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**ON THE VERGE**  
*Volume Con'tinues Brilliance*  
 SPECIAL ISSUE

# RYAN ADAMS

*Talk about the midnight rambler*

**TORI AMOS**  
*multiple personalities*

**THE STROKES**  
*new hype city*

Mike Patton • Squarepusher • Saves The Day

POWERMAN 5000. SPARKLEHORSE. DOVES. LOCALZINE. BALTIMORE. FITTY REVIEWS.

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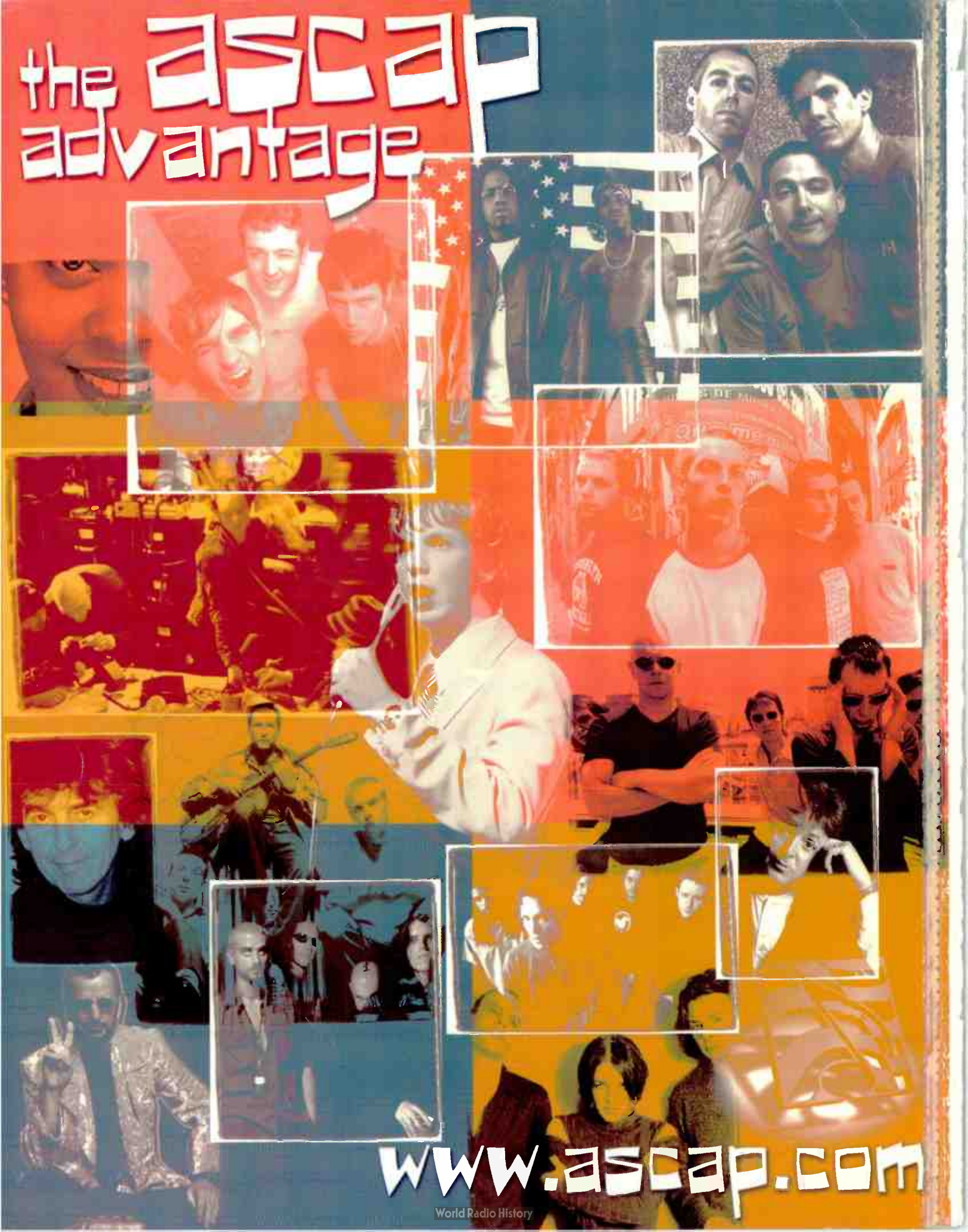
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## SPECIAL ISSUE ON THE VERGE

May Cause Excitability.



Predicting who's going to succeed in the teeming viper pit that is the music industry is a fool's game. But we'll play the fools for you. One day, everyone in this issue will be too cool to talk to us, but they're talking to us now—so pay attention.

### RYAN ADAMS 72

Ryan Adams is many things: a singer, a serial charmer, a breaker of hearts, a romantic, a spoiled brat. He's also an enormous talent and alt-country's great white hope. (But he's not Van fucking Morrison, thank you very much.) Scott Frampton takes apart the enigma inside the mystery.

### SQUAREPUSHER 64

Step inside the world of ADD poster-boy Tom Jenkinson, where the lines between jazz, electronica, drum 'n' bass, dub and two-step aren't just blurred—they're tossed out altogether. "My music's made of titanium," he says. "You can't fuck with it." Piotr Orlov wouldn't dare.

### SAVES THE DAY 62

It's a classic story: Band meets van, van meets road, van flips over, band sees the light. Now their pop punk is getting all existential and this tiny little band is cracking the top 100. Dylan P. Gadino charts the rise.

### MIKE PATTON 66

If you thought you were done with Mike Patton after Faith No More, think again: The king of noise is back to take on the worlds of film, hard rock and—gasp—pop. He's still got a few surprises up his sleeve, and his surprises are always rude. Tom Mallon takes cover.

### THE STROKES/NYC ROCK 68

Despite the rats, the roaches and the ever-present smell of human waste, New York City rock is hipper than ever, thanks to the media frenzy over a little band called the Strokes—but not everyone's buying it. Shelly Ridenour pokes around the world's biggest toilet.

### SPECIAL ISSUE: ON THE VERGE 41

Tell your friends you heard of them first: ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead, Avalanches, Bilal, Citizen Cope, Clinic, Matthew Herbert, Melissa Lefton, Madlib, Mink Lungs, Ike Reilly, Ursula Rucker, Thursday.





## ON THE CD 86

Ryan Adams, Mercury Rev, JJ72, Bilal, Kevin Tihista, Chocolate Genius, Thursday, Little T & One Track Mike, Stereolab, Curve, Simian, Orbital featuring David Gray, E.S.T., Bob Marley, Peter Tosh, Ike Turner & The Kings Of Rhythm, Jucifer, Grant-Lee Phillips, Beulah.

## QUICK FIX 24

Tori Amos sees a big vagina in the sky, Doves reveal their sound secrets, Robbie Fulks calls Doctor Love, the Incredible Moses Leroy takes you to school, Powerman 5000 play with themselves and Sparklehorse wears a bear suit. Oh, and Jah Wobble is not above beating your ass with a rusty bike chain.

## LOCALZINE 80

Baltimore: It's not just for John Waters fans anymore.

## THE SCENE IS NOW 82

That must be jam, because jazz don't shake like that.

## GEEK LOVE 114

Steve Ciabattone goes Macchio for King Crimson.

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# Bilal



# fast lane

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## KEVIN TIHISTA'S red terror



### don't breathe a word

"Blessed with a marvelous dry wit and a sparky songwriting talent, Tihista makes a convincing claim for long-term greatness." - NME



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## CONTRIBUTORS

As music editor of Baltimore's alternative weekly, *City Paper*, LEE GARDNER is an authority on the Charm City's thriving music scene, which he writes about in this month's Localzine (p. 80). He's also a firsthand witness to its emergence from a "heavy rock, blue-collar ethic" cocoon. Inviting as Baltimore's starting to sound, there's one thing about the city that still irks him: "Radio here sucks," says Gardner, who has written for *Nylon*, *The Wire* and a host of local Baltimore publications. "There's just no decent college radio station. That's the one thing that we need."



While interviewing Saves The Day's Chris Conley (p. 62), 23-year-old contributing writer DYLAN P. GADINO played the unfamiliar role of elder statesman. "I think he thought I was a lot older than him," explains Gadino. "He kept saying, 'I'm sure this sounds stupid coming from a 21-year-old.'" A New Jersey native, Gadino is familiar with Saves The Day's punk past, but is more impressed by their maturing power-pop sound—and their growing minds. "For 21 and 22-year-olds," Gadino figures, "they all have a pretty good perspective of where they're at." The *US Weekly* staffer has written for *Alternative Press* and *Billboard Online*, and confessed his Geek Love for Bon Jovi in our April, 2001 issue.

Boston-based writer MICHAEL ENDELMAN has a noble goal in writing about jazzy jam bands for this month's *The Scene Is Now* (p. 82): to break down ugly stereotypes. "Critics easily dismiss jam bands as a bunch of dirty, smelly hippies," says the Boston-based writer. "But they're making some of the most exciting music to come out of the scene." It also helps that jam-band musicians make for a refreshingly easy interview. "They're accessible. Unlike other musicians, they're pretty excited to talk to journalists and critics about their music," reports Endelman, who also writes for *The Boston Phoenix*, *The Boston Globe* and *URB*. Endelman wrote Localzine: Boston in the August, 2001 issue.



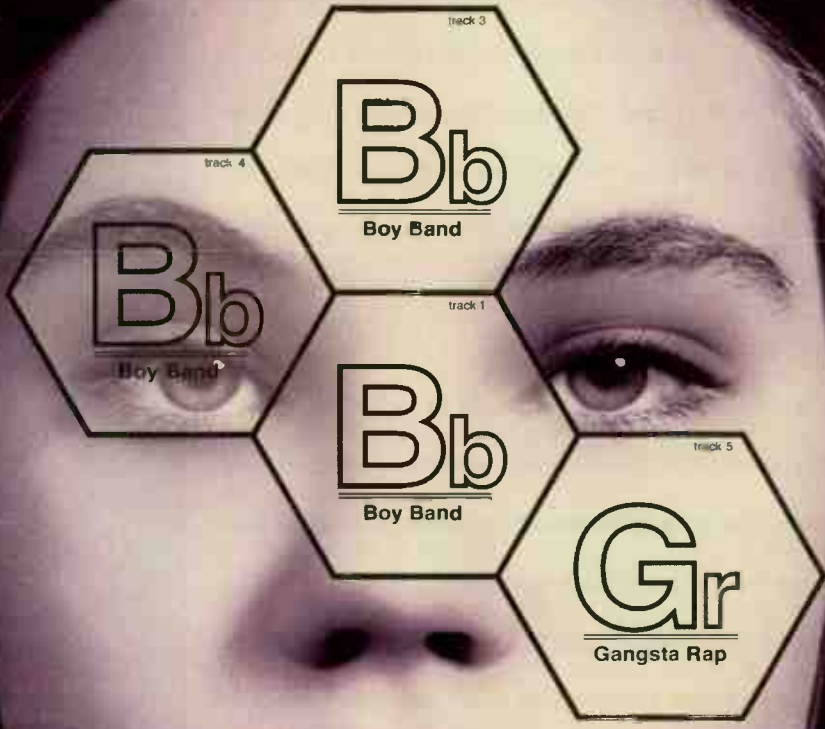
When ALIYA S. KING met up with R&B prodigy Bilal (whom she calls "the second coming of Sly Stone, Prince and D'Angelo") at Electric Lady Studios in Manhattan, he spent most of the interview chilling with the studio cat—descended from a feline who lived there during Jimi Hendrix's tenure—as if the kitty were heir to Hendrix's soul. King also witnessed Bilal recording "Love Poems": "The sheer passion and honesty he brought to the recording made me forget that the song is, essentially, a kiss-off to a woman who wants more from a purely sexual relationship." King, who has written for *Billboard*, *People*, *The Source*, *Vibe* and *XXL*, among others, wrote about the Beatnuts in the March, 2001 issue. (p. 44)

"I think it's a natural New Yorker tendency to want to resist hype," says SHELLY RIDENOUR, who delves into the brand new NYC hip-rock media machine, and the bands that spawned it, on page 68. "The Strokes' record is seriously great. The minute I put it on in my office, people started dancing around without knowing who it was." Some Strokes fans may pine for the days when Andy Warhol's Factory played host to smack-toting scenesters and the birth of an art-rock tradition. Not Ridenour. "Honestly, the Velvet Underground kind of puts me to sleep. Then again, so does Sonic Youth." Outraged fans can track her down at *Nylon*, where she is senior editor.





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## Letter from the editor

We don't smell the smoke anymore. There are still plenty of reminders: fliers posted for the missing, still more fliers announcing benefits and memorial services, the uncertainty that lingers in overheard street chatter. But we're back to work now, taking the opportunity—it's a long story that begins with our printer being located close to the Pentagon and our yearly music-industry confab, the CMJ Music Marathon, being scheduled the week we in New York got a glimpse of Hell—to replace the scheduled letters page with something that seems more appropriate. Only nothing is appropriate.

Who cares about music at a time like this? Well, we do, or rather, will eventually. And more importantly, you will, too. I'm not going to waste your time with attempts at being profound here. You saw those towers go down. You know that people threw themselves from the burning buildings rather than die in the flames, and that 300 of the firemen who rushed into those buildings never made it out. You also know that at some point, you popped a CD into your player to hear something that made you feel human again. That's what bonds us, the people who write and read this magazine. Music means something to us. It's not just a lifestyle accessory, or something to fill the dead air in our days. Music matters, and tragedy isn't going to take that away.

As the streets are coming back to life, and spam in my inbox once again announces that hot horny teen girls want me, if only I'd visit their website, I'd like to take a moment and thank you, our readers. If there's something that's pulled us out of walking around like zombies and only wanting to sit in bars and talk about how fucked up this all is, it's knowing that there are people who care about what we do. You care enough to clown us when we screw up and to complain loudly when the magazine is late in reaching your mailboxes or store shelves. That's inspiration enough, and for that, I can't thank you enough. —ed.

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**FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY • EPITAPH**

Bill Leeb (Delerium) and Chris Peterson get back to their roots and replant them with Front Line Assembly's Epitaph. This latest sonic attack is possibly their best album to date featuring building intros, trancey synth lines, pulsing beats, and solid melodies. The first pressing of Epitaph is a limited edition digi-pak with bonus material.



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**CLAN OF XYMOX • NOTES FROM THE UNDERGROUND**

The goth-rock pioneers Clan of Xymox have resurfaced with, Notes from the Underground, their first album in over two years. Learning much over their nearly 20 year career, Ronny Moorings and company have yet again accomplished another dark masterpiece of melody. Featuring all of the elements that has made them the most influential band in the genre, Notes from the Underground is sure to prove that goth isn't dead, nor are the Clan of Xymox.

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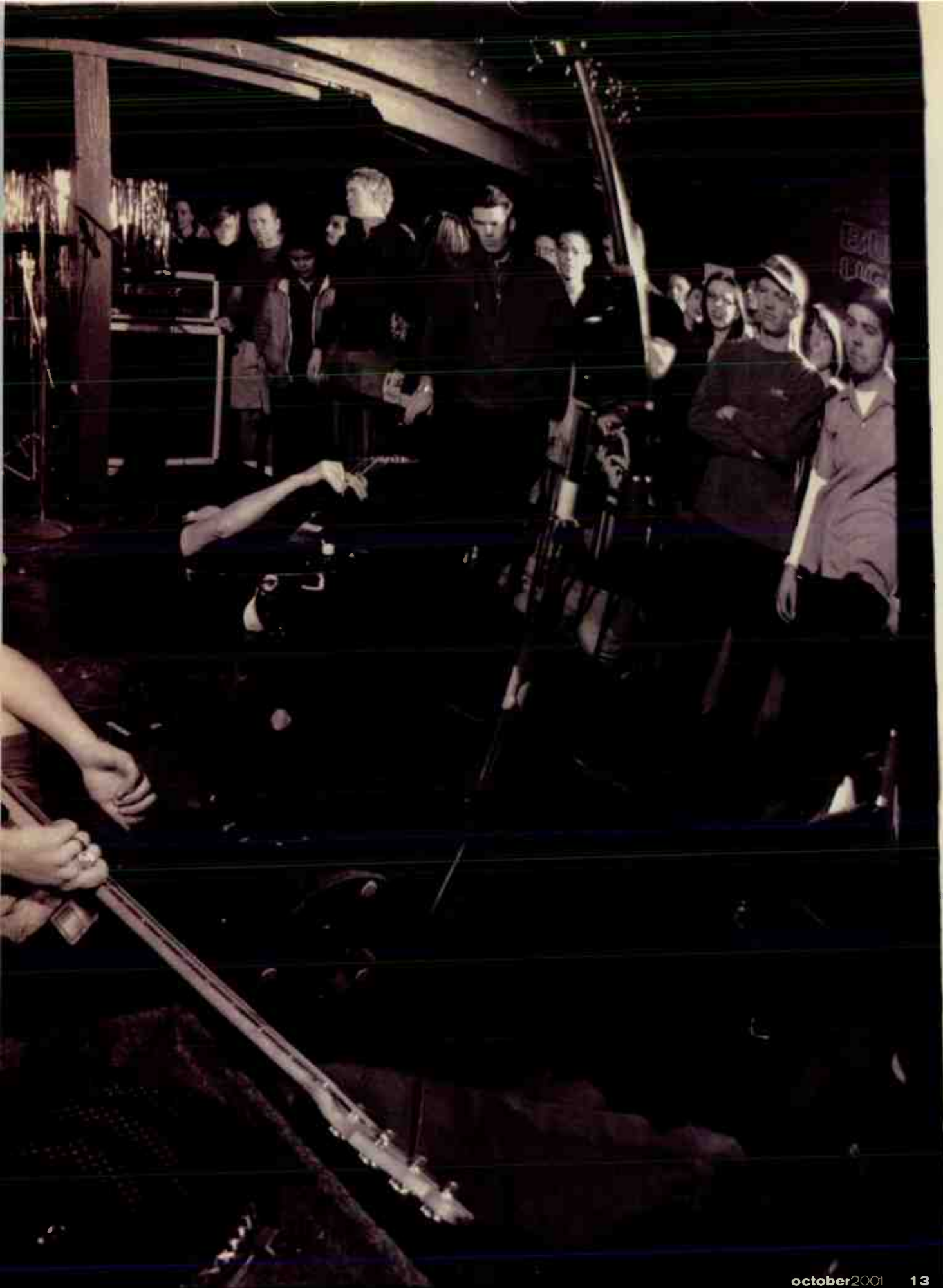


Silverlake, Calif.

p. 44

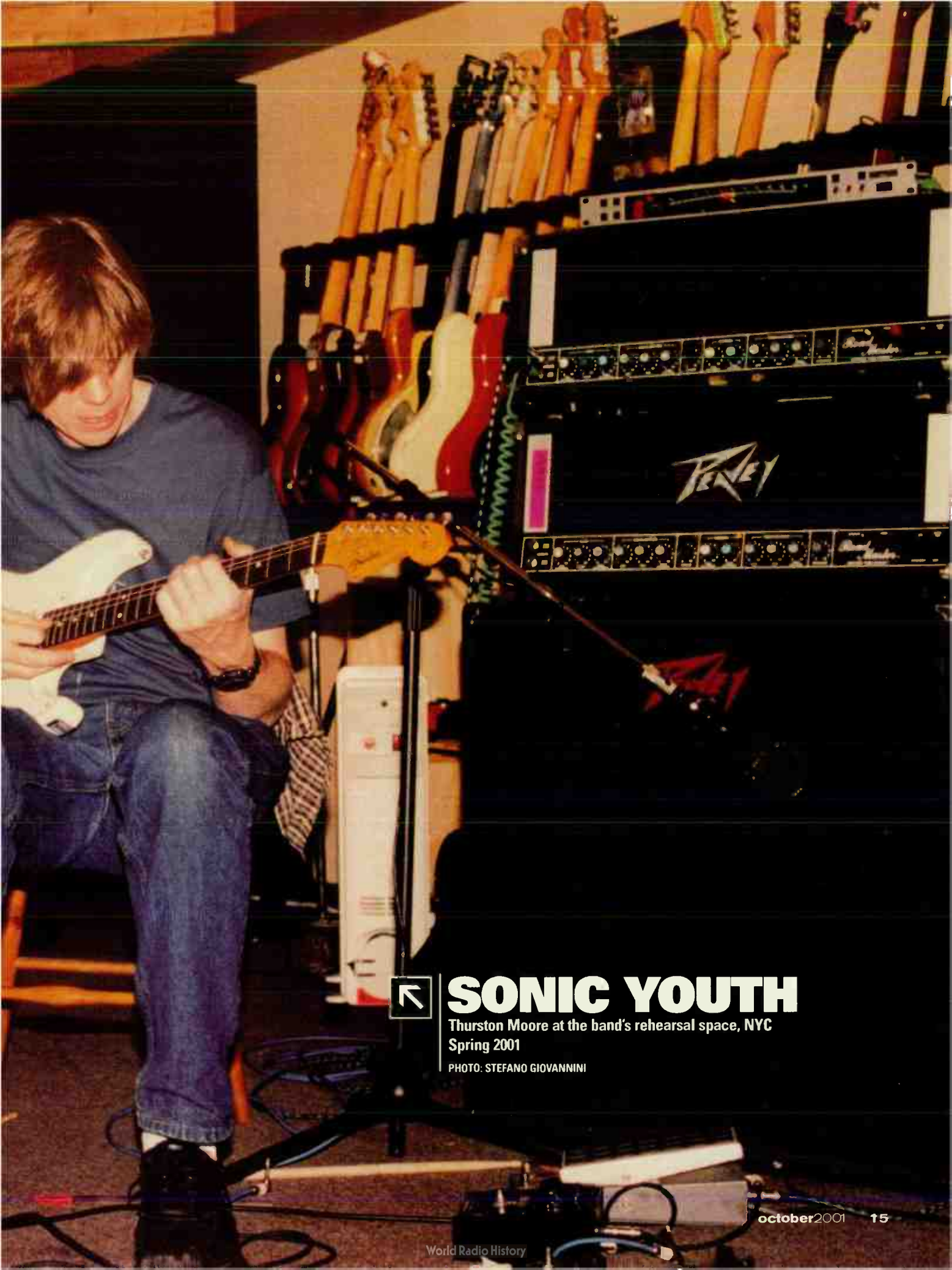
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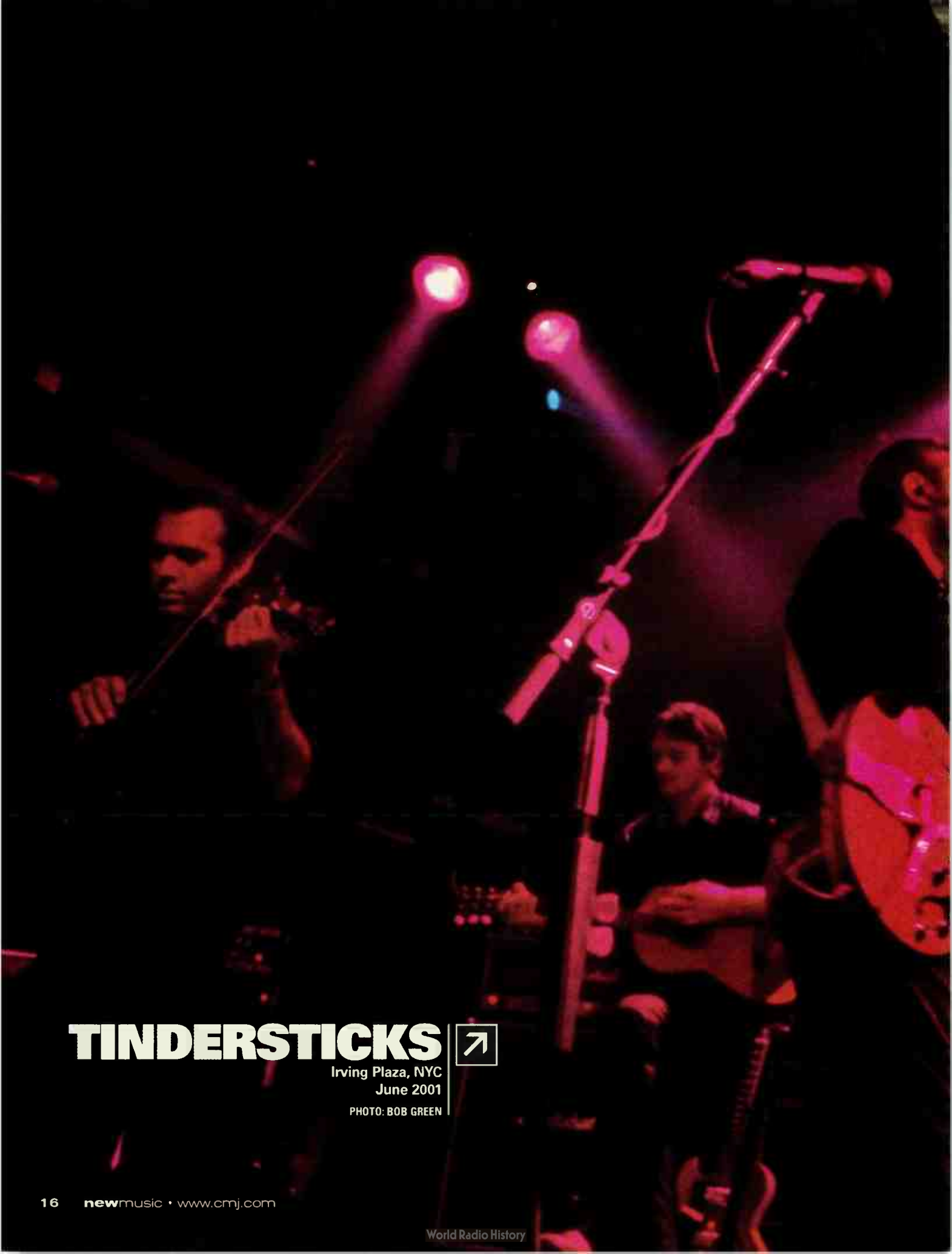




# SONIC YOUTH

Thurston Moore at the band's rehearsal space, NYC  
Spring 2001

PHOTO: STEFANO GIOVANNINI



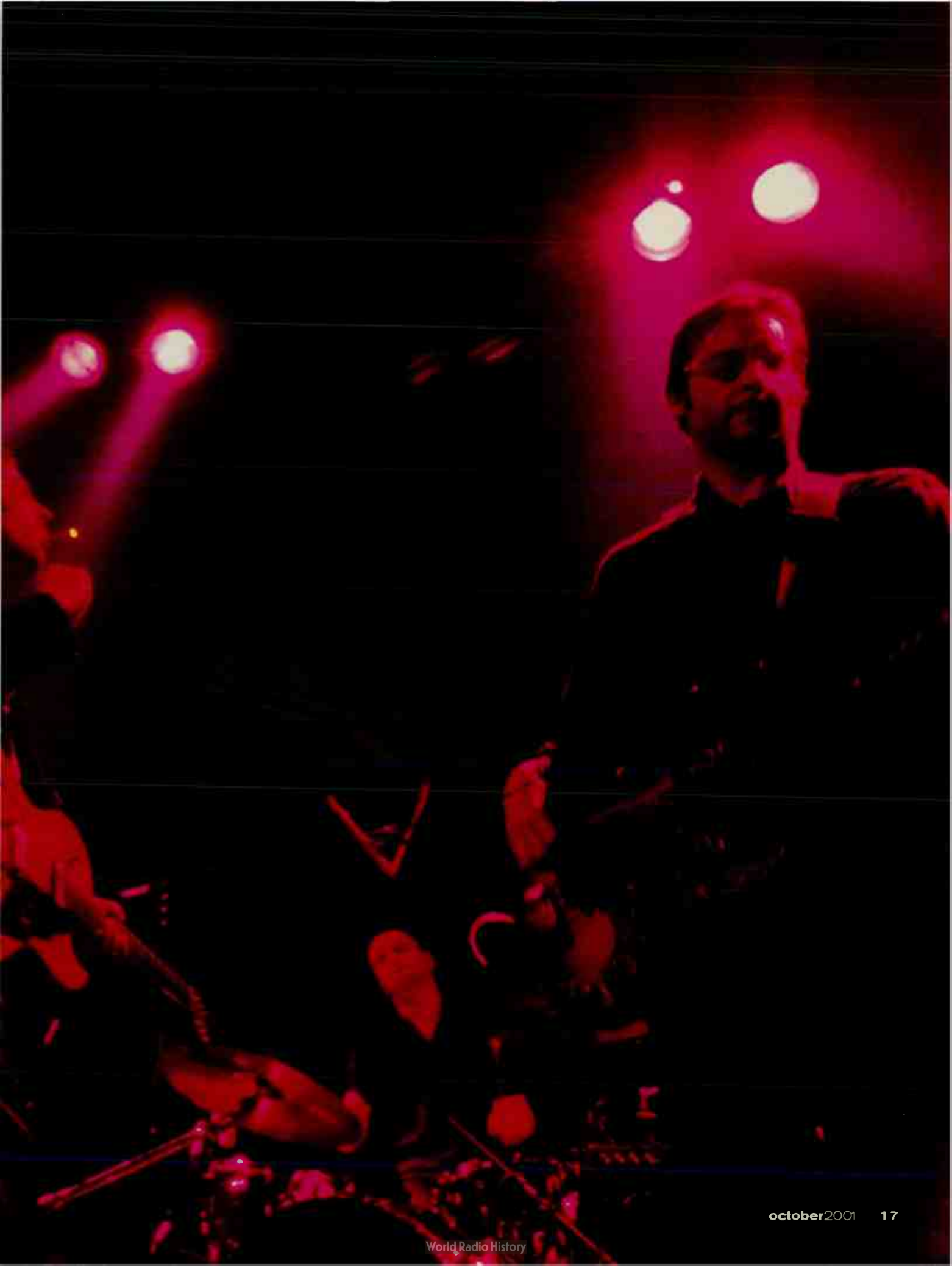
# TINDERSTICKS



Irving Plaza, NYC  
June 2001

PHOTO: BOB GREEN







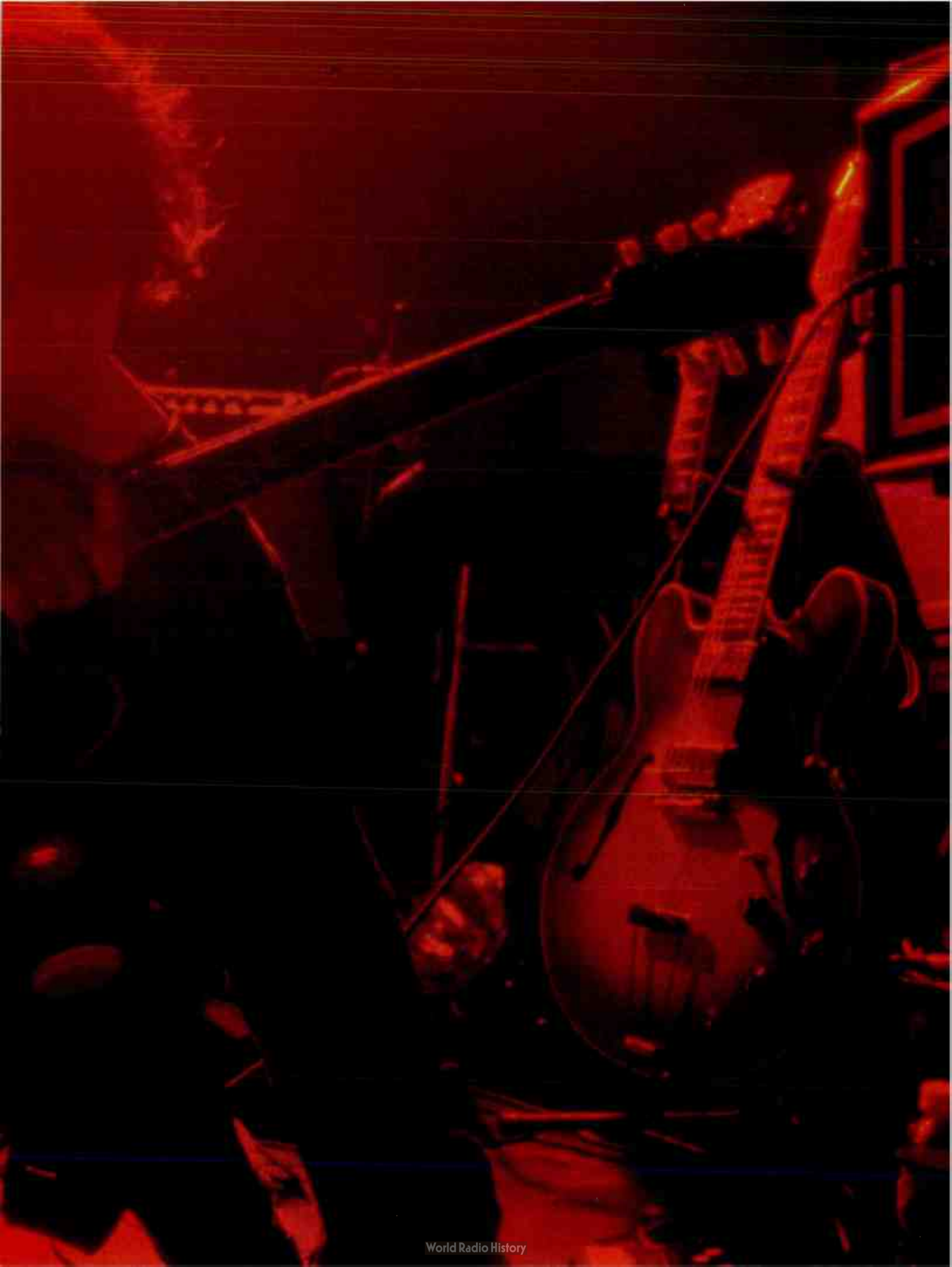
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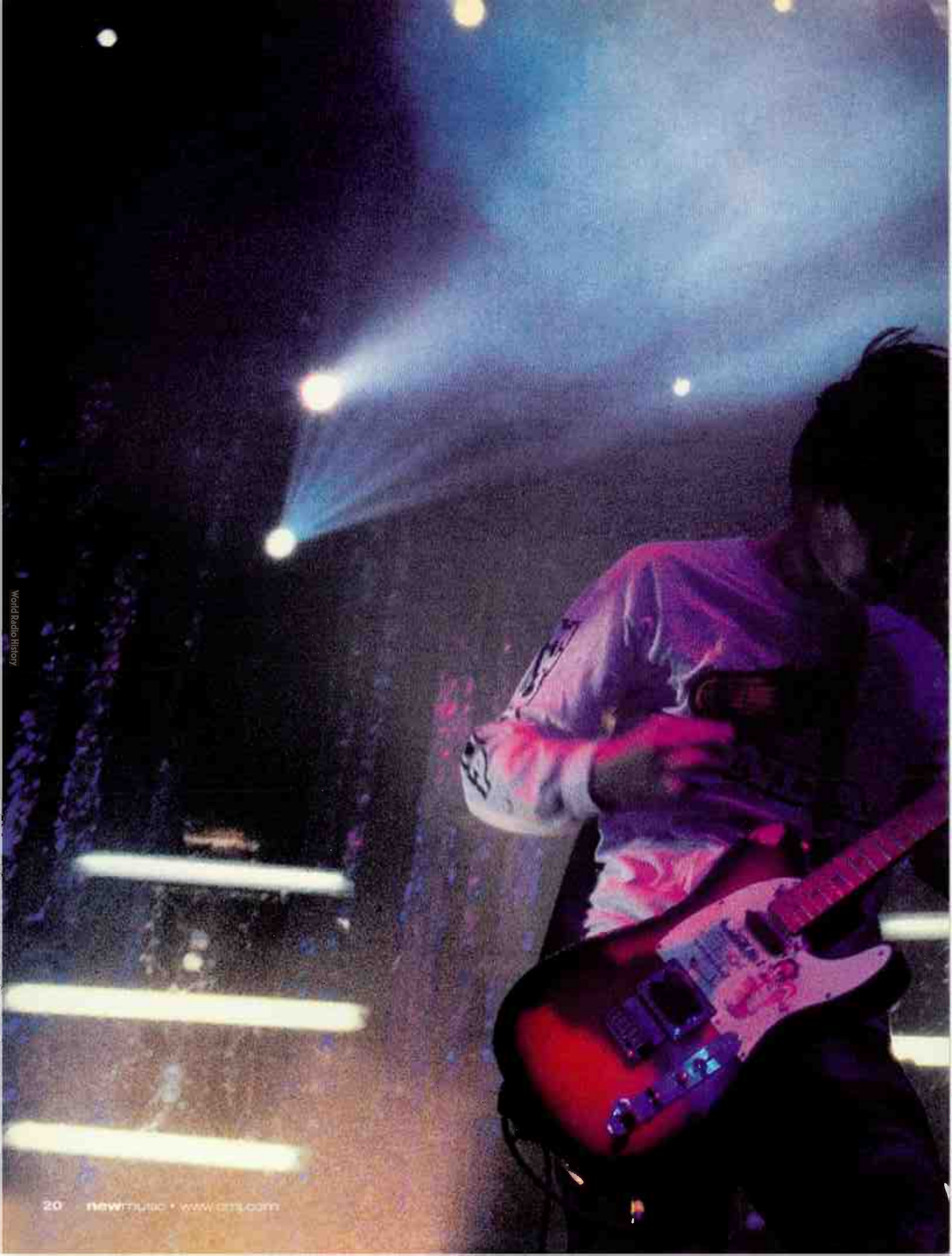
Bowery Ballroom, NYC  
August 2001

