DAKOTA SUITE

Signal Hill Badman

Although sadcore—slo-fi, mope rock, whatever appellation you prefer—is a slippery genre able to incorporate endless varieties of ennui, at its musical core is a tradition as solid as the Delta blues: You must seek to wrest beauty from suffering and do so as slowly as humanly possible. Successful adherents to the style possess a secret weapon in the form of a mesmerizing singer (Red House Painters), an adept lyricist (Mark Eitzel), or a delicate collective musicianship with a strong sense of melancholy (Ida). Without a single dominant talent, the chords lose shape and words read like a sad teenager's diary. West Yorkshire, England's *Dakota Suite*, the mastermind of songwriter Chris Hooson and former Spaceman 3 collaborator Richard Formby, occasionally uses a tasteful variety of instruments—piano, cello, violin, trumpet—to reinforce their basic acoustic attack. At times ("Clean Linen Sheets," the instrumental "I Turned Away So That I Might Not See") they achieve the heightened reality they seek. However, the artless lyrics ("Will you blind me/ So that I can't see/ The pain in your eyes/ And when we know/ Will you burn/ Burn me down" is but one of many examples) delivered in a voice best described as highly sedated, generally do little more than recreate the suffocating torpor the songs' lyrics suggest. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



Out
November 14
File Under
Slow-rock lament
R.I.Y.L.
Red House Painters, Low,
Black Heart Procession

DELAROSA & ASORAAgony *Schematic*

Don't be fooled by the anguished title of Scott Herren's latest work—it's simply a reflection of his mischievous sense of humor. Much like last year's misleadingly named *Folk Songs For Trains, Trees And Honey* (which he released under the moniker Savath+Savalas and which featured neither acoustic guitars nor Joan Baez covers and instead focused on intertwining organic melodies with sensual keyboards), *Agony* isn't an agonizing album. There are certainly moments of challenging textural uncertainty, but they are outweighed by an overwhelming sense of fragile beauty. Herren's songs as Delarosa & Asora balance the complex dissonant backdrops and glitch-ridden beats of the intelligent dance-music scene with his musical virtuosity. Nowhere is this more evident than on the opening track, "Wooden Toe," which begins with a chaotic rhythmic lattice (feedback, clicking pen caps, rushing water, etc.) before refining it with melodic instrumentation that pulls it out of the bedlam. The same feel is achieved with "Paz Suite 1," as a harmonic female vocal line—frayed edges and all—imbues the song with a pastoral innocence. Even when Herren starts bordering on difficult listening as on the album-ending "Elodie 2," there's still a glimmer of warmth felt beneath the cold shadows. >>>KURI KONDRAK



Out

November 30

File Under

Intelli-bent dance music

R.I.Y.L.

Boards Of Canada,

Funkstörung, Tortoise

DELTRON 3030

Deltron 3030 75 Ark

It's hard not to compare Dan "The Automator" Nakamura's most recent high-profile project, *Deltron 3030*, to his 1996 *Dr. Octagon* collaboration with Kool Keith and DJ Q-Bert. Automator's second rap supergroup also snags a spacey, cultish MC (Del Tha Funkee Homosapien), a wunderkind DJ (Kid Koala), and a kitschy concept (three hip-hop heads traveling through a post-apocalyptic, post-World War IV universe), except the results aren't quite as spectacular this time. When the *Deltron* crew nails the tone right—a goofy hip-hop head-trip through a distant Orwellian galaxy—they have more personality than 95 percent of underground hip-hop's hectoring homeboys. Fronting a production style that's best described as *Star Trek*-baroque meets crate-digger, Automator turns out a perfect backdrop for Del's casually brilliant, hyper-articulate, singsong flow. But Del has never been an easy MC to pin down, and by *Deltron 3030*'s halfway mark he sounds hemmed-in by the thematic construct; there's only so many paranoid android, sci-fi cyborg rhymes that one MC can spit without sounding bored—unless you're Kool Keith. It's not that *Deltron 3030* is a bad album, it's just a half-baked, mostly stoned idea that never reaches its full potential. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN



Out

October 17

File Under

Sci-fi hip-hop

R.I.Y.L.

Del Tha Funkee Homosapien,

Handsome Boy Modeling School,

Dr. Octagon



Once again, with several intriguing collaborators (Amampondo, Alex Paterson of Orb, and Sref Howeck), Ben Watkins takes Juno Reactor to the farthest extremes in electronic music. The new CD *Shango* and is a perfect blend of trance and techno making the album a milestone trip.

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World Radio History

DICE RAW

Reclaiming The Dead MCA

Dice Raw began apprenticing in the Philly Roots empire long before he even had a driver's license. Taking all of the best Roots ingredients—earnest, strong-headed lyrics, no-nonsense boom-bap tracks and a lack of typical rap machismo—Dice details his striving journey as a real MC. Buoyed by an urgent-yet-unwavering delivery, the album's most wholly realized cut is the strutting, head-nodding "Lockdown" (with guests Black Thought and Steve of the Roots), where Dice portrays major-label MCs as inmates. (As he explains: "They got us locked down/ In a cell/ Under the ground/ Trying to push for a mainstream sound.") His raps aren't all idealistic rabble-rousing: On the string-laden "5 Stages Of Death" and "Lava" he puts on his "thug-colored glasses," describing ghetto pain with well-spoken, empathetic tales. He gets fresh for the dancefloor, too, on the bouncy "Thin Line (Between Raw And Jiggy)" again featuring the Roots' Black Thought, as well as Malik. The Heat production team creates a less Rhodes-keyboard-drenched but still decidedly Roots-ish mix of groovers and thumpers. Not every cut grabs your ears long enough to hear Dice out, but it's a very strong debut that makes a big sound against the gangsta Tower Of Babel. >>>BRIAN COLEMAN



Out

October 24

File Under

The Roots' new branch

R.I.Y.L.

The Roots, Dilated Peoples, A Tribe Called Quest

EUPHONE

Hashin' It Out Jade Tree

There's something to be said for *small* music. When Ryan Rapsys split from Heroic Doses five years ago to begin noodling on his own, he'd sit on stage surrounded by drums, a sequencer and an old keyboard, a man at one with his sound. The two solo records he did as Euphone were eclectic but coherent—studied funk grooves with synths spread over the top like butter on a dinner roll. Nick Macri joined up two years ago, adding bass and saxophone to Rapsys' honed formula. While the two clearly have an easy rapport, their style as a duo is more scattershot. On this, their second collaborative album, they shift gears constantly. "Press On" is thick with rockabilly guitar, as is "Bad Ascending," which marries its swing roots with a Latin two-step groove. "Do You Up" opens with Macri and guest LeRoy Bach on sad saxes, the latter's baritone complementing Macri's alto gravitas. But "Where's The B?" pushes Euphone back to funky territory with its quick, abrupt Kool & The Gang guitars, and "Nick Is Ryan" keeps them there with a strutting bassline and gently-tapped cymbals. Individually, each Euphone style compels, but with so many collected together, *Hashin' It Out* appears to be just that. >>>JON CARAMANICA



Out

October 31

File Under

Small-scale indie swing-funk

R.I.Y.L.

The Sea And Cake, Slint, Heroic Doses

EVERCLEAR

Songs From An American Movie, Vol. Two: Good Time For A Bad Attitude

Capitol

It's hard to tell whether Everclear front-man Art Alexakis is poking fun at himself or his fans in "Rock Star," a big, ballsy, guitar-driven anti-anthem from the second installment of his *Songs From An American Movie* project. The song finds him sarcastically sneering, "I want to tell the little people they can kiss my ass/ ...I want to make those girls on *The Real World* fantasize about me." Maybe, in a sobering post-divorce moment, he simply saw something in himself that he didn't like: As he reflects wistfully in the similarly hard-hitting next track, "Short Blonde Hair," "All I ever wanted to do was to play guitar in a rock 'n' roll band." *Good Time For A Bad Attitude* is a return to rawking form for Everclear after the string-embellished softer stuff of *Vol. One*, and it's the most painfully revealing collection of songs this confessional rocker's ever committed to album. Whether he's playing the part of the battered woman—a risky move for a guy whose track record isn't exactly clean in that regard—in the otherwise pleasantly jangling "Overwhelm" ("I don't want to be your punching bag/ Your complacent little princess"), or just wondering how he managed to mess things up so bad, he's careful to include just enough detail to send a chill of recognition through anyone who's ever made their own mess of things—and that's a pretty broad demographic. >>>MATT ASHARE



Out

November 21

File Under

Confessional rawk

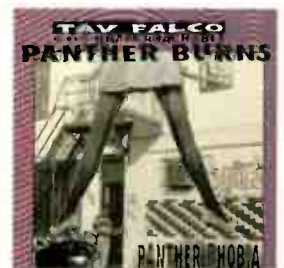
R.I.Y.L.

Soul Asylum, Creed, Nirvana

TAV FALCO & THE UNAPPROACHABLE PANTHER BURNS

Panther Phobia In The Red

Part raw rockabilly, part low-down, dirty blues and part kitschy performance art, Tav Falco And The Panther Burns have spent the last two decades carving out the hippest niche in Americana. Since their recording debut in 1980, which featured Memphis music legends Alex Chilton and Jim Dickinson, Falco and his motley crew have helped revive the careers of several American treasures (guitar granny Cordell Jackson, bluesman R.L. Burnside, and rockabilly picker Charlie Feathers) both by playing with them and playing their songs, exposing a new generation to the dark underbelly of roots music. Recorded live at Memphis's Easley Studios by Jeffrey Evans (Gibson Bros., '68 Comeback), *Panther Phobia* continues the band's tradition of choosing rare old blues, hillbilly and rockabilly covers and playing them in the wicked, primal way they were intended to be played. At the core of the Panther Burns' sick and shaky sound is hypnotic North Mississippi-style guitar riffing, soaked in reverb and driven by rickety drums. Snaky slide guitar slithers across Jesse Mae Hemphill's "Streamline Train," an erratic beat and swampy vamp give a sinister air to blues mandolinist James "Yank" Rachell's "Mellow Peaches," and Falco writhes like a madman on Howlin' Wolf's "Going Home," his warbly squall captured by the live setting. >>>MEREDITH OCHS



Out

October 30

File Under

Psychobilly blues

R.I.Y.L.

The Gories, the Cramps, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion



GODSPEED YOU BLACK EMPEROR!

Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas To Heaven *Krudy*

In concert, the members of Godspeed You Black Emperor! appear unperturbed, almost diffident. Strolling onstage one by one, they break into glorious cacophony almost by accident—feedbacky drones, guitar crashes, and marching drums collaborating to an effect that is as often visceral as contemplative. On record, they somehow achieve an equivalent anti-energy. *Lift Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas To Heaven* is Godspeed's third, and as with their earlier work, the nine-piece outfit creates majestic musical scenery. At their tempered best, they pair found voices (often bemoaning human dislocation) with groaning strings or, as at the album's end, they play with silence, imagining the sound of space collapsing and reforming itself. Brain candy notwithstanding, Godspeed is better when they shun the meditative and head for the rock. When they do, their sound manages to encompass destruction and redemption all at once. Oddly, the album's most engaging moments are near its outset; the opening bars strike notes of Olympian triumph, then give way to tense rumbles that suggest flesh being pulled apart. Godspeed's air of collapse is tempered only by occasional interludes of speed and energy, but never levity. Accordingly, *Lift Your Skinny Fists* is at its strongest when the sound is squeezed and the power sucked completely dry. >>>JON CARAMANICA



Out

October 23

File Under

Symphonic future-rock cacophony

R.I.Y.L.

Sonic Youth, Glenn Branca,
Gastr Del Sol

HIGH LLAMAS

Buzzle Bee *Drag City*

The High Llamas have settled into a pleasant groove over the past several years, with bandleader Sean O'Hagan sculpting intricate pop soundscapes shaped by tinkling and buzzing synths, billowy harmonies and sprinklings of vibes and marimbas—a mélange both coolly retro and brightly futuristic. But for all his attention to craft, sometimes his melodies and song structures don't quite hold up. The most memorable facet of *Buzzle Bee*, the band's laid-back seventh album, is its recurrent use of "la-la-la" vocals, which color most of the vocal tracks. The album opens with the welcoming, but not overly compelling "The Passing Bell," which finds O'Hagan telling a story atop Brazilian-accented acoustic guitar, a gently pulsing bassline and the feathery pillow of a female backup chorus (Stereolab's Mary Hansen is a frequent contributor here). The Llamas pick up their step with "Get Into The Galley Shop," which shimmies down "Penny Lane," the Broadcast-reminiscent "Tambourine Day" and "New Broadway," which flaunts O'Hagan's studio panache. Elsewhere, the band intersperses instrumental tracks that work more as long, lazy bridges than as stand-alone pieces, with nifty tech-y sounds that reinforce O'Hagan and Co.'s standing as Stereolab compatriots. The groovy, *Pet Sounds*-for-the-future vibe never lets up, but it would be nice if O'Hagan could come up with stronger hooks to hang it on. >>>LYDIA VANDERLOO

HIGH LLAMAS • BUZZLE BEE



Out

October 31

File Under

Retro-futurist wallpaper

R.I.Y.L.

Stereolab, the Sea And Cake,
Broadcast

JOE JACKSON

Night And Day II *Sony Classical*

Like Elvis Costello, Joe Jackson has evolved from angry young punk to bitter, middle-aged highbrow. Both have grown discontented with writing sophisticated misanthropic pop gems, dabbled in classical composing and returned occasionally to pop, but on their own terms. Here, Jackson offers a sequel to his most popular record, 1982's *Night And Day*, by composing a suite of songs about New York City, built around echoes of the cosmopolitan, chiming cabaret piano chords that drove the original album and its hit, "Stepping Out." While Jackson seems fascinated by some of the wackos that populate the Big Apple ("Stranger Than You"), he sees most New Yorkers as lonely characters. No wonder the cynical Jackson feels at home ("I think I'll stay," he concludes on the closing track). He hands over some songs to demographically apt singers: "Why," about a wailing immigrant, goes to wailing Iranian songstress Sussan Deyhim; "Glamour And Pain," about a resentful drag queen, goes to drag queen Dale DeVere; and "Love Got Lost," about a fading grande dame, goes to Marianne Faithfull. It's more like a sequel to Jackson's 1986 *Big World*—exquisitely tuneful, meticulously crafted, and about as much fun as social studies homework. >>>GARY SUSMAN



Out

October 24

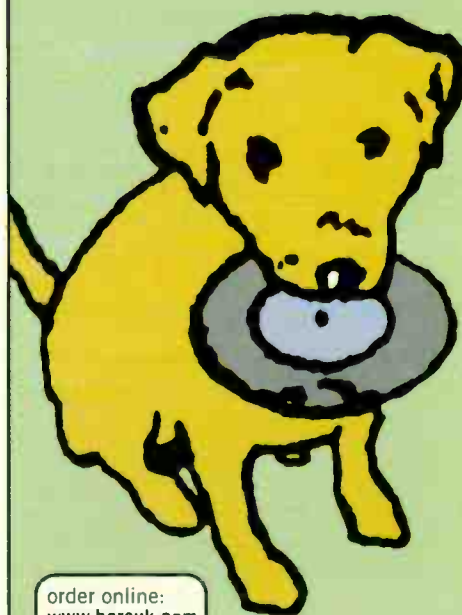
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Stepping out again

R.I.Y.L.

Elvis Costello, Graham Parker

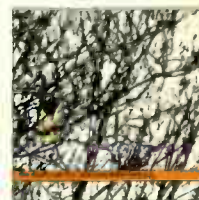
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THE CINEMATIC ORCHESTRA

Remixes 1998-2000 *Ninja Tune*

FLANGER

Midnight Sound *Various-Ninja Tune*

Long after the heyday of acid jazz, electronic music and jazz have picked up their on-again-off-again relationship, though they've taken a decidedly more serious path this time around. After all, now that Medeski Martin & Wood and Isotope 217 have delved into the sounds of DJ culture, the bar has been raised for all involved. New discs from Ninja Tune knob-twiddlers the Cinematic Orchestra and Flanger jump into the fray with headphone music that stays away from the mistakes of past jazz/DJ pairings—obvious Blue Note samples, wack rappers, cut-rate sax work—to stake out a piece of the cross-genre pie.

On the Cinematic Orchestra's second album, group mastermind J. Swinscoe remixes a varied collection of artists—Afro-house act Faze Action, jungle don DJ Krust and others—but his single-minded electro-jazz vision muscled them into a homogeneous sound. Drawing equally from Lalo Schifrin's epic orchestrations, ECM's Nordic-jazz cool, Elvin Jones's polyrhythmic drive and Aphex Twin's somber ambience, Swinscoe sculpts the material into gently drifting downtempo workouts that sound like an idyllic and minimalist take on '60s modal jazz. Technology adds a utopian sheen to the proceedings, while Swinscoe's hyper-detailed drum programming plies and plays with the underpinning groove. At best, Swinscoe's obsessive arrangements lead to moments of breathtaking beauty. The micro-managed combination of gently probing piano chords, cyclical marimba lines and acoustic bass throb on "Panoramica" manages to suspend time for a few minutes. But sometimes the music sounds too studied and safe. Swinscoe may want to throw away his well-worn copy of *Kind Of Blue* and learn to make some mistakes.

Where the Cinematic Orchestra thrives off spotless arrangements, Flanger's *Midnight Sound* feels more like a loose blowing session. The project brings together the well-known German electronic artists Burnt Friedmann and Atom Heart, and their second Ninja Tune disc together sounds like a light-hearted, Latin-tinged version of Squarepusher's *Music Is Rotted One Note*, right down to the Fender Rhodes vamps and spazzy drum overload. Recorded in Chile, *Midnight Sound* combines oblique improv lines and sharp harmonic clusters with bold laptop edits that transform the most basic track into a roller-coaster ride. Snare hits sizzle and burst; digital burn tears a hole in the ether; funk grooves flip-flop into salsa workouts; and burnished bass boom becomes freaky acid squelch. Like a true jazz group, Heart and Friedmann never fall into rhythmic stasis; their drum-keyboard interplay betrays a restless improvisational intelligence. And despite a limp cover of Miles Davis's "So What," *Midnight Sound* succeeds by swallowing the spirit of the unexpected. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN



Out
November 14
File Under
Headphone jazz
R.I.Y.L.

Aphex Twin, *Isotope 217*,
Miles Davis



Out
October 31
File Under
Electro-jazz
R.I.Y.L.

Squarepusher, Amon Tobin,
Miles Davis

JOAN OF ARC

The Gap *Jade Tree*

You can't sing along with a Joan Of Arc song. And any trace of the sustained compositions that appeared on this unorthodox band's first few albums has been sucked into one of the black holes that now pock their highly experimental songs. One bandmember's instrument is now listed as "computer." *The Gap* exists as much as it doesn't exist, which is to say that vocalist Tim Kinsellas and his possibly related acoustic-guitar foil Mike Kinsella perform with a momentum that's often interrupted, twisted or halted abruptly. Risky business to be sure, but far from an art-project misstep. In fact, *The Gap's* free jazz-via-indie rock excursions coalesce to create a phenomenal sense of tension. "As Black Pants Make Cat Hairs Appear" takes nearly eight minutes to unfold, with an intro of guitar and noise—including what sounds like glass bottles being dumped into a full recycling bin—before twitching and transforming itself into a lengthy folk-pop ditty (with the Spinanes' Rebecca Gates on harmonies). It's one of many pleasures on a disc rich with ideas, though it's really not the kind of record that will inspire most people to crank up the car stereo and drum along on the steering wheel. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



Out
October 3
File Under
Avant-rock collages
R.I.Y.L.

