

RHETORIC FARM

po box 43171 tucson, az 85733-3171

EDITORS:

Jordan Gruener
Peter Catalanotte

COVER BY:

Roy Tompkins*

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* For more of Roy Tompkins' comix, contact him, c/o The Mighty Insect, P. O. Box 16022, Austin, TX 78761. Enclose three 22-cent stamps for postage. Tell him you saw it in Rhetoric Farm.



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A Shiver Missed

I could go no farther
it just goes cold
talk about blackness
clap your hands white
from time from places
awoke with a shiver
missed you curled away
from me shaking one foot
badly playing sleepy -- time
games for next day plans
started by slipping into
you on my side you can
look away and breathe
harder and harder until i come
and you can have a cigarette stare
at my fat ass half the night
sleeping because
I could go no farther forget
the sweat it just goes cold
whats the use of even
trying to make this

right talk about blackness
clap your hands white
from-time from you

-George Dillon
March 87

Poetry



no wrong ideas

NOW DONT GET ANY WRONG
ideas she just counting
on her fingers so many
days since that now
dont get any wrong thoughts
shes just thinking with
those damn fingers shes
just so body bright now
DONT GET ANY WRONG IDEAS

IM JUST SITTING ON MY
FINGERS I DONT USE THEM
to think no more dont
get any wrong ideas i
was never body bright
shes just counting on her
fingers those damn fingers

-George Dillon
Feb 87

Mr. Shivers
has left a message
on your machine.
A prophecy.
He whispers something
about an estate sale.
His voice is a steam cloud
insinuating.

His card is found in your mailbox,
embossed letters and
an etching of a scythe.
On the back is a quote
from Ingmar Bergman
in Swedish.

Registered letter sent and refused
voodoo through bureaucracy
and it starts to wear
you down,
a coat tattered and dripping
threads.

-Ess Kranz

An Old Ford Van

by Jordan Gruener

I'm an old man god damn it. I can't keep up with you anymore, you know that. Collecting these cans these fucked cans these damn aluminum cans. Four cents a pound four lousy cents. And I've got to bring you to pick the dirt, to pick up the cans. You think there's no such thing as responsibility. I'll find that mother lode and I'll never let go if it god damn kills me. The blue hum of that television your mother left off with you. Your god damn mother, that stupid woman. I'll never know why - can't you see that can - dying like some disconnected phone. She was like a god damn cheap suit.

And all I've got to show for it is this lousy van. I'm an old man god damn it. Pick up that can honey, can't you see I need a god damn oil change.

I've been looking at the clock for an hour. It's four now and I guess grandpa left around one to get oil.

That god damn van of his and this stupid TV. Locking me up in here all day to watch soap operas so I can tell him what happened. I'd rather pick cans for him.

He was in the war and I guess like he says that means something. And when he talks about that van of ours, I guess that means the same thing. It ain't no good, but it's a home if we need it and grandpa says after having leeches sticking to his back, even that rusted up mess is something worth caring about. That's why he's going to get the oil changed. I picked cans on the beach for two days so we could get the oil changed. Just in case grandpa says. And I guess that's why I don't make any noise when Mrs. Gonzales comes hitting the door with her push-broom. I'm not home. That's all I have to remember Grandpa says. Just be real quiet and watch the soaps. And tell him, tell him everything.

Can't you hurry it up, my little girl's waiting for me. She needs me.

Well move it anyway, I worked hard for this money and you're not gonna waste it for me. Understand. Now that's a lot better. My little girl's waiting for me - did I tell you that.

Damn you, if I had a gun, damn I'd show you to drive. Five. If I don't get back soon, Lisa'll be whipping around the room and crying her eyes out. God I hate, I can't stand it when she does and I know she does, just like her mom. Always wanting attention. Spending the day with me isn't enough.

Jazz is all I ever wanted. But all I can do now is watch. Cleaning chicken shit - telling dad I didn't give a damn what he did when he was young I wasn't going to shovel that for anything. Then taking so many months for me to get out of the hospital. A god damn bloody mess of teeth and jaw, all white and sharp and catching the sun just right, like a regular rainbow. I could never learn to play the saxophone. My mouth never worked right after that.

If I hear a whimper I'll work that girl to the bone. She won't get no more free time for soap operas no more.

Damn Mrs. Gonzales. That woman wouldn't never give me a break, tomorrow I tell her, Lisa and me'll have the god damn \$75 tomorrow. So we left the sand and that god damn pounding surf to hit Vegas and the jackpot that's been waiting for me since before the war. So I bought Coca-Cola, coloring books and Lisa and we brought it all and that god damn war.

Well it took nearly ten days to get to Las Vegas. I told Lisa about the World's Fair in Chicago, back in Nineteen-hundred and thirty, I believe. Blue skies and the Goodyear Blimp, a time, a forgetful time. Lisa was as good a girl as any, so it weren't no surprise when she went looking for cans outside Yuma. She couldn't find nothing and those damn motorbikes nearly ran her over while I was filling the van and checking the oil.

But we finally hit Vegas around nightfall and it was glittering like some forgotten explosion - all crashes of orange and red. So's we checked into a motel, just me and Lisa. Sure enough I hit the jackpot in the lobby slot machine and won eight dollars. It was there I knew we wouldn't be wanting any more, there would be no more aluminum cans. I had that god damn mother lode by her crazed throat and there weren't no one, including Lisa's mom that would make me let go this time.