PHOTO: BOB GREEN

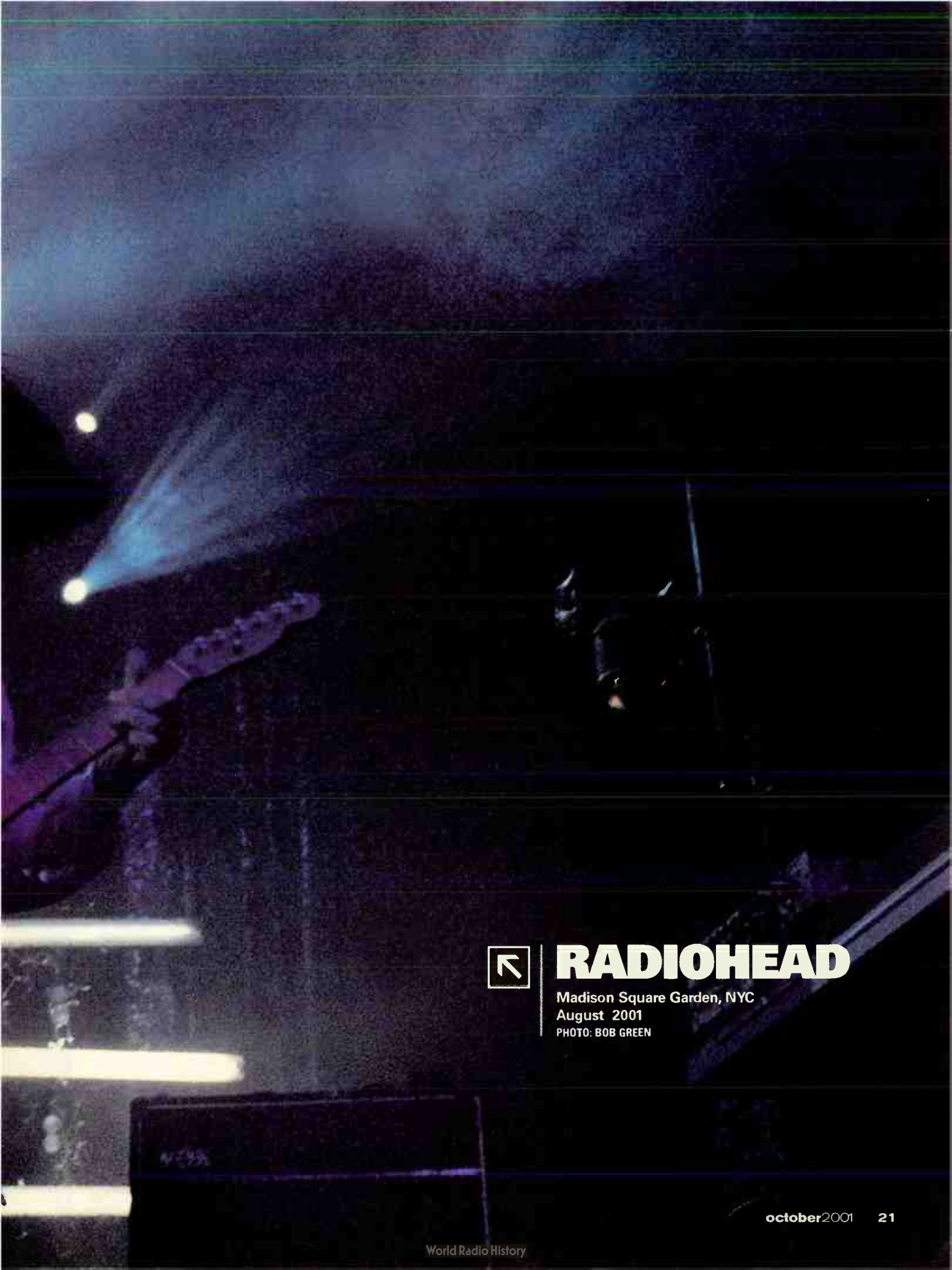












# RADIOHEAD

Madison Square Garden, NYC  
August 2001  
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## ➤ Cover Girl

*Tori Amos, on the occasion of her new album, **Strange Little Girls** (Atlantic), which reinterprets 12 songs—by the Beatles, Neil Young, Eminem and Slayer, among others—from a female perspective:*

I'm calling it a male parts record. It really intrigued me how men say things and what a woman hears. There was a lot of back-story and research going on. I did see the songs pretty differently in most cases. I access [the male songwriters'] words and I let them access my point of view, so when a bridge is built you can go both

ways on it, and with every song by a man, I didn't know at the time, but what started to show itself was that a woman stepped up and I therefore realized that she had access to me... The men are the mothers here that wrote the songs, these are their song-children. I was having a relationship with the song-daughters, not the mothers.

"STRANGE LITTLE GIRL" (THE STRANGLERS)



For instance, I did not see Satan in "Raining Blood," it was much more the big vagina in the sky moment, empowerment in a different way. When they talk about "return to power draws near," it was the idea of a world born wrapped in blood. As you know there's been some pretty

horrible treatment of women going on around the world. We really haven't gotten to a place of freedoms for all people, not just freedoms for heterosexual men, Christian men or Islamic men. So "Raining Blood" became a very different thing... In "'97 Bonnie & Clyde," [the



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: "I DON'T LIKE MONDAYS" (BOOMTOWN RAINBOWS), "'97 BONNIE & CLYDE" (EMINEM), "ENJOY THE SILENCE" (OFFICINE MODE), "NEW AGE" (VELVET UNDERGROUND)





female protagonist is] hearing the song as it is being told—not a word is changed. We go to that place where she's hearing him tell her little girl lies about what has happened, and is also involving her in some ways, making her an accomplice to this, and the mother knows that

her daughter will grow up delighted and torn between these two people and torn between herself. And the mother cannot protect her and she's gonna grow up to become a strange little girl...

INTERVIEW BY PIOTR ORLOV

PHOTOS BY TK



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: "I'M NOT IN LOVE" (100%), "HEART OF GOLD" (HEAVY DUTY), "RATTLESNAKES" (LLOYD COLE), "RAINING BLOOD" (BLUETEN)

# TOP 7.5

Carrots on the end of our stick



1. Free Ol' Dirty: Because Mumia and Leonard Peltier aren't going anywhere any time soon.

2. Chemical Brothers, "It Began In Afrika": Seven-plus minutes of safari samples and rainforest beats pummeling select dancefloors on both sides of the pond.

3. Buddyhead's Rules Of Rock: Had it been available in '97, this whole rap-rock thing would never have happened. ([buddyhead.com/other/rulesofrock](http://buddyhead.com/other/rulesofrock))

4. U.S. Men's National Soccer Team as World Cup hopefuls: Not to be shown up by the winning women's team, our men look like they might quit losing to nations with the GNP of Pittsburgh.

5. A blackened shroud, a hand-me-down gown: Sonic Youth curates the U.S. debut of the Belle & Sebastian-founded indie-rock fest All Tomorrow's Parties at UCLA, featuring the likes of Stereolab, Stephen Malkmus And The Jicks, Autechre and Cat Power.

6. Fatboy's plan to stay Slim until his little Woody grows: Norman Cook says fatherhood makes him want out of the popstar game. If only that'd worked on Creed's Scott Stapp.

7. Only slightly more endearing than a band that does whippets during an interview: A publicist who confiscates the balloon.

7.5 Prom Night: Fifteen years after *Pretty In Pink*, England discovers the kitsch factor of the American prom and inaugurates a club night to celebrate. Yawn.



NAPSTER BENDS OVER

NEWSFEED

Napster interrupted its death throes recently to make up with a roving band of accountants known simply as "Metallica." "We respect what they've done and regret any harm which this dispute may have caused them,"



said CEO Hank Barry, pausing to wipe blood from his eyes days before he resigned. "Metallica has taken a courageous stand and a tough and principled approach to the protection of its

name and creative output." Terms were not discussed, but rumor has it the settlement will relocate Napster from their California offices to a space underneath Lars Ulrich's desk.

## ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

According to their website, Weezer has been trying out new bass players: It seems that Mikey Welsh, who replaced former bassist-turned-Rental Matt Sharp, hasn't shown up for rehearsals due to "some sort of private medical problem," and he also failed to show up for a recent video shoot.

Add this to Weezer's recent legal troubles with their former manager, and all is not well in Weez-land; Rivers is said to be acting megalomaniacal and ruthlessly scrapping hundreds of perfectly good songs to console himself.



## WEIRD RECORD

### The Baby Boone



"America's Next Great Crooner"? According to Pat Boone, that would be 17-year-old Michigan native Ryan DeHues, a spooky cross between Bat Boy and *Happy Days'* Patsy. This wide-eyed wunderkind probably still gets the spins in health class, but listening to *My Dream Come True* (his debut for Boone's Gold Label), you'd think he's entering his golden years. The best moment: With a voice that yearns to get to second base, the geeky teen intones, "And this

torment won't be through/ 'Til you let me spend my life making love to you" with the voice of an aged lounge singer. Pat Boone has ruined another childhood. >>>ALEX NAIDUS



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## IN MY ROOM

**Who:** Spider One of Powerman 5000

**Where:** His home in Los Angeles

**Why:** Because Powerman 5000 fuses campy sci-fi, roaring guitars and robot funk into one big-ass ball of metal. And they have impeccable hair.

### Keepin' it fake

I've got a pretty extensive collection of robots. Ever since I was a kid, I've collected comic book/science fiction stuff. As I've gotten older I've backed off but I still can't resist a good robot. It must be my general dislike of people. I like the idea of having an artificial person around.

### Hang 'em high

I've got pretty cool movie posters: an original *2001: A Space Odyssey* poster, *Blade Runner*, *Thunderbird*. And I've got an original *Jaws* poster, which is one of my favorite movies.

### Playin' with yourself

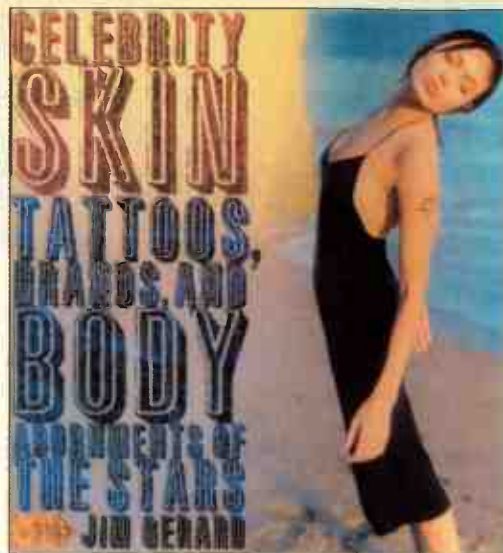
I just got the prototype for the Powerman 5000 action figures. They're not traditional ones like Todd McFarlane's stuff; they're very simple and stylized in design but the heads are carved with a lot of detail. It comes with a stage and a backdrop, it's like having a mini version of the show. They're very realistic, not like a lot of other ones. Since when did Alice Cooper have a six-pack?

*Ponder Alice Cooper's abs and other ethereal mysteries to the sound of Powerman 5000's Anyone For Doomsday? (DreamWorks).*

INTERVIEW BY TOM MALLON

## ➔ Superstar Pricks

PRINT



Ever wonder what happened to Johnny Depp's "Winona Forever" tattoo? Post-Winona, he changed it to "Wino Forever" (which was much more impressive to director-turned-vintner Francis Ford Coppola). That's just one of the salient facts included in *Celebrity Skin* (Thunder's Mouth Press), a Technicolor cavalcade of attitude and ink that features cameos from Eminem, Janeane Garofalo, Tommy Lee and Gillian Anderson. And you thought there was nothing shallower than a celebrity's personality. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



## ➔ Eye On The Tigers

FILMS

Didn't get enough of high school football players while you were in high school? Go *Tigers!* (IFC Films) documents the true story of the 1999 Massillon, Ohio high school team, a perennial national powerhouse coming off a dismal 4-6 season. Director Ken Carlson (a Massillon native) introduces the fanatical Tiger boosters, administrators and players, and takes you to the pep rallies and practices. But it's not all fluff: There are plenty of post-game beer bashes where linebackers guzzle 72-ounce beer bong, too. >>>JOHN ELSASSER

### ⋮⋮⋮ DON'T STOP 'TIL YOU GET IT ALL

According to U.K. newspaper *The Sun*, special tickets for Michael Jackson's star-studded 30th Anniversary concerts at Madison Square Garden are being offered for £3500 (\$4700)—the most expensive in history. The tickets, available to businessmen in groups of 10, include admission to a special after-show dinner, a signed poster and a meeting with Jackson himself. For an additional \$1000, attendees can get a piece of his nose and the opportunity to watch him melt when water is thrown on him.



# Answer Me

Sparklehorse's Mark Linkous on spiders and Tom Waits and bears, oh my.

Mark Linkous, the man behind Sparklehorse, loves to write fragile, irresistible songs. And then he loves to warp those songs into something else entirely by recording them with a plastic microphone he picked up at the local dump. Sparklehorse's third and latest album, *It's A Wonderful Life* (Capitol), is pop for the sonically and psychedelically deviant. >> MAC RANDALL

**So the band's called Sparklehorse, and horses feature in practically every other song. What's with the equine obsession?**

I just think they're the most beautiful animals—the way they look, the way they smell. Every time I get on 'em, I get thrown off, so I don't ride. I would love to be like a character in a Cormac McCarthy book and really bond with a horse, but there are just too many distractions. We have two horses on our farm in Virginia. We rescued them from some farmer who didn't give a shit; one of them had been left tied out in a field with no water. They stick their heads in sometimes when I'm recording. Certain songs they really seem to like. They just stand there and sway at the door.

**Tom Waits has been one of your idols for years. How was it working with him on "Dog Door"?**

Real quick. He's very low-tech, but unlike myself, he's really confident in his abilities. You know, when one of your musical heroes says, "Hey, how's that?"—what do you say? [In hushed, puny voice] "Would you mind singing this track through the bull-horn, Mr. Tom?"

**Your current tour plans include multiple trips to Europe and only a handful of U.S. gigs. Are you tired of America?**

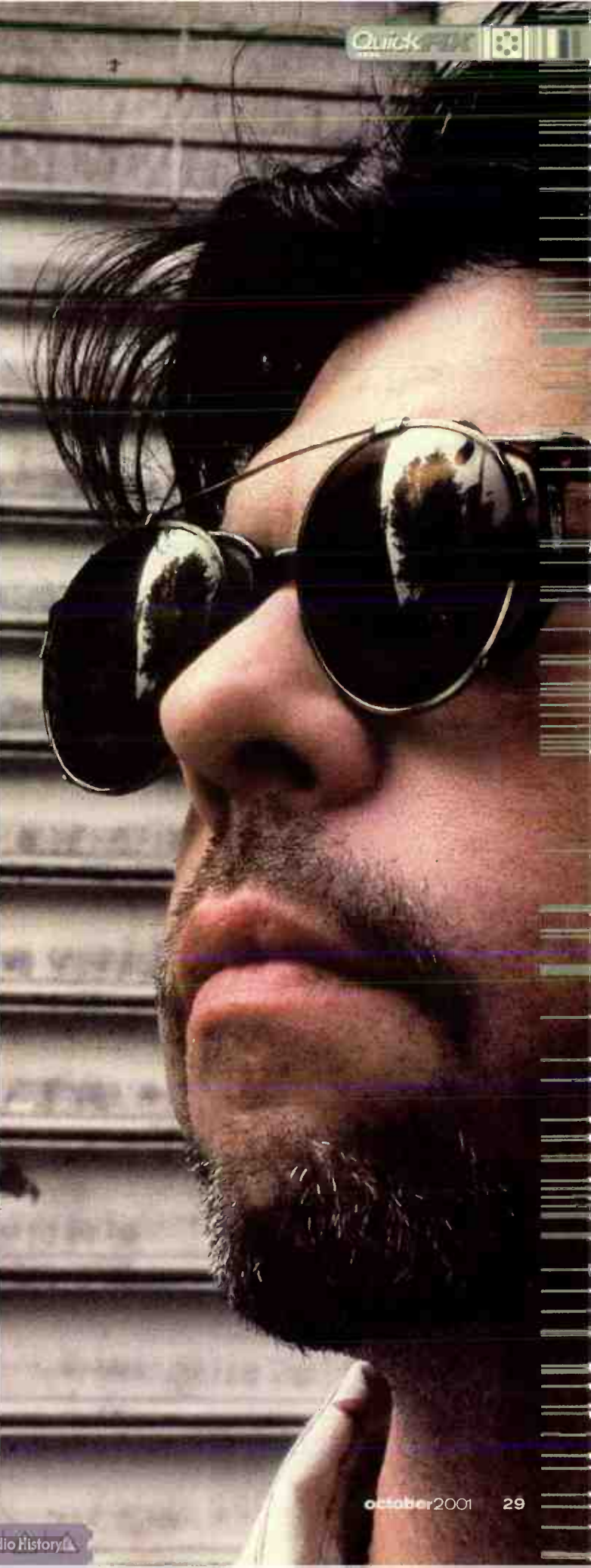
No, it's just easier to go to Europe because we have more support there. I know I shouldn't be bitching about the music business—I should be doing something about it—but I wish some of these industry people would just go throw their cell phones in a fuckin' lake for a day and go hear what normal people are actually listening to. They assume that what I do is too weird for mass consumption, but I don't think that's true; there are 15-year-old kids in Ireland who are Sparklehorse fans. And whenever we put out a single, they want to spend 10 grand on getting some hotshot modern-rock fool to remix it. I did an experiment and let that Jack Puig guy remix a song, and it was like, "OK, everybody failed that test. Fuck this—if you want a remix, find an R&B guy."

**I heard you recently had a spider infestation in your house, and that's why you didn't record so much at home this time. Has the problem been taken care of?**

Yeah, I think the spiders left. It's kind of a zoo where I live. Six dogs, two horses, cats, spiders, bears...

**The bears keep a safe distance from the studio, though, right?**

Except when I'm wearing my bear suit. But it's too hot now for that.



BOB GREEN

The dark, skewed *It's A Wonderful Life* (Capitol) also features guest spots from PJ Harvey and the Cardigans' Nina Persson. Jimmy Stewart, being dead, was unavailable.



## ▾ Dope Wars

**FILMS**

Medellin is the infamous center of the Colombian cocaine cartel, a city rife with shocking and senseless street violence. But it wasn't this way when world-weary writer Fernando left 30 years ago. *Our Lady Of The Assassins* (Paramount Classics) chronicles his return home to rampant drug-running, murder and, eventually, love. Director Barbet Schroeder's first foreign-language film in 16 years conveys striking revelations on the human condition and dying young; every character you meet is vulnerable, and tragedy always seems to be lurking around the corner. >>>JOHN ELSASSER

## ▾ Bumped In The Night

Alone In The Dark: The New Nightmare  
Infogrames (for PC/PSX/PS2/DC/GBC)

**GAMES**

Too manly to jump out of your seat over a silly game? Try staring down these rotting ghouls without checking over your shoulder. This is all about atmosphere, thanks to eerily vivid visuals and the ability to explore two sides of the same mystery with separate characters. Being constantly plunged into darkness adds to the tense air, as your flashlight reveals new items and forces light-fearing, yellow-fanged demons back into the shadows. This new chapter brings the fright the same way the groundbreaking original did nearly a decade ago, only now you can almost smell the musty environments and feel the hot breath of hellspawn on your neck. >>>JOE FORTUNATO







# Tough Love

Alt-country standard-bearer Robbie Fulks called his new album *Couples In Trouble* (Boondoggle). Do you need another reason to take his love advice?

**I live with my parents, and my dad flirts with every girl I bring home. Even worse, the girls seem to like him. I can't avoid my house entirely, but it's getting out of hand. Help!**  
—Brian, Modesto, Calif.

Your dad loves you and would never act this way if he truly understood the pain it causes you. Lay some heavy moves on your mom in front of him so he'll know.

**I met a guy in an online chat room about one of my favorite bands, and after a few e-mails back and forth, our messages to each other have gotten really dirty, like all about our first times having sex and all our fantasies. I'm sort of afraid he's some kind of weirdo, or that my boyfriend will find out. I'm having fun, but how far is too far?** —Meredith, Santa Fe, NM

This is a difficult and fascinating question, Meredith. Unfortunately, *CMJ* doesn't really permit me the space to explore all the ramifications of your quandary. Why don't you drop me a line at [Altcountryicon@hotmail.com](mailto:Altcountryicon@hotmail.com) so we can really delve into this one.

**I'm 23 and working as a substitute teacher at the small public high school I graduated from. Problem is, I'm dating a senior girl, Lisa, from the local Catholic high school. I really like her, but I'm afraid someone will find out and I'll lose my job. What do I do?** —Greg, Fort Dodge, Iowa

Relax, substitute teacher Greg of Fort Dodge, Iowa—how could anyone ever find out?

Love,  
Robbie

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## Voice of the People



### RE: STUNG!

Don't stand so close to the message boards at [www.cmj.com](http://www.cmj.com).

**Breathe Fire:** my friends and i started discussing a phenomenon we've noticed: when bands or artists get "stung," as in, when they start approaching an alarming level of Sting-ness. the criteria is simple: they had to once be in a band that was really good (à la the Police) and now crank out the lamest, most middle-of-the-road (or pseudo-world) crap. two fine examples are Perry Farrell and Dave Navarro, who have grown steadily crappier since the demise of Jane's Addiction. who else has been stung?

**mojo:** Tough question, which is even tougher to answer. The only artist that comes to mind is Morrissey. Sorry if I've struck a nerve, but after the Smiths disbanded I just lost interest.

**KidP\_DJP:** oh god. am i the only person here who thought the new Perry was good? i mean it wasn't GREAT but i liked it. and is pseudo-world a bad thing? i honestly have a lot of respect for Sting for exposing people to Cheb Mami. same for Peter Gabriel and Yossou N'Dour. how else are you going to hear African music on pop radio? as for "stung"... Daft Punk kicked ass. why do they suck so much now?

**kphaley454:** I think U2 is heading in this direction. They're not there yet, but if the next album sounds more lightweight than *All That*, I'm sure they'll be the victim of a big old bee-Sting...

**Breathe Fire:** kphaley—I would dare argue that U2 has been stung since the late '80s, and the swelling occasionally goes down enough to allow moments of brilliance to get through.

**dj\_athaut:** Paul Simon was "stung" before being "stung" even became possible. Shouldn't it be "Simonized?"



## Nice Cans

### TA238 Wireless Headphone

**GEAR**

Home recording can be a bitch, with your whole band huddling around the mixing console in a briar patch of headphone wires, straining to hear those subtle level changes. Prepare to be set free: Sennheiser's wireless headset delivers hi-fi stereo sound with full bass response, and its central transmitter can pipe crystal-clear tones into an endless number of phones. Also handy if your crew wants to blast some Maiden at 3 a.m., but you still live with your moms.

Sennheiser, \$199.95. [www.sennheiserusa.com](http://www.sennheiserusa.com)

## Our tech guy wants to fight... Mark McGrath



**Office computer gurus harbor a world of frustration. Sometimes, ours metes out justice with his fists.**

For releasing the same toothless, pop-schlocky album three times in a row, I'd like to fight Sugar Ray's Mark McGrath. Every time I see him he looks more like a weasel trapped in a hair-gel factory. What self respecting rock star appears in a porno and tries to cover it up? >>>J. DAVIDSON





## ▾ My Favorite Gear

This is what his sound's like—the Doves guy.

**F**or a trio, Manchester's Doves make a big noise. It's a sound that flutters between shimmering, atmospheric rock and focused, pastoral pop. And it's guitarist Jez Williams who causes much of that gorgeous racket. "There's no science behind it really," says Williams about the onstage equipment he uses to fill all that sonic space. "I've spent a lot of time with my gear and I know how to get the best out of it," he says, fondly noting his old-school Boss ME-8 effects pedal. "They brought out new ones, but they fucked it all up. So I'm keeping the original model." As his hands are busy soaring across his Gibson ES-335, Jez keeps his feet just as active. "I've got a MIDI trigger as well for samples. So I'm making noises with my left foot and controlling my guitar effects with my right," he says. "I like using these infinity effects that go on forever until I stop them with my foot." He's keen not to let the gear swallow the music though—the song's the thing. "I write songs on this bad acoustic, classical guitar. It's got to start out as a song on a rubbish guitar," he says. "I put that down on a Dictaphone and then I'll demo it in my studio. That's when I can get experimental." >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

Doves are currently in the studio working on a follow-up to 2000's *Lost Souls* (Astrolwerks).





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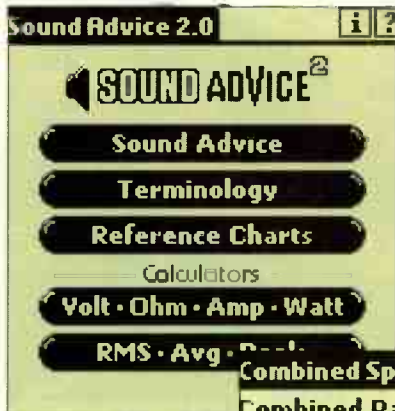
# WORD OF MOUSE

When even The Onion doesn't cut it



If your thirst for wise-assery isn't slaked by fine [www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com) headlines like "Jenna Bush's Federally Protected Wetlands Open For Public Drilling," your best recourse is the U.K. site [www.tvgohome.com](http://www.tvgohome.com), for its mean-spirited parody of TV listings and cathartically liberal usage of the c-word.

To wit: "8:50—Best Of Spring Break Whooping. A full uninterrupted hour of obnoxious American cunts rolling their fists in the air hooting and hollering while dim cheerleaders pop their tops. Music by Limp Bizkit."



Combined Spkr. Imped.

Combined Parallel Impedances

| ohms  | 4   | ∞     | 16  | 4:4   | 4:8 | 4:16 | 8:8 | 8:16  | 16:16 |       |     |   |
|-------|-----|-------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|-------|-------|-------|-----|---|
| 4     | 2   | 2.732 | 2   |       |     |      | 2   | 2.327 |       |       |     |   |
| 8     | 2.7 | 4     | 5.3 |       |     |      | 2   | 2.327 | 4     |       |     |   |
| 16    | 5.3 | 5.3   | 8   |       |     |      | 2   | 2.732 | 4     | 5.3   |     |   |
| 4:4   |     |       |     |       |     |      |     |       |       |       |     |   |
| 4:8   |     |       | 2   | 2.3   |     |      |     |       | 2     |       |     |   |
| 4:16  |     |       | 2.3 | 2.7   |     |      |     |       | 2     | 2.3   |     |   |
| 8:8   |     |       | 2   | 2.732 |     |      |     |       | 2     | 2.327 |     |   |
| 8:16  |     |       | 2.3 | 3.2   | 4   |      |     |       | 2     | 2.327 | 3.2 |   |
| 16:16 |     |       | 2.7 | 4     | 5.3 |      |     |       | 2     | 2.327 | 3.2 | 4 |

Done

■ = Not recommended  
■ = Use caution; verify minimum amp impedance

## Sound Advice

GEAR

You can't dork it up with your audiophile pals if you don't know musical notes' precise audio frequencies or the parallel impedance of speaker combinations. Sound Advice v2.0 is a crib sheet for your PDA, an audio-electronics reference tool crammed with definitions, reference charts and solutions to common problems. So next time you visit the wankers at your local Guitar Center, you'll be prepared.

Palmetto Logic Software, \$7.95. [www.palmgear.com](http://www.palmgear.com)



4 Things You Should Know About...

# Jah Wobble



TIM KENT

Bassist Jah Wobble, born John Wordle, has made a living both as a noise-punk envelope-pusher (in the '70s) and a train-station broom-pusher (in the '80s). Turning to world music in the late '80s, Wobble worked his ear for dub into projects with Can's Holger Czukay, singer Natacha Atlas, saxophonist Evan Parker and recently, Bill Laswell. >>>TAD HENDRICKSON

In a notorious punk episode in 1976, Wobble and Sid Vicious beat up music journalist Nick Kent with a rusty blke chain. "It was a storm in a teacup, which was actually quite funny. People dine out for years on stories like that. But to be honest, [Kent and his companion] kind of triggered it."

He gave Public Image Limited's *Metal Box* its cavernous bass sound.

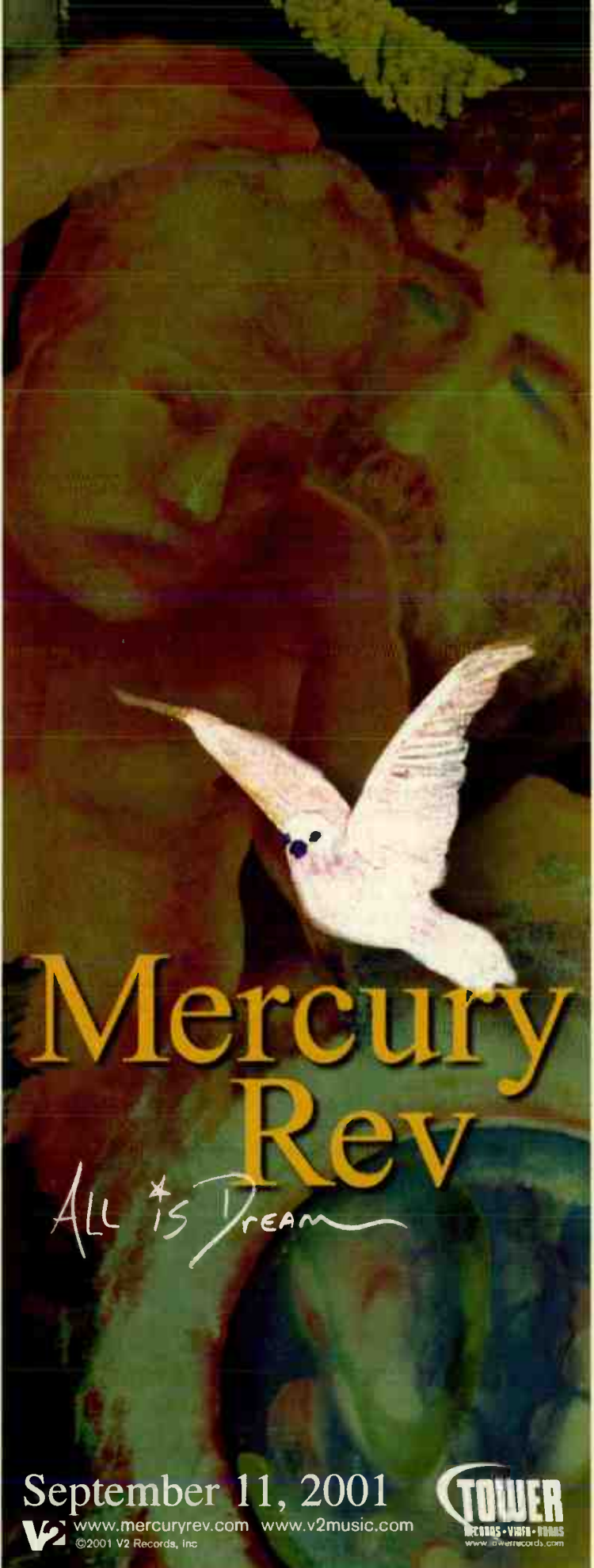
"I was listening to a lot of reggae bass. I knew I had to make patterns, one-bar or two-bar patterns, and I was on a sonic mission to get it as loud as possible. We received a lot of letters from people proudly telling us how we blew up their speakers... I was starting to hate [the other bandmembers] as individuals during the making of that record, but I always had a respect for what they could do musically, and they never fucked with my basslines."

Wobble left industrial-strength supergroup the Damage Manual after it didn't live up to his expectations.

