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Ad Sales

Julie Lakey

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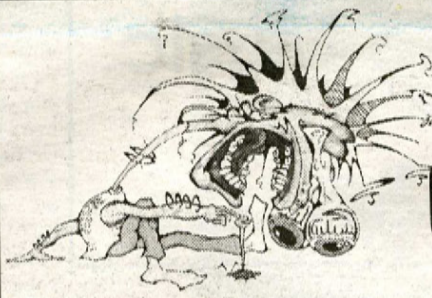
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dear dickheads

dickhead art: Dan Lloyd

Dear Dickheads,

You are all a bunch of overly opinionated, stubborn punks; but you tend to know what you're talking about, so kudos. I dig your local CD reviews, but I'd like to see you do more of them. Also, I think it would be a cool idea to have a 'Local CD of the Month' or something...give all the kids something to shoot for, ya know? Oh, and can you, for the love of God, go back to stapling your damn magazine? I keep dropping sections of it while I'm in the tub and I get ink all over me. Okay, that's all. So just continue running Blue Boutique ads in your little

zine and I'll continue to pick one up each month.

-camrod

Ed. Note:

Hey camshaft, are you too broke to purchase porn? I bet you have a personal collection of every blue boutique ad stashed underneath your bed, for those "bath times", don't you? Here's something that will turn your crank. Next years Valentine issue will contain mutiple girls in leather & chains.

As for the rest of you boys and girls- I know all of you out there have strong opinions. Where are they? This is YOUR column, YOUR soap box and YOUR CHANCE to rant about what's on you mind... SO GET OFF YOUR ASS!

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Call us
801 487 9221

Fax
801 487 1359

email
dicks@slugmag.com

website
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(essay contest)

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How I Lost My Troma Cherry!

(example essay) by Therese G. Lynch

Having been raised in a strict Catholic home and then shipped off to an all girl's school when I was 14, I could have been the poster child for obedience and chastity. My indoctrination by the Sisters of Perpetual Discipline was so complete that even when I got to college, I was way too uptight to sow any wild oats. My typical Saturday night was spent with my nose buried in a book in some remote corner of the library. The most erotic experiences

I had involved wiping the condensation moisture from the can of Diet Coke that was constantly at my side. Then, I happened to meet Taylor. Tall, with long dirty blonde hair, baggy jeans, a faded black Ted Nugent concert t-shirt, and a tongue that rivaled Gene Simmons, he wasn't like any guy I'd ever met before. Soon, I was walking on the wild side. After a few amazing tongue dates, Taylor said that he wanted to stop by a friend's house to watch videos. I agreed, figuring that my face could use a night off from whisker rash. Little did I

suspect that my life would be changed forever that night, for these weren't just any ordinary videos; they were TROMA videos. I was nervous at first. I'd never watched that kind of video before. What would the nuns think? But about half way through The Toxic Avenger, I started to relax. Leaning softly against Taylor, I allowed myself to enjoy the new sights and sounds seeping into my brain. Soon, a warm tingling sensation coursed through my body and I felt flush. By the time Taylor's friend popped in Tromeo and Juliet, I was nearly

dizzy with excitement, clutching at Taylor, my heart racing, my breath shallow and quick. And then came Terror Firmier. I began to tremble, waves of pleasure swept over me- laughing, crying, screaming, I was, at last, completely TROMATIZED. Now, I seek out even more TROMA thrills, sometimes with Taylor, and sometimes during those special quiet moments alone. Class of Nuke'em High, Redneck Zombies, Sgt. Kabukiman NYPD, Surf Nazis Must Die: though they all leave me feeling satisfied, I will never forget my first time...

MERGE Into Music: RECORDS

Indie Label Spotlight by Brian Staker

If your ears are suffering from pop fatigue, bored with the top ten records you've been listening to, in desperate need of something new, there are a number of things you can do about it. Laura Ballance and Mac McCaughan of the band Superchunk started their own record label. And ever since the first release, there's been something magical about the label. Maybe it has to do with the people who make the music operating the record label, or something in the air down in Chapel Hill, NC, from whence they hail. We investigated several of their artists to try to find out.

Spoon's upcoming release, *Girls Can Tell*, will be released in February, but there are samples up on the Merge Records site, www.mrg2000.com. "I love it, I think it's great," comments singer/guitarist Britt Daniels. "A Series of Sneaks had no room noise, was dry and sparse sounding, and it worked really well. But the new stuff has more of a 60's radio feel, lots of room mikes set up. It sounds more like the band playing than a recording of the band playing." SoS sneaks up on the listener with jagged, almost Pixies-minimalist guitar licks, skintight drumming and lyrics that are as artfully artless as the modernist album artwork in their biting sarcasm. Definitely not ready for mainstream radio play, but able to jangle nerves new-wave style at thirty paces, it's a postmodern masterpiece.

After bitter experience when the group was dropped seemingly moments after *A Series of Sneaks* was released by Elektra as their major label debut, Daniels has enjoyed working with Merge. "It sounds like a cliché, but once you've seen both sides, it really does make a difference

tions about our work creatively, yet they are always there to ask their opinion about stuff like album covers or what song to put up on the web."

The title of the new full-length came from a song by the Crystals, he says, and the songwriting for him has come slowly but surely, a luxury he might not have had at a major label. "The music on it has a lot to do with what I've been listening to lately; the Kinks, a lot of classic rock." Could Spoon be the Kinks of present indie rock? Just as *Series of Sneaks* distilled influences of English 80's bands he listened to, like Wire and PIL, into his own distinctive Austin-by-way-of-London musical dialect, on a song like "Fitted Shirt" you can here strands of, what, Led Zeppelin? Yikes!

He waxes romantic about radio. "It used to be easier for really good stuff to be popular back then; it must have been really inspiring. People who make the decisions about what gets on the radio aren't music lovers now, and they've got no balls. It's a cumulative effect; when you hear Marvin Gaye or David Bowie it inspires you to make good records." He remembers the last time he came to Salt Lake, about two years ago; it was the only time he ever got into a brawl with an audience member. The group's recent EP, *Love Ways*, made a transition between the sharkskin-sharp sound of SoS into *Girls Can Tell*, with songs like "Chips and Dip" taking the rhythmic groove of Spoon into looser, more open territory than ever before.

Versus' latest album, *Hurrah*, is perhaps the most conventional pop new record on the label, but even it defies easy categorization. The New York group's name, taken from the title of a

work-
ing
with a
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run by
music
lovers.
They
never
make
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Mission of Burma album, shows that their songs don't follow the easy hook or the expected chord sequence, but continually surprise and enchant. The 6ths' album, *Hyacinths and Thistles*, Stephin Merritt's latest solo project, is a set with great guest vocalists, ranging from Bob Mould to Melanie to Gary Numan to Marc Almond. The disc is just one more demonstration of the incredible range of Merritt's compositional skill, to craft songs that work well with almost any voice. What's next, a Broadway musical? Pram's *The Museum of Imaginary Animals* is a concept album by the Birmingham, UK band that's a musical menagerie that mixes psychedelia, intriguing instrumentation and an occasional trip-hop rhythm to create an utterly unique sound. Other notable releases on the label in past years have included the highly lauded Neutral Milk Hotel's *In the Aeroplane Over the Sea* and numerous Superchunk discs, including their latest, *Come Pick Me Up*.

We managed to grab the Rock*a*Teens for a few moments right after their short but dramatic set at Kilby Court on November 28. Singer Chris Lopez, with a preppy-looking sweater and emotive stage presence, resembled a young Richard Dreyfus, but with a bit of a Georgia drawl. I was given access into the tour bus--score!--and after you are done imagining the requisite drug and groupie action that went on therein, read on.

"We became fast friends with Superchunk after we played a show with them about two years ago," explains Lopez. "We got on as friends first, and did a single, they liked our stuff, and just recently recorded our third album, *Sweet Bird of Youth*, for Merge." The group had previously released work on Kill Rock Stars and Daemon. Trying to describe their music is hard, and falling back on comparisons is no help at all. "Certain things always remind people of something, but we don't sound like anybody," he insists. Drummer Ballard Lesemann chimes in, "the sophisticated listener comes up with comparisons: Elvis, the Clash, Henry Mancini, the Fall..." Yeah, they're kinda like the Fall covering Mancini. Lots of waltz time signatures, and almost carnival-sounding vintage key-

boards. Except the vocals reminded me more of early Echo and the Bunnymen. Titles like "Ma, Look What the City Did to Me" and "Please Don't Go Downtown Tonight" sound more like confessions or impassioned pleas than mere songs. You just don't hear vocals with that much urgency anymore.

"This record is about growing up, getting older, and how things change," Lopez continues. "'Please Don't Go Downtown' is about a relationship that had a wedge driven into it, and 'Make It New' is about wishing to go back to the way things were." Lesemann is right; there is something very vintage about the building blocks of their sound. "We're not part of any scene," Lopez adds. "We're not emo, but we're emotional. We're our own scene," he jokes. The winding path of their tour will eventually take them back to hometown Cabbagetown, GA. The label is like a second home to them as well. "We love working with Merge. When we call up, we chat about our lives before we talk about record crap. When we see them, it's like a family reunion, with drinking."

Laura Ballance and Mac McCaughan of the band Superchunk started the label around the time they formed their group, in about 1989. Ballance says they just started it to put out their own music and other local Chapel Hill, NC bands. "There was nothing like it at the time," she says, "no public way for people to get music from here." The town has since become an indie music hotbed akin to Athens, GA or Akron, OH. "A group like (early releases) Erectus Monotone or Angels of Epistemology was ahead of its time, with unusual instruments like mandolins and violins in a rock context." Members of AofE went on to current Merge band Shark Quest.



Superchunk

"The label doesn't really have a specific sound or genre," she says, "the music we put out is just a reflection of mine and Mac's individual tastes." When pressed to categorize what kind of music she likes, she simply says, "I like music that I think is good." Besides stuff on the label, she listens to Yo La Tengo, Built to Spill, the Tindersticks, and Bob Wills, to name a few. She'll even listen to Ethiopian pop songs. "I guess you could say it's heavy on the pop side," she confesses.

With characteristic modesty, she answers the question "Why Do You Think There's a Need for the Label" with "I don't know if there's really a need for Merge Records; if we weren't doing it, somebody else would. It's based on what we like, not what we think we can sell, and we're not the only ones doing that." Maybe so, but how many labels would have the guts to release the Magnetic Fields' 69 *Love Songs*, a three record set

What's Up
With
GEORGE?
Can't Keep
Up with
the Joneses?
Then lower your
aim, and try
keeping up with
George.

THIS MONTH I ...

- saw startling evidence
 - survived the landing
 - got some shoes
 - made my sister mad
 - made the fruit pledge
 - shook hands with tomorrow
 - stepped in toilet water
 - ate a hot dog
 - wore a tie
 - felt like a man.
- Love, George*



SPOON

by an unabashedly gay songwriter? The set made a lot of critics' "Best of" lists in '99, and was notable enough to rate an interview with Stephin Merritt on NPR. "It's not surprising in the sense that he writes amazing songs," says Ballance. "It's a beautiful record, and might not have received as much attention if it was only one disc. It's such a monumental piece of work that people had to give it recognition. But it's surprising that music that good is recognized. It gives you a sense of hope."

"We prefer dealing with people who share our ideals, who are doing it because they love making music," she continues. "You're not going to get rich on Merge. Bands also have to be willing to tour." Merritt was set to play a show the first week of December in Somerville, MA in which he would perform all 69 *Love Songs*. "We're coming up on our 200th release, and I don't know what we're going to do to celebrate," she says. Like Superchunk's former label, Matador, Merge released a 10th anniversary compilation last year.

Sometimes it gets hard to run a label and a band at the same time. "It's not getting too big, though," she explains. She still has enthusiasm for new stuff coming out on the label, like Versus, and Annie Hayden ex-Spent, another Merge band. "There are moments when it's just business, like the accounting, but when you get to release Magnetic Fields, or a new CD by Spoon, that's pretty exciting."

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On Ferret Records
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Her Black List Disaster
The Kill ex-Clear, Sand Kicker
Hammergun ex-Triphammer,
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Cave In -Legendary
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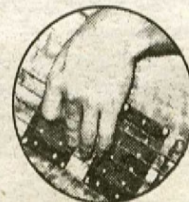
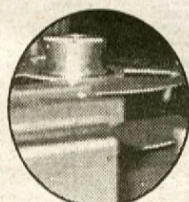
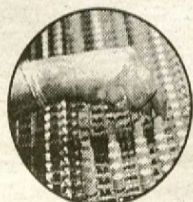
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NO EASY WAY OUT

AFTER A YEAR OF TURMOIL LONGTIME RECORDING ARTIST, BERNARD BUTLER, RETURNS TO THE STUDIO AND PROVES THAT WHEN THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY
BY DAVID WILSON

"Single influences don't do anything-it's everyone else trailing behind that makes the difference," says Bernard Butler when asked who made the biggest impact in the 20th Century. It's an interesting thought coming from someone who, although seldom credited, played an enormous part in shaping popular music in the past decade. He's worked with so many artists it's difficult to keep count, but his polite modesty and sincerity shows no sign of an ego.

At the young age of 4, Bernard Butler already found himself engaged in musical training, and by age 7 he was playing pieces by ear and modifying their arrangements. Perhaps his free-spiritedness stems from growing up in the working-class, or maybe it is just his instinct to always do a better job than the other guy.

"I remember playing the recorder at school when I was 4 like most kids do, but then started violin when I was 7," recalls Butler about his musical training. "I gave that up when I was 14 just before I turned to the guitar. I didn't like the precise discipline of being taught an instrument at school and I aggravated my tutor by learning pieces by ear and then playing them the way I liked to hear them, rather than how they were written."

After hearing **The Smiths**, things were never the same. Under heavy influence from **Johnny Marr**, Butler soon turned to guitar and music became his lifelong obsession.

"I can't remember if there was a moment of enlightenment as most people claim, but **The Smiths** were a huge force in me wanting to write music, not just for guitar but the feel and approach of what they did and how it drew me in at that age. I suppose I realised I had become attached to something that no one else could do who I knew and it was a kind of empowerment. I also felt very comfortable dreaming away on my own as a teenager-I was never worried by loneliness. I enjoyed my own company and the music going round my head, which to most of my friends was pretty sad, but for some reason, I became very single-minded and content about music and I don't know why that is."

Butler, easily the greatest guitar player to rise out of the UK in two decades, made his first break with **Suede**-a band that, at the time, was considered the greatest band in the UK. During their North American tour, Butler's father died. Trouble was obviously developing behind the scenes-other band members were living in the excess of the music biz and this conflicted with Butler's quieter and sincere persona. The rest of the tour dates were cancelled. Before long, Butler reportedly declared his vision was darkened and mysteriously left the band. **Suede** went down the drain after Butler's departure and they failed to record a noteworthy album since.

Sheer talent and the will to go on, kept Butler working. Few guitar players are able to generate the raw emotion Butler generates while playing-he gives the guitar a real voice. Notorious for gut-wrenching solos that leave his guitars smeared in blood, Butler is always quick to downplay the hype.

"I have always been keen to steer people from thinking I am technically endowed with musical instruments without appearing falsely modest-most of the time it's like teaching your grandma how a TV remote works," explains Butler, "I would rather open up music to people blinded by the science. We are all essentially tied to a traditional discipline as children and I think it's nice to open it up."

SACRIFICING BLOOD FOR ART--BUTLER AT HIS HAND-THRASHING BEST!

"I don't really think about whether I can play an instrument or not. If I can get a sound out of something by hitting it then I work with my technical limitations and just try and create. I work from a keyboard and a sequencer loaded with samples most

of the time and that's all I need to write."

In the years that followed his **Suede** departure, Butler appeared on a variety of works with artists including **Aimee Mann**, **Tim Booth** (of **James**), **Angelo Badalamenti**, and **Edwyn Collins**. He even worked with **Oasis** on their *Some Might Say EP* and spent a week working with **The Verve**. He performed with **Manic Street Preachers** and **The**

Cranberries. The recordings and performances were so extremely varied it grew difficult to anticipate what direction Butler was headed. He kept making these anti-career-like moves that, trying to follow his path, could leave one's head spinning.

In 1998, Butler unleashed the fire that was *People Move On*, his debut record as a solo artist. *People Move On* achieved gold status in the UK, and Butler followed the release with a small-scale tour of the UK, US, and Japan. Later, he received a **Brit Award** nomination (UK equivalent of a **Grammy**) for **Best New Male Artist**. Everything was going better than Butler imagined.

"I got some people to play some of the instruments. I got a bass player and keyboardist, as we had been touring and playing lots of the songs live before I did the record," says Butler about the recording of his second album, "That meant I could spend up to 2-3 days capturing a performance and getting more of the parts down, rather than 2-3 days me swapping instruments until I'd done it all."

"I have brilliant personal memories of recording both albums," he continues, "but...I had fun mixing *Friends & Lovers* in [New York]."

Friends & Lovers, Butler's second offering, was released in the UK in October of 1999 (and in February 2000 in the US)-much earlier than anticipated by fans and further demonstrated Butler's immense versatility as a songwriter. While *People Move On* was saturated in elaborate string arrangements and Butler's trademark studio wizardry, *Friends & Lovers* was a much simpler, but equally beautiful collection of songs-relying on powerful guitar riffs and striking keyboard arrangements.

Sadly, financial troubles overcame his parent label, Creation Records-which landed the label bankrupt and forced him to cancel his second tour. As a result, there was almost no promotion for *Friends & Lovers* and sales plummeted. He lost his record deal and is still without contract.

"I have no description for that feeling," confesses Butler about the Creation scenario.

Many artists would simply give up after going through everything Butler went through, but Butler is different. "I can't keep my mind on anything else," he confesses, "I don't pursue any career and music isn't my lifestyle choice as I don't interact with the music business, so I don't know why I bother really. I suppose it turns me on, and every now and then I have a good idea, which I feel makes a difference through the chain, even if no one credits me for it. I don't feel embarrassed that I don't see much worth in the shallow side

of the music industry-I think it's quite cool to not find any of these people interesting. I don't pretend that I don't have a hard time for my stubbornness, but I'd hate myself if I was as complacent or goody-goody as some of the people I meet. I'm frustrated, but not scared by the fact that people are put off you if you try and do anything spontaneously, or see how far you can physically take something."

Butler is busier than ever. Since the collapse of Creation, Butler recorded an album with legendary folk artist, **Bert Jansch** (alongside the influential **Johnny Marr**), produced and recorded an album with **Heather Nova**, recorded his third solo album (still no word on how it will be distributed at present) and is gearing up to record another album with the always-experimental **Edwyn Collins**.

While hyped in the media for his role as a guitar player, often overlooked is Butler's astonishing talent as a songwriter. Butler displays a maturity and versatility in his songs that are a step ahead the other artists of his age and expertise.

"I don't often deliberately write from my own experience, often it just turns out that way. I'm always writing thinking of others and realise it's me really. If I'm feeling particularly brave or angry for one reason or another, I might write about myself, but those are the moments when it gets recorded and not changed," explains Butler, "Either [piano or guitar] I use for chord structures, but normally I start with a rhythm and always have. I can't say I always use one instrument, as I never plan to write songs-I just do it and once it becomes your way of life you take it for granted for as long as you can."

"I go through phases where I love a particular piano or something because I got a great sound out of it one time, but then if I returned to it the next day it might be really dull to me. I like playing with simple monophonic synthesizers and drum machines," he adds, "I would love to learn cello and envy cellists a bit-it looks sexy. Obviously when my own guitar is roaring on the right day I can't beat it, but then I like French horns a lot."

"It's best to write from what you know, and what you want to know about-otherwise you get caught out easily," says Butler.