STORIES FROM DOWN SOUTH--WAY DOWN SOUTH

as told by Rebarb

Before I went to Brazil I had to go to the dentist. I was in Bolivia, in a small town, in the middle of nowhere, and one of my teeth was just killing me. I wanted desperately for the pain to end then and there. My father's secretary's friend's cousin knew a dentist and so it was arranged.

I arrived at his office in the late afternoon. It was to be a long, and unfortunately, unforgettable afternoon. The dingy waiting room was typically third world: mismatched 70's style furniture with ripped upholstery contrasting brightly painted walls with paint peeling from the constant humidity. Half the magazines on the coffee table were in German, the others were tourist propaganda for Korea, in Spanish. I was getting tense.

(I'm going to go over the next part really quick; the memory of it all is just too much.)

He was of German descent. In Bolivia, this means just about one thing--fugitive Nazi fleeing into the obscurity of Bolivia's underdeveloped disorder. (Not really, but he might as well have been). Anyway, he was massive (as in overweight). His hands were pudgy. His fingers, sausages with hairy digits.

I became very afraid. He X-rayed me, cleaned my teeth, filled numerous cavities, gassed me silly and pulled two wisdom teeth. I left his office around six, my mouth full of cotton.

The worst thing was that I'd already had my wisdom teeth taken out. I don't know what he took out but my mouth has seemed a little empty, as well as raped, ever since. 'Round the globe, dentists are evil. So stay home and brush your teeth.

RECORD REVIEWS

Frequency and Urgency
Salem 66
Homestead Records

They will probably never be popular on a commercial level, and one doubts this in an underground context as well. Their music is haunting, not catchy. The melodies pull and coax so the lyrics can pin you to the wall. This is Think Rock, and anyone looking for an easy time is not invited.

But songwriters Beth Kaplan and Judy Grunwald deserve so much more. They pit moody, introspective lyrics against mismatched harmonies and bring to mind any number of great bands, from Husker Du to Wire to X. They are not great musicians and they're not real easy to hum along with. But last year's *A Ripping Spin* was a near classic, and *Frequency and Urgency* comes close enough to be considered the same.

-Peter Catalanotte

Locust Abortion Technician
Butthole Surfers
Touch and Go

No one has ever successfully characterized the Butthole Surfers. *Locust Abortion Technician* continues their fine tradition. It's not hard-core, it's not industrial, it's not metal. . .

So what is it? Black Sabbath get their comeuppance ("Sweet Loaf"); Larry King gets his ("22 Going On 23"). The latter sounds like what the people who do tape manipulations with Ronald Reagan's voice wish they could do. "Graveyard" (side A) comes across like Shockabilly with Satan as Special Guest Vocalist; "Kuntz" is the music from a Gypsy restaurant inside a steel mill; and "Weber" is 32 seconds of pure ugly noise. Six more cuts, too. OK?

"It's better to regret doing something than to regret not doing something." We don't think you'll regret getting this album.

-Russell Post and Bradly Martin

Headache
Big Black
Touch and Go

Hmmmm. Didn't these guys just break up?

If so, this is a fine epitaph for one of the best of the Noise Bands (which they themselves would tell you they weren't—but that's another story). A 3-song EP with songs as great as any on last year's *Atomizer*, even though the warning label on the cover says otherwise.

If not. . . if Big Black is still together. . . if they are just as loud and lewd and viable and violent as they ever were. . .

When's the LP coming out, guys?

-Jayne Hybrid

Fillgree and Shadow
This Mortal Coil
4AD

Is this British studio collective project along the mode of Steely Dan or a synth-driven Danny and Dusty?

Well, it possesses aspects of both, but it is most closely compared to *Rainy Day*, a 1983 LP of covers of great and/or influential songs from the likes of Bob Dylan and Alex Chilton, spearheaded by The Rain Parade's David Roback and rotating personnel from L.A.'s neo-paisley pop crowd (The Three O'Clock, The Bangles, The Dream Syndicate). Like *Rainy Day*, This Mortal Coil's latest, a double LP, recasts many songs in their own unique mold. Yet TMC also composes moody instrumental bridges between songs that link them sonically as well as conceptually. Unlike *Rainy Day*, all of the constantly shifting members of This Mortal Coil come from a single U.K. record label, 4AD, and various bands like the Cocteau Twins, Dead Can Dance and The Wolfgang Press.

Label head Ivo is a co-producer and instrumentalist as well as the guiding force and vision of this entire project - from the somber cello-and-drone seques to the impressive graphics to the ponderous titles like "Inch-Blue," "Thais" and "The Horizon Bleeds and Sucks Its Thumb."

Songs are drawn from such diverse sources as Van Morrison, David Byrne and Gene Clark and gently deconstructed and woven into the undulating flow of the very Budd-like soundscape with lushly quiet vocals. The songwriters' quirks are blunted except where it contributes to the ambiance, giving this long (25 tracks, 75 minutes) work a unity and parameter that's admirable.

The most radical and uptempo points on *Fillgree and Shadow* are still soothing, so this isn't for the Damned-Clash heavy-retro-thrash crowd, except in their most sedate(d) moments.

-Ess Kranz

Zamia Lehmanni (Garden of Byzantine Flowers)
SPK
Side Effects

SPK, thank Christ, appears to be getting away from electrofunk. Graeme Revell says it was "infiltration." To which we respond, "What good does it do to screw the Marines if you don't plant the bugs?"

But enough of that. Although the departure from dance drivel is heartening, *Zamia Lehmanni* does not return to the superbly ugly industrial noise of *Leichenschrei*, instead deriving its influence from the classical religious music of Rome and Byzantium. The sounds are quiet and brooding -- and not a little pretentious -- as one might expect from such titles as "Invocation" and "Necropolis." We can't say if they'll continue to explore this field, but they are taking steps in a good direction.