"I want to do a successful rock thing and I thought Damage Manual could be it. I went into the studio and was really open and then we added Chris Connelly and that was great. But then Martin [Atkins] took the tapes and I think that everything just became overcooked. All the computer [programming] really isn't to my taste."

His new ambient dub project with Bill Laswell, *Radioaxiom: A Dub Transmision* (Palm Pictures), has been 20 years in the making.

"I heard some of the funky early stuff Bill did around 1978, and I would joke with people I worked with in the studio, saying, 'I want to work with Bill Laswell, he's the only fellow who would understand,' kind of tongue-in-cheek. Then in '88 or '89, I met him and we found out we both had the same favorite album, Miles Davis's *Dark Magus*. [Making *Radioaxiom*], I've learned a few things from him about how to deal with people—I've got that whole naive kid thing about me, right from when I first came into the business. He's very talented as a player, but he's also really been a disciple—he's devoted himself to music."



# Mercury Rev

All <sup>\*</sup>is Dream

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## 5 SPOT



When it comes to essential listening, old is the new new for Euros Childs of Gorky's ZygotiC MynCi

1. Dillard & Clark, late-'60s country-rock pioneers

"I remember seeing New York for the first time and playing [*The Fantastic Expedition Of Dillard & Clark*] on my Walkman, so it's stayed with me. It's quite poppy but it's got country-folk stuff in it. We did one of their songs, 'Out On The Side.'"

2. Mouse On Mars, spastic electronic pop jazz

"I don't listen to that much new music, but [*Idiogy*] is pretty warped. It's all computer-generated but it's got amazing brass riffs. I think when you listen to something like that, it makes you realize that all that defines good music is imagination, which that record's got."

3. Robert Wyatt, paralyzed left-wing English art-rock

"I [made a mixtape] of his stuff once and it spanned from 1966 to 1993, and it hadn't changed, he stuck to what he was doing. He's probably in his mid- to late 50s now and he's still as good as he was in his 20s. Which is good for us, to think of someone as old as my dad doing good music is quite heartening."

4. Neil Young & Crazy Horse

"I saw them for the first time in Britain and it was one of the best gigs I've ever seen. Like Robert Wyatt, he's getting on a bit but you'd never guess it by the way he was playing that night. I'd be tired after playing *one* of his songs, but he could just carry on for about two hours."

5. Meic Stevens, Welsh folk recluse

"He was called the best songwriter in Europe but he never made it out of Wales. He wasn't interested in a career. Which is a bit scary in a way, cause I know for a fact something of that equivalent could be lurking in God-knows-what-country anywhere in the world."

At least that's what we think he said—that damned crazy-talking Welshman. Increase your comprehension with their latest album (and second in English), *How I Long To Feel That Summer In My Heart* (Mantra-Beggars).

INTERVIEW BY TOM MALLON

## Rock Not Rock



Jiminy Glick



Barbara Walters



What Would Joan Jett Do?



What Would Jesus Do?



Gum flavored with hellfire



Gum flavored with toothpaste

## SmorgasH.O.R.D.E.

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6. Disco Biscuits





PATRICK HALEY

I N M Y L I F E

# Hot For Teacher

The Incredible Moses Leroy takes you to rock 'n' roll high school

**M**uch like Big Tobacco, Ron Fountenberry knows that you've got to hook 'em while they're young. So before he became the Incredible Moses Leroy, pop archivist and Beck-like pastiche-artist extraordinaire, Fountenberry took his act to the schools of San Diego as a substitute teacher. "I did P.E., English, field trips," he says. "I was like the 'show up, hang out, get paid' guy. Science classes were good too because they assume you don't know the material and you just show videos all day." It wasn't long before Fountenberry realized that a valuable market was throwing spitballs right under his nose. "I started handing out CDs as soon as I got them made. If you get fans at that age, they're going to stick with you," he laughs. "I figured I'd start disseminating my propaganda real early on."

Pack a lunch and get schooled by the Incredible Moses Leroy's Electric Pocket Radio (*Ultimatum*).

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# ON THE VERGE

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SPECIAL ISSUE



READY TO GO?

Open here



## ...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD

**W**e just wanted to evolve. That sounds frightening, doesn't it?" laughs ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead vocalist/guitarist/drummer Conrad Keely. Newly playing Dr. Moreau to the Austin band known for the feral intensity of its live shows is Interscope Records, which signed the band after two indie albums, well-received barnstormings of Europe (the right kind of ugly Americans, they're especially loved in the U.K.) and years of gigs routinely punctuated by mayhem. "It was a way for us to be able to make the record that we wanted," Keely says of inking to a

major. Not that the band held much truck with indie rock anyway, especially the shoegazing variety. "I saw it as complacent. I saw it as even pseudo-intellectual at times. Just a bunch of white, middle-class college kids who were trying to make a statement about rock being dead or something... It just grossed me out and I just wanted to tell 'em all to fuck off and kinda used my music to do so." What it won't mean is new gear for the band, since they tend to toss theirs around the club. "I'm kinda afraid to buy a nice guitar—it would be a tragedy what I would do to it." >>>SCOTT FRAMPTON

TRACI GOUDIE





# AVALANCHES

**T**he lineup for Australia's Avalanches only counts six members, but it took more than 600 artists to create their debut, *Since I Left You* (Modular-London/Sire). Like a house party where the DJ has a bottomless crate of vinyl and a severe case of ADD, the band uses cut-and-paste hip-hop tactics and a punk ethos to heat its dizzying array of samples into molten postmodern pop—and its production almost drove its architects insane. "We were so naïve when we recorded the album," says the Avalanches' Robbie Chater. "We found we had to sample a thousand different songs to create the kind of ambiance we wanted. We'd spend hours

fiddling with one little sound so it would work in a musical context. And we never imagined the legal ramifications of sampling Madonna. We drove ourselves completely mental producing this record and we'll never make another one like it." After spending a year legalizing their act of audio larceny, the band has taken on an even more arduous task: Recreating the album in a live setting. "We've turned into something of a garage band that does covers of its own songs," Chater says. "We've developed into a completely different entity and are bringing more of our own personalities into the mix. We're even singing now."

STEVE GULLICK

on the verge ...



# BILAL

It's hard to believe, but sexy, rhythm-riding funk music was not 21-year-old Bilal Sayeed Oliver's first career option. "I could never even do something like sing for my girl," explains the reluctant R&B singer. "Write a song, maybe. But none of that look-you-in-the-eye and just start singing. Hell, no!" He may never serenade a sweetheart, but his stint as a back-up vocalist for D'Angelo made Bilal lust for center stage, beckoning him out of the Mannes Conservatory Of Music (where he studied jazz and classical) and making the move from Bach to rock. On his debut, *1st Born Second* (Interscope), he manages to effort-

lessly vacillate from angel to pimp, sometimes in the same song. On the comically philosophical "Sometimes," he's had it up to here with a nagging girlfriend. He scats his way through thoughts of "putting a foot up her ass"—while his jazzy intonations caress each word like a marriage proposal. "Love Poems" is another case in point. "If we label this," he whispers, "just picture what we might lose." Does he really think he can convince a commitment-minded woman to remain a simple booty-call? Bilal throws his 'locks back and lets out a hearty chuckle. "Hmph, if I sing it to her, who knows?"

SHELBY GATES





on the verge



# CITIZEN COPE

CHRISTIAN LANTRY

**S**mall talk used to be tough for Clarence Greenwood, a.k.a. Citizen Cope. When he told people he was a musician, they'd want to know what he played. And since he didn't get very far with "rock 'n' roll, soul-inspired, roots-inspired type things," he had to change his response. "I say, 'You have to hear it.' That's the easiest way to get out of that one," he confesses. The former Basehead member conjured up that response just in time for tours with Nelly Furtado and Tricky and the release of his eponymous debut album (*DreamWorks*), on which he sings, plays keyboards and

guitar, mans the turntables and helps out with production. Sunnier than trip-hop and artier than G. Love, the record's genre-blurring songs comprise, in Greenwood's approximation, "essentially, hopefully, a soul record. Something that has some type of good feel to it." That good feel runs throughout songs like the mid-tempo jam "If There's Love," which finds him crooning, "If there's love, I just want to have something to do with it." In other hands that might come off as plaintive, but Greenwood plays it straight. "I want to be involved with that," he says. "I want to be involved with love."





## Cult Figurine

Think Barbie would still want Ken if she could have her very own Harvey Keitel? The new 12-inch *Reservoir Dogs* action figures (in celebration of the 10th anniversary of Quentin Tarantino's bloody heist-gone-wrong film) come complete with accessories like a removable ear, a gas can and a razor, which could spark a trend in

movie-memorabilia collection. Why settle for a poster when you can style the mohawk on a tiny Travis Bickle or poke a syringe into an Uma Thurman doll's chest? >>>STEPHANIE VALERA

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## Butterfly Jones



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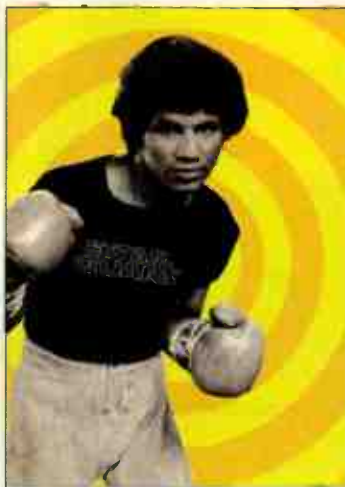
CMJ NEW MUSIC REPORT



Download the MP3 of "Anywhere But Now" at [www.vanguardrecords.com](http://www.vanguardrecords.com)

World Radio History

## Pan-Cultural Fashion Phenomenon



In Mexican slang, *naco* means something like "tacky," used to dis the fashionably unaware. For the Pasadena, Calif.-based T-shirt design company NaCo. ([www.chidochido.com](http://www.chidochido.com)), it stands for po-mo hipness. Appropriating pan-Latin slang and border-culture kitsch, NaCo. outfits the global-minded—Latino or otherwise—in shirts emblazoned with space-age

Spanglish and twisted corporate logos, like "Estar Guars," the phonetic Spanish spelling of *Star Wars*. The firm's irreverent esthetic has even gotten it adopted by Tijuana's über-cool Nortec Collective. >>>ENRIQUE LAVIN





CORINNE DAY

# CLINIC

**C**linic may hail from Liverpool, but they've got no interest in milking a certain sacred cow: "Liverpool's becoming like a Beatles theme park. There's roads named after each member, Beatles stuff everywhere you go," says singer/guitarist Ade Blackburn. "What slightly gets to me is that I thought people like the Teardrop Explodes and Frankie Goes To Hollywood were far more creative and original than the Beatles were." Considering their idiosyncratic views—and their atmosphere-heavy lo-fi rock—it's no surprise that the quartet has formed a mutual appreciation society with some fellow English envelope-pushers. "Radiohead have been experimenting

a bit more and not being on the treadmill—I admire them for that," Blackburn says. Clinic has already toured with Radiohead in Europe, and will be supporting them in Japan after the U.S. release of their debut LP, *Internal Wrangler* (Domino), which the U.K. press favorably compared to everyone from Frank Zappa and the Velvet Underground to Phil Spector and LL Cool J. Primal Scream's Bobby Gillespie and Pulp's Jarvis Cocker have been spotted at the band's gigs, and their mainstream appeal sealed when their single "The Second Line" soundtracked a Europe-wide Levi's TV ad. Just don't hold your breath for a McCartney collaboration. >>>ANGUS BATEY



BOB GREEN; LOCATION: THE MITCHELL ALGUS GALLERY

# HERBERT

**L**ive electronica" is usually an oxymoron—musical modernism as a laptop-shaped box of boredom, sometimes with trippy visuals. But Matthew Herbert provides the hosanna that set needs with an on-the-fly creation that's revolutionary, improvisational and funky as hell. Live, he commands a bank of samplers in real time, mixing in audience chatter, bottles breaking and grinding teeth, as Dani Siciliano sings and pianist Phil Parnell plays. "It's not supposed to be an accurate representation of [*Bodily Functions* (Soundlike-!K7)], but of how the record was made," explains the 29-year-old Englishman, who records simply as Herbert. "I use whatever I

made the track with, then I try to mess it all up." The live mix coalesces as gorgeously as the album, a digital jazz mosaic that may be the finest hour of Herbert's six-year career—or at least his most personal. "There's a song about aging called 'On Reflection,'" he explains, "which uses the sound of my skin and hair—my hair's falling out so I won't be able to make that sound in 10 years' time." Amid a dance culture increasingly fraught with commercialism and unoriginality, Herbert works to "contribute and create a sense of community that's an alternative," and that community is growing. Herbert stresses, "There's a whole ready group of people creating something extremely important." >>>PIOTR ORLOV





BOB GREEN

RICHIE HAWTIN

## Software for DJs

**G**earhead DJs talk about a future when technology will revolutionize the wheels of steel. Richie "Plastikman" Hawtin has seen that day, and is already bringing it to light. *Final Scratch*, software developed by hackers in Amsterdam, turns any turntable in the world into a digital interface. Hawtin's featured it in his DJ sets for more than a year, and used it to construct his latest mix record, *DE9: Closer To The Edit*. Put a specially made, preformatted piece of FS vinyl on, and the computer uses the info "to understand what you're doing with the turntable," says Hawtin.

"Slow it down, speed it up, turn it off, play the record at the wrong speed, take the needle and go across the record." The program translates the information and lets you manipulate the tracks of your choice. "It allows you to play music exactly the way DJs always have," Hawtin explains. But "because it's played in digital form it also opens the door for unbelievable things: manipulation, re-editing files, changing. Once something is in the digital realm that's where the progression is. [It's] giving the DJ even more power than he's had." >>>PIOTR ORLOV



## Rock Implement

Rock's supposed to be badass, not tasteful, so we should all hang our heads in shame that we let flamboyant, angular and obnoxiously colored guitars slide from the shelves in favor of *mature* instruments. Thankfully, BC Rich has reissued their entire line of horn-hand-worthy basses and

guitars, like the devilish Beast, the medieval weapon-like Mockingbird and the metalhead-staple Warlock. Expect a whole new legion of budding axe-players to injure themselves on those beautiful spikes while trying to high-kick and solo simultaneously. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

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## X-treme Sport



Freestyle walking (a.k.a. "soaping") has been around for years—kids who just couldn't stick that kick-flip started back-flipping off benches instead. It stood as the misfit of extreme sports, its "athletes" continuously accused of a lack of tal-

ent and originality. But just as Airwalk and Vans helped make skateboarding fashionable, Soap Shoes is almost single-handedly turning soaping into a trendy sport, sponsoring a nationwide tour of soaping demos and selling shoes specifically designed for grinding. Don't believe the hype? The company's multi-million-dollar profits show that droves of pedestrian adrenaline-junkies are already on board—or off board, as it were. >>>ALEX NAIDUS





BOB GREEN

## MELISSA LEFTON

**W**hen she was 12, Melissa Lefton donned bondage gear and performed "Seduce Me Tonight" from the *Flashdance* soundtrack for a talent show. "Very inappropriate," she remembers fondly. Now, at 27, her idea of appropriate is still a little skewed. Her perky self-titled pop debut is built on synth-y, bubble-gum soul backing tracks her Jive Records labelmate Britney might grind to. But on close listen, it offers an irony-laden take on the teen-queen scene for bouncy-beat-lovers (raised, like Lefton, on the addictive hooks of Erasure and Culture Club) who can't stomach lame lyrics. Over the standard top-40 whoop-whoops and cheesy

guitar riffs, Lefton disses a "chicken-choking chump in Armani," fends off an eager sugar daddy and deals with being ignored at a social event; with one foot in the real world and the other in the cotton-candyland of *TRL*, she's throwing the party and crashing it at the same time. "I'm interested in the sick seams shown underneath," she says. "It's very enjoyable for me to sit back and point the finger." To wit, on her confidently named first single, "My Hit Song," (whose video features a pig- and donkey-masked dancer troupe), Lefton calmly, coolly surmises that the future looks bright: "The market research/ Says we will make it." >>>CATHERINE LOWE

on the verge

# MADLIB

**A**n hour's drive outside L.A.'s hip-hop mainstream, in the dusty California town of Oxnard, a reclusive musical visionary is at work. Prolific DJ/producer Madlib has been "breaking and rapping and DJing" with his childhood buddies Wild Child and DJ Rome as the Lootpack for nearly a decade. When their debut LP, *Soundpieces: Da Antidote*, fell under the radar in '99, Madlib holed up at home and channeled his disappointment into his MC alter ego, Quasimoto, releasing *The Unseen* to critical acclaim (and with label backing from Bay Area hip-hop magnate Peanut Butter Wolf) a year later. Distinguished by an impeccable sense of

composition, *The Unseen's* mix of hip-hop and vintage jazz continues to resonate up and down the West Coast, while Madlib continues to push the envelope: The new *Angles Without Edges* (Stones Throw), from his Yesterday's New Quintet, is a reverent, introspective jazz project on which Madlib plays all the instruments himself (disregard the fake names on the record sleeve), expanding on his keen sense of arrangement. And another Lootpack record is expected this year. "Keep buying it, I'm going to keep bringing it," Madlib says, then reconsiders: "Even if they don't buy it, I'm going to keep bringing it. Let the music speak for itself." >>>MARTIN WOODSIDE





on the verge



## Videogame Classic

With the *Final Fantasy* movie complete, the best-selling game series continues to gain momentum. *FFX* pushes the PS2's processing brain like digital Ritalin with its unprecedented graphics, but the game's not all eye candy: Expect a new strategy-heavy battle system and actual

voice acting for the first time in the franchise's history. Sure, the male lead resembles a young Meg Ryan, but he's got a big sword and isn't afraid to use it. This'll make the perfect Valentine's Day gift for your sad, lonely self when it floods shelves in February. >>>JONATHAN DUDLAK

## Philosophical Failure

*Dogme 95*, two Danish filmmakers' list of 10 pipe-dream commandments for quality motion pictures, set the film world on its ear; now, it's inspired designer Ernest Adams to compile his *Dogma 2001* for the video-game industry. Forbidding 3D hardware, violence, cine-

matic interludes and any good/evil dichotomy whatsoever, Adams' list makes the Atari 2600 seem advanced. No designers have picked up the gauntlet yet—perhaps it's that nagging desire to go on eating, which requires the sale of marketable products. >>>JONATHAN DUDLAK





HAROLD TAINOT

## MINK LUNGS

**S**o what if Mink Lungs bassist Jennifer "Miss Frosty" Hoopes sometimes hula-hoops while she sings, and guitarist Gian Carlo Feleppa hurdles through club audiences lip-syncing to Jerry Falwell, shirtless, barefoot and toting a personal spotlight? Disregard the fact that until Feleppa got a massive electric shock onstage, all four members wore white coveralls wired with Christmas lights. Mink Lungs do not want to be a shticky band. "That's probably the worst pigeonhole to be in," says Feleppa, adding that the Lungs combat the shtick factor with change—by, say, adding a batch of red Jell-O, some pancake makeup or 1000 live ants to the onstage equation. Along with Hoopes (they're a couple),

brother Tim Feleppa (on guitar) and former upstairs neighbor Tom Galbraith (on drums), Gian has been perfecting jammy, goofily psychedelic, massively creative pop rock in a record-packed Brooklyn duplex for three years now. "All we ever do is practice," sings Galbraith on the classic-rocky "Snail," and with twice-a-week rehearsals, it's almost true—still, there's a pleasantly lo-fi grit to their first full-length, *The Better Button* (Arena Rock), from quieter, Tim-penned numbers to go-go-ish Miss Frosty tunes. If their reception in New York is any indication, Galbraith might have to rework another of "Snail"'s lyrical quips: that their audiences are "all our friends/ And a couple musicians." >>>DYLAN SIEGLER





BOB GREEN

## IKE REILLY

**M**y music is like a good party," singer Ike Reilly says, downing an afternoon beer. "In the front room of the party, you might punch somebody or you might fuck somebody; in the back room, you might get fucked or punched. But either way, it's better than not going." Reilly's songs spin in that same Beat-happy rush of language, unleashing the life-affirming imagination of a mid-30s pub-punk musician living in the Chicago suburbs, working as a hotel doorman. His saga unfolds like the timeworn plot of the great American novel—and so does his music. Doubtful? Then revel in the celebratory incantations of *Salesmen*

and *Racists* (Republic-Universal), a debut that shows him wanting to be Bob Dylan in the same way Beck once did. Stories and lies intertwine on lyrical pastiches like "Last Time," a part off-color joke, part self-fulfilling prophecy about failure, and "Hip-hop Thighs #17," a spit-shined American-music flag-waver. Reilly's rock is the witty sound of hope, cock-eyed and idiotic at times, but always alive. "There's no apathy on this record, or in anything I do," Reilly reiterates. "It's all a celebration, and the joy comes from the lack of inhibition to discuss anything. If you're willing to not be so cynical about everything, you'll relate." >>>PIOTR ORLOV



## Footwear

If you want to prove you're a player, you don't need brilliant battle rhymes or a souped-up Glock, you need a team of badass lawyers. L.A.-based Dada Footwear recently squared off with Nike over the "Draulics" shock absorbers on Dada's new Solesonicforce running shoe,

with each side claiming the other stole its technology. The two recently settled out of court, but Dada is now the choice of gangstas on the court: Snoop Dogg recently signed on to promote their new Thizzles basketball sneaker. >>>NEIL GLADSTONE



## Retro Gadget

One thing missing from the petering '80s nostalgia trend is that glorious time in America when portable stereos, like the girls on the *Facts Of Life*, became larger than you ever thought possible. Break out your Boogaloo Shrimp headband, for the return of the shoulder-borne boombox is

nigh. Perch Sharp's QT-CD210 on your clavicle for a striking Johnny-5 look (bonus '80s points there), use Pentagon Defense Products' Boom Box Spy Camera to stealthily record your headspins or clip Spencer's 4 1/2-inch Mini Boom Box to your earlobe for extra flair. >>>RENEE FALK

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# unlisted

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## Film Directors

Working with the most difficult band in the land has its benefits: A gaggle of Radiohead video directors are headed for the big time with their feature-film breakthroughs. Most notable are Jonathan Glazer ("Street Spirit (Fade Out)," "Karma Police"), who's currently making waves with his British gangster comedy *Sexy Beast*,

and Jamie Thraves ("Just"), who joined Loew's Cinemas' Shooting Gallery Film Series earlier this year with *The Low Down*. As for those responsible for *Pablo Honey*-era disasters like the bleached-blond-Thom-and-swarms-of-ants mess "Stop Whispering," there's always work to be had in car commercials. >>>CAM'RON DAVIS

## Surreality TV Programming

Psychic medium John Edward has been called many things: prophet, charlatan—but the next Judge Judy? Like that brazen bringer of justice, Edward will soon be the gangleader of a daytime-TV movement: His hit show, *Crossing Over*, leaps from the humble SciFi Network this fall to CBS's

lineup. But that's just the start—NBC recruited *The Weakest Link*'s producer to create a psychic talk show of its own, and even the alleged wire-fraud felon infomercial queen Miss Cleo reportedly has a show in the works. "Hold on child, I think I see a commercial break coming." >>>ALEX NAIDUS



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|---------|----------------------|----------------|
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| 22      | TLA                  | Philadelphia   |
| 24      | Beacon Theatre       | New York City  |
| 25      | 9:30 Club            | Washington, DC |
| 27      | Vic                  | Chicago        |
| 28      | Women's Club         | Minneapolis    |
| Oct 1   | St Andrews Cathedral | Vancouver      |
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## Hip-hop Subgenre



BUCK 65

Back in the day, self-doubt was enough to get any MC laughed out of the cipher. But in today's uber-fragmented hip-hop universe, there's a place for all types of rappers, even insecure ones. MCs like Eyedea, Slug, Aesop Rock and Buck65 embrace their post-collegiate angst, redirecting their B-boy braggadocio inward for navel-gazing rhymes full of existential meanderings. It's Freudian funk for distressed hip-hop heads. >>>MICHAEL ENDELMAN





BOB GREEN

## URSULA RUCKER

**U**rsula Rucker has some issues. She doesn't like being labeled a rapper, a feminist or an R&B artist, even though she's best known for her guest appearances on Roots albums, several of the rhymes on her debut, *Supa Sista* (Stu'dlo K7), needle away at gender and race stereotypes and the soul-funk tracks that frame her stately spoken-word pieces were produced by King Britt and 4 Hero, among others. Instead, the Philly native and Sonia Sanchez disciple would rather be known simply as a poet. With a father who's a deacon in a black Baptist church, a mother who's a devout

Italian Catholic and a brother who died in a codeine deal gone bad, she's got plenty of personal history to mull over in her meditative verse. Dressed in a cut-off tank top and white headband, she might look like a fly girl; then you hear that seductive, whispery voice rising up against corporate, technological and social oppression on *Supa Sista*, and you have to reconsider. "This album is my little way of being an activist because I'm too chicken to go on the front lines and be arrested, because of my kids," admits the mother of two. "I'm too much of a punk to do that, so this is my way." >>>NEIL GLADSTONE

on the verge



# THURSDAY

**W**inona Ryder's fallen hard for Dave Pirner, Beck and Ryan Adams. Could Thursday, a gaggle of hard-rocking Rutgers dropouts, be the actress's next love thang? They've got a surefire in, at least: Guitarist Steve Pedula's tight with *George Washington* director David Gordon Green. "[Green] went out with her one night to talk about movies, and he wore a Thursday shirt and they got into a conversation about us," vocalist Geoff Rickly beams. "Most celebrities make me sick, but she's got that other thing going." Likewise, Thursday stands out proudly among their contemporaries; they've got that visceral, innovative hard-core thing going. On the New Brunswick, N.J. quintet's recent

LP, *Full Collapse* (Victory), fragile arpeggios tiptoe onto a cloverleaf of tight, bullying riff-rock traffic, get flattened like Frogger, and then pop right back up swinging. That careening gentle singsong vs. wounded scream dynamic isn't exactly revolutionary, but Thursday does it exceedingly well. That might be because of the sincerity of their delivery: As Rickly confides, the springloaded torment you hear is surprisingly reality-based. "When we write we don't get along very well," he says. "When we actually [finish] something... all the tension is released while we're playing it, so that our first view of the song, we kind of get a very explosive version of it. Because we're all very frustrated." >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD





# DAY OF

**A brush with death showed Saves The Day that bouncy pop-rock isn't everything. Just don't try to tell that to their fans.**

**I**'ve been thinking about how insignificant we all are," Saves The Day vocalist Chris Conley says from the back of his band's tour bus, parked in front of Manhattan's Irving Plaza.

It's surprising to hear something so dark from a guy who's sung lighthearted pop punk for throngs of backpack-toting teens since his band's debut, *Can't Slow Down*, three years ago. But a van accident in March of 2000 nearly claimed the lives of Conley and bandmates David Soloway and Eben D'Amico, so even with the Princeton, N.J. quintet's sophomore effort, *Through Being Cool*, out-selling their debut, the object has changed. "When the van accident happened I thought I was dead," Conley says. "And then all of a sudden I wasn't and I was really alive. From then on my

brain just took off... Why put out another album that's about meaningless drivel? I mean, it's been wonderful to make all the stuff we've done before and it's wonderful that some people listened to it. But at the same time, let's try to move ahead now. We all thought it would be interesting to make people think a little bit, to try to say something."

That sets up some wicked contrasts, since what hasn't changed on the new *Stay What You Are* (made with hot-shot Beck producer Rob Schnapf), is the band's reliance on tight, unapologetically happy-sounding power-pop melodies. The result is classic boy-loses-girl frivolity backed up against frosty meditations on death and despair. On "As Your Ghost Takes Flight," inspired by





# RECKONING

SPECIAL ISSUE  
**ON THE VERGE**  
May Cause Excitability.

STORY: DYLAN P. GADINO PHOTO: JEREMY MICHAEL WEISS

a childhood friend's heroin addiction, Conley sings: "I drank your blood/ Feel it dripping down my throat," in the same somewhat girlish tone as before. He likens the shape of the moon to the blade of an axe over the bouncy stop-and-go dynamics of "All I'm Losing Is Me." And on the infectiously percussive set opener, "At Your Funeral," he pledges to sing a friend's requiem when the time comes.

All these deep thoughts make rock stardom especially odd for Conley: "People treat us differently now," he says. "Now people reach up to the stage wanting to touch my hand and they act like it's a special event in their life. That alone is mind-boggling. They can touch their brother or sister's hand and it would be just

as good. I mean, I'm not going to leave them hanging, but it just feels weird to me." It shows no sign of letting up, either—after signing with Vagrant this year and debuting halfway up the *Billboard* album chart, *Saves The Day* (which also includes drummer Bryan Newman and guitarist Ted Alexander) find themselves selling out 2000-plus capacity venues. For Conley, though, the idea of further success isn't the point: "I think we're already there," he says. "This can all end tomorrow and I'd walk away with a smile on my face." **NMM**



BRYAN NEWMAN, TED ALEXANDER, CHRIS CONLEY, DAVID SOLOWAY, EBEN O'AMICO

# + PUSHER MAN +

Tom Jenkinson is Squarepusher. Squarepusher is the ghost inside a rhythm machine. Tom Jenkinson is not a ghost.

STORY: PIOTR ORLOV PHOTO: BOB GREEN

**S**quarepusher's given name is Tom Jenkinson. He's a burly, slightly disheveled 26-year-old man. Funny, and kind of tall. He's twitchy and restless, in posture and in prose—fidgeting with his hands, breaking obscenity-streamed sentences off midway for sound effects, adjusting in his seat, and then flowing eloquently for a brief free-associative spell: Whisper, fucking hmm, squiggle, boom, gone. It's also how his music operates—a driving, fusion bop-infested drum 'n' bass juggernaut consistently rolling off cliffs, at times inexplicably breaking for moments of ambient jazz serenity.

"My music's made of titanium," Squarepusher says. "You can't fuck with it."

Jenkinson is not the average electronica hermit, but one of the style's few genuine and unabashed eccentrics. Previously unwilling to discuss his music, he's turning over a new leaf of sorts. "I'm trying to revoke the fucking idea of ego [in my music], that's why I feel stupid talking about it. I used to think it was pointless, but I like pretending and getting into social situations," he says, grinning like a sly alligator pulling his victim by the leg into the water, where he can take a righteous chomp.

But he doesn't bite. Music is pretty much all the East London resident does. "[It's] the axis around which everything in my life revolves, the one place where I feel like a person," he says. So he creates all the time. Having released seven albums in just the last six years, he reckons he could release "three times as much." Beginning with '96's fusion-jungle, "rhythm-oriented melody" manifesto *Feed Me Weird Things*, which soulmate Richard "Aphex Twin" James described as "sound like sound never sounded before" in its liner notes, and working through this year's *Go Plastic* (Warp), which purees dub 'n' bass, two-step garage and a dash of madness into a slamming digital gazpacho, Jenkinson has followed his muse into explicitly divergent corners. Jazz, beats and "headfucks" are integral parts of his liberated artistic conscience, with the hyper-contrast of 1998's *Music Is Rotted One Note's* straight-up early-'70s Miles Davis vibe with 1999's *Selection Sixteen's* self-admitted pointless kineticism owing simply to the voices inside his head, as translated by machines.

"How do they relate?" He repeats the question, devilish look still intact. "There's three different strands of stuff [I'm creating] all the time. There's a strand of stuff concerning samplers and sequencing and computer-based shit, which is the space represented on [*Go Plastic*]. Then you got this other strand where I'm playing instruments and making tracks by trying to strip away every single crutch, make music as pure as possible, like a mad test. And there's this other strand that is more like music I don't even think about, where I don't even give a shit, like making acid tracks or noise tracks, to clear my head. It's like washing. Like if I've got some bullshit going on in my head, I just do it. So when Warp says to do an album, I just compile it. I don't make it from start to finish. I've got libraries of different stuff, and I just grab them, and more often than not, I tend to grab them from one strand."

Jenkinson attributes this purist view on music and its creation, and a heartfelt disregard for context, at least partly to his parents' genes. "My mom is like a psychic, and my dad is an electronics engineer, and I've inherited a bit of both. So I'm a lock of those two together: I've got the desire to take gadgets apart and play around with stuff, mixed with the feeling of being perpendicular to time. It's a curse, but it's a blessing as well, cause I feel like I see straight into things."

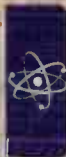
So, in a world so stringently defined by environment, Squarepusher is almost wholly apart, his message guided as much by the medium of his creation as by the electronic jazz schizophrenia that is its end result: "As far as I understand, I'm only here to do this. To my ears, my music sounds like it's devoid of personal intentions, it's sideways to life, it's like a sideways route. A different angle, and I love having the camera angle switched, however subtle or however extreme that is." **MMM**



SPECIAL ISSUE

# ON THE VERGE

Light juse. Stand Back





## Mike Patton is back, in several new roles.

STORY: TOM MALLON PHOTO: BJORN OPSAHL

**M**ike Patton has a bad reputation. As frontman for Faith No More, he was notoriously difficult. Uncooperative. Cantankerous. After the band's breakup, he named his new record label, Ipecac, after a syrup that induces vomiting. His first solo record consisted solely of weird vocal noises and contained a song called "Raped On A Bed Of Sand"; he is not a man of conventional taste.

With four records and two movie roles in the works, he's doing his best to ram that taste right down your throat. The first assault is Fantomas's *The Director's Cut* (Ipecac), twisted takes on 15 classic movie themes that debuted at No. 57 on the Billboard New Artist Albums chart and earned a slot opening for what Patton calls "a little band called Tool." Then comes Tomahawk, a noise-rock who's-who with ex-Jesus Lizard guitarist

Duane Denison, ex-Helmet drummer John Stanier and current Melvins bassist Kevin Rutmanis that Patton says is "the closest thing to a rock band I've been involved with for a while." Add running a record label and an upcoming collaboration with Massive Attack's Robert "3-D" Del Naja and you can almost hear Patton's schedule bursting at the seams.

But out of all these projects, Peeping Tom could be the one that returns Patton to the big time. A collaboration with Dan The Automator, it's his attempt at pop—albeit "dense, pretty messy" pop. While they haven't entered the studio yet, the demos alone were good enough to ensnare Reprise Records, Faith No More's old home.

"I just got the contract in the mail today," Patton says, much friendlier on the phone than his reputation (or output) would indi-



# PENDING

cate. "It's like a fucking telephone book. I was just oohing and aahing over it; I haven't signed something like this since I was a teenager."