Recently, the use of computers is increasing in the recording industry. However, Butler feels that technology doesn't really impact music itself and says, "Technology can't make anything better or worse-it just changes the way you approach something, and it is approaches that people got wrapped up with, not science. Anything new is regarded 'technology' at its launch-until people start working in quartertones or break down all time scales, music just evolves from the idea that was there on day one. Technology just helps you unlock the same doors in different ways."

Media buzz terms like 'organically produced music' come to mind. "Organic is a cliché-I heard **Mariah** using it recently," proclaims Butler, "People will go crazy for every new bit of gear, the manufacturers will make a packet, we'll go off the gear, and then go back to it 10 years later bemoaning it's simplicity. The reason is that we're all looking to do some-

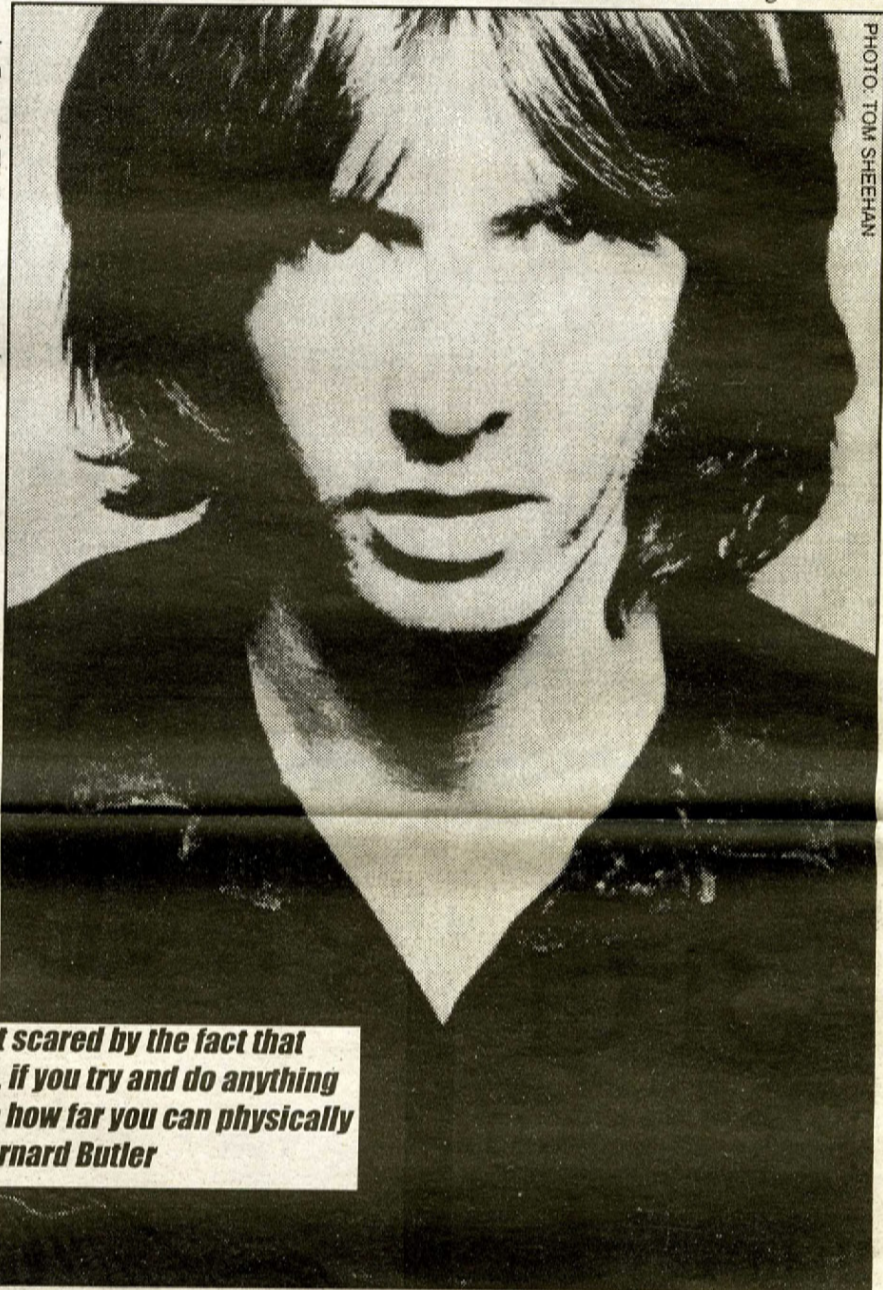


PHOTO: TOM SHEEHAN

"I'm frustrated, but not scared by the fact that people are put off you, if you try and do anything spontaneously, or see how far you can physically take something." -- Bernard Butler

thing that no-one else is doing in that time, so there's no point using the most popular gear of our time."

"I've believed for a while that music from the nineties onwards would be re-examining all the stuff discovered so quickly and passed over, mixing and matching anything and seeing what comes of it that is new," he adds, "I think people will continue to not care how a sound was produced, but more what it does for you."

One can immediately remember the times people say, 'everything has already been done with music and it's impossible to still sound fresh and innovative.' Butler says, "It's impossible to appear fresh when the listener is so jaded and world-weary. Actually most people judge a sound on how the artist looks or is marketed, and have always overlooked the interesting stuff. I'd rather the statement 'it's impossible for anyone to stay interested for long enough to find out if everything has already been done with music.'"

With this in mind, Butler recorded his eagerly anticipated third album. What this third album will sound like and what the album will be called are very good questions. **SLUG** learned that the third album is also self-produced.

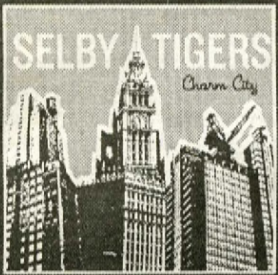
"[My new album] will be called 'Why I prefer penguins to people' and under the name **Crème Brûlée**-radically different," he says with a bit of a laugh-an obvious joke!

"At the moment I set loops and rhythms going eternally, tape down the keys on keyboards to create a texture and then improvise into a microphone with voice and guitar and see what happens!"

Despite recent turmoil Butler says, "If I made one person smile or stop talking and listen to themselves for a minute then it was worth it."

For more information about Bernard Butler, visit www.bernardbutler.com.

PHOTO: BRETT ROBINSON



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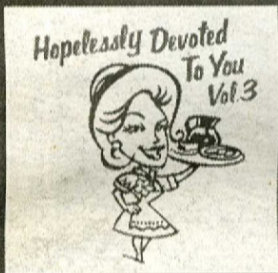
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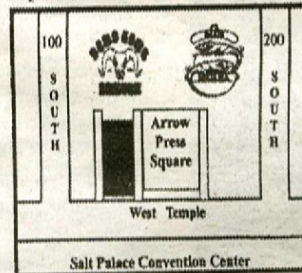
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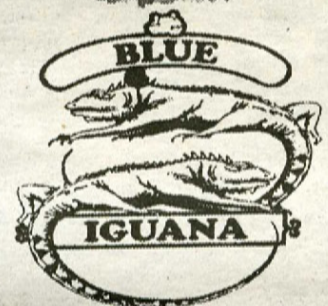
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Concert Previews

Well, it's another month with a big holiday in it. And this month is the mother of all corporate holidays. In other words, it's bad enough that as soon

as the stress and strain of finals is over, then it's time to turn around and go Christmas shopping. They give you only a month to relax from the hell of school, but in that month you have to navigate through the countless masses of shoppers fighting for items that they can use to buy the affection of those people close to them. I read in USA Today that more Americans will be in debt this Christmas than any other. In debt!? Just to buy gifts for loved ones? Is something whacked here? Second, My SLUG boss and I are quite discouraged by the lack of responses by you readers out there. What's wrong with y'all? If you read something and you like it, or hate it; how hard is it to send an E-Mail with two sentences voicing an opinion. It's not that hard people. I spend forty hours a week perfecting this column to the point were my fingers are bleeding on the keyboard, and all I

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**Burt's
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want to know, "Is it all worth it?" Guys, send me E-Mails telling me, or the boss, what you like or don't. I want to know if this column makes y'all spew milk out of your nose when you read it. (Of course, when you're drinking milk; not that milk would instantly come out of your nose like snot or something). Girls, send me E-mails telling me, not the boss, how much you desire ol' Kevlar7 and want to be his number one fan. (And want to give birth to his children). Send those E-mails to www.Kevlar7@Hotmail.com; don't make me lose faith in all of you. SLUG will print ANYTHING you send to me in the Dear Dickheads Section. Just think, if ya send something; y'all be famous with your names in print, so get up off your cans and get those fingers working!! Third, There isn't much happening in the way of shows this month. Most bands around this holiday time, usually don't go out on tour and instead stay home with the family. So, unfortunately, I had to really scrape to come up with a partial list of shows to go to this month. My advice, check out the good shows and then stay home and drink eggnog after dealing with finals and Christmas shopping. After getting nice and loaded, send me E-mails of (guys): praise, (girls): affection. Oh, and get really shit faced on new years 2001: wonder if NASA will find a giant black monolith on the moon this

year. Something to look forward too. The 6th has the return of **Clutch** to Utah!! Playing with **Corrosion of Conformity** and **Flybanger** at DV8, Clutch will be belting out the real groove metal for all those who absolutely love the sounds of all three of Clutch's last records. Six years ago, when I was writing for Diesel magazine, I did an interview with the Clutch guys and found out that these guys don't take themselves very seriously in the music world. Never the less, I take their music VERY serious, because these guys play some of the most heavy styled jams that take the average listener to many different realms of time and space. Be at this show, one of the best for the month.

One of the greatest cover bands **Spleen** is playing at **Burt's Tiki Lounge** on the 7th. What the hell does a band like Spleen cover? Is it disco? Is it Grateful Dead covers? Fuck all of you idiots!! Ween, man, Ween. One of the craziest and strangest bands in the last twenty years. And Spleen does much justice in covering Ween's musical catalog, check it out; it's free anyway at Burt's.

The first of two Birthday bash's for the month is on the 7th at Bricks. It's called the **Rock n' Rave** and it features live bands **Gwen Mars**, **Quant**, and **Chump**. The Rave DJ's are Superstars **Katupilar** and **Loki**; with old schoolers **Kel-Rok** and **Cups**. The B-boy is Bricks own Rob Turner and he made sure to make this a helluva party. And for a good cause, bring a can of food for the food drive of Utah, and receive a dollar of the seven-dollar cover charge. Make sure to bring the pre-Christmas presents for Mister Turner.

Jerry Joseph and the **Jackmormons** are performing at **The Zephyr Club** on the 8th and the 9th. When I first heard about these guys, I thought they were some kind of hippie piece-of-shit jam band. Boy, was I wrong. My ex-girlfriend, (we're still friends), dragged me to this show and I ended up really liking these guys. They have all kinds of musical ideas thrown together with a kind of groove rock backbone that propels their music. The lead vocalist has a really good voice that hits many ranges and levels. Very tight and entertaining band, espe-

cially after a couple of Cerveza's.

Also on the 8th, is **The Sprague Brothers** at the **Dead Goat Saloon**. Great rockabilly for the whole family. If you haven't seen the Brothers play before, then get that hair greased up, cuff the jeans, and scooter down to the Saloon to have great night of 'billy fun. Those people who clue have no clue as to what Rockabilly is all about, has got to give this show a try.

Or the **Jesse Dayton Texas Tall Tales Tour** on the 9th, also at the **Dead Goat Saloon**. Mister Dayton is the lead singer for the **Road Kings**, one of the greatest of the new rockabilly bands out there carrying the banner of hellfire and brimstone. I saw the **Road Kings** open for Mike Ness and thought they set the stage on fire that night. Hopefully, mister Dayton will bring the energy to stage with this tour and will be able to tantalize without the help of the Kings. From his past performances, I'm willing to bet that he can and will be able to put on one of the best shows of month. Don't miss it.

Not much is happening for a while, and then on the 11th is the not to miss show of December. The bands are **Samiam**, **Weston**, **Pictures Can Tell**, and **Interstate** at the new and improved **Kilby Court**. **Samiam** is one of the greatest bands to play emotionally charged punk rock. They're one of those few bands that actually get better with each disc. Their latest disc, **Astray on Hopeless**, gets my vote for one of the best of the 2000-year. I'm very excited to finally see this band play live. And after all the shit this band has been through, it will be truly amazing to see how much these guys love performing their music. **Weston** is a band that plays some alright emo-style rock, **Pictures Can Tell** and **Interstate** are local bands that pull tight rhythms and have a killer progressive indie-mathematic rock sound. Do not miss this show at any costs.

For all the lovers of dark and disturbing music, there is the huge industrial night at **Area 51** on the 13th. Now industrial is NOT Gothic, and industrial is a lot easier to dance too, besides the 'pick the flowers' or the 'look at myself in the mirror on the floor' dances of Gothic. On the other hand, industrial is a 'pumping' sound that is fun to get nicely loaded too, while dancing with all the girls in black. (Heh-heh-heh). The bands that night are, **Velvet Acid Christ**, an aggro-industrial group from Colorado, (we're practically neighbors), **Haujobb**, who bill themselves as 'Intelligent Techno', (should be interesting), and **Din Fiv**, who is really David Din, an member of the industrial group **Informatik**. This show should bring back memories of when I was Eighteen and hanging out at the **Pompadour Club** and trying to get high, drunk, and laid. Not like that's changed any now, of course.

The next night at **Kilby Court**, the 15th, has **The Blue Meanies**, **The Gadjets**, and **The Wunder Years**. **The Blue Meanies**, is a band that feels like a 80's revival is needed in their sound. Kind of a cross between **Devo** and **Public Image Ltd.**, **The Meanies** disc is mildly entertaining, but I think that to see them live would then proper justice. I may have had mixed feelings about their disc, but I look forward to see how wild and crazy this band is live. From what I hear, this band is truly great live. Check 'em out, whether you like the 80's or not.

A night of killer local bands is at the **Burt's Tiki Lounge** on the 16th. The groups are **The Unlucky Boys**, **Erosion**, and **Wormdrive**. This a celebration for the Birthday of the bass player for **Wormdrive**. The **Unlucky Boys**, who opened for the **Rev. Horton Heat** on Halloween, plays fun-as-pigs-in-shit drunken psychobilly.

Erosion, demented country style **Cave/Waits** narratives, and **Wormdrive** does the pissed off drunken power punk. Be there, for a night of good clean piss-drunk birthday mayhem. Make sure to give that bass player some smacks on the butt, (girls), or a crack on the jaw, (guys).

Being homeless sucks, especially couch surfing. Unless you're some kind of hippie that just melds into a couch and becomes camouflaged with the living room, then y'all need to come down to **Kilby Court** on the 16th for a **Homeless Benefit**. This benefit features some of the best of local talent: **Drive**, **Gerald Music**, **New Transit Direction**, and **Magstatic**. All the bands on this list are killer, but **Gerald Music** is the one to check out. Very tight and talented, **Gerald** has a progressive atmospheric sound with beautiful vocals from their female vocalist. Look for their debut disc soon. Support the local scene and help those freezing to death on the streets.

"Dark days are here, again. Ohhhh bbaab-byy!" Sorry, I think this Tequila has hit me pret-



ty hard. When I drink the stuff, it makes me sitting terribly off key. So anyway, the point of my song, is that on the 18th, at **Area 51**, will see the return of the **Electric Hellfire Club**, with opening locals

Dreamscape Unlimited. **Hellfire Club** is a Gothic Satanic group that always brings chuckles to me when I listen to their disc. Definitely not to be taking serious; unless your eighteen and steal your mummies dress after painting face white. No really, this show will be killer, because this band is one of the best of the Darkwave sound that is putting a little darkness into the pop sunshine of commercial radio. Come check it out, I'll be there hanging out with DJ Amy, who spins the 'real' industrial sound at **Area 51** on Fridays. Check the bands out, check out her Friday night, and of course check me out.

After opening Christmas presents that your loved ones went into debt for, (y'all are a bunch of greedy bastards), boogie on down to the **Zephyr Club** on the 25th, for the groove-pop sounds of **Velvet Alex**. These guys used to be locals, but decided to transplant themselves to a city that could really support them. Hence this 'new' California band will be coming to town to get your booty down on the dance floor. A mutant dance rock hybrid, **Velvet Alex** is two girls and two guys dedicated to shake your thang. Dig?

To finish the month off with, there is more local action on the 30th, at the **Dead Goat Saloon**, with the filth and the beauty of **Fistful**. This will be a good show to prep yourself for New Years. This means drink a little less than usual; scale back a beer or two. By the way, **Fistful's** latest platter fuckin' rocks, dude. Be there.

That seems to be just about it for December, I'm sure that there is a lot that got left out, but nobody felt it was wise to send me a list of their gigs until AFTER we went to press. So once again, send me your monthly calendars BEFORE the 25th. I can't promote your shows if I don't know about them, especially if it's too late. By the way on New Years at **Burt's Tiki Lounge** there is **High Ball Train**, **The Unlucky Boys**, and **The Zack Parish Blues Band**, which should be the real place to attend a crazy as hell New Years bash to celebrate the first real year of the new millennium, (kiss your ass goodbye). So see y'all later, until next month. Hopefully, there will be a helluva lot more action then this month. Remember to send me fan mail and to get the Christmas shopping done before New Years. Bunch o' damn slackers.

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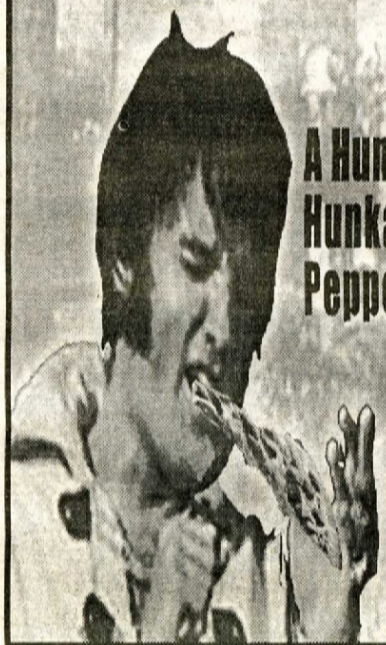
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Hello again kiddies. Come sit on Uncle marks lap he's got a story for you. Oh uh, come on don't worry, oh that, it's uh just my uh, marker Yeah.

Six pairs of echo cargo pants. (or Interstate if

you live in a trailer.) Check. Fifteen tribal t-shirts. Check. One, black beanie. Check. Oh I know what you forgot. Dude you're supposed to pull one of the legs up. Check. Have you been working on your limp? Both legs! No shit! Word! You're a writer now. Well, almost.

"Style, and competing for the best style are the keys to all forms of rocking..."

...For a graffiti writer it's rocking your name on a train, or a wall."

Henry Chalfant, author *Style Wars* and *Subway Art*, knew what he was talking about

when he made this comment in 1983 and it is as true today as it was then. Are we all on the same page now? Listen dog, just because you've perfected your Dude York accent doesn't mean you are any where near king status. Despite what the girls you meet at lagoon may think it does take a little more than swagger to make the jump from poser to prolific bastard in this, The Greatest American Pissing Contest. I'm sorry to

inform you that the style in question cannot be obtained at the mall. (Although a good number of you seem to have gotten one at the toy store.) Yes my "friends" you're actually going to have to put in work to get any respect from the pros. Wait! Before you go and stink up my view with your half-assed signature on every bus stop (there are better ways to prove you have a small penis) you might want to spend a little time honing your skills on a smaller scale.