Jim O'Rourke,
the Sea And Cake,
Storm And Stress

HERMAN JOLLY

Mad Cowboy Disease *Fortune*

Homicide. Suicide. Cat-icide. And bottles strewn everywhere. Herman Jolly's view of life would seem as bleak as that of Nicolas Cage's character in *Leaving Las Vegas* if it weren't for the singer/songwriter's twisted sense of humor, quirky voice and hapless, effortless charm. Jolly, who led Portland's Sunset Valley through two releases, sounds like a younger, rustier and more ironic Neil Young. His sturdy folk-rock tunes are driven by acoustic guitars and noodling, occasionally down-tuned electrics that wind around each other in brief, bumpy solo flights. Sometimes Jolly overreaches with his strained, cracked falsetto, but when he's singing within his range, his tone is appealingly lazy and conversational. The most striking aspect of *Mad Cowboy Disease*, though, is his dazzlingly evocative, alternately deep and shallow songwriting. On the opening "Crooked Vein," he threatens to slash a vein that "Carries cold blood to my crooked heart/ Down my body through my liver part/ Which alcohol has been tearing apart." It would be beyond tragic, if not for that "liver part." Jolly can also paint a brilliant, tragedy-less picture with just a few words, as he does on "Christmas Yet," but most times, things just end badly. >>>BILL KISLIUK



Out
October 10
File Under
Alone with a guitar and a bottle
R.I.Y.L.

Fred Eaglesmith, Neil Young,
Grant Lee Buffalo

THE JULIANA THEORY

Emotion Is Dead Tooth & Nail

While the title of this Pennsylvania rock quintet's second full-length might appear more suited for the stark electronic desert of a Plastikman album, *Emotion Is Dead* is a nicely ironic name when compared to the gushing themes of love, loss, isolation and alienation that fill the album's 13 tracks. Lyrics like "Dad, your boy is about to fall/ He walks the razor's edge/ He's on the brink of fading out/ He's at his bitter end" make it clear that emotion's alive and well in singer Brett Detar. Most of these songs follow the soft-verse-into-loud-chorus arc, as on "Into The Dark" and "Don't Push Love Away." But the Juliana Theory's sound is most engaging when some of the gloss is stripped away and a punkier edge is allowed to jut through: Tracks like "To The Tune Of 5,000 Screaming Children" and "If I Told You This Was Killing Me, Would You Stop?" hint at the radio-friendly roughness of bands like Our Lady Peace and Silverchair. The two instrumental pieces on *Emotion* indicate that the Julianas might even aspire to musical endeavors outside the confines of the pop-music spectrum, though they're not exactly successful. If it were possible to subtract the insipid elements from Third Eye Blind and modern Goo Goo Dolls and meld their good parts, *Emotion Is Dead* might be the shiny, cohesive result. >>>TANNER CUSICK



Out

August 29

File Under

Radio-friendly unit-shifters

R.I.Y.L.

Goo Goo Dolls, Silverchair,
Third Eye Blind

KARATE

Unsolved Southern

On *Unsolved's* "The Lived-But-Yet-Named," Karate singer Geoff Farina sounds just a heroin habit away from a career as the next Chet Baker. Check the wispy, light brushstroke of a voice, the notes not so much sung as lightly assayed, hinting at color and depth but leaving the larger part to the imagination. Dig the immaculate guitar tone, tranquil, intimate, implacable, cool in the old sense. Farina's been weeding the D.C.-style indie-rock phrases out of his vocabulary and replacing them with a refined, economical and delicately lyrical jazz-rock fusion. "Sever" and "The Roots And The Ruins" are at least as good an argument for this discredited genre as white guys have come up with since the Steely Dan reunion. Unlike the Chicago Underground Duo or Isotope 217, the emphasis is on actual songs, on stoking a spontaneous enthusiasm and finding new and deeper shadings of the composition to explore. "Words are the worst way to say what I have to say," Farina offers on "This Day Next Year," and as far as lyrics go he is pretty impenetrable; he treats verses like strictly phonetic resonances, favoring echo and repetition and the awkward syncopation of opaque prose that can sound like a mathematical equation. And when *Unsolved* doesn't sound like a hotel-lobby trio variation on the old *Hill Street Blues* TV theme, it's pretty sharp. >>>CARLY CARIOLI



Out

October 23

File Under

Indie jazz odyssey

R.I.Y.L.

Fugazi, Codeine,
the Mercury Program,
Steely Dan

KING CHANGO

The Return Of El Santo Luaka Bop

When King Chango debuted in 1996, its mix of Latin pop, ska, techno, reggae and rap made the group instant leaders in New York's Latin-alternative scene, as well as players in a global wave of Latin rock. Chango's follow-up is an eclectic homage to the masked Mexican wrestling star, *El Santo*. The title track opens like a folksy border *conjunto* with accordion and a bouncy bassline; then rough ragamuffin dub vocals announce an abrupt dive into a raging punk-rock refrain. Nimble, unpredictable mood shifts are this band's stock-in-trade. "Best Dressed Pimp" melds old-school R&B with growly, attitude-drenched Spanish rap. "Brujeria" plays like a Latin-tinged cowboy song. "Finalmente" nods to California pop with breezy vocal harmonies even as the groove sticks to hard Latin clavé. The songwriting is generally tuneful, and some of the singing very sweet, especially "Sin Ti," a deep reggae outing, and the loping, bass-driven "Lil Sister." "Step Me Down" and "I Don't Care" deliver breathless ska, and "What Politicians Say" offers equally breathless techno-reggae. Chango's aggressive diversity allows polished electronic constructions and sweaty band workouts to coexist happily. This is ravenous, rowdy pop giddily blurring the lines between genres. >>>BANNING EYRE



Out

November 14

File Under

Spicy melting-pot pop

R.I.Y.L.

Los Amigos Invisibles,
Naçao Zumbi, Sergeant Garcia

unisex stratosfear

Returning with a startling shift in sound, *Stratosfear* is a spacerock masterpiece exploring the outer reaches of inner space through a series of inter-related songs that represent Unisex's bravest work to date. Highlights are the vocoder-fazed tones of album opener 'Full Force of the Sun', the sneaky drum&bass/jazz array of 'Sidekick & Emo' and the blissed out cosmic fantasy of 'Autopilot', featuring the lush harmonic unison of telescopes, Stephen & Jo.

unisex includes the core members of the telescopes



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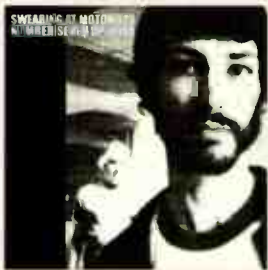
SWEARING AT MOTORISTS
Number Seven Uptown *Secretly Canadian*

Although they may not be as obsessively prolific as their former Guided By Voices bandmate, Robert Pollard (a guy who releases 100-song box sets of unissued demos, for crying out loud), GBV alums Tobin Sprout and Don Thrasher have hardly been victims of writer's block. Even before Sprout officially left the Dayton, Ohio group and moved the fam to Michigan, the guitarist made *Carnival Boy*, a small but stellar solo album that proved he was far more than just a Golden Boy to Pollard's King Shit. *Wrinkled Thoughts* represents the full-length debut from Eyesinweasel, Sprout's "new" band (in fact, both bassist Dan Toohey and drummer John Peterson are veterans of Sprout's pre-GBV '80s outfit, Fig. 4). The difference between this effort and Sprout's three solo discs—not to mention the limited edition Tobin Sprout/Eyesinweasel semi-bootleg of demos and outtakes—is considerable. Unlike the mostly insular nature of Sprout's past projects, Eyesinweasel (which also includes guitarist Nick Kizirnis) sounds like a living and breathing band that's played together for a while—which, of course, they have. That dynamic spark and intuitive interplay is precisely what makes rousing tracks like "Seven And Nine" and "Marriage Incorporated" hum with an effortless, mid-fi grandeur. While not as abstruse as his former partner Pollard, Sprout's no slouch when it comes to wrapping his pixieish voice around a cryptic couplet like "A hundred monkey theory/ An Internet to the weary." Like GBV's best work, these free-associative verbal slogans and, well, "wrinkled thoughts" have a peculiar way of triggering their own systems of meaning.

Swearing At Motorists, a Dayton duo comprised of singer/guitarist Dave Doughman and ex-GBV drummer Don Thrasher, favors a far darker, fractured indie-rock sprawl on their *Number Seven Uptown*. The shambling dissonance of tracks like "Drunk On Monday" and "Bullet" (which even features an ambulance siren wailing out the window) are a far cry from GBV's briskly buzzing pop, although the lo-fi, static-and-hiss vibe that threads through the material recalls that band's early home recordings. Mostly, SAM's songs concern characters whose depression-addled lives are shot through with bleary self-loathing ("Three Wishes") and bleak regret. The high points come when these poor bastards take temporary solace in the fleeting moments of a live rock show ("Calgon Take Me Away"), or run into onetime lovers by accident only to feel a rekindled—but ultimately fruitless—joy ("Flying Pizza," which gets two treatments here). Unlike, say, Elliott Smith's impeccably crafted melancholia, there's nothing remotely pretty about Swearing At Motorists' sorrow. This kind of drowning despair is much closer to writer Charles Bukowski's warts-and-all misery. When Doughman sings "I'm out of time" on "Dog With The Lampshade Head," for instance, it's all too easy to believe him. >>>JONATHAN PERRY



Out
October 23
File Under
Son of Guided By Voices
R.I.Y.L.
Guided By Voices,
East River Pipe, Bill Fox



Out
October 23
File Under
Misery and company
R.I.Y.L.
764-HERO, Built To Spill,
Eleventh Dream Day

KREIDLER
Kreidler Mule

There aren't many bands about which it's possible to complain that the drummer keeps time too well, but Kreidler is one of them. Now down to a trio, the band no longer has personnel overlap with To Rococo Rot, but it's audibly part of the same German scene that's also produced projects like Tarwater and Schneider TM. Augmenting its electronics with human-played rhythms, the band's ostensible goal is to recall the first wave of Krautrock—pulsing, droning bands like Can and Neu!—using the new generation of technology. Beneath static little keyboard-and-sample patterns, drummer Thomas Klein maintains a strict beat, and other elements slink brusquely through the mix. Sometimes their chilly attitude pays off: "Mnemorex" troubles guest vocalist Momus to construct a lyric and melody over a single-chord lurch, and he rises to the challenge; the pitch-impaired sample at the center of "Beauties" keeps the band on its toes. Too often, though, Kreidler hits a two-second groove and repeats it with minimal variation for the entire duration of a track—and their grooves don't cut deep enough that repeating them does much good. Besides, the whole point of having live drums is to introduce color and variation to a rhythm, and Klein imitates a drum machine so well that it's almost impossible to tell the difference. >>>DOUGLAS WOLK



Out
November 21
File Under
Synth-tweedling
R.I.Y.L.
Cluster, To Rococo Rot,
Tarwater

LESS THAN JAKE
Borders & Boundaries *Fat Wreck Chords*

Less Than Jake have all but scuttled the ska on this set, with only one of 15 songs showing any trace of that recently out-of-fashion beat. While this marks their return to the indie-label world after a long spell on Capitol, it sounds more produced and more commercial than anything they did for the majors—they even brought in radio specialist Tom Lord-Alge to mix one song. Add in the bigger production and take away the ska, and you get within spitting distance of good old mainstream rock; Less Than Jake didn't get pegged to open a Bon Jovi tour this fall for nothing. The added polish doesn't do any real harm, even if "Gainesville Rock City"—with its pop-friendly vocal and white-soul horns—sounds more like Chicago (the band) than they probably intended. "Hell Looks A Lot Like L.A." is good and snotty, but it doesn't say anything about the Hotel California that the Eagles didn't. Less Than Jake still sounds best when not really trying: The in-joke "Pete Jackson Is Getting Married" should strike a chord with anyone who loved the Replacements' "Tommy Gets His Tonsils Out." And "1989," which ponders their 10 years as a band, makes a nice break from the album's party-time feel. >>>BRETT MILANO



Out
October 24
File Under
Mainstream ex-ska punks
R.I.Y.L.
The Offspring, NOFX,
the Mighty Mighty Bosstones

THE LIMESTurn Your Lights Off *Deluxe*

Maybe they're just compensating for their home state's reputation for stripped-down roots music, but Texas's the Limes build their edgy pop as if they're erecting a wall of sound. The hooks come early and often, the singing's as earnest as anything from the mid-'90s alt-rock heyday and the rhythmic tug is as persistent as the grasp of a zealous five-year-old in a toy store. The Limes obviously like rock, and they play it well. Songs such as the arena-ready "Solid State" and the buzzing, frenetic "Calculator" suggest that vocalist/guitarists Joey Shanks and Carter Albrecht spent more time studying up on Cheap Trick than on Willie Nelson, though a sludgy, serviceable cover of the Smiths' "London" hints that they're familiar with a wider range of material, as well. The gliding, vicious "The Rock" bridges the gap between '70s album-oriented rock and '80s college rock, with Joe Walsh-like licks that collide with a propulsion straight out of the Hüsker Dü handbook. "If," meanwhile, finds the Limes unable to escape their own roots, with a bluesy lead and Shanks's most convincing vocal performance. Given that the remaining tracks don't distinguish themselves as convincingly, perhaps these boys should've stuck closer to home for inspiration. Remember, Buddy Holly came from Texas, too. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



Out

November 6

File Under

Power-pop tacklebox

R.I.Y.L.

Buffalo Tom, Sloan, Heatmiser

MASTERS OF ILLUSION

Kutmasta Kurt Presents Masters Of Illusion

Threshold

Kool Keith is nothing if not prolific, having released five albums under various guises over the last two years. Not that they've all been very good. One-dimensional concepts have left Keith either hating record companies (*Black Elvis/Lost In Space*), ironic to the point of delusion (*Dr. Doom*) or sexually juvenile (*Erotic Man*). Masters Of Illusion, the brainchild of L.A.-based producer Kutmasta Kurt, finds Keith returning to the style of clever word-play, braggadocio and comedic abstraction that marked his classic work with Ultramagnetic MCs. "I waste no time telling you in front of your ugly girlfriend you can't rhyme/ Urinate on your SSL board and your lyric sheet/ Defecate on the hood of your store for leaving your fans butt naked with a box of Pampers in the middle of the street," he fires on "Souped Up." Masters' other rhyming half is Motion Man, a little-known MC whose cartoonish staccato and punctuating wit on songs like "East West Hustlers" compliments Keith's verbosity well. The two are framed by the fluctuating funk of Kutmasta Kurt, whose fortified beats here are fortuitously akin to underground faves Dilated Peoples. Like many of Keith's better efforts (*Dr. Octagon, Sex Styles*) this one's probably a fleeting concept, so best to appreciate it while it lasts. >>>JOSEPH PATEL



Out

December 5

File Under

Kool Keith, use your illusion

R.I.Y.L.

Dr. Octagon, Kool Keith,
Ultramagnetic MCs**MANISHEVITZ**

Rollover Jagjaguwar

Folks who pick up the sophomore set from Manishevitz anticipating another round of dark, folk-tinged fare à la the 1999 debut *Grammar Bell And The All Fall Down* are in for a surprise, albeit a pleasant one. After bandleader Adam Busch pulled up stakes in Charlottesville, Virginia, his body relocated to Chicago but his spirit landed in Southern California circa the mid-'60s. With its sunbursts of brass and chugging Fender Rhodes, the Socialist dance number "Words For The Cause" could pass for an outtake from the *Pet Sounds* box, while the rollicking but irregular gait of "Cold Rubber Band," which closes with a panoramic coda that rivals the High Llamas' best, recalls the uncommon cadences of Love's *Forever Changes*. Although only Busch and lead guitarist Via Nuon remain from the previous line-up, Manishevitz still occasionally taps into its bluesy vibe of yore, as on the melancholy "Go Blind" and the cover "Some Men," a square Salvation Army-style hymn (recast as a more colorful chamber piece for "Reprise") with lyrics from the Church Of The SubGenius liturgy. Busch's hazy, mush-mouthed singing seems at odds with the disc's sunnier arrangements, but like the stark imagery of his impressionist lyrics, the contrast ultimately enhances *Rollover's* bittersweet allure. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY



Out

November 13

File Under

Cloudy with intermittent sunshine

R.I.Y.L.

High Llamas, John Fahey,
Van Dyke Parks**THE MOUNTAIN GOATS**The Coroner's Gambit *Absolutely Kosher*

Some things just make sense: like the fact that John Darnielle, the principal member of the Mountain Goats, records his albums in one-dimensional lo-fi. It's hard to imagine his scratchy, unadorned voice swallowed up in a canyon of Steve Lillywhite echo or close-miked to a fault with one of Rick Rubin's fancy condenser microphones. Or synthesizers? Drum machines? Trip-hop? No, these are quirky songs built on simple, rustic chords and odd lyrical details—the radio playing a hated LeAnn Rimes song, a friend recording herself on a micro-cassette quoting Tolstoy, the downsides of insurance fraud—and their impact relies on the mode of delivery. The hum of the cheap boombox that records these odd ruminations is every bit as integral to the process as the furious guitar strumming that brings to mind an untutored backwoods folkie after three lattes too many. *The Coroner's Gambit*, the eighth Goats album, took an unusually long time—three years—to write and record. Yet the slow-down from the usual rapid-fire release schedule hasn't changed the approach a bit. Darnielle still sounds like a mix of learned raconteur, awful comedian and lovable neighborhood kook—the kind of guy you don't necessarily believe, but who makes life more interesting nonetheless. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



Out

November 14

File Under

Basement tapes

R.I.Y.L.

Palace, Damien Jurado,
Smog, Edith Frost

ORANGER

The Quiet Vibration Land *Amazing Grease*

Oranger has been pretty open about being self-consciously retro. The band's debut featured a song called "Mike Love, Not War," and the title of this disc, *The Quiet Vibration Land*, is a nod to the Who's *Tommy*. The sleepy expansiveness of the disc's opening track, "Sorry Paul," gently unfolds to clear a path for airy and psychedelic vocal harmonies, a simple-but-stately Lennon/McCartney piano figure, guitars that shift from George Harrison-y twang to fuzzy, Pete Townshend-like slashes, drums that run the Ringo Starr-to-Keith Moon spectrum, and a grand outro with tons of tripped-out ambience. Working within the confines of a specific movement in music, studying the textures, hooks and production, can be very insulating, and Oranger doesn't come up with anything here that might distance the band from its shtixties roots. The jangle and thrash of "Stoney Curtis In Reverse" calls to mind retro-paisley '90s bands like Teenage Fanclub, the Posies and Jellyfish, and that's the closest things get to solid pop-rock. Only the experiments in sound sculpture, like the 31 seconds of pretty guitar feedback on "The Quiet Vibration Land Theme VII," hint at an elemental transcendent side that could break this band out of its records-made-by-record-collectors-for-record-collectors cycle. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN



Out

December 19

File Under

B-pluses: Beach Boys, Beatles and Big Star

R.I.Y.L.

