

"Marvellous!"
Film of the Month

VOX

One man's search for
...who knows what

From the star of
RESERVOIR DOGS and FARGO
STEVE BUSCEMI
CHLOE SEVIGNY

*Trees
Lounge* ¹⁵

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FORTHCOMING ATTRACTIONS

Thursday 6th February



**fokkewolf
INTENSE DEGREE** adm. £2

Tuesday 13th February

**GRIDLOCK
Slack Elvis** adm. £2

Thursday 20th February

SURF CREATURES
SURF CITY ROCKERS THEE PHANTOM CREEPS
Adm. £2.50 (£2 NUS/USA)

Tuesday 25th February

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& The Royal Roots Band**
DJ JOHNNY B (Heatwave) DJ PABLO (Fever / Loungin')
Revival Roots & Culture adm. £3.50 (£3 NUS/USA)

Thursday 27th February

DUB MERGE ROOTSMAN
Sweet Potato presents

Tuesday 4th March

MAJICK SPYDER

Thursday 6th March

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CELLTARABIA**

Thursday 13th March

astralasia



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THERE IS A SMELL OF FRIED ONIONS

overall

THERE IS A SMELL OF FRIED ONIONS

Issue # 49 February 1997

FREE



Roy from PERFORMANCE

Some but not all the information contained herein may be false. Stay alert!

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Whispers

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7 DAYS A WEEK
POOL TABLE & TV LOUNGE
UP TO THE MINUTE SOUNDS

Under New Management

firstofall:

The first major exhibition to focus on recycling comes to Nottingham Castle Museum in February. It includes furniture, wall hangings, jewellery, fashion accessories, lighting and basketry. The craftspeople in this exhibition want to show that waste is a legitimate material as clay, wood or gold. Including a chest of drawers made from sardine cans and a basket woven with computer parts the exhibition, imaginatively entitled *Recycling*, begins 10th Feb. and continues until April 7th.

Please Release Me

Due to the British Board of Film Censors continuing to delay the release of *Original Sins*, Screen Edge has brought forward the release date of Jr. Bookwalter's classic gorefest *The Dead Next Door*. It will be released on video completely uncut on March 24th.



REEF

photo: Katarina Jebb

New releases on Sony include top-selling rockers Reef's new album *Glow* out now on Sony's S2 label; *Battle Of Who Could Care Less* is the risky title of the Ben Folds Five new single out Feb. 10th on Epic with an album to follow in March. They appear at The Leadmill, Sheffield, March 9th; pop-Rockers *Jocasta* go for it with new single *Go* on Feb. 3rd; while on Immortal records via Epic is the new single from Korn entitled *A.D.I.D.A.S.* taken from their *Life Is Peachy* album; Korn were the first band to perform live on the internet; coincidentally DJ CAM was the first DJ to have a live set broadcast on the 'net and on a 'nouvelle vague de l'abstract hip hop' tip comes his album of jungle, jazz and house (not necessarily in that order) from this former French graffiti artist and bedroom DJ, 23-year old Laurent of Paris. The follow up to his *Underground Vibes* debut album, this one is called *Substances* and is released by Columbia on Cam's own label Inflamable Records.

Gene issue their new album *Drawn To The Deep End* which includes their latest single *We Could Be Kings* on Polydor records Feb 17th. before going out on tour of the UK culminating in a show at the Royal Albert Hall.



A new Twister (pic.) single *It's A Dog's Life* shifts the streets this month on Damaged Goods records cd or limited edition blue vinyl. Latimer have a single out Feb 10th called *Used Cars* prior to a new album *Live From Sour City* in March, on World Domination. Oxford/Bristol yoklers The Egg crack open their second single for Indochina at the end of the month following a UK tour which includes a weekly residency at the Splash Club throughout Feb. and an appearance at The Charlotte, Leics. (13th). Out now on Epitaph The Offspring's *Ignay On The Hombre* with some UK dates coming up in April. Pretty Ugly Lunachicks new, more accelerated and complex album on Go Kart. Quirky San Franciscans Engine 88 take *Seconal* from their forthcoming album *Snowman*, perform a one-off at the 100 Club in London and return to the UK in Spring for a full tour. *Mere Pawns... To The Monkey God Of Rock 'n' Roll* is the realcore soundtrack and true garage concept of Monkey Island's new album on Ultra via SRD. *Why Suzy Can't Go Swimming - A Taste Of UK Hardcore* is a 16-track compilation on Org Records featuring latest signing to Earache records Pulkas, Pepperman, Glueball, Travis and King Prawn. London-based low-lifers Dream City Film Club release their *Perfect Piece Of Trash* ep for Beggars Banquet on Feb. 17th with a full length album to follow.

Nottingham's newest dance club Whispers, (formerly The Staircase and fully refurbished), hosts a weekly Northern Soul/Tamla Motown on Saturday nights with resident dj Rob Smith and guest djs while fortnightly on Fridays starting 14th Feb is *MIXin* with djs Pablo, Jazz Spirit, Ryszard and Jonathan. Meanwhile across town at The Skyy Club Thursday night is members night i.e. its free entry with a membership card and Denis says "if you don't bring your card you pay a quid even if you're Paul Overall". However Paul Overall will be busy on Thursday nights at the new-look Sam Fay's with some top bands so that scenario will not arise. Acts this season include hardcore motherfuckers Fokkewolf, Intense Degree and Mangacide (Feb 6th); Nottingham's best alternative rock act Gridlock with their special guests Slack Elvis (13th); a splash it on all Overall Surf Special with "the Shadows meet Man...Or Astroman?" Surf Creatures, "Ramoness meet the Beach Boys" Surf City Rockers and Thee Phantom Creeps (20th); a reggae revival night featuring Nottingham's top session musicians The Royal Roots Band backing up the voices of Sammy 'Sweet' Clarke and Singin' Roots; the first in the new *Sweet Potato* dub reggae series featuring Dub Merge, Rootsmen (27th) which continues with *Aba Shanti* (March 27th) and *Jah Shaka's* 40k sound system (May 1st) all with the inevitable DJ Walt. On March 6th discover *The Lost Music Of Celtarabia*, a dance groove from the dawn of time played on medieval and arabic instruments combined with organic acid house beats and dub basslines; and on Thursday 13th March the return of *Astralasia* and their mysterious Swordfish.

* The ten lucky winners of our Rolling Stones Rock n Roll Circus Video competition are D. Smith, The Park; R. Cuom. Sneinton; P. Smith, Mansfield Rd.; D. Walker, Radford; E. McElveen, Sherwood; I. Brock, Top Valley; S. Gorman, Forest Fields; K. Mulvaney, Sneinton, J.T. Whitworth, Edmaston Rd. Nottingham and R. Simpson, Ilkeston, Derbys.

Obituaries by Lord Biro

Brian Harvey

Ecstatic
Tracey 16 + ECSTASY 12
= ex-Tracey
Times tabloid
Divided East 17
- One.

Cnl. Tom Parker

Farewell then
Tom Parker

Fat
fairground
barker

and manager
for the King

I've just
left him
at the pub

he wasn't
Shook up

He was
Laughing
like fuck

Actually.

BASILDON GIRLS CHOIR

Rottweiler males and fat cats tails
that's what little Spice Girls are made of.