"What the fuck are you getting at Mark?" All in good time my friends, all in good time. Remember the rubiks cubists? Much like these geeks (whom I believe to be the forefathers of today's digi masters) we writers would never leave home without our plumage. "Goddamnit Mark quit speaking in metaphors already. What are you getting at you bald bastard." OK, OK, Bitch I'm talking about what we in the know refer to as blackbooks. (Piece Book is also a "down" term for the same object) This is where we hone our skills, spending hour upon hour trying to create and perfect our folk-

ish craft. Every real writer has one. And as far as antiques goes these books may be the most sought after items once the real graffiti of this generation has been rubbed out by the powers that be. Black books truly document the back stage efforts of this fledgling art movement and feature everything from your beefs to your Brittany spears sticker col-

Getting Up with Mark Tupp



a degree. (based on the amount of work within produced by other reputable graffiti artists.) If you ever meet a writer who doesn't have one of these journals they are probably perpetrating a fraud. These phonies most likely refer to themselves as taggers and depending on weather or not you read the last article you know what that means. To those of you out there trying to make a mark without any regard for stylistic integrity you may as well kill yourselves now because you'll never amount to shit. The end.

P.S. To the "other side" guy just know that



your cheap quest for "Props" is in actuality only securing your rep as a chump. I'm not telling you what to do I'm just making you aware of the word on the street. The only good thing about these desperate marks is the fact that you are saving benchers a trip across the buckle. Placing these whorish ads of chumpdom directly next to the work of my crew will be seen as nothing short

of direct antagonism and directly violates the terms of your agreement to never again meddle in our affairs. Then again honor has never been a strong point for weak-minded white trash in the past and I don't foresee the



millennial atmosphere having an effect on misguided mother fuckers like yourself. But hey, I've been wrong before (once or twice) and in fact maybe your ignorance is at such a level that you don't realize how bad your shit really stinks. Also worthy of mention is the fact that we know you lied about not being the person who stamped cress' piece and did-

n't have the balls to live up to your actions. Do me a favor and be a fucking man. In closing I just want to reassure you that we're still assholes and nothing else gives us the itch like knowing you're a jealous bitch. Oh yeah don't ever forget that the church is true and our savior will never turn his back on a wretch like you. Word.

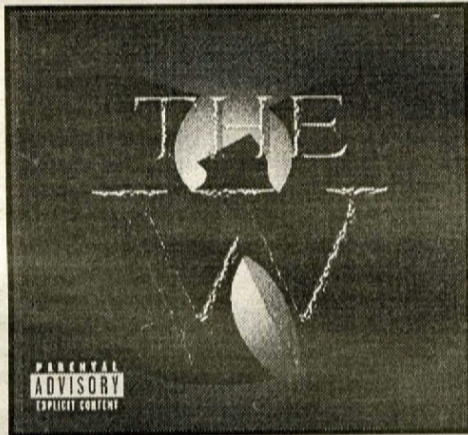
lection. Piece Books (short for masterpiece) are a writer's first tool to prove not only illustrative and stylistic competence but also are a measure of clout to

Winter is here so it's time to break out the puffy coats and start acting like you're from New York, Son. Many new releases have been coming from the old eastern seaboard on the aboveground level and the west is still holding down the pseudo-underground. Most of the records that are hitting the shelves now were recorded in the summer, but it seems like this is the time of year that the giant commercial records from NYC and the east, in general, sound the tightest. I don't own a pair of Tims and I have no fur collared polo jackets, but the cold makes the production quality hit a little harder. A couple of these records are going to be huge Christmas sellers, but don't sleep! Just because it's commercial doesn't mean that it's wak. I've already heard kids fronting just 'cause everybody else likes it, and I have been just as guilty of hating. I think it's kind of weird for the suburban audience and practitioners of Hip-Hop to become resentful of it's origins, to the extent of hating on the aspect that reflect what people are feeling all over the country. **Juvenile** didn't get big off of Blockbuster Music pushing his shit. Ghetto heads in New Orleans blew him up. The **Hot Boyz** represent one of Hip-Hop's ever changing manifestations, if you like it or not. However, not many of us relate to all that mega-player shit, either. When it hits MTV, is when listeners start with the hating. Think about it though...Some of these cats have no other recourse in the world. If the music is tight, and a cat gets paid on top of it, why hate? The quality of a commercial record is in the hands of the artist more now than it has ever been. Record label executives that are out of touch with the world of the performer can no longer dictate a formula for commercial success. The overground always affects the underground, and the more that artists are able to maintain control of their vision the better off everyone is.

One of the most obvious evidences of this is an artist like **Jay-Z**. Here's an artist who owns his own publishing, he's distributed though an industry giant, and built a roster of musicians to cover many of the bases. His new joint **The Dynasty Roc La Familia** is a step above any of the previous material I've had the chance to hear. I know for a fact that **Mr. Carter** can rap, he just hasn't played his hand to the fullest extent yet. On this record there is ample proof that he isn't playing around with the lyrics. **Jigga** flexes many diverse styles that show the complexities and depth of his game. He's got bouncy radio cuts "I Just Want To Love You", all the way down to painful reminiscences of an abusive and absent father "Where Have You Been". Is the skateboarding song on the **Battle Axe** record indicative of a different set of values and completely different way of growing up? You answer. The majority of the rest of this record is typical New York thug shit, but **Jay-Z** manages to pull it off with a style unmatched by many of his contemporaries. The album is held down by his crew, **Beanie Sigel**, **Memphis Bleek**, and **Amil** and also features the obligatory guest artist thing. On this record he's got **Snoop**, **Scarface**, and **R. (Braid My Hair) Kelly**. The production is slick and corporate, but it still has head-nod-ability.

Sometimes, simple production can be the best. I liked how they flipped "Missing You". You have to respect anyone who can make a song about something foul a top forty radio hit that your mom nods her head to. One of the biggest highlights, is hearing **Dj Kay Slay** better known to writers as **Dez**. This is one of my guilty pleasures of the 2G.

I wasn't in a big hurry to check out the new **Wu Tang** record "The W". A group can suffer from over exposure, and I think all the side projects took a toll on the collective whole of the **Wu**. If this had come out in '97 instead of "Forever", I might still be enthusiastic. This is a tight record, with **RZA**



producing all of the songs except one. I love hearing a chopped loop put to good use and the **RZA** found a nasty one to use for "Hollow Bones". The overall quality of the flows has improved, and **Rae** is shining almost as brightly as he did on "Only Built for Cuban Linx". **Cappadonna** seems to have taken the **ODB's** spot in the roster, and I don't cringe when I hear **Meth** on this record. Again, **Snoop** rears his processed head to guest spot on a cut with **ODB** that sounds like it was spliced together on a four track. The cool thing about the whole record is the fact that it sounds kind of rough like "36 Chambers" did, and that is one of the aspects of the **RZA's** production that makes it interesting to listen to. This project is chock full of the five percent rhetoric that had the whole east coast open and made middle American kids call each other "Son". The record has a few guest artists, but with a crew as big as **Wu Tang**, who needs help? **Isaac Hayes** blesses a track, so does **Nas** and even (surprise!) **Redman** is on one of the cuts. **Junior Reid** sings on a couple of songs and it makes me wonder how **Marcus Garvey** and **Clarence 13X** would have gotten along. If you still enjoy **Wu Tang's** style and sensibility, pick it up.

A group I've been telling y'all about for a while now, **The Micranots**, have their debut record out on **Subverse**. The record is called



"Obelisk Movements", and the concept of the title is as compelling as the rest of the album. **Self Devine** spits intricate and often metaphysical lyrics accompanied by the production of **Kool**

Akiem. The production is a raw blend of the traditional elements of Hip-Hop (samples and loops) with the efficiency and thump of the new (keyboard type beats). It works well in conjunction with **Self's** flows, he is definitely a student of the past but his rhymes are polished and volatile. The songs cover a plethora of topics, from the political outrage of "M.O.V.E.", to an autobiographical insight on "Balance". This is a near classic album. The styles are diverse and interesting and you'll have your finger on the rewind like, "What the Fuck did he just say?" There are only two songs that have guests on it, but the performances are refreshing due to the fact that you've never heard of any of these cats. **Buddah Tye** weighs in on a cut and the members of a collective called the **Liun's Den** flex on a song called "The Willie Lynch". The liner notes are ample in explaining the concepts of each song in detail, and I enjoy the artists being able to explain themselves when not dealing with surface level shallowness. The major problem with this release is the distribution. When the record came out, it was kind of hard to get, but I know a couple of spots in town carry it. This is material for the new age of Hip-Hop, a near perfect blend of concious raps and ill styles. Don't sleep.

Another good record to check out is the **Foreign Legion**. Their first commercially available release, "Kidnapper Van (beats to rock while bike stealin)", features the work of the two MC's **Prozack** and **Marque Stretch** and the DJ by the name of **Design**. This reintroduces something that has been missing in Hip-Hop for quite some time. Humor. It's not parody or sardonic comment, it's the kind of humor that allows heads not take themselves so seriously for once. The beats are nice and juicy, I mean they have a picture of a sp1200 on the cover of the record! The LP has the feel of a son-of-Diamond D type of style that is becoming popular in the bay area. The songs are irreverent, poking fun of "underground" MC's on the aptly titled "Underground", or ridiculing the 'illuminati' rhetoric so prevalent in the late 90's on "Nowhere to Hide". The production is tight and the concepts are cool but the rhymes are not the ultra-tech. It works to their advantage, though making the record more accessible to the average listener. It would be hard to laugh at a joke that no one else could understand. Quality stuff.

I really wish I could tell y'all how I feel about "Stankonia", but I won't. I love southern shit, you know that and **Outkast** isn't afraid to have dancers. That's Hip-Hop. The best thing about music is that everyone is entitled to their own opinion, though. Something I am not willing to take into account more times than not, but so be it. I would ask everyone that cares about listening to music to keep seeking out new shit. If Hip-Hop had become stagnant on the **James Brown** breaks of the mid to late 80's we would not be where we are today. Don't limit your ears, or anything else for that matter. Take it all in and process it however you feel like it and regurgitate it for the world to criticize. That's progress, baby. On a final note, If you're trying to get shit to me, please drop it off by the 15th of the month or so. That way I'll have a little bit of time to analyze it and let you know what I think.

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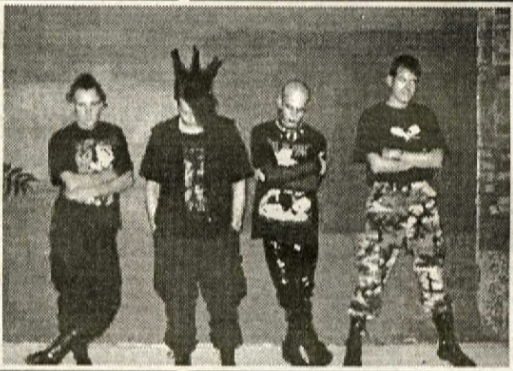
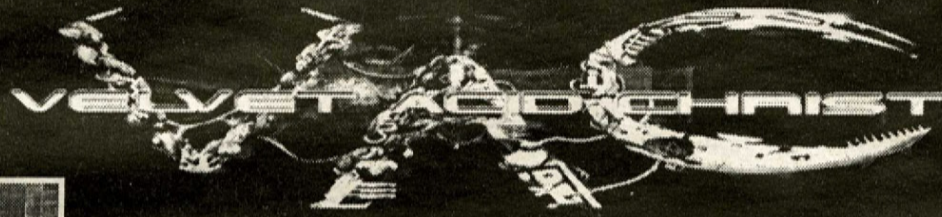
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Yes, another show in Salt Lake was canceled. VNV Nation was supposed to be at Area 51 on November 21st and it didn't happen. A lot of rumors surrounding this surfaced, and I think I'm just going to stay out of it. Nothing we can do about it besides hope that Velvet Acid Christ/Haujobb/Din_Fiv doesn't get canceled.

I've been in the dark as far as local industrial for some time. I've heard a few not very impressive things come my way (I won't mention any names) and then I was asked to go to **Ya Buts** to check out this "local industrial band". Being my cynical self living in a metal dominated city I figured it would be one of these ass rock bands that call themselves industrial because they have a live keyboard player. Needless to say I was pleasantly surprised when I found otherwise. They're called **Uber Faction**, and they sound anything but local. The material is already label quality production with the driving electro beats with well mixed *tactful* guitars, and aggro vox mixed with eerie female vox; a little reminiscent of *L'ame Imortelle* and/or *Flesh Field*. **Little Sap Dungeon** (or LSD) also played their disturbed set of atmospheric ambience with chaotic vocals. I was very impressed with both acts and will be attending all the shows I can in the future.

Local industrial/electro/ebm/experimental/whatever acts! Send your CDs to SLUG for review! In February's issue of SLUG, I will be dedicating my column in its entirety to the local industrial scene. I will review as many as I can fit, so only the best will make it. The absolute best will also be featured as 'Band of the Month' on SLUG's website which includes a band photo, MP3, bio, and we'll tag your website to if one exists. Deadline to get CDs to me is January 10th, so start crackin'.

This month's TOP TEN. See a pattern?

- Hocico - *Poltergeist*
- Hocico - *Temple Of Lies*
- Hocico - *When Angels Don't Sing*
- Hocico - *Distorted Face*
- Hocico - *Espinas el Mal*
- Hocico - *Final Resource*
- Hocico - *Ordo en el Alma*
- Hocico - *Without a God*
- Hocico - *Spit as an Offense*
- Hocico - *Nothing Black*

Velvet Acid Christ
Twisted Thought Generator
Metropolis Records
Rating: 5

Forget about everything you've heard about this album until this point. Bryan Erickson stated a number of things during the making of this album like it being all about drugs, and the excluding of mainstream movie samples and using purely b-side horror movie samples, etc. There is actually an interesting story in the liner notes of this release stating why his initial idea of making an album completely about drugs was shot down. I don't know what happened with his sample ideas, but there are plenty of "mainstream movie" samples including, but not limited to, *The Matrix*, *Playing God*, and *The Devil's Advocate*. He also sold all of his gear that he used in previous albums and bought a shload of old school analog stuff for that moogy, deep, bass heavy sound. Even though the album is almost completely different than everything he said it was going to be, it's immaculate. It's very rapidly growing to be my favorite album released this year. The lyrics are much more deep and intelligent than VAC has been known for, and the musical arrangements with the vocal arrangements make it very dark and emotional album. VAC fiends will also be

glad to know that the CD also contains 11 MP3 data tracks of an early side project called **Dimension 8**. You'll have to hear it and decide for yourself, because I'm not even going to try to explain it.

Icon of Coil
Serenity is the Devil
Metropolis Records
Rating: 4

Ya know, I listen to this album, and listen, and listen, and I still can't figure out why everybody is so prone to throw these guys into the synth pop category. The only thing really synth-pop about it are some of the vocals, and the fact that one member co-wrote Apoptygma Berzerk's *Starsign*. You can definitely pick out the synth-pop influences in some of the writing, but musically it's still very electro styled. The first half of the album is actually kind of boring; didn't really do anything for me. However, starting with track 8, *Fiction*, the entire vibe of the album takes a very club oriented approach that won't leave many disappointed, especially followers of X Marks the Pedwalk and Hyperdex-1-Sect. Another great release for the year 2000. It seems Metropolis is saving the best for last.

Suicide Commando
Mindstrip
Metropolis Records
Rating: 2.5

Even though **Suicide Commando** has been around since the latter part of the 1980s, I hadn't really heard anything until a little while ago. I picked up a copy of *Construct*><*Destruct*, went home, listened, and wept that I had spent almost twenty dollars on such crap. I have not been too much of a fan since to say the least. When the *Helraiser* single was released in early November I started having second thoughts. I was really impressed, but now I'm over it. After a few listen-throughs of the disc in its entirety I suppose I somewhat like it. *Raise Your God* is a



phenomenal piece of work, *Love Breeds Suicide* is also of the same equality. As for the rest of the tracks, it's a lot of that good ol' fashion Suicide Commando monotony. It's better than anything else I've heard come from SC, but nothing I'd spend too much time listening to.

Decoded Feedback
Mechanical Horizon
Metropolis Records
Rating: 3

First of all, if **Decoded Feedback** could get over using the most untactful samples I'd ever heard, they be much more listenable. A truly talented twosome that I know is more than capable of being original, and be good at it, but still insists on taking samples from other songs to create their music around. Prime example: Track 4 - *Darkstar* - Intro sample blatantly taken from the Funker Vogt *Destructive* mix of Velvet Acid Christ's *Malfunction*. There are a few others as well, including one of Front 242's *Work* pieces. These songs are good, just idiotically sampled. The clean vocal tracks on this album sound like they were recorded pissed-ass drunk, and the processed vocal tracks sound like he still drunk, just effect happy. The rest of the album is pretty good and has a few club anthem type songs, such as the before-mentioned *Darkstar* and *A Kill to an End*. Good enough to look past the bad things to appreciate the good... barely



I suppose I should introduce myself, or at least the column, so that you know what to expect from it. Initially the idea was for it to be dominated by Goth, which it will definitely include, but I felt that it should reflect my varied taste for music outside of Goth as well. So you'll also find the likes of **Suede**, **Marc Almond**, **David Bowie**, along side **Mandalay**, **Portishead**, **Mulu** and anything else that feels like midnight or the morning after.

Peter Murphy
DVS November 18

For those of you who stayed at home, whatever your excuses may be, I pity you. You may hear some complaints that the set list was too short and yes there was a sense of disappointment that the night did not go on forever, but Peter could have easily canceled the show. After all, he was ill. What a show it was. Peter will always be a great performer, healthy or otherwise. Part of this is because he honestly enjoys doing it. Many artists perform live to give them an excuse to record, Peter records so that he can hit the road another time and it shows. Unlike the shows in the past, Peter's voice was backed only with a guitar and a violin (Peter Distephano and Hugh Marsh). This, with the intimate venue, gave the performance a more passionate feel than any other **Peter Murphy** show I've experienced. This set gave Peter a chance to showcase more mellow material ("Time has got nothing to do with it," "Indigo Eyes," "All Night Long," "Strange Kind of Love," "Subway," and the brilliant "Marleine Dietrich's Favorite Poem") including two new tracks, "Every Home Has Its Sire" and "Just for Love". The new material is heavily influenced by **Massive Attack** and the mix made it difficult for me to form a definite opinion. The show opened with a film called *The Grid*, which was originally screened on the 1980 Bauhaus tour. It was confusing at best, but who went there to watch a movie anyway?

Elsewhere
Karaoke Echo No. 1
Eden's Watchtower

Perhaps the only thing keeping **Elsewhere**

relatively unknown is that they don't really fit into any genre. In many ways, they are anti-pop music with all the guitar hooks of a pop band. You can't be a pop band and write songs that consistently go beyond 5 minutes, can you? Perhaps if you are a pop band you can't be this honest. With this release we find Elsewhere closing in on the likes of the Red House Painters. They might not have reached the point where they can write like Mark Kozelek, but if you were to spiral *Karaoke Echo No. 1* with *Songs for a Blue Guitar* I think you would be surprised at how well they mesh together. Some of the guitar solos might have gotten them kicked off 4AD and that's not a bad thing. Highly recommended.

David Sylvian
Everything and Nothing
Virgin

Sometimes the best music requires a bit of work on the listener's part. I have heard the praises of **David Sylvian** for years, but it wasn't until I sat down with his album *Dead Bees on A Cake* that I started to understand what all the fuss was about. This 2-disc release is a collection of Sylvian favorites mixed among newly finished and re-mixed tracks and it is very good. However, it's not a greatest hit album, but I couldn't tell. The mixture of Jazz with ambient, with non-intrusive vocals, in a warm mix is irresistible.

Blur
Best of
Virgin

As far as group rivalries go, I've always been on the side of **Suede**, which in some regard is supposed to make me view **Blur** with a touch of dislike. However, I am perfectly willing to set those feelings aside for this release. 18 singles, a map of sorts to the musical direction that **Blur** has gone, because there have been many. From the Beatle-esque "Beetlebum," to the club friendly beats of "Girls and Boys," to the alternative rock radio hit "Song 2" and back to the classic tracks, "There's No Other Way," and "Tender." They've also thrown in a live 10 track disc, if you rush out and grab the first pressing. This is an album worth

picking up—even for the most casual **Blur** fan or anyone interested in a piece of contemporary British rock that has more variety and life in it than any **Oasis** record.