This is an interesting, introspective work. We recommend it strongly -- but only to those with a high tolerance for Serious Art.

-Russell Post and Bradly Martin

In the Kingdom of Heaven
Mighty Spincter
Placebo Records

Q: What has a scary, death-schlock sound; employs crucifixes, skeletons, etc; and sings morose, creepy tales of Hitler and heaven for shock effect?

A: A hundred million different bands, including this one.

Write to: Placebo Records, P.O. Box 23316, Phoenix, AZ 85063.

-Jayne Hybrid

Fastbreak
Fastbreak
Local cassette

Essentially a slick, hard rock outfit, Fastbreak rises above such restrictions because they play mostly instrumentals, with the rest of their repertoire features vocalist/composer David Yox.

This is primarily a demo tape, so it only features the songs with vocals. This is a pity, as their instrumentals are their strong point: the guitars glide and plummet, while the beat-heavy drums drive it back. Of course, these elements aren't really missing from this debut tape, but they take a back seat to the singing more than one would like.

They are much easier to appreciate live, where the instrumentals come every other song. This release is but a mild representation of their talents.
Write to: Tom Copen, 4202 E. Lester, Tucson, AZ 85712.

-Jayne Hybrid

Days Like These
Jet Black Factory
391 Records

Although they're probably weary of the comparison, this Tennessean four-piece brings Joy Division to mind, and not much else. Dreary vocals placed atop dirged strumming could bring to mind no less. And the cryptic musings ("We could live our days in rage/We'd grow our hair and cut our face," goes a line in "Waters Edge") can't free them from this restriction anyway.

Harmless enough, but I couldn't imagine listening to it more than twice.
Write to: 391 Records, 465 Hogan Rd., Nashville, TN 37220.

-Jayne Hybrid

The Brain Feels No Pain
Steve Stain
New Alliance

Steve Stain howls semi-comprehensible lyrics through distorted guitars, tape loops, found metal percussion, and "tub sucking." The result is discordant, grating, frantic, and fascinating.

That alone would make this a good album. What raises it to the ranks of the great is that it comes off without a discernible scrap of pretension. The cover, the liner notes, and the music itself all radiate a spirit of fun. One slow meditative instrumental proves to be a well-directed jab at Eno -- "Taking Ryan's Garage By Ketamine."

This one is a must. Proof that "light-hearted" need not mean "insane" and that "industrial" doesn't necessarily entail "self-important." Not for the timid, but a good listen for the musically adventurous.

-Russell Post and Bradly Martin

Boi-ngo
Oingo Boingo
MCA Records

Oingo Boingo hails from L.A., has nine members and their most recent LP has a high sheen production gloss on it. Sadly, the gloss is placed on pedestrian riffs and lifeless horn charts, generating a lumbering funk. Danny Elfman, songwriter and vocalist for the band, has also been doing soundtrack work of late and, unlike Ry Cooder, film music hasn't helped Elfman's creativity. There is a workman-like air to the whole album and a certain number of mildly pleasing moments, but hell, I'd expect that from just putting nine competent musicians together. *Boi-ngo* delivers that bare bones minimum and very little else.

-Ess Kranz

Rock In NReell In Auckland New Zealand XXX
The Cramps
Vengeance Records

Too bad this show wasn't videotaped--it must have been a great one! Still, this is quite a gem of a bootleg with some good cover photos and (more importantly) crisp clear recording. But there is no address given and it is hard to find, and you'll probably pay what you'd expect for such a rarity.

Most of the songs chosen come from their failed *A Date with Elvis* LP. They almost perform "Surfin' Bird", and it's a crime they didn't (it falls apart before they even get to the first verse). But they do damn near rip through the best "Heartbreak Hotel" you ever heard, and if that ain't good enough for ya', why do you like the Cramps anyways?

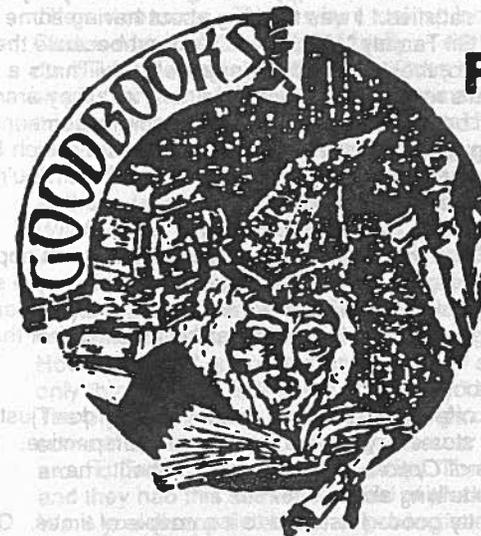
-Jayne Hybrid

Escalator Stampede
Al Perry & the Cattle
Addled Recordings

More greatness from Perry and Co. It's their usual mix of Link Wray meets Tucson Mall, but who can get enough of it? They even perform "Penstemon" from the cassette-only masterpiece *Fraidy Cat*. The price is right (three bucks!), but this too-short, four-song EP ends before it begins. It's a mighty nice appetizer, but it only leaves you hungry for more. . .but that shouldn't keep you from owning it.

Write to: Addled Recordings, P.O. Box 40421, Tucson, AZ 85717.

-Peter Catalanotte



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MAKING THE MUSIC GO BANG!