The Olivia Tremor Control, Apples In Stereo, Essex Green

PHIFE DAWG

Ventilation: Da LP *Groove Attack*

A Tribe Called Quest may have been "soft," but the hip-hop crew stayed commercially and artistically hard for the better part of a decade by working the same smooth, jazz-inflected moves with concentrated dedication. In comparison, the two post-Quest solo discs are so explosive, it makes you wonder how the Tribe kept their juices pent up for so long. If the metaphor seems crass, it's nothing compared to the frank sex talk that characterizes both Phife Dawg's *Ventilation: Da LP* and Q-Tip's sorely underrated 1999 solo debut. The differences between the two start with that similarity: Whereas Q-Tip remained respectful of the things he coveted, Phife Dawg wants his honeys to "Ben Dova" to show them who's boss. It's a pathology that sadly comes with the rough-and-tumble streets Phife now dedicates himself to above anything (or anyone, as unkind words to Q-Tip suggest). Dropping a string of alliterative rhymes, gleefully pumping up an annoying synth figure or gracefully stomping around a lovely Afropop sample, Phife proves he can stroke it to the East with a fervor he rarely displayed with Quest. But unlike Quest's painless 10-year tryst, this back-alley rendezvous will leave you feeling spent and wondering. >>>FRANKLIN SOULTS



Out

September 26

File Under

A diatribe-scrawled Quest

R.I.Y.L.

A Tribe Called Quest, De La Soul

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Shanti Project Volume 2 *Badman*

Shanti Project Volume 1 was a smoldering collection of soft-spoken songs from artists like Low and American Music Club benefiting a San Francisco-based AIDS help group. *Volume 2* is similarly crafted, this time featuring 15 tracks from seven female artists who all share certain torchsong affinities. Mimi Parker, drummer for Low, flips the script on "When You Walked Out On Me," an intense, bluesy whiskey-bar confessional. Like female versions of jazz balladeers Spain, the Spinanes' Rebecca Gates ("The Colonel's Circle") and Julie Doiron ("And There Is Still Enough") build on the same slow-burning acoustic esthetic. Others get more folksy; Kristin Hersh reprises "Hate My Way" from the first *Throwing Muses* album, singing like she's groping for air, every line expunged with urgency while she plucks fervently on her guitar. But Tarnation's Paula Frazer and Chicagoan Edith Frost don't fare so well with their tepid numbers. Then there's ex-Hole and Smashing Pumpkins bassist Melissa Auf der Maur, who emerges from the shadows with her first solo tunes. Given her resume and fervent fanbase, even these demo-quality missives are bound to raise curiosity. Sadly, they reveal a flat sound and even flatter voice, holding none of the punkish charm of someone like, say, Kim Deal. Thus, *Volume 2* takes its lumps. But for a good cause, all could be forgiven. >>>JOSEPH PATEL



Out

November 21

File Under

Torchsong charity

R.I.Y.L.

Low, Julie Doiron, Kristin Hersh

SICK OF IT ALL

Yours Truly *Fat Wreck Chords*

With roots that stretch all the way back to the '80s, Sick Of It All are the deans of the New York hardcore scene. The band got called up to the majors for two albums in the mid-'90s before heading back to indie land last year with *Call To Arms*, its first disc for Fat Wreck Chords. That move turned a few heads, since Fat specializes in younger, poppier punk bands, not grizzled old tough guys like Sick Of It All. The group's high-energy sound hasn't changed much, though it has grown slightly more sophisticated over the years. There are a few curveballs on *Yours Truly*, the band's sixth full-length, including actual bits of melody to complement singer Lou Koller's patented on-key yelling. Koller sounds downright happy on "America," as effective an aging punks' sociopolitical statement as Bad Religion's recent "The New America." Drummer Armand Majidi takes a poignant turn on the mic for the reflective ballad "Souvenir," the album's biggest departure. Sick Of It All isn't the loudest and fastest band on the block anymore—guitarist Pete Koller has traded in his speed riffs for a more nuanced attack that recalls Snapcase, one of *Yours Truly* producer Steve Evetts's other pet projects. But the group still has a message to get across, and when Lou sings "This is not an image/ This is our life" on "Disco Sucks F**k Everything," you know he's not kidding. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON



Out

November 21

File Under

Your father's hardcore

R.I.Y.L.

Hatebreed, Dropkick Murphys, Earth Crisis

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Solesides Greatest Bumps Quantum Projects

DJ Shadow continues to stave off thirst for the proper follow-up to his 1996 masterpiece *Endtroducing...* with this stopgap retrospective of Solesides, the now-defunct label he ran with hip-hop crews Latoryx and Blackalicious. But this is far from a Shadow showcase. For one thing, he only has three cuts here, including 1993's previously unreleased-on-CD "Entropy Part A," where he manages to critique mainstream rap and the bourgeois attack on sampling simultaneously through a hip-hopscape of assiduously placed sound bytes. For another, the preponderance of Latoryx and Blackalicious tracks, together with their previously unreleased live and/or freestyle snippets provided for bait, tends to downplay Shadow's atmospheric influence on their work. But it doesn't entirely obliterate that influence, and this is still a decent enough place to continue your fascination with your favorite DJ savior and his brethren. Even better, the jumbled chronology works two ways. Listening closely (perhaps reading along with Jeff Chang's snooty insider notes), it puts the wild/contemplative tension between the two MCs in Latoryx into relief when slammed against a Shadow instrumental or a Blackalicious track. Heard in the background, it stirs them all up into one great futuristic R&B/funk collection. >>>KEVIN JOHN



Out

October 31

File Under

Shadow's bump and run

R.I.Y.L.

Blackalicious, Divine Styler,

Freestyle Fellowship

SONGS: OHIA

Ghost Tropic Secretly Canadian

Songs: Ohia's songwriter and only continuous member, Jason Molina, has been plumbing the depths of his heart of darkness for four albums or so, celebrating a kind of shotgun marriage of the Palace Brothers' indie Appalachian bent to an unrelenting funereal none-more-blackness indebted to Flannery O'Connor and Johnny Cash. On *Ghost Tropic*, Molina tweaks the formula slightly, bringing in Shane Aspegren and Mike Mogis from Lullaby For The Working Class, who are apparently responsible for the subliminal knob-twiddling one occasionally hears off in the distance behind the usual suicidal piano and guitar figures. For an eight-song album clocking in at over 50 minutes, there are really only two or three discernible songs here, and the two instrumental tracks on the album bearing the name "Ghost Tropic" aren't among them. The opening "Lightning Risked It All" couches Molina's soft, dry, warbly horror-movie delivery in a droning lick that isn't so much a riff as a guy trying to tune his guitar over and over, with "ethnic" percussion by a strange tribe of kitchen-sink beaters. And "The Body Burned Away" is vintage Molina: a flinty, haunting minor-key piano piece recalling Pentecostal snake charmers and Nick Cave. But mostly one doesn't hear ghosts so much as what isn't there. >>>CARLY CARIOLI

Out

November 13

File Under

American gothic

R.I.Y.L.

Palace Bros., Nick Cave, Low

THE COMP FILE (Our guide to compilation CDs)

TITLE	Take A Bite Outta Rhyme (Republic-Universal)	Various:02 Dancemusic:Modernlife (V2)	Show Me Your Hits: A Salute To Poison (Deadline)	I Guess This Is Goodbye: The Emo Diaries, Chapter Five (Deep Elm)	KindercoreFifty (Kindercore)
CONCEPT	Rap-rockers tackle hip-hop classics.	A live mix of V2's stable of electronic artists.	Poison frontman Bret Michaels rounds up some "friends" and pays homage to himself.	The fifth chapter in the (in)famous comp series that helped make "emo" a four-letter word.	Three-disc retrospective of Athens, Georgia label Kindercore's first 50 releases.
TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC	Kids who consider Korn "old school"	Hipster party people in the house saying "ho!"	The unskinny bop just blows you away	Sniffle. Aaaaaaaaaaaaaa! Sniffle.	Hardcore indie-rock obsessives
NAMES TO DROP	Staind w/ Fred Durst, Sevendust, Dope	Aphrodite, Ian Pooley, Moby	Pauly Shore (no, seriously), Great White, Earth Wind & Fire	Reuben's Accomplice, Slowride, Eniac	The Olivia Tremor Control, the Apples In Stereo, Of Montreal
SUMS IT UP	"Bring The Pain" (Mindless Self Indulgence)	"Freakin' You" (Jungle Brothers)	"Every Rose Has Its Thorn" (Bret Michaels)	"Looking Past Sky" (the White Octave)	"The Bells Of Saint Alcohol" (Vermont)
VERDICT	Who stole the soul? Staind and Fred Durst manage to suck the life out of Public Enemy's "Bring The Noise."	This mix is definitely hot, but we weren't kidding when we said it was time to retire Moby's "Porcelain."	This is even more embarrassing than C.C. Deville's appearance on <i>Rock 'N' Roll Jeopardy</i> , and not nearly as entertaining.	Yeah, emo's fun to pick on. But the Deep Elm kids sift through a whole lot of eem to deliver a mix of unknowns who are worth the listen.	Three CDs of indie: the new, the old and the remixes. If you've never uttered the phrase "They went downhill after their first 7-inch," you're not ready for this.

SUPA DJ DMITRY

Scream Of Consciousness **TVT**

Given Towa Tei's successful solo career, versus the absence of fresh product from his former cohorts Lady Miss Kier and Supa DJ Dmitry, it's easy to assume Tei was the sole musical brain behind Deee-Lite. Not true, judging by Dmitry's work on this DJ set. Immediately alerting listeners to expect the unexpected, he kicks off with Dus & Jacques's "Krishna," a multi-part epic that weaves bamboo flutes with tribal beats. The seasoned turntable vet appreciates that while weird noises and 140 beats per minute may be sufficient to keep a rave pumping, a mix CD needs more meat, and Dmitry leans heavily on tracks with strong melodies and vocal hooks, like the rubbery "6th Sense" by Josh Wink featuring Ursula Rucker, the tweaked-electro propulsion of Luke Slater's "Body Freefall," and what sounds like a leftover from the original *Star Wars* cantina scene, the funky "Darn Cold Way O' Living" by Super Collider. The latter portion of the set includes several of Dmitry's original productions, including "Singularity," a kaleidoscopic instrumental that recalls his old outfit's *Dewdrops In The Garden*, and a harmonically unsound cover of "Space Oddity" featuring chanteuse Julee Cruise. An unnecessary remix of Deee-Lite's "What Is Love" concludes the nearly 70-minute program, but if it works as bait, a little nostalgia is forgivable. >>>KURT B. REIGHLEY



Out
November 21
File Under
Deee-Liteful surprises
R.I.Y.L.
DJ Silver, Keoki, Josh Wink

VARIOUS ARTISTS

Tattoo The Earth: The First Crusade **1500**

Live rock discs are all about capturing the moment, and this document of the inaugural Tattoo The Earth metalfest gets its moment down on track number six: Slipknot's "Surfacing," the costumed creeps' signature tune and the song that ended the show each night this summer. "This is your new national fuckin' anthem," decrees Slipknot singer Corey Taylor by way of introduction, adding "We're goin' home in a body bag" before launching into his little "Fuck it all/ Fuck this world/ Fuck everything that you stand for" bit. Recorded entirely at the tour's July 30 stop in Pontiac, Michigan, the disc is packed with similarly nasty gestures from the anti-commercial lineup of hate-filled noisemongers. Sevendust delivers the closest thing to a hit with "Waffle," a moody, Faith No More-inspired piece that gets the crowd shouting along during its heavy parts. Connecticut's Hatebreed sounds simultaneously boorish and principled on "I Will Be Heard," a teaser for the hardcore heroes' long-awaited sophomore disc. Slayer flies the flag for the old school on its two tracks, which hark back to the days when metal bands liked their hair long and their guitar solos even longer. Lesser lights drag down the disc's second half, but it's a fine memento of the summer's ugliest rock party nonetheless. >>>SEAN RICHARDSON



Out
October 24
File Under
Single live gonzo
R.I.Y.L.
Slipknot, Slayer, Sevendust

JANE WIEDLIN

Kissproof World **Painful Discs**

The once and future guitarist/lyricist for the Go-Go's is back, and boy is she pissed. After the breakup of her marriage to Memphis-based musician Joe Hardy and a miserable showing with her last post-Go-Go's release, 1995's *Cold* (with her band froSTed), Wiedlin lets loose with a vitriolic spew of depression and rage. But by setting these songs to guitar-centered melodies that invite sing-alongs, she may finally have found the right formula: This disc, Wiedlin's fourth since the 1984 finale of the Go-Go's, recalls nothing so much as the best of those girl-punk days. Despite a few lesser cuts (the draggy "Fallen"), *Kissproof* is a range of spunky pop-tarts and some moments of rather dark beauty: miniature epiphanies of hate ("My Lovely Revenge"), frustration ("He's Not Talking") and failure ("The Good Wife"), delivered with earnest appeal and a high-gloss production that makes the most of Wiedlin's little-girl voice. Some consciously retro touches, such as the Steppenwolf-steal opening of "Sooner Or Later" and the guitar-slashing "Die Now! Pay Later!" reach back even farther to her former group's club roots. A wide range of collaborators help stage these dramas, including Matthew Sweet harmonizing in the quiet "He's Not Talking," and sister Go-Go Charlotte Caffey, who co-wrote the first two tracks. It's an exuberant return for Wiedlin, who seems to have traded illusions for bright harmonies and hooks. >>>CLEA SIMON



Out
October 31
File Under
Grown-up girl pop
R.I.Y.L.
Veruca Salt, Elastica,
the Go-Go's

ROBBIE WILLIAMS

Sing When You're Winning **Capitol**

Only in America could this Brit Boy Wonder not be a star. Williams's 1999 American debut, *The Ego Has Landed*, only broke gold here, while the two albums from which it was compiled sold eight million copies over there. Blame it on our current literalism—our inability to comprehend how soaring romantic mastery could be matched to roguish insincerity, like a bride chastely saying "I do" while making eyes at the handsome young chaplain. This pile-driving follow-up reminds us with its apt title that the stance is actually an American invention—the debonair smirk of countless Vegas refugees who keep singing long after winning it all. But from its football (or soccer, something else we've got wrong) cover on down, the disc also suggests that Williams remains a minor presence because he's so bloody English. Among others, the generically handsome chameleon synthesizes George Michael (the goofy dance stomp, "Rock DJ"), Pet Shop Boys' Neil Tennant (the majestic disco swoon, "Supreme") and John Lennon (the introspective piano-pop bit, "If It's Hurting You"), not to mention Elton John in the weak parts and Ian Dury in the raps—which he should do more of. Yanks like that stuff, know-wot-ah-mean? >>>FRANKLIN SOULTS



Out
October 3
File Under
Brit-pop
R.I.Y.L.
George Michael, Elton John,
Pet Shop Boys

SAFETY DANCE

DANCESAFE TAKES A FRESH APPROACH TO FIGHTING CLUB-DRUG DEATHS.

STORY: M. TYE COMER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS CHING

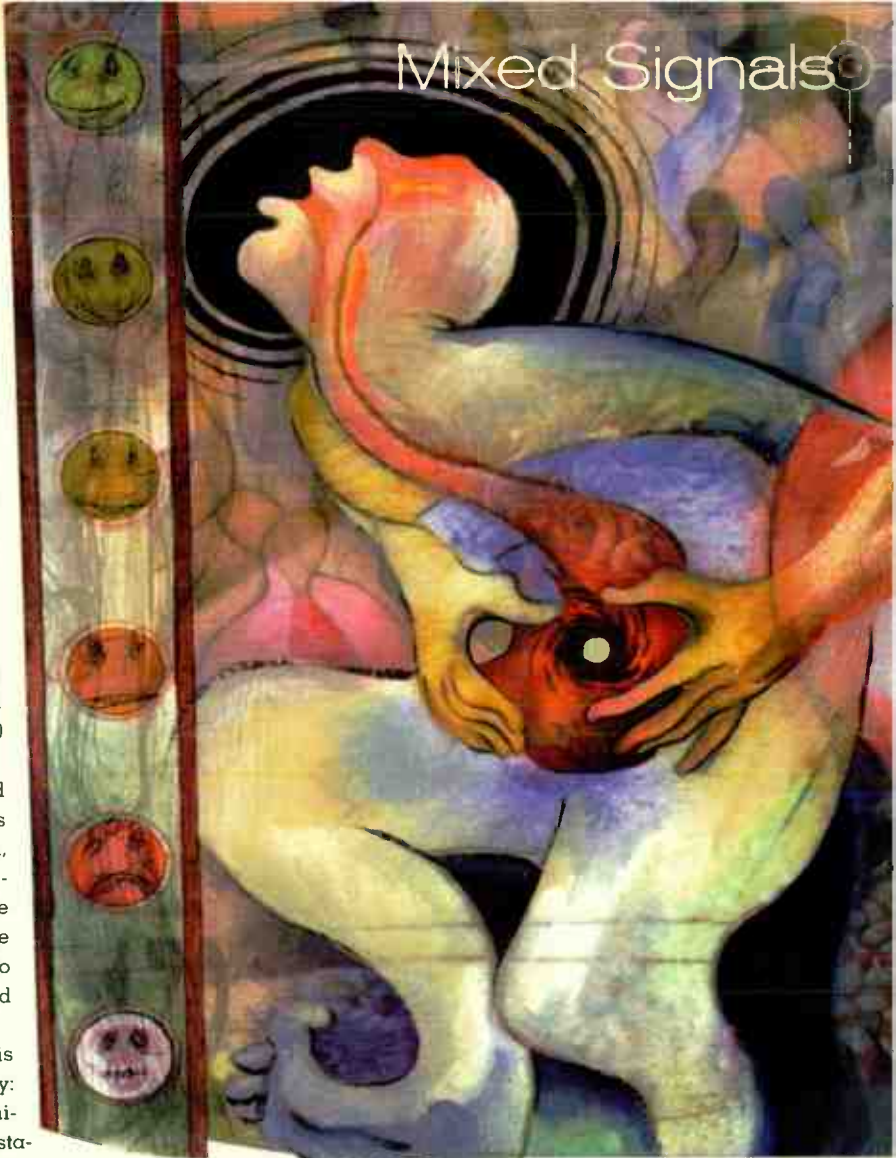
The public fascination with the evils of ecstasy quickly became a fascination with the evils of rave culture: Back in 1997, nighttime news shows like *20/20* and *60 Minutes* started urging parents to “Stop The Rave” in order to curb the drug’s use, and US government officials have recently begun slapping fines as high as \$10,000 on illegal-party promoters and performers. Meanwhile, the University Of Michigan-affiliated Monitoring The Future report, an annual study of the behavior of American youth (partially funded by the government), reported that ecstasy use by high school students rose by almost 50 percent since 1999—one in 20 kids in grades eight, 10 and 12 admit to using it.

“The media hysteria condemning raves has only added to the number of people who go to them *only* for drugs,” says Theo Rosenfeld, community organizer for the Oakland, California-based DanceSafe organization. “People who otherwise wouldn’t have any interest in raves heard on [the news] that raves were the places to go to get fucked up. The dance community is also about using drugs, but it’s also largely about musical innovation, about celebration and coming together as a community.”

