

overall

THERE IS A SMELL OF FRIED ONIONS

Issue # 43 MAY 1996

FREE



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firsttofall:

cover: Davis

The winners of the **Woodpecker Battle Of The Bands** competition were **Dum Dums**, who won £450, two days recording time in Bandwagon Studios and a bottle of Champagne. Second place went to **Davis** who received £250 and are featured on the front cover of this issue. See *Fried Alive*.

An even bigger prize has been promised in another **Battle Of The Bands** competition currently being organised by Johnny Moore Promotions, taking place at Sam Fay's in Nottingham from June. For details and application forms call (0115) 945 5855.

Nottingham Community Arts and Loudhailer Designs have announced a competition inviting individuals or groups to respond to or interpret the theme of **Football Football**. Work can be produced in any media— painting, sculpture, photography, drawing, writing, performance, etc. and all work submitted will be considered for part of a major exhibition to coincide with the **Euro 96 Championships**. The closing date for entries is May 24th and the exhibition will open at Nottingham Community Arts Centre, Gregory Boulevard, Hyson Green on May 31st prior to a national tour. Tel. (0115) 942 4275 for details. Hardcore is flavour of the month as ever with appearances in Nottingham during May by New York Hatecore exponents **SFA** at the Narrowboat (8th); **Samiam, Texas Is The Reason** and **Shutdown** at The Clinton Rooms (14th); Californian veterans **Rhythm Collision** at the Narrowboat (17th); and treading where Green Day fear to go, **Gameface** at the Narrowboat (31st).

"While some bunch of pretty boys wearing newly purchased pork-pie hats practise their nutty dance in a rehearsal room in Camden or somewhere equally untrendy, paid for by some major major label, SOME OF US HAVE BEEN AT IT FOR YEARS! and what's more, will still be at it when said pork-pie hatted johnnies are rehearsing their Spandau Ballet (or whatever) covers in a year's time." Thus spat **Spithead** in the press release accompanying their debut album *Swag* which is available on Kollusion Records in both cd and cassette formats. "Imagine the sound of good-time ska colliding head on with old-school punk, half-way up the M6. It's neither revivalist rubbish nor bandwagon jumping, just crunchy-ska created to move the feet." Catch their live show at The Old Angel (Sun. 26th May) and Sam Fay's (Thurs. 20th June) where they join Bender on a double bill of fun and frolics.

Bender also pop up with the track *A Misunderstanding* on a compilation cd on the newly formed Household Name records. Entitled the *Last House On The Left* it's a 21-track collection of some of the most exciting unsigned acts in the country including **Headbutt, The Flying Medallions, King Prawn, Leechwoman, Gink** and **Pura Vida**.

Nottingham is host this year to the **14th National Street Music Festival**, which aims to bring music to where the people are— the streets. Taking place over the weekend 29-30th June, events include a procession, street bands, mass public performances, a modestly priced evening concert and workshops offering, singing, drama, poetry and banner making. Founded in 1984 by the **Sheffield Street Band**, the festival is unique in that there is no central organising committee, responsibility for the event being handed from one city to the next every year. Last year it took place in Stroud and this year is being organised by the **Nottingham Clarion Choir**, a socialist choir of some forty voices. Founded in Nottingham eight years ago, the Clarion Choir's 1996 engagements include performances in Karlsruhe, Germany and a

singing tour of Cuba.

NG7-based label Sentrax Corporation have two new cd releases. Final 2 is the second solo release from Justin Broadrick of Godflesh/ Techno Animal and features C. G. Green also of Godflesh on several tracks. The other is Inscape by Tactile, who employ pulse driven analogue electronics. An album of remixes follows shortly featuring Coil, Zoviet France, Ø, Scalpel and others.

The New Bushberry Mountain Daredevils have released a new album *Peace And Justice* on the Enigma label. They perform a series of live dates around the UK before touring in Europe.

Tricky continues to live up to his name with his latest project *Nearly God* which includes collaborations with several artists including **Terry Hall, Neneh Cherry, Björk** and **Alison Moyet** and includes a cover of Siouxsie & The Banshees' *Tattoo*. A proper Tricky album is due later in the year.