A TALK WITH JOHN DOE OF X

They have been through hell and high water and lived to sing about it. With the departure of axeman Billy Zoom and the wistful break-up with his spouse Exene Cervenka, bassist John Doe tells us how he gets used to being desperate.

Interview by Richard Connell. Photos by David Portnoy.



This man does not want to be in Wham.

RF: Well, what about this Jim Bakker thing?

JD: I read in the "Star" that the whole reason it happened is that Tammy is just too big. Jim Bakker couldn't be satisfied. I was thinking about having some t-shirts made up: "Here Comes Big Ol' Tammy." No, I think it's great because the people that they give money to, they're called "Televangelists". That's a new word I picked up today. That's real Marshall McLuhan, isn't it? They aren't going to make the distinction between someone who is good and someone who is not. They're always going to think they're a bunch of shysters, which I think basically they are. Peddling or basing their thing on people's fear. You're going to go to hell, and that's not what religion's about.

RF: Well, what is religion about?

JD: Looks like we done stepped in it this time. I think it's about faith, and hoping that you can aspire to something more than just the pettiness of people saying bullshit about friends saying bullshit about other friends and how petty and sick people can be. Something good. Something that can be a little higher than what you do everyday.

RF: Do you feel the same way about music?

JD: To a certain extent. Try to offer alternatives to people so they don't just accept what is given, like in a shoe store. Try to give them a new perspective.

RF: New music: In a 1983 issue of *Option*, you were talking about The Replacements, who are you talking about in '87?

JD: Well, their new record is pretty good. I listened to it a couple of times. Concrete Blonde is incredible, I listened to their record.

RF: Is there anyone who kind of uh ... excites you?

JD: Well, there's a woman who's going to be real big in country music named Rosie Flores. She used to be with the Screaming Sirens.

RF: Did they break up?

JD: No, they have another guitar player. She got an opportunity to record some singles for a country label. I also like the Raunch Hands. I like their records a lot.

RF: A lot of people are offended by them lyrically. Does that make any difference to you?

JD: It's probably the same people who were offended by Fear. If you don't understand the joke or the double-entendre, you're offended.

RF: Who's your new guitarist?

JD: Tony Gilkyson. He and Dave played in the band about seven months together. And Dave, after we finished recording, decided he wanted to pursue his own career. "Dave Alvin and the All-Nighters." So we just said, well it's a drag but we'll see what happens. And Tony just stepped right in. He really welcomed the challenge, and basically we had two lead guitar players.

RF: Do you know what Billy Zoom is up to and would he ever come back to X?

JD: No, he doesn't want to tour. He's working on electronics. I think he's trying to build a studio or something like that. I mean, Billy was great you know? Tony is really good. He's very capable of handling it. He used to play for Lone Justice, which we don't hold against him (laughs).

RF: Are you still on good terms with him?

JD: With Billy? Yeah. I mean I don't see him.

RF: Was it a mutual parting?

JD: No. We were set to go to Europe and he quit. We were set to release a second single from *Ain't Love Grand* and he quit. Then Dave stepped in a month or so later because he had certain restrictions in the Blasters that he felt he had to get away from. So it was a mutual thing with Dave joining our band and Billy leaving, but Billy just didn't want to do it, so you can't make people do things.

RF: And when is the new album coming out?

JD: It's supposed to be June eighth.

RF: What is it titled?

JD: "See How We Are." It's a song title.

RF: Who produced it?

JD: We went through a lot of producers before we settled on this one guy, for different reasons. That's why it took so long. We got this guy named Alvin Clarke, who had done a lot of really -- awful things. Not awful, but things I just don't like. He engineered Frankie Goes to Hollywood. He produced some singles for Gene Loves Jezebel. Our management calls up and says, "We got this guy who just might work out," and told us his credits and we thought, "What are you talking about?" and then as they went on we found out he produced Whirlwind, a rockabilly band from England in about '78 or '79, and Chelsea and all these really off-the-wall cover groups. He did a record for the Fall, *Live at the Witch Trials*, which is a live studio record... just all kinds of weird stuff.

RF: What was it like to work with (Dokken producer) Michael Wagener?

JD: It was okay. I think we were kind of floundering and didn't really know what we wanted and maybe lost a little faith in what we did. And we wanted to prove that we could make an album that was commercially acceptable--and "Burning House of Love" got played on all kinds of stations. And that was all right. The only thing I regret is that the songs didn't come across as well as they could. The production came first and the songs came secondary. And they were some of the most heartfelt songs we ever wrote. Because they were based around Exene's and my relationship. They were really personal kinds of songs and they had this semi-metal kind of production laid on top of it.

RF: Were you disappointed in that production?

JD: Yeah, in that you really didn't feel the song. You don't really hear the production

on most of Bob Dylan's good stuff. It's just the song that really grabs you. There was a lack of personality in the production that we've gotten back to on this one.