Collide
Chasing the Ghost
Noiseplus

kaRIN and Statik return with their own record label, after remaining silent for the past few years. It is a deeply introspective album and a slight change of musical direction. Those of you familiar with their previous efforts, "*Beneath the Skin*" and "*Distort*," need not fear because *Collide* is just as layered and well orchestrated—they just pulled back the noise, allowing for more focus on the vocals and lyrics. The only drawback the album may carry is that none of the tracks scream out to be club hits, with a massive sing-a-long chorus, but since when was that a drawback? If you even remotely like bands with female vocals against distorted electronics or intelligently constructed soundscapes with honest lyrics this album will not disappoint.

Die Form
Extremum
Metropolis

Die Form, the fetish soundtrack makers return with electronics dragged over rocks and with vocals stolen from heaven's angels and hell's...well, you get the picture. It would be easy to write them off as just another band trying too hard to be unique, but the truth is they are actually quite good at what they do. They sound a bit like **Delerium**'s last few releases, only a touch darker (sometimes it is best to not try and decipher the lyrics). The key drawback is that many of the songs become overly repetitive, which often works at clubs, but doesn't necessarily cross over to casual listening. Maybe that's where the fetish bit comes in.

Magnetophone
I guess sometimes I need to be reminded of how much you love me
4AD

For any of you who picked up either one of the last two ambient sounding **Xorcist** sound-

track albums, this album is for you. However the key difference in this album succeeds by including beats that keep the

sound more active and upbeat. There is a very synthetic feel to the music as if it was being broadcast from a world run by machines. Perhaps not as engrossing as **Future Sound of London**'s *Dead Cities*, but a worthy companion within reach of the top of the genre.

Marilyn Manson
Holy Wood
Nothing

Like him or hate him, you should have an instant gut reaction to **Marilyn Manson**. I don't know anymore. When he was running around trying to be **David Bowie**, he wasn't bad, but he didn't sell, so he is back to being the Antichrist. So, is the album terrible? No. Is it brilliant? No. Does it have its moments? Yes, but they tend to collapse too quickly. Let's face it, the first single "Disposable Teens" is a poor revisiting of the past hit "Beautiful People" and that's never a good sign. "Fight Song" is far better, as is "Target Audience," which nearly wins me over, until it succumbs to screaming and over-used, chunky, distorted guitars—but neither does it save the album from becoming boring and repetitive. If you liked him before, you'll like him again. If you've got better things to focus on, I'm right there with you.



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If you didn't get to see the I.N.C. (International Noise Conspiracy) on Election night at Liquid Joe's then I'll try to not rub it in too hard, but you fuckin' blew it! These amorous audio terrorists came all the way from Sweden to deliver the future of subversive sound. There is a conspiracy here to mesmerize you with intoxicating rhythmic tantrums, while breathing steamy unshakable somethings in your ear. There's just no way to do these freaks justice in print, so I'll just strongly urge you to buy their debut disc, *Survival Sickness*, on Epitaph. A meeting was arranged with frontman Dennis Lyxzen. I ended up taking almost an hour of his time, but Dennis was very gracious and gave no hint of impatience. The following is a test of the Anti-American Broadcast System...

SLUG: What role do you play in the band?

Dennis: I'm the singer ... the agitator of the band. Yeah, that's me. (laughs)

SLUG: What kind of music do you guys consider yourselves to be? Your message is total punk, but your sound isn't necessarily as abrasive as the traditional punk sound. Are you audio-terrorists or what?

Dennis: Pretty much. I mean, I don't know... we don't try to define ourselves because when you try to "define" yourself, you sorta get stuck within a scene. We are a punk-rock band. Punk rock has its roots in '60s garage and that whole thing, and everyone in this band has played in punk and hardcore bands for years and years and years, and we all started backtracking and asking, you know like, where does great music come from? All of a sudden you're listening to Bo Diddley and realizing, whoa!, this is where punk-rock [attitude] got started. So, we're just trying to pick out the best pieces of... punk-rock, or whatever else we find interesting... and just add what we enjoy doing. And, because we are punk-rock kids it turns out punk. I mean, there are times when we'd like to play soul music, but we can't because we've played punk for so long... and we're white. We're from the north of Sweden, we're white and we're punk-rock kids, so... (laughs)

SLUG: I really dig the idea of, in lieu of lyrics, including 12 different manifestos (one for each song) outlining in further detail the concepts behind the songs. Very inventive, and it really compels the listener to think about what you're saying.

Dennis: We've always thought of ourselves as like a sort of concept band. Not like... Queensryche, but we had this idea to juxtapose music that anyone can relate to with the most radical politics. We decided, if we're gonna make a record, a video or play a show, there will be no mistaking what we're saying here. We just wanted to make a good rock record, because traditionally rock has been the music

of the people. It's not like an obscure youth movement, or something like that... Everybody listens to rock music. Well nowadays it's kinda shifting to where the working class listens more to, say, rap, but still rock is everywhere. So you lure them in with that element of recognition, and then slam them over the head with the message... Here's our analysis of the fucking world; this is why we play music. We wanted to take the whole role of the rock spectacle and throw it upside down by forcing people to think about things.

SLUG: That's what I like about you guys, you're not afraid to tackle the Big-Picture. You're trying to enlighten people, not just preaching to them saying boycott this, or do this, don't do that, but really encouraging them to change their way of thinking, right?

Dennis: Yeah... but it's not even their way of thinking, you know, it's like we have to change the whole economical/political system... the entire structure. We just want to encourage the tradition of self-education. Empowering yourself by learning about the world.

SLUG: On track 4, "Survival Sickness", the essay begins: "Survival has become the paradigm of economic circumstances." I'm always telling people about how we need to change the stories we're living. The current cultural paradigm we've been enacting for the past ten-thousand years or so, which casts mankind as the end of all creation, pitting us against Nature, is leading us unwittingly to our own demise. Do you feel that there is hope for humanity?

Dennis: As long as there is resistance there is hope. As long as people are actually living, breathing, feeling alienated, there is hope. Each shift in the power structure brings new movements of resistance. The last couple of years, have brought a resurgence of political activism. Instead of decreasing, the grass-roots movements are actually growing. Look at what happened in Seattle, look at what's been happening this whole time in Prague, there was a demonstration in Montreal just two weeks ago, all of this stuff is going on. There is this feeling that people are pretty much fed up with the way things are. Yet some come to the mistaken conclusion that events like the Presidential election won't really change anything, that's it's just a matter of who will be the representative of the American way of life.

SLUG: If something doesn't change, the people are going to change it ultimately! Look at the French Revolution, hell, the American Revolution for that matter. The people will always win because there's more of us than them.

Dennis: Yeah, yeah. Exactly. We go up every night and we talk about revolution, political struggles/changes, blah, blah, blah. And people are, like, you're pretty naive to go up and talk about that, you know... the world is so big and you're so small. We're like, yes, we know this, we are very naive, and we are romanticizing what we are doing here. But there is only one thing that's more naive than this and that's believing a change won't come. Look at how much has changed the last hundred years since Industrialization. Even, like how much the world has changed since the second World War. So, change will come. I don't know how, or what it will look like, what shape it'll take, but I'm pretty confident that things are happening, that they will.

SLUG: In one of the manifestos you guys drop oldschool names like the Angry Samoans and G.G. Allin! The Bosstones covered the Samoans' "Lights Out" for their last song at the Big Ass Show. I thought it was kinda cool, but I'd bet that most of the kids had no idea it was a cover song.

Dennis: We thought it would be fun to use this opportuni-

ty to leave traces, an audio bread trail, leading the listener back to some of the roots they may not know of! Although, one thing we stupidly missed on this album is footnotes and book references. Besides, we have no qualms about admitting that we steal relentlessly, from everywhere, and this way people know where we got it.

SLUG: Track 5, "The Reproduction of Death," the ominous question is posed: "What happens when the companies' latest ad campaigns create a desire that capitalism might not be able to satisfy?" This has some very heavy undertones. I'll ask you the perennial question: Will it expand or will it crack?

Dennis: I don't really know. Marx said that "capitalism will crumble under its own weight," that it would be too heavy to perpetually sustain a capitalist system. But capitalism has been very good at maintaining itself, at the expense of everyone else and it is for this reason, I think, that eventually it will crack. We're faking these desires, they are manufactured and sold to us. A few years ago nobody needed a cell-phone, now you can't live without it. I don't have a cell, and I'm doing fine. So, I think there will come a time when it just won't work, people will see through material desires and realize this is pretty retarded. Capitalism has been very successful at sustaining itself and this is a problem. (laughs)

SLUG: Track 6, "Imposter Costume" deals with identity in an inherently alienated creature (humans). Perhaps you can answer a question I frequently ask: Are we who we think we are or only how others see us?

Dennis: Hmm... I think we are a bit of both. I think that identity is not a fixed position. I think identity is something that changes with context. I don't see a "natural" Dennis somewhere, when I go look at my roots, or whatever. (Laughs) I am a product of the world I've seen and the world I've lived in. At the same time that I'm also a product of how other people perceive me. For instance, if I read an interview of myself, I'm presented with a dislocated image of myself. Sometimes, it's like, whoa, that's me? That guy's kinda crazy! (Laughs) I think identity is constantly changing.

SLUG: Based on track 4, "Survival Sickness" and track 8, "Only Lovers Left Alive", I'm gathering that one of the overall messages in your art is the heart and love? I don't mean in the Romantic sense, but love for life, wonder, beauty, humanity etc.

Dennis: Yeah, passion definitely. A lot of people want to mistake these as just love songs, but there's more to it than that. For so long the leftist/radical movement has been characterized as stoic or somber with a very puritanical sort of self-sacrificial attitude. Like, yes... I will pass out the flyers even though I don't enjoy it... for the struggle. And this is all good and noble, but in the long run, I think it alienates more people than it excites about radical ideas. We just want to be the band that's passionately sexy and intelligently radical, so that people might be intrigued and go: Damn, that whole Socialist thing doesn't look that bad! (laughs) A political struggle without love and passion is not a struggle we want to be a part of. People have a common misconception that suffering must accompany struggle.

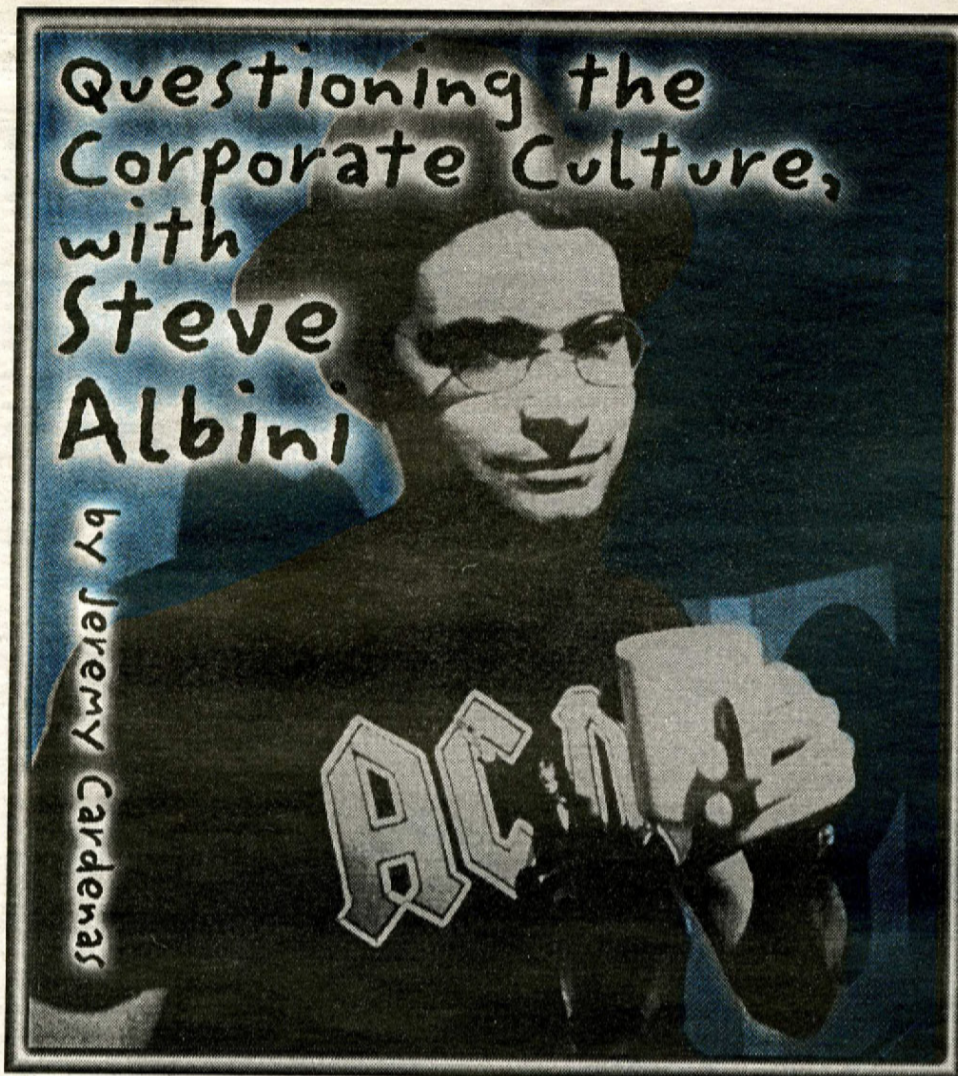
We're here to show that you don't have to suffer to change.

SLUG: A joyous revolution?

Dennis: Yeah! Why not? We want people to be ball-out, and sort of be captured by the whole feeling of excitement!

-Shame Shady aka Old'sCool





I'm not going to waste your time with some big introduction for Steve Albini. He is a producer and a musician. You have probably heard some of the albums he's recorded. Two of my Albini recorded favorites are the Pixies' *Surfer Rosa* and Nirvana's *In Utero*. His band, Shellac, is one of the best bands you've never heard, and he likes it that way. Find his music and appreciate it. This is the key to being a genuine fan as opposed to a follower of pop culture dictated trends. He has written one of the most critical and honest articles about the music business I have ever read titled *The Problem with Music* originally printed in *MaximumRockandRoll* in 1998. He has strong opinions, so we here at SLUG would like you to have the opportunity to enjoy them. If they happen to spark a revelation, you may become a super-ethical indie legend—just don't forget from whence your inspiration came.

SLUG: First some questions about Shellac. With this band, why have you generally scorned promotion and advertising?

Steve: It's not so much a stance that the band is taking, it's more that we do not want to be a part of the aggressive promotion of bands and personalities. It seems like whenever a band puts out a record, immediately it is thrust in front of you. This intrusion into all of our lives stems from people trying to sell 'things,' not only records, but 'things' of all kinds. It seems like people are constantly trying to direct your attention toward something, and we've all occasionally felt like that is invasive and irritating. For our own peace of mind, we don't want to be a part of that. We would rather accept the fact that we reach fewer people and sell fewer records. We feel good about not intruding upon people the way that aggressive promotion intrudes upon our lives all the time.

SLUG: How does the Touch and Go label feel about the way you do things?

Steve: Philosophically, Touch and Go, as a record label, and Shellac, as a band, are like two peas in a pod. Corey Rusk founded this record label as part of the punk rock/hardcore underground, so in those circumstances and in that medium, nobody really wanted to be a part of the mainstream

culture. Everyone sort of accepted that we were outside of that. So the record label has absolutely no problem with us not promoting the records or the band. In fact, it makes life very easy for them. When they have a million things to do in terms of promoting a band, getting a record out, getting review copy solicited or all that sort of thing, they just take us off the list and don't worry about us. It frees up a lot of their time and energy for bands that want to be more actively promoted. I feel good about that. I feel like instead of being this band "that takes up all the time and energy of the record label's staff," we make their lives easier. It carries through, not just from the promotion aspect, but in other areas like manufacturing and production. We don't ever expect a specific release date, we don't tour commensurate with the timing of the record release, so we don't have an agenda that forces people to work late. I don't begrudge anybody else for thinking another way. I mean, there's the perspective that if you're doing something with a band that you want as many people to hear it as possible. I don't hold that perspective, but I can understand it and I don't begrudge anyone else for feeling that way.

SLUG: There are very few bands that actually do that. On a mainstream level, what do you think about the members of a band like Tool, who, minimize their appearance and personality to maintain a certain amount of focus on their music?

Steve: Well, I can't speak for them, but my perception of Tool is that they're just like every other band. I don't actually consider anything they do as being dramatically different from anybody else. I realize that we're talking about shades of gray, and so possibly, from their perspective, perhaps they're doing something that's very selfless and very unabsorbed. I don't know, maybe they are making some sort of a stand in the circles that they travel. It's just that from my perspective as an outsider, they seem to be just like any other band.

SLUG: And they still cash a big paycheck at the end of the day....

Steve: I have absolutely no qualms about a band making money. I think a band making money at what they do is the most fantastic and rare situation there is. If a band is making money by being a band, then god bless 'em, they're the one in a million. I have no reservations about a band making money.

SLUG: Well, I didn't mean it offensively.

Steve: I know, but all the bands that I admire, like Crass, the X, or Fugazi, all these bands make money doing what they're doing, and that's testament to the way that they do things. You can do things in a non-exploitative way. You can do things in a non-selfish or non-'industry-standard' manner and still make it. You can make up your own rules and by conducting yourself honorably, you can still make money. It's a pervasive argument for people that do things in the exploitative 'industry-standard' fashion and who say, "Well, we want to make a living at it, and we want to make money, so we have to do this...." Bands like Shellac, Fugazi, and the X, and all these other bands that don't operate that way prove that you don't need to do things the standard way to make money. Shellac makes loads of money. We're non-exploitative in that we don't take advantage of our position and that we don't try to take advantage of our fans or our record label. We don't try to "work the system" the way we could if we only wanted to siphon out money. We make money by operating efficiently and by not over spending on anything, and by being reasonable and rational about all of our decisions. I think that making money is kind of a convenient excuse for this sort of 'rock star' type behavior, and it really isn't a valid excuse.

SLUG: How relevant is your 1998 MMR article, *The Problem with Music* in the year 2000 (see inset)? Do you think the music industry has changed its' tactics for seducing and exploiting new talent very much since then?



Steve: Well, within the mainstream music business and in regard to record labels that sign artists to contracts for an extended period of time, I think that things have gotten worse. Especially in terms of the band's proportional payment—things have gotten dramatically worse. Record royalty base rates have fallen dramatically. The total number of exclusions in contracts has increased, the percentage of payments has decreased, and accounting periods have lengthened. All of those marginal things have gotten worse for bands in the main-

stream world. In the independent sphere, outside the mainstream, things have stayed basically the same or gotten easier. The Internet provides an easier means of promotion and sales for independent bands and labels. The Internet lowers things like office costs by keeping telephone usage down, and that makes it easier. The fact that the mainstream music business now is almost exclusively selling records that none of us care about means that there is no crossover. Independent bands and labels now have absolutely no reason to advertise in publications like *Rolling Stone*, *SPIN*, or those skateboarding magazines. There is still an underground and there is still a mainstream, just the way there has been for the twenty years previous to this 'alternative' rock era.

SLUG: How do you feel about labels that may promote themselves or their image as 'independent' while having major label backing?

Steve: I don't think the labels promote themselves. They try to create an image that is based on a few tangibles like the way that their ads appear, the types of gigs that the bands play, or the way that they're promoted. Labels can't do interviews... (Laughs).

SLUG: What do you think of bands that try to 'shop' themselves out to record labels? Do you think this is a productive way of doing things or should they just concentrate on doing things for themselves and see what comes of it?