Lord Biro

THURSDAY MARCH 27 TH

"THE MIGHTY EARTH ROCKER"

ABA SHANTI - I

SOUNDS OF JAH LIGHTNING AND THUNDER
WITH EXCLUSIVE LIVE APPEARANCE OF HIS

SHANTI-ELVES

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DOOR £8

THURSDAY MAY 1 ST

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THURSDAY JUNE 5 TH

ZION TRAIN Bad Religion

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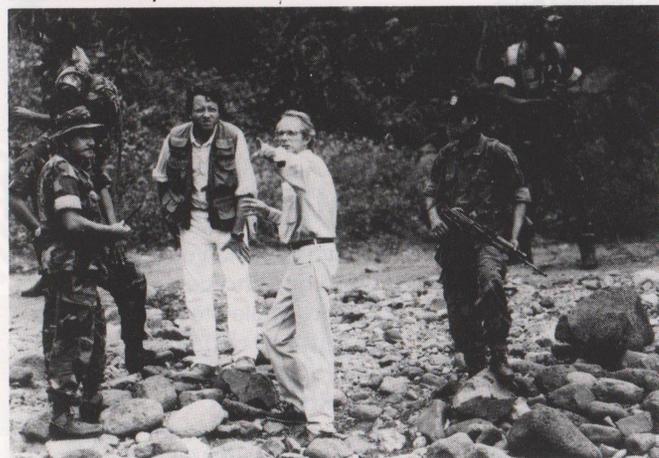
visual:



SHINE dir. Scott Hicks

Inspired by the true story of eccentric Australian pianist David Helfgott, Shine is a powerful, enormously moving film that examines the contradictory life of a musical prodigy and the pursuit of artistic excellence that proves detrimental to his health and sanity. Alex Rafalowitz, Noah Taylor and Geoffrey Rush are the three actors who represent Helfgott at different ages, and his troubles begin early with a dictatorial and autocratic father (Armin Mueller Stahl). Friendship and encouragement is offered by an elderly writer (Googie Withers) and against his father's wishes he takes up a scholarship at the Royal Academy Of Music where his inherent talent flourishes under the tutelage of eminent professor Cecil Parkes (Sir John Gielgud). However, the stress and pressure soon become too much and a nervous breakdown is followed by a decade of confusion living in and out of mental institutions. The road to recovery is long but a chance meeting with astrologer Gillian (Lynn Redgrave) offers Helfgott hope and the opportunity to rescue his career.

Director Scott Hicks elicits strong performances from all of the cast, while the films factual aspect adds to its resonance and enhances its heartfelt emotional charge. Impressively shine does not ignore the bleak, agonizing side to its story, but uses these elements to show how the human spirit can come through and triumph over tragedy. 1997 kicks off with a truly inspiring piece of film-making. Hank Quinlan
Shine on at Broadway Fri 31st Jan - Sun 9th Feb.



CARLA'S SONG dir. Ken Loach

The latest from uncompromising British director Loach, Carla's Song traces a similar path to last year's Spanish epic Land And Freedom as once again a young working class man is caught up in a foreign civil war. Set in 1987, the first half of the film makes the most of its Glasgow locations as George (Robert Carlyle), a plucky, free-spirited bus driver meets and falls in love with distressed Nicaraguan refugee Carla (Oyanka Cabezas). Threatening their relationship are the horrors of her past and the memories of an old boyfriend whom she reluctantly left behind, so at George's behest they up and leave for war-torn Nicaragua. Once there the film shifts gear as the developing love story takes a back seat to the political diatribe and the vivacious struggle between the Sandinistas and US backed Contras. Predictably and justifiably, loach points an accusing finger at covert CIA operations, but it's a one-sided argument and although the atrocities committed are indeed appalling, there is a general lack of real dramatic tension. The moral complexity which made the director's previous work such a success is absent here and the result, despite excellent, authentic performances particularly from Carlyle, and the plain, impressive realism of the cinematography, is simply not as challenging or absorbing as it should be. Hank Quinlan
Carla's Song sings at Broadway Fri. 31st Jan-Sun 9th Feb.

BEAUTIFUL GIRLS

Ted Demme's Beautiful Girls can be usefully seen as a Diner for the 90's since the plot surrounds a group of twenty-somethings coming together in the snowbound town of Knight's Ridge, Massachusetts for a reunion. A strong cast includes Mira Sorvino, Uma Thurman, Timothy Hutton (in one of his best roles to date), Matt Dillon, Rosie O'Donnell and Michael Rapaport in a film most notable for the fact that the script has been supplied by one of Hollywood's hottest current talents, Scott Rosenberg (Things To Do In Denver When You're Dead). Some cinema goers may feel that they have been here before in other reunion films but Beautiful Girls is still a delight mainly because the dialogue is so strong, the characters perfectly believable and many of the encounters between characters thoroughly amusing. Touching, heartfelt, and poignant, Beautiful Girls is a surprisingly warm comedy that totally absorbs you right up to the final credits. Matt Arnold

DEAD PRESIDENTS

The Hughes' brothers second film is a Vietnam-based drama that is really three stories in one: the high-school upbringing of black boy Anthony Curtis; his flight to join the war in Vietnam; and his return as a swiftly forgotten hero struggling to make a living on the streets. Although this area has been covered before in detail, the film gives a rounded view of Curtis, neatly tells the three tales as one and provides a decent feature-length film with plenty of roles for a host of black actors. It also has one of the best sound-tracks to emerge this year, for its capture of the period as it journeys from the late 70's through to the early 80's. It's difficult to see what message the Hughes' brothers are trying to put across or why they wanted to make it, but much work has gone into it and it will find an audience, particularly amongst the black community. MA

THE DAY THE SUN TURNED COLD

From the Far East, Hong Kong director Yim Ho's The Day The Sun Turned Cold is engaging and powerfully persuasive as a film. It unravels shady secrets that have been going on in a bleak rural homestead in Northern China. Yim Ho concentrates on a family death and a perplexing dilemma which faces the icily cool Guan, 24, who comes to the conclusion that his mother poisoned his father some ten years earlier. Should he just accept what has happened or turn her over to the police, even though she would face a death sentence? To further cloud the issue, at the time of his father's death, his mother was seeing another man. It brings to mind the brilliant film starring Jack Nicholson, The Postman Always Rings Twice. This film is similar and yet also all the more startling given that it's based on a real-life case. Beautifully executed, The Day The Sun Turned Cold will grip those who go to see it. Well worth seeing with some decent acting and a plot that engages from start to finish. The film also has a fine and particularly poignant ending so do stay to the final credits. MA
The Day The Sun Turns Cold sets at Broadway 11th-13th Feb. and Metro 19th-20th March.

SLEEPERS

Sleepers, set in New York's Hells Kitchen from the sixties to the eighties, is based on an allegedly true story by Lorenzo Carcaterra. Four youths, Lorenzo included, accidentally injure a man with a stolen hot-dog cart and are banished to a reform school that's more Alcatraz than Grange Hill. They have to eat food off the floor, are beaten with batons and raped by the guards, including the grotesque Noakes (Kevin Bacon). Their only beacon of hope is friend Father Bobby (De Niro). Years later two of the four spot Noakes in a bar, riddle him with bullets and stand trial. The other men Lorenzo, (Jason Patric) and Michael (Brad Pitt), conspire to rig proceedings by making Pitt prosecute and inept lawyer Danny Snyder (Hoffman) defend. Suffice to say the fish-like stench of affairs remains undetected by all and the murderers are released. For all it's predictability, Sleepers is a tense, gripping and shocking affair. The childhood years, complete with surf soundtrack and burst hydrants, are well depicted with an outstanding performance by Joe Perrino as a troubled Lorenzo. Bruno Kirby (Basketball Diaries) gives a chillingly genuine performance as Lorenzo's wife-beating father, a portrayal of true violence Bacon should note.