What many rave naysayers are failing to realize, too, is that their real enemy is also a foe of the dance community: the fake ecstasy pills, made from far more dangerous chemicals than MDMA (Methylenedioxyamphetamine, ecstasy’s chemical name), that have flooded the market since the drug’s rise in popularity. Pure MDMA is not physically addictive and is arguably less dangerous than most other street drugs—most ecstasy-related deaths are not overdoses, but are caused by severe dehydration. Last spring, three Chicago ravers died after ingesting “ecstasy” that actually contained PMA (Para-methoxy-amphetamine), a powerful stimulant that’s cheaper and easier to manufacture. In September, three Florida ravers followed in their unfortunate footsteps.

DanceSafe is one group that takes a non-threatening approach to keeping kids alive. Founded in 1998 by Emanuel Sferios, a community organizer and regular on the San Francisco rave scene, DanceSafe was formed to cut through the misinformation and mixed messages circulating about club drugs and develop ways to give vital information to users when and where they need it most: at raves. Says Rosenfeld, “[DanceSafe] is based on a commitment...to bringing activism, along with health and safety messages on harm reduction to the party community.”

In contrast to other drug-related Web sites—like www.club-drugs.org (launched by the National Institute Of Drug Abuse), a \$54 million campaign focused only on the negative side-effects of ecstasy—www.dancesafe.org offers monthly updates on the chemical makeup of pills circulating in the scene and sells at-home ecstasy-testing kits. And though DanceSafe takes a grassroots approach to delivering information, distributing drug information pamphlets designed like rave flyers and setting up booths at raves across the country (DanceSafe has 13 active chapters and looks to expand to 20 in the near future), the organization is best known for testing pills for



MDMA content at raves, a service that draws scowls of disapproval from those who believe it promotes drug use.

“It’s true that the majority of people who come to our booth want us to say, ‘Yes, it’s okay to take that pill,’” admits Rosenfeld. “They want our approval. But we don’t give advice. And we never say that any drug is safe. We simply educate and leave it in the hands of the person to make their own decision. In the same way that condoms reduce the spread of disease without increasing sexual activity, our services can reduce harm due to drugs without increasing their use.”

Recently, DanceSafe extended its activism in the rave scene by developing the Safe Settings campaign, a set of 14 guidelines promoters can follow—ranging from available water to onsite EMTs—to reduce hassle from law enforcement and help guard ravers’ safety. (DanceSafe hopes to partner with www.rave-world.net to ensure that parties publicized there adhere to the guidelines.) But through all of DanceSafe’s efforts to make raves a safer place for kids to play, Rosenfeld readily admits that no one can control the bacchanalian urges of youth.

“Personally, I see people doing things that are unsafe or even plain stupid, but it’s our job to [provide people] with information. What they do with that information is their business,” he says. “People go through a period of extravagant hedonism in their late teens and all the health and safety messages in the world aren’t going to stop that. Part of the developmental process is learning how to take risks, and sometimes that involves doing risky things. Hopefully we can just keep people alive and healthy while they go through that period.” **NMM**

THE SCENE IS NOW



DIANE COLLINS

FREE ASSOCIATIONS

WILLIAM PARKER'S IMPROVISATIONAL CIRCLE

After nearly 30 years as a working upright jazz bassist, William Parker's phone rings constantly with players, producers and clubs looking to book him all over the world. "I'm proud of the fact that it's the year 2000 and I've still never asked for a gig," Parker says during a midnight conversation from his home in New York City's East Village. "All I do is answer the phone." He may not ask for gigs, but Parker is a tireless worker who is always on the move—just like his music.

The master bassist's approach and time-keeping are unique: Seldom opting for the obvious riff, he bows and plucks with odd effect, creating innovative lines. According to longtime friend and collaborator Matthew Shipp, "What he does is so rooted in his body

and his mind that I've never seen him play poorly. Charlie Parker was like that. William has such a singular sound and he is so rooted in it, that he always manages to pull it off."

Parker is part of such seminal active groups as the David S. Ware Quartet, Peter Brötzmann's Die Like A Dog, Other Dimensions In Music, nearly all of Matthew Shipp's groups, as well as the bassist's own Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra and several other small groups. This doesn't even include Parker's steady stream of one-off projects. He's such an important part of improvised music's greatest groups, if Parker happened to break a finger, he could effectively cancel a jazz festival in L.A. or Barcelona. The following are some of Parker's permutations.

DAVID S. WARE QUARTET

Undoubtedly a leading figure in the late-Coltrane school of hard blowing, Ware is also the only improvisational jazz musician currently signed to a major label. His Quartet has been called one of the best jazz bands working, and their live shows are often cataclysmic. "The bass for [Parker] is not always for the bottom," says Ware. "The bass for him is a horn, as far as exploration, as far as variation on a theme. He doesn't take root anywhere so his parts are always flowing. He can anchor, but his natural tendency is to fly." Parker on the Quartet: "People always talk about the power of the group, but musically and technically there are some things that are definitely happening. We have these songs and structures that we learn. Then we use them as we see fit. It's very subtle."

LITTLE HUEY CREATIVE MUSIC ORCHESTRA

Parker is somewhere between leader and sideman in this army of 15 to 20 players (depending on the day). Parker doesn't presume to tell the Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra what to do, but he does get them to swing. The next step in a line that goes from Ellington to Mingus to Sun Ra's Arkestra, the band integrates everything from New Orleans jazz to blues to gospel into an avant-garde big band. Small coalitions of players embellish the swing, only to turn it over to the next soloist or group of soloists. Parker stalks the bandstand or plays, but always leads by example. "Sometimes I think of William as the Pied Piper," Little Huey alto saxophonist Ori Kaplan says with a chuckle. "He's just a force of nature and you just follow him and his certain kind of magic." Parker says: "Little Huey has many parts that could not operate at an optimum level by themselves. When you put them together as an orchestra, each person is able to do things that they might not normally do. Each person is a piece of the puzzle that makes the whole thing work."

OTHER DIMENSIONS IN MUSIC

Beautiful improvisation without a net: This 20-year-old collective features Parker playing with trumpeter Roy Campbell, reedist Daniel Carter and drummer Rashid Bakr. "Earlier, it was more about energy," Campbell explains. "Now we still have a lot of energy, but it transcends categories and explores other spaces." Typically the band starts, pauses 40 minutes later to let the audience breathe, and plays on for another 40. In between, there is a mind-blowing conversation where each member completes the others' sentences and tells his own stories. Parker on Other Dimensions: "Everyone brings something to the event, sharing enough stuff for it to be open and beautiful."

MATTHEW SHIPP

The mercurial Matthew Shipp is prone to change groups from project to project, but if there is a bassist, and there almost always is, the string-slinger is William Parker. According to Shipp, "We just have this thing together. Not to be egotistical, but I'm proud of the fact that, though he played with Cecil Taylor for years, when you think of William and a piano, I'm the pianist." Whereas Ware and Brötzmann can be sonically overpowering, these two play with that same intensity, but omit the brawn. Parker on Shipp: "We have a natural rapport where I can think of a phrase and he'll finish it. He'll even finish it with a counterpoint phrase to me if I'm playing slow."

PETER BRÖTZMANN'S DIE LIKE A DOG QUARTET

German reedist Brötzmann plays with the kind of paint-peeling intensity that leads some to compare his tone to a power sander. But the hard-edged sound works for Brötzmann, sending the energy level through the roof every time he puts his horn to his lips. Parker and rhythmic-soul purveyor Hamid Drake create the perfect hard-hitting rhythm section, giving Brötzmann the juice he needs. But the two also take it to Africa, bringing some tribally rhythmic elements to the proceedings. The international cast, usually rounded out by trumpeter Toshinori Kondo or Roy Campbell, gets together a couple of times a year. According to Campbell, "Music is like a well, and we drink from the same one." The quartet doesn't write anything out, instead relying on their massive chops. Parker on Die Like A Dog: "What had started as a special performance of 'Die Like A Dog: The Music Of Albert Ayler' became a regular thing. We don't know why it works, but when we put it together, this magic happens."

PARKER'S SMALL GROUPS

Parker's In Order To Survive featured the talented drummer Susie Ibarra and the underrated talents of alto saxophonist Rob Brown and pianist Cooper-Moore. Highlighting Parker's talents as a composer, the quartet was around for most of the '90s before they disbanded. These groups' beautiful and often poignant sounds are embellished with a more traditional groove, even though the busy Ibarra seldom stays long in one place. Parker has a new small group with a record due out soon—if the leader can sit still long enough to release it himself. Parker on his new group: "[It] sounds like a throwback to classic Blue Note or Riverside session. It has a lot of traditional elements of the blues, a few backbeats and there's a samba tune."

ESSENTIAL ALBUMS:

David S. Ware's *Cryptology* (Homestead): The band at its most ferocious.

Peter Brotzmann's *Die Like A Dog Quartet From Valley To Valley* (Eremite): The hard-hitting trio joined by trumpeter Roy Campbell.

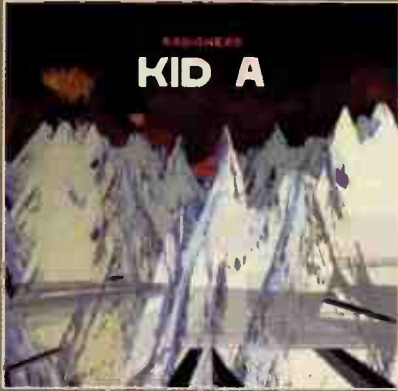
Other Dimensions In Music Now! (AUM Fidelity): Beauty and adventure are not mutually exclusive.

William Parker's *Little Huey Creative Music Orchestra Sunrise In The Tone World* (AUM Fidelity): A double-disc set that captures the group's many moods.

Matthew Shipp's *DNA* (Thirsty Ear): A duo album that nicely captures Shipp and Parker's special bond.

In Order To Survive's *Peach Orchard* (Aum Fidelity): The band's swan song.

TOP 75



RADIOHEAD

KID A
CAPITOL

#1

5 YEARS AGO

ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT
SCREAM, DRACULA, SCREAM! (INTERSCOPE)

SONIC YOUTH
WASHING MACHINE (DGC)

AIR MIAMI
ME. ME. ME. (4AD)

SUPERCHUNK
HERE'S WHERE THE STRINGS... (MERGE)

THE FLAMING LIPS
CLOUDS TASTE METALLIC (WARNER BROS)

10 YEARS AGO

JANE'S ADDICTION
RITUAL DE LO HABITUAL (WARNER BROS.)

COCTEAU TWINS
HEAVEN OR LAS VEGAS (4AD-CAPITOL)

CHARLATANS UK
SOME FRIENDLY (BEGGARS BANQUET-RCA)

PIXIES
BOSSANOVA (4AD-ELEKTRA)

THE REPLACEMENTS
ALL SHOOK DOWN (SIRE-REPRISE)

	ARTIST	ALBUM	LABEL
1	RADIOHEAD	Kid A	Capitol
2	THE GO-BETWEENS	The Friends Of Rachel Worth	Jetsel
3	BADLY DRAWN BOY	The Hour Of Bewilderbeast	XL-Beggars Banquet
4	SEA AND CAKE	Oui	Thrill Jockey
5	BJORK	Selmasongs	Elektra
6	AT THE DRIVE-IN	Relationship Of Command	Grand Royal
7	BLACK EYED PEAS	Bridging The Gap	Interscope
8	J MASCIS + THE FOG	More Light	Ultimatum
9	SELF	Gizmodgery	Spongebath
10	SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS	Bedlam Ballroom	Mammoth
11	ELF POWER	The Winter Is Coming	Elephant Six-Sugar Free
12	GREEN DAY	Warning	Reprise
13	HOOVERPHONIC	The Magnificent Tree	Epic
14	GODSPEED YOU BLACK EMPEROR!	Lill Your Skinny Fists Like Antennas...	Kranky
15	WESTON	The Massed Albert Sounds	Mojo
16	JETS TO BRAZIL	Four Cornered Night	Jade Tree
17	TITAN	Elevator	Virgin
18	DON CABALLERO	American Don	Touch And Go
19	TRISTEZA	Dream Signals In Full Circles	Tiger Style
20	NEW FOUND GLORY	New Found Glory	Drive Thru-MCA
21	IDAHO	Hearts Of Palm	Idaho Music
22	ELASTICA	The Menace	Atlantic
23	MORPHINE	Bootleg Detroit	Rykodisc
24	SUPERDRAG	In The Valley Of Dying Stars	Arena Rock
25	THE TWILIGHT SINGERS	Twilight As Played By The Twilight Singers	Columbia
26	GOMEZ	Abandoned Shopping Trolley Hotline	Hut-Virgin
27	SAINT GERMAIN	Tourist	Blue Note
28	ELLIOTT	False Cathedrals	Revelation
29	BROADCAST	Extended Play Two	Warp-Tommy Boy
30	DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE	Forbidden Love (EP)	Barsuk
31	KARATE	Unsolved	Southern
32	WILLIE NELSON	Milk Cow Blues	Island
33	NICK DRAKE	Pink Moon	Hannibal
34	UNDERWORLD	Everything, Everything	V2
35	DE LA SOUL	Art Official Intelligence: Mosaic Thump	Tommy Boy
36	SUNDAY'S BEST	Poised To Break	Polyvinyl
37	GURU'S JAZZMATAZZ	Vol. 3: Streetsoul	Virgin
38	ZEBRAHEAD	Playmate Of The Year	Columbia
39	JOHNNY CASH	American III: Solitary Man	American-Columbia
40	KITTYCRAFT	Catskills	March
41	JOAN OF ARC	The Gap	Jade Tree
42	COLDPLAY	Parachutes	Netwerk-Capitol
43	BLONDE REDHEAD	Melodie Citronique (EP)	Touch And Go
44	MAN OR ASTRO-MAN?	A Spectrum Of Infinite Scale	Touch And Go
45	DOVES	Lost Souls	Astralwerks
46	EMMYLOU HARRIS	Red Dirt Girl	Nonesuch
47	ELEVATOR	A Taste Of Complete Perspective	Teenage USA
48	VERSUS	Hurrah	Merge
49	SAMIAM	Astray	Hopeless
50	SUBMARINE	Skin Diving	Kinetic-Reprise
51	SCREECHING WEASEL	Teen Punks In Heat	Lookout!
52	ORGY	Vapor Transmission	Elementree-Reprise
53	DAMIEN JURADO	Ghost Of David	Sub Pop
54	VAST	Music For People	Elektra
55	THE MOONEY SUZUKI	People Get Ready	Estrus
56	MOJAVE 3	Excuses For Travelers	4AD-Beggars Banquet
57	TRANS AM	Red Line	Thrill Jockey
58	CATCH 22	Alone In A Crowd	Victory
59	JEJUNE	R.I.P.	Big Wheel Recreation
60	BARENAKED LADIES	Maroon	Reprise
61	ELENI MANDELL	Thrill	Space Baby
62	THE NEW AMSTERDAMS	Never You Mind	Heroes And Villains
63	IAN POOLEY	Since Then	V2
64	CINERAMA	Disco Volante	Manifesto
65	CREEPER LAGOON	Watering Ghost Garden	SpinART
66	BLUE MEANIES	The Post Wave	MCA
67	UGLY DUCKLING	Journey To Anywhere	1500
68	DJ? ACUCRACK	Sorted	E-Magine
69	CINERAMA	This Is Cinerama	SpinART
70	THE DAMAGE MANUAL	The Damage Manual	Invisible
71	LOS AMIGOS INVISIBLES	Arepa 3000	Luaka Bop
72	PALO ALTO	Palo Alto	American-Columbia
73	VARIOUS ARTISTS	Metroschifter Encapsulated	Doghouse
74	TYRO	Audiocards	Mute
75	THE AUTOMATOR	A Much Better Tomorrow (EP)	75 Ark

Chart data culled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Top 200 radio chart, based on combined airplay of approximately 500 college, non-commercial and commercial radio stations reporting their top 30 most played releases that week. Mohair? Don't even let me get near a llama—holy shit.

TOP 25

BY MARTIN POPOFF

METAL

1 NILE
Black Seeds Of Vengeance RELAPSE

2 MORBIO ANGEL
Gateways To Annihilation EARACHE

3 NOTHINGFACE
Violence TMT



4 SOULFLY
Primitive ROADRUNNER

5 DOWNSET
Check Your People EPITAPH

6 LAMB OF GOD
New American Gospel METAL BLADE

7 JOMMI
Jommi PRIORITY

8 SPINESHANK
The Height Of Callousness ROADRUNNER

9 CORROSION OF CONFORMITY
America's Volume Dealer SANCTUARY

10 PRO-PAIN
Round 6 SPITFIRE

11 CANNIBAL CORPSE
Live Cannibalism METAL BLADE

12 SIX FEET UNOER
Graveyard Classics METAL BLADE

13 AMEN
We Have Come For Your... I AM-VIRGIN

14 SLAVES ON OOOPE
Inches From The Mainline PRIORITY

15 DROWNINGMAN
Rock And Roll Killing... REVELATION

16 EYEHATEGOD
Confederacy Of... CENTURY MEDIA

17 DYING FETUS
Destroy The Opposition RELAPSE

18 TYPE O NEGATIVE
The Least Worst Of ROADRUNNER

19 HYPOCRISY
Into The Abyss NUCLEAR BLAST AMERICA

20 GOD FORBID
Reject The Sickness 9 VOLT

21 AT THE DRIVE-IN
Relationship Of Command GRAND ROYAL

22 CRADLE OF FILTH
Midian ROUGH

23 LINKIN PARK
Hybrid Theory WARNER BROS

24 KILLSWITCH ENGAGE
Killswitch Engage FERRIS

25 ENTOMBED
Uprising METAL-IS-SANCTUARY



>>>On the new, tentatively titled *Digimortal* (Roadrunner), L.A.'s **Fear Factory** has made some notable changes to its e-metal menu. "We cut out all the bullshit and just went straight to the meat and potatoes," explains guitarist Dino Cazares. "Everything's more melodic, from the guitar riffs to the basslines to the vocals." In terms of philosophical thrust though, one can expect yet another semi-conceptual record examining the pluses and pitfalls of electro-humanity. "It goes along with the Fear Factory story," Cazares offers. "It's about how man has discovered how to survive in a digital world." Reflecting Burton C. Bell's more pure "singing" on the record, the music looks to be, well, sweeter too. "The tone is definitely going to be very high-tech, very well produced. It still has a hard edge to it, because that's what Fear Factory is all about. But it's definitely a lot more melodic...a lot catchier." Don't be misled by this talk of melodic hooks, however. Cazares says the band's retained their tasteful air of gloom. "I would say that [the songs on *Digimortal*] are a little doomy, a little sad.... Usually when we write something that's too happy, we'll throw it away."