After almost 15 years in the business, 33-year-old Patton learned to be skeptical about the size of Peeping Tom's potential market. "To my ears, I think it would click with a lot of people. But who fuckin' knows, man? People are insane. I don't know what they like. I've come to the realization that anything I do isn't going to fit anywhere very neatly. It's always going to be some kind of freak, and I'm OK with that." He snickers. "We'll see how Reprise is with that. I've been in the Warner system for a long time and I'd think they would know better."

His transition to the film world is going considerably less smoothly. Patton is slated to appear in two films: *Firecracker*, in which he'll play henchman to Dennis Hopper, and *Amnesia*, where

he'll fill the shoes of a drug-dealing Ibizan bartender. "Having never done anything like that, I figured, 'I'm gonna give it a shot, it could be a good laugh.' So I immediately said yes to both of them. And I haven't heard a word," he says. "Someone told me they were using my name in ads on the Internet, but I'm not sure how that world operates. It seems even slimier than the music business—they start pimping a product before there even is one."

If the spotlight does come crawling back, Patton's ready. "I've got a little experience doing that," he says, downplaying his former pinup status, "and if push came to shove I could probably do it with a little more conscience this time. I think I could do it on my terms, which is not saying yes to everybody, which is not bending over backwards and inserting a few fists in your ass for them." **NMM**

# Stroke It

Is the latest wave of New York City rock the work of the Strokes and a few impeccably dressed bands or just a transcontinental media wankfest?

STORY: SHELLY RIDENOUR PHOTO: COLIN LANE

**D**id you hear that tickets to see the Strokes are being scalped for 200 pounds in England? Or how Morrissey and Courtney Love were spotted at the band's L.A. show, while Radiohead and Kate Moss checked them out in Oxford? How Oasis is courting them as tour openers? How one of the guys lost his girlfriend to a member of Weezer?

How about the Strokes' music? Heard *that*, their one import EP? Or caught them live? Hype travels fast, but bands still get around in vans, so you're not alone if their music's eluded you. "It sucks that people have to read stuff about us in a magazine before they hear us," says Strokes guitarist Nick Valensi. But that's exactly what's been going on for the past 10 months, as the world, or at least the English music press, heralds this New York band as "the coolest motherfuckers around."

Formed in Manhattan in 1999, the quintet (Valensi, singer Julian Casablancas, guitarist Albert Hammond, Jr., bassist Nikolai Fraiture and drummer Fabrizio Moretti) dived headfirst into New York City consciousness in December of 2000, with a month-long opening-slot residency at prime downtown venue the Mercury Lounge. By the end of the month, they were packing the place on their own, with the club reportedly turning away people by 7:30 p.m.

"Originally, the goal was to take over New York. We wanted to be the most popular band in the city," recalls Valensi. "Then we went to England and... got distracted." To say the least. On the other side of the Atlantic, the band's *The Modern Age* EP was released on Rough Trade in January of this year; by February they were selling out every show of their debut British headlining tour. Their second single, "Hard To Explain," debuted at No. 16 on the U.K. pop charts and went on to sell more than 20,000 copies. Meanwhile, the predictable Manhattan A&R madness was taking place; RCA emerged as the top shark and signed the band last spring. That was about the same time *Rolling Stone* called them "Manhattan's first big rock 'n' roll thrill of the year." Reckons Valensi: "Hype exists when people don't know what you're doing. Word about us gets around faster than our music does. That'll die down when the record comes out."

So what do the Strokes actually sound like? Both live and on their RCA debut, *Is This It*, they sound like... New York. Like the scruffy sophistication of smart kids with all the culture in the world at their boot heels, running the streets of the Lower East Side. Clocking in at an average of three minutes, their songs are taut and raw and bristling with energy, and that's no accident: "There's no bullshit, no gimmicks, no tricks to try to get you to like the song," says Valensi. "We don't put in a guitar solo just to have one." They play nervous-energy pop with a romantic slouch (see "Some Day" and "The Modern Age") while sending out siren calls for hand-clappers and hip-grinders ("Last Nite," "Hard To Explain"). They summon the ghosts of art-rock, of the Velvet Underground and all things Warholian.

The romantic notion of all those echoes—and groups akin to the Strokes, like Radio 4 and the Walkmen—making up a new New York music scene is one that's being fetishized by the English music press. "The British press is sort of notorious for leaping on new bands and 'creating' scenes in order to generate excitement among readers," admits *NME* writer (and ardent Strokes fan) April Long. "In this case, though, people at *NME* are genuinely bowled over by the Strokes. They've called them 'the most important





THE STROKES, FROM LEFT: JULIAN CASABLANCAS, NICK VALENSI, FABRIZIO MORETTI, ALBERT HAMMOND, JR., NIKOLAI FRAITURE

band to come out of New York in over 20 years,' which is slightly hyperbolic, but I think everyone loves them because they combine all the qualities rock 'n' roll should have—intelligence, style and songs which sound fresh and innovative while also evoking a hallowed era that everyone secretly wishes they could return to. It was a bit of a gamble for us promote them so ardently, but I think everyone is relieved to have some kind of alternative to the boring nü metal that's been pouring in from the States."

There's just one problem for the bands involved: "I didn't know anything about a scene until I read about it," admits Walkmen vocalist Hamilton Leithauser. "I mean, everyone knew about the hype around the Strokes, but it's never felt like we were part of any sort of cohesive thing."

Bands or painters or writers often deny that they're part of a scene, and it makes sense that bands don't want to be lumped together with their peers as a bunch of soundalikes—especially when they're first sparking their careers. But right now, at a dive bar in Knoxville or St. Paul or Boulder, there is a conversation going on between members of local bands about their scene—how can it be more vital? How can they get more people involved, get press attention, make it cooler and more like New York's? Funny thing is, it's almost impossible to have a united scene in New York. "Usually in smaller towns, you have one cool bar where everyone plays and hangs out," says Interpol guitarist Daniel Kessler. Even in a metropolis like Chicago or Atlanta, local bands collaborate and share concert bills. But in New York, there is not only no central club or bar for local music, it's nearly impossible to create a scene when you're competing with national touring acts for gigs and crowds every night of the week. "Living in New York is just a struggle in itself," Kessler says. "But the things that get in the way—the rush and the anxiety of the city—not only divide any scene, they also make people work harder. I think that's the common goal that the bands who are getting attention right now all have: an inner drive to make it in New York."

Much talk has also been made about how these bands are the evolutionary descendants of Jonathan Fire\*Eater, the downtown NYC band of the late '90s who self-destructed after 15 minutes of hype, lots of drugs, a fantastic EP and one major-label album that made not even a ripple. It's true, bands like the Strokes share a certain Rimbaud romanticism with JF\*E. And, as it turns out, the Walkmen share three members. "I'd like to think we don't sound like them," says Leithauser, who wasn't in JF\*E. "But it's undeniable that we sometimes do."

Undeniable, and not a bad thing. Nor is it bad that Radio 4's bristling guitar blare and trembling energy immediately conjure memories of Gang Of Four. What's more noteworthy is what they don't sound like: the dark, visceral chills of fellow New Yorkers Interpol, or the French Kicks' exuberantly off-kilter, new new-wave pop, or the naughty-nursery-rhyme wink and nudge of Moldy Peaches. Thing is, the bands everyone's talking about in New York right now aren't so much united by a common sound (although they all make great, guitar-driven rock 'n' roll) as a common attitude and a crowd that thrives on that. "There seem to be several bands who have similar ideas of what music should be about—rhythm, and dancing at shows," says Radio 4 vocalist/bassist Anthony Roman. "Bored indie rock has finally worked its way into a corner. Without a tendency to be retro, bands are bringing back the concept of having a good time."

Indeed, a good time is exactly the nature of NYC live shows right now. An almost *Footloose*-style backlash has arisen

against Mayor Rudolph Giuliani's strict enforcement of cabaret licensing laws, a misguided effort purportedly intended to quash drug use in supersized dance clubs that ends up forbidding shaking a tailfeather at most bars.

"I think that it's no coincidence that there's a ban on dancing in [bars] in New York right now," says Roman. "Punk rock reacts to oppression." And while New York music crowds are notorious for standing still, arms folded, audiences actually dance to all the aforementioned bands, as well as to the unforgiving sonic blasts of Black Dice and the Mooney Suzuki's wired garage rock. At the Strokes' latest New York concert—a sold-out soiree at the 500-capacity Bowery Ballroom—girls in Carnaby Street minis and go-go boots shimmied and swooned.

And no matter how much Valensi shrugs it off—"That's stupid; we're not fashion kids"—it can't be denied that the Strokes' style and swagger and attitude are part of the appeal. The ironic-T-shirt-and-corduroys indie-rock uniform has been replaced by vintage Kinks-wear and shag haircuts (the Strokes), mod suits (Interpol), even bunny-rabbit costumes and sailor suits (Moldy Peaches). Then again, New York music scenes have always been fashion scenes in their own right. Look back at the black leather lizardry of the Velvet Underground, or Blondie's kewpie-gone-bad fantasy, or the tongue-in-cheek sturm and drag of the New York Dolls. They weren't following trends—they were setting them. Even the Ramones' anti-fashion statement of leather jackets, T-shirts, skinny jeans and Converse high-tops went on to practically define a way of life.

But not everything is the same as it ever was—in part because it's so expensive to be a band in Manhattan. Where the fabled New York scene of 1977 was based in the East Village—specifically at the corner of Bowery and Bleecker, home of CBGB—the modern age is a sprawling crazy quilt, spreading its reach from P.O. boxes (the French Kicks are more or less homeless, having subleased their apartments before embarking on their current tour) to comparatively affordable pockets of Brooklyn. It's a trend evidenced by *This Is Next Year*, Arena Rock Recording Co.'s double-disc compilation of 42 Brooklyn-based bands—from the Walkmen and Interpol to Ida and Rainer Maria. Radio 4's Anthony Roman finds himself influenced by the sights and sounds in his Park Slope, Brooklyn, neighborhood. "It really is a cultural melting pot. I hear reggae and Latin music on my street every day; we bring rock and punk to the table. There's a coffee shop next to where I live, and the guy plays house records all day. All I can hear through the walls is the booming percussion. I know that's influenced our music."

Ironically, the Strokes aren't feeling very NYC at the moment. "We started in New York, but it doesn't feel like we're a New York band. Because of the way our career took off in England, it feels more international," Valensi says. "Plus, we're on the road indefinitely. We get to go home in the fall, though, for the first time in months." That doesn't mean they'll have much time to enjoy the city, though. "We've all got the next album somewhere in the backs of our minds," he continues. "The pressure's already there. With the 11 songs on this record, we had a year to get them right; we have no time to write on the road right now. The only time we get to work on things as a band is soundcheck, and that's lame. We need to coop ourselves up for six months in our studio and write." Maybe, more than anything else, that's how the Strokes epitomize the New York spirit—competitive drive, personal determination, larger-than-life expectations. And, of course, loving every minute of the joy ride. **NMM**



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THE *Heartbreak* KID

*It's hard to argue with a combination of bottomless talent and the tendency to fall hard for the girl. This is Ryan Adams, late of Whiskeytown, just before the real spotlight hits.*

STORY: SCOTT FRAMPTON



Ryan Adams is a charmer. "Coffee. A little bit of cream, no sugar because I'm already too sweet," he says to the angular waitress tracking the hotel bar like a stylus. His smile is quick and sincere. He knows it's a horseshit line and if he's at all self-conscious about it, it doesn't show.

Soon, his new record, *Gold* (Lost Highway), will be doing the charming for him. It's an old-fashioned double album, two vinyl discs joined by a gatefold sleeve—or if you weigh convenience over romance, a 70-minute single CD. On it, Adams neatly executes a variety of closely grouped country-rock and pop styles, custom-fitting his voice with a range of hurt boy's falsettos and lusty growls. Here, the stark beauty of 2000's *Heartbreaker* is just plain beautiful. It feels like a record you've heard before—not derivative so much as familiar, like you've made out to it a few times, or was it playing at that party where you were stoned and looking at that cutie across the room wondering, Why not you? It's classic in that way, and it's going to make his current indie stardom into little more than an early-warning blip on the radar.

*"Goddammit, this is shit-hot, right now this is what I'm feeling, this is just off the press."*

Right now, it's still fresh to him, and he's excited about it.

"We're gonna put it out on vinyl because we think that's really cool," he says with reticent eye contact that's somewhere between distracted and wary. "It's gonna have four sides—the record feels like it has four sides. That was the point, we could've gone two discs but I was like, gosh, double vinyl record sounds so great, like *Daydream Nation*, *Exile On Main Street*, *Zen Arcade*, all these records."

He perks up at the mention of Swans' *Children Of God*, a 1987 double album of Lower East Side art-noise renowned for its intensity: "That is a great, great record. They already let you have it by the first two, what's the first song? 'New Mind?' and then it went right into 'In My Garden.' You're like, 'What the hell?' That record is so amazing."



PATRICIA DE GOROSTARZU

Eye contact is easier to come by now, as his enthusiasm builds and sentences topple over one another, even upon returning to the subject after being interrupted by a call on his cell phone. "Oh my god, such feeling, such complete belief," he says, hopping a bit in his chair as he pulls his foot up under him. The striking thing—beyond someone usually associated with the alt-country diaspora enthusing about a band from the darkest corner of the '80s New York underground—is how Adams is immediately more comfortable now that he's found a venue for his passion. Everything else is all bullshit details he'd just as soon blow off. But a good record, or an author he likes, or painting or his music, these have his full and sometimes rapturous attention. Which, it must be said, is pretty charming.

The venue he's most in need of at the moment, however, is one where he can smoke, so he suggests leaving his coffee order unfilled ("Wow, they sure are taking a long time with that") and heading up to his room.

Upstairs, the room has a view of the southwest corner of Manhattan, as well as muted *Star Trek* reruns on the TV, a neat pile of folded clothes on the desk and stacks of books and CDs. The entire room could also fit inside a UPS van. His guitar, an old one with a large Indianapolis Motor Speedway sticker across the bottom, stands by the bed. Once the lighter finally makes a conjugal visit to the cigarette, it's like a rock transient's still life.

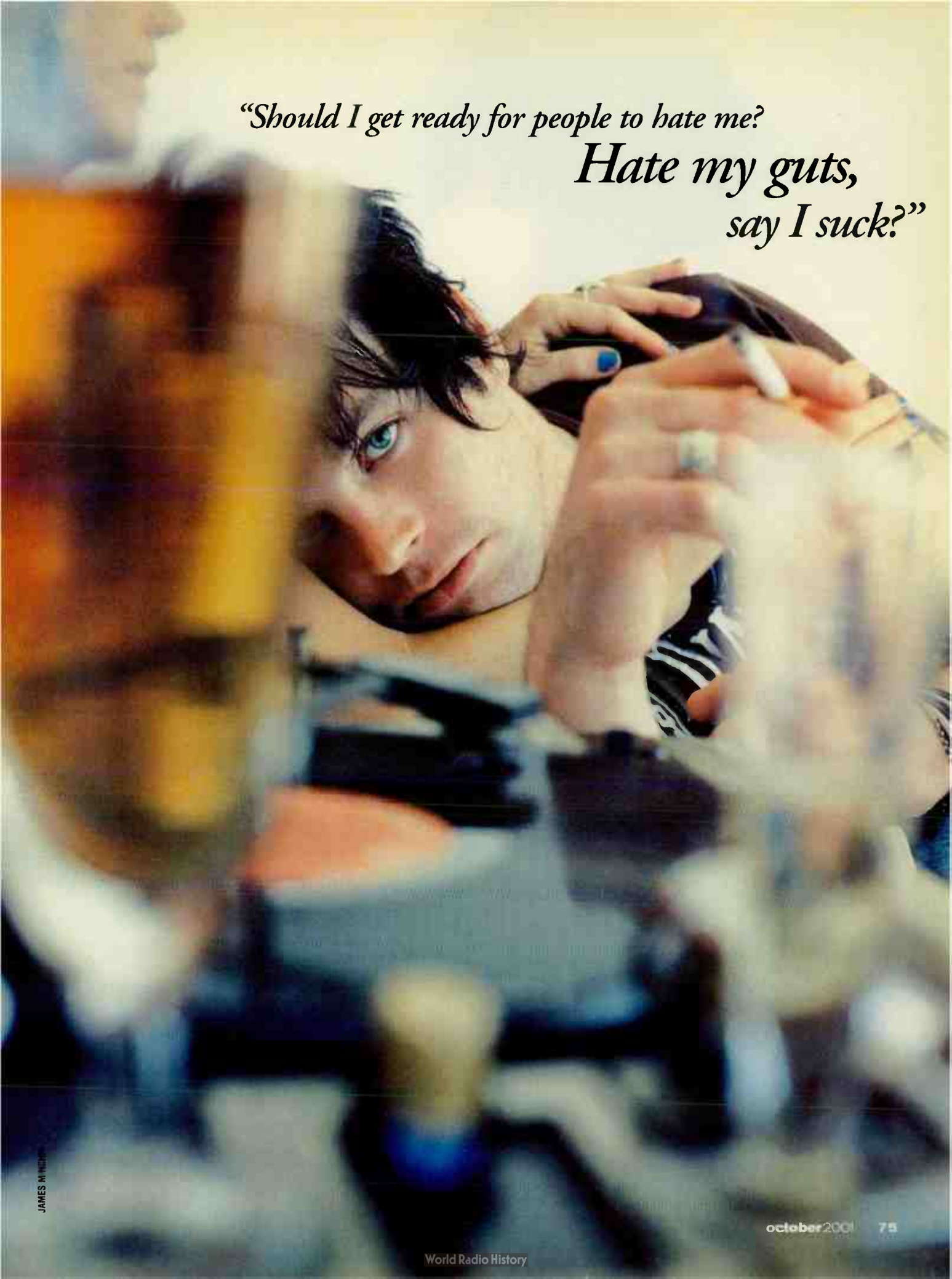
The day is gloomy, with light streaks of rain giving character to the one large window and the streets as wet as they always are in movies—a romantic's idea of Gotham. And Adams is a heart-on-sleeve guy, but not about New York just now. The weather would have to be a good deal darker to give the room the aspect of *Heartbreaker*, the 2000 solo disc he recorded in Nashville, still raw from the wreckage of the relationship he had when he last lived in this city.

"There were a bunch of reasons I went to Nashville—for professional and romantic rehabilitation. I just kind of had to get out of New York. I had been in the city for too long. It's no mystery, because of the way *Heartbreaker* sounds: I left a relationship, I left a lot of things behind. It just was I kind of needed to get out, and I needed to get away from everything and so I split."

Fresh from the breakup and a dissolving Whiskeytown, he went straight into the studio with Gillian Welch and David Rawlings and producer Ethan Johns, who would later man the boards for *Gold*. *Heartbreaker* isn't ambitious, but it's a killer, with starkly rendered, mostly acoustic songs that more than befit the disc's title, and a sweet duet with fringe-country doyenne Emmylou Harris. Released on the Chicago "insurgent country" label Bloodshot, it became a sleeper hit amid a chorus of rock-critic hosannas.

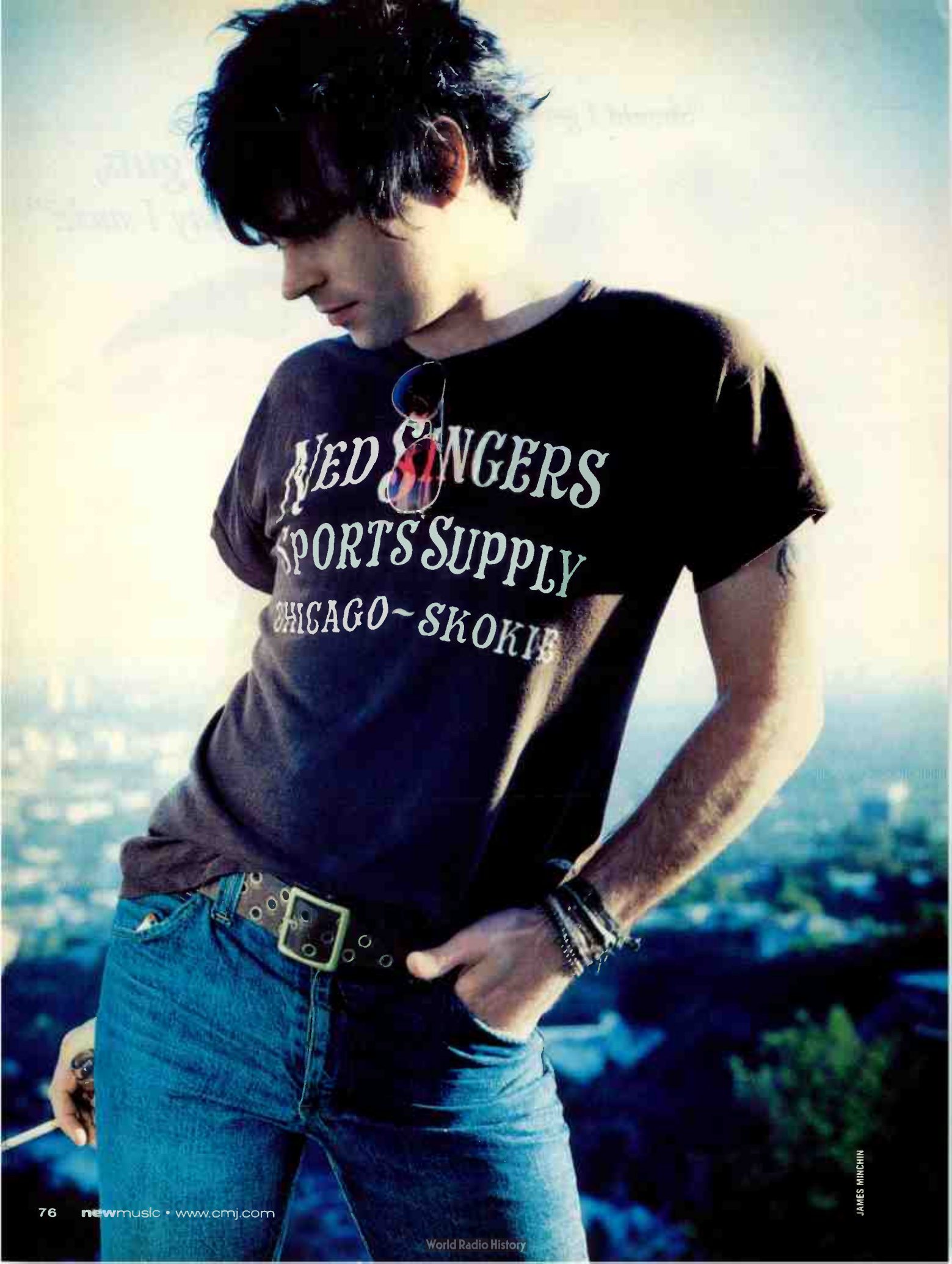
"I had no idea," he admits. "I expected the thing to sell, like, 3000 copies. I was thinking, like, my-career-is-over kinda stuff. And I wasn't bitter or anything, I was just kinda like, 'Oh well, whatever, I'm just gonna make little records from now on and it's gonna be fine.' You know, get a job, or just go live in the South, 'cause you can live in the South and make little records and have like a \$500-a-month house and not have to worry about money if you're touring. But I went to Europe and by the time I got back, it had blown up to a level that indie records don't, anymore anyway. It was pretty legitimate. Everyone was like, 'Man, when you get back you're not gonna believe it.' I'm like 'Oh, you're fuckin' with me, don't try and make me feel better.' Optimist that I am."





*“Should I get ready for people to hate me?*

*Hate my guts,  
say I suck?”*



MED SINGERS  
SPORTS SUPPLY  
CHICAGO-SKOKIE



Returning to Nashville to find himself again a hot commodity, his place empty of his former housemates, and tiring of a Music City seediness you won't see on CMT, he "kinda picked up and just said 'fuck it'" and went to L.A. There, he started work on *Gold*, originally as a thematic and stylistic follow-up to *Heartbreaker*, until the infamous Cali weather brought on a thaw.

"Something about getting up at like 11 o'clock and the sun is out every day, and you can walk outside and it's like really nice... it changed my personality some. It changed the shape of my new record. I had written a really dark record to follow *Heartbreaker*, as dark if not more dark. Roy Orbison-type dark. And I branched off. I decided I was gonna write songs about other people, make paintings about things I didn't know about, as opposed to just another record about me. There's a lot of that on that album."

And so, *Gold*'s concept began to change and the double-album idea began to take hold, with the first couple of sides about New York, and a side each of Nashville and L.A. to follow. Eventually, the flow of the record demanded some songs be shifted around—with "La Cienega Just Smiled" as the fourth track, for example—but it still begins with "New York, New York" (not a cover) and ends with "Goodbye Hollywood Blvd." In between are the perfectly lovely "When The Stars Go Blue," sweet up-tempo numbers like "Firecracker" and "Gonna Make You Love Me." And then there's "Rescue Blues," which survives a gospel chorus through the sheer force of lyrics like, "Everyone wants you to be special/ Everyone wants you to be high," and "Harder Now That It's Over," a gentle song that will nonetheless tear out your beating heart and show it to you.

*"Everybody wants you to be special/ Everybody wants you to be high." — "Rescue Blues"*

As for "Answering Bell," and its redolence of *Tupelo Honey*-era Van Morrison, Adams half spits, "Everybody says that, but I don't own any Van Morrison records. I was just trying to do some white-boy soul." If Adams is going to take any heat for this record, it's going to come from those who wanted another *Heartbreaker*, which even without his change of location and disposition, is something Adams has already done and is therefore categorically uninteresting to him. But *Heartbreaker* this isn't, and its full (while extraordinarily tasteful) production and occasional similarities to the work of classic-rock figures like Morrison, Bob Dylan and even the Who will make for easy targets. He's not in indie land anymore, and with that will come disappointment and backlash.

"Should I get ready for people to hate me? Hate my guts, say I suck?" he asks.

Maybe. People don't like it when you're not part of what they see as their world.

"Indie people? I never was in their world!"

But even he realizes what he's up against. "I was afraid [*Gold*] wouldn't be as good as *Heartbreaker*," he says. "*Heartbreaker* is fucking rad. It's horribly sad. I listened to it the other night and I almost couldn't believe I'd made it.

"I'd say *Gold* is probably like my most romantic record ever," he qualifies. It's like romance for every song, and the sadness factor dropped in lieu of like, I used lethargy really, more than sadness. More than just complete destroyed bullshit, I was more like, I'd want to make somebody feel sentimental just by the melody, just by the fact of it, so that like all of a sudden—maybe like how the Smiths' records feel—you're kind of like, 'Whoa, this is a weird place that feels like maybe the first time I've felt this way about something,' or music that makes you feel really lost and misty for a second."



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*Gold* is the record he wanted to make—at the time. “I was doing what was happening,” he says of this particular confluence of his life in and out of the studio. “You know, a lot of it happened just naturally; some of it’s just off the cuff. Literally minutes before I’d have written the song on the typewriter, I pass a Xerox copy of the lyrics around to everyone, they look at it and are like, ‘Damn, this is good,’ and they all get behind their instruments and it’s usually a first or second take. And it’s like, ‘There it is. Goddammit, this is shit-hot, right now this is what I’m feeling, this is just off the press.’ If it’s like, ‘Well, I could’ve done the C-section better,’ you’re like, ‘Too late. The moment was there.’ My voice was either there or not, if it was there half the song, then fine.”

*“I’ll tell you what, man, I’m about sick of some damn girls now.”*

With so much dictated by the moment, if he were to record something tomorrow it would necessarily be different. But even this is superceded by his need, creatively, to move on. In fact, at the end of July, he finished a record that won’t even fit in the same record-store bin as *Gold*, with his Nashville rock band, the Pinkhearts. “It is sort of like, bleeding-heart rock ‘n’ roll,” he explains. “Like ‘Fuck,’ you know? It’s kind of like skateboarding: It just is what it is. It’s not really like ‘Hey, look how serious I am.’”

And then? “I want to make an acoustic record—like right after that—much in the vein of something like [Neil Young’s] *Harvest* or something that’s just brief, about one subject, teeters off a little bit, but it makes those songs more important. You don’t have to fish through so much. Brevity is great—I didn’t learn the art of, like, wanting to accomplish that until just recently, and that’s after I made this long-form record, I went ‘Well, I never want to do this again, for a long time.’”

That his description of that acoustic record sounds not too terribly different from *Heartbreaker* isn’t a coincidence. In one sense, he’s like a precocious kid, jumping from one idea to the next, and since he’s not exactly held back by the limits of his talent, no one’s ever told him he couldn’t. In that same way, he’s patently less interested in something he knows he can do. But in another sense,

Adams is like a farmer rotating his crops, rushing to make a record different from the one before to keep things fertile. He wants to make another record like *Heartbreaker*, but shit, man, not right now. And as it stands, *Gold* is pretty great.

A few months later, on the phone from Nashville at the tail end of the Pinkhearts sessions, Adams is completely shagged out. He’s exhausted from trying to record one album while promoting another, jumping out of the studio to do interviews and photo shoots. And again, he’s waiting for hotel coffee.

Remembering when we last spoke, he says, “That was a fucking hell week, man. *Hell* week.”

When it’s suggested that his most recent solo show at Fez, a subterranean sit-down place close enough to the subway to rattle your minimum two drinks, was successful, that he’s developing into a raconteur whose story about single-handedly fucking up the debut of Hardee’s chicken and biscuits (front page news in his North Carolina hometown) kept the crowd in the palm of his hand, even past 2 a.m. on a school night, it becomes clear that his exhaustion isn’t just a consequence of professional ambitions.

“I don’t know. I was finalizing some bullshit with somebody that week,” he says, voice trailing. “I’ll tell you what, man, I’m about sick of some damn girls now. Shit’s fucked up.”

He’s groggy and hoarse; that spark is doused a bit. He makes it work for him, though. You want to get him his coffee and tell him not to wear his heart on his sleeve and maybe take some better care of himself, because he’s what, 26? Don’t be a Byronic brat your whole life; you’re too good at what you do. And with these thoughts come the realization that this is his professional ambition. This charm, that talent that even detractors have trouble denying, is all just Ryan to him. It’s all a way of getting into situations where his passions can play out. This life is what he does, and you can’t separate it from his music any more than he can. **NMM**





# On The Verge City: Baltimore

STORY: LEE GARDNER

**F**or decades, Baltimore was the blue-collar burg hidden in Washington, D.C.'s glamorous shadow. But over the last three years, while no one was paying attention, the city's low and high cultures have come together in idiosyncratic bloom. Now, not only are local musicians and artists staying put, but out-of-town musicians and artists are actually beginning to move here—and not just because you can buy a rowhouse for what you paid in rent last year in New York or Chicago.

The trick to locating Charm City's considerable charm lies in getting behind its Chamber Of Commerce front. For years, civic leadership has been trying to window-dress the city's grim, grimy image via the tourist nightmare that is the Inner Harbor and by promoting the formerly divey Fells Point neighborhood as a nightlife destination. Fells Point certainly is a destination—if you want to run into everyone you hated in high school, drunk or buying souvenirs. That said, it does boast two of the city's finer CD and record stores, the one-stop-shop **Sound Garden** (1616 Thames St., 563-9011) and the nothin'-but-punk **Reptilian Records** (403 S. Broadway, 327-6853), as well as the mid-sized rock venue **Fletcher's** (701 S. Bond St., 558-1889).

The city's genuine nightlife is thriving elsewhere. The rapidly gentrifying Canton neighborhood is lousy with new bars and restaurants, but it's also a center for the area's hopping F culture thanks to the **Spot** (2314 Boston St., 276-9556) and much more laid-back spin sites such as the new **Sonar** (3000 O'Donnell St., 327-8333) and the too-hip-for-a-sign **Good Love Bar** (2322 Boston St., 558-2347). There's also **Shorty's** (3301 Foster Ave. 327-8696), owned by DJ Feelgood, and classic Baltimore underground dance mecca the **Paradox** (1310 Russell St., 837-9110), which is still hanging in there, dropping house, club and hip-hop on the faithful weekly. If there's anything else going on around town near two turntables and a crate of white labels, the folks at Canton's **Modern Music** (2919 O'Donnell St., 675-2172) will probably know about it. Sadly, for the most part Baltimore hip-hop still goes without a stable regular venue for skilled local MCs like Labtekwon, though the city's indigenous breakbeat-based variant on booty-shake, known as club music, is literally booming—tune into the weekend mix shows on urban-radio powerhouse WERQ (92.3 FM) for word on the latest parties.

There is perhaps no better place to sample Baltimore's slept-on renaissance in concentrated form than at the **Ottobar** (203 Davis St., 752-6886). Tiny, smoky and crowded, it's pretty much like every no-big-whoop indie-scene hangout you've ever been in, except it's in Baltimore. That means you get everything from local punk recidivists the Fuses to the deadpan math/metal muggery of Oxes to the laptop beats and off-the-dome raps of electronic wunderkind Cex. In fact, there's so much new stuff going on here these days that you can get this far talking about Baltimore without even mentioning John Waters.



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# Local Logic: BALTIMORE'S BEST

- Art therapy:** The American Visionary Art Museum (800 Key Hwy., 244-1900)
- Scenester bar:** The Club Charles (1724 N. Charles St., 727-8815)
- Obligatory steamed crabs:** Gunnings Crab House (3901 Hanover St., 354-0085)
- New weird books, etc.:** Atomic Books (1100 W. 36th Street, 662-4444)
- Used weird books, etc.:** Normals Books And Records (425 E. 31st Street, 243-6888)
- Baltimore club music 12-inches:** Music Liberated (201 W. Saratoga St., 837-1000)
- Tiger hairballs and sideshow banners:** The American Dime Museum (1808 Maryland Ave., 230-0263)
- 4 a.m. drunk-food eatery:** Sip And Bite Restaurant (2200 Boston St., 675-7077)
- 4 a.m. drunk-food eatery shaped like a ship:** Captain James Landing (2127 Boston St., 327-8600)
- Selection of smoked fish:** Greg's Bagels (519 E. Belvedere Ave., 323-9463)
- Divine Brew:** Resurrection Ale at the Brewer's Art (1106 N. Charles St., 547-6925)
- Souvenir:** An old-school silk-screened concert poster from Globe Poster Printing Corp. (3705 Bank St., 685-8787)

All phone numbers are in the 410 area code.