Reform school is grimly portrayed by Director Levinson. All bars, dankness, greys, walls, rats and filth. He expertly films harrowing rape scenes by showing the hysterical faces of the child victims rather than anything explicit. The problem in this section of the movie is an over-the-top Bacon. He appears to have missed Gary Oldman's master class of how to be an intense, believable, psychopathic Warden despite being feet away from him in Murder In The First. Indubitably, perhaps inevitably, De Niro steals the show as Father Bobby, the hippest priest ever, a boozing, chain-smoking basketball player yet also a firm shoulder for the quartet to cry on throughout their lives. A complex hybrid of Michael Jordan, Humphrey Bogart and yer nan. If Priests were this cool no one would be out on the piss Saturday nights. Two of the most memorable moments in Sleepers are De Niro based. One is a court room head-to-head with Hoffman's excellent, stubbly, down to earth Lawyer, a coupling of cinematic Gods reminiscent of the De Niro-Pacino partnership in Heat. The other is merely an extended close up of De Niro's charismatic face, eyes welling with pain, as Patric tells him of the horrors he's gone through at reform school. It's a testament to the captivating, natural talent of the man that a screen filled by his features is infinitely more riveting than any scene involving the insipid Pitt or featureless Patric. Ultimately the film leaves the audience pitying De Niro, not only because he has to appear with Pitt and Patric but because he is arguably the most likeable character in the film and is the only one punished, having to lie under oath to give the murderers an alibi. Sleepers carries a similar message to that of A Time To Kill, promoting vigilantism and suggesting justice and the law differ. This seems a highly dangerous maxim to preach and surely this reviewer isn't the only person to feel murderers should be punished however provoked. After all, if provocation removes guilt then Fathers, Mothers-In-Law and Bryan Adams would have been largely wiped out by now. Overall, ignoring Pitt, Patric and the Friends-style models-without-talent-around-a-table ending, Sleepers is a powerful film held aloft by shocking brutality, Levinson's slick camera and the consummate professionalism of Hoffman and De Niro. Peter Lawton



TREES LOUNGE

Steve Buscemi does a good impression of a lounge lizard echoing Mickey Rourke's memorably seedy performance in Barfly as he takes the lead role here in his own directorial debut. Trees Lounge is the name of a Cheers-type bar which Steve frequents pretty much daily. Playing a lively ex-mechanic who turns his hand to driving an ice-cream van when he's short of readies, he begins to turn on the charm with an impressionable 17-year old (played by the engaging Chloe Sevigny of Kids fame). Not as naive as you might think she is, the two of them get close one night, but she has an over protective father with a strong temperament who knows the kind of low-life played by Buscemi. He gets on with him but wouldn't want to hear of any kind of liaison between him and his daughter. Both Buscemi and Sevigny give decent performances and the plot has enough twists to keep you enthralled and amused for a few hours.

Matt Arnold

Trees Lounge branches out to Broadway 14th-23rd Feb.

FREEFORALL

We have a pair of tickets to give away in our Trees Lounge competition and five runners-up will receive a cd of the soundtrack and a poster. Simply answer this question: What colour 'Mr.' did Steve Buscemi play in Reservoir Dogs? Answers on a postcard to Trees Lounge, Overall, PO Box 73, West PDO, Nottingham NG7 4DG. Please include your telephone number. Closing date 13th Feb.

THE STARMAKER

Italian film-maker Giuseppe Tornatore made a name for himself with the memorable masterpiece Cinema Paradiso and his latest comedy The Starmaker won the special Jury prize at the 1995 Venice Film Festival. Although not in the same league as Cinema Paradiso, it still has its moments and fans of Tornatore may well wish to see it out of curiosity. Set in Italy after just after WW2 the starmaker in question is young con-man Joe Morelli (Sergio Castilito) who tours the country in a run-down van selling fake screen tests. He charges 1500 lire to any punter willing to stand in front of a camera which in fact has no film inside. Interestingly there's a double edge to Morelli's work: yes, he's exploiting others and taking money under false pretences but by doing so he is allowing those purchasing the tests to pursue their wildest dreams. As it follows dream-maker Morelli's fortunes, the film produces an engaging (if at times uneven) mix of fantasy and reality. MA
Starmaker tests out at Broadway 15th-20th Feb and Metro, Derby 14-20th Feb.

LOOKING FOR RICHARD

Shakespeare is 'in' right now and so is Al Pacino. The two come together in this film about the making of a film, in which a film-maker struggles with all sorts of problems to ensure that the show will go on. Pacino conceived the idea, co-wrote it, he directs and also acts in a movie reminiscent of Truffaut's Day For Night. Assisting him in an all-star cast are Winona Ryder Oscar winning Kevin Spacey, Aidan Quinn and Alec Baldwin (fresh from the court wrangles after punching a photographer). MA
Looking For Richard shows up at Broadway from 28th Feb and at Metro 21st-26th March.

WALKING AND TALKING

An apt title as there is indeed a great deal of walking and talking in this US indie comedy about the hang-ups of two thirty-somethings, Amelia and Laura in present day New York city. Written and directed by Nicole Holofcener, who is currently being touted with some conviction as a 'female Woody Allen'. Walking And Talking provides a refreshing approach to the old chestnut of a comedy based on romantic hang-ups as Laura (Anne Heche) is about to be married and Amelia (Catherine Keener) can't even find herself a guy. It is refreshing because it is written by a woman from a woman's point of view both in the situations the characters find themselves in and in the dialogue. But there is a downside because after an hour you realise there isn't much to it and the lack of substance to the plot makes the final third drag to its conclusion. A walk with snappy dialogue but in no particular direction. MA
Walking And Talking strolls into Broadway 21st-27th Feb.

THE SECRET AGENT

Based on the Joseph Conrad novel this is an adaptation of written and directed by Christopher Hampton about a beautiful young woman (Patricia Arquette) betrayed by her husband (Bob Hoskins) who is an unwilling secret agent in Victorian London. The cast also includes Gerard Depardieu, Jim Broadbent and Christopher Bale and was produced by Norma Heyman. MA

ROBINSON IN SPACE

Another release of curiosity value, Robinson In Space is a social commentary on the way the British go about their lives. In this unique view of 90's Britain, with a voice-over by Paul Schofield, a fictional character named Robinson, a language teacher from Reading, is asked by an advertising agency to undertake a study of "the problem of England". From there Robinson casts a wry glance at aspects of human behaviour, social history, literary sites, road signs, infrastructure, factories— whatever takes his fancy. There is no lead character, no plot, just a series of images intrinsically linked with the voice-over. The same style was adopted by the film's creator Patrick Keiler two years ago when his debut London opened to wide acclaim. Robinson's film essay on London life was refreshingly original, sharp in its observations and funny with it. By widening the net he has taken on a bigger and more ambitious challenge. Unfortunately it doesn't come off with the same sharpness. It certainly begins as a funny social commentary, with several witticisms about British daily life but 45 minutes in the style begins to seem monotonous. Although out of the ordinary it would have made a better short film. Robinson In Space looks in on Broadway 24th-27th Feb.

SHOCK: The Essential Guide To Exploitation Movies

edited by Stefan Jaworzyn (Titan books)
Picking and probing away art moviedom's dark underbelly Shock presents a mish-mash of articles, reviews and interviews on all things sleazy, slimy and cinematic. As expected in this type of publication the tone is uneven and the writing quality erratic, but the genuine enthusiasm for the subject matter makes for an informed and entertaining read. Best of the bunch are Kim Newman's examination of Hollywood under the influence of McCarthyism, Jack Stevenson's historical overview of horror classic Freaks, Colin Davis' investigation into necrophilia in the movies, Damon Wise's interview with Little Miss Shy Traci Lords and Anne Billson's amusing piece on the guilty pleasures of the Art Movie. An excellent selection of rare photos, posters and stills provide visual interest, though the accompanying piss-poor captions full of schoolboy humour are far from impressive. Eccentric, vulgar, tacky and tasteless Shock is a nice place to visit, but you have to wonder about the weirdos who live there. Hank Quinlan