NEWS



HATEBREED

>>>**Hatebreed** is recording a second album with Steve Evetts, of Snapcase and Earth Crisis fame. The band will contribute the track "I Will Be Heard" to the *Tattoo The Earth* live CD, as well. Evetts can also add **Sepultura's** new album *Nation* to his production credits.... **Ozzy Osbourne** is once again talking with Zakk Wylde about the next Ozzy solo slab after enjoying a blast of Wylde's last Black Label Society album in a private listening session in Zakk's truck.... Tommy Lee is recording the next **Methods Of Mayhem** CD at his new home studio, Tommyland. The album will be released in conjunction with a tour video. Meanwhile, a Mötley Crüe

autobiography, *The Dirt*, is due in the spring, packaged with a CD that will include a new track. The book launch will coincide with more North American touring.... The next **Damn Yankees** album has been finished and—according to Tommy Shaw (currently on a wildly successful tour with Styx)—discarded, due to the band's intense loathing of the production. Alas, no make-up sessions are planned, as **Ted Nugent** will be recording a new solo album, and **Styx** will be touring well into 2001....

IN THE BINS

ENSLAVED's *Murder, Beyond The Within* (Necropolis) combines the power of rhythm-crushed '80s metal with the delicious, dangerous tones of cold, cold black metal.

Statement (MCA) from NONPOINT is a ferocious, intelligent and freshly positive power-up of the emo formula

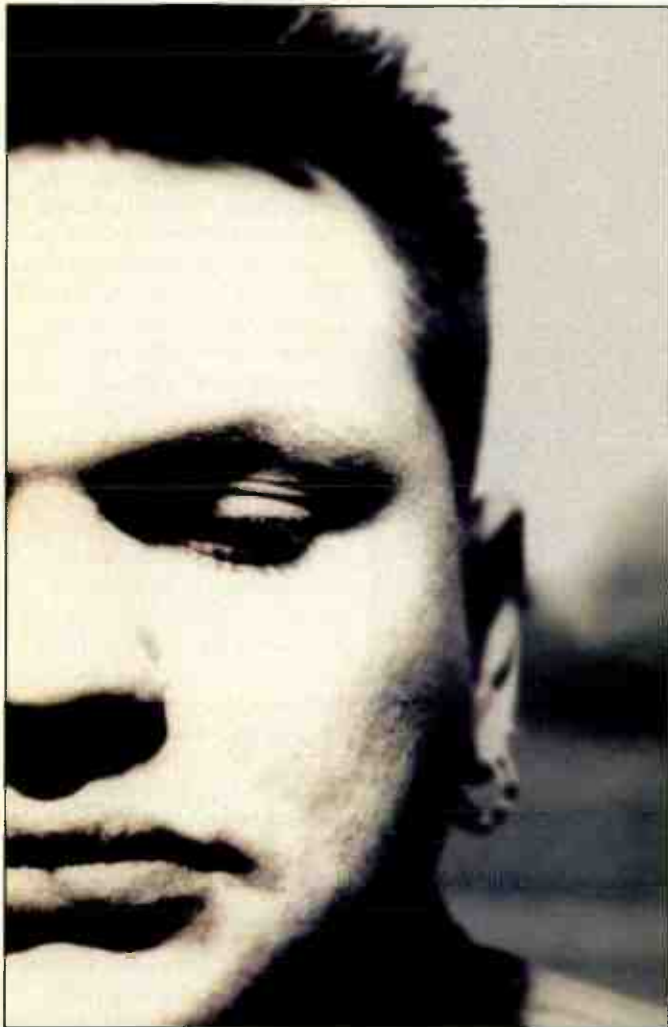
PAW's *Home Is A Strange Place* (Koch) marks the return of the great grunge gods from Lawrence, Kansas. It's only an EP, but it's slouching, slurring blues-metal all the same.

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

DANCE

BY B. WERDE

TOP 25



>>>First, there were Sasha, Digweed and Oakie. And now, there's Timo. Hanover, Germany's **Timo Maas** boasts residencies at two of the world's top clubs, Cream and Twilo, and has scored two top-10 UK singles with his mix of the Azzido Da Bass classic, "Dooms Night," and his new single, the storming "Ubik." Now, he's topping that off with a US debut: *Music For The Maases* (Hope-Kinetic). The double-CD mix is startlingly fluid, considering that he drew solely from tracks he produced or remixed with production partner Martin Buttrich. The album ranges from scratchy breakbeats to banging tech-house to downtempo (Maas calls the downbeat "Mama Konda" his favorite track. "I like to smoke spliffs," he says). But mostly, *Music For The Maases* is an intense dancefloor excursion. "The music I produce and spin is much more underground than most of the English DJs play," says Maas. "My music is evil, with a smile on its face: 'Heheheh, I kill you.'" Maas makes a point of not only keeping the crowd on the floor when he spins, but keeping them on their toes. "That's why I love to play long sets. You can play around with the people," he explains. "I'll play a trancey track, and they say, 'Oh, now he's getting nice with the girls,' and then I kick their fucking ass."

1	IAN POOLEY Since Then	V2
2	DJ? ACUCRACK Sorted	E-MAGINE
3	TIMO MAAS Music For The Maases	KINETIC
4	PHOTEK Solaris	ASTRALWERKS
5	UNDERWORLD Everything, Everything	V2
6	MOCEAN WORKER Aural & Hearty	RYKODISC-PALM PICTURES
7	DAVE RALPH Love Parade: Berlin	KINETIC
8	RONI SIZE & REPRAZENT In The Mode	ISLAND
9	VARIOUS ARTISTS Moonshine Overamerica	MOONSHINE
10	DJ MICRO DJMixed.com	MOONSHINE
11	SAINT GERMAIN Tourist	BLUE NOTE
12	JUNO REACTOR Shango	METROPOLIS
13	VARIOUS ARTISTS Xen Cuts	HINJA TUNE
14	BANCO DE GAIA Igizeh	SIX DEGREES
15	DJ TIESTO Summer Breeze	NETTWERK
16	BT Movement In Still Life	NETTWERK
17	GOO MODULE Artificial	INCEPTION
18	THIEVERY CORPORATION The Mirror...	EIGHTEENTH STREET LOUNGE
19	VARIOUS ARTISTS Electropolis Volume II	METROPOLIS
20	SASHA Global Underground: Ibiza	BOXED
21	JEGA Geometry	MATAOOR
22	NOBODY Soulmates	UBIQUITY
23	VARIOUS ARTISTS Shadow Dancing	A DIFFERENT DRUM
24	VARIOUS ARTISTS This Is Jungle Sky...	LIQUID SKY
25	FLESH FIELD Redemption	INCEPTION

NEWS



BOY GEORGE

'80s, George has become one of the top-grossing DJs in the UK's progressive house and trance scene.... Finally, a worthy "ism": Fledgling Ism Records' second full-length is a funkastic downtempo mix by **DJ Swingsett**, ranging from dub to moody moogs and tripped out breakbeats. Ism just launched their house imprint, Esho, with a funky Julius Papp & Dave Warrin single, "Lookin' Up." **Indeed.**

>>>German label **Force Inc. Music Works** (and imprints Mille Plateaux, Position Chrome, Force Tracks and Ritomell) has established a NYC beachhead. Proper introductions are best served by *Met@music* (Force Inc.), a 14-track sampler that represents crisp techno pulses and dub experiments in all their various splendors. From the robotic jiggyness of Twerk to the mesmerizing tech-house cyclings of Stewart Walker to the rumbling, sub-bass techno "Phoonk" of Atlon Inc., the album showcases how clearly German techno is Detroit-inspired. Check www.force-inc.com for more info.... Karmagain? **Boy George** relaunches his career in the States with a *January Essential Mix* (London-Sire). The 18 tracks will include George's version of "The Girl From Ipanema." If you're still stuck in the

IN THE BINS

ARTFUL DOOGER brings the UK garage craze Stateside with *Re-Rewind* (London-Sire). This R&B, jungle and house hybrid withstands the hype.

HEAVY FLUTE (Label: M) features jazz greats like Rahsaan and Herbie Mann. Congas, strings and glorious flute make this perfect for any downtempo set

Despite DJ **RICK GARCIA**'s erratic mix, *Rewind 1984: Chicago* (UC Music) is a must-have for classic Trax cuts by Frankie Knuckles and Robert Owen.

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

TOP 25

BY BRIAN COLEMAN

HIP-HOP

1 WU-TANG CLAN
"Protect Ya Neck (The Jump Off)" LOUD

2 DE LA SOUL
"Ari Official Intelligence" ROBINY JAY



3 MOS DEF FEAT. GHOSTFACE KILLAH
"Ms. Fat Booty 2" RAWKUS

4 BLACK EYED PEAS
"Bridging The Gap" INTERSCOPE

5 JURASSIC-5
"Quality Control" INTERSCOPE

6 AKROBATIK
"Internet MCs" RAWKUS

7 GURU
"Jazzmatazz: Street Soul" VIRGIN

8 DELTRON 3030
"Deltron 3030" 75 ARK

9 AUTOMATOR
"A Much Better Tomorrow" 75 ARK

10 SKITZOFRENIKS
"C'mon Dude !?!" BACK-LAND SPEED

11 TALIB KWELI AND HI-TEK
"Reflection Eternal" RAWKUS

12 BAHAMADIA
"BB Queen (EP)" GOOD VIBE-ATOMIC POP

13 MYSTIKAL
"Let's Get Ready" JIVE

14 JAY-Z
"I Just..." WUG-A-FELLA-DEF JAM

15 DILATED PEOPLES
"The Platform" ABB-CAPITOL

16 CREATORS
"The Weight" BAD MAGIC

17 MUSALINY & MAZE
"Blend Famz" EPIC

18 JA RULE
"3:36" MURDER INC.-DEF JAM

19 PHARCYDE
"Trust" DELICIOUS VINYL

20 LARGE PROFESSOR
"Bout That Time" MATADOR

21 WYCLEF JEAN
"The Eclectic..." COLUMBIA

22 MR. LIF
"Front On This" USF-JIVE

23 AFU-RA
"Body Of The Life Force" D&D-KOCH

24 M.O.P.
"Warriorz" LOWE

25 LL CDOL J (Featuring James T. Smith...)
"G.O.A.T." ISLAND DEF JAM



>>> "Rule number one is that there are no rules," says Cincinnati's illest DJ, the mildly infamous and outspoken **Mr. Dibbs**, of his personal business plan. This would seem like lip service coming from most artists. But Dibbs walks the walk, and has built an impressive reputation despite mostly hard-to-find recorded works (aside from spots on Bomb's last two *Return Of The DJ* compilations) and a lack of media hype. But the coming year should change that, with his skateboard soundtrack, *Primitive Tracks*, at least three battle records and his brain-busting new *Live In Memphis* (Nu Gruv). The record shows all of Dibbs's best tricks: deep, hard beats, hilarious spoken-word, an equal sensibility for dusty funk and modern hip-hop, and a desire to give people the last thing they'd expect—three studio tracks are tacked on the end. As he points out, there isn't much difference between his live and studio worlds: "I want the stuff that I do live and on record to be similar. I don't want it to ever be like when you hear a band and then go to see them live and it's different and it sucks."

NEWS



CUT CHEMIST

>>> The UK's old-school-worshipping *Fat Lace* magazine (www.fat-lace.com) has begun a new series in collaboration with the Bad Magic record label, bringing back '80s rap gods and matching them with now-school talent. The first in their *Know School Rules* sessions is Juice Crew legend **Masta Ace's** "So Now U A MC?" (produced by DJ Paul Nice, with extra vocals by Genessee) and will be soon followed by **T La Rock** covering his own "It's Yours" (produced by DJ Mighty Mi, with an appearance by C Boogie Brown, a.k.a. Charlie Brown of the Leaders Of The New School)... Boston hip-hop legend **Edo.G's** new album is scheduled for release by March 2001 on Ground Control, with an impressive list of contributors and guests: DJ Premier (who produced the first single, "Sayin' Somethin'"), Pete Rock, Black Thought, Guru, Tajai, Casual, Teamstas and more. Check www.edo-g.com... And L.A.-based DJ/producer **Cut Chemist** is continuing work on his solo album while the hard-working Jurassic-5 takes a break. It will be mostly instrumental, with at least one track featuring Blackalicious's Gift Of Gab. No label has claimed it yet. Check www.jurassic5.com...

IN THE BINS

DJ SUSHI's *Lost Dub Plates* (Hip Hop Slam) is a short but captivating EP that proves this late Japanese turntablist's supreme skills and vision.

SOLESIDES GREATEST BUMPS (Orionnum) is the ultimate collection of mid-'90s Bay Area hip-hop madness from DJ Shadow, Blackalicious and Latyrx.

CUE'S HIP HOP SHOP VOLUME 2 (Stray) is an essential collection straight outta Oakland, reminding you that a new favorite DJ track always lurks around the corner.

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

>>>>**DJ Shadow** is a 45 fiend, so it's somehow fitting that his first new music in a couple of years is a vinyl 7-inch: "Dark Days" (MCA), the theme song from the movie of the same name, a documentary about homelessness. It's not a big departure from *Endtroducing*, and it naturally "contains sampled elements" from a total obscurity—something called "Bamboo And Rice" by Bill Osborn (who?)—but Shadow could find a great breakbeat on a spoken-word comedy album, and he turns an echo-chambered jazz drum-smack into the focal point of the mix. "Dark Days" gradually tugs at the fibers of a spaghetti-Western guitar piece until they unravel just enough, then reconfigures them into a fuzzy tassel. The other side's "Spoken For Mix," though, is where Shadow really gets to do his thing. He's transferred dialogue and sound effects from the movie onto vinyl, and scratches them nimbly over a pumped-up version of the theme, playing plenty of dub and echo tricks.

>>>>**Gai/Jin** is a collaboration between Boston drum 'n' bass producer Hrvatski and a terrific, blaring guitarist named Jiro H. Their untitled EP (part of Wabana's *Gun Court* series) starts with a brief screech-guitar warm-up, then plunges into its centerpiece: a fantastic cover of Aphex Twin's "On," from which they've somehow divined an actual riff for Jiro to shred on. There's also something called "M.O.D. Theme"—which comes off somewhere between metalloid football-stadium touchdown music, Atari-era video-game soundtrack and Hrvatski's own ultra-filterized breaks—and "Off," a thickly layered catalogue of variations on the theme of "distortion," and maybe an answer song to "On."... When Australia's casual strum-and-drum wonders **the Cannanes** spent a few months in New York last year, they experimented with beats and samples, and they've documented that odd little phase of their 15-year-plus career on their EP for



DJ SHADOW

Insound's *Tour Support* series. "You Name It" drenches the offhanded fragility of Frances Gibson's singing in synthesizers, piano, and a beat very close to the one Milli Vanilli made famous; it works out much better than you'd expect. Even the electro beats and scratches in "Postcard From Cuba" complement Gibson's chatty lyrics and voice, and Stephen O'Neil's sly, distinctly

non-mechanical guitar humanizes the silicon grooves in return.... L.A.'s **BellRays** are a battering ram of a live band—an explosive hard-rock group in the Blue Cheer/MC5 bloodline, fronted by the ferocious Lisa Kekaula, a tougher-than-tough soul screamer in six-inch heels and an 18-inch afro. They haven't yet come up with a studio recording that does them justice, but *Smash The Hits!* (Flapping Jet), an 8-inch (yes, you read that right) EP, is a step in the right direction—not so much because of the soul simmer of "Mind's Eye" or the instrumental "Swastika," but the howling live-on-radio version of "Gather Darkness" that occupies the whole second side. If Tina Turner had ever gotten to make the all-out rock record she sometimes talks about, it probably still wouldn't kick this hard.



A FEW QUICK DROPS OF THE NEEDLE

There seems to have been a schism in the **Desco** funk collective, often celebrated in these pages—some of its core members have started a new label, Soul Fire, and former Desco singer Lee Fields has just released a single of his own there, "I'm The Man." Calling Fields an acolyte of James Brown is putting it mildly—he even addresses their vocal resemblance in the song—but he sounds great, and the band wallops its groove on the one nice and hard. It's backed by "Your Love (Is Something I Need)," which betrays a certain, uh, familiarity with JB's "Let A Man Come In And Do The Popcorn."... Also new on Soul Fire: "Majestic Soul" by **Third Point**, an instrumental that's unmistakably by the same crew, this time tensing up the early sound of Philadelphia International, with dueling lead horns.... Admirers of Belle & Sebastian's "Lazy Line

Painter Jane" should keep an eye out for "77X" (Creeping Bent), the first solo single by that song's guest singer **Monica Queen**. She emotes like she's trying to sell a 1986 power ballad, audible inhalations and all, but her songs turn the fire down just enough whenever she threatens to boil over.... *Killed By Absurdity Vol. 1* (Failed Pilot Productions) claims to be an unauthorized collection of ridiculous "found" songs, but the liner notes suggest that some of them may just be fake wackiness by the compilers. My bet: **After Dark**'s skin-crawling a cappella stab at Toto's "Africa" and **Tom Sirard**'s hopeless Billy Joel wannabe move "The Bar" are the real thing, **Hearts Pursuit**'s quasi-stalker rap "You Are So Precious To Me" and **Dos Power Surge**'s mush-mouthed Casio doodle "The K-Mart Rap" are ersatz. But decide for yourself.

>>>>Laurie Anderson was the sort of performer who made you remember the first time you heard or saw her. Back in the conservative MTV/Reagan '80s, it was hard not to notice her spiky hair, black kabuki-type clothes and electronic violin that emitted weird speech and strange sounds. Anderson was something of a figurehead for bringing "performance art" into the mainstream, and she was partially responsible for unleashing cutting-edge downtown New York concepts upon the unsuspecting public. (This was before underground art/mainstream confluences like the Blue Man Group appearing in TV commercials would become so commonplace.) Listening to Anderson's two-CD anthology, *Talk Normal* (Rhino), is an eye- and ear-opening experience now, considering how other "arty" endeavors from the '80s have failed the test of durability. Tracks like "O Superman" still sound fresh and clever today, especially when remembered in context and juxtaposed against the onslaught of slick mainstream '80s music like Olivia Newton-John, "Flashdance" and ZZ Top's electro-boogie. It's even possible to see now that the ludicrously bombastic "Language Is A Virus" is deliberately cheesy, intentionally overblown and, on some level at least, a send-up of performance art and the commercial mainstream. Of course, if you find her annoying (as many people no doubt do) this won't convert you. But for the fans, it's nice to enjoy an artist with a sense of fun and playfulness in her work.



LAURIE ANDERSON

>>>>Another love 'em or hate 'em band with a new retrospective in the bins is the grandiose—and oftentimes extremely silly—symphonically tinged rock band **Electric Light Orchestra**. A new three-CD Sony Legacy anthology (whose *Flashback* title we heartily approve of) is a showcase for the classic Jeff Lynne formula of inconsequential, Beatles-y ear candy taken to extremes. ELO offered everything a kid could possibly want and more: insidiously catchy hooks, orchestral overkill, overblown concept albums, soaring trumpet obbligatos that serve no purpose, and a live show that featured a giant spaceship landing amidst a swirl of smoke machines and lasers. Still, there's no telling just how many thousands of today's musicians clutched ELO albums in their tiny hands as children, making the band an

incalculable formative influence upon today's retro-happy musical landscape.... I've raved in these pages about **Canned Heat** before, and I've also become accustomed to the uncomprehending gazes on the faces of my long-suffering friends who don't share my enthusiasm for one of the world's biggest and baddest boogie bands. *Live At The Kaleidoscope 1969* (on Varese Vintage) is another treasure from the vault, a live tape that shows why Canned Heat were the kings of big, burly white-boy blues. You've also got to admire the way that this band has refused to give up the ghost in spite of the deaths of no less than three of its members, and has become a veritable cottage industry, cranking out reissues of quality vintage unreleased treasures to keep their audience of crazed boogie-heads wailing through the night....