Following their *Boss Tabla* single, **Transglobal Underground** have an album *Psycho Karaoke* due out May 13th. They are on tour throughout May and with several festival appearances into July including the *Turning Up The Beat Festival* in Leicester on June 15th.

First signing to Tony Wilson's new Factory Too label, **Hopper** release a new single *Bad Kid* on May 13th to be followed by their debut album later this year. In the meantime they undertake a headline tour spanning three months. They appear at The Band Chapel, Derby (17th May); Sam Fay's, Nottingham (6th June); the Charlotte, Leicester (12th); The Wheatsheaf, Stoke (27th).

Following the release of their fourth album *In Sides* **Orbital** appear in concert this month at Leicester De Montford Hall (Tues 7th) and Sheffield Octagon (Fri 10th). The album consists of six unrelated sound scenarios totalling 72 minutes with the vinyl version spread over three discs.

Revolutionary Dub Warriors unleash their second album *State Of Evolution* of May 13th. Produced by **Adrian Sherwood**, the On-U team continue to deliver the goods confirming their position at the forefront of the new breed of dub music makers. On-U Sound's fifteenth year looks like being a busy one for Adrian Sherwood who has also been recording and remixing the Scottish 1996 European Cup song with **Primal Scream** and **Ervine Welsh** (Put that on your terrace and chant it). He is also collaborating with **Doug Wimbish** on a trilogy of albums to be released over the next few months. On-U Sound will be represented at the forthcoming **Essential Music Festival's** Reggae Day by **Lee "Scratch" Perry, The Dub Syndicate, Bim Sherman** and **The Revolutionary Dub Warriors**. The festival takes place over May Bank Holiday weekend at Stanmer Park near Brighton with Reggae Day on Monday 27th. For those who can't make it to Brighton, **Dub Syndicate** will play a warm up gig at Sam Fay's on Tuesday 21st May.

The **DiY** discollective are to promote a one off night at The Skyy Club on Sat. June 8th featuring the legendary **Larry Heard** a.k.a. **Mr. Fingers**, one of the pioneers of very early House music supported by DiY djs **DK, Digs & Woosh**. Adm. is £4 and as this is one of the more intimate gigs of his tour you are advised to arrive early.

Sheffield's violin 'n' bass outfit **Pigsix4** release their debut album *I Am The Chemistry* on May 20th. It will be distributed worldwide on the Symbiose label based in Lisbon, Portugal where the band will play a launch date prior to touring northern Italy. Four gigs in Russia are also planned but you can see them at Sam Fay's on Tues. 18th June. Pigsix4's techno alter-ego **Enno** release a 12" single later in the year.

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12 MONKEYS

A momentary break in his on going war with the big guns of Hollywood and Terry Gilliam, the maddest of all ex-Pythons, seizes upon David and Janet People's ingenious screenplay and then simply lets his imagination run riot. The result is a fearsome lo-tech hi-fi fantasy infused with the same crazed visionary genius that made *Brazil* such a brilliant mind-blowing assault on the senses. Plotwise it combines elements of *Outbreak* and *The Terminator* as a bald, bar-coded convict (Bruce Willis) is sent back in time from 2035 to the present day to trace the origins of a lethal virus and alert the human race to it's imminent annihilation. Madeleine Stowe is the psychiatrist who he first meets as a patient and then later mixes up in his perilous mission, while Brad Pitt puts in an OTT performance as a mentally unstable eco-terrorist. As usual, Gilliam's visual imagery is quite stunning, and the script also impresses with a remarkable attention to detail that demands and deserves an audience's full attention.

Yet the film's major bonus and it's biggest surprise is the very wonderful Mr. Willis. Shorn of his usual smirks and mannerisms he powerfully conveys his character's time-hopping disorientation and inarticulate impetuosity. Already a sizeable hit in the USA, *12 Monkeys* merges together all the brash excitement of a big budget Sci-Fi thriller with the bizarre off-the-wall aesthetic of a true auteur. Playing games with reality and asking the unanswerable questions Gilliam bravely goes where no man has gone before.

Now showing at MGM.