- F: You came out of the L. A. punk scene. Did you have hopes that it would develop into something, which it didn't?
- J: Yes and no. I hoped that it would at least be given a chance, which the media - the major media - really took away at the beginning. Because of certain bands that were just glory-hounds. Like the Sex Pistols. They didn't see the larger picture because with them and all the bullshit they pulled it just became a fashion thing. But Christ, I don't envy bands that are so popular they can't walk down the street. I mean, who wants to be Wham!? That's the kind of music you have to put out to go under that mega-success. I read in the newspaper that U2 is going on tour for 18 months. Who the fuck wants to go on tour for 18 months? You're talking about a year-and-a-half out of your life, and music is important to me but I have plenty of other stuff to do with my time.
- F: You don't think that someone who was just as great as Bob Dylan would have to dress up like Wham!? Do you think a really great artist could break through?
- D: Oh, I suppose he could. It would take a really strong person. Because the time in which Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones and the Doors and the whole era, FM radio had just begun and there was just a musical openness that is missing now. The state of the nation? I'm not telling you anything you don't know. People want to party now. That's why the Beastie Boys are so big now. Because they're fucking brainless no-talent simplicity. I don't know, maybe you like them. I think they stink. I saw them on this horrible thing that MTV had on spring break in Palm Springs. And I just saw the very end of it, of this weekend blast that they had and they showed clips of the 36 hours that they'd been covering, and all it was, was the Beastie Boys running around with girls with no clothes on. And this is supposed to be the "Cutting Edge?" I mean the Cutting Edge is sometimes good, sometimes not so good. I mean MTV, as far as like a 13 years-old up to 21 years-old, is where they look to for new ideas and sort of what's cool and what is not. Someone who hasn't formed their opinions yet, they see some girl in basically no clothes or some guy who's a champion because he is crushing beer cans or getting real loaded, as a role model. I mean, who's in the White House, Dwight Eisenhower?



Ain't love grand? Exene Cervenka and John Doe zero in on the note that binds.

- RF: How much control do you have over the videos?
- JD: You have complete control. Unfortunately, you have to take a lot of things into consideration if you want to get them played. We'll probably do a video for the song called "See How We Are" that's sort of a political statement. . . I can't explain the whole song right now. There'll be a political edge to it, but you have to realize what's popular and what's played, and take that into account when choosing what single to put out and what video you want to do, and how you want to present the video. That was the main failing of punk rock. It was so much of "Hey, fuck you" and who wants to be told to fuck off? You know it doesn't work.
- RF: So it's like a line.
- JD: Well, not a line, but an amount of balance. If you're gonna get your song or video or whatever project it is to more than a small group of people, you've got to balance it. If someone is really righteous and really righteously offensive, then I just say more power to them. It's a necessary thing, they've just got to realize the limitations to it. Getting back to Bob Dylan, if you ever watch the old movie he did, *Don't Look Back*, he was a really arrogant, snotty, kind of egomaniac, but when he was talking to interviewers, what he was saying was really right on. And that's why he got away with it. Because what he was saying was true. He was talking to some guy from *Time Magazine*, and said, what's *Time Magazine*? If I want to know something, I'm not going to read *Time Magazine*, I'll ask somebody about it and find out for myself.
- RF: What do you see as the future?
- JD: There will be a live record out, I think in the fall, and then we'll see. We've been doing this a long time. I'm sure we'll continue putting out records, just not have that be the be-all and end-all of our existence. Both Exene and I have been doing some acting and that's rewarding in a different way. And we want to, I want to have a complete life. I don't want to be just Mick Jagger. I guess he has a pretty full life. It's just that sometimes he's really embarrassing. He's amazingly good for how long he's been doing it and all the things he's stolen. Sometimes you just feel it's time to make room for somebody else.
- RF: When X ceases to exist, how would you like to be remembered?
- JD: As the band with the shortest name in show business.

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Night of Desirable Objects

Snakefinger's Vestal Virgins

Ralph

This could be a serious disappointment for Snakefinger aficionados. Although a careful listen reveals that he is still capable of the remarkable guitar work which characterized his earlier albums and his collaborations with the Residents, he conceals it well here. We listened in vain for the kind of musical pyrotechnics we learned to love on "Here Come the Bums" and "Sinister Exaggerator." On this, Snake is all too often submerged under co-producer Eric Drew Feldman's pedestrian keyboards.

Not that all of his spirit of adventure is gone. The songs on the album cover a wide range of styles, from Bulgarian folk to gospel to light '70s jazz. Unfortunately, although the variety is interesting, the arrangements are not. If we had to characterize this, we'd call it "mutant pop," more evocative of the early Talking Heads than anything else. Certainly there are a lot of musicians doing worse things -- but from Snakefinger, we had expected better than this.

-Russell Post and Bradley Martin

Horse Rotorvator

Coil

Relativity

The Anal Staircase (EP)

Coil

Relativity

Coil has grown more subtle and less dissonant without sacrificing the characteristic power of their sound -- part dirge, part triumphal march, and all evil. The sound is denser and more varied than on their earlier *Scatology*; strings and brass have been added, and the vocals are less deliberately grating. Although Clint Ruin (Foetus Jim Thirwell) is credited only on one cut, his presence is noticeable throughout much of the album.

The Anal Staircase is a worthwhile investment in itself for someone who might not have the money for the album (or who has enough for both). It includes "Blood From The Air" -- arguably the best cut on the LP -- a less dance-oriented version of the EP's title track, and a fine instrumental, "Ravenous," which does not appear on *Horse Rotorvator*.

-Russell Post and Bradley Martin

Poet's Corner/ Dr. Michael Pemulis

Placebo Records

Another Placebo one-side-per-artist release, this one featuring Poet's Corner and Dr. Michael Pemulis, and like their label, they base themselves in Phoenix.

Because they have been around forever, Poet's Corner has had an ever-shifting cast. But the core has always remained vocalist Pete "Sugar Beat" Cannon and his obtuse insights. The subject matter may be slightly vital ("The Plague" is about A.I.D.S., "Third Grade Level" is an anti-Reagan rant), but these things should be left to a keener eye. Cannon is far too blunt, and the monotonous sing-speak grinds against the funky salsa cooked up by his backing band. They seem to overpower the vocals at times, but this is to our advantage.