Steve: That's a mentality that you either have or you don't. The people that have that mentality will behave that way regardless of what happens, and people who don't will never be convinced. I don't know if that mentality is even worth debating because the results are so evident. Either the members of a band go through the effort of trying to make themselves popular and desirable or they don't. The net result is how you evaluate it. In some instances, obviously, a band wouldn't have 'shopped themselves out' if they didn't have that mentality or that self-promotional streak. They wouldn't do anything. But in some instances, I think it's an unnecessary bit of baggage for the band.

SLUG: How can a new band circumvent that and get themselves to a larger audience?

Steve: Well, the question that you're asking presupposes that the band wants to get to a bigger audience. I think that's the fundamental difference. There are some people that play music for it's own sake, so an audience, if there is one, will gravitate towards them of it's own attraction. If you put flypaper down, flies will eventually stick to it, you know? If you make a flyswatter, maybe you'll get a few more flies. I feel like if the band's members are making their music for their own entertainment, and to please themselves, then at

least they will get that much enjoyment out of it. If other people discover them through word of mouth or stumble across their music, then those people will genuinely appreciate the band. That's the band's natural audience. Whereas, if this band is thrust in front of people who may or may not give a damn about them, then whatever opinions those people form will not necessarily be closely held. These people won't become dedicated, sincere fans. These people might be momentarily interested in the band and they might be tricked into buying

a record or a T-shirt, but I don't think that is any way to build a natural fan base.

SLUG: It's more like a pop-cultural gravitation.

Steve: Yeah. Look at the bands that have survived. I don't mean for two years, I mean for twenty years. Bands that have developed a rabid following, a hard core following. Those bands are, generally speaking, not the bands that have gone out of their way to promote themselves. Those are the bands that do what they do exclusively for their own tastes, to please themselves. The genuine nature of their music is what attracted dedicated fans.

SLUG: Like *The Jesus Lizard*—I think that they have a rabid following based upon the shows and music rather than any image of the band.

Steve: Right, so using that band as an example, they went through a period where they were trying to promote themselves to an 'outsider' audience, an audience outside their natural fan base. They did these tours like Lollapalooza, or opening for *Rage Against the Machine*, *Ministry*, and *Bush*, and thrust themselves in front of an audience that wouldn't necessarily appreciate them. I don't think that their core fan base increased at all because of that effort. It was a much more inefficient means of working, I think that led to a sense of dissatisfaction within the band, so ultimately the band had to stop. I don't think that their natural following changed through this very aggressive effort to promote themselves to a different audience. That is an example of a band that still has a base of dedicated fans despite the band's unproductive efforts to promote themselves to a mainstream audience.

SLUG: What do you think of bands that seem to be produced to attract the mainstream audience? Take *Blink-182* as an example, they started out independent, then signed with a major label, and now are one of the bands that are most aggressively promoted to the mainstream audience. This creates a whole sub-genre that emulates their sound. Now there are at least ten rip-offs of that 'pop punk' thing that had been done for years, but wasn't commercially viable.

Steve: I can't specifically write off any band. I know, for example, that the members of *Blink* were together long before they signed with a big record label. They were a band and they were putting out records independently, so I can't second-guess their motives. There are bands that have been put together specifically to sound like *Blink*. There have been bands that are comprised of people who have been kicking around in five or six different bands over the years that used to sound like *Nirvana*, then they sounded like *Pearl Jam*, then they sounded like *Korn* and now they're sounding like *Third Eye Blind* or whatever. There are bands that adopt these personas one after another until somebody buys it and at face value it seems to be the most insincere approach imaginable. I can't name any one band and say that they're insincere and phony, because I don't know what their motives are. I think *Blink* might very well be genuine about what they're doing. They certainly haven't done what, for example, *Sugar Ray* did, where they changed from being a straight up pop-punk rock band to being a dance pop band with Latin and hip-hop undertones. That's a complete paradigm shift within that band and it makes the listener curious as to why that shift occurred, but even in that situation I can't say with certainty that they're being phony because maybe their tastes just changed. I don't know.

SLUG: What is the biggest factor that determines which bands you work with in your recording studio?

Steve: I basically try not to say, "No." If a

band approaches me and they're genuine about wanting to do a record, and it's not a political move on their record label's part to get me involved, and I think I can do a good job, then I'll do it. I keep in mind the style, people, and motivation behind the music. The amount of money that I get paid doesn't matter at all. It doesn't even enter into the discussion.

SLUG: Do you use some of the money that you earn from your larger projects to kind of 'filter' down so that you can record bands that might not be able to afford production costs?

Steve: A lot of people make that assertion, but I don't. Not consciously, anyway. Some people have pictured me as some sort of a Robin Hood character, where I'm sort of screwing the big bands to pay for the little bands, but I honestly haven't had that motivation enter my mind. In all honesty, I approach each thing that I do of it's own nature as an individual event. If a band approaches me about doing their record, I'll do it if I feel like I can do it and I feel like everyone is being genuine about the request, then I'll do it. If a band approaches me and I smell a rat somewhere, you know, if I feel like the reason they want to do it isn't genuine, then I'll probably decline. Seriously, that's the only criterion. There really isn't some sort of Robin Hood mentality in play at all. If a record is so stylistically or conceptually out of my range of experience, then I won't do it. If a band approached me to do a dance pop album or a boy band or one of those cute girl records, I wouldn't have the slightest idea about how to do that stuff. I've never done anything like that. From a technical standpoint, I think I could pull it off, but why involve me. I don't have any taste for that kind of music, so that sort of thing would be pointless.

SLUG: Do you produce a lot of your own albums?

Steve: All *Shellac* albums have been produced by the band itself. Bob and I are both engineers, so the technical aspect of it is covered pretty well. The aesthetic angle comes from a sort of 'group' mentality. Everyone has things to say and things that they want observed in this band. There really isn't a 'big cheese,' there really isn't one boss.

SLUG: Was Bob an engineer prior to being in this band or has that come from working with you?

Steve: Yeah, Bob's training is in electrical engineering; he used to be a radio engineer. He has worked in studio installation and things like that. He has been recording albums for years.

SLUG: As a musician, I find it difficult to juggle work and touring sometimes. Considering your expansive work schedule, has that problem affected your band at all?

Steve: I have to disagree. I had a straight job for years. From when I got out of college through about 1986, something like that, I had a full time, 40 hour per week, job. I had so much fucking free time it was unreal. I had weekends off. I had every evening free. I mean, every evening I could do whatever I wanted. I had holidays, oh boy, what a fantastic lifestyle that was. Yeah, having a job is great. There are times when I wish for the days when I had a job. Think about it—if your band has to pay your rent, then you will do anything to get by. The end of the month is coming, you don't have any money, fuck it, play a wedding, you know? Learn "Proud Mary" and go play somebody's wedding. You will whore yourself to an unbelievable degree just to pay rent. If you're a professional musician, and you don't do anything else, then you've suddenly removed yourself from that notion that

your music is not beholden to anything, because your music is instantly beholden to paying your rent.

SLUG: I've never thought of my having a

A Cross-Section of the Steve Albini discography

Alternative TV, The Amps, Ativin, The Auteurs, Bedhead, Bewitched, Big Black, The Big Boys, Bitch Magnet, Brainiac, The Breeders, Brise-Glace, Bush, Cheap Trick, Cheer-Accident, Chevelle, Chisel Drill Hammer, Cinerama, Chris Connelly, Tony Conrad, Cordelia's Dad, Crain, Crow, Dazzling Killmen, Dianogah, Dirty Three, Dis, Don Caballero, Eclectics, 18th Dye, Ein Heit, The Ex, Faucet, Filibuster, The Fleshtones, Flogging Molly, Flour, The Frogs, Robbie Fulks, Gastr del Sol, Great Unraveling, Guided by Voices, P.J. Harvey, Helmet, Hosemobile, Jawbreaker, Killdozer & Ritual, Les Thugs, Lizard Music, P.W. Long's Reelfoot, Low, Man Dingo, Man or Astro-man?, Melt-Banana, A Minor Forest, Morsel, Naked Raygun, Neurosis, Nine Inch Nails, Nirvana, Will Oldham, Jimmy Page & Robert Plant, Palace Music, Pansy Division, Pegboy, Pezz, Phoenix Thunderstone, Pigface, The Pixies, Plush, Poster Children, Rapeman, Rosa Mota, Sandy Duncan's Eye, Fred Schneider, Scrawl, Screeching Weasel, Shellac, Silkworm, Silver Apples, Slint, Smog, Space Streakings, Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, Spider Virus, Squirrel Bait, Steel Pole Bath tub, Storm & Stress, Tad, Tar, Teenage Frames, Tortoise, The Traitors, Union Carbide Productions, Union, In Terminus GA, Usherhouse, Ut, Uzeda, The Wedding Present, Shannon Wright, The Young Dubliners, Zeni Geva.

The above information is all taken from www.allmusic.com.

Steve Albini is also set to produce the *Breeders'* reunion CD in 2001.

full time job as being productive to my band's agenda. I usually think the opposite, but...

Steve: That's exactly the perspective that I take on it. I think that it frees the band up so dramatically. I mean, we don't really have to care if anybody likes us or not. We're not living off of the band, so if we put out a record and it stinks, and nobody likes it, it doesn't affect us at all. We're not going to go hungry, you know? Any band that is in this situation never has the thought enter their mind, "Is this going to be popular?" or "Is this going to be successful?" because it doesn't fucking matter.

SLUG: And it frees you up creatively to do whatever you want....

Steve: Yeah, the most important thing about being in a band is that you get to do whatever comes to mind. And if you have to worry about making rent, then you don't have that luxury of doing whatever comes to mind. Literally, all you can do is make sure that you have enough money coming in. Suddenly it becomes really important how much money you make at each gig. Suddenly it becomes really important how many records you sell. That stuff directly affects your standard of living.

SLUG: Do you see any improvement in the ability to network on an underground level due to improved technology, i.e. the Internet?

Steve: I have to say that, for me, it's precisely the same as it's always been. You find your own connections, you make your own contacts, and before long you have a phone book full of people that you can use reliably. The more times you pass through, the more things that you do, the easier it is.

SLUG: Have you passed through Salt Lake City before?

Steve: We've never played there. We don't play the West Coast too much because the drive is so long, and there's not much between here and there.

SLUG: Well, hopefully we'll see you here someday. Thanks for talking to me Steve, we'll see you.

Steve: Sure. Bye.

There you have it. Now, do me a favor and try to do something for your art. Being an apathetic slob isn't going to cut it anymore....



Photo by Gail Butensky

the problem with music

by steve albiati
excerpted from Baffler No. 5

Whenever I talk to a band who are about to sign with a major label, I always end up thinking of them in a particular context. I imagine a trench, about four feet wide and five feet deep, maybe sixty yards long, filled with runny, decaying shit. I imagine these people, some of them good friends, some of them barely acquaintances, at one end of this trench. I also imagine a faceless industry lackey at the other end, holding a fountain pen and a contract waiting to be signed.

Nobody can see what's printed on the contract. It's too far away, and besides, the shit stench is making everybody's eyes water. The lackey shouts to everybody that the first one to swim the trench gets to sign the contract. Everybody dives in the trench and they struggle furiously to get to the other end. Two people arrive simultaneously and begin wrestling furiously, clawing each other and dunking each other under the shit. Eventually, one of them capitulates, and there's only one contestant left. He reaches for the pen, but the Lackey says, "Actually, I think you need a little more development. Swim it again, please. Backstroke."

And he does, of course.

I. A&R Scouts

Every major label involved in the hunt for new bands now has on staff a high-profile point man, an "A&R" rep who can present a comfortable face to any prospective band. The initials stand for "Artist and Repertoire," because historically, the A&R staff would select artists to record music that they had also selected, out of an available pool of each. This is still the case, though not openly.

These guys are universally young [about the same age as the bands being wooed], and nowadays they always have some obvious underground rock credibility flag they can wave. Lyle Preslar, former guitarist for Minor Threat, is one of them. Terry Tolkin, former NY independent booking agent and assistant manager at Touch and Go is one of them. Al Smith, former soundman at CBGB is one of them. Mike Gitter, former editor of XXX magazine and contributor to Rip, Kerrang and other lowbrow rags is one of them. Many of the annoying turds who used to staff college radio stations are in their ranks as well.

There are several reasons A&R scouts are always young. The explanation usually copped-to is that the scout will be "hip" to the current musical "scene." A more important reason is that the bands will intuitively trust someone they think is a peer, and who speaks fondly of the same formative rock and roll experiences.

The A&R person is the first person to make contact with the band, and as such is the first person to promise them the moon. Who better to promise them the moon than an idealistic young turk who expects to be

calling the shots in a few years, and who has had no previous experience with a big record company. Hell, he's as naive as the band he's duping. When he tells them no one will interfere in their creative process, he probably even believes it.

When he sits down with the band for the first time, over a plate of angel hair pasta, he can tell them with all sincerity that when they sign with company X, they're really signing with him and he's on their side. Remember that great, gig I saw you at in '85? Didn't we have a blast?

By now all rock bands are wise enough to be suspicious of music industry scum. There is a pervasive caricature in popular culture of a portly, middle aged ex-hipster talking a mile-a-minute, using outdated jargon and calling everybody "baby." After meeting "their" A&R guy, the band will say to themselves and everyone else, "He's not like a record company guy at all! He's like one of us." And they will be right. That's one of the reasons he was hired.

These A&R guys are not allowed to write contracts. What they do is present the band with a letter of intent, or "deal memo," which loosely states some terms, and affirms that the band will sign with the label once a contract has been agreed on.

The spookiest thing about this harmless sounding little "memo," is that it is, for all legal purposes, a binding document. That is, once the band sign it, they are under obligation to conclude a deal with the label. If the label presents them with a contract that the band don't want to sign, all the label has to do is wait. There are a hundred other bands willing to sign the exact same contract, so the label is in a position of strength.

These letters never have any term of expiration, so the band remain bound by the deal memo until a contract is signed, no matter how long that takes. The band cannot sign to another label or even put out its own material unless they are released from their agreement, which never happens. Make no mistake about it: once a band has signed a letter of intent, they will either eventually sign a contract that suits the label or they will be destroyed.

One of my favorite bands was held hostage for the better part of two years by a slick young "He's not like a label guy at all, A&R rep, on the basis of such a deal memo. He had failed to come through on any of his promises (something he did with similar effect to another well-known band), and so the band wanted out. Another label expressed interest, but when the A&R man was asked to release the band, he said he would need money or points, or possibly both, before he would consider it.

The new label was afraid the price would be too dear, and they said no thanks. On the cusp of making their signature album, an excellent band, humiliated, broke up from the stress and the many months of inactivity.

II. There's This Band

There's this band. They're pretty ordinary, but they're also pretty good, so they've attracted some

attention. They're signed to a moderate-sized "independent" label owned by a distribution company, and they have another two albums owed to the label.

They're a little ambitious. They'd like to get signed by a major label so they can have some security—you know, get some good equipment, tour in a proper tour bus—nothing fancy, just a little reward for all the hard work.

To that end, they got a manager. He knows some of the label guys, and he can shop their next project to all the right people. He takes his cut, sure, but it's only 15%, and if he can get them signed then it's money well spent. Anyway, it doesn't cost them anything if it doesn't work. 15% of nothing isn't much!

One day an A&R scout calls them, says he's "been following them for a while now," and when their manager mentioned them to him, it just "clicked." Would they like to meet with him about the possibility of working out a deal with his label? Wow. Big Break time.

They meet the guy, and y'know what—he's not what they expected from a label guy. He's young and dresses pretty much like the band does. He knows all their favorite bands. He's like one of them. He tells them he wants to go to bat for them, to try to get them everything they want. He says anything is possible with the right attitude. They conclude the evening by taking home a copy of a deal memo they wrote out and signed on the spot.

The A&R guy was full of great ideas, even talked about using a name producer. Butch Vig is out of the question—he wants 100 g's and three points, but they can get Don Fleming for \$30,000 plus three points. Even that's a little steep, so maybe they'll go with that guy who used to be in David Letterman's band. He only wants three points. Or they can have just anybody record it [like Warton Tiers, maybe—cost you 5 or 10 grand] and have Andy Wallace remix it for 4 grand a track plus 2 points. It was a lot to think about.

Well, they like this guy and they trust him. Besides, they already signed the deal memo. He must have been serious about wanting them to sign. They break the news to their current label, and the label manager says he wants them to succeed, so they have his blessing. He will need to be compensated, of course, for the remaining albums left on their contract, but he'll work it out with the label himself. Sub Pop made millions from selling off Nirvana, and Twin Tone hasn't done bad either: 50 grand for the Babes and 60 grand for the Poster Children—without having to sell a single additional record. It'll be something modest. The new label doesn't mind, so long as it's recoupable out of royalties.

Well, they get the final contract, and it's not quite what they expected. They figure it's better to be safe than sorry and they turn it over to a lawyer—one who says he's experienced in entertainment law—and he hammers out a few bugs. They're still not sure about it, but the lawyer says he's seen a lot of contracts, and theirs is pretty good. They'll be getting a great royalty:

13% [less a 10% packaging deduction]. Wasn't it Buffalo Tom that were only getting 12% less 10%?

Whatever. The old label only wants 50 grand, and no points. Hell, Sub Pop got 3 points when they let Nirvana go. They're signed for four years, with options on each year, for a total of over a million dollars! That's a lot of money in any man's English. The first year's advance alone is \$250,000. Just think about it, a quarter-million, just for being in a rock band!

Their manager thinks it's a great deal, especially the large advance. Besides, he knows a publishing company that will take the band on if they get signed, and even give them an advance of 20 grand, so they'll be making that money too. The manager says publishing is pretty mysterious, and nobody really knows where all the money comes from, but the lawyer can look that contract over too. Hell, it's free money.

Their booking agent is excited about the band signing to a major. He says they can maybe average \$1,000 or \$2,000 a night from now on. That's enough to justify a five week tour, and with tour support, they can use a proper crew, buy some good equipment and even get a tour bus! Buses are pretty expensive, but if you figure in the price of a hotel room for everybody in the band and crew, they're actually about the same cost. Some bands (like Therapy? and Sloan and Stereolab) use buses on their tours even when they're getting paid only a couple hundred bucks a night, and this tour should earn at least a grand or two every night. It'll be worth it. The band will be more comfortable and will play better.

The agent says a band on a major label can get a merchandising company to pay them an advance on t-shirt sales! Ridiculous! There's a gold mine here! The lawyer should look over the merchandising contract, just to be safe.

They get drunk at the signing party. Polaroids are taken and everybody looks thrilled. The label picked them up in a limo. They decided to go with the producer who used to be in Letterman's band. He had these technicians come in and tune the drums for them and tweak their amps and guitars. He had a guy bring in a slew of expensive old vintage microphones. Boy, were they "warm." He even had a guy come in and check the phase of all the equipment in the control room! Boy, was he professional. He used a bunch of equipment on them and by the end of it, they all agreed that it sounded very "punchy," yet "warm."

All that hard work paid off. With the help of a video, the album went like hotcakes! They sold a quarter million copies!

Here is the math that will explain just how fucked they are:

These figures are representative of amounts that appear in record contracts daily. There's no need to skew the figures to make the scenario look bad, since real-life examples more than abound. Income is underlined, expenses are not.