STEVE SHEARER

# BLOW OUT

## The Lowdown on the High Zero Festival

Dancing drummer Toshi Makihara molests a Wile E. Coyote doll while "light organist" Daniel Conrad hypnotizes the room with shifting hues. Free-jazz trumpeter Joe McPhee spars with theremin player James Coleman in a squeak duel. Welcome to High Zero. For the past two years, Baltimore's Red Room Collective has brought together the city's bumper crop of unusual musical voices (including multi-instrumentalist John Berndt, instrument inventor Neil Feather and free-range noisemaker Jason Willett) and a host of improvisers from across the U.S., Canada and Europe for a series of visceral mix-and-match show-downs. For this year's festival, which runs Sept. 13-16 at the Theatre Project (45 W. Preston St., 752-8558), the Red Roomers welcome German double-bass master Peter Kowald, British electronic improviser Kaffe Matthews, Buchla synthesizer player Charles Cohen, two steel-guitar pickers, an improvising bassoonist, a "dry ice orchestra" and much more unpredictable activity. Visit [www.redroom.org](http://www.redroom.org) or [www.highzero.org](http://www.highzero.org) for further details.

**Light the weed  
Tap the keg  
SHOOT THE SH\*\*  
LET'S BEGIN.**

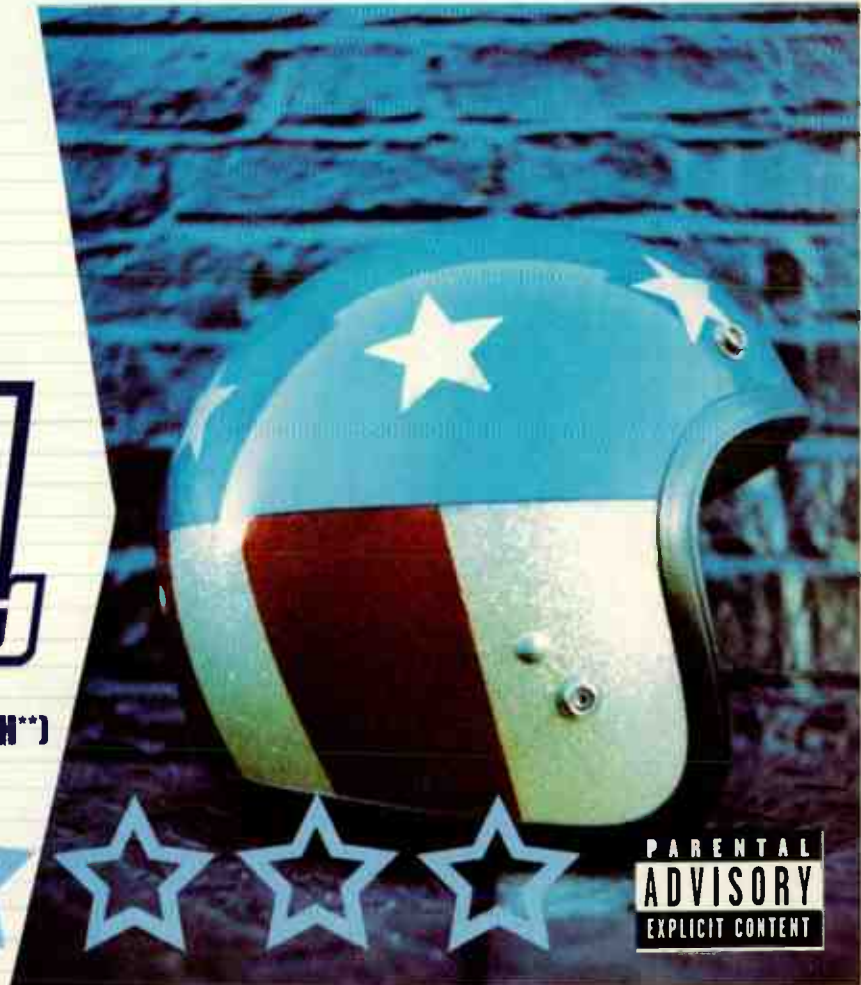
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# CMJ NEW MUSIC MONTHLY

## RYAN ADAMS

## MERCURY REV

## JJ72

## BILAL

## STEREOLAB

October 2001 • Issue 97

14. **BOB MARLEY** "Satisfy My Soul (Remixed By Groove DeLuxe)" *Shakedown: Marley Remixed* (Jad Anansi)

The inimitable (and paradoxically oft-imitated) Bob Marley gets tweaked by some young electronic whippersnappers.

15. **PETER TOSH** "Legalize It" *I Am That I Am* (Jad Anansi)

Wailers member Tosh posthumously flies the flag for political reggae. In retrospect, we assume this track is a prophesy of that new no-driving-while-talking-on-the-cell phone hoo-ha.

16. **IKE TURNER & THE KINGS OF RHYTHM** "Gave You What You Wanted" *Here & Now* (IKON-Rooster Blues)

Ike's back, dishing out his trademark soul—he's giving you what you wanted, so don't piss him off.

17. **JUCIFER** "Lambs 4" *The Lambs EP* (Velocette)

This boyfriend/girlfriend team gets punk on your ass as often as they lay on the comfortable, airy ambience. Adding to their charm, they brilliantly named their own pre-Velocette super-indie label Crack Rock.

18. **GRANT-LEE PHILLIPS** "Spring Released" *Mobilize* (Zoë-Rounder)

Grant-Lee Buffalo frontman takes his graceful folk-rock solo.

19. **BEULAH** "Gravity's Bringing Us Down" *The Coast Is Never Clear* (Velocette)

The San Francisco arm of the Elephant 6 clique returns with a pleasing guitar-pop follow-up to 1999's *When Your Heartstrings Break*. (See review p. 92.)

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1. **RYAN ADAMS** "New York New York" *Gold* (Lost Highway)  
Ex-Whiskeytown frontman Adams grows from an alt-country brat into the bastard child of Van Morrison and Bob Dylan. And yes, that's a good thing. (See Cover Story, p. 72.)
2. **MERCURY REV** "Nite And Fog" *All Is Dream* (V2)  
A brilliant, tripped-out sound issues from upstate New York: It's Mercury Rev, nouveau psychedelia's favorite sons, and this time it's less about effects, more about where the song takes them. (See Review, p. 100.)
3. **JJ72** "October Swimmer" *JJ72* (Columbia)  
They're called heirs to the Radiohead throne, or Sigur Rós in English. What are they, really? Three young Irish kids who do wuss-rock right.
4. **BILAL** "Fast Lane" *1st Born Second* (Interscope)  
The thinking woman's D'Angelo dishes funky R&B with heart, style and plenty of attitude. (See On The Verge, p. 44.)
5. **KEVIN TIHISTA** "Lose The Dress" *Voices* (Atlantic)  
Former bassist for Chicago alt-pop heroes Triple Fast Action goes solo, and the girls all swoon in unison.
6. **CHOCOLATE GENIUS** "Endless Fall" *Godmusic* (V2)  
Arty blues-rock from the one-man band of Mark Anthony Thompson, merging the soulful aspects of PJ Harvey and Jimi Hendrix with a knack for novel melodies.
7. **THURSDAY** "Understanding In A Car Crash" *Full Collapse* (Victory)  
Visceral, dynamic post-hardcore from New Jersey that bares its love of graceful melodies, explosive riffage—and Winona Ryder—proudly. (See On The Verge, p. 60.)
8. **LITTLE T & ONE TRACK MIKE** "Fome Is Dape" *Fome Is Dape* (Atlantic)  
Charming, kicky white-boy hip-hop dishing equal portions of kitsch and chops.
9. **STEREOLAB** "Captain Easychord" *Sound-Dust* (Elektra)  
Stereolab's on its 14th full-length, but don't worry—the latest from these electro-indie elders still delivers "perfectly lovely, impeccably hip cosmo-pop tunes." (See Review, p. 106.)
10. **CURVE** "Hell Above High Water" *Gift* (Hip-O)  
Toni Halliday and Dean Garcia return with a classy representation of the music they helped pioneer—an alt-friendly electronic/rock hybrid full of hooks.
11. **SIMIAN** "One Dimension" *Chemistry Is What We Are* (Source-Astralwerks)  
This dreamy U.K. foursome has garnered accolades at home for its update of the dreamy Beatles-meet-Aphex Twin tones popularized by the Beta Band and Air.
12. **ORBITAL** featuring DAVID GRAY "Illuminate" *The Altogether* (frr)  
The Hartnoll brothers have been English techno's reigning kingpins since 1989, while Gray's brought the U.K.'s soul-folk tradition back with a vengeance. Their collaboration borrows from both worlds, but is situated in neither. (See Review, p. 102.)
13. **E.S.T.** "Dodge The Dodo" *Somewhere Else Before* (Diesel-Columbia)  
Swedish pianist Esbjörn Svensson leads a his trio through a minimalist electronic vortex. Ambient jazz at its finest. (See Best New Music, p. 88.)

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# BJÖRK

## Vespertine

Elektra



**B**jörk's touring collaborators in Matmos have jokingly likened learning to create the Icelandic singer's outlandish back catalog to "being in a Björk cover band." Likewise, *Vespertine*, despite its host of accomplices (newcomers Matmos and Matthew Herbert alongside old allies Mark Bell and Guy Sigsworth), is somehow her Björkest album yet; it's as if the record was always there, waiting to emerge from beneath the mossy surface of her previous full-lengths. In its melding of electronic and organic textures, her predilection for charred samples and angelic choirs, Björk continues to build upon the fantasy world she's hinted at before, conjuring spaces that morph from the majestic vistas of "Harm Of Will" to the dollhouse delicacy of "Pagan Poetry." Her lyrics remain as cryptic as ever, the deepest secrets now buried in sound, in the hairline fractures of her voice as it dries and cracks, in the nooks and crannies of the programmers' glitches, in the cinematic swell of Sigsworth's strings. Previous outings have seen her dart from register to register—from the sonic futurism of "Come To Me," say, to the cabaret glam of "Big Time Sensuality"—but *Vespertine* folds all these aspects into an unlikely document of astounding power. Like the music box at the heart of "Frosti," it's an archaic kind of machine music that stands eerily, beautifully outside of time. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE

Link

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File Under

Music for futurist forest ceremonies

R.I.Y.L.

Plaid, Laub, Lali Puna

# THE COUP

## Party Music

75 Ark

**T**his is party music two ways—as a penetrating commitment to a socialist line that only begins with "5 Million Ways To Kill A C.E.O.," and as a fun, block-long celebration complete with live barrelhouse musicians, P-Funky choruses and layers of good-time cross-talk. Boots Riley sums up the flava best in a line from "Ride The Fence": "Proletarianfunkadelicparliamentarian." With Pam The Funkstress on the wheels of steel, every track provides plenty of forward motion without sacrificing the music's vertical pleasures. The ceaseless slop of "Ghetto Manifesto" recalls their previous tour de force, "Me And Jesus The Pimp In A '79 Granada Last Night" (from 1998's equally terrific *Steal This Album*), while the disc goes out on "Lazymuthafucka," a fiery fusion whose alternate title should be "Who Says A Rap Crew Can't Play Rock?" And the stories! There's "Wear Clean Draws," where Boots offers warm, feminist-conscious advice to his daughter; "Nowalaters," a teen pregnancy tale which never once wags a finger; and "Heven Tonite," the most humane and calmly intelligent song ever to demonstrate how religion becomes an opiate for the masses. They clearly put so much of themselves into it that the title is a perfect summation of their joyous musical universe. A great title for a great album. >>>KEVIN JOHN



Link

[www.75ark.com](http://www.75ark.com)

File Under

Yo! Bum rush the means of production

R.I.Y.L.

The Goats, P-Funk, Public Enemy

## DOCTOR L AND TONY ALLEN

Psyco On Da Bus

PGI-Platform



**N**igerian-born drummer Tony Allen is the definition of cool: Easy and understated in everything he does, he just happens to be one of the most subtly brilliant trap drummers playing in any genre today. Allen made his name in Fela Kuti's inimitable Afrobeat band, Africa 70, but he's lived in Europe since the mid-'80s, experimenting with various types of fusion, "struggling to reach somewhere," as he once put it. Working with French drummer and programmer/producer Doctor L, and with other members of Allen's touring band, Afrobeat 2000, Allen has succeeded. The music here is open, spare and decidedly experimental, with twisted jazz, funk and African rhythms, smatterings of looped electronic sound, guitar, piano, oud and Allen's ubiquitous bass whisper. The tracks were begun on the band's tour bus—hence the name—but where other Afro-electronica tends to drown African feeling and roots sensibility in the stiffness of technology, these tracks are all feel. One of many great tracks, "Hand Full Of Sands," starts out with a vocal and hand-drum rhythm, cranking up the energy before Allen makes his entrance. Just as you think you're heading for an African blowout, Allen uses his drums to chill the groove out and open it up. >>>BANNING EYRE

Link

[www.platformrecordings.com](http://www.platformrecordings.com)

File Under

Afro-funky, soulful electronica

R.I.Y.L.

Fela Kuti, Frikwiwa

## ESBJÖRN SVENSSON TRIO (E.S.T.)



Somewhere Else Before

Columbia

**T**here have been a number of important European jazz players over the years, but a new wave is afoot on the other side of the Atlantic—it's young and defiantly unafraid of melody or modern electronics. More on the straight-ahead jazz tip than St. Germain or Nils Petter Molvæ, Sweden's E.S.T. can still play the hippest of Euro chill-out rooms. On the trio's Columbia debut, which combines tracks from two previously released European albums, Esbjörn Svensson's acoustic piano worms its way through moody jazz rhythms created in bassist Dan Berglund's subtle, swinging underpinnings and drummer Magnus Öström's pleasant, restrained approach to beat. Nevertheless, they can stoke a blue flame of intensity where the music soars to spiraling heights, as on "The Face Of Love." There's also an occasional undercurrent of electronic gadgetry ("The Wraith" smoothly fuses the acoustic and the electronic with interesting results) and some post-production manipulation on "Spam-Boo-Limbo." Some could argue that Svensson's catchy piano licks and the trio's often laidback approach is too Bruce Hornsby-like, but occasional bursts in Svensson's playing spotlight the fact that, much like the great Bill Evans, he can linger on the elegiac but soar to rhapsody when the mood is right. This is organic ambient jazz, filled with improvisation, sensitivity and an awareness of the here and now. >>>TAO HENRICKSON



Link

[www.esbjornsvenssontrio.com](http://www.esbjornsvenssontrio.com)

File Under

Another rebirth of the cool

R.I.Y.L.

Chick Corea, Brad Mehldau,  
Innerzone Orchestra





## SPARKLEHORSE

### It's A Wonderful Life

Capitol



**W**hen Mark Linkous recorded his first batch of warped melancholic pop songs for Sparklehorse's stunning 1995 debut, *Vivadixiesubmarinetransmissionplot*, he had to play as quietly as possible to keep from waking his wife in the next room. Six years and two albums later, Linkous is collaborating with some great musicians (PJ Harvey, Tom Waits, and Cardigan Nina Persson, among others) and producers (Dave Fridmann, John Parrish), but that hasn't raised the sound levels of his recordings, nor kept him from pushing his muse to the gummied-up edges of his creative envelope. *It's A Wonderful Life* retains Sparklehorse's bittersweet melodies, languorous rhythms, Rauschenberg-like found sounds, impressionist lyrics and fragile whispers, processed through a hand-cranked Victrola. But now these elements simmer before being augmented by exquisite vocal accompanists and innovative production techniques that accent their natural flavors. A treacly Frank Capra redemption story this is not; rather, the bard who has survived a near-death experience remains filled with heartbreaking melancholy ("Eyepennies," "Apple Bed"), frolics with grimy, trombone-playing swordfish ("Dog Door") and works up warped lullabies ("Babies On The Sun") and mid-tempo rock songs ("Gold Day," "Piano Fire," "King Of Nails"). All the same, you can rest assured that when Linkous and PJ Harvey duet on the line "Slowing my heart, stealing my breath," somewhere, an angel is indeed getting its wings. >>>ANDY GENSLER

Link

[www.sparklehorse.com](http://www.sparklehorse.com)

File Under

And the award for best weilschmerz album of '01 goes to...

R.I.Y.L.

Tom Waits, Cracker, Daniel Johnston, Will Oldham

## SPIRITUALIZED

### Let It Come Down

Arista

**R**are is the bandname that goes straight to the music's heart, but Jason Pierce hit the nail on the head when he dubbed his band Spiritualized. Perhaps the gospel choirs he's taken to employing were only a gleam in Pierce's eye when he was spinning off from Spacemen 3, but transcendence is what Pierce has been after all along. The 1997 opus *Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space* was downright awe-inspiring, like a gift of rock to the big guy upstairs; you felt the holy purpose in every note. Its follow-up, *Let It Come Down*, is more earthbound: This time around, Pierce is wearing his debt to T. Rex on his sleeve, expanding their gritty rock with layers (and more layers) of orchestration and choral arrangements in an attempt to, well, spiritualize glam's visceral heat. The album kicks off down 'n' dirty, the mood sprinting to a dead end on "The Twelve Steps" before the soulful fervor picks up on "The Straight And The Narrow" (one of the album's most beseechingly beautiful tracks). Things keep expanding from there, but on the best songs Pierce's glam gestures keep him from tripping from grandeur into bloodless grandiosity. Less uncanny than *Ladies*, *Come Down's* strongest moments are its most human, and it's only a come down when Pierce tries too hard to shake off his mortal coil. >>>MAYA SINGER



Link

[www.spiritualized.com](http://www.spiritualized.com)

File Under

Glam rock to take you higher

R.I.Y.L.

Mercury Rev, Mogwai, the Verve

# REVIEWS



## ADEMA

Adema Arista

Mark "Marky" Chavez, vocalist for Bakersfield, Calif. new mook quintet Adema, never says die. Imagine his struggle back in the day: no real band, no gigs, just a famous half-brother in Korn frontman Jonathan Davis and an intense bidding war that resulted in a three-record deal from Arista. Despite all the odds stacked against him, not only did Chavez persevere, he had the humility and self-belief to write "my life has changed but fuck the fame, I'll stay the same" (from "The Way You Like It"). On "Pain Inside" he writes about the pain he has inside, on "Drowning"

he writes about how he's drowning inside, and on "Freaking Out" he writes about how he's freaking out over drowning in so much inner pain. To show he's his own man—that savvy little bastard somehow anticipated the Korn comparisons—he throws us a curveball and takes a Taproot approach to his music. Every verse is eerie, layered with white-noise electronica ambience, and during choruses, the guitarists, who adhere to the industry standard for downtuning, shift that one-finger nü-metal chord around all the appropriate places. But Chavez really keeps it real by including a fat bald guy with a goatee and lots of piercings in his band; there just can't be enough of those guys in rock 'n' roll. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN

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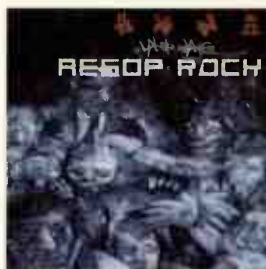
[www.ademaonline.com](http://www.ademaonline.com)

File Under

Nü-metal nepotism

R.I.Y.L.

Taproot, P.O.D., Alien Ant Farm



## AESOP ROCK

Labor Days Def Jux

These days you can't swing a dead cat without smacking a smarty-pants indie hip-hop MC in the puss. But even amid the rising tide of GRE-ready rhymers, Aesop Rock is something special. On *Labor Days*, his second album and first for Def Jux, the New Yorker once again uses his agile monotone flow to boggle ears and minds with dense verbalism worthy of *The New Yorker*. While he spits wicked randomness with the best of his brethren—"I'm a dinosaur with Jones Beach in my hourglass/ Passing the time with serial-killer coloring books and bags of marbles," he tongue-

trips on "Battery," before going on to caution, "Don't tell me God and Lucifer don't carpool"—he isn't just another solipsistic indie-rap showoff. On "No Regrets," Rock displays a knack for simple hip-hop storytelling worthy of Slick Rick by flipping a "Children's Story"-style yarn inside out, into a fable of artistic self-affirmation that's not the least bit corny (a hopscotching track from longtime collaborator Blockhead helps seal the deal). "9-5ers Anthem" finds him raising consciousness as well as IQ by taking on the daily grind and our messed-up attitudes about it. The unpretentious, dryly witty *Labor Days* confirms that not only is Rock's mind in gear and his mouth in motion, his heart's in the right place, too. >>>LEE GARONER

Link

[www.defjux.net](http://www.defjux.net)

File Under

My vocabulary weighs a ton

R.I.Y.L.

Dose One, Company Flow,  
Studs Terkel







## ALSACE LORRAINE

### Through Small Windows *Parlo*

All music, it might be argued, is derivative. Band Z is going to sound like some previous Bands A-through-Y, if only by using similar instruments. But many artists manage to combine (or hide) their influences in an unexpected way. Not so with Chicago-based trio Alsace Lorraine (named for the region of France that brought you Joan Of Arc). Let's put it this way: If you've ever wished that the Magnetic Fields had stuck with the sugar-and-synth stylings of *Holiday* for one more album, resistance to *Through Small Windows* is futile. With the heavily delayed produc-

tion and one-finger melody of "You Are Like Charles Lindbergh To Me," not to mention the dueling Casios of "Once The Ocean Built A Ship," Alsace Lorraine wears its Stephin Merritt badge proudly. Singer Caitlin Brice actually sounds like neither Susan Anway nor Claudia Gonson—instead, she's got a standard-issue indie-pop voice, breathy and somnambulant, aching to be compared to Astrud Gilberto. ("The Girl From Roanoke," one of the stronger tunes, apparently has a cousin in Ipanema.) The few mild departures stand out by a mile: "Swing Low, Constellation" is built around intricate and thoughtful guitars, and several tracks make adroit use of trip-hop conventions. In fact, everything here is skillfully executed, but it's hard to shake the feeling that the band may have asked themselves, "What would Stephin do?" once too often. >>>FRANKLIN BRUND



## ARLING & CAMERON

### We Are A&C *Emperor Norton*

Arling & Cameron possess the gift of a deranged Midas: Everything they touch turns to kitsch. By their own definition (proclaimed in *We Are A&C*'s title track), they "combine every conceivable style," then "add some rhythm and spice" but "don't forget some humor and tricks." Rather than mixing and matching though, the Dutch duo switches styles track by track, mimicking a dizzy variety of late-20th-century space-age bachelor-pad music. It's hyper-hyphenated, decade-hopping, retro-futuristic, Euro-trash club-pop, and it's very fun—but no deeper than an ironic wink or a struck pose. "Coconut Conga" and "Can You

Pah-Pah?" take cues from the '60s jetset lounge, with cheesy keyboards and ba-ba-ba vocals. From the '70s, A&C recreate sweeping TV-theme music ("Ocean Drive" and "Sunday," which pick up where last year's *Music For Imaginary Films* left off) and leisure-suitable slow-groove soul ballads ("Born In June," "Love And Understanding"). Several doses of late-'70s/early-'80s electro-bop appear too, in the Devoesque "Dirty Robot" (with vocals from Stereo Total's Francoise Cactus), the scratchy breakbeats of "B.B. Electro" and the chirpy teen pop of "Freedom, Right Now." Even the late '90s are represented: "Don't You Fuck" is a blast of Chicks On Speed-y electro-punk and "UP" is a club-culture send-up. *We Are A&C* is a deliberate, maddening hodgepodge, but its kitschy nostalgia itself may be a nod to the early '00s. >>>STEVE KLINGE



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## BEULAH The Coast Is Never Clear Velocette

The Elephant 6 insignia is gone from Beulah's latest release, but the San Francisco quintet hasn't strayed far from the path that yielded 1999's *When Your Heartstrings Break*, and fans of that breakthrough shouldn't be disappointed. Beulah still traffics in a jaunty brand of late-'60s AM-friendly pop, harboring leader Miles Kurosky's penchant for Beach Boys-inflected harmonies and ruminations on the California sun and the turning of the calendar. But *The Coast Is Never Clear* manages to sound both more aggressive and more lilting than its predecessor: The tempos are

Link

[www.beulahmania.com](http://www.beulahmania.com)

File Under

Sunny indie-pop

R.I.Y.L.

Ladybug Transistor, Elf Power,  
Stephen Malkmus

quicker and the infrequent guitar lines crunchier (though never to the extent of the band's debut LP, *Handsome Western States*). Other edges are softened by lounge-ready keyboards and a synthetic string section, the latter an accommodation to the modern world that would likely be frowned upon by the E6 crowd. As in the past, though, most of the highlights ("Silver Lining," "Popular Mechanics For Lovers") are punctuated by Bill Swan's joyous trumpet. The paring back of the extensive guest roster that brought many of *Heartstrings'* unique flourishes may explain why *Coast* lacks that record's giddy standouts, but there's still nary a clunker to be found here. Beulah has unassumingly established itself as a reliable source of cheery, literate pop. >>>GLEN SARVADY



## BUTTHOLE SURFERS

*Weird Revolution* Hollywood

Butthole Surfers nearly imploded not long after their first stint in the buzz bin: The Austin punk legends' follow-up to their 1996 radio hit, "Pepper," was shelved by former label Capitol, and the bandmembers retreated into various side projects. Here, Gibby Haynes and friends return, with controversy riding in the sidecar: The title track for the Buttholes' Hollywood debut borrowed rhetoric from a Malcolm X speech, and the slain African-American leader's family denied permission to use it. So after working past one false start, Butthole Surfers were facing another, and had to re-record the song with new lyrics. Such

Link

[www.buttholesurfers.com](http://www.buttholesurfers.com)

File Under

Not your father's

Butthole Surfers

R.I.Y.L.

Rage Against The Machine,  
MC 900 Ft. Jesus, Smash Mouth

snafus usually yield artistic messes, but the chaos seems to have inspired this nearly 20-year-old outfit. Although the careening guitars and insane rhythmic assaults were left back in the early '90s, the band still practices what they preach, constructing an ungodly musical pastiche with lyrics that range from inflammatory to outlandish. The hard-rockin' title track's call for intellectual anarchy yields to deranged synth-laced pop ("Intelligent Guy"), dense cyclical rock ("Jet Fighter") and even a song that ricochets from a dub intro to a "Pepper"-like singsong to sitar and scratch-DJ interludes ("Venus"). By the time Gibby rhymes "Buddha" with "Bob Dylan on a motor scooter," it becomes clear that while Butthole Surfers are no longer potent enough to start a revolution, nobody's as weird. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



ARTIST APPEARS ON THIS MONTH'S CD • R.I.Y.L. - RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE





**THE CLEAN**

*Getaway* Merge

The Clean were to New Zealand pop what Wire were to London punk: cerebral, visceral, restless, groundbreaking. Back in 1981, the Clean became the first band to record for seminal New Zealand label Flying Nun—in doing so, they not only defined the sonic imperative of its imprint but its geography as well: Jangle-and-drone electric guitars bathed in echo, reverb and keyboards became the New Zealand sound's hallmark, and swirling, agitated vocals became its language. *Getaway* only marks the outfit's fourth full-length over their 22-year on-again, off-again career,

and the good news is that little's changed. In uncorking an album that sounds as immediate as the *Boodle Boodle Boodle* EP did back in '81, the reconstituted Clean—including brothers David (guitars, vocals) and Hamish (drums, vocals) Kilgour and Robert Scott (bass, vocals)—bring to mind the vim and vigor of last year's *Go-Betweens* comeback. It takes mere seconds from the first chords of "Stars" to realize that the band's retained the magical élan that made every one of their singles essential listening. There's much to savor here: the space-age jaunt of "Jala"; the pastoral lope of "Crazy"; the hazy ambit of "Circle Canyon" (which features guest shots from Yo La Tengo's Ira Kaplan and Georgia Hubley). With this outing, the band has done more than just make a Clean getaway. They've made a Clean return, too. >>>JONATHAN PERRY

Link

[www.mergerecords.com](http://www.mergerecords.com)

File Under

Good Clean fun

R.I.Y.L.

The Chills, the Bats,

Bailter Space, Yo La Tengo



**CLICK THA SUPAH-LATIN**

*Square Won* Wild West

Being known as a human beatbox artist generally makes you a one-trick pony. Sure, people still praise the prowess of Doug E. Fresh, Biz Markie and others, but be honest: It's more as a sidebar to their MCing. So it's definitely for the best that L.A.'s Click Tha Supah-Latin shows only a modicum of his considerable mouth-music skills on *Square Won*, choosing instead to tap the entire range of his talent. He's not an edgy, mysterious, cutting-edge producer and he's not the greatest rapper you've ever heard—he's just Click, your friend from around the way. On refreshingly steadfast, solid and well-produced tracks like the poppy,

Latin-tinged "The Park," the Rahzel-ish "The Fifth I.E.," the old-school drum-machine-based "Square Won" (featuring his son, 11-year-old Click 44, who sounds fresh beyond his years) and "Jaw Jabbin'" (with Akil of Jurassic-5 and Derek Strong), Click asks an important question: Hip-hop used to be fun and built on skills, so what happened? There's no flossing, image manufacturing or b.s. here, just good old-fashioned, uncluttered rhymes over funky, bouncy, head-nodding tracks. And with them, Click proves that heart and soul still counts for something in the rap game. >>>BRIAN COLEMAN

Link

[www.wildwestrecords.com/click.htm](http://www.wildwestrecords.com/click.htm)

File Under

Fresh beatboxin' rap

from the left coast

R.I.Y.L.

Rahzel, Jurassic-5,

Doug E. Fresh



**THE FAINT**

*Danse Macabre* Saddle Creek

Nebraskan electro-punk outfit the Faint makes a convincing case for reopening the ranks of Gary Numan's Tubeway Army. Like that synth-pop pioneer in his heyday, these four young men in black are determined to replace the ragged heart beating at the core of punk rock with a cold, machine-precise android thump. It works better than you'd think. *Danse Macabre*, the Faint's third full-length and the follow-up to 1999's *Blank-Wave Arcade* (the record that made the band an all-ages underground sensation), re-imagines teen angst in a refreshing

context, jacking cheap (but surprisingly kickass) keyboards and primitive drum machines into the all-too-familiar guitar-bass-drums matrix. Frontman Todd Baechle sneers his way through the standard-issue alienated-guy script—"Right now a boy gets old/ A boy gets bitter/ A boy learns not to trust," he warns in "Violent." But he and producer Mike Mogis (of Omaha chamber-folk ensemble Lullaby For The Working Class) construct such a dizzying sonic environment around these well-worn complaints, it sounds like a brave new world. That's why "Let The Poison Spill From Your Throat" throbs like the Human League, and "Agenda Suicide," the disc's incendiary opener, sizzles with titanic synth riffs and drummer Clark Baechle's snarling disco cadence. Rage with the machine...in style. >>>MIKAEL WOOL

Link

[www.thefaint.com](http://www.thefaint.com)

File Under

Sexy synth sass

R.I.Y.L.

Gary Numan, Blur's *Modern*

*Life Is Rubbish*, black hair dye

**Everybody Digs Bill Hicks**

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Bill Hicks**

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## FAITHLESS

Outrospective *Arista*

Despite the skeletal snazziness of their beats and the luxurious ambience that is the soul of their tracks, Faithless was always, first and foremost, a pop band. So what if its heart at times pumped to clubland's rhythm? That only made co-conspirators Rollo and Sister Bliss worthier—a dance-pop band that doesn't suck is hard to find nowadays. Anyone complaining about the unadulterated top-40 sheen that envelops the group's third album, *Outrospective*, like a great big pop womb is missing the point. How do you think they birthed Dido, anyway? Not by being abstract, that's

for sure. Thus, it makes all the sense in the world that the folk balladeering of new guest vocalist Zoe Johnston's "Crazy English Summer" explores electronic textures that pop radio and Sarah McLachlan fans could warm up to, and "Not Enough Love" is Faithless MC Maxi Jazz in full adult hip-hop mode, the song's music-hall chorus just an added sweetener for crossover programmers. Luckily for all the heads, Rollo and Sister Bliss haven't fully shed the skin that made them club faves, they're just more likely to slither the ambient groove into the chill-out room now, which is where a mid-tempo head-nodder like "Machines R Us" and the heavenly pulse of "Liontamer" are most likely to seduce. The groove is still in their blood, it's just diluted a bit. >>>RASPBERRY JONES

Link

[www.faithless.co.uk](http://www.faithless.co.uk)

File Under

Pop-rockin' beats

R.I.Y.L.

Massive Attack, Madonna,  
Everything But The Girl



## BEN FOLDS

Rockin' The Suburbs *Epic*

Ben Folds knows what he is: "Male, middle-class and white," according to the aptly named title track. Things come easy for Ben Folds, and that, it seems, is what makes things so hard for him. No one's immune to emotional distress. However, just as bluesmen who reach financial success leave their stock-picking endeavors out of the 12-bar format, privileged, sensitive and precocious piano players have to carefully balance the whining they do. The occasional string arrangement compares well to Mantovani's influence on early '70s AM radio, but Ben Folds

Link

[www.benfoldsfive.com](http://www.benfoldsfive.com)

File Under

Pure pop from the piano man

R.I.Y.L.

Bread, Paul McCartney,  
Elton John

navigates the potential pitfalls of his first self-attributed solo album by punctuating his lower moments with quick nods and winks. Acid casualties find Jesus. Broken hearts find solace in songs that on the surface could be penned by Barry Manilow. "Losing Lisa" begins with a lonely vocal that could be David Gates of Bread finding the diary underneath the tree, while the chorus is a melodic epiphany worthy of the Turtles' "Happy Together." And "Still Fighting It" casts Folds as the overgrown kid melting into the shag carpet in the den. In all cases, however, Folds no longer boxes himself into the corner in quiet indie-rock servitude, but rather goes immediately for the catchy hook, determined to teach the world to sing his radio-deserving melodies. >>>ROB O'CONNOR



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Link

[www.perishablerecords.com](http://www.perishablerecords.com)

File Under

Home-grown psych-folk  
weirdness

R.I.Y.L.