Dr. Michael Pemulis (and what is he a doctor of?) operates on roughly the same ground but with an acoustic guitar and minimal help from his back-up, Whiskey Straight. He could be labeled a folkie because he stands on the outside of society and exposes its foolish whims and fancies (isn't that what a folkie does?), but he's a more like Gary Trudeau with an old acoustic and a fifth of Jack Daniels.

-Peter Catalanotte

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World Crunch
Saqqara Dogs
Pathfinder Records

What might easily be seen as arty is in fact fresh and heartfelt. This 20-minute EP goes from the complex swirl of "Sister" to the side-long center piece "Greenwich Mean Time," with its shifting accents and breezy guitar doodles.

Though they use fairly exotic instrumentation (cello, dum-bek), they carry no pretense and as a result offer a unique challenge to all of us jaded rock 'n' roll worshipper types.

Write to: Pathfinder Records, 175 Fifth Ave, Suite 3292, New York, NY 10010.

-Peter Catalanotte

Martian Whores
Lethal Gospel
Salmon Eye Records

Live, these guys rip. Strained, too-loud chords aim for the ear and the ballsy beat keeps them there. But on vinyl, the lyrics become audible and therein lies the problem. Lines like "Your yogurt douche still fresh in my mouth" (from "Teach Me to Scream", easily the worst song on the LP) are best left unwritten much less unheard.

Stick to the winners like "Last Ride", a touching tribute to a family dog's death (it really is more sensitive than "Teach Me to Scream" would have you believe), or the dead-end scenario of the hopeless hooker in "Calendar."

Besides, if the slide-and-scrape solos of songs like "Old World's End" leave you satisfied, who - besides critics - needs a lyric sheet anyway?

Write to: Salmon Eye Records, P.O. Box 410099, San Francisco, CA 94141-0099.

-Peter Catalanotte

\$3.00 SUPER SONIC WITCHCRAFT COOKIES NOT A GOOD DAY
Wallmen Wallmen Wallmen

This New York synth outfit sing about weird galactic visions, and weird urban mysticisms, and weird mind trips, and they really seem to be trying hard to convince you that they *are so weird*. It's all rather amusing, but most of the jokes don't need to be told. I'm sure we all find Donovan a faded fixture to poke fun at, but we wouldn't write songs about it ("Donovan Turns Me On" from *Not a Good Day*). Some of the songs seem to be competing for Most Obnoxious Title ("Baby Dolls Flexed Between Interstellar Acid Gels" or "Jethro's Kaleidospic Aural Mixture").

Still, one can't help notice that it's all quite sincere--judging by the covers, they seem to have even invented their own language. Plus, these cassette-only releases have a strange charm all thier own that by passes even their most excessive moments.

Write to: Wallmen, 7711 Lisa Ln., N. Syracuse, NY 13212. All tapes are \$3.00.

-Peter Catalanotte

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The Very Best of Jeff Colt brings the ex-Seidoms' Jeff Colt to your stereo with sixty minutes of fast and funky garage rock. Fantastic!!!



Verbal Curios features spoken word pieces, many of which have appeared on *Rhetoric Farm's* pages. The artists include Bill Beaver, Jim Parks, Jordan Gruener, John Armando, Steven Kranz, and Rebarb. Sixty minutes of eclectic readings!!!

The cassettes are available for \$3 each at Wrex Records, Cockpit, Al Bum's, Discount Records, or through mail-order (include \$1 for postage per cassette). No checks please.

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Psssst! Watch for future releases, including *The Wooden Ball* with Howe Gelb, Paula Brown, Jim Parks, the River Roses and Billy Sed to name a few

MoeJadKateBarry

Moe Tucker

50,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 Watts Records

Yes, it's the Moe Tucker last heard on her 1983 solo debut *Playin' Possum*, and yes, that is the real name of the record company.

This time she is joined by Jad Fair of Half Japanese fame. If your idea of torture is hearing his reedy whine placed atop Velvet Underground covers, you have been warned. If the primitive pulsings of drummer Mo Tucker are your thing no matter what the cost, this might be for you. It's really a match made in heaven, though that opinion won't be shared by most of its owners.

Write to: 50,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 Watts Records,
5721 S. Laguna Ave, Stuart FL 33497.

-Peter Catalanotte

Fatal Flowers

Fatal Flowers

Atlantic Records

If the Stones were as vital as they used to be, they'd have called it quits by now. If they were really as vital as they used to be, they'd sound like the Fatal Flowers.

Granted, this isn't the stuff that could move a generation, and you'd probably wear out another copy of *Exile on Main Street* before you would this one. But this is still a pretty potent disc, and one-time Motorhead producer Vic Maile adds enough grit to push this debut over the edge. Can't wait for the follow-up.

-Peter Catalanotte



The Big Gundown

John Zorn

ICON/Nonesuch

The subtitle gives it away and it's the subtle epitaph for this LP: John Zorn plays the music of Ennio Morricone. Why oh why does one of the brightest lights of improvisational music this side of Eugene Chadbourne limit himself and merely play Morricone, instead of using Morricone's own unique stylings as a framework to leap off of? But that's what Zorn does on *The Big Gundown*.

And as strange sounding as this album is at times, it still comes across as pretty tame. With a spectrum of artists from the abrasive (Arto Lindsay, Diamanda Galas, Robert Quine, Fred Frith) to the more melodic (Bill Frisell, Vicki Bodner, Big John Patton), the most haunting and ethereal moments on this come from Toots Thielmans, whose harmonica and whistling on "Poverty (Once Upon a time in America)" is spacious in a minor key.