Hank Quinlan



CYCLO

A 'cyclo' is a bicycle taxi used by many to make a living in the Far East and in this film, the second from Tran Anh Hung, the director of the critically acclaimed *Scent Of Green Papaya*, the lead character (played by Lee Van Loc), is a young man who has his cyclo stolen in Ho Chi Minh City. As a result he is forced into the underworld and a life of crime. Unbeknown to him one of the underworld figures he meets is busy pimping for the young man's sister. *Cyclo* is a strange, mind-bending thriller with a lot to say about the urban underworld which Tran Anh Hung brings vividly to the screen. It is quite different from his first film, and interestingly begins as a social realist thriller but ends as something much more poetic and elliptical. As a result it's not quite as accessible as it first appears but it did win the Golden Lion at Venice last year (no mean feat) and the International Critics Prize at the same festival.

Matt Arnoldi

At Broadway Wed. 8th - Sat. 11th May.

SAFE

Environmental drama which at first glance appears to be ahead of it's time, but in fact is very topical now. It's about a housewife Carol White (Julianne Moore) who gradually comes to the conclusion that she is suffering from some sort of environmental disease. Allergic to most things around her such as everyday solvents, perfumes and the urban smog, over a period of time, Carol drops out from her comfortable Californian lifestyle and eventually ends up seeking sanctuary in a new-age health centre where her symptoms seem to be taken more seriously. The centre, though, seems cultish but the director leaves it up to the audience to decide whether Carol is in safe hands or not. A thought-provoking film directed imaginatively by Todd (Poison) Haynes and produced by Christine Vachon. Julianne Moore, last seen in *Short Cuts* and *Nine Months*, is particularly convincing in the central role.

Showing at Broadway Fri. 24th - Thurs. 30th May.

Matt Arnoldi

FREEFORALL

Enter our Kids competition and win a cd of the explosive soundtrack from the movie Kids featuring music by Lou Barlow, John Davis and Daniel Johnston. All you have to do is answer this question: Lou Barlow is a member of which famous band? Answers on a postcard to Hank & Kids at Overall, PO Box 73, West PDO NOTTINGHAM NG7 4DG. First two correct entries win a cd soundtrack, and then there are five T-shirts and 10 posters for the runners-up. Closing date 20th May.

THE HAYLOCK INTERVIEW:

ZION TRAIN



Q. Hello! Hope you're fit and well. I hear that the follow up to Homegrown Fantasy is imminent. When is it due out and can we expect any surprises?

A. It is Grow Together, early July, lots of surprises.

Q. What's this about recording with The Ruts? You did a Peel Session, is that correct?

A. The Ruts and Zion Train operate a mutual admiration society. We did Suspect Device by SLF, Do Anything You Wanna Do by Eddie And The Hot Rods/Thin Lizzy, Witch Hunt by The Mob and Bass Adds Bass by Family Fodder.

Q. You seem to do a lot of festivals. What's happening this year?

A. A lot in Europe, Phoenix is definite, as are Womad and several others. Sadly, no Glastonbury so vinyl power sucks us in!

Q. I'm gutted, no Glastonbury! What should be done with Michael Eavis?

A. Michael Eavis is his own man. Respect for 25 years of festival joy.

Q. Name ten pivotal albums in your lives...

A. 1. A New Chapter In Dub - Aswad 2. What's Going On - Marvin Gaye
3. Pet Sounds - Beach Boys 4. Wish You Were Here - Pink Floyd
5. King Tubby Meets The Rockers 6. Astral Weeks - Van Morrison
7. Pounding System - Dub Syndicate 8. Starship Africa - Creation Rebel

Q. Who sucks? **A.** Those in control.

Q. And why? **A.** Money madness.

Q. You have a heavy tour schedule for '96. What keeps you motivated?

A. Going places, meeting people, music. All good!

Q. Can we expect to see Zion Train in Nottingham?

A. Yes, with the mighty DJ Walt (Earthpipe).

Q. What inspires you? **A.** Passion.

Q. Do politics play a big part in your life? And is Michael Portillo a cunt?

A. Politics = life. Yes.

Q. Can you remember a Labour government? Is Tony Blair a wanker?

A. Yes and yes.

Q. Do the Dreadzone comparisons piss you off? 'Second Light' seemed to steal your thunder, yet I thought 'Homegrown Fantasy' was much stronger. Radio play is essential so what do you think of the current state of English radio?