The Incredible String Band,  
Gorky's Zygotic Mynci,  
Mercury Rev

for the 21st century. With meticulously arranged vocal harmonies, an impressive array of instruments (marimba, ukelele and clarinet pop up amid the usual guitars and keyboards) and crafty pop sensibilities, the Bats strike an agreeable balance between homegrown, back-porch folk rock and the '60s psych-pop vistas evoked by kindred spirits like Olivia Tremor Control and Mercury Rev. The bizarre lyrical imagery favored by main man Eric Johnson further enhances the feeling that the band has created its own private world in which nothing works quite the way it does in "real" life, and for the length of *Echolocation*, it's a pleasant world to inhabit. >>>JIM ALLEN



## FRUIT BATS

Echolocation *Perishable*

Fruit Bats' homey exoticism could lead you to believe the bandmembers must come from someplace like Wales or New Zealand, or at least some isolated corner of England. But these modern-day psych-folkies actually make their home in the American Midwest—Chicago to be specific. And like so many Chicago groups, their members hail from a variety of other bands (mostly Califone), but *Echolocation* bears little in common with their previous endeavors. Instead of post-Americana experimentalism, Fruit Bats indulge in a mostly acoustic, attractively quirky brand of '60s-flavored pop that suggests nothing so much as the Incredible String Band reinvented





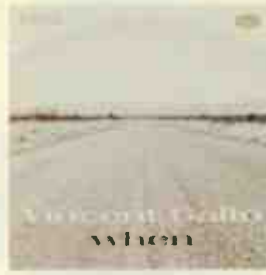


**GALACTIC**  
We Love 'Em Tonight (Live at Tipitina's)

Call it borrowed if you will, but nobody does the deep-fried Meters vibe quite like Galactic. And the New Orleans jam band is seldom more inspired than when playing in front of the hometown crowd at the gritty Uptown club named for a Professor Longhair tune. That's the setting for the group's overdue first live disc, a crisply recorded set that amply demonstrates the ability of powerhouse drummer Stanton Moore and co. to build a multicolored house of funk, jazz and psychedelic noise atop a juicy groove. "Crazyhorse Mongoose," the title track

from the group's 1998 album, welcomes with a familiar Galactic song-writing strategy: Moore and bassist Robert Mercurio dig into an infectious rhythm, guitarist Jeff Raines and organist Rich Vogel offer a laid-back riff answered by saxophonist Ben Ellman, and then the jam begins in earnest. "Moog Marmalade" thrives on a Middle Eastern sax melody and squiggly keyboard effects, and Ellman injects wheezing harmonica into the experimental "Bobski/Jeffe 2000." Veteran Crescent City singer Theryl de'Clouet makes it a soul party with a three-song segment, and the Dirty Dozen Brass Band is saluted on the heavily syncopated "Baker's Dozen." The boys shuttle off to space on the psychedelic "Two Clowns" before de'Clouet jumps back into the fray, sending fans home with the nasty funk-rock blast of Black Sabbath's "Sweet Leaf." Sticky, sweet stuff, indeed. >>>PHILIP BOOTH

Link  
www.galacticfunk.com  
File Under  
Greasy good jams  
R.I.Y.L.  
The Meters, Soulive,  
Charlie Hunter



**VINCENT GALLO**  
When

Link  
www.drowninginbrown.com  
File Under  
Lovesick dreams  
R.I.Y.L.  
Loren Mazzacane Connors,  
DJ Shadow, trying to think

So a guy walks into a bar...actually more of a nightclub lounge, and his appearance in the room is not unlike that of a possibly rabid German Shepherd padding unannounced into the midst of a child's birthday party. Turns out it's Buffalo '66 writer/director/actor Vincent Gallo, and following just a pace behind is the neatly appointed, sparrow-like figure of Polly Jean Harvey. For the next hour or so onlookers are subjected to the intrigue of watching Gallo (the wolf, er, shepherd) and Ms. Harvey (did I mention her scarlet-red blouse?) suggestively nuzzling, back-caressing and sweet-

whispering to one another, while an indie songwriter of some renown performs unfazed on the stage. *When*, a dream-clouded pastiche of pensive, elliptical guitar noodling and almost subversively naïve love balladry, may have been what was playing in Gallo's head at the time. "Goodnight baby/ Sleep tight here with me/ We can lay in the bed/ You and me/ And I won't go away/ Or leave you alone," he faintly pleads over some spare Casio chords on one of its vocal tracks. And it calls to mind Gallo's emotionally crippled man-child of *Buffalo*, desperately grasping for the stability that seems perpetually out of his reach. Harvey's replacement for Christina Ricci in this fiction vs. reality exercise aside, *When's* impressionistic musings may suggest much more about the famously caustic Gallo's fragility than any visual statement could ever hope. >>>COLIN HELMS

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File Under

Psychedelic popsters take a  
folk-rock turn  
R.I.Y.L.

The Beatles, Neutral Milk Hotel,  
Fairport Convention

esteemed predecessors (though never overly derivative of them). While many of the songs are based around acoustic guitar, piano, fiddle and the like, contrast is provided by occasional concessions to the group's psychedelic past, such as the overt Beatisms of the opening track "Where Does Yer Go Now?" But overall, *How I Long* has more in common with the gentle, backyard folk pop of Ram-era Paul McCartney. This more acoustic direction was strongly hinted at on the last couple of Gorky's releases, but now they've fully integrated it into their sonic palette. They make use of their considerable gift for ornate arrangements to charmingly frame these sunny pop gems which, true to the album title, are perfect evocations of an endless summer, sent with love from Wales straight to your heart. >>>JIM ALLEN



Link

[www.grade.net](http://www.grade.net)

File Under

Predictable but proficient  
post-hardcore  
R.I.Y.L.

Hot Water Music, Boy Sets Fire,  
Small Brown Bike

## GRADE

Headfirst Straight To Hell *Victory*

After 1998's *Separate The Magnets*, Grade found itself in the midst of a label feeding frenzy, with indies and majors alike scrambling to stake claim to the Canadian quintet. Many considered Grade's fusion of throaty, visceral hardcore and pop melodies to be the new direction of hard rock, going so far as to prophesy mainstream acceptance. Grade finally decided on indie-hardcore powerhouse Victory Records, releasing '99's breakthrough *Under The Radar*, which further expanded their underground following but lacked the push to launch them into the mainstream. Two years later, Grade's buzz returns to

accompany *Headfirst Straight To Hell*, and very little has changed. Kyle Bishop's raspy, raw vocals blare over melodic metal riffs, creating the forceful dynamic that has become Grade's trademark. In fact, the majority of *Headfirst* is content to rely solely on this established tone, songs beginning to blend into each other, rhythm and melodies repeating. Except for the impressive bite-sized space rock of the Hum-esque "Twenty Moons," Grade's attempts at breaking from the hardcore mold are aimless and tragic—"The Glorious Dead" concludes the album with 16 wasted minutes of ghostly, echo-y ambient keyboards and noodle guitars. It's as though, having risen to the top of hardcore's mountain, Grade have run headfirst off the cliff in their attempt to go farther. >>>ALEX NAIDUS



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### GROOVE ARMADA

**Goodbye Country, Hello Nightclub** Jive Electro  
Upon contemplating *Goodbye Country, Hello Nightclub*, it'd be easy to assume that Groove Armada is on the downside of one-hit-wonderville. Their 1999 crossover hit, "I See You Baby," which went from "shakin' that ass" to clubgoers to "shakin' that thang" for Toyota vehicles, would be impossible to top in its big-beat guitar glory. Andy Cato and Tom Findlay seem to know that their 15 minutes are up, throwing that pop moment away on their third album. Truth is, Groove Armada accidentally hit upon pop-culture success while playfully pasting dance music to other genres (as

Link

[www.groovearmada.com](http://www.groovearmada.com)

File Under

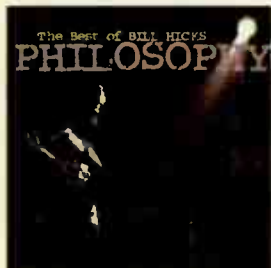
Explanatorily shakin' that ass

R.I.Y.L.

Kruder & Dorfmeister,

Soulstice

as indicated by the less successful elements of their breakthrough, *Vertigo*), and as such, *Goodbye Country* reflects their continued experimentation. The album begins awkwardly with "Suntoucher," a pastiche of gangsta-rap bravado, reggae-groove delivery and white-folk cleanliness, then carries on the reggae-garage house-music miscegenation on "Superstylin." Yet the duo's dedication to exploration is apparent throughout, from the ambient-house sleepiness of "Drifted" to the sexy Marvin Gaye-styled swooner "Little By Little." They achieve similar success with light strings and "Tubular Bells" synths on "Lazy Moon" and get the electro-funk right on the money in "Raising The Stakes." So, with its slick highs and gaudy lows, *Goodbye Country* is likely what we would have gotten if Groove Armada hadn't shaken anyone's anything. >>>HEATH K. HIGNIGHT



### BILL HICKS

**Philosophy: The Best of Bill Hicks** Rykodisc

At a time when most stand-up comedians were limp, colorless *Seinfeld* clones, Bill Hicks hammered home politically incorrect texts alternately fueled by outrage and a placid stoner wisdom. Why waste time talking about airline peanuts? Hicks wanted to hit people in darker, more vulnerable places. His final network television spot in 1993 never aired: His curse-free, pre-approved segment for David Letterman contained a bit about proflifers, but fearing its impact upon advertisers, the network got queasy and pulled the whole damned set.

Link

[www.billhicks.com](http://www.billhicks.com)

File Under

Dangerous minds

R.I.Y.L.

Denis Leary, Lenny Bruce,

the First Amendment

Apparently, Dave is still sick about it; he knew Hicks's death at 32 in early 1994 from pancreatic cancer was a giant loss. Like Lenny Bruce, Hicks turned scatology into high art, and rolled people into fits of laughter in his defense of drug use, gays in the military, smoking and whatever else he thought made America great. He could make a tirade about the editing of cum shots from hotel porn sound like a First Amendment treatise. *Philosophy* gets the job done by packing a career of Hicks rants into a single package. Be thankful that so much of his work was recorded; mythmaking about this act would have only softened the cutting impact of this scathingly funny cult icon. >>>STEVE CIABATTONI

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**HIS NAME IS ALIVE**

**Someday My Blues Will Cover The Earth** AND More like, *Today My Soul Will Bleed A River*, and holy shit does Warn Defever's soul seem full, its contents spilling over the banks. Considering the scattered, partly alchemical indie-pop home recordings he's previously launched, the musical makeover that the HNIA mastermind has orchestrated on *Blues* is as wholly unexpected as an act of God. Which, considering its extremity and direction, it just might be. With former gospel choir vocalist Lovetta Pippen out front on each of its 13 tracks, Defever has turned HNIA's seventh full-length into an emotion-soaked, modern

Link

[www.timestereo.com/hnia](http://www.timestereo.com/hnia)

File Under

Soul don't fail me now

R.I.Y.L.

Jill Scott, Young Disciples, Prince's late-'80s ballads

R&B flood—hold the irony, then try to hold on. Free of any saturated sexual-healing overtones, Pippen and Defever are adrift on a river of gothic neo-soul and G-funk production techniques and the sheer despair of songs that live up to titles like "Solitude," "Our Last Affair" and "Are We Still Married." "Write My Name In The Groove," the only song to reach even a mid-tempo, finds its rhythm submerged in a current of minor jazz chords. Otherwise, what floats by in the shape of hope are the album's blues, specifically the mild Chicago smokiness of "Karin's Blues" and the modern Philly vibe of "Happy Blues." Taken as a whole, it's a gorgeous, penitence-serving bumper. One hopes they're waving and not drowning, otherwise the group's name is their only life preserver. >>>PIOTR ORLOV



**ILL NIÑO**

**Revolution Revolución** Roadrunner

Given the surge of Latino flavoring in popular music, it's no surprise that salsa-spiced and flamenco-flavored metal would rise as well. Puya drops Caribbean rhythms, Sepultura's Brazilian percussive boom can be heard from here to kingdom come, and now, New Jersey-by-way-of-South America neo-metal sextet Ill Niño is crashing the hard-rock party. Gnashing their teeth on blustering riffs and driving their sound forward like a flared-nostril bull (via drummer Dave Chavarri's louder-than-bombs hand- and foot-work), *Revolution Revolución* veers off the mall-metal

Link

[www.illnino.com](http://www.illnino.com)

File Under

Tropic of Cancer metal

R.I.Y.L.

Puya, Souffly, Sepultura

course, thanks to seamless, strategically placed Latino rhythms. (See "God Save Us," "What Comes Around" and "No Murder" for tastes of Ill Niño's adept acoustic flamenco breakdowns.) But while Ill Niño's music may be drenched in Latino flavors, the majority of its attitude and lyrical content eschew specific political subjects that are common in metal en español (though the title track does reference poli strife). Rather, the six-piece waxes about regular-guy issues like betrayal and relationships. Cristian Machado's vocals are slathered with distortion, giving his screams something of an overly familiar slant, but his actual singing voice is sweet, effective and engaging. Ultimately, the slow Latino dynamics don't accurately serve as barometer of how brutal Ill Niño can be; they do, however, prevent the band from being another frat-house nü-metal yawner. >>>AMY SCIARRETTO

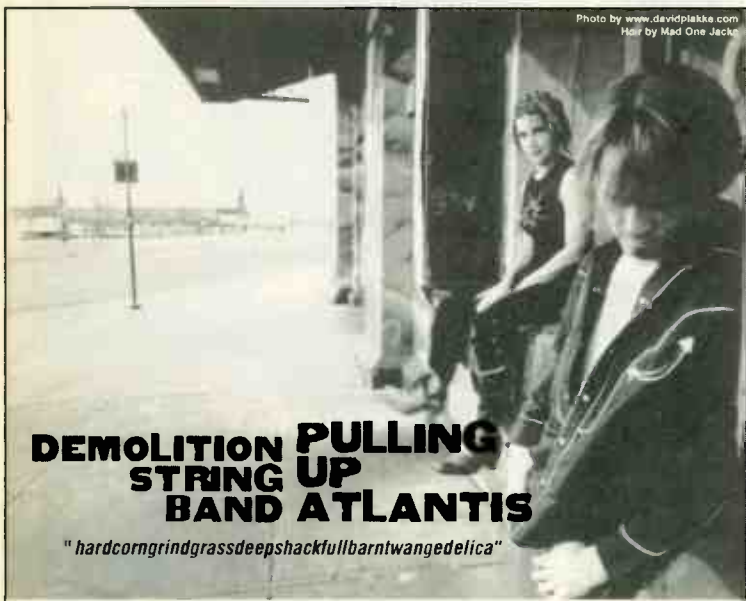


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**LEN BROWN SOCIETY**

**It Wasn't The Smoothest Time** Galaxia

It's probably not advisable to rhyme "baloney" with "Zamoni" in a song, but Len Brown Society mastermind Eric Warren doesn't seem too concerned with conventional wisdom. The California singer/songwriter, who works with a varying cast of backing musicians, drifts along a palette of styles broad enough to encompass murky samples and Yo La Tengo-style free rock. The results can be breathtaking in their originality, as when a fuzzi-guitar solo disrupts the otherwise genial mood of "Bottom Of My Cup," or in "Chlorine," where the narrator

Link

[www.galaxia-platform.com](http://www.galaxia-platform.com)

File Under

Organic, free-spirited indie rock

R.I.Y.L.

Luna, Black Heart Procession, Granddaddy, Silver Jews

swims placidly in a pool—backed by the underwater sounds of the Hammond B-3—until a jazzy psychedelic freakout makes waves. Warren and his Society sometimes take too long to get where they're going (or never arrive at all), as in the wryly titled "Blind Man's Toupee," which is all experiment (cello and tape-delay effect Echoplex being the main instrumentation) and no execution. Mostly though, Len Brown Society's musical curiosity (and curious musicality) opens beautiful vistas of sound, certainly enough to allow Warren to play with words. One complaint about the rhymes, though: "Porch Song" also works in "lonely," "phony" and "macaroni," but fails to mention former Canadian prime minister Brian Mulroney. >>>RICHARD A. MARTIN



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### CHARLES LLOYD

#### Hyperion With Higgins ECM

Charles Lloyd exhibits an attractive lyricism on *Hyperion With Higgins*, the second set culled from the December 1999 recordings that produced last year's *The Water Is Wide*. For the title track, the veteran saxophonist and late, great drummer Billy Higgins, playing one of his final sessions, gently spar on the bluesy changes, making good on the spiritual-musical connections they made way back in Los Angeles in the late '50s. Joined by bassist Larry Grenadier and pianist Brad Mehldau, two-thirds of the latter's regular trio, Higgins eventually comes to the fore, delivering another of

his impeccably designed expositions of rhythm before driving the group hard to the end of the piece. Throughout, Lloyd remains as ambitious a composer as ever, hinting at his Memphis beginnings with "Darkness On The Delta Suite," a five-part opus tinted with church and blues colors that features some particularly pungent soloing by guitarist John Abercrombie. The quintet also delivers the bossa-tinged balladry of "Dancing Waters, Big Sur To Bahia," the sly post-bop of "Secret Life Of The Forbidden City" and the droning, Middle Eastern ruminations of "The Caravan Moves On," which Lloyd leads with the oboe-like taragato. It's an eclectic set, a reminder of the tenor master's vitality: At 64, he's full of vigor and wit, and as relevant as ever. >>>PHILIP BOOTH

Link

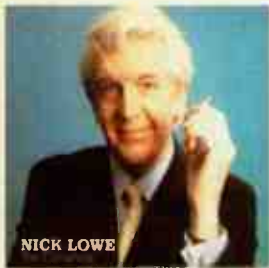
[www.ecmrecords.com](http://www.ecmrecords.com)

File Under

Organic post-bop

R.I.Y.L.

John Coltrane, Pharoah Sanders, John Abercrombie



### NICK LOWE

#### The Convincer Yep Roc

Nick Lowe has always charted his own course as a songwriter, never sinking to self-parody. With the arrival of his 11th album, *The Convincer*, Lowe continues to be guided by a distinctly personal vision. That's not to say Lowe has become, or *The Convincer* is, anti-pop. But at this point in his storied career, he's past everything but art for art's sake, and as a stylist, he makes the rounds with the casual offhandedness of one who's been there before and has come to know better. He edges right up to country, but doesn't go there, with "Lately I've Let Things Slide," then crosses the line with the ballad "Bygones

(Won't Go)" and the Bakersfield vibe of "Has She Got A Friend?" Although flirting with one's wife/girlfriend is hopelessly romantic and uncool, that's exactly what's happening in "Let's Stay Home And Make Love." And the grand pop arrangement of the soul chestnut "Only A Fool Breaks His Own Heart" animates one of the album's best lyrical interludes. Place "Indian Queens" in the eccentric category, the narrative concept of which is even more retro than his cover of Johnny Rivers's "Poor Side Of Town," both fitting precisely into the grander script. *The Convincer* is music for fans over pop styles and into pop substance. >>>PHILIP VAN VLECK

Link

[www.nicklowe.com](http://www.nicklowe.com)

File Under

Pure pop for well-versed people

R.I.Y.L.

Elvis Costello's *Almost Blue*,  
Arthur Alexander,  
Willie Nelson

# sense field

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## MAZARIN

**A Tall-Tale Storyline** SpinART

When Philadelphian Quentin Stoltzfus dropped Mazarin's critically acclaimed debut, *Watch It Happen*, the element of surprise was on his side. Sophomore efforts are trickier, especially when heightened expectations are heaped upon an erstwhile drummer with a single home-recorded solo project to his name. So the real surprise is that *A Tall-Tale Storyline* actually one-ups its predecessor, retaining its iconoclastic charms while pushing an already bulging envelope. *Storyline* is all over the map, interspersing effervescent indie pop, two country-drenched numbers and

a pair of dexterous instrumental homages to late avant-folkie John Fahey. The constants are an insistently strummed guitar and layers of incidental noise (bells, street bustle, feedback) gurgling beneath the fray. Mazarin resembles Neutral Milk Hotel in both its acoustic guitar foundation and Stoltzfus's everyman delivery of pleasingly wordy, poetic lyrics. Parallels to Yo La Tengo's multifaceted muse also spring to mind, both on "Go Home," an eight-minute drone-groove built upon an electronic tone generator that breezes by surprisingly quickly, and the electrified rave-up "My Favorite Green Hill." These stylistic shifts show that Stoltzfus is documenting his unique vision rather than honing his ideas for a wide audience. It may not be a recipe for shifting serious units, but discriminating music fans will welcome this window into Mazarin's world. >>>GLEN SARVADY



## MERCURY REV

**All Is Dream v2**

Rock 'n' roll ghosts have a way of floating through Mercury Rev's albums. On 1998's *Deserter's Songs*, the Band's Levon Helm and Garth Hudson haunted the Rev's spooky dreamscapes. This time, the specter of legendary producer/arranger Jack Nitzsche, who died one week before he was to begin working with the band, looms like a shroud. That sad event makes both the symphonic swell of strings (a Nitzsche trademark) and the oceanic cymbal crashes that carry "The Dark Is Rising" especially affecting. The producer's presence was actually first felt on

*Deserter's*, in the guise of a bowed saw—which the band fell in love with after hearing its peculiar quiver on Nitzsche's soundtrack to *One Flew Over The Cuckoo's Nest*. That instrument again colors the Rev's palette of flute, french horn, strings, and what sounds like a choir of angels-in-limbo—especially on "Lincoln's Eyes." Overall, a strange, twilight loveliness suffuses the Rev's fifth disc and mirrors singer/guitarist Jonathan Donahue's lyrical preoccupations: night, dreams, solitude and the elements. Donahue confesses on "Little Rhymes," in a cracked, keening voice similar to his onetime bandmate, Flaming Lips' singer Wayne Coyne, "When I'm alone and scared/ I think up little rhymes." Much of the material here sounds as if it was conjured under those circumstances. If so, here's to Donahue getting a fright for years to come. >>>JONATHAN PERRY



# MIXED SIGNALS

BY M. TYE COMER

## JUAN ATKINS



### JUAN ATKINS

**Legends Volume One** 0m

**What it is:** Detroit techno innovator gets your engine running with a soulful set of the Motor City sound.

**Why you want it:** Instead of resting on his well-deserved laurels, Atkins crafts a focused journey of classic and current tunes—including works by DJ Sneak, Kit Clayton and his own Model 500—and remains as potent as he's always been.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Derrick May, Carl Craig, DJ Sneak

## FUTURE GROOVE



### FORCE MASS MOTION

**Future Groove Collection** Future Groove-Mute

**What it is:** A dark, driving progressive trance mix of tunes released on the two year-old Future Groove label.

**Why you want it:** The imprint's first domestic release is an 11-track, no-nonsense collection that demonstrates why Polaris, Vic20 & Sinclair, Grayson Shipley and Inertia are becoming some of the most respected trance producers around.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Paul van Dyk, Sasha, Paul Oakenfold



### DJ HARRY

**The String Cheese Remix Project** Instinct

**What it is:** Denver hippie-turned-house-head uses his own remixes of a noodly jam-band to create warm, organic grooves.

**Why you want it:** Not as Phishy as you might think. The live drums and guitars add a charming twist to house excursions that are more Dubtribe than Dead, proving that ravers and hippies do have something in common.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Dubtribe, Electric Skychurch, Mark Farina



### RICHIE HAWTIN

**DE9: Closer To The Edit** M-nus-Mute

**What it is:** Minimal techno master uses new software technology to craft a set of stark and subdued space-age funk.

**Why you want it:** Not quite as punchy as '99's *Decks*, *EFX* & *909*, but consists of 31 Hawtin track reconfigurations (via the recently-developed Final Scratch program) making it ambitious, inspiring and unlike anything that's come before it.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Theorem, Thomas Brinkmann, Basic Channel



### STANTON WARRIORS

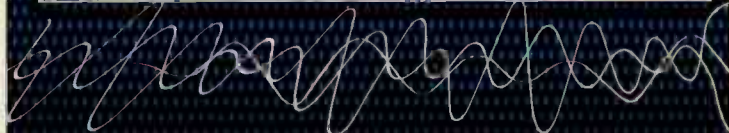
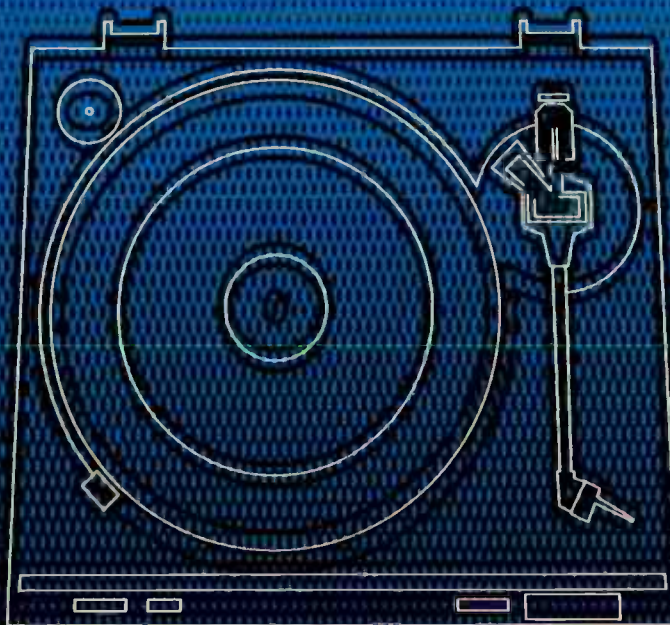
**The Stanton Session** XL-Beggars Banquet

**What it is:** A bouncy, bumpy collection of bass-heavy, brooding two-step, mixed by the new kings of the U.K. underground.

**Why you want it:** Meaner than MJ Cole and platter than the Plump DJs, the Warriors present the break-beat evolution in its most unadulterated form, with relentlessly funky grooves and live toasts that will have you jumping and shouting.

**R.I.Y.L.:** Dreem Team, Plump DJs, Adam Freeland

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| Leftfield w/Roots Manuva | Underworld                  |
| Asian Dub Foundation     | Massive Attack              |
| Terranova w/Tricky       | Ming & FS                   |
| BT                       | DJ Food                     |
| DJ Spooky (Vs. Scanner)  | Indian Ropeman              |
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**NEW ORDER**

**Get Ready** Warner-Reprise

Despite a hideous name and several songs that seem to bear working titles ("Slow Jam"?), New Order's first full album of the new millennium is anything but a throwaway. The band was among the first to bridge post-punk grandeur, modern recording techniques and plain old pop, and *Get Ready* finds them showcasing their diversity in a rock-oriented, mostly uptempo mood, neither as dark nor as slick as 1989's disappointing *Technique*. "Rock The Shack" is as guitar-heavy as anything they've ever recorded, and if it weren't for Bernard Sumner's telltale aching tenor, the acoustic ballad "Run Wild" might be another band

Link

[www.neworderweb.com](http://www.neworderweb.com)

File Under

The Big '80s, with a touch of class  
R.I.Y.L.

Electronic, The The, Happy Mondays

entirely. Of course, it wouldn't be New Order without a few up-to-date dance culture references, but these are used creatively: In both "60 Miles An Hour" and "Close Range," trance buildups give way to surprisingly raw distortion. At times, the eclecticism seems cynical, with Gillian Gilbert's synth-strings and Peter Hook's signature up-the-neck bass melodies popping up at regular intervals as if they were contractual obligations. But when riff, rhythm and melody all work together (the instantly memorable chorus of "Turn My Way"), it's clear there are few more stirring combinations in popular music. Not all of *Get Ready* is this strong (the aforementioned "Slow Jam" unpleasantly recalls EMP's "Unbelievable"), but these 20-year veterans have gracefully stuck to their original vision. >>>FRANKLIN BRUNO



**ORBITAL** 

**The Altogether** FFRR

Lasting for 12 years in show business is a long time, and in the super-fickle world of dance music, it's an absolute eternity. Few would have thought Orbital's 1990 rinky-dink rave hit "Chime" would have spawned seven critically acclaimed albums and about a million tour miles—least of all Paul and Phil Hartnoll themselves. Yet somehow they've maintained the momentum, filling record shelves and festivals with their angular take on breakbeat-driven techno. The duo's new outing, *The Altogether*, is a return to form after two sonically dense discs, *The Middle* of *Nowhere* and *In Sides*. It's still super-

Link

[www.loopz.co.uk](http://www.loopz.co.uk)

File Under

Chunky, punkish future machine funk  
R.I.Y.L.

Underworld, Leftfield, Moby

charged with those characteristic Orbital traits—humour, melody, groove—but they've stripped away the layers to reveal a leaner, meaner take on 21st-century machine-funk. "Oi!" sets the agenda, dusty electro beats mutating into cool dub house disco, then "Tootled" illustrates what Al Jourgensen's version of drum 'n' bass might sound like, and "Tension" approximates Johnny Rotten on the samplers. The brothers Hartnoll also collaborate with some proper vocalists: "Funny Break" floats soaring vocals from Naomi Bedford over weightless rhythms, while MOR singer David Gray croons over the hook-laden dancefloor stabs of "Illuminate." Still interesting, still funky and still unashamedly anthemic, *The Altogether* is proof positive that the brothers have once again gone and worked it out. >>>KIERAN WYATT

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**LEON PARKER**

**The Simple Life** Label M

An advocate of the less-is-more esthetic, jazz drummer and one-man rhythm section Leon Parker has been known to play gigs with just two drums. He's also been a busy sideman for more than a decade, appearing on funky albums by guitarist Charlie Hunter, as well as traditional outings backing the likes of pianist Jacky Terrasson and trumpeter Tom Harrell. *The Simple Life* is his fourth album as a leader, revealing a stunning musical imagination, at once earthy and folkish, as well as urbanely jazzy. Tracks like Ellington's "Caravan" and "Makin Love," both featuring the vocal talents of Elizabeth Kontomanou, are simple, delicately minimalist tunes, based on handclaps and voices. When Parker chooses to pick up a percussion instrument, he creates taut, mesmerizing hand-drum grooves, like the African-inspired "Jungle" and the Afro-Cuban-leaning "Ray Of Light." And when he settles behind his kit, Parker drives straight-ahead jazz compositions like "Belief" and "Ray Of Light (Revisited)" authoritatively, amidst a full complement of horns, bass and piano. Then there's Parker's beautiful duet with fellow percussionist Stephen Chopek on "Peace" and with saxophonist Steve Wilson on "Green Chimneys," both filled with thoughtful musical conversations. Ultimately though, whichever direction Parker chooses, his songs seldom linger, and he stays inside them just long enough to make an impression, then naturally moves on to the next. >>>TAD HENDRICKSON

Link

[www.leonparker.com](http://www.leonparker.com)

File Under

Bobby McFerrin's drumming counterpart  
R.I.Y.L.

Charlie Hunter, Rumba Club, Hilton Ruiz





**PASCAL & MISTER DAY**

*The Lure Of Melody* Glasgow Underground

Is the return of genuine soul music in the air? R&B isn't the only style inching away from the mack-daddy esthetic, towards something more refined and spiritual. The French, who jocked Chicago House to jump-start their music revival, are now getting into the act, and as Europeans are wont to do with American innovations, they're furthering it for their own damned needs. So Lyon-based Pascal (the producer) & Mister Day (the vocalist) treat soul as a vague and diverse concept on *The Lure Of Melody*, a feast of positivity that serves as their first proper album. That means a gorgeous cover of Shuggie



Link

[www.glasgowunderground.com](http://www.glasgowunderground.com)

File Under

French soul kiss

R.I.Y.L.

Isley Brothers, Roy Davis Jr.,

Larry Levan's populist

dancefloor

Otis's "Inspiration Information" bleeding into a dub jam based on its melody. That means "Foolin," a gruff-voiced ballad that wouldn't be out of place on either side two or four of Prince's *Sign O' The Times*. That means melding the worlds of Paradise Garage disco and spiritual house with the plastic-soul melodicism of Air on the title track, or refashioning a James Taylor (!) song, "Don't Let Me Be Lonely Tonight," into a set-ending uplifter. Day sings with the passion of one who hasn't faked a thing in years, and the sounds Pascal serves up are distinctively organic, more in keeping with the old-school vibe of MFSB's Philly than Jill Scott's. But they take both into account, celebrating soul as much for its vision as for its sound. >>>PIOTR ORLOV



Link

[www.matadorrecords.com/preston\\_school\\_of\\_industry](http://www.matadorrecords.com/preston_school_of_industry)

File Under

Return of slacker pop

R.I.Y.L.

Pavement, Stephen Malkmus,

Sonic Youth

As expected, genres are ripe for parody and plumbing. Pedal-steel guitar signifies country music for "A Treasure @ Silver Bank (This Dynasty's For Real)," while Kannberg sounds as if he's rummaging for change in the spare room. Monolithic, descending guitar lines introduce the near-eight-minute "Encyclopedic Knowledge Of" as the heir apparent to Robin Trower's early-'70s classic "Bridge Of Sighs." Carnival organ and a bouncy groove give "Solitaire" that shiny pop sheen that Pavement always reluctantly embraced. Drummer Andrew Borger (Tom Waits, Moore Bros.) and bassist Jon Erickson (Moore Bros.) set a consistent pace, while Kannberg goes about filling every last second with another ringing guitar and another set of hooks patiently waiting to pull you in. >>>ROB O'CONNOR

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**PUDDLE OF MUDD**

**Come Clean** *Flawless*

Call off the charity boxing match! Fred Durst and Scott Stapp have resolved last year's Dysfunctional Family Picnic acrimony with more than a mere handshake; the Floridian rock gods just announced the birth of their first child in Kansas City, Mo. The little tyke's name (gender and species are undisclosed) is Puddle Of Mudd, and it's a fit-to-be-flushed amalgam of Generation *TRL* riffage and post-p.c. tough-guy groaning. Casual corporate alternative radio listeners will be unexcited to learn that most of *Come Clean* isn't as insufferable as leadoff

single "Control," a thudding "Sex Type Thing" flashback ("I like the dirty things you do when I have control of you!") that's as sultry as a wet fart. Even a painstakingly accessible wannabe anthem like "She Hates Me" inspires no more than fond memories of Ugly Kid Joe. Front-dude Wes Scantlin drawls like Rob Thomas hopped up on andro, and he and co-guitarist Paul Phillips generate leads so unthreatening that the obligatory Andy Wallace sponge-bath mix is thoroughly redundant. Puddle's too straight to pirate Limp's hip-hop bastardizations, but they're still the perfect flagship for Durst's vanity label. The Dark One has a knack for breaking the dark, passive-aggressive fecal matter that 250-pound high school lettermen can coo along to en route to cow tipping'. >>>ANDREW BONAZELLI

Link

[www.puddleofmudd.com](http://www.puddleofmudd.com)

File Under

Cock-rock chemical spill

R.I.Y.L.

Alice In Chains, Staind, Creed



**QUASI**

**The Sword Of God** *Touch And Go*

Quasi's Sam Coomes and Janet Weiss put themselves in a tight spot with their bittersweet manifesto, *Featuring "Birds"*: It was so right-on, such an arguably perfect realization of indie-pop's continuing potential (yes, even in 1998), that they'll likely be playing catch-up with it for the rest of their career. The duo's on its second post-*"Birds"* effort now—their first for Touch And Go—and they're closer to conquering the slump. The secret, for main songwriter Coomes (he sings and plays keyboards and guitars, and Weiss, also of Sleater-Kinney, handles drums) seems to lie in imperfection;

where *"Birds"* relied on his nubile falsetto and a clean, Beatles-indebted guitar jangle—even the few organ freak-out jams were metronomic—*The Sword Of God* rolls Quasi's honey-dipped sneers in gravel. On several tracks ("From A Hole In The Ground" and "Better Luck Next Time"), Coomes's voice betrays not boyish heartbreak, but grown-up hangover. Bird noises appear again on "A Case Of No Way Out," but instead of an optimistic, standalone chirp track (as on *"Birds"*), here they're eclipsed by sinister, fuzzed-out bass tones as the duo harmonizes, "But in the end/ The darkness was your friend." Almost all of it works; it won't appease indie rockers as yet unsullied by life's feedback, but it'll speak loud and clear to the rest of us. >>>DYLAN SIEGLER

Link

[my.voyager.net/~jimmy/quasi.html](http://my.voyager.net/~jimmy/quasi.html)

File Under

Pop, tarred and feathered

R.I.Y.L.