THE PSYCHOTRONIC VIDEO GUIDE

Michael J. Weldon (Titan Books, £19.99)
It's big—28 x 21 cm, 620 pages, over 9,000 entries and 450 illustrations. In the rarified and reactionary world of book reviewing, size sure isn't everything, but you have to be impressed with statistics like these. What's more first impressions don't lie as a wonderful selection of witty, informative reviews leap out from page after page. Any video with elements of Sci-Fi, horror or fantasy gains automatic entry into author Weldon's Psychotronic twilight zone, but so do exploitation movies, old B-Movie relics, hip trashy cult items and the quirky best from the likes of Altman, Hitchcock and Coppola. An index of directors and their films would have made it easier and more useful for cross-reference purposes while a major drawback is the obvious, though understandable American slant which does bring into question the books practical application in this country. Nevertheless, flicking through and finding one cinematic, oddity after another really is great fun ('Linda Lovelace For President' anyone? Or maybe you'd prefer 'Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama'???) and so far I've yet to find one review I didn't agree with. Yep, it's that good. Hank Quinlan



SALAMANDA TANDEM Lighthouse Nottingham Wollaton Hall

photo: Jo Fairfax

I had a good feeling about this performance, a feeling which grew as I caught sight of Wollaton Hall glowing red and blue in the distance. Salamanda Tandem's fusion of dance, song, lighting and sculptural design paid off at this venue, whose surroundings and history were used as an inspiration for their work, transforming an entire room and using corridors, galleries, pillars and doorways as part of the vision. It was a delight to experience as mind and senses were all satisfied by a gradually building atmosphere with the sound of the wind, banging doors and the ringing of distant bells as the three singers entered with lead dancer/singer Isabel Jones chiming a single bell. An atmosphere of eerie calm and expectation was created by the way the light changed to the movement of the voices from in front, through and behind the audience. At one point only the singers' silhouettes could be seen high above in the gallery while their voices could still be heard. Unfortunately the arrangement of seating all on the same level made it impossible to view the whole stage environment at once and some of the dance was often obscured. But the huge shadows cast by the players, the ever-changing angle of light, the Butoh-influenced dancing of Naomi Mutoh and Tamami Jones, using and reflecting the sculptural visual design of Jo Fairfax were striking in their simplicity and in sympathy with the surroundings, making Wollaton Hall look and feel like never before.

MITA BANERJEE Nottingham Trent University Bonnington Gallery

In contrast this piece was staged in a corner of the gallery amongst an exhibition of Asian women's art. The dance was complimentary to the exhibition, addressing the myth of the perfect Indian woman and her role as an ideal wife using simple, controlled, elegant movements with words spoken by Banerjee during the piece. Her dance also draws on the tradition of dance in India which goes back thousands of years. The Natya Shastra (literally 'Dance Book') is 4,000 years old. Banerjee's background also extends to classical South Indian dance, Bharata Natyam African dance and martial arts— Kalar from North India and Chau. All of this showed in the accomplishment of her movements and the huge amount of control with which they were executed. Frances Richards

FRIED CIRCUIT

FEBRUARY 1997



not so dodgy rock band GRIDLOCK feat. Trent Mathon (left)

- thursday 6th**
FAT DIGESTER / WEAVERMAN Nottingham The Old Angel
FOKKEWOLF
INTENSE DEGREE / MANGACIDE Spin Out Sam Fay's
DELICIOUS Rock City
OSSIE / IAN STEWART / LEROY The Academy
DOS B Easy Tiger
CHRIS CONWAY QUARTET Jazz Consortium The Mill
THE HAMSTERS The Running Horse
RELENTLESS Filly & Firkin
BETH ORTON / TRAVIS Leics The Charlotte
THE LIZARDS Pump & Tap
- friday 7th**
AINSLEY LISTER Nottingham The Running Horse
BLISS Filly & Firkin
ON THE FIDDLE Mechanics Arms
GO TROPO The Skyy Club
RYSZARD / JAZZ SPIRIT / PABLO D? CI? Loungin'
THE CANDYSKINS Leics The Charlotte
MINK / EARTHLIFE Pump & Tap
BENNETT Northampton The Roadmender
- saturday 8th**
BADAXE / ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY / SNEINTON ELVIS see Chris Badaxe shit in a bucket live on stage whilst conducting a seance with Denis McCarthy. £2 Nottingham The Old Angel
HANGOVER The Running Horse
EARTHLIFE Filly & Firkin
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE 3pm The Golden Fleece
THE COMMANDMENTS Behans Bar
SONS OF ERRIS Mechanics Arms
- thursday 13th**
GRIDLOCK / SLACK ELVIS DJ MARK SPIVEY Nottingham Sam Fay's
ABK The Running Horse
JUICE Filly & Firkin
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE Café Metz
TNT Behan's Bar
SAVILLE'S TRAVELS The Mill
DRUM VISION drum & bass The Skyy Club
CORE Rock City
THE EGG / FUCCIO Leics The Charlotte
PROPELLOR Pump & Tap
- friday 14th**
DOG TOMAS / BULLYHEAD Nottingham The Old Angel
THE JAMM / EASE Meadow Club
MIXIN Whispers
STUMBLE BROTHERS Running Horse
DAVIS Filly & Firkin
STUMBLE BROTHERS Running Horse
EAMON GETHINGS Mechanics Arms
SILVER SUN / GRASSHAW / DON Leics The Charlotte
MONDO KANE Pump & Tap
PLACEBO Sheffield Foundry
LOL COXHILL The Roadmender
- saturday 15th**
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE 3pm Nottingham The Golden Fleece
FIBRESTREAM / SENZA MISURA
THE IMAGINEERS The Old Angel
THE NIGHTPORTERS The Running Horse
SURF CREATURES Filly & Firkin
HOOLEY & THE CRACK Mechanics Arms
PLACEBO / DEUS Rock City
LONG TALL TEXANS Leics The Charlotte
PASSION STAR Sheffield Morrissey's
NO DOUBT The Leadmill
- friday 21st**
LIGAMENT / BOB TILTON Nottm The Old Angel
ALAMO The Running Horse
MAXIM Filly & Firkin
TRIBUTE TO NOTHING KING PRAWN Rock City
SMOKESCREEN Skyy Club
JACK OF DIAMONDS Mechanics Arms
HELIOTROPE MIG Leics The Charlotte
THE WHISKY PRIESTS Chesterfield Arts Centre
- sunday 16th**
THE FOOTWARMERS noon The Golden Fleece
MIND THE GAP 8pm Nottingham The Bell Inn
HARRY & THE GROWLERS The Running Horse
THE JUG BAND The Golden Fleece
- thursday 13th**
LODESTAR Rock City
STATUS QUID / FREAKZONE / FRONTIER / HELLRAZOR / HUSK TAUREA doors 1pm £5 Mansfield Oak Tree Lane Leics. Centre
MAD AS HELL Leicester Pump & Tap
PERFUME / SPACEMAID The Charlotte
GALLON DRUNK / GOLDBLADE GROOP DOGDRILL Sheffield The Leadmill
- sunday 9th**
THE FOOTWARMERS noon The Golden Fleece
JUBA 8pm Nottingham The Bell Inn
KELLY'S HEROES The Golden Fleece
SERVE CHILLED Skyy Club
- monday 10th**
PAT TRAVERS Nottingham The Running Horse
THE EXPLOITED LEECH WOMAN Rock City
THESE ANIMAL MEN Disco II
THE OMEGA BAND The Bell Inn
ACOUSTIC ROUTES Golden Fleece
ORLANDO / ACACIA / ECSTASY Leics The Charlotte
- tuesday 11th**
THE RUNAWAY BAND Nottm The Golden Fleece
GREYNOTE The Bell Inn
FOLK, BLUES & BEYOND The Running Horse
THESE ANIMAL MEN / BALLROOM / COSMOTOR The Charlotte
RACHEL STAMP N'ampton The Roadmender
- wednesday 12th**
FORTEANA / INSIDE / POD Battle Of The Bands The Skyy Club
JAMES JOYCE & THE EXILES Behan's Bar
808 STATE Derby University Union One