There are moments of atonality and abrasive energy, and even more moments of calm sinuous beauty, yet when the most effective and piercing moment on a Zorn album of Morricone covers is provided by the same guy who does the *Sesame Street* theme, I've gotta say no go, Elmo.

Write to: ICON Records, New Music Distribution Service, 500 Broadway, New York, NY 10012.

-Phil Lipkin

Anything

The Damned

MCA Records

This album shows the Damned as a completely lobotomized and castrated travesty of its former self. Self-indulgent, unimaginative, even cowardly, this album marks an abysmal and unredeemable low. Anything the Damned started out to be is trashed without remorse on this album.

Witness the shameless iggy rip-off of the title track; the worthless remake of Love's "Alone Again Or"; the sub-moronic instrumental "The Portrait"; the schmaltz-drenched sentimentality on "Restless."

That's just side one.

It's sad to think this is the same band that used to kick out the jams with songs like "Sick of Being Sick" or "Smash it Up." But I've seen so many of the greats of the old days go this way that it's not such a surprise.

If I didn't know better, I might be inclined to believe this was a joke, if not a particularly funny one. But they've even washed the sneer out of Dave Vanian's voice. I keep expecting it to show up, even for a moment, but I think it's really gone.

Too bad. Next.

-Matthew Griffin

Mirage

Meat Puppets

SST

If you thought *Meat Puppets II* was The Big Sell-Out, avoid this like the plague. The arrangements are slick, they use synthesizers--egad! Even Derrick Brostrum learned a few drum rolls!

Despite this exaggerated catastrophe, the Puppets pull more rabbits from their bottomless hat and the results are diverse yet as pleasing as you'd expect. "Confusion Fog" bounces through familiar psycho-western terrain, while the title track (and its King Crimson riffing) could fit on even the most narrowed radio playlist. Only with "Liquified," the album closer, does the mindless mind-tripping wear a bit thin.

But that's a small worm in a mighty fine apple. As to the rest: sell-out, schmell-out. At least we'll have more room on the dance floor.

-Peter Catalanotte

Sun City Girls

Horse Cock Phepner

Placebo Records

That's strange-I thought these guys were the perfect neo-beatnik dadaist jazz thrash outfit. Now, they're... political!?

Surprisingly, they pull it off without missing a beat. While most bands would choose the more obvious hardcore rant-and-rave route, the Sun City Girls vent their anger a little differently. For example, in "Nancy," they target Our First Lady as a phallic-worshipping love nymph who sneaks off for trysts with Jesus and Mr. T, among others.

But it's the head-split ponderings of "Without Compare," or "Eyeball in a Quart Jar of Snot" that shoot these Girls past their rivals and straight into their own mind-fuzzed solar system. They are not of this earth.

Write to: Placebo Records, P.O. Box 23316, Phoenix, AZ 85063.

-Peter Catalanotte

Books

The Last Museum

Brion Gysin
Grove Press

Brion Gysin passed away in Paris last year, respected as a scholar, painter and writer in Europe, but never quite acknowledged in America. His 1969 novel *The Process* (most recent printing by Quartet Books, London), dealt with the bizarre hallucinogenic experiences of a character not unlike Gysin, while travelling through the Middle East and Africa (not unlike Gysin did).

In *The Last Museum* a character called Brion, but later mistakenly called Jon, has a bizarre hallucinogenic experience in a hotel, not unlike the Beat Hotel which housed such expatriates as William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg, Ian Sommersville, Jack Kerouac and Gysin. Yet, where *The Process* universalized the tribulations and generated a twisted but undeniable continuity, *The Last Museum* consists of disjointed in-jokes about the Beat Generation. To a scholar of 1950's literature, this book is a treasure trove of information and insight, but it falls distinctly flat to someone without that orientation and reference system. It also helps if you're familiar with the Tibetan Book of the Dead, because the whole structure is copped from it. Intelligent, convoluted, obscure and arcane, this is a sad epitaph for the genius that was Brion Gysin.

Write to: Grove Press, 920 Broadway, New York, NY 10010
Quartet Books, 27/29 Goodge Street, London W1P 1FD

-Phil Lipkin

New Sounds: A Listener's Guide to New Music

John Schaefer
Harper and Row

Whatever you call it--post-punk, post-modern, process music, ethno music, electronic, New Age, electro-acoustic, or just modern music--John Schaefer has provided the critical overview that New Music (his term) has needed. Schaefer, a host of WNYC's *New Sounds* program for almost five years as well as host of the weekly National Public Radio program of the same name, brings the critical distance and broad perspective this subject needs to this overview. After all, the categories defy coherence and, all too often, the performers resist categories, too. How to link Steve Reich, William Ackerman and Brian Eno in a single term?

The wide angle view this guide takes makes it inevitable that sections will be lacking insight and a proper perspective, but those few areas are more than offset by the detail and extrapolations in lesser known branches such as David Hykes' Harmonic Choir and the varieties of international ethnic music.

Most every section provides a historical context and individual examples of pertinence, backed up by discographies which range from comprehensive to better than adequate, including critical comments on virtually every entry.

In fact, the most confusing and negative aspect of *New Sounds* are the individual discographies for each section and the inconsistent cross-indexing. But seeing how there are a number of 1987 LPs listed, I'm willing to make allowances and to bide my time until the 2nd edition by thumbing through the 1st edition again and again.