Built To Spill, Sleater-Kinney

**THE COMP PILE** (Our guide to compilation CDs) BY ALEX NAIDUS AND KATE BOWMAN

|                           |  |  |  |   |  |
|---------------------------|--|--|--|---|--|
|                           |  |  |  |   |  |
| <b>TITLE</b>              | Twisted Forever: A Tribute To The Legendary Twisted Sister (Koch)  | The Amos House Collection, Vol. 1 (Wishing Tree)                               | Space Jazz (Quango)  | Bombay 2: Electric Vindaloo (Motel)   | Ozzfest 2001: The Second Millennium (Epic)   |
| <b>CONCEPT</b>            | Whether they spent the '80s onstage or in grammar school, all these acts love Dee and the gang.  | Indie-rock darlings gather to benefit a Rhode Island charity for the homeless. | Classic jazz studded with trip-hop sampling gives new meaning to the term "atmospheric." | Kitschy clips from decades-old Indian spy-caper films used and abused by today's top DJs.                       | Live tracks from a legion of nü-metal torchbearers. And Sabbath!   |
| <b>TARGET DEMOGRAPHIC</b> | SMFs, young and old  | Artsy-fartsy activists   | You can't afford an interstellar joyride, but you can afford a CD.                       | Techno freaks with a closet sitar fetish  | You're proud to be one of Slipknot's "maggots."  |
| <b>NAMES TO DROP</b>      | Sevendust, Chuck D, Sebastian Bach   | Departure Lounge, Spoon, Death Cab For Cutie                                   | Love TKO, Tosca, Horsemilk   | Ursula 1000, Kid Koala, Mix Master Mike   | Black Sabbath, Hatebreed, Slipknot   |
| <b>SUMS IT UP</b>         | "We're Not Gonna Take It" (Joan Jett)  | "I, Aquarius" (Bridget)  | "Original Oddstep" (Vert)  | "Third World Lover" (Kid Koala & Dynamite D)  | "Blood Brothers" (Papa Roach)  |
| <b>VERDICT</b>            | The veterans rip up their tributes, but <i>TRL</i> -friendly contributors prove that you sometimes <i>can</i> (and should) stop rock 'n' roll. | Singing for someone else's supper never sounded sweeter—or more heartfelt.     | One small step for jazz, one giant leap for electronica.                                 | An eclectic fusion of traditional Indian instrumentation and modern electronic tweaking that rivals volume one. | Ham-fisted rapping, gratuitous DJs and a complete lack of sincerity: When will it go away? (Sabbath notwithstanding, of course.) |







## RITON

**Beats du Jour** Grand Central

Like fellow Englishman Lee Norris, who under the name Metamatics consistently side-steps sappy adult pop conventions with quirky electronic effects, Riton's Henry Smithson debuts with a mature yet lively sound that's easy on the ears. The title suggests a penchant for today's cream of dance beats, but Smithson actually careens closer to the downtempo listening room and keeps his innocuous rhythmic constructions tightly reined in. "Departure," with its funk electro-bass tendencies and soulful sampled diva lyrics, could have been an abomination

on par with Christina Aguilera's better ballads, but the dreamy overtones Riton implements keep the cheese to a sharp minimum. To that end, there's a touch of dolor in the at-times minimal melodic constructs Riton creates, where the droning pop synth and heavily echoed trumpet of "C Communicated" reflect the dark and dreamy sadness of Alison Goldfrapp's romantic, melancholy pop from last year. It's an element not lost on lounge-music merchants such as Richard Dorfmeister (of Kruder &)—whose DJ sets usually include Riton's "Habib"—and it illustrates how stylistically nimble Norris is. Geared for the relaxed dance and lounge set, *Beats du Jour* is easily a sleeper hit. >>>HEATH K. HIGHLIGHT

Link

[www.grandcentralrecords.co.uk](http://www.grandcentralrecords.co.uk)

File Under

Sedate rhythms

R.I.Y.L.

Goldfrapp, Ladyvibp,  
Metamatics



## SEASON TO RISK

**The Shattering** Owned & Operated

If only you could see Season To Risk's press photo; the long and dejected look on these guys' faces reads, "Well, here we go again." They've endured 12 years, four records, five labels and numerous lineup shifts, and it shows. Though initially known and noted for a jarring abrasive "pigfuck" sound—a term used to describe the cold steel clank of guitar bands like Big Black and Pussy Galore—*The Shattering* finds the Kansas City, Mo. quartet favoring the warm turbulence of emo. Stabs of dissonance offset standard powerchord-driven choruses, the guitars

ride the bucking rhythm section instead of looking to sabotage it with grating counter rhythms, and singer Steve Tulipana ditches his fuzzy CB-mic delivery for a Guy Picciotto vocal style, with a melodic marbles-in-the-mouth urgency. S2R always had a metal streak, and "Demand" and "Spasser" are like Fugazi in an Alice In Chains-based soup, atom-splitting guitars floating around a thick grungy broth. "Despair" is a mellow throwback to their noise days, a shivery vocal delivery leading sweetly tempered industrial clamor. And the title track is the album's finest moment, an awkward and sour set of chords hammered down into a semi-traditional metal gallop. It's an optimum balance of arty noise and brut riffing a few years too late. >>>LORNE BEHRMAN

Link

[www.seasontorisk.com](http://www.seasontorisk.com)

File Under

Noisy emo

R.I.Y.L.

Garden Variety, Fugazi,  
Rites Of Spring



## SENSE FIELD

**Tonight And Forever** Nettwerk America

Sense Field's flirtation with major-label muscle almost made a casualty of *Tonight And Forever*, the California quintet's fourth full-length. The band signed to Warner in 1996, recording the album as *Under The Radar*, a title that proved unfortunately apropos: After eight release-date delays, it became obvious Sense Field wasn't registering on Warner's sensors. Nearly five years later, the band's escaped big business relatively unscathed, having reworked and re-recorded the album for downtrodden-pop-friendly label Nettwerk. Fans who snagged a *Radar* bootleg won't just

be getting a remix; Sense Field completely rethought their approach, dropping tracks, adding others and heaping hefty layers of atmosphere onto everything. The band's 1996 LP, *Building*, knocked them into the emo-pop camp with the likes of the Get Up Kids and Jejuné, but they've always been a little too polished for that category—more of a razor-sharp melodic rock band—and *Tonight* rockets them firmly past postcore comparisons. Singer Jonathan Bunch's vocals never approach snarliness, and the group's musicianship is almost prog-rock pristine. You might even accuse them of being too perfect—it's hard not to wish they'd just let loose every now and again and show some humanity. But *Tonight* certainly shows growth: Sense Field's learned a bunch of new tricks (the keys and samples add gorgeous textures) that make for a beautiful summer driving soundtrack. >>>NICOLE KEIPER

Link

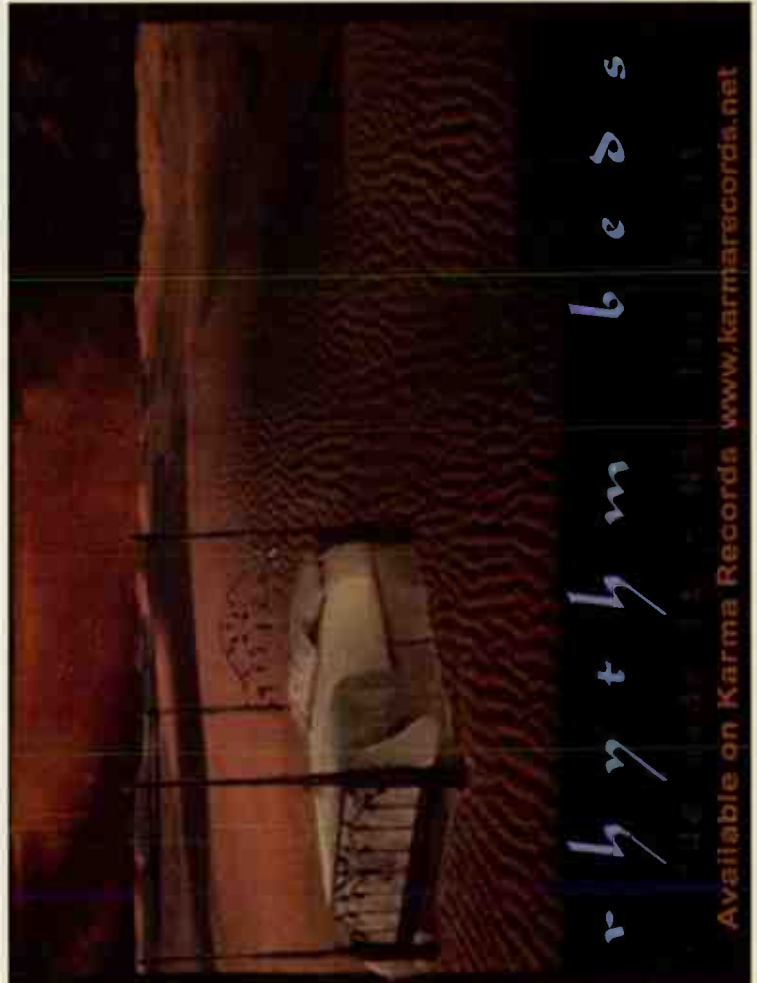
[www.sensefield.com](http://www.sensefield.com)

File Under

Squeaky-clean melodic rock

R.I.Y.L.

Far, Hum,  
Jimmy Eat World's *Clarity*

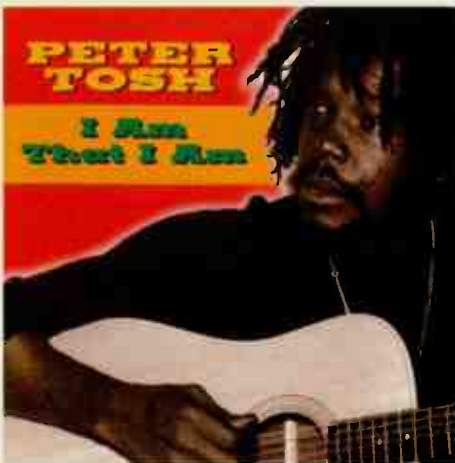


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[www.matadorrecords.com/solex](http://www.matadorrecords.com/solex)  
File Under  
Sampledelic pop whimsy  
R.I.Y.L.  
Le Tigre, Beck, Cibo Matto

## SOLEX

Low Kick And Hard Bop Matador

Since her 1998 debut, *Solex Vs. The Hitmeister*, Dutch producer/songwriter/vocalist Elisabeth Esselink (a.k.a. Solex) has become one of the world's greatest song-titlers, from the smirking "Dork At 12 O'Clock" (off 1999's *Pick Up*) to the bemused "Have You No Shame, Girl?" and the tart "Honey (Amsterdam Is Not L.A.)" (from the new *Low Kick And Hard Bop*). The songs themselves also have an appealing offhand quality, registering as the musings of a smart girl in the back of the classroom murmuring commentary on the goings-on of her schoolmates. But the new

songs on *Hard Bop* don't quite live up to their names. Much has been made of Esselink's compositional methods—she culls samples from the discard pile at the Amsterdam record shop she runs—and she picks out plenty of striking moments for the new record, from the title song's bluesy harmonica and the Thelonious Monk-ish piano part on "Good Comrades Go To Heaven" to the Henry Mancini-esque trick ending of "Ease Up, You Fundamentalist!" But these add up to the sum of their parts and not much more; it's music that beguiles while it's playing, but that leaves your head almost immediately after it's over. Esselink is beginning to sound bored with her own technique—maybe she should switch to gleaning source material from records people actually like. >>>MICHELANGELO MATOS



Link  
[www.stereolab.co.uk](http://www.stereolab.co.uk)  
File Under  
Back to the 'Lab  
R.I.Y.L.  
High Llamas, Herb Alpert And  
the Tijuana Brass, Broadcast

## STEREOLAB

Sound-Dust Elektra

Good taste may be timeless, but it can also get a little boring. More than a decade has passed since Stereolab first impassively droned its way into the hearts of *tout le indie monde*, and the group's 14th full-length, *Sound-Dust*, finds them still cool, composed and ready to hypnotize you anew with perfectly lovely, impeccably hip cosmo-pop tunes. That's all most fans need to know. The question is, should the average listener add yet another interchangeable volume to a Stereolab collection that's probably already been sized-up for resale when things get a little lean? Well, *Sound-Dust*

is a definite improvement over the lackluster *Dots And Loops* and *Cobra And Phases Group Play Voltage In The Milky Night*. The group's fascination with '60s AM pop is more apparent than ever in the melodic layers decorating tunes such as the Motown-ish "Captain EasyChord" and the Bacharach-like "Naught More Terrific Than Man," and erstwhile 'Labber Sean O'Hagan deserves a nod for the subtle but substantive horn charts that sneak up throughout. Yet Stereolab's songs remain the same, from Laetitia Sadier's lilting-but-bloodless socio-political critiques on down to the band's fundamentally unexciting motorik beats. On "The Black Arts," a midtempo groover complete with a "Muskrat Love"-like guitar-squiggle hook, Sadier suddenly breaks down and admits, "I need somebody, I feel so lonely," but it's probably just a glitch they'll have fixed by next time out. >>>LEE GARDNER

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Touched



Link

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File Under

Ex-Posey in bloom

R.I.Y.L.

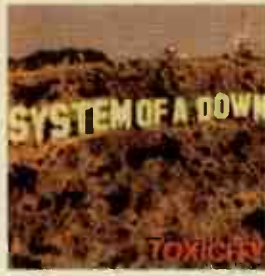
The Posies, R.E.M., David Gray

**KEN STRINGFELLOW**

Touched Manifesto

"Here's To The Future," the exquisite, closing track on *Touched*, summarizes the album's preceding themes: hope, sadness, longing, friendship, regret, possibility, love. For a guy who wrote a song called "Everybody Is A Fucking Liar," "Here's To The Future" is a bit of an anomaly, overflowing with sentiment at its simplest and most pure: "Here's to the future my friends/ And all that it holds in store/ I hope that each day from now on holds more." With Jon Auer in the Posies, Stringfellow has crafted some of today's most clever and poignant pop songs. *Touched*, his

second solo endeavor, follows suit, finding Stringfellow stylistically stretching out, amidst diverse instrumentation. "Fireflies" glides along on electric piano and a light-as-helium vocal, while the soulful ballad "The Lover's Hymn" drones with mournful organ. "Down Like Me," woven together with a lazy, melancholy lap-steel line, features some of Stringfellow's best singing, the harmonies stretching the limits of his voice. On "Find Yourself Alone," perhaps the album's most Posies-ish track, Stringfellow sings: "My life's a car wreck on the side of the road/ Say nothing but you can't turn away." Stringfellow has a gift for finding the beauty in the grotesqueness of life, and listening to him sift through his own debris is a great soundtrack to putting the broken pieces of our own lives back together. >>>DANA BUONICONTI



Link

[www.systemofadown.com](http://www.systemofadown.com)

File Under

Quirkcore

R.I.Y.L.

Jane's Addiction,

Mr. Bungle, Tool

**SYSTEM OF A DOWN**

Toxicity American Columbia

When System Of A Down was a baby band, supporting their 1998 self-titled debut opening for then-labelmates Slayer, the quirky neo-metal quartet was booed off the stage by scores of rabid, Slayer-obsessed hessians. But that was more just a rite of passage, if you will; Slayer fans always mercilessly abuse opening acts, regardless of the merits of their music. A mere three years later, SOAD has outsold Slayer by a few hundred thousand records, and on their second album, *Toxicity*, the band proves it's not just their fanbase that's grown. SOAD's high-IQ avant-metal

goes even further off the edge of predictability on this album, proudly manifesting a bipolar personality—their artsy yin versus their sideshow carny yang. System's beefed-up metal muscle is balanced out by political thought ("Prison Song" lashes out about mandatory minimum drug sentences), with guitarist Daron Malakian pounding trickily timed riffs and using his low-key voice to create two part harmonies with vocalist Serj Tankian, who shifts from nasal singing to pit-bull screaming and clownish talking. The album is filled with layers, textures and colors that your average metal band couldn't dream of concocting, proving that while System Of A Down may have hatched from the nü-metal nest, they've certainly spread their wings and flown the coop with *Toxicity*. >>>AMY SCJARRETTO

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## THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS

Mink Car *Restless*

Fans waiting for Johns Linnell and Flansburgh to return to drum-machine-and-synth-driven pop need wait no longer—well, half the time anyway. *Mink Car*, their first studio full-length in five years, strikes an almost-equal balance between the full-band sound they first adopted on 1994's *John Henry* and the two-guys-in-a-bedroom approach of their early work. In fact, *Mink Car's* like a catalog of TMBG styles over the years. "Bangs" and "My Man" recall the bouncy synth-pop of their first three records; the rollicking "I've Got A Fang" harkens back to the lo-fi sample-driven weird-

ness of *Apollo 18*; and guitar-based tracks like "Hovering Sombrero" and "Working Undercover For The Man" cover their post-*Henry* output. The mix works—this is the best record they've made in years. The lyrics have recovered from the slump TMBG fell in with 1996's *Factory Showroom*; in some cases, they're odder than they've ever been before. "Cyclops Rock" uses *Child's Play* as a metaphor for a breakup ("I'm sick, like Chucky was sick/ My defeated heart keeps beating on"), while "Hovering Sombrero" offers words of encouragement to a piece of gravity-challenged headwear ("When you take yourself for granted, feel rejected and unwanted/ No, you're never just a hat, never only just a hat"). The museum of pop oddities is once again open for business. >>>TOM MALLON

Link

[www.tmbg.com](http://www.tmbg.com)

File Under

Rebirth of a giant

R.I.Y.L.

Ween, the Flaming Lips,

Frank Black



## SCOTT TUMA

Hard Again *Truckstop*

As the guitarist in pioneering Chicago alt-country band Souled American, Scott Tuma created a sound as deliciously thick and slow as molasses, as organic and gritty as a swampland marsh. On his first solo outing, he picks up on that thread but removes the song element entirely, offering what may be the first alt-country ambient recording. The effect Tuma achieves on *Hard Again* is just as warm and knotty as that of his erstwhile band, but traditional structure is forsaken in favor of gentle atmospheres where more attention is paid to texture than harmonic or melodic development (pretty much the textbook

definition of ambient music). The vast difference between Tuma and conventional ambient technicians is that his sound sources are largely non-electronic. The equipment list for *Hard Again* would probably read pretty close to that of any Souled American album, but the instruments (mostly electric and acoustic guitars) are processed for maximum environmental impact. While bands like Stars Of The Lid and Labradford have labored long in the service of guitar-based ambient music, no one ever approached it from such a distinctively Americana context as Tuma does. If ambient records are soundtracks for imaginary films, *Hard Again* could comfortably accompany some cinematic meditation on the natural beauty of the deep South, full of mysterious woodlands and twisting rivers. >>>JIM ALLEN

Link

[www.truckstoprecords.com](http://www.truckstoprecords.com)

File Under

Ambient alt-country

R.I.Y.L.

Neil Young's *Dead Man*

soundtrack, John Fahey,

Azusa Plane

grant-lee phillips mobilize

*Mobilize* is the solo debut from Grant-Lee Phillips, the vision and voice behind the critically acclaimed group Grant Lee Buffalo.

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Check out the first single from *Mobilize*, entitled "Spring Released," included on the sampler CD for this issue of *CMJ New Music Monthly*.

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## VISION OF DISORDER

From Bliss To Devastation *TVT*

Vision Of Disorder likes to keep its legions of hardcore fans guessing: Unleashed by Roadrunner in 1997, the band's self-titled debut pumped out anthem after moshpit anthem, only to be followed up by 1998's *Imprint*, a comparably inaccessible chunk of bittersweet noise. So it's natural that *From Bliss To Devastation*, the Long Island quintet's first album for TVT, would be a whole different sonic bag. In fact, the degree of change is staggering. Obviously nursed on the Soundgarden catalogue, *Bliss* is coated in guitarists Michael Kennedy and Matt Baumbach's

sludgy chug-a-lug. But this is hardly neo-grunge: The album's stoner riffs are so rumbling and dirty, they would find a more suitable home on the stoner-rock powerhouse imprint Man's Ruin. And the larynx of vocalist Tim Williams is probably begging the singer to show some mercy—Williams still shrieks like a man possessed, but here, he also sings in a ravaged, hoarse, almost whiskey-soaked fashion, and the result is taut with heretofore-unseen tension. While V.O.D. might alienate old-school fans with this shift—*From Bliss* is the least hardcore of VOD's albums—it's the most structured artistic statement the band has ever made. It's no longer just about the mosh, but about dropping verse-chorus-verses and coming satisfyingly full circle. But if anything, the band should receive kudos for not making the same album over and over again. >>>AMY SCIARRETTA

Link

[www.vod.com](http://www.vod.com)

File Under

Back to the land of grunge

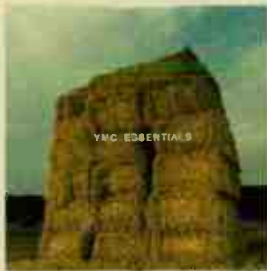
R.I.Y.L.

Soundgarden, Jane's Addiction,

Tool, Alice In Chains







## YMC

**Essentials** Yoshitoshi

Yoshitoshi, the Washington, D.C. sub-label run by progressive house dons Deep Dish, generally sticks more toward the deep end of the pool than the parent imprint named for its owners. While the Deep Dish duo and label are happy to kick up a rousing game of Marco Polo that has the water-winged club kids splashing each other with their glowsticks, Sweden's YMC—the Yunk Music Collective, whatever that means—have taken advantage of the commotion, plunging to aquamarine depths where they can watch the others' hijinks unfold in bubbly slow-mo.

*Essentials* is house music, sure, but it's fused with the lethargic vibe of Kruder & Dorfmeister to create a current that flows at half-tempo, despite its steady 4/4 kick. Like U.K. group the Rurals, YMC excel at making dreamy, ambient house graced with gossamer female vocals. It's certainly no accident that the swirling "Mist" samples early Cocteau Twins, though the way they update it with sparkling ride cymbals and gently pulsing bass elevates what could have been a cheap grab into an inspired reformulation. The epic "Niteflite Parts 1 + 2" proves their compositional prowess, folding shortwave interference into a dubwise dreamscape, but it's the remarkably simple "Bluesless" and "Arrows" that are the album's standouts—deeply soulful, and laced with just enough funk to get you through 'til dawn. >>>PHILIP SHERBURNE



## ZIAKAS

**The Theory Of Everything**

The Institute Of Hi-Fidelity

Somewhere between frivolous pop conventions and pretentious progressivism, there lies Ziakas, a forward-thinking group equipped with rock song structures and the urge to gently, inoffensively obscure the traditions that rock mandates. But don't think Elephant 6. On their debut album, *The Theory Of Everything*, the Northern California quartet manages to bring filthy electronic meddling and organic pop to an excellent compromise. Like indie contemporaries Tahiti 80 and Centro-Matic, Ziakas has the curious ability to create catchy chunks of music

without being particularly melodic or even tuneful. More times than not, singer Erin, who clearly has strong pipes, drives that idea by holding back, playing seductive or ironic instead of cute. The band—guitarist Kris, bassist Joe and drummer Paul (first names only, like Fabio)—follows her lead by plodding through mid-tempo jams, but often roll out surprises like the jazzy grunge of "Latitude" and the trippy dancer "The Indiana Song." "Sold Together," built on clunky percussion and the repetition of the word "baby" in its chorus, sounds like a girl-group spoof/homage, and "Supergirl" is a mechanical, if not sarcastic, ode to perfection. Even on the album's most clearly catchy moments—"Hypomaniac" and the almost radio-ready "Booteen"—Ziakas and producer Eli Janney (Girls Against Boys) dish out pop that charms both the ears and the mind. >>>DYLAN P. GADINO

Link  
[www.deepdish.com/yoshitoshi](http://www.deepdish.com/yoshitoshi)  
File Under  
Deep, deep house  
R.I.Y.L.  
The Rurals, Everything But  
The Girl, Miguel Migs

Link  
[www.ziakas.com](http://www.ziakas.com)  
File Under  
Prop pop  
R.I.Y.L.  
Tahiti 80, Porno For Pyros,  
Mazzy Star

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## MUTINY ON THE BAY

New! Live! Totally Unreleased! The first-ever Dead Kennedys live album authorized by the band -- contains energy-packed recordings of classics like "Holiday in Cambodia," "California Über Alles," and "Kill the Poor!"

# DEAD KENNEDYS



## PLASTIC SURGERY DISASTERS/ IN GOD WE TRUST, INC.

The DK's second album, *Plastic Surgery Disasters* is a scathing, satirical review of the lie that is the American dream. Also included is the classic EP, *In God We Trust, Inc.*, featuring the unforgettable anthem, "Nazi Punks Fuck Off." Digitally Remastered!



## FRANKENCHRIST

Resisting censorship since its release, *Frankenchrist* is the third album from the DKs, now digitally remastered. A classic of punk rock and everything it stands for.



## BEDTIME FOR DEMOCRACY

The band's final studio album, with 21 tracks of their most thrashy, intense music. Digitally remastered from the original analog tapes!



## GIVE ME CONVENIENCE OR GIVE ME DEATH

The DK's "Greatest Hits," featuring 17 tracks that document the band's classic singles and rare tracks. Digitally remastered for 2001! Includes lavish 36-page booklet, and essentials like "Police Truck," "California Über Alles," and "Holiday in Cambodia."



[manifesto.com](http://manifesto.com)

WHEREHOUSE  
MUSIC



# The Living Dead: Jam bands find jazz

STORY: MICHAEL ENDELMAN



MEDESKI MARTIN AND WOOD

association can be traced back to the immensely popular quartet Phish. Whereas the Dead's strong suit was their rough-edged (re)interpretations of Americana, Phish brought a whole new bag—filled with chops-heavy flash, Zappa-esque absurdity and a slicked-up Beatles-by-way-of-Steely Dan songwriting sense—to the smoke-filled stadium circuit. The result may not sound much like chasing the 'trane, but it takes a jazzman's approach to craft, technique and discipline.

The Vermont foursome have fortified the connection by inviting admired (but often fledgling) jazz acts to open for them, including organ-led trio Medeski Martin And Wood, who rocketed from the boutique label Gramavision to the envied Blue Note roster after receiving Phish's blessing. MMW's success, in turn, has paved the way for a new crew of conservatory-trained players who are stealing "America's classical music" back from high-brow academia and snooty hotel bars and returning it to smoky nightclubs and sweaty dancehalls.

## Essential Listening

### Medeski Martin And Wood,

*It's A Jungle In Here* (Gramavision, 1993)

**John Scofield,** *A Go Go* (Verve, 1998)

### Charlie Hunter Quartet,

*Ready...Set...Shango!* (Blue Note, 1996)

**Soulive,** *Doin' Something* (Blue Note, 2001)

**DJ Logic,** *Presents Project Logic*

(Ropeadope, 1999)

In the early '90s, acts like Groove Collective and the Greyboy Allstars tried to do something similar by reviving the funky hard bop and soul jazz of the '60s and '70s under the moniker of acid jazz. But this time around, the jazz establishment isn't just taking notice, it's lending support: *Downbeat* magazine dedicated an issue to Phish and their brethren last year; the grande dame of jazz festivals, the Newport Jazz Festival, booked Boston jam-jazz phenoms the Slip this summer; and Blue Note has expanded its roster to include improv-rock regulars like guitar whiz Charlie Hunter, the bluegrass Jazz Mandolin Project, Denson, Soulive and MMW.

So, why is the jazz world suddenly paying attention to this decidedly louche and populist jazz funk? To paraphrase Bill Clinton: It's the money, stupid. MMW's 1998 Blue Note debut, *Combustication*, sold more than 100,000 copies—small change in the pop marketplace, but blockbuster numbers in the jazz world, where scanning 20,000 units is considered a hit. While a top-notch, critically acclaimed jazz player like Dave Douglas is playing intimate bars, the baby-faced guys in Soulive are filling 3000-seat clubs.

"I think this is the future of the music," says Eli Wolf, manager of A&R at Blue Note. "My

The crowd amassing outside Boston's Paradise nightclub is a near-perfect portrait of post-Jerry hippiedom: Shaggy guys walk around flashing the international hand-symbol for "I need a ticket, dude" (one finger in the air), dreadlocked girls compare toe rings and ankle tattoos and a smattering of collegiate preppies in Phish shirts and Adidas visors mill around looking slightly dazed. Business as usual. Or maybe not.

The music performed later that night isn't the slightest bit psychedelic, or trippy, or even related to the Grateful Dead. The capacity crowd came to hear San Diego-based saxophonist Karl Denson, who performs a dance-friendly style of jazz that dates back to the early '60s. For 30 years, the Dead's acid-tinged take on earthy folk, electric blues and old-school R&B boogie was the primary blueprint for granola-rock followers, helping at least two generations of crunchy fans discover the joys of spontaneous improvisation and psychedelic drug intake. But not anymore.

Groups like the String Cheese Incident, moe. and Widespread Panic still adhere to the rootsy vision of Jerry & co., but they're getting heavy competition on the jam-band circuit from groove-centric jazz acts like avant-funk gurus Medeski Martin And Wood, new-school organ trio Soulive and acid-jazz holdover Karl Denson—musicians more familiar with drum legend Art Blakey than the Dead's *American Beauty*. At heart, the jam-band scene has embraced jazz because of a musical trait that connects the Dead with Eric Dolphy: improvisation. But that's not the whole story. Like much in this shaggy universe, the



KARL DENSON



personal view is that jazz has always been very conservative and elitist in a kind of way. I feel like [these groups] aren't. Essentially it's dance music and it has a potential to reach a new, young audience that finds straight-ahead jazz inaccessible."

Even older, established jazz cats like ex-Miles Davis guitarist John Scofield and former Herbie Hancock drummer Mike Clark have woken up and smelled the patchouli, playing for adoring jam-band audiences that are at least half their age. "I love playing for the [jam-band] crowds," enthuses Mike Clark. "They research us, they know our past, and they listen in a real close, respectful way. They actually become part of the performance, they're into it as heavily and seriously as the band is."

While the jam-band nation is injecting some cold hard cash and youthful enthusiasm into the graying jazz market, the granola-rock scene has also become a refuge for conservatory outcasts, players who are turned off by mainstream jazz's reliance on Wynton-esque ideas about jazz improvisation, composition and performance—basically, bebop dressed up in a Young Lion's Armani suit. "I like playing original music and not having to do jazz standards," points out Jared Sims, saxophonist for Boston's Miracle Orchestra. "I like not having to play in that standard jazz format, with swinging cymbals and walking basslines—I want to explore different things musically."

To an open-eared jazz group with a D.I.Y. outlook, the improv-rock scene looks pretty damn appealing, with its well-established grassroots network of clubs, websites, tape traders and indie labels. "We don't listen to the Dead or Phish, we don't like them, and we don't sound like them," says Eric Krasno, guitarist for Soulive. "But we're on the road touring a lot and we improvise a lot, so we get classified as a jam band."



ANDREW MACNAUGHTON

SOULIVE



JEFFREY WEISS

DJ LOGIC

Although the jam-jazz connection only seems to be solidifying, the movement is not without its critics. "Bands like Defunkt were doing this in New York almost 20 years ago," points out Steven Bernstein, trumpeter for the downtown avant-jazz outfit Sex Mob. "These [new bands] aren't that original and they're not getting it from the source—it's like making a copy...and overall, the level of musicianship isn't that great. They're not real experienced musicians." True, for a listener used to the highly developed melodic language and harmonic complexity that characterizes the best contemporary jazz—like Don Byron or Uri Caine—some of these jam-jazz bands can sound pretty green. But, when Karl Denson rips into a roiling Latin boogaloo at the Paradise, it's clear that the crowd doesn't care about those nit-picky details—just as long as they can get their groove on.

## Looking For Jammy Jazz?

### ▶ **Jacob Fred Jazz Odyssey**

This Oklahoma-based trio comes on strong and leaves a tart aftertaste—Fender Rhodes obsessives with a propensity for spiky, rough-edged compositions.

### ▶ **Topaz**

A big New York group with a languorous but muscular sound. Airbrushed funk and new-school dub for late-night comedowns.

### ▶ **Living Daylights**

Infused with a mournful, Eastern European keen, this Seattle bass-drums-sax trio boasts a thick jazz-noir sound that drips from the walls.

### ▶ **Schleigo**

Odd time signatures? Check. Twenty-minute songs? Check. Drum solos? Check. Prog-influenced fusion wankery? Check. A guilty pleasure that makes Rush seem understated.

### ▶ **Miracle Orchestra**

Like a combination of Weather Report and Jan Garbarek Nordic Euro-jazz, this Boston quartet plays knotty funk fusion laced with moments of austere, icy beauty.