- THUNDER** Rock City
SERVE CHILLED Skyy
- monday 17th**
THE OMEGA BAND Nottingham The Bell Inn
ACOUSTIC ROUTES The Golden Fleece
THE SLINGBACKS / ATAMA The Charlotte
- tuesday 18th**
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE Nottm The Bell Inn
TINGE The Golden Fleece
MANTARAY The Aviary
BOOT Filly & Firkin
FOLK, BLUES & BEYOND The Running Horse
RED STRIPE Leics The Charlotte
DE LA SOUL Sheffield The Leadmill
- wednesday 19th**
THE FAB FOUR Nottm Sam Fay's
PAUL RODGERS Royal Concert Hall
ANALUZ Behan's Bar
GROUPIE / PALIGAP / OBLIVIOUS Leics The Charlotte
- thursday 20th**
CHAOS THEORY / TERMINUS Nottm The Old Angel
SURF CITY ROCKERS
SURF CREATURES
THEE PHANTOM CREEPS Surf Special Sam Fay's
HARSH Filly & Firkin
THE WHITE ROOM The Running Horse
HARPER The Old Vic
URESEI YATSURA Rock City
PESHAY / KEMISTRY & STORM
ATHLETICO Steel Beatroot
SECOND NATURE jazz consortium The Mill
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE Café Metz
UNKNOWN STUNTMAN
DUST DEVIL / SEXY LAND Leics The Charlotte
GENE Sheffield Octagon
- friday 21st**
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE Nottingham The Golden Fleece
FIBRESTREAM / SENZA MISURA
THE IMAGINEERS The Old Angel
THE NIGHTPORTERS The Running Horse
SURF CREATURES Filly & Firkin
HOOLEY & THE CRACK Mechanics Arms
PLACEBO / DEUS Rock City
LONG TALL TEXANS Leics The Charlotte
PASSION STAR Sheffield Morrissey's
NO DOUBT The Leadmill
- sunday 16th**
THE FOOTWARMERS noon The Golden Fleece
MIND THE GAP 8pm Nottingham The Bell Inn
HARRY & THE GROWLERS The Running Horse
THE JUG BAND The Golden Fleece

- saturday 22nd**
SILENCER / CONSUMED
SPINACH Nottm The Old Angel
GREG WRIGHT'S LEFT HOOK The Running Horse
JUMBLE SALE Filly & Firkin
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE 3pm The Golden Fleece
POTEEN Mechanics Arms
WIGGLE Skyy Club
SUPERNAUT / VERTIGO Rock City
DUB WAR / MARXMAN Leics The Charlotte
JEWELLERS EYE Leics Pump & Tap
SPEEDY The Leadmill
- sunday 23rd**
FBI Nottm The Running Horse
THE FOOTWARMERS noon The Bell Inn
AKIMBO 8pm The Bell Inn
FLASHPOINT The Golden Fleece
LOVE The Skyy Club
DEAD JOE Leics The Charlotte
SALLY BARKER Phoenix Arts Centre
- monday 24th**
THE OMEGA BAND Nottm The Bell Inn
ACOUSTIC ROUTES The Golden Fleece
- tuesday 25th**
SAMMY 'SWEET' CLARKE
SINGIN ROOTS
THE ROYAL ROOTS BAND
JOHNNY B (HEATWAVE) Roots and culture special Nottm Sam Fay's
GREYNOTE The Bell Inn
BOOT The Golden Fleece
FOLK, BLUES & BEYOND The Running Horse
TRIBUTE TO NOTHING KING PRAWN Leics The Charlotte
NUMBER ONE CUP Sheffield Octagon
THE ALOOF The Leadmill
- wednesday 26th**
INVADERS FROM THE PLANET PHUNK
ELECTRIC MAYHEM / WOTEVER Battle of the Bands Nottm The Skyy Club
CNS / MANGACIDE / FREEBASE Rock City
ROY DE WIRED Behan's Bar
REDD KROSS / PUSHERMAN Leics The Charlotte
- thursday 27th**
DUB MERGE / ROOTSMAN Sweet Potato Nottm Sam Fay's
NEW BUSHBERRY
MOUNTAIN DAREDEVILS The Running Horse
LOVELENDER Filly & Firkin
COMET GAIN / THE FREED UNIT Leics The Charlotte
- friday 28th**
CARLOS' LOUNGE Nottm The Running Horse
FRANK DEMPSEY Mechanics Arms
NOVOCAINE Rock City
ACID DISCO Skyy Club
QUOASIS Leics The Charlotte
THE LIZARDS Pump & Tap
- MARCH saturday 1st**
FAT DIGESTER / WEAVERMAN Nottm The Old Angel
CARNIVAL THIEVES running Horse
AUDREY Filly & Firkin
ON THE FIDDLE Mechanics Arms
SHOD COLLECTIVE 3pm The Golden Fleece
FEVER Skyy Club
PERFUME / SPACEMAID Rock City
THE ALOOF Derby University Union One
- sunday 2nd**
IAN SIEGAL The Running Horse
BEATNIK FILMSTARS Filly & Firkin
THE SCHEME Golden Fleece
THE FOOTWARMERS noon The Bell Inn
JUBA 8pm The Bell Inn
SERVE CHILLED Skyy Club
RED KROSS The Rig
- monday 3rd**
ISAAC GUILLORY Nottm the running horse
THE OMEGA BAND The Bell Inn
ACOUSTIC ROUTES The Golden Fleece
GENE Rock City
- tuesday 4th**
MAJICK SPYDER
DJ PABLO Nottm Sam Fay's
THE SHOD COLLECTIVE The Bell Inn
FOLK, BLUES & BEYOND Running Horse
MOOD INDIGO Golden Fleece
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- I Shot Andy Weatherall**
 (formerly on y va qui mal y danse)
- fridaze**
BLUE SKIES AHEAD Café Bleu
GO TROPO / BREEZE The Skyy Club
SMOKESCREEN Deluxé
HOT LIZARD Paul Wain, Gary Marsden
BIG BANG Rock City
LE FREAK The Rig
HOT BUTTER / INDIE FRENZY Beatroot
RETRO The Cookie Club
RETRO INDIE Pieces
UNITY Kitsch Club
INTERCLUB The Essance
SHIMMER The Zone
MIXIN' / LOUNGIN' Whispers
- mondaze**
MONUMENTAL Dj Mike Wilding The Lenton
CRAPTASTIC DJ Crap Sam Fay's
PLANET EARTH 80's disco The Rig
ROCK NIGHT The Zone
STUDENTS NIGHT The Skyy Club
- tuesdaze**
JAZZNOLOGY jazz, funk, latin and tings DJ Pablo Sam Fay's
SOLE JAM The Cookie Club
STUDENT MANIA Ritzy
ON ONE / PLANET KAHUNA The Essance
- saturdaze**
FEEL GOOD The Cookie Club
ALTERNATIVE NIGHT Rock City
ROCK NIGHT The Rig
DEP. LOUNGE vs QUADRANT Café Bleu
FEVER / WIGGLE Skyy Club
CUSH house trance techno The Lenton
LIFE Beatroot
- wednesdaze**
LA BÊTE DES BLEUS D? CI? Café Bleu
JAZZ NIGHT/ TRY The Skyy Club
BEATLEMANIA The Fab 4 Sam Fay's
BRAIN SALAD DJs Das Uberdog & Doublevision The Lenton
INDIE GO GO The Cookie Club
- thursdaze**
DISCO TECH DJ Mark Spivey Drum n bass, techno, gabba disco Sam Fay's
SERVE CHILLED AGAIN Digs & Woosh Café Bleu
V.F.M. Ritzy
STUDENT NIGHT De Luxe
JEUDI Student Night Rock City
KAMIKAZE Beatroot
TOP BANANA Pieces
- sundaze**
SERVE CHILLED / LOVE The Skyy Club
JUST THE TONIC Comedy Club Loxley's

- ZERO G** The Essance
STOMP The Skyy Club
SPANK IT Hippo

discoverall:



VARIOUS ARTISTS *Live At Heavenly Social 2 mixed by Jon Carter* (Heavenly)

The word ragga is enough to send my mind into oblivious mode, I personally find it so dull that I couldn't even be bothered to give reasons for my lack of enthuse. Imagine then my delight at having to review a collection of rampant ragga hop. The popularity and recent interest in the Heavenly Social club has forced this collection to be rereleased in time for the new academic year. (since when has ragga been the popular choice of students?) Mixed by club moocher Jon Carter (sadly not the cutesy rookie doc from tv's ER!) but he of the Monkey Mafia.