-Ess Kranz

RAW, Number 8 *Raw Books and Graphics*

Ostensibly a periodical, *Raw's* lengthy gestation between issues (over a year between numbers 7 and 8), large format (10 1/2" x 14") and high price (\$7.95) makes it feel like an anthology. Its international scope and hip cachet can attract big names like R. Crumb, Sue Coe, Mark Marek, Brad Holland, Drew Friedman, Joost Swarte and even Pee Wee Herman's art director, Gary Panter, making it the contemporary forum for graphic work. Innovative touches throughout each issue, such as the new chapter in Art Spiegelman's *Maus* saga, individually bound in a booklet format, are wonderful. Well worth the price, since *Raw* is complex, dense, funny and compelling enough to be appreciated at length.

Write to: Raw Books and Graphics, 27 Greene Street, New York, NY 10013.

-Ess Kranz

Why Duchamp

Gianfranco Baruchello and Henry Martin
Document/McPherson Publishers

Baruchello is an Italian artist and acquaintance of Marcel Duchamp. Martin is an essayist and art critic. They got together and discussed the implications of Duchamp's work on a cross section of the arts. Doesn't sound inspiring but these transcribed results, subtitled "an essay on aesthetic impact," have a flow and lucidity rarely found in art criticism. But then again, this isn't concerned with analyzing formal elements and ideological stance.

Baruchello discourses about influences and repercussions from Duchamp in his own thinking and artwork. Nice photos and a concise text combine to make this a fine introduction to the abstracts dealt with in great art everywhere, not just Marcel Duchamp's.

Write to: McPherson, P.O. Box 638, New Paltz, NY, 12561.

-Ess Kranz



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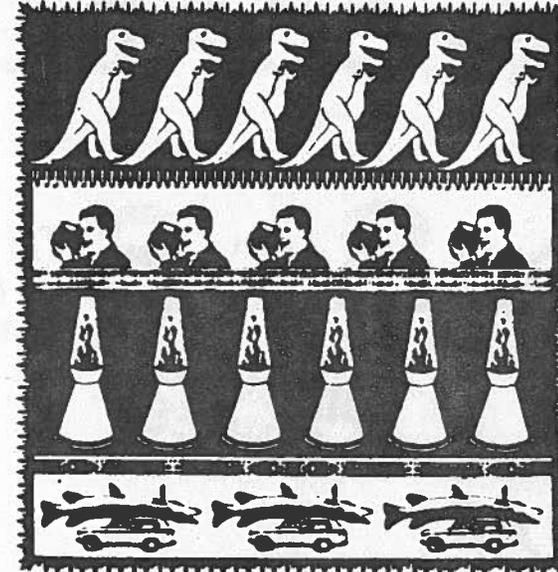
we heard it through the ...



The cigar of happiness goes out to proud poppa Howe Gelb and merry mommy Paula Jean Brown for the arrival of Patsy Jean a few weeks back. No word yet on how the babe-in-arms will affect the ever-shifting Giant Black Sand Ranchette line-up... Preparing for their latest LP is Naked Prey and this is all we know: it might be recorded in Nogales and Paul Cutler might twiddle the production knobs again. We received word that frontman Van Christian was a regular reader of this magazine, but when pressed to the truth, admitted he had never heard of it. That's okay, we've never heard of The James Gang... We came, we heard, we grooved: some smoking sessions were held recently at Sitting Duck Studios with the making of the Marshmallow Overcoat debut LP (to be released on Lee Joseph's Dionysus Records sometime soon). Wildman Al Perry laid down some heavy leads while Tim Gassen grunted and groaned. As for the l-o-n-g awaited Voxx comp Sounds From the LSD, we are told the release date will be "August." Does this mean the record release party will last all month long?... Speaking of Sitting Duck Studios, main man David Slutes is slating July 1st for the release of his own cassette compilation, entitled Tunes From Tucson. The 90-minute work will include Thai Plnk, Giant Sand/Blacky Ranchette, Rainer & Das Combo, Deadbolts, River Roses... let's just say it has practically every local band you could imagine, all for five bucks. Write to: P.O. Box 41724, Tucson, AZ 85719, and tell him the Farm sent you... Whoooooee! Nice guys Durango 95 rocked this town (the day after their May 29th Club Congress gig) with a free show at the hoppin' Club 818. Some said it was the best party ever, while others accused them of not knowing enough Beatles' covers. You can fool all of the people some of the time... Read all about one man's reaction to Giant Sand, Rainer & Das Combo and the River Roses in the debut issue of Declaration. Send \$2 and two 22-cent stamps to: 17 Stagecoach Rd., Hingham, MA 02043. Tell 'em the Farm sent you... Back to the studio for Bloodspasm who might release an LP on a branch of the Dionysus Records label... Phantom Limbs will be on a two-week tour that will take them through Texas, New York and Canada... We've heard good things about rookie rockers Infinite Beauties. Described as "happy punk," they are in need of a drummer at the moment... Folk-grungers River Roses will be releasing a 3-song single this August... By the time you read this, Opinion Zero will have embarked on a two-week tour taking them from El Paso to San Francisco... What happened to the rumored Dead Milkmen appearance at Nino's? Is it really just for cowboys?... Ex-Heavy Convictions crooner Dave "Hellrad" Goodman is singing for local threat-to-police outfit U.P.S. and they are hoping to play out soon... Send all gossip and hearsay to: P.O. Box 43171, Tucson, AZ 85733-3171. We reserve the right to make things up as we go along.

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