Advance:	\$250,000
Manager's cut:	\$37,500
Legal fees:	\$10,000
Recording Budget:	\$150,000
Producer's advance:	\$50,000
Studio fee:	\$52,500
Drum, Amp, Mic and Phase "Doctors":	\$3,000
Recording tape:	\$8,000
Equipment rental:	\$5,000
Cartage and Transportation:	\$5,000
Lodgings while in studio:	\$10,000
Catering:	\$3,000
Mastering:	\$10,000
Tape copies, reference CDs, shipping tapes, misc expenses:	\$2,000
Video budget:	\$30,000
Cameras:	\$8,000
Crew:	\$5,000
Processing and transfers:	\$3,000
Offline:	\$2,000
Online editing:	\$3,000
Catering:	\$1,000
Stage and construction:	\$3,000
Copies, couriers, transportation:	\$2,000
Director's fee:	\$3,000
Promotional photo shoot and duplication:	\$2,000

Band fund:	\$15,000
New fancy professional drum kit:	\$5,000
New fancy professional guitars (2):	\$3,000
New fancy professional guitar amp rigs (2):	\$4,000
New fancy potato-shaped bass guitar:	\$1,000
New fancy rack of lights bass amp:	\$1,000
Rehearsal space rental:	\$500
Big blowout party for their friends:	\$500
Tour expense (5 weeks):	\$50,875
Bus:	\$25,000
Crew (3):	\$7,500
Food and per diems:	\$7,875
Fuel:	\$3,000
Consumable supplies:	\$3,500
Wardrobe:	\$1,000
Promotion:	\$3,000
Tour gross income:	\$50,000
Agent's cut:	\$7,500
Manager's cut:	\$7,500
Merchandising advance:	\$20,000
Manager's cut:	\$3,000
Lawyer's fee:	\$1,000
Publishing advance:	\$20,000
Manager's cut:	\$3,000
Lawyer's fee:	\$1,000

Record sales:	250,000 @ \$12 = \$3,000,000 gross
retail revenue Royalty (13% of 90% of retail):	\$351,000
Less advance:	\$250,000
Producer's points: (3% less \$50,000 advance)	\$40,000
Promotional budget:	\$25,000
Recoupable buyout from previous label:	\$50,000
Net royalty:	(-\$14,000)
Record company income:	
Record wholesale price	\$6.50 x 250,000 =
\$1,625,000 gross income	
Artist Royalties:	\$351,000
Deficit from royalties:	\$14,000
Manufacturing, packaging and distribution @ \$2.20	
per record:	\$550,000
Gross profit:	\$710,000
The Balance Sheet: This is how much each player got	
paid at the end of the game.	
Record company:	\$710,000
Producer:	\$90,000
Manager:	\$51,000
Studio:	\$52,500

Previous label:	\$50,000
Agent:	\$7,500
Lawyer:	\$12,000
Band member net income each:	\$4,031.25

The band is now 1/4 of the way through its contract, has made the music industry more than 3 million dollars richer, but is in the hole \$14,000 on royalties. The band members have each earned about 1/3 as much as they would working at a 7-11, but they got to ride in a tour bus for a month.

The next album will be about the same, except that the record company will insist they spend more time and money on it. Since the previous one never "recouped," the band will have no leverage, and will oblige.

The next tour will be about the same, except the merchandising advance will have already been paid, and the band, strangely enough, won't have earned any royalties from their t-shirts yet. Maybe the t-shirt guys have figured out how to count money like record company guys.

Some of your friends are probably already this fucked.

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NO USE FOR A NAME

By Shane Farver

I stand outside of the entrance of Bricks in the frigid air. I watch my breath raise in plumes up to the November sky. I wait for the guest list to arrive. Finally, someone opens the door and

I enter. I take a quick glance around the empty club which will soon be filled with a sea of people. I turn to find myself face to face with Dave Nassie. He asks for a light. I oblige. We meander to the bar area. We sit in the company of pool tables and video games. As he takes a slow drag off his cigarette, Dave Nassie tells me his experiences as the lead guitarist and newest member of the well-known punk band, No Use For a Name. They began in 1987 with remaining members Tony Sly (vocals/guitar) and Rory Koff (drums) as well as two other original members. It was during these salad days that they found their unique name. Nassie recalls, "They (Tony and Rory) were doing their first set thirteen years ago and someone asked them what their name was. They replied, "We don't have a name." It was that easy.

Since that day in '87 No Use has made several changes. First, they replaced both their original bassist and original guitarist. They picked up Matt Riddle (bass) who had previously played in Face to Face and Pulley. They also acquired Dave Nassie who has played with them for close to a year and a half. The addition of new band members isn't the only change No Use For a Name has made over the years. Second, they changed their musical style. Dave Nassie shared his feelings with me about *More Betterness*, the newest album. "On the new record, we made a deliberate effort to be more melodic and use different instrumentation. We tried to not let things pass by as quickly. We tried to say a little bit more in our songs. When I asked Dave Nassie what his influences were, I expected to hear the stereotypical list of influential punk bands—you know, Dead Kennedys, Social Distortion, Bad Religion, etc. I was surprised to learn that this was not the case. He mentioned a diverse assortment: Van Halen, Metallica, Slayer, and Stevie Ray Vaughn. This wide array of musical influences has helped Nassie contribute to the melodic sound of No Use For a Name. Most of us believe that life has some sort of deep meaning, however Dave Nassie's view on life is a simple one. "I think I'm here to play guitar, shed a different perspective, and make people forget about their problems for an hour and ten minutes," he said. I proceeded to ask him what No Use For a Name hopes to accomplish. He replied, "We're four guys trying to make the best music possible. You can almost make yourself immortal, to a certain degree, if you document something that's real. We don't want to shortchange our fans." As we finished our interview, I asked Dave what I would see when No Use For a Name appeared on stage. He replied, "Four people trying their best to stay warm on a freezing-cold stage in a room that smells like burnt metal. Oh, and one or two of us may be drunk." We had a good laugh, shook hands, and went our separate ways. By the time I reentered the stage area, the crowd was growing. What followed was one of the best performances I have attended for quite some time. Dynamite Boy, One Man Army, and Pulley all put on excellent performances and No Use For a Name was the perfect finale. Crowd surfers dove over my head as I chanted familiar No Use lyrics with the rest of the fans. Amidst all the chaos I caught a glimpse of Dave Nassie thrumming chords with explosive energy and I thought to myself, "If any of you guys are cold or drunk you hide it well, very very well."

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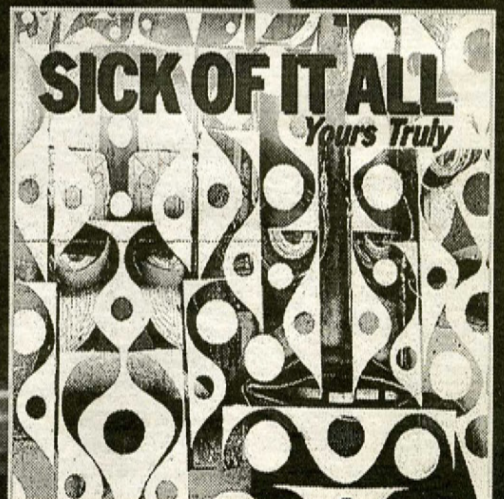
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This month we introduce a brand new feature in SLUG, focussing on zines. Zineland is a strange territory, full of fascinations and oddities. Do It Yourself has long been the mantra for independent musicians, and in publishing it denotes the province of the "zine." But what is a zine? It's one of those words that gets tossed around a lot but begs for definition. It's not the same as a magazine, obviously. You wouldn't call Rolling Stone a zine, would you? The word originally was short for "fanzine," or publication produced by fans of virtually anything, from a rock star or movie hero to favorite snack cakes, for sheer love of the subject matter, not making money, since they usually don't. Zines are usually thought of as pretty cheaply made, either on inexpensive newsprint or even xeroxed by hand, though that isn't always the case. There's a gray area—if you look in the **Zine Guide**, a zine that serves as a kind of "magazine," consisting of nothing but reviews of other zines, you'll see mentions of publications like music mags **Magnet** and **Big Takeover**, and gonzo artist Robert Williams' **Juxtapoz**, all glossies that take in their share of ads.

The common denominator is self-expression—a zine truly serves as a vehicle of expression for the publisher's thoughts, feelings and vision, no matter how twisted, rather than being some corporate shill to sell ads. SLUG obviously doesn't fall into the zine category, because we are here to take you suckers for all we can get. But if your pet hobby horse turns into a lucrative source of income, what's wrong with that? We talked to some zinemongers, local and national, to find out what it is about zine-ing that makes them virtually sweat ink to get their work on the page.

First off, in the electronic age, when almost everybody has a webpage, why go to the effort to create a zine at all? "Being up in Portland and Eugene, and seeing how many kids put out publications, and how strong the scene is, I wanted to put a little more effort in Salt Lake underground publications, because, obviously, it's not that strong," maintains Trent Call, who publishes **Swinj**, a local zine with a strong hip-hop/graffiti art influence. "It seems more personal to physically own a copy. My friend Mayo is in the process of converting **Swinj** into digital form. **Swinj** exposes few of the many SLC local artists, in more of an underground format, and it also resembles a sketchbook of some sort. Even though it's a lot of work, it's quite fun to produce."

There's also an overtly political quotient to **Swinj**, featuring articles on protests against WTO and features on Ralph Nader. "Politically, I try to stay away from large companies, supporting smaller ones. I agreed with a lot of what Nader was about, and thoroughly enjoy reading **Adbusters** (an anti-advertising magazine). Understanding our country's media propaganda and how it alters the public. My views influence **Swinj** possibly by supporting some of the locally owned shops around town, not changing my form of art for the gain of income, supporting the music and imagery that my friends create and being open to many styles."

Tom Motley is director of the **Hector** cartoonist collective, based in Denver. They produce comics to send to publications all over the place, in addition to their own occasional zine, and he says, "My mission is to present to the world the fruits of my musings, and I've found cartooning to be the clearest way to do that. Since my skills are put into the service of my own oddball ideas, instead of serving some publisher's agenda or perceived market, the backwaters of the zine world provide my surest outlet." Motley is a ringer for singer Wayne Coyne of the **Flaming Lips**, and he's about as eccentric.

"For many years, I've drawn inspiration from the work of the French Oulipo writers, trying to apply their methods (like writing an entire novel without using the letter "E") to the comic strip supplies an inexhaustible supply of con-

cepts. There's a culture of self-publishing cartoonists who produce work that's notable for being personal, poetic, casual, and endowed with a simple beauty that sets them above the regular comic market, however unslick their stuff may seem. John Porcellino, Steve Willis, Jenny Zervakis, Ed Pinsent and David Lasky. Whether or not I'll ever belong in that company, I aspire to those values." Maybe not, but Hector has appeared everywhere from exotic zines like **Formaline**, **Exquisite Corpse**, the German zine **Comic Trash**, to the high-falutin' **Review of Contemporary Fiction** and **American Book Review**.

"Collaboration is a big part of what I'm about. My passion is to invent or discover rules and procedures with which to challenge other writers and artists. We write stories in which every word must begin with a given letter of the alphabet, we deal characters and situations from decks of cards, roll dice to determine sex acts, and on like that. I've been particularly excited by some recent collaborations with a Dutch cartoonist named Monobrain who tears out scraps from our cartoons and draws around them. He calls it "sampling.""

Ben Lybarger, an undergraduate student at Kent State/Salem Ohio, has just produced the second installment of **Lethologica**, a literary zine, and also helps his girlfriend, Lisa Donnalley, edit **Rock'n'Roll Purgatory**, a zine devoted to all types of roots music, from rockabilly to surf. "I started **Lethologica** as a kind of blind thrust into the literary world. What motivated me is kind of hard to tell. I guess it would have to do with the desire to be responsible for something in print, something with physical presence that I could claim as mine. I also have an accompanying web site. I think that people bring different assumptions to a web site as opposed to a printed publication, and so many people don't look for poetry or prose on the Internet."

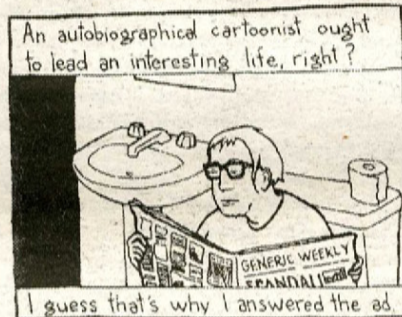
The zine's motto is "writing that gets under your skin," and has already attracted contributions by literary lights such as French writer Raymond Federman, Lance Olson, and Doug Rice, whose controversial fiction was targeted by Congress in the brouhaha over NEA funding. "Lethologica I suppose fills the niche for people who have eclectic tastes, who want something to pop up in a literary mag that shouldn't be there—like a review of the Templars, or an essay meandering through issues related to fetal research and animal rights issues and connections. To me, that makes the reading experience a bit more fun and less predictable. Once I feel **Lethologica** is more aptly titled **Lethargica**, then I will call it quits."

"My other zine, **Rock'n'Roll Purgatory**, is devoted to punk rock, rockabilly, psychobilly, Oil, and surf music. We basically started this one just because we love these types of music and wanted to get involved in promoting it. The free promo CDs were also a big plus, but since this one is very new (first issue September 2000) we don't get a lot of those yet. The web site gets exponentially more hits than the **Lethologica** site and allows for interactivity with bands and other fans. Also, the Internet lets us network with other bands, labels, etc. The web site is a lot of fun to do, and actually aids in the creation of the print zine. Yet the pulp version can be circulated at shows and stores, and is a more sizable accomplishment."

"Next issue of **Lethologica** will feature a panel that Doug Rice (author of *Blood of Mugwump* and *A Good Cuntboy Is Hard To Find*) is putting together to explore relationships between pain, language and body. Also, our tentative Valentine's issue of **R'n'R Purgatory** may include an interview with a professional dominatrix, but that's not confirmed yet." I met Motley, Lybarger and Rice at a literary conference in 1999 at Salem, the Festival of Postmodern Piracy and Transgendered Subjects, at which I presented a story I'd written about the Postmaster General. The conversational icebreaker was my **We Never Sleep** shirt, from a now-defunct alternative Denver mailorder bookstore, which sold, among other

things—zines!

Local cartoonist Richard Visick publishes **Little Monkey**. "What I do differs from a regular zine in the **Little Monkey** is basically just a self-published comic book. I have even heard of some zine makers taking issue with those who call mini comics zines. However all zine makers I have met are quite nice. I like to tell narratives through comic form, and a zine style publication seems the most effective means of distributing those narratives. I have seen comics presented with electronic media, and I believe much of the experience is lost. The physical object of a little book is somehow vital to the experience for me and I really enjoy the culture that surrounds this medium. I have met a lot of inspiring and enjoyable people who make zines. Plus it is fun to trade stuff through the mail."



Visick's work has been seen in **SLUG** and **Proper Gander**, a cartoon zine produced in San Marcos, TX (see next month's feature), but perhaps the most unusual **Little Monkey** was the "Dirty Voyeur" art event at Kilby Court last month. "The Dirty Voyeur centered around a comic narrative of the same name I had drawn. I made up mini comics of the story, but also made slides of each panel and an audio accompaniment. The event also featured drinking, a survey which attempted to pry into the personal lives of those in attendance, and music. I thought of it as an extension of my zine. I was attempting to reference the tone and events that



take place in my stories by creating a sort of art party."

The story of a young cartoonist answering a personal ad from a couple looking for someone to watch their staged lovemaking was hilarious, but also brought up the issue of who the real voyeur is in the artistic experience, the artist, the viewer, or both? "The event was actually my midterm for a sculpture class, and in a way assembling the event dealt with more sculptural issues than assembling my comics. The use of light, sound, space, time, and physicality for example. Feedback was quite positive overall. The survey allowed people the option of being mean and some were, but mostly people seemed to enjoy it. Many of the discussions I had with the attendees centered on issues I'd hoped to raise, so it was definitely successful in that regard. I don't know what my grade will be yet. The class critique went pretty well. However, my teacher is still not convinced that it was sculpture."

Next issue: What do you get when you mix indie rock stars and plastic animals?

Contact **Swinj** magazine at PMB #7, 50 South #25 Main, SLC, UT 84144.

Hector can be reached at PO Box 480463, Denver, CO 80248.

Lethologica's web site is <http://www.geocities.com/lethicon/index.html>, and the physical address is 710 Arch St, Salem OH 44460.

Write to **Little Monkey** at PO Box 521388, SLC, UT 84152.

Send your zines for review to **Zineland**, **SLUG Magazine**, 2225 S. 500 E. #206, SLC, UT 84106.

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Bratmobile
Ladies, Women, and Girls
Kill Rock Star

It's the year 2000 and B-mob's back to stir the gender-bias music world around in their new polished blender. Tim Green (the champs + Nation of Ulysses fame) cleans up the production just enough to emphasize all the great things we love about the Brat and showcase what's new. What's new? Erin + Molly spent the last 6 years since Bratmobile's split in various bands (peechees, cold cold hearts...) actually learning their instruments, as well as practicing vocal harmonies. And while in word the idea of a polished Bratmobile seems blasphemous, Tim Green manages to keep the music loud + the vocals mixed equally (unlike the way Nyk Fry, Paula Abdulled most local bands' demos at Ken's Worlds Best studios in the early '90's.) As if that wasn't enough, Jon Nikki (Gene Defcon, Primadonnas) contributes both bass and keyboards, rounding out the sound. Cheesy Casio sounding keyboards that follow Erin's surf guitar attack - assaulting the song + the listener. Albeit, most importantly, Allison Wolfe's singing is on key. Not that Allison singing off key is bad. She can do no wrong in my

book (speaking of which, have you bought a copy of my poetry book - er, no wait, I'm not Staker;) delivering the anthems with a burlesque/cheerleader savvy, breaking hearts and empowering thousand with lines like:

"At least the guys know if they fuck with me That I'll fuck them up indefinitely I don't know who you think your trying to impress But when you try too hard you get much less You're saying there's a fight, but there's no contest You can say you're better, but you know I'm the best."

I probably don't need to tell the girls to pick this up, but boys do yourself + the world a favor and buy *Ladies, Women, and Girls* Or maybe:

"You're scared of girls just taking things In their own hands and making things All for themselves and not for you."

-lewis ristick

The Helio Sequence
Com-plex
cavity search

The Helio Sequence contains two guys from Portland, Oregon who have perfected the art of song craftsmanship. They sound like a mix of old Verve, Blur, and Spiritualized. I have not taken this c.d. out of the player for a month now. DAMN it's good!

-mike

U2
All That You Can't Leave Behind
 Interscope

You really must hand it to U2. For their label debut on Interscope, they could have done anything. They could have done another greatest hits or b-sides compilation or a remix boxset. Instead, they've gone and made a classic U2 album. Is it because they tend to work with the same producers (Lanois & Eno) or because they are such strong songwriters/musicians? I'm not really sure, and it hardly matters. From the first bars of the amazing "Beautiful Day," you will be hooked.

Whether you view U2 as a socially conscious group, or more importantly, as one of the world's greatest rock 'n roll bands, "All That You Can't Leave Behind," seems to present both stances simultaneously. This is no mean feat. The contagious "Walk On," "Wild Honey," and "New

York" are so catchy, that unless you're reading the lyrics, you don't immediately realize their bold political statements. When Bono sings "Grace makes beauty out of ugly things," on the album's gorgeous closing track, you forget the politics, and get utterly lost in the music.

-Son of Damian

Rainer Maria
A Better Version of Me
 Polynyl Records

Like their namesake, the late 19th/early 20th century German romantic poet Rainer Maria Rilke, this band's lyrics combine the physical with the metaphysical, the infinite with the immediate. "Maybe there's a ceremony written down inside the body, where maybe no one ever sees," croons Caithlin

De Marrais on "Ceremony. Her voice carries such weight that she seems to be simultaneously talking about the body of words, that of music, and the physical world in which we live as a whole. And that sounds a lot like poetry.

-Brian Staker

Gaza Strippers
1000 Watt Confessions
 Lookout Records

It's about damn time that Mister Rick Sims has got up off his ass and blazed forth once again into the music world! Those ignorant listeners, who have no idea who this rock god is, let me set y'all straight towards the divine teachings of the man. Rick Sims used to be the front man for the band **The Didjits**. In the early nineties, they set the stage for a lot of fiery rock n' roll bands to come. After the Didjits explosive break up, Mister Sims joined the **Supersuckers** for a brief stint on the *Scrillicious* album. He left and fell into obscurity, until the emergence of *1000 Watt Confessions*. How good is it? The best fucking thing Sims has ever recorded, (my humble rock critic opinion). A glance at the albums song titles, reveals the general mood of the disc: *Get 'Em Down*, *Catfight*, *Sex and the Drifter*, and *As Long As It Feel Goods*. A must for old fans and for anyone looking for some high octane, fuel injected, lowdown and dirty, rock n' roll. This months best, hands down. Get it!