There's bogle baking, and ragga muffing ahoy, all mixed competently but sitting uncomfortably on its chosen genre, and, it must be said, somehow losing out on its desired market. There's much by now be hundreds of the best ragga lps in the world ever... which is essentially what this is, albeit a little more stylish /elitist than others.

MIKE INK *Paroles* (Warp)

1991's classic breakbeat squelchfest that was originally released through Structure, gets a re-release with the original plus new mixes. First up is Mike's own minimal polka-ish slinky drum n house groove still with reversed Sterling Void vocal snatch. Next up is Autchre's industrial d n b skittered but not really moving mix and T Power's 70's sounding airport thematic, slow grooving drum n jazz remix. The original however still kicks ass.

MIKE INK *Polka Trax* (Warp)

The minimal movement moves on in its never changing /ever changing lock groove intimacy, gaining new enthusiasm and inspiration from the stark funk jazz grooves of drum n bass. Owing as much to the original ethos of acid house (as envisioned by its originators) as to the new school of tech /house, labels such as Sahko, Basic Channel, Source and artists such as O, Panasonic, Jeff Mills and Robert Hood prove that less is definitely more when it comes to synthetics. Mike Ink takes his machines on a subtle rhythm odyssey gently changing patterns at irregular intervals and just enough to satisfy the mind's demand for progression. These trax work as well in the transcendence of the floatation tank as on the dance floor. As Mike would say "eat raw, hear minimal".

FREEFORM *Prowl* (Warp)

Simon Pike may not be a name familiar to the masses of the techno fraternity, but to those with an ear for the esoteric his alias of Freeform probably will set off a few wake up calls. His previous work for Ambient Soho's Worm Interface label Elastic Speakers, his releases on Skam, and the previous support slot for pals Autchre on the Tri Repertour has given his quirky electronica a higher profile. His first ep for Warp is a heady concoction of geeky head nodding diodic jazz and atmospheria in a sound that's at times so similar to his label mates that it often sweeps way out of all comparison. A groovy disjointed Steptoe of an ep which should reward the lad with a few new bytes.

Dael

V. ARTISTS *Northern Exposure Sasha & Digweed Mix* (Ministry Of Sound)

Sasha and Digweed sex gods to thousands of the nation's disco bunnies, have been busy compiling and chopping their favourite bits from yesteryear's grooves to form a double disk extravaganza. They've snatched a host of lush whooshing sequences from the likes of William Orbit, Underworld, Drum Club, Rabbit On The Moon, etc. and stretched them out into a spangling mix of transcendent ethnoprog anthemia that works well for those Trevor Horn-type disco products so favoured by large clubs. Disc one travels from ambiscales to tribal trancing. Disc two heads straight for hypnotherium and boob tube heaven which are back in again! Obviously a renaissance for yesterday's styles then!! So in the ultra chic world that is 90's clubbing, if brown is the new black then Euro groove is the best dressed move in town.

THE HARVEST MINISTERS *Orbit* (Setanta)

Sensible opinion has it that this act's last LP, A Feeling Mission, was one of the finest countrified, downbeat, downhome offerings since Neil Young wrapped Harvest in eco-friendly cardboard over 20 years ago. Yet if songsmith Will Merriman felt any crushing weight of expectancy to follow his previous efforts, it doesn't show here. Opening cuts Think About Me More and I Never Raised My Voice To You show a dark departure, with rumbling electric chords delivering a sharp rasp. A more normal service is resumed with the almighty, lovely A Feeling Mission (that phrase again) bringing folky strums underpinned by subtle piano and Hammond lines. Stop Doubting Thomas again scores with cunning simplicity before A Reluctant Volunteer's sombre refrain cuts in. Elsewhere the formula is pretty much repeated throughout, with defiantly simple melodies unfolding from a wistful, lilting backdrop. And it's once more to Merriman's credit that he keeps his standards consistently high.

TELSTAR PONIES

Voices From The New Music (Fire)
There's experimental, there's avant-garde, there's fusions galore and then there's Telstar Ponies. This vast, occasionally rambling, 76-minute offering conjures up so many different options that it's hard to know where to begin. "Music is the thing that keeps me alive/I must play music that is beyond this world" intones Rachel Devine as the title track shuffles briskly in. Guitarist and chief composer David Keenan then takes the rein as Last Outpost grasps a blue mood and turns it icy white with beautiful barbed chords. Atmospherics abound at every turn, and it speaks volumes for their approach that the voice is widely employed to create the tension. Nowhere is this better displayed than on Shizuka where Devine hovers like a grieving angel over the dark melody. Brewery Of Eggshells digs deeper into this vein, before Aegis Falling takes you on a ghostly piano ride through echoing chambers. Sail Her On finds Keenan lurching and leering like Tom Waits starcrossed with Shane MacGowan's bleary dregs, but the top ace in the pack comes via The Fall Of Little Summer. Driven by a fierce folk twang cut open with military drumming and a jaunty whistle, this is seven worthy minutes of epic stealth. The final three pieces account for half an hour of this record and, depending on your mood, are a tad frustrating or works of sublime insight. But such is the price for sheer refusal to compromise, and for threatening

preconceptions. New music, new danger.

Gareth Thompson

BETH ORTON *Trailer Park* (Heavenly)
Despite lending her vocal presence to the likes of William Orbit, The Chemical Brothers and Red Snapper, this is Orton's first major solo outing. The omens are striking from the outset, as sitar-mimicking violins swoop over chunky chords and Orton's velvet-fisted voice. She Cries Your Name also thrives on some subtle, sympathetic percussion, but it's the trippy Portisbeat underpinning Tangent's seven wondrous minutes that best emphasises her approach. It's back to strings and strummings for the fervent Don't Need A Reason, where you realise the strong vocal comparison with Judie Tzuke's telling tones. And when her voice breaks to a quiver whilst pondering "why do we always hurt the ones we love/well, we don't need a reason", the tension is acute. More upbeat by far is Live As You Dream, with another instant chorus for the collection. It's this adaptability that enables the wistful, defiant plea of Sugar Boy to sit perfectly by Touch Me With Your Love's low ambient atmospherics and the solidly commercial How Far. Lyrically she never ventures far from the confessional, but when her words hit the levels of I Wish I Never Saw The Sunshine, you can only drown in empathy.

ALEC BATHGATE *Gold Lamé* (Flying Nun)

New adventures in lo-fi is the order of proceedings here, as Tall Dwarfs man Bathgate emerges from his garage once more. Already renowned for taking four-track home recording further than most achieve after months in Abbey Road, our man uses guitar, piano, organ, vocals and Casio rhythms to enormous effect. Opening cuts Win Your Love and Ain't It Strange could be nuggets discovered from some dusty Beach Boys vault, with Bathgate's reliable melodic senses working on overtime. Happy Head and the gorgeous Pet Hates both soar with ease, before the Beatleque poetics of Slow Parade reveal great mastery of the form. Everything is stripped back for the hugely effective elegy Friday In The Ground, whilst the classic rock 'n' roll swing of Happy Hound would have delighted the original gold lamé suit wearer from Tupelo, Mississippi himself.