IN MY CRATES

FIVE FLASHBACK ESSENTIALS FROM **GRAND THEFT AUDIO'S** JAY BUTLER



THE SEX PISTOLS, *Never Mind The Bollocks...*
"Still one of the most intense, snarling, dirty, witty albums I've ever heard. Steve Jones's wall of guitar and John Lydon's treballistic vocals totally inspired me to start playing."

BOOGIE DOWN PRODUCTIONS, *Ghetto Music: The Blueprint Of Hip Hop*
"I first got into this through a friend at school, I didn't stop playing it until it had holes in it. KRS-One had these amazing intelligent rhymes that I hadn't really heard in music before."

FUGAZI, *Repeater*
"I'd been an obligatory Minor Threat fan, just through being into punk rock, but when I first got this album I was blown away.... The guitars and

dynamics were from a completely new angle, loads more focused and direct. That guitar was ahead of its time—as Rage Against The Machine would prove by copying that style years later."

BLACK FLAG
"I always associate Black Flag with the best times of my life; whether I was trying to put the world right in my head or trying to out-moron the Ramones, Black Flag had a tune for it all."

BEASTIE BOYS, *Licensed To Ill*
"It could never be stressed enough how much this record changed everything. Snotty nosed arrogant kids (exactly like all my friends and me) shouting about their dicks—pure genius! This was like a Bible to everyone I knew...."

JUST OUT

NOVEMBER 21

ARTFUL DOODGER Remix Record *London.*
A-TEAM Who Framed The A-Team *Ground Control-Nu Gruv.*
BANTAM ROOSTER I Gemini *Estrus.*
 —7-inch.
BLUR Greatest Hits *Virgin.*
CAPONE-N-NOREAGA The Reunion *Tommy Boy.*
CAUSE FOR ALARM Nothing Ever Dies *Victory.*
CHEMICAL BROTHERS Music: Response *Astralwerks.*
 —EP with live and unreleased tracks.
CHRIS AND TAO Hand Me That Door *Orange.*
 —New project from Chris Ballew of the Presidents and Tad Hutchinson of the Young Fresh Fellows.
THE CITIZENZ Toolz Of War Vol.1 *Replicant-Nu Gruv.*
OC TALK Best Of *Virgin.*
DELERIUM Poem *Nettwerk.*
DEVILS Drift *Nettwerk.*
 —Reissue.
ECHOBOY Volume 2 *Mute.*
ELECTRIC LIGHT ORCHESTRA Flashback *Epic Legacy.*
 —Three-CD box set.
EVERCLEAR Songs From An American Movie, Vol. 2: Good Time For A Bad Attitude *Capitol.*
FUNK O'VOIO To Ya Waistline *Soma.*
DAVE HOLLISTER Chicago '85...The Movie *DreamWorks.*
THE IMMORTAL LEE COUNTY KILLERS Let's Get Killed *Estrus.*
 —7-inch. Good idea!
KREIOLER Kreidler *Mute.*
CYNDI LAUPER She's So Unusual *Epic Legacy.*
 —Expanded reissue with three bonus live tracks.
TIM 'LONE' LEE One Night Samba *Tummy Touch.*
 —12-inch.
PAT METHENY Trio 99>00 Live *Warner Bros.*
MONROE MUSTANG I Am The Only Running Footman *Emperor Jones.*
 —EP
MOUSE ON MARS Instrumentals *Thrill Jockey.*
NINE INCH NAILS Things Falling Apart *Nothing-Interscope.*
 —A collection of remixes from The Fragile.
NOFX Bottles To The Ground *Epitaph.*
 —EP

OMNIVORE Feeding Frenzy *Hydrogen Dukebox.*
 —Reissue.
PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT Don't Hold Back *RCA.*
Q.B.'S FINEST Queensbridge: The Album *Columbia.*
RED SPEEDWAGON High In-Fidelity; You Can Tune A Piano, But You Can't Tune A Fish *Epic Legacy.*
 —Remastered reissues.
SANTANA The Best Of Santana Vol. 2 *Columbia Legacy.*
SICK OF IT ALL Yours Truly *Fat Wreck Chords.*
SKYCLARO Rhymes Against Humanity *Nuclear Blast.*
STARFLYER 59 Easy Come, Easy Go *Tooth And Nail.*
 —Box set.
STEVEN R. SMITH Death Of Last Year's Man *Emperor Jones.*
 —EP
SUPA DJ OMITRY Scream Of Consciousness *Wax Trax!*
 —New solo mix from the former Deee-Lite member.
NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA Thrill Jockey. *—12-inch.*
TRICKY WOOD Trouble *Estrus.*
 —7-inch.
TUESDAY WELD L'amore A La Morte *Kindercore.*
UB40 The Very Best Of *Virgin.*
PAUL VAN DYK We Are Alive *Mute.*
 —CD and double 12-inch single.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Plus 8 Classics III *Plus 8.*
 —Classic cuts from Richie Hawtin's Plus 8 label.
VARIOUS ARTISTS The Rose That Grew From Concrete, Volume I *Amaru-Interscope.*
 —Q-Tip, Mos Def, Cosby kid Malcolm Jamal Warner and others perform poetry from Shakur's 1999 book. Shakur himself was apparently too busy filming his new movie to appear.
VARIOUS ARTISTS The Shanti Project Volume 2 *Badman.*
 —Tracks from Low, American Music Club, the Spinanes' Rebecca Gates, Julie Doiron, Kristin Hersh and Edith Frost (among others) benefitting a San Francisco-based AIDS help group. Also includes the first solo work from Smashing Pumpkins/Hole bassist Melissa Auf der Maur.
STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN SRV *Epic Legacy.*
 —Three-CD box set, including a DVD with six unreleased television performances.
VITAMIN C Elektra.

ROGER WATERS In The Flesh *Columbia.*
 —Two CDs of Roger pretending he's better off without Pink Floyd.
WU-TANG CLAN The W *Loud.*
XX Give It Up *Tommy Boy Silver Label.*
 —12-inch and CD single.
ZEN GUERRILLA Dirty Mile *Estrus.*
 —7-inch.

NOVEMBER 28

MICHAEL COLEMAN Do Your Thing! *Delmark.*
FINGATHING The Main Event *Grand Central.*
JIMMY JOHNSON Pepper's Hangout *Delmark.*
KING KOoba Fooling Myself *Second Skin.*
BILLY MCLAUGHLIN Inhale Pink; Exhale Blue; The Archery Of Guitar; The Bow And The Arrow; Stormseeker *Nouveau.*
 —Reissues.
OYSTERBAND Granite Years: Best Of *Era.*
TRIO ELECTRICO Return To The Coconut *Stereo Deluxe.*
 —12-inch.
TY Break The Lock *Big Dada.*
 —12-inch.
VANILLA ICE Mind Blowin' *Ultras.*
 —Reissue of the ganjaified follow-up to To The Extreme, which most of you play haters are still trying to pretend you didn't buy.
ZORA YOUNG Learned My Lesson *Delmark.*

NOVEMBER 30

DELAROSA AND ASORA Agony *Schematic.*

DECEMBER 5

AALIYAH *Virgin.*
ALICE IN CHAINS Live *Columbia.*
 —Tracks culled from the irritatingly inactive band's 1990, 1993 and 1996 tours.
BLENDERHEAD Figureheads On The Forefront Of Pop Culture *Tooth And Nail.*
DAVID BRYAN Lunar Eclipse *Moon Junction.*
 —Solo record from Bon Jovi keyboardist David Bryan.
BUDDYREVELLES American Matador *Motorcoat.*
CALI AGENTS Neva Forget *Ground Control-Nu Gruv.*
 —12-inch.
EVE Ruff Ryders.

FRAME Fase 2 *Soma.*
 —12-inch.
HOLGER HILLER Holger Hiller *Artemis.*
JOSH JOPLIN Useful Music *Artemis.*
MASTERS OF ILLUSION Kutmasta Kurt Presents Masters Of Illusion *Threshold.*
MELINA By Your Side *Tommy Boy Silver.*
 —12-inch and CD single.
DJ RECTANGLE Box Set *Ground Control-Nu Gruv.*
SILICON SOUL Chic O Laa *Soma.*
 —12-inch.
VARIOUS ARTISTS Dracula 2000 Soundtrack *DV8-Columbia.*
 —Hot metal from System Of A Down, Powerman 5000, Slayer and more. I don't know what this movie's about, but if Slayer's on board then I'm sold.

DECEMBER 11

HOWARD ZINN Heroes & Martyrs *Alternative Tentacles.*

DECEMBER 12

CYPRESS HILL Live *Columbia.*
PETER FRAMPTON Peter Frampton *Legacy.*
 —Reissue of his 1994 album. Now includes the bonus track "Scotty Keep Your Pimp Hand Strong," an ode to his long-lost nephew (and New Music Monthly kingpin) Scott.
DAVID GRAY Lost Songs *RCA.*
JU JU/PIETER K Hex/Jacaranda *Phunkatek-Nu Gruv.*

DECEMBER 19

ORANGER The Quiet Vibration Land *Amazing Grease.*
VARIOUS ARTISTS Tribal Futures: The Way Ahead *Echo Beach.*

DECEMBER 26

MICHAEL BOLTON Love Songs *Columbia Legacy.*
DUKE ELLINGTON Love Songs *Columbia Legacy.*
ARETHA FRANKLIN Love Songs *Columbia Legacy.*
THE ISLEY BROTHERS Love Songs *Epic Legacy.*
 —Do you feel the love in the room? I sure as hell do.
NAS Lost Tapes *Columbia.*
FRANK SINATRA Love Songs *Columbia Legacy.*



VELVET ACID CHRIST

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World Radio History

Tech, No Logic

SCANNER FORESEES A FUTURE WHERE ELECTRONIC MUSIC ISN'T ABOUT TECHNOLOGY.

STORY: NEIL GLADSTONE
PHOTOS: PHIL KNOTT

One shiny spring day you amble into an open-air market where shopkeepers hawk fiery red apples and toy koala bears and fresh bunches of figs, and piquant bouquets of garlic sway gently off of the plywood booths. Sniffing through the rounds of fresh havarti and gouda, you realize the sound of the haggling and clinking coins seems much too intense for the size of the crowd. Then all of a sudden, from under the arching overleaves of banana bunches, a wiry, doe-eyed woman begins to dance with her basket as partner. As she approaches you're not sure how to respond. You've just stumbled into the work of Scanner.

The majority of electronic music performances involve a pale fella crouched behind a bank of keyboards occasionally twiddling the oscillators. Spine-startling whooshes and bleeps appear as if composed by a guy performing a diagnostic on your carburetor.

"Most people can't understand any correlation between the way your hands are moving and the sounds you're making," concedes Scanner, a.k.a. Robin Kimbaud, who hates the distance created between performers and audiences by keyboards and monitors. Although the English producer/DJ/artist regularly releases albums (*Scannerfunk*, his 12th, is due out shortly on Beggars Banquet), his approach to humanizing technology and creating new ways to interface with listeners is just as, if not more, groundbreaking. "You can make electronic music accessible, but you don't have to water down the ideas behind it to do it," he says.

If you're lucky enough to be strolling through the food market in the center of Adelaide, Australia in the near future, you may be able to experience Scanner's *Ghosts*, which will take place on days when the booths are normally closed. Part musical concert, part theater, this multimedia event is just one example of the way the English composer plans for his bricolages of sound to envelop audiences. In preparation for the production, Scanner will sample markets from around the world and then loop and edit these sounds into an ambient soundtrack that will play over loudspeakers.



Rimbaud's three-dimensional approach to performance really took off during 1998's *Surface Noise*, for which he sketched a path-way through London by laying the sheet music of "London Bridge Is Falling Down" over a city map with Big Ben as the starting point and St. Paul's Cathedral as the end. He then recorded the bells of those monuments from different points along the route and took digital pictures. Using MetaSynth, a program that translates visual information into sound, Rimbaud fashioned pieces of a composition by splicing together synthesized and sampled tonal phrases. He then rewired an old London Routemaster bus with a P.A. and mixed the music live while motoring through the byways.

Advances in listening, surveying, recording and photographic technology have long fascinated the English bloke who, as a child, didn't speak for two years after his father died. And if you need any further evidence of the effect of such innovations in Scanner's work, just take note of his stage name, nicked from the technological breakthrough that enabled us to listen in on everything from police emergencies to bus drivers' radios and Burger King drive-thru mics.

"I would say that we all like watching other people, but we don't like being watched," figures Scanner. He notes that his fascination stems more from capturing human tonal qualities than from tawdry gossip. Many of his samples from police scanners remove all lascivious and distinguishing details, leaving only the mundane comments.

"The human voice is such a key instrument," Rimbaud emphasizes—regardless of whether it's singing, the voice still communicates melodically. Scannerfunk begins with its creator enunciating, "Listen to my voice," and then a feminine, computer-like monotone assures "I am calm" while a frenetic piano loops through a string of notes. The composer intentionally juxtaposes the drowsy pronouncement with a flurry of sound, simultaneously contrasting humanity with technology.

"Mixing the real and not real intrigues me," he says. "What technology has allowed us to do is liberate sound, liberate image. There's software now that allows you to draw the sound with a cursor, like MetaSynth. You can design [wavelengths]—that's a unique opportunity. But I still like to use a lot of analog sound that's around us all the time, be-

it radio waves or environmental sound. If you mix the artificial with the real, it's difficult to find the boundaries."

Too many technology-minded artists let machines dictate their work, he contends. When faced with a sampler that's set up to record in 4/4 time, a producer just keeps with the program. "The truth is you can do whatever the hell you like and you forget that because it's presented in such a simple way." He's ever in search of the little accidents that acknowledge the flawed, offbeat, breathing creature who's programming the machine, "When it shows, 'Okay, I'm real.'"

"We all like watching other people, but we don't like being watched."

you like," explains the montage mastermind, who plans to improvise on audience suggestions at gigs in the coming year. He's also just contacted Softswitch, an English company that manufactures instruments out of cloth. That's right: You can just unroll your keyboard. "I like the idea of making these really accessible interfaces," says Scanner, who currently uses a stylus to input waveforms on his Filofax-sized Roland keyboard interface.

For him, working alone with just a piece of technology isn't as thrilling as collaborating with other humans, so he spends a good portion of the year traveling around the globe to do that. He's currently working on *Needle Cut*, a piece similar to *Surface Noise*, with D.C. legends Fugazi, creating a soundtrack of sorts for commuters on the city's subway system by blending the band's post-punk explorations with personal narratives recorded by local denizens.

Perhaps one-upping Natalie Cole's duet with her deceased father, Scanner occasionally performs live remixes of the soundtracks to films, such as Jean-Luc Goddard's *Alphaville*, while the movie plays on a nearby screen. Even though he knows the movie well, the chanciness of collaborating with the past is what makes it interesting: "I don't rehearse it. I just improvise live. I always feel like a tightrope walker who doesn't use a net. I like that risk of it going impossibly wrong."

Even his new work, *Blink*, in which a bank of 12 electronic eye-equipped computers reacts to the sound of the person in the room by magnifying the amount of noise the onlooker makes, is a collaboration of sorts with the viewer. And although Scanner's preoccupation with technology doesn't keep him from ruminating on the classic themes of human relationships, much of his work, like *Blink*, comments on the complexities of man's relationship with technology. "Using technology is such a lonely experience, but the question is how you use the technology and the etiquette of using it is changing, such as the level that your voice should be when you're talking on a cell phone in a restaurant."

Is there any piece of technology this forward-thinker would like to see invented?

"I hate batteries and I hate cables. Between my mixing disc and all my instruments there are just hundreds of cables. I'm looking forward to a future with no cables and no batteries, because batteries always die." **HHH**

Scanner will be performing next spring at San Francisco's Museum Of Modern Art as a part of the exhibit 010101: Art In Technological Times (www.sfmoma.org). For more information about other upcoming Scanner works, check out www.scannerdot.com.



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アストラル

Onstage, Japan's Spoozys opt for sparkling white spacesuits and colossal helmets; offstage, well, they wear sparkling white jackets, tops and pants and colossal eyewear. From left, Naomi's interstellar jacket, pants and bag are from Gabbriel Ichak Design Studio (212-673-0673); her rocket-fueled sunglasses and wristband are from Ricky's (212-226-5552). DKO's Vulcan vinyl jacket, top and pants are from Yellow Rat Bastard (212-625-8989); bionic shades are from Antique Boutique. Jun Matsue's hyperplasmic vest, sweater and pants are from Patricia Field (212-254-1699); antioxidant sunglasses from Patricia Field. Noiseman's antigravity coat came from the forward-thinking Antique Boutique (212-460-8830).

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MALIKA STYLING BY HIRO HAIR & MAKEUP BY CHI CHI



When these *Astral Astronauts* splash down, they'll need some Body Glove Whitewater sneakers with quick-drying mesh (www.bodyglovefootwear.com).

Because you want to keep your hands free when you're moonwalking, the Micro-link Walkie Talkie watch allows you to call mission control with the touch of a button (www.gadgetuniverse.com).



アスロナー-20089



There's only one way to fight off the monotony that leads to space madness: the Cybiko, a wireless "intertainment" system that allows you to play games, send messages to nearby friends and get new downloads everyday. (www.gadgetuniverse.com).



Not sure if the captain's traded in his Tang for a fuzzy navel? Find out with Sharper Image's Digital Breathalyzer—friends don't let friends jump into hyperspace drunk (www.sharperimage.com).

6-16



スペーススーツ





ムーンスーツ



Transporters?
Holodecks? Ha. In the
future we'll be able to
use Game Boys to e-
mail mission control.
The folks at Shark MX
are on the forefront of
this technology—for
more information, check
out [www.interact-
acc.com](http://www.interact-
acc.com).



イジラ - ステラ - クロ - ジ'ラ'



Deep space gets pretty cold. What better way to lock in that body heat than with some air-tight, slimming rubber clothing? (Bottom, left to right) Jun Matsue's supersonic rubber shirt, hat and pants are from Patricia Field. Noiseman's Battlestar yellow rubber shirt and white pants are from Patricia Field. Sunglasses are from Ricky's. DKO's intergalactic red jacket and sunglasses can be found at Antique Boutique. Naomi's Tatooine-style rubber suit, t-shirt, necklace and sunglasses are available at Ricky's.

HARDCORE WIGGER

MARY HUFF OF SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS



PAUL DAGYS

Ever tried to plug in your hot rollers in a dirty beer hall? Mary Huff has, and she's here to tell you: It's not easy. So to keep up her signature onstage bouffant hairdo, Huff, bassist for Chapel Hill boogie rockers Southern Culture On The Skids, started collecting wigs 11 years ago. "With wigs you can not take a shower for a month, then just plop that thing on your head and it's instant glamour, you're instantly more entertaining," she says, and each of her 150 hairpieces helps "the accent come out and makes me cock and strut a little more." Huff prides herself on looking, well, hot when spotlight temperatures are rising: "It's so hot, it's insane—and I wear a wig cap, which is like putting knee-high pantyhose on your head. But you gotta do what you gotta do to look good." Currently on tour promoting the band's latest, *Liquored Up And Lacquered Down* (TVT), Huff spends her downtime shopping for new wigs—"I brought about a dozen on tour and I'll probably go home with about 20"—but she's never topped her favorite, an Angie Dickinson-style '60s platinum number. High-end wigs can cost as much as \$120 a piece, but look at it this way, she says: "The bigger your hair is the smaller your ass looks." >>>DYLAN SIEGLER

QUENTIN WHO?