-Keolar7

GOMEZ
Abandoned Shopping Trolley Hotline
 Virgin

You missed this one! That's right. Go back to the record store and get this vast and varied collection from the British band GOMEZ, a 15 track compilation - featuring 12 previously unavailable recordings including seven unreleased songs, 3 radio sessions and a remix. Although a mixture of odds and ends, this collection stands as a perfect example of what this band is all about and can achieve. GOMEZ stirs their rock with blues and jazz, loopy and rhythmic guitar, drum beats intertwined with subdued key vocals. GOMEZ is about mood and tone, a feel. Music to flop to, space out on, stomp your foot and shake a stick at. This ain't no skinny butt band sounding more British than they truly are, with their earthy, rollicking jams, this 5-piece could easily be mistaken for Yanks. Loose and gritty, occasional more refined, but always free flowing. *Abandoned Shopping Trolley Hotlin'*, documents the vast outpouring from this unique and innovative band.

Initially available with a bonus 5 track EP, "Machismo", which starts out with loopy beats, then swiftly moves through standard GOMEZ fare, and is propelled into a 13.33 minute finale "The Dajon Song". Get these two together while supplies last.

-Loosie Groove

Flatus
Blindsided
 Black Pumpkin Records

Fierce power-punk with two interchanging vocalists, who actually sing well, and write some really great introspective lyrics. This band is carries the banner of punk well into the millennium. I'm kicking myself for missing these guys play at Burt's Tiki Lounge last month; it would have been a helluva show. Flatus hail from the East Coast and it doesn't really show in their music. The pop hooks of the Ramones exemplify the East influence, but there seems to be the West Coast drive propelling the rhythms. For example, 'Responsible Man' reminds me of Agent Orange, 'I'm Drunk' like Pennywise, 'Dealer' of Coffin Break, and 'On the Couch' similar to Face to Face.

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By no means do Flatus blatantly rip-off or obviously imitate these bands, they just have elements that sound similar. These guys have their own bombastic style, energy and punk sound. Almost like a crossing of old and new school, this bands music is posed ready to explode in the ears of any unwary listener. Search this disc out; lovers of real punk will really get off on this one. Guaranteed.

-Keolar7

Schema

(Self-Titled)

5RC Records

This release, with members of Hovercraft joined by Stereolab's Mary Hansen, is trippier than either of those groups, free of the constraints of the latter's quaint 60's French baroque mannerisms. This is the stoner pick of the month, with rhythmic patterns repeated ad infinitum and sound effects up the ying-yang, plus softly spoken vocals that trademark this as "indie." "We Think We're Sane" just about says it all. Hovercraft is touring with occasional appearances by Schema, but that won't happen here.

-Brian Staker

MudVayne

L.D. 50

Epic

Satan is dead. MudVayne are taking her place. Are you ready to get freaked-the-muthafuck-out? On first listen you'll be tempted to dismiss these freaks as Korn wannabes with a slice of Maynard (Tool) thrown in for taste. Sorry girls, but MudVayne do Korn better than Korn. They're like Korn without any radio sensibilities! And instead of crying about their tortured childhood, they dish out a soul-shaking message about the future of progress and humanity's evolution. Complete with new concepts/paradigms about what it means to be human and where we do we go now that our myths of "purpose" and a "higher power" have failed us and no longer serve our development. I aint fuckin' kidding either. This shit is not for fragile minds. I dare you to poke some holes in those blinders, punk. These guys can't be getting any pussy on tour!

- Shame Shady

Rocket 350

Jungebilly

Beatsville Records

People always come up to me at the bar, (favorite residence), and are constantly e-mailing me requesting a list of kick ass rock n' roll and greasy rockabilly. Well, I tell them to read my reviews and if I rave about an artist that I blatantly refer to as falling into those previous music categories, then the person should rush off to their closest music store, pronto. An excellent local store that specializes in ordering indie music that can place your order and get it to you quickly. Which brings me to Rocket 350; you must do whatever it takes to get this impressively fierce psychobilly disc. Think of a more rocking version of rockabilly, for example: old school Rev. Horton Heat, The Amazing Crowns, and Tiger Army. That's what Rocket 350 does, music that's scary to squares and conservatives alike. Music to race, drink, fuck, smoke, and murder to; music to save the soul. All greasers are ordered to burn rubber and race after this very entertaining and energetic new psychobilly release.

-Keolar7

Bowman

Believe

?

Goo- Goo Dolls POO-POO rawk. Very forgettable.

-mike

Damien Jurado

Ghost of David

Sub Pop

"It just so happens I have many concerns," begins "Medication," the lead-off number on singer/songwriter Jurado's third Sub Pop release. It's only the first of a musical set of short stories full of life, love gone wrong, even murder, but also much more mundane subjects, all rendered in a placid yet compelling style reminiscent of Springsteen's Nebraska. As far as spooks, you get the feeling he's seen plenty of them. Hopefully you are weren't too afraid of ghosts to have seen him, conjure or exorcise, December 4 at Kilby Court.

-Brian Staker

Limp Bizkit

Chocolate Starfish and the Hotdog Flavored Water

Interscope/Flip Records

Upon receiving this disc from the evil SLUG boss, I vowed to be very objective and try to give a valid reason for liking or disliking this disc. This takes an open mind, and fortunately I love music enough that I don't care who's popular, sold-out, or what they say in *Rolling Stone* or *Spin*. I firmly believe that you can like a band for their music, not by liking the members of the band because of what their big mouth says. To set the record straight, I remember seeing Limp Bizkit performing for one of their first times on the third warped tour and thought that they kicked ass. Their first disc was one of my favorite discs of the year. Then the second release lowered my approval. It was clearly a pop record written to hook a more accessible audience. For this, I lost respect for the Bizkit; their compromising of musical integrity. This brings me to the new disc: it's fat!! Maybe, I should be cool and say it sucks, the Bizkit has no musical talent. If I said that, I'd be selling my musical integrity short, no way. This disc is a return to the raw and abrasive sound of their first disc, if not an improvement. Get the new Bizkit if you like them, pass over if you hate them. But if you want fierce, well played, metal-hop music, and have an open mind; then purchase it. (No more Bizkit cuts, they've redeemed themselves; not Mister Durst, he's an open target).

-Keolar7

Hooverphonic

The Magnificent Tree

Epic

With lines like "You are my Autoharp/I push every button on your body" (on the cleverly titled "Autoharp") and song titles like the brilliant "Everytime We Live Together We Die A Bit More," you should know you're in trouble. Once upon a time, Hooverphonic made an impressive album called *A New Stereophonic Sound Spectacular*. There was that wonderful single called "2 Wicky" too. So, Hooverphonic, baby, where did the love go?

I believe this Belgium trio has had a vocalist change or two, and that would presumably



explain the lyrical mess. But even the music has changed too drastically. By "Vinegar & Salt" you think it can't get any worse, until the next track, "Frosted Flake Wood," in which singer Geike Arnaert warns us "For God's sake run away." I'm afraid I heeded her advice before I reached "Pink Fluffy Dinosaurs." Yuck. The tree in the title track may have been magnificent, but nothing else here is.

-Son of Damian

Gentle Waves

Swansong For You

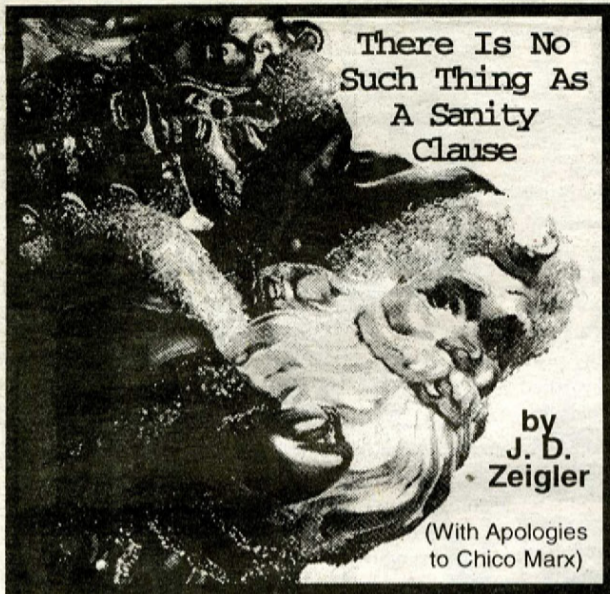
Jeeperster

Gentle Waves is a musical side project by Isobel Campbell of Belle and Sebastian. Her voice is so hushed you have to prick up your ears to hear what she's saying, but the songs are compelling enough that you'll want to. "Partner In Crime" is a swan song indeed, of almost Bronte-like proportions, with lush orchestration. "Loretta Young" is a loving tribute to the actress. This might be easy listening for those who thought Belle and Sebastian had too many decibels, but there's more than meets the eye for those who dis B&S as merely cutesy; there's some darkness here. But don't pick the wrong wardrobe when you listen to this. What the Jam did for mod parkas in their day, B&S have done for thrift store cardigans.

-Brian Staker

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"You said your family was especially dysfunctional at Christmas time," gently prodded Bill's therapist, Dr. Davis. "How does your inner child feel about that?" she asked, handing him a box of Kleenex.

Bill, dry-eyed and annoyed, put the box on the floor. He regretted ever mentioning his childhood. It was a can of worms he didn't care to open, but Dr. Davis had insisted. Now his inner child wanted to kick her in the shin. Instead, because he was an adult, he merely reminded her of what had brought him to therapy in the first place. "Let's get back to that dream I had about my second wife," he suggested.

"You're changing the subject, Bill. You're trying to deny the boy inside."

"Nonsense..." Bill began, but the Doctor cut him off.

"Oops, look at the clock, time's almost up," her tone implying she'd won the argument. "Here's your 'homework' for the week." She handed him a sheet of paper with a border of

Santa Claus heads, then stood up to usher him out of her office.

Feeling like he was getting the bum's rush, Bill tried to read his "assignment" first. But he never was any good at standing up to bossy women, and he was out the door even before he got his coat on. Anyway, he knew that the sheet contained more bullshit getting-in-touch-with-your-inner-child exercises. Dr. Davis had been prescribing them ever since he came for help after his second divorce six months ago.

When he got back to his office, Bill balled up the paper and sank one off the rim of his trash basket. So far all of the assignments had been a waste of trees and time. Once, he was supposed to buy himself a teddy bear. He bought a bottle of good scotch instead. Another time, he was supposed to watch "Snow White and The Seven Dwarves", but he rented "Snow White Does the Seven Dwarves". (He really got in touch with his inner-fifteen year-old that night!) And most disastrously, Dr. Davis had convinced him to call his mother long distance in Boston and ask her to read him a bedtime story over the phone. Christ! The old bat still bitched about it every time he talked to her.

Much better to leave curiosity to cats, Bill decided. He got back to work, intending to catch up on the orders that came in while he was out, but flirtatious Carol from marketing soon interrupted him. She'd been trying to get him in the sack ever since his marriage broke up. Normally Bill would have taken her up on her many offers, but he wanted to resolve some of his "issues" in therapy before getting involved again. Not that this inner child crap had been any help yet.

"Throwing out letters from Santa?" Carol asked, fishing his therapy homework out of the wastebasket. Before Bill could stop her, she unfolded the crumpled paper. "Oh, it's a Christmas to-do list!" she exclaimed happily and began to read aloud.

"Number One, buy a present for someone you really like." She batted her eyes at Bill. "I'm partial to lingerie," she said in a low voice and he grew lightheaded with desire.

"Number Two, go caroling. Caroling? Hmm. That could mean more than one thing," she said archly, then added, "You buy me that lingerie, maybe we can go 'caroling' together."

Bill swallowed hard, trying to control the lust in his voice, "Silk or lace?" he asked.

"Leather," Carol replied, grinning wickedly. "It's a deal," he gasped.

"Not so fast. There's one more. Number Three, sit on Santa's lap." Carol collapsed in a fit of giggles. When she regained control again she said, giving voice to Bill's wildest dreams, "Tell you what, sugar. You sit on Santa's lap and I'll sit on yours. Deal?"

Knowing he should know better, Bill swiftly swept his unresolved issues under the rug where they belonged, and replied, "Deal."

The next Saturday — only seven shopping days left before Christmas, found Bill, with the mini-skirted Carol in his passenger seat, circling the chock-full parking lot of Fashion Place Mall like a satellite doomed to forever orbit, never land.

"Pull over, I'm going to be sick!" Carol dizzily cried on the tenth go round.

Bill immediately stopped in the middle of the lane, heedless of the other cars surrounding him. While Carol hurled lunch onto the

pavement, an unsympathetic mall cop wrote Bill a fifty-dollar ticket for obstructing traffic.

"Where's your Christmas spirit, Officer Scrooge?" Bill shouted sarcastically over the holiday muzak blaring from the lot's loudspeakers. Just as rudely, the departing cop indicated his spirit's direction with his central digit.

After letting Carol off at the mall's entrance, it took Bill another twenty minutes to find a parking spot, one that was so far from the building it may as well have been in Idaho. On the long walk to the mall, the December clouds opened up, releasing not cliché snow, but cold rain. Bill, wearing his suede "date" jacket, got drenched. By the time he met up with Carol, he smelled like a drowned cow, but at least the roses were back in her cheeks. She took his arm and directed him to the "adult" section of a pricey leather goods boutique.

When she skipped off to the dressing room with several thongs looped around her little finger, Bill began to feel better, too. Until he paid one hundred fifty bucks for approximately twelve square inches of leather, that is. Combined with the ticket, he was already out two hundred dollars, and there was still dinner, drinks, and a movie to put on the tab. He hoped Carol was worth it. God knew when he dropped this kind of money on his ex it got him nowhere.

Carol, not noticing his glum expression, jovially slipped her arm though his and pulled him out into the teeming throng clogging the mall's thoroughfares.

"Doesn't Christmas just make you feel like a kid again?" she asked.

Bill shivered at the very thought.

"Are you cold?" she asked sweetly, "Don't you worry, honey, I'll keep you warm."

Her tender concern for his physical well being seemed such a good sign, Bill decided to push his luck a bit. "Want to go back to my place and start a fire?" he asked. He hoped he didn't sound desperately horny.

"I'd never thought you'd ask," Carol replied, answering his prayers. "But first you have to sit on Santa's lap. Remember?"

"Damn! He'd forgotten all about that stupid list! Bill mentally cursed his therapist. He was going to have to stop seeing her. This hot date with Carol was proof that he'd gotten over his issues. He didn't need Dr. Davis and her half-baked inner child ideas anymore. Besides, if he wanted that kind of humiliation, he could get it for free from his mother!

He glanced at Carol, trying to gauge if she truly would hold him to the letter of their deal. A slight hootchie-coochie movement in her hips, a preview of things to come, and a mischievous twinkle in her eye told him that he would be sitting in another man's lap very soon. Already he could hear a synthesized "Here Comes Santa Claus" heralding their approach to the mall's "North Pole".

In less than a minute, they reached their destination, a plywood and glitter castle surrounding an ornate plastic and velvet throne. Enconced upon the throne, was Kris Kringle himself (or a reasonable facsimile thereof), ho-ho-ing and making promises he'd never have to keep. A long line of children snaked around the Pole, extending fifty feet to a smelly pen that enclosed two dyspeptic reindeer. Bill's heart sank. There was at least an hour's wait ahead of him, but, having no other choice, he joined the end of the line.

After a half-hour, Bill and Carol had moved up parallel to the pen. Gagging on the musky stench, Carol handed Bill her box of thongs and claimed she urgently had to use the ladies room. Feeling abandoned, he watched her until she was lost in the crowd. Still, he

held to his slow moving post, sandwiched between a squirming eight year-old girl and a sobbing four year-old boy. Their respective parents eyed him, an adult without a child in tow, with the suspicion usually reserved for men whose names were registered with the police.

Fifteen minutes passed and Carol still hadn't returned. Bill was now a short twenty feet from the throne, close enough to have caught Santa's puzzled eye. Jesus! It was so embarrassing! Bill considered bugging out, but the thought of a rewarding lap dance from hip-switching Carol strengthened his resolve. He planted his feet more firmly. She was bound to return soon.

Finally, when Bill was one mere child from Santa's lap, he spied Carol heading his way. His ordeal would soon be over and his reward was in sight. Bill's heart and another body part leapt with joyful anticipation. Then a teenager in an ill-fitting elf costume strung a velvet rope between him and the squirming girl.

"Santa will be back in an hour," she said to Bill. Dumbfounded, Bill looked at the elf. Then he looked at Carol, still six stores away, but closing fast. He did the math. One hour of waiting in this hellish line plus making a fool of himself should equal Carol in a leather thong. He had to sit on Santa's lap right now! Bill stepped over the rope ahead of the squirming girl.

"Hey, no cuts!" she yelled angrily.

"Sweetheart, I'll buy you anything you want," he pleaded, "Just let me see Santa first."

"Noooo!" she wailed and scooted in, front of him. Bill, as gentle as a newborn lamb, shoved her carefully aside.

"Mommy!" she screamed.

In answer to that primal call, long acrylic fingernails suddenly dug into Bill's Adam's apple. Illogically, he flashed on the time his mother caught him in the bathroom with his older brother's Playboy. Panicked, he swung wildly at the woman throttling him. Then the rough hands of many fathers grabbed him from behind and angrily threw him out of the North Pole with a force that sent him spinning on his ass all the way to the reindeer pen.

And there he sat, an outcast rock in a stream of disapproving holiday shoppers, wondering how a day with so much promise had gone so bad so fast. His inner child had only been trying to get his outer adult laid. Six months of therapy and he was still screwing up with women! Dr. Davis must have got her license from a Cracker Jack box! That stupid inner child shit didn't work! She was supposed to be a mental health professional. What the hell was wrong with her?

"What the hell is wrong with you?" It was Carol, standing above him, madder than a wet hen. "You pushed that little girl, you big jerk!"

"Carol, I can explain..." he answered.

"Don't bother, dirtbag. I want nothing to do with a guy like you. Deal's off!"

She spun on her heel and stalked off, leaving Bill sitting with his back against the chicken wire of the pen, and still holding the box containing the once promising thongs. As if to add insult to insult and injury, the reindeer standing closest to him chose that moment to defecate.

Quickly, Bill leapt to his feet to escape getting hit. Then his inner child suddenly had a brainstorm. He opened the box, dumped out its expensive contents, leaned over the wire, and scooped the fresh droppings inside. Feigning nonchalance, he took the box to the Mailboxes next to Sears, had it wrapped up in paper dotted with madly smirking Santas, stuck a "do not open until Christmas" tag on it, and sent it overnight express to Dr. Davis.

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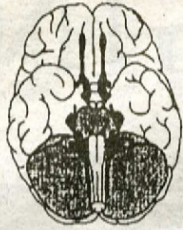
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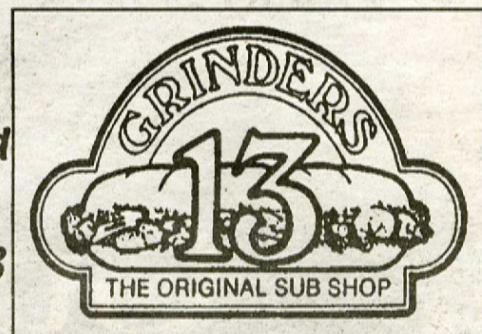


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LASER'S EDGE :

Oslo, Norway's **Spiral Architect** released their debut full length, **A SCEPTIC'S UNIVERSE** in the beginning of 2000. I stumbled across this band during a recent foray of the internet. Once I initially heard of Spiral Architect and started



to dig for information on them, I realized the "buzz" surrounding this band is louder than a chainsaw. **A SCEPTIC'S UNIVERSE** is amazing in every way. These guys have taken technical, progressive metal to all new heights. Actually, Spiral Architect's playing ability is technical almost to a fault. That's the theme of this band's goals - to exceed abilities captured on CD in the past - to go beyond - to break and push the boundaries of progressive and technical metal. This band has achieved those goals, and in a sense, has exceeded those goals. Neil Kernon's production wraps it all together, creating a soundscape that captures the heaviness, crispness and clarity of Spiral Architect's music.