BLUR *Beetlebum* (Food)

Languihing here in provincial fazedom we may be, but the good folks at Beatwax Press can be relied upon to keep us lowlanders supplied with the bigger guns. Thus the arrival of new Blur material was a perfect pre-Xmas boost for the ice-capped Overoffice. Not that Damon's spreading a deal of seasonal cheer, mind you, as the trivia of his media-warped position is all but finally swept away here. Low-slung, stark, fuzzy chords invite his faintly distracted voice into the proceedings which build into a gloriously uncommercial, but still insistent drama. Is this the sound of English slackers languishing deeper in a timewarped doldrum, or a zealous mission to bury the ghosts of Tracy Jacks and Manchester's sparring siblings? Either way, you sense Blur are perfectly in control. It's out in late January, and be fairly sure of it presaging another thoroughly good album.

** In the week before Christmas, the music journalist Leo Finlay died in a London hospital, aged 32. Leo was the first writer to discover and publicise Blur, and they responded in kind by performing at his wedding back in Dublin. He was, for many years, a highly popular contributor to such journals as Vox, Select, Sounds and the trade magazine Music Week where we worked and played together. Famous among the bars, Leo possessed a fiery Irish wit, with his every gesture displaying splendid disdain for petty authority. His absence is already keenly felt. And those of you who presume that everyone at the top forgets those who helped them at the start, might observe the following. As I was waiting at the Intensive Care Unit during the week of Leo's fatal illness, a beautiful floral bouquet arrived for him, signed with love and best wishes — from Blur and Elastica.

Gareth Thompson

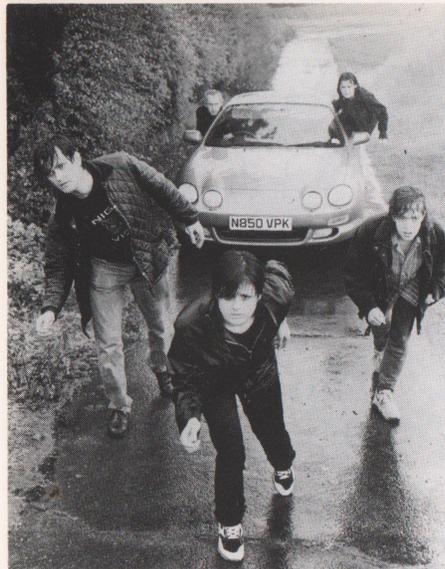
VARIOUS ARTISTS *Don't Do It* (Spin Out)

Don't do what? Don't throw your cd player through the bedroom window? Don't break your leg on the way from the cashpoint to the record shop? Don't pick up a Dodgy album by mistake? No, don't, by any means, not buy this cd. Four local acts supplying twenty brilliant tracks giving you a taste of what you should be looking out for. Consumed are powerful and earnest, shouting and ranting their way through songs with ace titles like Spatula Party. Raggity Anne (see album review) are fat, furious and fuckin' ace, Syduck are not for the faint hearted, a dubious cross between goth, punk, and metal which does grow on you (though whether like Roses or fungus I'm not sure) and Mr. Jolly complete the line-up with their catchy line in fuzzy pop-rock. Unproduced and unashamed — this is the sound of Nottinghamshire NOW. Don't miss out.

RAGGITY ANNE *Rascal Soup* (Smokin' Troll)

Brilliantly spiky power pop mercifully lacking in American accents, perfect harmonies or pristine production; but bringing with them a fantastic sense of humour, raucous energy-charged tunes and the perfect remedy for the horrors of Christmas. The sleeve is distinctly underdone, in fact the case to mine was smashed to bits — Punk Rawk! It's impossible to pick out the best tracks as they're all so good but Pop Stars, where RA muse over certain artists who deserve a good slapping, is definitely a winner as are the catchy 13 Years, The Only One, and Girl With A Black Eye.

Mischa



TIGER

We Are Puppets (Trade)

A few months ago you couldn't open a newspaper without the Bad Hair Days of 1996, Tiger, and their terrifying mullets staring at you. Tiger were clever to release this album at the height of their hyping but not so clever to make all the songs sound the same; perhaps they were hoping that people would think they were continually listening to the admittedly superb single Race over and over. If you didn't know better you'd think they had the drum machine stuck on the same speed all the way through the album. The ideas are good, and as singles the records will undoubtedly reach the top 40, but as an album it is unlistenable in its entirety. Outstanding tracks include She's OK and On The Rose but there are too many fillers for my liking. In the light of the new set of bands the music press are currently focusing on, it will be interesting to see whether Tiger's reign of terror can carry on without the continued universal support and tolerance of their hair.

photo: Justin De Deney

V. ARTISTS *...And The Rest Is History* (Xerox)

When every so often you feel a bit sick of the current "scene" and find yourself yearning for something a bit different, then look no further. This revolutionary new cd featuring a whole host of fresh, new and young talent with tunes as snappy as their names, all set to start a whole new movement of youthful teen bands whom you must see NOW before they start filling the Astoria. Nominees for the Best Track award are the lovely Symposium, Midget with their 56-second miracle Wendyhouse, punk rawk chicks with attitude T a m p a s m, Croydon brat punk all-stars T o a s t with the anthemic Give Me A Beer, dweeb who have long been at the forefront of the teen scene, the amusingly offensive rants of Xerox Girls and bubble gum pop girl Helen Love's summery Formula One.

PHANTOM SURFERS

The Great Surf Crash Of '97 (Lookout)

This is the first bona fide surf cd I've ever come across and I can see why it is so popular at the moment; weaker men than I would be weeping in gratitude at the change from the torrent of Same old indie and punk. The tracks range from wickedly energetic guitars and mental drumming to cool laid-back melodies; close your eyes and you are on a beach in California and it is the late 1950's. Listen out for the brilliant cover of that old favourite The Cat Came Back (anyone remember the cartoon?). The Shadows would do well to make a come-back just about... now.

VAR. ARTISTS *Heart Of Darkness* (Mezention)

What have we here? "15 prime cuts from middle England" according to the inlay. In other words, this is a collection of Midlands bands hoping to make it big but with Mr. Mickey Greany bleating about his "sweet buttercup" Annabelle only two tracks in I don't fancy the chances of any rational listener bothering to continue further (especially since the Midlands seems to be breeding a "healthy" heavy metal scene). But I braved it through and so should you if only for the power-pop punkness of The Blaggards, the raw guitar rock of T win Hazy and the loud, catchy, spiky pop of supplied by Lemonilla. So there is hope for the future of music in this country — these bands need you!

VERSUS *Secret Swingers* (Caroline)

Inoffensive American rock, pleasant enough but it could be better; so many of these tracks are begging to be noisier, punkier, grungier, anything, just not so...so... M.O.R.! Versus are so close to discovering American rock at its loud and raucous best but at the moment they seem content to follow in the footsteps of REM, which may earn them a huge fanbase but not the audience they were after.

VARIOUS ARTISTS *Heide Sez* (Lookout)

Now this is my kind of compilation. One look at the track listing and I was falling over myself to play it. Lookout don't do just one type of band even though they have a reputation for pop-punk, because of bands like the Mr T Experience (and most of the others here) but the Phantom Surfers and Pansy Division are here too. There's something for everyone and the only thing Lookout bands have in common is that they're all bloody brilliant, and 21 bands, all different but ace, makes for cd heaven. Particular bands that stand out are Citizen Fish, Smugglers and Avail. You'd have to be bloody awkward not to find something you like.