A. We come from sound systems, Dreadzone don't. We like them, they like us. It's cool. Radio is our weapon, currently in the hands of cretins.

Q. Why should we buy the new album?

A. Tape it or steal it then convince a richer friend to buy it.

Q. If you could choose three support acts from the last 35 years, who would you choose?

A. Throbbing Gristle, Aswad (live and direct), Jimi and Albert Ayer.

Q. Which gigs have proved to be the best, the worst and most bizarre so far in your career?

A. Too many, too much. We love playing live. It takes a lot to piss us off!

Q. My spies tell me there's an album coming out on E.B.S. with contributions from yourselves, Senser, Banco De Gaia, Utah Saints, Advent and others. E.B.S. It's Hawkwind's own label, so what's the nature of the contributions?

A. We remixed.

Q. Finally, what does the future hold for Zion Train? Thanks for your time and I'll see you on the forthcoming tour. Cheers!

A. Freedom of expression and greater control of the means. It has been a pleasure. One Love. Zion Train.

(Zion Train appear at Sweet Potato, Sam Fay's on Tuesday 4th June.)

CHEESETRUCK / ESPRIT / DUM DUMS DAVIS / MOTOR CITY MIRACLE Mansfield The Woodpecker Battle Of The Bands '96

Sweat. I'm sweating. The first sweat of spring. By 8.30 The Woodpecker is packed, everyone has arrived early to take their place at the front. A one-legged geezer sits on a chair in the middle of the throng. It's cooking in here and most of the audience is here to see— all the bands! Without prejudice! Let the games begin. First out of the hat, Cheesetruck would have sweated whatever time of year and given the space and the right environment would have made sure the audience did also. Especially the dancers, although with their cheese-cloth and bandage bondage gear (very attractive, especially when backlit) they rather distract from the purpose of the event which is music. The points awarded for Stage Presence refer to the musicians, so it doesn't matter if you have twenty naked dancers on stage, and you'd think that having a six-foot tall and then some handsome Anglo-American Indian up front would suffice. In fact, I found the guitarist the most striking with his painted face and obvious enjoyment, and a seated technician with headphones and computer dropping in live samples adds to the mystique. Last time I saw Cheesetruck they were a cock-eyed, piss-taking mess. Things have improved greatly especially with the recruitment of ex-Weirdbeard member Lippy, whacking sense into those drums. Cheesetruck are certainly different, but will that be enough to beat all comers? Audience reaction? Positive!

So will Esprit, the only band playing to a home crowd, have an advantage? No! The audience thins out at the front for precisely that reason. They've seen their R&B pub act before. Oh dear, it looks like the token Mansfield band (highest scoring runners up, my arse) are not fooling anyone. Esprit aren't bad, they are competent, they work hard, the last song was a good way to go out but it showed them to be finale-ists, not finalists. Audience reaction? Some but not all of their mates liked it.

Dum Dums' reputation goes before them and they are widely tipped to win, which may suggest they shouldn't be here either, for all the opposite reasons. But at the time of writing this bit (before they take to the stage) it's yet to be decided. Dum Dums have every right to be here, and it is an interesting exercise to consider all the bands who didn't enter this competition, whatever their lack of motive (a prize fund of £700 and free studio time is not to be sniffed at). Anyway, the heat certainly doesn't bother the hooded Kev plus denim jacket, and I privately predict a gradual striptease to the dungarees. (Well, I have seen them before.) The mere fact of their arrival on stage causes a palpable change in the atmosphere. Theirs is the strongest entrée so far, accompanied by an inspired choice of *The March Of The Siamese Children* from *The King*

& I. They storm immediately into a one minute blast, leave the audience dumbstruck, take a split second's silence to realise this and get straight down to business. Looking around from the midst of the melée, I noticed people choosing the easy option by watching the proceedings on one of the three video monitors. Frankly this is not the way to see Dum Dums, especially in view of the camera's narrow angle lens. They are a most alive act and Del's p.a. is doing the business for all the bands tonight so— to the front. But I can't. It's chocca. Even the guy with one leg is on his foot and moving— and nobody else needs his chair. It stands (or sits, or whatever chairs do) alone. If it could clap its wooden arms it would. In fact the