GUY RITCHIE PROVES YOU DON'T NEED TARANTINO TO MAKE AN IRONIC GANGSTER MOVIE.

Guy Ritchie's ironic, working-class London gangster pic, *Lock, Stock, And Two Smoking Barrels*, earned several comparisons to Quentin Tarantino's bloody, frenetic work on its release in 1998. The English director's new diamond-heist flick, *Snatch* (Screen Gems), might be accused of similar derivation if you didn't know better: Although Ritchie admits to being a Tarantino fan, he prefers the safecracker tension of *The Asphalt Jungle* and historical drama of *Gladiator* to *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*.

Ritchie went on his gangster jag after noticing a huge vacuum in British film history. "I've always thought that after *Performance* and *Get Carter*, things got really quiet," he says, naming the two undisputed chronicles of the English underworld, both from the early '70s. He headed into *Snatch* hoping to make a serious contribution to the tradition. "But I couldn't help it—I just ended up getting rather silly. I think it's because people on the set were really assing around, and that worked its way into the script."

Seriousness, after all, has been the main line of British cinema—especially the often dreary, socially conscious films of the 1960s. "I can't stand them," Ritchie says of black-and-white movies set in the industrial North. "All I know is, probably like most punters, I want to get lost. I don't want reality—unless the reality



is so alarming or thought-provoking that it warrants the dourness."

There's nothing dour about the hyperactive *Snatch*. Ritchie's secret weapon in *Snatch* is none other than Brad Pitt, who approached Ritchie after seeing *Lock, Stock*. "He's a good-looking bastard, and I tried to make him ugly, which is hard to do. I think people begrudge him for being so good-looking. So you have to make him humorous."

Pitt plays an affable, nearly unintelligible piker, a wanderer with a mumbly, quasi-Celtic accent who turns out to be the traveling folks' bare-knuckle boxing champ. Ritchie and Pitt hung out with real traveling vagrants before making the movie. "They haven't lost touch with their visceral side," says Ritchie, who's obsessed with evolution and the period after the Crusades. "They live by their own set of rules. I'd be one of them quicker than I'd be a banker." >>>SCOTT TIMBERG

CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON (SONY PICTURES CLASSICS)

The versatile Ang Lee follows up *Ride With The Devil* with an action movie that has something for almost everybody: romance, history, drama and, most importantly, some of the greatest martial arts sequences ever filmed. Chow Yun-Fat plays a 19th-century Giang Hu warrior who gives his 400-year-old jade sword to an old friend (Michelle Yeoh) for her to pass along to her father. The magic sword is stolen by a masked thief, which prompts incredible battle scenes (choreographed by *The Matrix*'s Yuen Wo-Ping) that might actually cause your head to spin off. >>>JON POPICK

STATE AND MAIN (FINE LINE FEATURES)



David Mamet has drifted from his gruff school of theater and cinema to something like Paul Thomas Anderson-lite, replete with ensemble casts and overlapping subplots. That's not necessarily a bad thing, especially since Mamet's

blue-collar roughness and flat, staccato dialogue were growing tired. With his latest film, he's combined a satire of Hollywood with pastoral New England. *State And Main* drops a movie crew—William H. Macy as director, Alec Baldwin as reckless star and Philip Seymour Hoffman as a sweet, nostalgic playwright turned screenwriter—into a Vermont village full of local characters. The culture clash between the hard-edged crew from "the coast" and the genial locals begins amiably, but gradually spins into discomfort. Despite a few slack spots, this Preston Sturges-inspired comedy is by turns biting and affectionate. >>>S.T.

SHADOW OF THE VAMPIRE (LIONS GATE FILMS)

What if legendary German director F.W. Murnau used a real blood-sucker to star in his vampire film *Nosferatu*? That's the intriguing premise behind *Shadow Of The Vampire*, a clever comic fantasy that takes you behind the scenes during production of the celebrated 1922 classic. Consumed by his passion for realism, Murnau (John Malkovich) hires Max Schreck (Willem Dafoe), the ultimate "method actor"—who suspiciously only appears at night and in character—to play the lead. Even more mysteriously, cast and crewmembers keep dying. Nearly unrecognizable under impressive makeup, you'll swear the eerily effective Dafoe is a real vampire too. >>>JOHN ELSASSER

Sega GT (Sega Sports) DC



If you can't get your competitor to adapt one of their best titles for your gaming console, what do you do? You copy it. Though *Sega GT* is essentially a *Gran Turismo* clone, it's still one of the most accurate racing sims on any console to date. If you've played the Playstation title, you know the drill—start with \$10K, get your license, buy used car, win some cash, upgrade car to win more races, sell car and buy the one you wanted in the first place. *Sega GT* might not feature as many cars as its adversary, but its excellent tracks and high frame-rate easily win the day, while its unique "Carrozeria" mode enables you to build a car from the chassis up. As with most sims, learning *Sega GT* isn't easy—but give it time and even you can learn how to maneuver a Daihatsu mini-wagon around a hairpin turn at 65 mph. >>>AARON CLOW

NASCAR Pro Digital 2 (Thrust Master) PC/Mac



Shopping for a steering wheel controller but terrified of sticker shock? Thrust Master has lowered the cost of entry into the wheel market with its competent, budget-priced *NASCAR Pro Digital 2*. Although the product's package boasts "10-bit accuracy," gamers know that feel and precision can't be measured on a stat sheet. While the *Pro Digital 2* improved my ability to outrun the cops in *Need For Speed: High Stakes*, it also kept me completely out of the competition in *Rally Masters*. As usual, your mileage may vary. The twin column-mounted shifters respond with a nice, tactile "click" when activated, which is a quality that would've been welcomed on the otherwise vague stick-shift. The rubber-padded wheel is also a nice touch, as is the aluminum hub. If you're still using a joystick or keyboard as your racing controller of choice, it may be time to make the leap. You don't still steer your car with a tiller, do you? >>>A.C.

San Francisco Rush 2049 (Midway) DC/N64

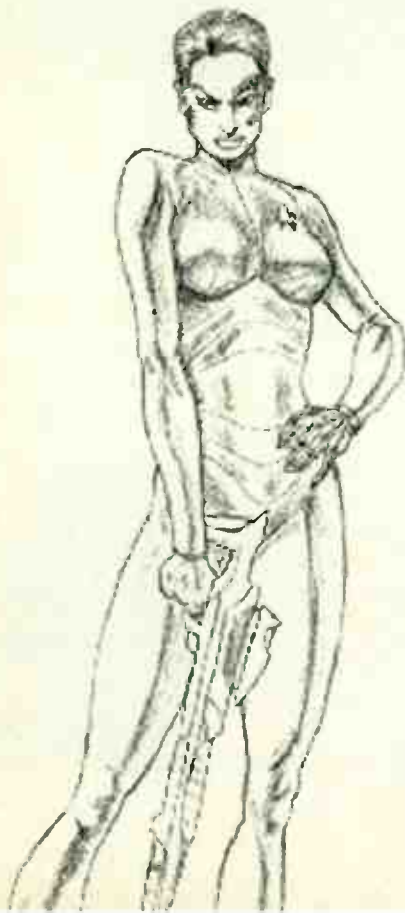


Granny always said taking shortcuts was no way to get ahead in life. Which is why she would have got her bony ass kicked in *San Francisco Rush 2049*, Midway's home version of their arcade racer. The meat of *Rush 2049*'s mayhem is finding outlandish shortcuts on each of its six courses, strewn across the urban landscape of a very sci-fi version of San Francisco. It's the first console game in the *Rush* series to capture that arcade sense of speed and gravity-defying fun (the cars even have friggin' wings), and the addition of a stunt mode and multiplayer battle mode just sweetens the deal. I hope Granny got herself a DreamCast in heaven. >>>STEVE TILLEY

Star Trek: Voyager—Elite Force (Activision) PC



Red Alert: The *Star Trek* gaming franchise finally has a real winner, and it's been a long time coming. *Star Trek: Voyager—Elite Force* is, without a doubt, the best first-person shooter to come full-phasers-on-stun. There are so many unexpected plot twists, so much interaction with other characters and so many wonderfully eerie and beautiful worlds in this game (which is based upon the *Quake III* engine) that it doesn't matter if you watch *Voyager* or not—the *Star Trek* universe is almost secondary. As Elite Force member Alexander (or Alexandria) Munroe, you play out an episode of the television series—from the introduction before the main credits to the epilogue. The game is short, but what it sacrifices in length it makes up in intensity. You will curse the clock on your computer table for even trying to remind you that it's 3 a.m. and you have to work tomorrow. >>>A.C.



SideWinder Strategic Commander (Microsoft) PC



Looking like a mouse after some serious steroid abuse, Microsoft's latest foray into the niche game controller market is for hardcore real-time strategy junkies only. Festooned with more buttons than a Victorian wedding dress, the *Strategic Commander* can drastically streamline gameplay in most any real-time strategy title, reducing dozens of keyboard commands and mouse maneuverings into a handful of button presses. The catch is, you have to climb one hell of a steep learning curve to commit the various shift-press-twist-with-an-extra-olive combos to memory. The left-handed usage makes camera movement in 3D strategy titles much more intuitive, but only the most anal virtual generals will take the time needed to unlock this doohick-ey's many subtleties. >>>S.T.

NewsBytes

Interplay and Gathering Of Developers have decided to throw a few bones to Apple fanatics. Among several titles arriving for the Mac later this year are Ritual's excellent third-person shooter, *Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K. 2*, and Interplay's role-playing yardsticks *Icwind Dale* and *Baldur's Gate II*.... Is it possible that Sony could be the next corporation to fail when assuming consumer loyalty will sell their latest product? We're not going to bet against the PlayStation 2's success by any means, but we can't be the only ones balking at its \$300 price tag. Sure, it's a DVD player as well, but users will have to shell out another \$35 (not including the extra controllers) for a multi-tap device in order to plug in four controllers at the same time (something that console gamers now take for granted). And then there's the matter of some more cash outlay for a modem/broadband card. Now that Sega has heavily discounted its Dreamcast to \$149 (free if you sign up for SegaNet internet access), will gamers show Sony the money? We'll see after the adopters pony up. >>>A.C.



Back before Art Spiegelman was famous for *Maus*, he and Françoise Mouly (now the cover editor at *The New Yorker*) edited *RAW*, probably the best comics anthology ever. It's taken them 10 years, but they've unleashed another collection, and it's a doozy: **Little Lit** (*RAW Junior*), a set of folktales for children in comics form. Artists like Daniel Clowes and Charles Burns, who ordinarily draw for a considerably older audience, seem liberated by the chance to do something for kids; Spiegelman's adaptation of the Hasidic tale "Prince Rooster" is completely adorable. There's even a nod to children's comics of the past with a reprint of a 1943 piece by the great cartoonist Walt Kelly. And the endpapers are by Chris Ware of *Acme Novelty Library* fame: the most depressing board game of all time, *Fairy Tale Road Rage*.



paintings of Alex Ross's *Kingdom Come*.... One of the most visually compelling comics stories of late consists of a 69-page monologue, delivered by a retired fan salesman wandering around his dilapidated Toronto home. Seth (just one name, thanks) has been serializing his epic story "**Clyde Fans**" in his Palookaville series, and he's just collected the first part of the story in a single volume

(Drawn & Quarterly). Seth is an enthusiast of old-school cartooning—the clean, thick, dramatic lines of '30s and '40s magazine illustration—and the loving nostalgia of his drawings makes his talking-head story redolent of the narrator's past.... **Actus Tragicus** is an Israeli collective of five comics artists who've just published their first American work: two "flipper" books (*Actus Tragicus*), with a 30-page graphic novella by one of them on each side of the book (and a short, painted story by B. Kolton, the weirdest of the group, in the middle). Their writing doesn't come through too well in translation, though I. Rennert's inverted coming-of-age story "Speaking Of The Devil" is pretty amusing. The drawing, however, is fascinating across the board—stylized, bold, sometimes awkward and gnarled but crackling with originality.





French photographers Pierre et Gilles make no pretense about keepin' it real. They fashion iconic scenarios from glittering sets and fabulous costumes, and then hand-paint on unreal hues and sugary gloss that suggest the dreamy perfection of golden-age movie posters and gaudy dime-store keepsakes. In this glistening world, Adam and Eve seem to have stepped out of a coming-of-age flick and Siouxsie Sioux (one of several famous participants, including Iggy Pop, Marc Almond

and Sarah Cracknell) morphs into a Medusa-like vulture. The subjects often wind up looking more like mannequins, but there's just enough humanity left in the eyes to make it appear as if the people have been trapped in their poses—and in a way, they have. Dan Cameron's new survey, **Pierre et Gilles** (Merrell), celebrates the first US exhibitions of the duo's work at New York's New Museum Of Contemporary Art (until January 7) and San Francisco's Yerba Buena Center For The Arts (from February 10 to May 6).



Imagine the hyper-analysis of *High Fidelity* crossed with the twisted romantic cynicism of *In The Company Of Men* and you probably have a decent idea of **Girlfriend 44** (St. Martin's Press). Like two dogs transfixed by the same bone, Harry and Gerrard discover Alice, who sleeps in a black catsuit that makes her look like one of the Avengers and has a body that could "draw spunk from a lodging-house candle." Already a hit in its native England, *Girlfriend 44* reads like a barroom rant by an old college chum who reminds you why refus-

ing to grow up can be so much fun.... Although the Chinese government has likened followers of Falun Gong to the doomsday cult that released tear gas into Japan's subway system, the basis of the practice is a series of Qigong-style meditation and breathing exercises with purported health benefits. So, why are Communist party hardliners supposedly torturing practitioners in mental institutions and sentencing them to long jail sentences? In **Falun Gong's Challenge To China: Spiritual Practice Or "Evil Cult"?** (Akashic Books), former CNN and ABC news producer Danny Schechter serves up plenty of compelling explanations and interviews about fascistic propaganda and rights abuse in the People's Republic. Although it reads at times like an overextended news article, Schechter's evidence is certainly convincing.

24x

AUDIO RIP

12x
WRITE

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- 15 Colorado's **3K SATELLITE** may wax pop-rock poetic on this year's eclectic *Radar* (Hideaway), but the ghost of Gram Parsons lurks close behind. A little bit o' sweaty Southern country goes a long way, as singer/songwriter Marc Benning can attest on the jittery radio-ready track "Riverside." "I was sitting on a bench in Memphis, on the banks of the Mississippi River, when this song came to me," he explains. "There's so much history there; memories of people dying, lives being lived, music being made. It was so incredibly hot too. The sprinklers came on and I just sat there and let the water spray me the entire afternoon."
- 16 Connecticut rockers **HOT ROD CIRCUIT** made a point of filling tracks like "Flight 89 (North American)" (from their sophomore set, *If It's Cool With You, It's Cool With Me*, on Triple Crown-Montalban Hotel) with the same vigor they display live. And drummer Mike Poorman's quite proud: "The one comment I've always gotten since I've been in the band is, 'You guys are the most energetic band I've ever seen,' and I've gotten that four or five times." But his bandmates wouldn't allow that pride to get overblown. "Do you want to go to the bathroom and deflate your balls?" bassist Jay Russell nudges. (See On The Verge p. 27.)
- 17 As a member of Guided By Voices, Tobin Sprout rode a range of emotions, from appreciation, to road-weariness, to knowing that the band's focus wasn't really his. "I believe in Bob [Pollard] and his songs and his vision," he says, "but I was always aware that it was Bob's band. To his credit, he was always open to what I threw out...but I was never under any delusion that GBV was anything but Bob's band." Now Sprout's got his own band, **EYESHINEHEAD**, though—and a new record called *Wrinkled Thoughts* (Recordhead-Wigwam), featuring the track "Marriage Incorporated." (See Review p. 62.)
- 18 "Today it's important to be as loud as you can, to break limits and rules, to destroy daily the fascism that rules the world," offers Gina V. D'Orlo of German hardcore techno duo **TECHNO**. She and partner Patric C. have been using tracks like "Discriminate Against The Next Fashionsucker You Meet—It's A Raver" (their first) and "Zero Heroes" (from the new *The One And Only High And Low* on Digital Hardcore) to break boundaries and eardrums since 1995. "To me, music always meant more than wasting time in practice rooms," D'Orlo says, "...then finding out that there were a billion people doing the same shit."
- 19 "I want to transcend potential cult-dom. I want to reach the heights of both Billy Joel and Daniel Johnston," says Toronto-based singer/songwriter **IAN BRYK**. And he's started by developing a devoted following, which includes Ben Folds, Courtney Love, Ron Sexsmith and even Deborah Gibson. "As it stands, I'm stuck somewhere between Robert Forster and Armeé Mann," he explains. Bryk's third album, *Lovers Leap* (Scratchie), a 12-track pop opus, includes "Fingers"—a song based on "what happens when a guy you look up to turns around and tries to jump your bones."
- 20 "For a drummer, **THE MAX WEINBERG 7** is a dream come true," praises Max Weinberg, celebrity skins-smacker and longtime member of Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band. "Since 1993, when Conan O'Brien asked me to serve as the musical director and bandleader for his NBC-TV *Late Night* program, it has been my privilege to work with these extraordinary musicians." The band put together the tracks on their self-titled debut (Drive Entertainment) using some very simple criteria, according to Weinberg: "Rock This Joint" is a song that the band has always enjoyed playing."

 **TDK**

CMU NEW MUSIC

ISSUE 89 JANUARY 2001

- 1 With two hit albums and a slew of successful solo projects, the **WU-TANG CLAN** could have done whatever they wanted on their new record, *The W (Loud)*. So they took it to L.A. and got down to doing what they do best—finding new ways to revamp hip-hop. "Make songs, that's our focus. Make creative things, not the things you're used to hearing," says Wu MC U-God. "We're some creative brothers. We ain't afraid to experiment. You know how some motherfuckers always sound the same on every fuckin' record? We don't do that." Enter the Wu-Tang all over again with "Hollow Bones." (See Cover Story p. 36.)
- 2 Since 1992's *Broken*, each major **NINE DUCH NAILS** release has been given the remix treatment; with *Things Falling Apart* (Nothing), 1999's *The Fragile* gets its turn. NIN kingpin Trent Reznor recently told the press that his approach to remixing is a return to the old days of the vinyl 12-inch, when bands would be remixed by their peers. On "Slipping Away," Reznor and studio cohort Alan Moulder decided to handle it themselves, adding more digitally mangled funk to *The Fragile*'s "Into The Void."
- 3 **THE PHARCYDE** made a name for themselves with their debut LP, *Bizarre Ride II The Pharcyde*—an eccentric alternative to the gangsta styles that dominated early-'90s rap. After a lengthy absence (since 1995's *LabcabinCalifornia*), they're ready to make a difference again, by being...plain. "Plain Rap [Edel America-Delicious Vinyl] is just that," says MC Romye. "It's just rap. I feel like everyone in hip-hop has to be somethin'...no one was rappin' to rap for hip-hop's sake." Get ordinary to the tune of "Trust (J-Swift Remix)." (See Quick Fix p. 12.)
- 4 All greatest-hits records seem to include an obligatory new track. When **BLIND** went to record theirs—for the wistfully titled *Greatest Hits* (Virgin)—"Music Is My Radar" wasn't going to be it. "We went in and did 'Black Book,' which we all think is the best thing we've done," bassist Alex James told *Melody Maker* recently. "But it was 10 minutes long. Then we went in to do the B-side and, because we weren't feeling any pressure, ['Music Is My Radar'] came out. The A&R man came down and burst into tears." Have a box of tissues handy.