PULLEY *Esteem Driven Engine* (Epitaph)

Pulley are another US pop-punk band and if you like this sort of thing then go for it. Pulley don't do things by halves, the songs are pure energy and have been and gone before you know it. Worth a listen. Mischa

CREAMING JESUS

The End Of An Error (Jungle)

Chaotic, aggressive, head-thrashing, motherfuckers invited to their own funeral, carving in stone their epitaphs of British underground culture. Grebo/trash punk/ Goth... dance-floor abuse is their rudimentary musical theory. Tempting us into their blackened church with subtle intras, the doors are then closed and vocalist Andy launches into his entire teachings like a demented priest of a primeval religion. This is their funeral but they're taking us with them! Tribal drum beats and driving bass lines that could raise the dead, cut into our animal selves and everything becomes a slam-pit feud as chaos reigns. And finally, it's all over. They're gone without trace and where they once stood lies this gravestone inscribed with the words 'Skin up for Jesus'. DJ Sin

FUXA

Very Well Organised (i/mind expansion/Che)

Randall Nieman and Ryan Anderson score the shores of nebulae with a swish and shimmering store of organ and moog and percussive minimalism which makes the whirr of the cd deck itself sound like the glide of the galaxy spinning through the universe, a universe inhabited by droids and drones and... well, it requires a loop of the imagination.



LOUIE VEGA & KENNY 'DOPE' GONZALEZ

Nu Yoricain Soul (Talkin Loud)

Here's something to chase away those winter blues. A double album of groovy, latin, jazzy, soulful, funky hip-hop, house stuff, known in these parts as 'Pablo music'. It's a sound as equally from New York as Puerto Rico conjured up by the Masters At Work with the help of such honorary guests as Tito Puente, Jocelyn Brown, Roy Ayers, George Benson and Jazzy Jeff. A wide variety of styles with a consistently sunny disposition all round.

THEE PHANTOM CREEPS

Teenage Fingers (Armed and Fat)

Dirty debut of raunchy, raptor-rhythm rock n roll in the vein of Creeps with fuzzed up guitars in search of slack and they don't put a blood-stained finger wrong.

MANSUN *Wide Open Space* (Parlophone)

Mansun are one of those bands whose songs you know but you didn't know you knew them; one day, people will put 2 and 2 together and realise that all those tunes come from the same place and Mansun will be kings. Wide Open Space is a bit of a surprise hit; on first listen

there is nothing very remarkable about it, but give it time and the laid-back vocals, unhurried guitars and layers of harmonies grow as you realise what you've been missing.

60FT DOLLS *Hair* (Indolent)

Back with another release from their album and although it's undoubtedly a great moment in crashing guitars and howling vocals, it's not the best they've done; they seem to get more mellow with every release — the first sign of old age? Besides, how many of the great classic punk anthems of our time were written about someone's hair? Buy it for the b-side which is wonderfully energetic and should have been the single (if you ask me).

S.M.F.

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NEWBURY REUNION RALLY January 1997

"Now all the youth of England are on fire," declaimed Shakespeare in *Henry V*. Which may be an appropriate intro to a day on which the elements vied with literary quotations and anarchy among ancient battlefields for your attention.

Thus it was back to Newbury for a rally designed to mark the first year of direct action against the proposed by-pass. Eighteen miles of wire fencing now border the route, and a thousand boots marched along the grim perimeter to a meeting point at Middle Oak.

No sooner had Tony Benn MP bellowed his unplugged speech at the throng, than attention swiftly turned to events at the security compound that now surrounds Middle Oak. Here one mighty tree still remains, close to the historical 1664 Battle site.

Access to the enclosure had been gained by some nifty wire cutting, as a Druidic mist cloaked Middle Oak in swirling fog. Yellow coats sought combat jackets in a hazy chase—if this was soccer they'd have abandoned the game at half-time. But it was more like a pitch invasion as hundreds swept through the gaps and over the rickety mud. The fencing itself was strewn with leftover Christmas decorations, banners, poems, paintings and even someone's symbolic bicycle. An otherwise blank A4 page contained two words: 'Reality Check'. 'This is Costain the Earth' stated one placard in reference to the near-bankrupt contractors.

'Rendelised by a Demoprat' raged another, against the local Liberal MP. As well as original lyricism — "wisdom is a five minute silence at moonrise" — you could muse upon excerpts from the Bible, Auden, Wordsworth, Manley Hopkins and many others.

A crew of departing police officers thanked us for the overtime as they left the scene: "Oh look, it's 150 o'clock," smirked one in anticipation of just such a bonus figure. To his left, the slogan 'Might and Money are with the Enemy' went unheeded on the battered wire.

Perhaps they should have stuck around to earn their packets, for back at Middle Oak the tides were rapidly turning. Every earth mover was now surrounded and occupied. Proud grandparents posed atop dormant diggers with the sort of stiff pride normally reserved for the family album. Their younger, more agile, comrades mounted the tallest crane, from whose apex a fire breather's beacon was held aloft with Olympian majesty. Outnumbered security men raised helmets in mock salute as they slunk away from the jubilant jeering. Flames began to appear inside heavy machinery and trashed Portacabins too, with black smoke billowing across the dusky wasteland. It gave the television crews an image to toy with, and the moral majority a stick to bleat with.

More significantly, it lodged Newbury's concern back into the collective conscious. On a negative level, it might also give the law enforcers added zest for the next time.

And there will be a next time. And another...

Gareth Thompson



AUTOUR DE LUCIE

Songwriters need images as much as film directors need music, claimed Jean Luc Goddard. And the great man of French cinema has an ally in Parisian quartet Autour de Lucie. Lead singer Valerie Leulliot claims, "We love a lot of film soundtracks, and you can sense a movie atmosphere in our songs, but it's not a deliberate ploy." She notes, too, that France is more renowned for producing notable composers as opposed to individual pop stars. There is also some striking orchestration on their remarkable eponymous debut album, but it's unlikely to be reproduced on stage as guitarist Jean-Pierre Ensuque explains: "It's partly due to lack of finance — there were eight classical musicians on the record— but there's also the challenge to find new arrangements for live performance. It can maybe look a bit cold to have lines of players at the back of a stage. We want to base things more on our own energy."

Two songs on *Autour de Lucie*, *Simon* and *Island*, are sung in English. The former is actually a ballad of Irish origin, whilst the latter was written first in French (*Le Tournesol* on the LP) and then translated as an exercise to see if the words would correspond. Jean-Pierre is rightly scathing of the many French bands who "put senseless English lyrics into their music, destroying the melodic flow, just to appeal directly to the bigger markets. We want our songs to exist in French."

Yet so many of Autour's numbers, with their catchy hooks and solid guitar base, could attract English ears by virtue of their instantly recognisable format. Add the novelty of sublime French voices and vowels, and it's hard to see who could fail to be won over. Jean-Pierre, however, is more reticent: "We're really not expecting too much, as it's already a fairytale for us to come over here and play." Valerie adds, "We've all listened to a lot of English bands, and we're proud to be playing our French music over here. It's all done with unconsciousness and faith."

In England, where musical style is increasingly dominant over lyrical content, you wonder whether anyone listens that closely to the words anyway. Suggest that the situation may be comparable in France, and Valerie throws her hands up in horror. "England is the land of football and music, whereas France is the home of literature and, um, cheeses! There is a stronger literary tradition in France, but the musician is not considered as having a serious role to play in society," she states.

Bypassing the temptation to reel off a thousand British literary masters from Shakespeare to Ian McEwan, we turn to their already recorded second LP. They promise it will be a case of "less strings, more strange" and certainly the new tracks played at Sam Fay's, Nottingham in December displayed dark, intimate qualities. Valerie believes that "the song must always be there at the start, just a guitar and voice, before you start rearranging and reconstructing."

Discussion of particular influences proves to be confounding, with Valerie's claim that "you are open to everything all your life whether it is tv, movies, radio or books. I try to recover that feeling you had when you were young, to capture something that was strong when you first heard music. This feeling you once had in your life, that changed everything."

Gareth Thompson



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