ROTTEN RECORDS : The late '80s were a dynamic time for metal and hardcore music. A rash of bands began to emerge around that time that had discovered the beauty of combining the hard and heavy elements of the two forms of music. While D.R.I. was one of the best known bands mixing hardcore and metal at the time, another band at the forefront of this interesting combination was **Excel**. Check out the re-release of Excel's debut full length, **SPLIT IMAGE**. Eleven demo tracks and songs that appeared on compilations have been added to the re-release. Very cool.

METAL BLADE : I must say, the **Cannibal Corpse** video **LIVE CANNIBALISM** is the coolest thing I've ever seen in my life. The video was released as a companion to the **LIVE CANNIBALISM CD**, which was also recently released with the same live track listing. The sound and footage are awesome. There's no replacing this band live, but you're not going to get any closer to the Cannibal Corpse experience unless you're getting your head bashed in at the front of the stage.

SECOND NATURE : **CHANNEL STATIC BLACK** is **Krakatoa's** follow up to their 7th release, **CLOUDS BURNED BY SUNSHINE**. **Krakatoa** is a side band for the members of the group and they have no intention of becoming anything more than a studio band. The rhythm section of this band is solid, with the guitar work being the real standout. Guitarist **Carl Skildum** (Threadbare) plays a cross of hardcore, metal and rock. His style of play can be aggressive, technical and harsh at times, and at other times he's layered softer guitar parts resulting in lush, full passages. The vocals have the same dynamic - at times they are harsh to the point of grating, and other parts are melodic. This is a very good album.

SPIITERE : **Yngwie Malmsteen**, the undisputed Swedish guitar god lit up **Saltair** on November 22nd as an opening act for **DIO**. Fingers flew, notes soared from Marshall cabi-

Yngwie J. Malmsteen's Rising Force



nets and Yngwie performed more leg kicks than the Rockets (what a showman!). Yngwie performed songs from his extensive catalogue dating back to 1984's **RISING FORCE**. Malmsteen's latest release, **WAR TO END ALL WARS** has a grittier, more over-driven sound than some of his more recent albums. A vibe

that was lost somewhere after his third album, **TRILOGY** has resurfaced on **WAR...** Yngwie is really playing this time around, and has begun again to realize that "instrumental" and "long solo" are not dirty words (Yngwie's first album was all instrumental. Since then, for the most part, his albums have become less and less instrumental).

Ronnie James Dio proved once again on November 22nd (at **Saltair**) that he still has one of the best and coolest voices in metal.

Dio's name is synonymous with the the "devil horns" salute that metal heads give by extending their index and pinkie fingers from a fist hand - unsurprisingly, **Saltair** was awash in "devil horns" during Dio's entire performance. Working on the strengths of his early material, **Ronnie** performed songs from his first two albums (**HOLY DIVER** and **LAST IN LINE**), as well as some of the better known songs from the many albums he's released since the early '80s. Dio's latest, **MAGICA** is conceptual and deals with the battle between evil and divine. All of the musicians involved with **Magica** have worked with Dio in the past



(**Jimmy Bain** on bass - dating back to **Ronnie's** days with **Rainbow**, **Craig Goldy** - guitar and **Simon Wright** on drums). The line-up for **MAGICA** is solid and the song writing reflects that. The production is warm and elevates this release's familiar, yet non-traditional metal aspects. Dio was quite the sport after the show when I requested that he tell me that I was "The Last In Line". **Ronnie** thought about it for a second and pronounced, "You ARE the last in line..... We are ALL the last in line". Now that was cool!

Kicking a little ass NYC hardcore style is what **Pro-Pain** is all about. Although the band has relocated to Florida, their sound has remained fairly consistent over the years. **Pro-Pain** started to take over many of the responsibilities of the recording process with '96's **CONTENTS UNDER PRESSURE**, and by '99's **ACT OF GOD** the band members handled all of the recording, producing and mixing duties for the album. **ROUND 6** is studio album "6" for **Pro-Pain**, and it continues with their gelled, "in your face" sound and style.

INSIDE OUT : **Arjen Lucassen's** band **Ayreon** is releasing not one but two albums, **UNIVERSAL MIGRATOR** (Part I : The Dream Sequencer and Part II : Flight Of The Migrator). This is two distinct CDs with Part I handling the more serene and atmospheric elements of **Arjen's** music. Part II, the real gem in my opinion (and the one that's received most of my attention) is the harder and more aggressive of the two. Altogether, from what I can figure, over 30 musicians and singers were recruited for the recording of the two releases. A mighty undertaking indeed, resulting in a release that had to be practically pried out of my CD player. The vocal performances are awe-inspiring (including Part II's, track five from **Bruce Dickinson**) and the guitar / synth interplay will have more than just a few jaws dropping.

OLYMPIC : The "core" of the band **Divine Empire** is **Jason Blachowicz** (bass / vocals) and **John Paul Soars** (guitar / vocals), with **Alex Marquez** (ex-Malevolent Creation) playing drums on their debut **DOOMED TO INHERIT**. This is solid death metal - especially for a debut. A great production and heavy groove underlie their brutally heavy music. The dual vocals add a nice touch to this

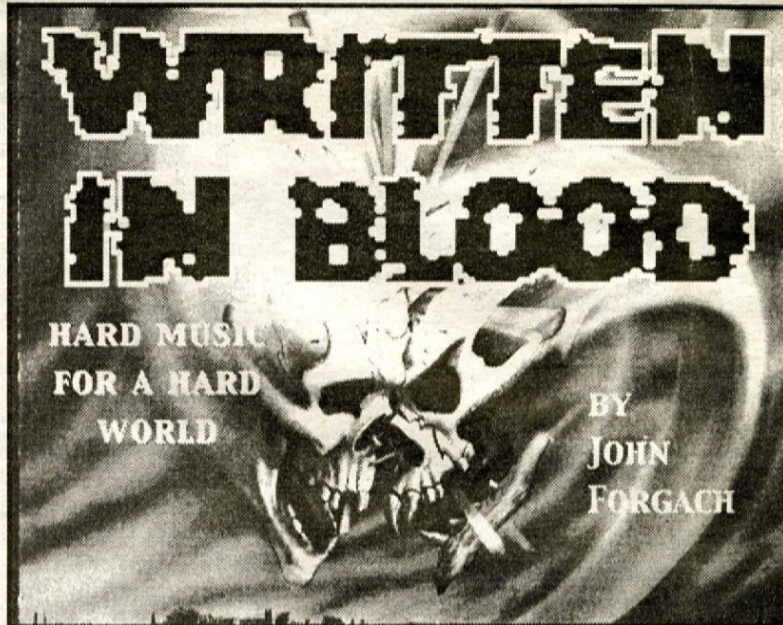
release.

Macabre's latest opus is the 26 track **DAHMER**. That's right, 26 songs related to, dedicated to and wasted on **Jeffrey Dahmer**. If you're going to check this out, be prepared to enjoy the ridiculous biographical premises of the songs as much as the music (these guys are actually pretty good.).

Fleshgrind has just released the follow-up to their album **DESTINED FOR DEFILEMENT**. Their new release, **THE SEEDS OF ABYSMAL TORMENT** is a raw slab set to ignite the fans of the underground. This album is fairly complex in it's delivery, but at the same time it's straight-forward style never strays from **Fleshgrind's** brutal death approach.

PAVEMENT : Despite being plagued by a "revolving-door" of musicians throughout their career, **Malevolent Creation** is currently sporting the same line up as their last release, **THE FINE ART OF MURDER**. Upholding the traditional M. Creation oath, "If you're too slow, you've got to go", has resulted in the bands latest release, **ENVENOMED** being equal parts brutality, speed, speed and speed.

NUCLEAR BLAST : The band **Primal Fear** exudes an abundance of talent, I'll give them that much. The only problem is most of the time they are spending all of their energy trying to sound exactly like '80s era **Judas Priest**. That's not inherently a bad thing, other than the fact that **Judas Priest** has already done the whole '80s era **Judas Priest** thing. **Primal**



Fear's new album, **NUCLEAR FIRE** even has some sort of mechanical bird (Screaming For Vengeance perhaps?) on the front cover. I just can't take this band seriously. European death metal has never sounded better than **Children Of Bodom's**, **FOLLOW THE REAPER**. While I'm not crazy about the relatively flat vocals, this band makes up for it musically.

VIRGIN : Nu-metallers united from all over the nu-metal spectrum for the recording of **STRAIT UP**, to honor the life of **James Lynn Strait** (former **Snot** vocalist, killed in an auto accident). Each guest vocalist brought the style that has been branded upon them from their respective band. **M.C.U.D.'s** track features the hip-hop style of his band (hed)p.e., and of course, **Max** from **Soulfly** had to break out the tribal drums that he carries in the trunk of his car (for every recording session he's involved with). Some other musicians involved with this project hail from **System Of A Down**, **Korn**, **Incubus**, **Sevendust**, **Limp Bizkit**, **Coal Chamber**, **Slipknot** and **Sugar Ray**.

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December Daily Calendar

Submissions for the SLUG Calendar are due by the 1st of the month. Fax to 487-1359 or email dickheads@slug-mag.com. You can't B-Lame us if you don't send it in!

Tuesday, December 5
Blues Jam- Burt's Tiki Lounge

Wednesday, December 6
Optimus Prime- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Trouser Trout- Dead Goat Saloon
Corrosion of Conformity, Flybanger, 60
Second Shaman, Clutch- DV8
Shred Night- Ya' Buts

Thursday, December 7
Gwenmars- Bricks
Spleen- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Laughing Man- Dead Goat Saloon
The Anonymous- Ya' Buts
Robert Earl Keen- Zephyr Club

Friday, December 8
Jesse Dayton- ABG's (Provo)
PooPee Dee & SLC All Stars- Burt's Tiki
Sprague Brothers- Dead Goat Saloon
Eight O One- Getty's
Starlight Mints, Kind of Like Spitting, Gift
Anon- Kilby Court
Porterhouse- Mulligan's (Park City)
Insatiable- O'Shucks (Salt Lake)
Split Face- Ya' Buts
Jerry Joseph & Jackmormons- Zephyr Club

Saturday, December 9
Swank Five- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Jesse Dayton- Dead Goat Saloon
Hunda Holsa, Body of Binky- Kilby Court
Trans-Siberia Orchestra- Kingsbury Hall
Porterhouse- Mulligan's (Park City)
Low-Fi Breakdown- O'Shucks (Salt Lake)
Gearl Jam live album recording- UofU Fine

Arts Auditorium
Mind Set, The Opposable- Ya' Buts
Jerry Joseph & Jackmormons- Zephyr Club

Sunday, December 10
Highball Train- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Porterhouse- Dead Goat Saloon

Monday, December 11
Headplay- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Smokin' Joe Kubek feat. B'nois King- Dead
Goat Saloon
David Nelson Band- Harry O's
Samiam, Weston, Pictures Can Tell,
Interstate- Kilby Court

Tuesday, December 12
Smokin' Joe Kubek feat. B'nois King-
Beatnik's (Ogden)
Blues Jam- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Shawn Mullins- Zephyr Club

Wednesday, December 13
Velvet Acid Christ, Haujobb, Din Fiv- Area
51
Zenbucket- Dead Goat Saloon
90 Day Men, Sandkicker, Form of Rocket-
Kilby Court
Blue Hour- Ya' Buts

Thursday, December 14
Get Stakerized!, Fumamos- Burt's Tiki
Lounge
Gearl Jam- Dead Goat Saloon
Mother Hips- Johnny B's (Provo)
Rug Burn - Ya' Buts

Friday, December 15
Unlucky Boys- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Clyde's Ride- Dead Goat Saloon
Flying Blind- Getty's
White Hot Putter, Gypsum, Crumb-
Hatter's (Orem)
Blue Meanies, Pinehurst Kids, Wunder
Years- Kilby Court

Trigger Locks- O'Shucks (Salt Lake)
Alchemy, Optimus Prime- Ya' Buts
Alchemy- Ya' Buts
Mother Hips- Zephyr Club

Saturday, December 16
Wormdrive, Erosion, Unlucky Boys- Burt's
Tiki Lounge
Teddy Morgan & the Pistolas- Dead Goat
Saloon
Voodoo Carpet, Means to An End- Getty's
Homeless Benefit: Magstatic, Drive, Gerald
Music- Kilby Court
Clyde's Ride- Mulligan's
Vand Bucket- O'Shucks (Salt Lake)
Earth Jam- Ya' Buts

Sunday, December 17
Ain't nuthin' goin' on-
stay home & make art

Monday, December 18
Electric Hellfire Club, Dreamscape
Unlimited- Area 51
Bro Brahs, Mullet Men All Stars- Burt's Tiki
Cash McCall Band- Dead Goat Saloon

Tuesday, December 19
Wednesday, December 20
Metal Meltdown- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Elsewhere- Dead Goat Saloon
Zen Buckets- Ya' Buts

Thursday, December 21
Sweetgrass- Dead Goat Saloon
Prism- The Wife Trap
Fam- Ya' Buts

Friday, December 22
Office Party, Jenny Jenses- Burt's Tiki
Lisa Marie & CoDependents- Dead Goat
David Copperfield- Kingsbury Hall
Fat Paw feat. Tim Wray- O'Shucks (Salt Lake)
Burner, Alchemy- Ya' Buts

Saturday, December 23
Erosion, Nurse Sherry- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Wasatch Improv Festival, benefits Utah
Food Bank- Comedy Circuit
Harry Lee & Back Alley Blues Band- Dead
Goat Saloon
David Copperfield- Kingsbury Hall
Emotional Wreck, Lux- Ya' Buts

Sunday, December 24
Harry Lee & Back Alley Blues Band- Dead
Goat Saloon

Monday, December 25
Yule Feel Better After Sleeping Off A
Hangover Today-
You Can Crash Anywhere Except My House
Velvet Alex- Zephyr Club

Tuesday, December 26
18 Visions- Kilby Court

Wednesday, December 27
Trouser Trout- Dead Goat Saloon

Thursday, December 28
Shimmy Shiwabble- Burt's Tiki Lounge
Gearl Jam- Dead Goat Saloon

Friday, December 29
2-1/2 White Guys- Dead Goat Saloon
Flango Punga- Ya' Buts

Saturday, December 30
Fistful- Dead Goat Saloon
Gamma Rays- O'Shucks (Salt Lake)
Oxygen Cocktail, Persecution Revamp- Ya'
Buts

Sunday, December 31
Unlucky Boys, Highball Train, Zac Parrish-
Burt's Tiki Lounge
Lisa Marie & CoDependents- Dead Goat
Saloon
Insatiable- O'Shucks (Salt Lake)
A Big Fuckin' Party- Your House

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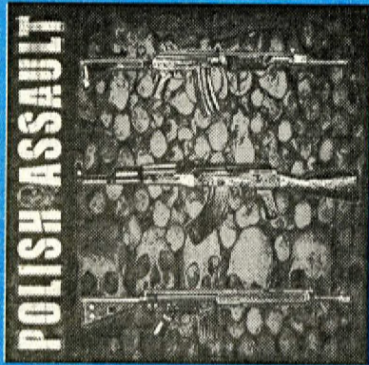
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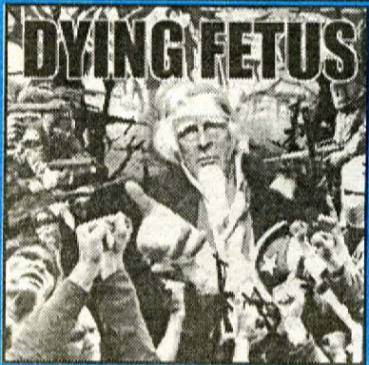
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SUBTERRANEAN SECT



Various Artists
Polish Assault

Over 70 minutes of brutal, underground death metal featuring the demo/early recordings of Decapitated, Yattering, Lost Soul and Damnable... the leaders of the current new crop of extreme death bands emerging from Poland.



Dying Fetus
Destroy The Opposition

Just toured as part of Death Across America! Combining an innovative mix of technical virtuosity and catchy song structures to create the ultimate blend of death metal, hard-core, and grind, DYING FETUS lead the charge of extreme music's new generation.



Regurgitate
Carnivorous Erection

Smell the stench of burning death as legendary splattergrind masters Regurgitate decompose their most extreme recording to date with Carnivorous Erection.



Carnal Forge
Firedmon

Furious Swedish death/thrash metal (featuring Dellamorte/In Thy Dreams members) slaying the competition with hyperspeed rhythms, merciless guitar riffs and ferocious vocal assault.



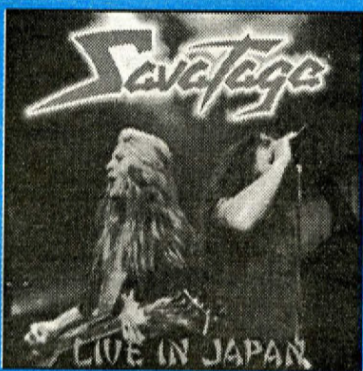
Various Artists
A Tribute To Judas Priest Vol. 2: Delivering The Goods

The second edition of this tribute to one of metal's classic bands featuring versions from the likes of Saxon, Blind Guardian and Forbidden, as well as lyrics and a complete band discography.



Eyehategod
Confederacy Of Ruined Lives

The Godfathers of sludge are back with a brand new album!



Savatage
Live In Japan

Totally remastered and repackaged, Savatage tear through classics like "Castles Burning", "Handful of Rain", "Gutter Ballet" and more from Japan from the 1994 world tour. Watch for the new record in early 2001...



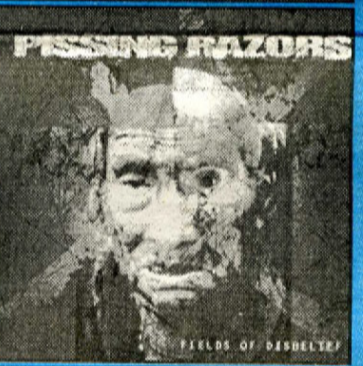
Hammerfall
Renegade

The purest of pure, the best of the best, totally traditional heavy metal! Hammerfall's best work to date will have you screaming with metal pride!



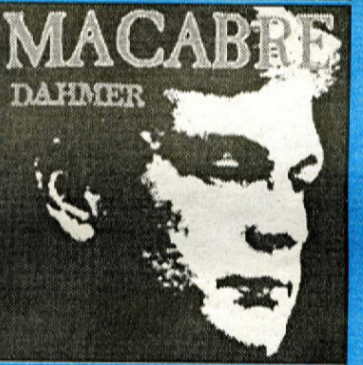
Theatre Of Tragedy
Musique

One of the longest running and best gothic acts in the world with their newest blend of goth, dance, and metal. A masterpiece of dark, flowing, beauty.



Pissing Razors
Fields Of Disbelief

Thirteen tracks of venomous brutality filled with machine gun riffs, monumental hooks and slaughtering drum beats create the Razors' best and most diverse album yet. Produced by Razor drummer, Eddy Garcia and Sterling Winfield (Pantera).



Macabre
Dahmer

A diverse and chilling 26 song murder musical documenting Jeffrey Dahmer's bizarre life story. www.murdermetal.com



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