# TOP 75



**BUILT TO SPILL**  
ANCIENT MELODIES OF THE FUTURE  
(WARNER BROS.)

#1

## 5 YEARS AGO

**REVEREND HORTON HEAT**  
It's Martini Time (Interscope)

**SOUL COUGHING**  
Irresistible Bliss (Slash-WB)

**BECK**  
Odelay (DGC)

**DEAD CAN DANCE**  
Spiritchaser (4AD-WB)

**VERSUS**  
Secret Swingers (Caroline)

## 10 YEARS AGO

**SMASHING PUMPKINS**  
Gish (Caroline)

**SIOUXSIE & THE BANSHEES**  
Superstition (Geffen)

**ROBYN HITCHCOCK & THE EGYPTIANS**  
Perspex Island (A&M)

**CHAPTERHOUSE**  
Whirlpool (Dedicated-RCA)

**NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN**  
God Fodder (Columbia)

| ARTIST                           | ALBUM                                     | LABEL                      |
|----------------------------------|---|----------------------------|
| 1 BUILT TO SPILL                 | Ancient Melodies Of The Future            | Warner Bros.               |
| 2 THE BETA BAND                  | Hot Shots II                              | Astralwerks                |
| 3 STEREO LAB                     | Sound-Dust                                | Elektra                    |
| 4 JIMMY EAT WORLD                | Bleed American                            | DreamWorks                 |
| 5 FIREWATER                      | Psychopharmacology                        | Jetset                     |
| 6 CAKE                           | Comfort Eagle                             | Columbia                   |
| 7 IGGY POP                       | Beat Em Up                                | Virgin                     |
| 8 OWLS                           | Owls                                      | Jade Tree                  |
| 9 RADIO BIRDMAN                  | The Essential Radio Birdman (1974-1978)   | Sub Pop                    |
| 10 RADIOHEAD                     | Amnesiac                                  | Capitol                    |
| 11 RIVAL SCHOOLS                 | United By Fate                            | Island                     |
| 12 POETS OF RHYTHM               | Discern Define                            | Quannum                    |
| 13 TRAVIS                        | The Invisible Band                        | Epic                       |
| 14 THE SHINS                     | Oh, Inverted World                        | Sub Pop                    |
| 15 SAVES THE DAY                 | Stay What You Are                         | Vagrant                    |
| 16 RONDELLES                     | Shined Nickels And Loose Change           | K                          |
| 17 THE FAINT                     | Danse Macabre                             | Saddle Creek               |
| 18 MURDER CITY DEVILS            | Thelema (EP)                              | Sub Pop                    |
| 19 WEEZER                        | Weezer (Green Album)                      | DGC-Interscope             |
| 20 DAVID GARZA                   | Overdub                                   | Atlantic                   |
| 21 SQUAREPUSHER                  | Go Plastic                                | Warp                       |
| 22 FOUR CORNERS                  | Say You're A Scream                       | Kindercore                 |
| 23 AMERICAN ANALOG SET           | Know By Heart                             | Tigerstyle                 |
| 24 TRICKY                        | Blowback                                  | Hollywood                  |
| 25 APPLES IN STEREO              | Let's Go! (EP)                            | spinART                    |
| 26 BASEMENT JAXX                 | Rooty                                     | XL-Astralwerks             |
| 27 VARNALINE                     | Songs In A Northern Key                   | Artemis                    |
| 28 BUTTHOLE SURFERS              | The College EP                            | Hollywood                  |
| 29 IVY                           | Long Distance                             | Nettwerk America           |
| 30 SUPERCHUNK                    | Late-Century Dream (CD5)                  | Merge                      |
| 31 CURSIVE                       | Burst And Bloom                           | Saddle Creek               |
| 32 PERRY FARRELL                 | Song Yet To Be Sung                       | Virgin                     |
| 33 PREFUSE 73                    | Vocal Studies + Uprock Narratives         | Warp                       |
| 34 FAITHLESS                     | Outrospective                             | Arista                     |
| 35 EDITH FROST                   | Wonder Wonder                             | Drag City                  |
| 36 JOHN VANDERSLICE              | Time Travel Is Lonely                     | Barsuk                     |
| 37 UTAH SAINTS                   | Two                                       | Nettwerk America           |
| 38 SPARKLEHORSE                  | Chest Full Of Dying Hawks ('95-'01)       | Capitol                    |
| 39 DELTRON 3030                  | The Instrumentals                         | 75 Ark                     |
| 40 GORILLAZ                      | Gorillaz                                  | Virgin                     |
| 41 ROLLINS BAND                  | Nice                                      | Sanctuary                  |
| 42 MANU CHAO                     | Proxima Estación: Esperanza               | Virgin                     |
| 43 PULLMAN                       | Viewfinder                                | Thrill Jockey              |
| 44 CONVOY                        | Black Licorice                            | Hybrid                     |
| 45 NICOLA CONTE                  | Bossa Per Due                             | Eighteenth Street Lounge   |
| 46 TINDERSTICKS                  | Can Our Love...                           | Beggars Banquet            |
| 47 NANCI GRIFFITH                | Clock Without Hands                       | Elektra                    |
| 48 LUCINDA WILLIAMS              | Essence                                   | Lost Highway               |
| 49 TORI AMOS                     | Strange Little Girls Sampler (EP)         | Atlantic                   |
| 50 APPLIANCE                     | Imperial Metric                           | Mute                       |
| 51 ASS PONYS                     | Lohio                                     | Checkered Past             |
| 52 OLD TIME RELIJUN              | Witchcraft Rebellion                      | K                          |
| 53 THE BUSY SIGNALS              | Pretend Hits                              | Sugar Free                 |
| 54 MATTHEW JAY                   | Draw                                      | Capitol                    |
| 55 GILLIAN WELCH                 | Time (The Revelator)                      | Acony                      |
| 56 SOUNDTRACK                    | American Pie 2                            | Universal                  |
| 57 LUPINE HOWL                   | The Carnivorous Lunar Adventures...       | Beggars Banquet            |
| 58 TIGHT BRO'S FROM WAY BACK...  | Lend You A Hand                           | Kill Rock Stars            |
| 59 PLAID                         | Double Figure                             | Warp                       |
| 60 CHOCOLATE GENIUS              | Godmusic                                  | V2                         |
| 61 CLEM SNIDE                    | The Ghost Of Fashion                      | spinART                    |
| 62 BJÖRK                         | Hidden Place (CD5)                        | Elektra                    |
| 63 BELLE AND SEBASTIAN           | Sing Jonathan David (EP)                  | Matador                    |
| 64 DE FACTO                      | Megaton Shotblast (EP)                    | Gold Standard Laboratories |
| 65 AFRO CELT SOUND SYSTEM        | Volume 3: Further In Time                 | RealWorld                  |
| 66                               | This Time                                 | Lo Oeya                    |
| 67 ALISON KRAUSS & UNION STATION | New Favorite                              | Rounder                    |
| 68 BILAL                         | 1st Born Second                           | Interscope                 |
| 69 WEBB BROTHERS                 | Maroon                                    | Atlantic                   |
| 70 ARLING & CAMERON              | We Are A&C                                | Emperor Norton             |
| 71 JUCIFER                       | The Lambs (EP)                            | Velocette                  |
| 72 REBECCA GATES                 | Ruby Series                               | Badman                     |
| 73 SHANNON WRIGHT                | Dyed In The Wool                          | Quarterstick               |
| 74 KAITO                         | You've Seen Us...You Must Have Seen Us... | Devil In The Woods         |
| 75 KILL YOUR IDOLS               | Funeral For A Peeling                     | Side One Dummy             |

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. Thick with Ian Chouder.



# METAL TOP 25

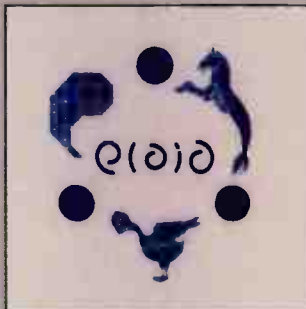
|    |  |               |
|----|--|---------------|
| 1  | <b>ICED EARTH</b><br>Horror Show                       | Century Media |
| 2  | <b>SIX FEET UNDER</b><br>True Carnage                  | Metal Blade   |
| 3  | <b>CRADLE OF FILTH</b><br>Bitter Suites To Succubi     | Spitfire      |
| 4  | <b>PIG DESTROYER</b><br>Prowler In The Yard            | Relapse       |
| 5  | <b>SLIPKNOT</b><br>Metal Radio Sampler (Iowa)          | Roadrunner    |
| 6  | <b>KRISIUN</b><br>Ageless Venomous                     | Century Media |
| 7  | <b>DRY KILL LOGIC</b><br>The Darker Side Of Nonsense   | Roadrunner    |
| 8  | <b>JUDAS PRIEST</b><br>Demolition                      | Atlantic      |
| 9  | <b>DARKEST HOUR</b><br>So Sedated So Secure            | Victory       |
| 10 | <b>VISION OF DISORDER</b><br>From Bliss To Devastation | TVT           |
| 11 | <b>DRAGONLORD</b><br>Rapture                           | Spitfire      |



|    |  |                    |
|----|--|--------------------|
| 12 | <b>SYSTEM OF A DOWN</b><br>Toxicity                    | American-Columbia  |
| 13 | <b>MAHARAHJ</b><br>Repetition                          | Now Or Never       |
| 14 | <b>ROLLINS BAND</b><br>Nice                            | Sanctuary          |
| 15 | <b>STRETCH ARM STRONG</b><br>A Revolution Transmission | Solid State        |
| 16 | <b>SANTA SANGRE</b><br>Feast For The New Gods          | Eulogy             |
| 17 | <b>AMERICAN NIGHTMARE</b><br>Background Music          | Equal Vision       |
| 18 | <b>ARMORED SAINT</b><br>Nod To The Old School          | Metal Blade        |
| 19 | <b>PUYA</b><br>Union                                   | MCA                |
| 20 | <b>GROOVENICS</b><br>Groovenics                        | Spitfire           |
| 21 | <b>MINUS</b><br>Jesus Christ Bobby                     | Victory            |
| 22 | <b>ABSU</b><br>Tara                                    | Osmose             |
| 23 | <b>DECEASED</b><br>Behind The Mourner's Veil           | Relapse            |
| 24 | <b>ADEMA</b><br>Adema                                  | Arista             |
| 25 | <b>DESTROYED BY ANGER</b><br>Offsetting The Balance    | Destroyed By Anger |

# RPM TOP 25

|   |  |                 |
|---|--|-----------------|
| 1 | <b>SQUAREPUSHER</b><br>Go Plastic                      | Warp            |
| 2 | <b>BASEMENT JAXX</b><br>Roxy                           | XL-Astralwerks  |
| 3 | <b>HYBRID</b><br>Remix And Additional Production By... | Distinctive-!K7 |



|    |  |                          |
|----|--|--------------------------|
| 4  | <b>PLAID</b><br>Double Figure                          | Warp                     |
| 5  | <b>HAUJOB</b><br>Polarity                              | Metropolis               |
| 6  | <b>KARSH KALE</b><br>Realize                           | Six Degrees              |
| 7  | <b>DETROIT GRAND PU BAH</b><br>Funk All Y'all          | Jive Electro             |
| 8  | <b>DARREN EMERSON</b><br>Global Underground: Singapore | Global Underground       |
| 9  | <b>CEVIN KEY</b><br>The Ghost of Each Room             | Metropolis               |
| 10 | <b>DJ HARRY</b><br>The String Cheese Remix Project     | Instinct                 |
| 11 | <b>Q-BURNS ABSTRACT MESSAGE</b><br>Invisible Airline   | Astralwerks              |
| 12 | <b>JIMMY VAN M</b><br>Bedrock                          | Pioneer-Bedrock          |
| 13 | <b>FAITHLESS</b><br>Outrospective                      | Arista                   |
| 14 | <b>ETIENNE DE CRECY</b><br>Tempovision                 | V2                       |
| 15 | <b>PLUMP DJS</b><br>Plump Night Out                    | Netwerk America          |
| 16 | <b>UTAH SAINTS</b><br>Two                              | Netwerk America          |
| 17 | <b>AUTECHRE</b><br>Confield                            | Warp                     |
| 18 | <b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b><br>Dublab Presents: Freeways    | Emperor Norton           |
| 19 | <b>BADMARSH &amp; SHRI</b><br>Signs                    | Netwerk America          |
| 20 | <b>SARU</b><br>Downtempo Dojo                          | Shadow                   |
| 21 | <b>PREFUSE 73</b><br>Vocal Studies + Uprock Narratives | Warp                     |
| 22 | <b>ARLING &amp; CAMERON</b><br>We Are A&C              | Emperor Norton           |
| 23 | <b>HOWIE B</b><br>Another Late Night                   | Kinetic                  |
| 24 | <b>NICOLA CONTE</b><br>Bossa Per Due                   | Eighteenth Street Lounge |
| 25 | <b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b><br>Fashion TV                   | V2                       |

# HIP-HOP TOP 25

|   |   |                        |
|---|---|------------------------|
| 1 | <b>DELTRON 3030</b><br>The Instrumentals        | 75 Ark                 |
| 2 | <b>X-ECUTIONERS</b><br>"Y'All Know The Name"    | Loud                   |
| 3 | <b>VARIOUS ARTISTS</b><br>The Funky Precedent 2 | Matador                |
| 4 | <b>JADAKISS</b><br>Kiss Tha Game Goodbye        | Ruff Ryders-Interscope |
| 5 | <b>DA BEATMINERZ</b><br>"Extreme Situations"    | Rawkus                 |



|    |   |                 |
|----|---|-----------------|
| 6  | <b>GORILLAZ</b><br>Gorillaz                                       | Virgin          |
| 7  | <b>J. RAWLS</b><br>The Essence Of J. Rawls                        | Groove Attack   |
| 8  | <b>MISSION</b><br>"Home"  | Puls-0m         |
| 9  | <b>ASHERU &amp; BLUE BLACK</b><br>"Elevator Music"                | 7 Heads         |
| 10 | <b>AEOP ROCK</b><br>"Coma / Maintenance"                          | Ozone           |
| 11 | <b>AZEEM</b><br>Craft Classic                                     | Stray           |
| 12 | <b>ACE LOVER</b><br>Weed Spots                                    | Marcion         |
| 13 | <b>7L &amp; ESOTERIC</b><br>The Soul Purpose                      | Landspeed       |
| 14 | <b>MYSTIC</b><br>Cuts For Luck And Scars For Freedom              | GoodVibe        |
| 15 | <b>STIMULATED DUMMIES</b><br>Stimulated All-Stars                 | Stimulated      |
| 16 | <b>GREYBOY</b><br>Mastered The Art                                | Ubiquity        |
| 17 | <b>MASPYKE</b><br>"Played List"                                   | 7 Heads         |
| 18 | <b>ILLIN' P</b><br>"You Be Illin'"                                | Ozone           |
| 19 | <b>JAY-Z</b><br>"Izzo (H.O.V.A.)"                                 | Def Jam         |
| 20 | <b>FOXY BROWN</b><br>Broken Silence                               | Def Jam         |
| 21 | <b>HI-TEK</b><br>Hi-Tekology                                      | Rawkus          |
| 22 | <b>CORMEGA</b><br>The Realness                                    | Landspeed       |
| 23 | <b>BASBOMBING</b><br>"Maximum Overload"                           | Insidious Urban |
| 24 | <b>BILAL</b><br>1st Born Second                                   | Interscope      |
| 25 | <b>KARDINAL OFFISHALL</b><br>Firestarter Volume I: Quest For Fire | MCA             |

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

Compiled from CMJ New Music Report's weekly Hip-Hop charts, collected from CMJ's pool of progressive radio reporters.

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 Aesop Rock (Def Jux) Reviews p. 90  
 Alsace Lorraine (Daria) Reviews p. 91 www.lorraine.com/alsace  
 Tori Amos (Atlantic) Quick Fix p. 23 www.toriamos.com  
 ...And You Will Know Us By The Trail Of Dead (Interscope) Quick Fix p. 12, On The Verge p. 42 www.trailofdead.com  
 Arling & Cameron (Emperor Norton) Reviews p. 91 www.arlingandcameron.nl  
 Avalanches (Modular-London/Sire) On The Verge p. 43 www.geocities.com/avalancheshomebase  
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 Bilal (Interscope) On The Verge p. 44, On The CD p. 86 www.bilal-the-man.com  
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SEPTEMBER 4

40 BELOW SUMMER Invitation To The Dance  
 London/Sire  
 6 SHOT The Actual Meaning Tommy Boy  
 AMERICAN ANALOG SET Know By Heart Tiger Style  
 BEATLESS Ubiquity  
 THE OEVIS My Beautiful Sinking Ship Bella Union  
 THE OIRTMITS The Dirmits Sonic Union  
 FLANGER Inner Space/ute (12-inch) Ninja Tune  
 G-MAN & THE RIDDLER Ecstasy Tommy Boy Silver  
 HOLLY GOLIGHTLY Singles Roundup Damaged Goods  
 MARGO GURYAN 25 Demos Franklin Castle  
 HALO Guantan Relapse  
 WAYNE HANCOCK A-Town Blues Bloodshot  
 LOVE AS LAUGHTER Sea To Shining Sea Sub Pop  
 MAYOR MCCA Me Is He Sonic Union  
 MAZARIN A Tall Tale Storyline spinART  
 THE MURDER CITY DEVILS Thelema (EP) Sub Pop  
 NEOTROPIC Sunflower Girl (7-inch) Nitone  
 ORBITAL The Altogether ffrr-London-Sire  
 P'TAAH Ubiquity  
 PUSH KINGS Feel No Fade Le Grand Magistry  
 RANK 1 Such Is Life (12-inch, CD5) Tommy Boy Silver  
 OJ RECTANGLE Greatest Battle Breaks (2LP) Ground  
 Control-Nu Gruv  
 REUBEN'S ACCOMPLICE I Blame The Scenery  
 Better Looking  
 ERIC SANKO Past Imperfect, Present Tense Jetset  
 SIANSPHERIC The Sound Of The Colour Of The Sun  
 Sonic Union  
 TUCSON SIMPSON Drawn & Ready GGP  
 SOUNDTRACK Songs For Cassavetes Better Looking  
 MIKE STERN Voices Atlantic  
 SYSTEM OF A DOWN Toxicity American-Columbia  
 T-ROCK Skinthead Stereo-Type/Nu Gruv  
 EMILIANA TORRINI Rarities & Remixes (EP) Virgin  
 JAMES "BLOOD" ULMER Memphis Blood: The Sun  
 Sessions Label M  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS A Low Watt Document: Frequency  
 Modification Shut Eye  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS The Best Of Sessions At West  
 54th Automatic-Columbia Legacy

SEPTEMBER 11

ARSONISTS Date Of Birth Matador  
 OAVE AUOE Nocturnal Wonderland Moonshine  
 BABY S Ruthless-Epic  
 BAYLEAF Bayleaf Epic  
 BATH GATE Dear Rich America, My Story To You Virgin  
 BEULAH The Coast Is Never Clear Velocette  
 CINOY BULLENS Artemis  
 THE CHEMICAL BROTHERS It Began In Afrika (CD5)  
 Freestyle Dust-Astralwerks  
 CITIZEN COPE DreamWorks  
 COKO RCA  
 KIMBALL COLLINS DJ Mix Jive Electro  
 JOYCE COOLING Third Wish GRP  
 CRASH RICKSHAW Crash Rickshaw Tooth And Nail  
 BEN FOLDS Rockin' The Suburbs Epic  
 FRONT LINE ASSEMBLY Everything Must Perish  
 (CD5) Metropolis  
 GROOVE ARMAOA Goodbye Country, Hello Nightclub  
 Jive Electro  
 MERLE HAGGARD & THE STRANGERS Train Whistle  
 Blues - Classic Road Songs, Volume 5 Rounder  
 HANOSOME DEVIL Love And Kisses From The  
 Underground RCA  
 I-10 CHRONICLES I-10 Chronicles 2/One More For  
 The Road Back Porch  
 JAOE Maverick  
 JAMIROQUAI A Funk Odyssey Epic  
 —Gee Huck, that title's powerful week!  
 JUOE King Of Yesterday Maverick  
 LBOA DreamWorks  
 LENNON 5:30 Saturday Morning Arista  
 LONG BEACH DUB ALLSTARS Wonders Of The World  
 DreamWorks  
 BRAD MEHLOAU TRIO Progression Art Of The Trio,  
 Vol. 5 Warner Bros.  
 MILLENCOLIN Melancholy Collection Burning Heart  
 MIXMASTER MIKE Spin Psyche Moonshine  
 OZOMATLI Embrace The Chaos Interscope  
 REV.99 Turn A Deaf Ear Pax  
 SHYNE Bad Boy-Arista  
 SLAYER God Hates Us All American  
 SOLEX Low Kick And Hard Top Matador  
 SON, AMBULANCE Euphemistic Saddle Creek  
 SONS OF THE PIONEERS Bloodshot  
 SWITCHED Virgin  
 THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS Mink Car Restless  
 TIMBALAND Tim's Bio Life From Da Bassment Virgin  
 TIMBALAND & MAGDO Welcome To Our World Virgin  
 ARTIE TRAUAM The Last Romantic Narada  
 JIMMY VAUGHAN Artemis

SEPTEMBER 18

ALEXANDER VON SCHLIPPENBACH'S GLOBE UNITY  
 ORCHESTRA Globe Unit Atavistic-UMS  
 FRED ANDERSON Dark Day + Live In Vienna  
 Atavistic-UMS  
 BIS Return To Central spinART  
 CALL AND RESPONSE Call And Response (reissue)  
 Kindercore  
 DJ CLUE Ghetto Fabulous Desert Storm-Elektra  
 BOBBY CONN Golden Age Thrill Jockey  
 FOETUS Blow Thirsty Ear  
 OJ FOOD & OK Sowd Steel Mix CD Ninja Tune  
 FREESTYLE FELLOWSHIP Temptations/Ghetto Youth  
 (12-inch) Ground Control-Nu Gruv  
 GORKY'S ZYGOTIC MYNCL How I Long To Feel That  
 Summer In My Heart Mantra-Beggars  
 MACY GRAY The ID Epic

RICHIE HAWTIN DE9: Closer To The Edit Mute-  
 M nus  
 OJ ICEY Warner.esp-London-Sire  
 THE K.G.B. The K.G.B. DreamWorks  
 KINGSBURY MANX Let You Down Overcoat  
 AL KOOPER Rare & Well Done. The Greatest And  
 Rarest Of Al Kooper (2CD) Columbia Legacy  
 LAMBCHOP Tools In The Dryer Merge  
 LANTERNA Elm Street Badman  
 LOFTY PILLARS Amsterdam Atavistic-Truckstop  
 MILEMARKER Anaesthetic Jade Tree  
 MISTREATERS Personal Space Invader (7 inch) Estrus  
 MOOSET MOUSE (EP) Epic  
 NERVES World Of Gold Thrill Jockey  
 TARA JANE O'NEILL In The Sun Lines Quarterstick  
 BILLY NERSHI AND LISA OXNARD It's About Time  
 SciFidelity  
 "MONEY" MARK NISHITA Change Is Coming  
 Emperor Norton  
 OWEN Owen Polyvinyl  
 —Debut solo album from Mike Kinsella of Joan Of  
 Arc/American Football.  
 MIKE PHILLIPS Epic-Hidden Beach  
 PHOBBIA Return To Desolation (reissue) Relapse  
 RATOS OE PORAO Guerra Civil Canibal Alternatve  
 Tentacles  
 ROBERT RICH Bestiary Relapse  
 ROOTS MANUVA Join The Dots (12-inch) Big Dada  
 ROOTS MANUVA Run Come Save Me Big Dada  
 S.I. FUTURES The Mission Statement Mute  
 SANFORD ARMS Too Lour For The Snowman  
 Pattern 25  
 IRMIN SCHMIDT & KUMO Masters Of Confusion Mute  
 SIMIAN Chemistry Is What We Are Source-Astralwerks  
 SLEPCY And Again Ambush  
 (SMOG) Rain On Lens Drag City  
 SOILENT GREEN A Deleted Symphony For The Beaten  
 Down Relapse  
 SUPERCHUNK Here's To Shutting Up Merge  
 OJ SWAMP Now Is Never Lakeshore  
 SWAY & KING TECH Wake Up Show Freestyles V.3  
 880-Nu Gruv  
 SWAY & KING TECH Wake Up Show Freestyles V.4  
 880-Nu Gruv  
 THE SWITCH TROUT Sonic Masters (7-inch) Estrus  
 NOBUKAZU TAKEMURA Sign Thrill Jockey  
 TELEFON TEL AVIV Farenheit Fair Enough Hefty  
 THUNOERPUS DJ's & Divas Tommy Boy Silver  
 TO ROCOCO ROT Pantone (EP) Mute  
 TWEAKER The Attraction To All Things Uncertain Six  
 Degrees  
 PAUL VAN DYK The Columbia EP Mute  
 VANDERMARK 5 Acoustic Machine Atavistic  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS All Tomorrow's Parties 1.0  
 (Curator: Tortoise) All Tomorrow's Parties  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Bomb 10 Year Anniversary  
 Bomb Hip-Hop  
 VICTIMS FAMILY Apocalyptic Alternative Tentacles  
 VIONA OBMAMA Tremor Relapse  
 VUE Find Your Home Sub Pop  
 DAVID S. WARE QUARTET Corridors & Parallels  
 AUM Fidelity

SEPTEMBER 25

ABANOONED POOLS Humanistic Extasy  
 RYAN ADAMS Gold Lost Highway  
 B.R.M.C. (EP) Virgin  
 BAD RONALD Bad Ronald Warner Bros.  
 BANABILA Voiz Noiz II Tone Casualties  
 THE CLARKS The Clarks Live Razor & Tie  
 JOHN COLTRANE The Spiritual John Coltrane (re-  
 issue) Impulse!  
 DEAD PREZ Loud  
 THE DISTILLERS Hellcat  
 OOGWOOD Matt Aragon Tooth And Nail  
 OORASEL Uneash The Beast Virgin  
 THE EYELINERS Sealed With A Kiss Lookout!  
 THE FAINT Mote/Dust (12-inch) GSL  
 FFTT DreamWorks  
 FLOETRY DreamWorks  
 THE GRATEFUL DEAD Nightfall Of Diamonds Arista  
 DONNY HATHAWAY Live Label M  
 HEADSTRONG RCA  
 CHARLIE HUNTER Songs From The Analog  
 Playground Blue Note  
 I.G.T. The Alpha And The Omega Loud  
 OAVE KOZ A Smooth Jazz Christmas Capitol  
 KENNY LATTIMORE Weekend Arista  
 THE LOCUST Flight Of The Wounded Locust (EP) GSL  
 LOST DOGS Real Men Cry BEC  
 — immediately upon waking, every single morning.  
 THE MICROPHONES The Glow, Pt 2 K  
 THE NEW EALD Jive Electro  
 ONESIDEZERO Is This Room Getting Smaller  
 Maverick  
 THE PATTERN Immediately (EP) Lookout!  
 T.J. REHMI Invisible Rain Shakti  
 SENSE FIELD Tonight And Forever Nettwerk  
 SMASH TASK RCA  
 SOULSTANCE Truth, Simplicity, & Love Shakti  
 SPIRITUALIZED Let It Come Down Arista  
 THE STROKES Is This It RCA  
 JIMMY STURR Gone Polka Rounder  
 — Frampton has a special pair of pants for when he's  
 gone polka. They go all the way to 11.  
 SUGARBOMB Bully RCA  
 THE SUICIDE MACHINES Steal This Record Hollywood  
 SWIZZ BEATZ DreamWorks  
 TECHNO ANIMAL The Brotherhood Of The Bomb  
 Matador  
 TENACIOUS D Tenacious D Epic  
 TRANSMATIC Transmatic Virgin  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS @Home - Sunrise Moonshine  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS @Home - Sunset Moonshine  
 VARIOUS ARTISTS Give 'Em The Boot III Helicat



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| <input type="checkbox"/> May '95            | Juliana Hatfield                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Mar '98   | Ben Folds Five                            |
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# KING CRIMSON

STORY: STEVE CIABATTONI ILLUSTRATION: NICK MEOLA



It's a mixed blessing to meet a man you greatly admire. What if he turns out to be a jackass, or, even worse, what if he finds out that you're a jackass? I've had pretty good luck despite the astonishingly high probability of the latter. In fact, a two-minute chance conversation with Robert Fripp, the guitar guru from King Crimson, managed to change the way I listen to and play music. And it was the second time he'd done so.

In the early '80s, or as archaeologists refer to it, the Late Vinyl Age, my older brother gave me a copy of King Crimson's *Discipline*. Growing up in a strict classic-rock household, I was familiar with their opium-soaked '70s epics, but this incarnation of Crimson spoke to my art-rock soul like no album had ever done before. While my fellow guitar-playing friends were busy etching the Van Halen flying "VH" logo on their copies of *Concepts In Algebra*, I now found myself scribbling the knotted, Celtic-inspired logo that graced the *Discipline* cover in the margins of my notebooks.

In this new Crimson, Fripp and Yes drummer Bill Bruford were now joined by bassist Tony Levin (from Peter Dinklage's band) and hot-shot guitarist Adrian Belew, fresh from pulling pranks with the likes of Frank Zappa and the Talking Heads. Frankly, the album frightened me at first. Angular, caustic, repetitive guitar textures were set against off-kilter rhythms, and on top of it all, Belew made his guitar sound like a roaring elephant. And there, printed on the album sleeve, was the phrase, "Discipline is never an end in itself, only a means to an end." Brainy, weird and not at all mainstream, in retrospect, it's no wonder I gravitated to it. *Discipline* taught me that there was more than one way to play the guitar. I liked that Fripp generally played patterns, not chords, and that he and Brian Eno had worked out this thing called Frippertronics, a system that allowed him to make loops and textures and then to play over top of them, sort of a one-man Steve Reich orchestra. Yes, *Discipline* was the sound of me burning my Simon & Garfunkel big-note guitar book. Life change number one.

I continued to enjoy Crimson's output and became very interested in Guitar Craft, the school Fripp established in the mid-'80s to teach the instrument the way he felt it should be played. Stories about the school and its teachings had come my way via magazine articles and people who had taken the course. Most spoke about it as if

they had ventured to the Far East where they met with a man who told them to forget

everything they know about music. It's no wonder, since Fripp's Guitar Craft aphorisms tend to read like Zen koans: "Abandon concern for hitting the right note. Then, hit the right note," says Fripp, sounding like some musical version of Mr. Miyagi in *The Karate Kid*. In addition to Fripp's mind-clearing nuggets, one technique-related bit of advice really stuck with me. Fripp grouched that bad guitarists always allow their little finger to point skyward, a wasted motion when one would only to have to bring it back down to the fretboard to hit the next note. A disciplined guitarist keeps his fingers close to the strings for maximum efficiency. Damned if he wasn't right. As I played I noticed my amateur left little finger floating in space, shamefully unfocused. So I (assuming the Ralph Macchio role) worked and worked at it, playing scales while paying close attention to where my fingers were at all times. Wax on. Wax off.

Just last year, I found myself in a position to say hello to Robert Fripp at a music conference. But how to do it without sounding like Chris Farley? ("Uh, remember... remember when you did that song, 'Elephant Talk,' on that album?") I decided to start the conversation by telling him what a fan I am of the Guitar Craft. I just knew he'd love my little finger story! So I let him know that he really improved my guitar playing after working hard to discipline my flying finger. "Ah, yes," he said serenely. "But did you practice it in the correct way?" Buddhist monks call it lightning Zen, that flash of enlightenment that comes when you realize you've been thinking about things the wrong way or concentrating on the tree and not the forest (or no, wait, is it the forest?). "Practice it in the correct way?" I repeated to myself. Damn! I stood there with nothing to say, while Fripp grinned and moved on to greet other six-string sycophants. I realized then that there were more than two ways to play guitar.

Steve Ciabattone is sure that if he ever meets Brian Eno, his ice-breaking stories about pygmy music will start them on a lifelong friendship.



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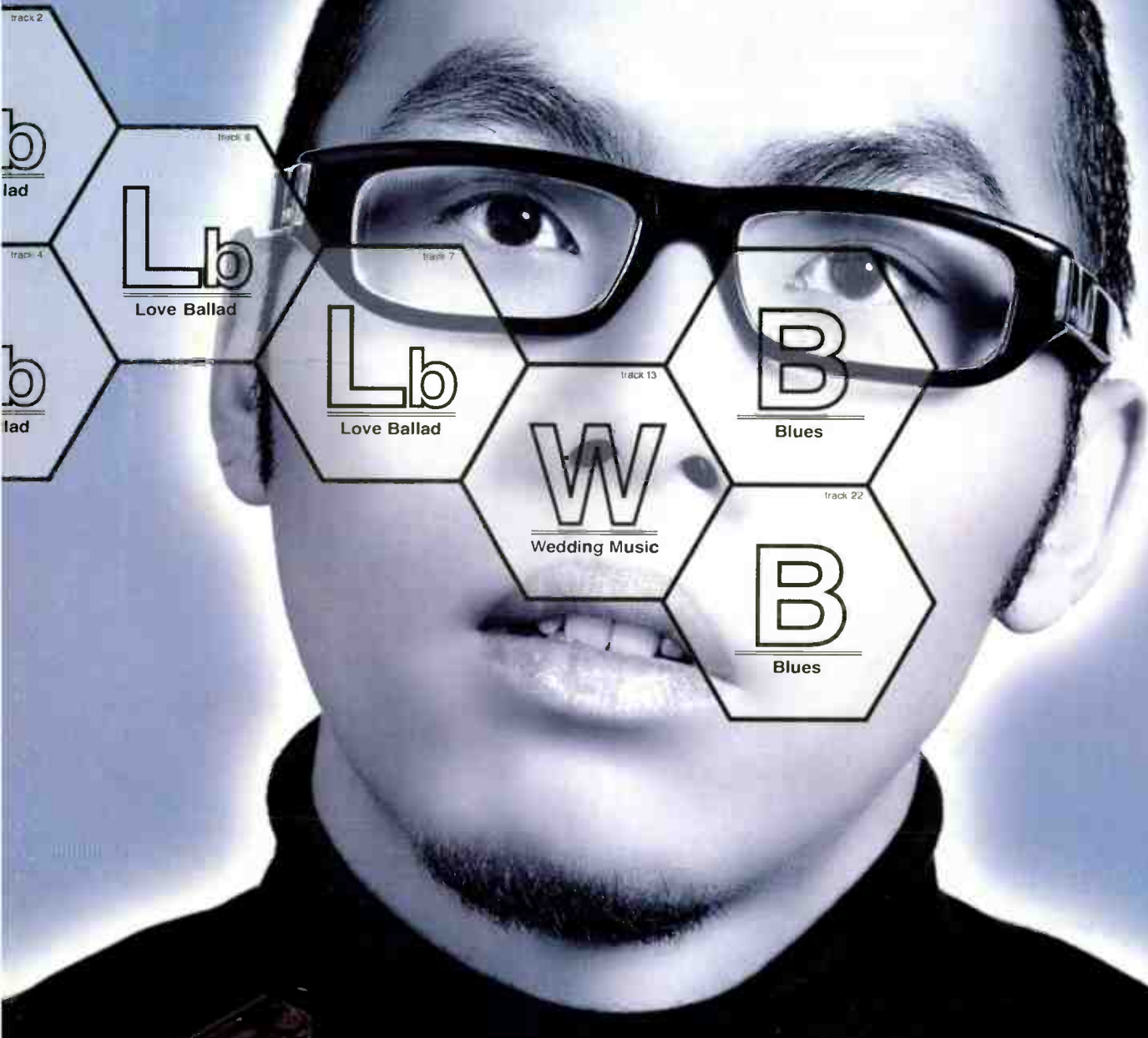
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