WU-TANG CLAN



NINE DUCH NAILS



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THE PARACLYPS



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MR. Z



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10 When **Strait** frontman James Lynn Strait was killed in a car accident on December 11, 1998, he left behind family, friends and a promising music career. "Angel's Son," featuring **LABOX OF SEVENDUST**, is part of the tribute album *Strait Up* (Immortal/Virgin), created from the tracks of their unfinished second album. "The only star shining bigger than everyone on this record is Lynn and I think that's why you see such a huge representation of people doing this," says Sugar Ray's Mark McGrath, who also contributes a track. "When you see the turnout of people here, you can see Lynn's legacy."

11 "We're making sure that we don't take ourselves too seriously," smirks punk-pop troupe **SEVENDUST**'s vocalist and bassist Chris Baird. For a band comprised of two Harvard graduates, a psych major and a hair stylist, intellectualism answers to the bloody axe of loud rock. The band's XDF Records debut, *Bikini Pie Fight*, featuring the spit-stained scorcher "Porno Getaway," shows that the band knows how to get the kids' attention. Baird explains, "We're always mindful of the very short attention span of our audience, which we have to assume is somehow, impossibly, even more narrow than our own."

12 The Solesides label was originally the brainchild of DJ Shadow and hip-hop crews Latyrx and Blackalicious. But when it shuttered in 1997, Quannum Projects—a label based on the same concept and run by the same folks—was born. *Solesides Greatest Bumps* is a retrospective culled from the Quannum heads' old-school vaults, painstakingly collected to "provide hours of intense enjoyment in a variety of applications and listening environments," according to the label. The bump featured here shows Latyrx MC **LYNCH HORN** teaming up with **JOYO VELARDE** on the track "Balcony Beach." (See Review p. 65, Hip-Hop p. 73.)

13 Veteran MC **WRLAP** was named the best hip-hop act at this year's Boston Music Awards, and now he's primed to break nationally with *Enters The Colossus* (Def Jux), home to "Cro-Magnon (produced by FAKTS-ONE, featuring Illin' P)." He hopes *Colossus* might help fix the damaged state of popular hip-hop. "It really worries me when I think about what could be on the minds of the youth today. The cats out here listening to DMX, and to them, Jay-Z is the best rapper ever," he told www.hiphop-elements.com recently. "All these people are talking about straight-up nonsense. They have no respect for women or themselves." (See Feature p. 34.)

14 The members of Omaha, Nebraska's **THE FAINT** have been playing together in one form or other since 1994; back then, band members Joel Petersen and Todd Baechle played with Bright Eyes' Conor Oberst in the lite-rock band Norman Baiier. Now they're plugging away at their punky brand of sick pop with *Blank-Wave Arcade* (Saddle Creek) (which includes "Worked Up So Sexual"), the band's second effort. "When we started playing music, we felt like it was something plausible right away," says Baechle. "With G-funk and 'can't-play-core' as genres of music, it was easy to believe that we too could play music that someone may want to listen to." (See Tomorrowland p. 50.)

5 When British rockers the Housemartins disintegrated in 1989, one piece of the band went off to become Fatboy Slim, and two other fragments, vocalist Paul Heaton and drummer David Hemingway, formed **THE HEATERS A SOUTH**. Chart-toppers in their native land, the band's soul/rock mix is a well-kent secret Stateside, despite—or perhaps due to—their dry lyrical wit. "Closer Than Most," from *Painting It Red* (Ark 21) however, is an old-fashioned love song Yanks should understand: It's "about tapping into a spirit you feel when you meet someone. You get that certain feeling and you don't have to say anything, you just know," says Heaton. (See Review p. 55.)

6 Liverpudlian new wavers **LADYTRON** are named after a Roxy Music song, but their influences are much more Devo and Duran Duran. To be fair, Kraftwerk, funk purveyors the Meters and early electro also number among their favorites, but for 26-year-old keyboardist Daniel Hunt, no one beats Debbie Harry: "[My introduction to new wave] was probably [Blondie's] 'Heart Of Glass,' I was four years old at the time, and Debbie Harry must qualify as my first crush, as I'm sure she was for lots of people." Ladytron's "He Took Her To A Movie" is from their new *Commodore Rock* EP (Emperor Norton). (See Tomorrowland p. 50.)

7 The aim of trip-hop purveyors **HOOPERPHONIC** is "to make great pop songs that have a prominent, distinctive atmosphere," according to chief songwriter Alex Callier. "The combination of accessible melodies and wistful moods is one I hear too rarely in contemporary pop music," he says. Their new album, *The Magnificent Tree* (Epic), features cellos, trumpets, an autoharp, a theremin and even a children's choir. Fusing influences like Angelo Badalamenti (David Lynch's soundtrack guru) and Portishead, "Mad About You" is the first single from the Belgian combo's third album.

8 Long Island, New York's **MY FAVORITE** are children of the '80s who "remember Boy George on the *A-Team* and Adam Ant on *The Equalizer*." And like many of us, the members chose their friends based on the band t-shirts they had in common; synth player/vocalist Michael Grace recalls fondly "how many Friends it was possible to make based on a Depeche Mode 101 t-shirt." Perhaps that new-wave memory also informs "Homeless Club Kids," from the arty opus *Joan Of Arc Awaiting Trial* (Double Agent). (See Tomorrowland p. 50.)

9 Although **WANE JIN** hails from the blond and sequined outback of Nashville, the quartet's second full-length release, *Brainwasher* (Virgin), is anything but sedate country fare. It's full of down-home strings, yes, but the band's roaring guitars and howling vocals deliver more rock than they do twang. On the album's title track, singer Bobby Bare Jr. admits to letting some serious rock yearnings loose: "I just wanted to get something perverted and stupid as an intro to show the ridiculousness of what's to follow; to set a ridiculous theme of drama." (See Review p. 55.)



THE PARACLYPS



LADYTRON



MY FAVORITE



WANE JIN

34 Satellite (Hideaway) On The CD p. 95
www.34satellite.com

6gig (Ultimatum) Review p. 54 www.6gig.com

A3 (Columbia) Review p. 54 www.a3-online.com

Add N To (X) (Mute) Quick Fix p. 15, Review p. 54
www.addntox.com

Atriccando All Stars (Stern's Africa) Best New Music p. 23

Amen (Virgin) Dn The Verge p. 26, Review p. 54
www.comaamerica.com

Ananda Project (King Street-Nite Grooves) Review p. 55

Laurie Anderson (Rhino) Flashback p. 75
www.laurieanderson.com

Antibalas (Afrosound) Dn The Verge p. 28
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Artful Dodger (London-Sire) Tomorrowland p. 46, Dance p. 72

Bare Jr. (Virgin) Review p. 55, On The CD p. 95
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The Beautiful South (Ark 21) Review p. 55, On The CD p. 95 www.beautifulsouth.co.uk

The BellRaye (Flapping Jet) Singles p. 74
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Kruder & Dorfmeister (G-stone) Quick Fix p. 18
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NEW ORLEANS



HORSIN' AROUND IN JACKSON SQUARE.

Eat. Drink. Dance. Party. Sleep. Repeat. New Orleans locals can whip up impromptu seafood boils, gigs and feasts out of virtually nothing at all. And if the city-that-care-forgot atmosphere gets on your nerves (try getting to work when your home and your job lie on opposite sides of a 21-float carnival parade), just remember: Your boss is probably dancing on one of those floats dressed as Diana Ross.

While many make their pilgrimages to the home of the blues expecting to check out famous funk, jazz and R&B names like **the Neville Brothers**, **the Marsalises** or **Dr. John**, you're always more likely to stumble into an out-of-the-way bar and get blown away by a bunch of cats you've never heard of. It's ludicrously easy to find off-the-cuff gigs where a bunch of musicians just show up, play their butts off, and at the end of the night, pass around a blue Kentwood water bottle to collect donations. Stanton Moore, the drummer for local funk heroes **Galactic**, has been known to put together some of the best gigs of this breed under the name Moore & More, where players in various bands come together and split apart like random electrons in an unstable musical molecule.

That serendipitous feeling of

expecting to go one place and pleasantly finding yourself three doors down is part of the city's true charm. And music—along with almost everything else—just kind of happens in New Orleans. It may take a while for the drummer to find the keys to his car, or the sax player might not be able to tear himself away from a neighbor's seafood boil, or musicians might be shuttling between two different gigs at once, but once things get rolling (usually around 11 p.m.), you've got a lot of options.

The beloved all-night music nightspot **Benny's** is gone (shortly after closing its doors, the building literally fell over into the house next door), but there's still the **Funky Butt** (714 N. Rampart, 558-0872), the **Maple Leaf** (8316 Oak, 866-9359) and the back room at the **El Matador** (504 Esplanade, 569-8361). There's also the **Circle Bar** (1032 St. Charles, 588-2616), a tiny place with no stage that books mostly low-key shows in the alternative, alt-country and slacker-jazz veins. Guitarist Alex McMurray of **Royal Fingerbowl** is sometimes seen tending bar, no doubt collecting barfly stories and ramshackle characters to use in his Tom Waits-like songs. If you want a taste of vibrant New Orleans brass-band culture, **Donna's** (800 N. Rampart, 596-6914) throws down authentic New Orleans street jazz almost every night, within earshot of the very same Storyville neighborhood where some say jazz was first played.

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NOSH NEW ORLEANS

Great cheap food is unusually easy to come by in N'Awlin's, with tiny corner bar/restaurants roughly every six or eight blocks. **Parasol's** (2533 Constance St., 899-2054) serves up gravy-soaked, garlicky, overstuffed roast-beef po-boys wrapped in paper, and even has a French-fry po-boy on the menu. **Uglesich's** (1238 Baronne St., 523-8571) is arguably the best down-home, elbows-on-the-table seafood joint in the world—I once discovered Stevie Ray Vaughan's entire road crew one table over. The kitchen is behind a half-wall partition so when you order fried seafood, you can actually hear and smell your meal dropping into the grease. Yep, it's a tough town for vegans and health-food fans—if you need a break from all the fried food, check out **Taquería Corona** (5932 Magazine St., 897-3974). **Jacques-Imo's Café** (8324 Oak St., 861-0886) offers more sophisticated and decadent dining but is still cheaper than most fancy places. Plus it's right near the streetcar line and only a door or two down from the legendary **Maple Leaf**, the bar where New Orleans piano wizard James Booker used to hold court and still home to quite a few colorful odd-ball locals of the *Confederacy Of Dunces* variety.



IMPROMPTU STREET JAZZ.

CUTTING CREW

STORY: RICH ALBERTONI ILLUSTRATION: NICHOLAS MEOLA

Catch my breath, close my eyes... November 1987. Ashland, Oregon. Thursday night, half past nine. A Greyhound bus pulls up to where I stand on a deserted downtown street. I grip a \$58 round-trip ticket in my left hand. Seven solitary hours to Portland, to see Anna. A yellow bulb lights a dim circle around me in the dark, Pine-Sol-reeking bus. We're rolling through Grants Pass, and I'm thinking back five weekends to a day spent hanging around in bed with Anna and feeling swimmy, dreamy. Still, there is the side of her I don't understand. She wants to live together, but what do I want?

Once you won't admit it, then you know you're in it... Approaching Eugene, I reach down to my backpack for a gray cassette that's printed with tall letters and a stark diagonal slice. It's the soundtrack to my life right now, *Broadcast*, by the British band Cutting Crew. Their No. 1 single, "(I Just) Died In Your Arms" had hardly registered on my musical radar. But they hung around, begging for attention—over the ceiling speakers of the student union building, on the jukebox of the Log Cabin Tavern, in the window at Diana's Records & Tapes.

Then I saw them on MTV—in a video filled with beautiful wandering models, sidelong stares, sensual touches and silk sheets—and I wanted to plunge headfirst into their black and white slow-motion love world. They were all about thick hair and textured passion, everything my work/study cafeteria job at Southern Oregon State College was not. They'd been in love before—they knew the hardest part.

Just one touch, just one look... Maybe you could say I wasn't Cutting Crew-ready until that fall, when Anna left to take a job in Portland. From then on, everything became longing. There were no e-mail accounts to check, no nickel-a-minute long-distance plans. There were only afternoons spent on the front porch staring at the Siskyou Mountains, reading newspaper accounts of the recent stock-market crash and the upcoming Reagan-Gorbachev summit. Waiting for a handwritten letter.

On those days, no song swept through me more sweetly than "I've Been In Love Before." And no person—besides Anna—loomed larger than the Cutting Crew's swooning frontman, Nick Van Eede. I was struggling to keep cool in the face of my desires. But there was Nick, a genuine sex symbol surrounded by plenty of women who wanted him, handling it all with an even pitch, restrained vocals and a modest, understated beat.

A dangerous dance... I dozed through Salem with *Broadcast* still streaming into my ears. The driver soon announced our arrival at the Portland station. My heart was beginning to pound. I can still feel the cold sweat on my hands as I spotted Anna in the plastic bus shelter waiting for me, her eyes sparkling with the sunrise. All I heard was a Cutting Crew crescendo of suspended piano, piercing



electric guitar and gentle drumming. And then I buried the tape in the bottom of my bag.

One small word can make me feel like running away... By the spring of 1988, Anna and I had moved beyond the long-distance phase of our love affair. We loaded up my futon and headed north on I-5, ready to share a Capitol Hill apartment in then-undiscovered Seattle. When I unpacked the last of our boxes, however, my *Broadcast* cassette was gone. I felt a surprising surge of relief that Anna would never see it. Her pop sophistication, after all, was a key to our chemistry. She was moving me into musical territory I would never have thought to chart—early Hoodoo Gurus, New Order, the Young Fresh Fellows. We were going to clubs and taking stock of the local scene. Cutting Crew was a skin to be shed, a dirty little secret to be kept.

You can't say you're in it, no, until you reach the limit... Of course, I had never really gotten to know Cutting Crew. Today, when I scan the car-radio dial and find them grazing in the green pastures of soft-rock, I feel guilty for abandoning them to their tepid future as quickly as I did. Looking for redemption, I've searched the Web for vestiges of the band, only to be connected to a unisex hair salon in Dracut, Massachusetts.

This left me one option. After all our years together, I had to reveal my Cutting Crew side to Anna. It wouldn't be easy—she is still so cool, and she knows she taught me everything I know. So I found a used copy of *Broadcast*, awkwardly took it home, and told her my story. One minute into "I've Been In Love Before," she flashed me her signature *what-is-this-shit?* glance, the one I had feared. But this time, it had no sting. I wanted back that innocent, Ashland part of myself. And my hand reached out for the volume knob, finally ready to turn it up.

He's reached the limit, and knows he's in it. Rich Albertoni is a freelance writer in Madison, Wisconsin, and is fully aware of his story's comical pathos.

As I spotted Anna in the plastic bus shelter, her eyes sparkling with the sunrise, all I heard was a Cutting Crew crescendo.

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69, 29 DIED, 80 MILE BEACH, AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM, AFRO MYSTIK, AMALGAMATION OF SOUNDZ, AMAZONICA, APHRODITE,ARLUNG & CAMERON, ASPHALT JUNGLE, AURA ANTHROPICA, AUTOMATIC IMPULSES, AWOL ONE, AXUS, BALKAN TRIBES, BAMBOLEO, BASEMENT JAXX, BASSLAND, BEATLESS, BEEF WELLINGTON, BEN WA, BILLY LINCOLN, BOB HOLROYD, BONES & WESTERMAN, BOOKS ON TAPE, BOWERY ELECTRIC, BT, BUCKETHEAD, CAPSULE, CARISSA MONDAVI, CHAINSAW AND CHILDREN, CHIEVELLE, CHRIS PAUL, CIRRUS, CITY OF TRIBES, CLEVELAND LOUNGE, COFFEE BREAKS, CONSULE, DAKONA, DARWIN, CIAMBER, DEEJAY PIN-UP, DELERIUUM, DIDGEBEAT, DIESELBOY, DIGITAL ASSASINS, DJ DESIGN, DJ ME DJ YOU, DJ SOUL SLINGER, DRUNKEN MASTER, DUNE, DYNAGROOVE, DYNAMIC SYNCOPATION, ELECTROLAND, ELWOOD, EMPEROR SLY, ENDORPHIN,ENIGMA, FAMILY OF GOD, FAZE ACTION, FEAR FACTORY, FUTURE LIFE, FUTURE LOOP FOUNDATION, GEARWHORE, GENUINE CHILDS, GEORGE SARAH, HANDIMAN MAURICE, HANS PLATZGUMER, HAWKE, HEADCASE, HED NOIZE, HI-FI KILLERS, HYPERBOREA, IAN POOLEY, INFERNAL, INFINITE POSSE,INNERZONE ORCHESTRA, INNOCENT BYSTANDER, J. SMOOTH, JOI, JONDI & SPESH, JUNGLE THEORY, LAYO & BUSHWAKA, LIONROCK, LONI ROSE, LUNATIC CALM, MEDICINE DRUM, MEG LEE CHIN, MELLOWTRON, MEPHISTO ODYSSEY, MICRO, MIKE HIRAIZKA, MING & FS, MITCHELL, MÓCEAN WORKER, MOUNT FLORIDA, MR. SCRUFF, MY SCARLET LIFE, NAKED MUSIC, NOBODY, NOEL ZANCANELLA, NYNEX, ŌTAKU, OVERSOUL 7, PAPAS FRITAS, PEPE DELUXE, PIZZACATO FIVE, PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS, PLEXIQ, POET NAME LIFE, PONGA, P'TAAH, PURACANE, PURPLE PLANET, PUSH, Q-BURNS ABSTRACT MESSAGE, QUASIMOTO, REPRISE, REROOTED, RINOCEROSE, RUBBEROOM, SCOTT ROEWE, SEDONA, SKYJUICE, SLIDE FIVE, SMITH & MIGHTY, SMP, SONIA DADA, SONOROUS STAR, SOULSTICE, SOURCE DIRECT, SOYLENT GREEN, SPACETIME CONTINUUM, SQUAREPUSHER, STARFLYER 59, SUPERSOUL, SUPRÊME BEINGS OF LEISURE, SURREALIEN SOUNDTRACS, SVEN VATH, TAHITI 80, T-CISCO, TERMINAL-3, THE FRESHMAKA, THE IRRESISTABLE FORCE, THE THIRD EYE FOUNDATION, THEORY, THUNDERBALL, TOM TOM CLUB, TRANCE GROOVE, TRANCENDEN, TRIP THEORY, TURNER BROS, TURTLEBEND, UBERZONE, URSULA 1000, VAMPYROS LESBOS, VAS, VENUS, W, WALDECK, WISDOM OF HARRY, ZXP SOUNDS

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