only people sitting down are the judges, which is strange since they can see Jack Shit from their supposed vantage point. Lucky there's a handy monitor close by them, or I might doubt their final decision. They could have stayed home and watched it via satellite. Already people in the don't know are likening Dum Dums to Skunk Anansie but that is a mistake. Dum Dums have been around much longer than those factory manufactured pretenders, in fact if I let my imagination run free, some fly A&R geezer once checked out Dum Dums, liked what he saw, realised he could never control them, and decided to invent a new version with a female front artiste and give them a repertoire. Ah, but such cynicism has no place here, especially since there are no music industry rep's here tonight. They are busy pulling each other's self-congratulatory plonkers at the bar of Sound City



in Leeds, even as Dum Dums wind up their breath-taking set. *They think it's all over...* Despite having such a hard act to follow Davis seem not in the least bit fazed as they rip roar into action with their unashamed smart pop image (no stripping, sideburns neatly trimmed, waistcoats straight— they don't so much sweat as perspire). Does the one-legged geezer stand up? Yes! Davis are chic, they are cool, they are funny to watch and they look good on TV. Davis' image is the BBC as opposed to Dums Dums' MTV, the comedy to their irony, and the crowd loved it. Bigger me, but these guys are in with a chance. The winner's name, methinks, will begin with the letter 'D'. ...and it is now!

Motor City Miracle therefore have drawn the short straw. On their side is the fact that people are drunk now, even the judges, and judging by their reception have the biggest partisan following of all five bands. They are also a fine band— if you like Brit Pop. Motor City Miracle are the 'obvious' band of the night, and a year ago might have attracted my interest. But tonight they embody everything that's been boring the tits off me since then. Vulgar, in yer face, wall of sound, no space anywhere, unoriginal lyrics 'Brit Pop'. The job's been done guys, new music is here again and given the imminent backlash it might be worth considering a new direction. Okay, so your kind of music will always have a market, and sure the audience is going wild for it, containing as it does all the reference points

of the '95 uprising of the upstarts, the rebellion against rave, but as one of the judges put it referring to the category 'Originality/Potential', "given the current climate..." ... of British pop music, I assumed he would continue, but there are other categories and one of them is 'Stage Presence' and MCM's 3-1-0 formation may be solid but it ain't pretty. Audience reaction? Ecstatic. Overall Impression? Heardtall before.

Competition aside this was an excellent gig and considering it was free to get in, top value for

money with some very entertaining bands and a keen atmosphere. The Woodpecker itself deserves top marks for potential, and it's certainly got a stage present, (*ha ha*—Ed) complete with video monitors and a manager who knows what he wants, making it the most viable venue in Mansfield. (I mean, how many times can you see Old School at The Plough? Talk about 'Groundhog Day'...) My thoughts are interrupted by the MC clearing his throat into the mic. the atmosphere is electric and for the first time of the evening silence descends...

...and the winner of the 1996 Woodpecker Battle Of The Bands is... DUM DUMS!

Christine Chapel

photos by Rob Pitt

Top: DUM DUMS Middle: DAVIS
Below: CHEESETRUCK

vinolution:

They are
Urusei Yatsura



URESEI YATSURA *We Are...* (Che)
this band seem to have real problems writing crap songs because up to now they haven't put a finger wrong. Already they've given the world one mini-album and a handful of 7" (17.5cm) singles. Now here is their debut album proper. I love Glasgow bands. I'm going to go there on my hols and hang out. I'll go drinking at the 13th Note, shopping at Missing Records, and buy a copy of *Kitten Frenzy*. Yeah, Glasgow rawwks and at last it would seem that some media types are taking notice. Blimey! I read about it in *The Sunday Times* and *i-D* last month. Some say that along with Pink Kross, Urusei Yatsura got things going. So cheers! Their album, not surprisingly, is full of wonderful songs from their past as well as new material. *Pow R. Ball* has 'great' splattered across it. The latest single *Kewpies Like Watermelon* just rips through your speakers. So why, WHY? dom people keep falling for bands like Cast? If you did buy that Cast album I reckon you'd burn it after one listen to this delightful record. I always knew that their debut album would be a bit of a cracker and it is.

CHINA DRUM *Goosefear* (Mantra)
Well, it might have taken them nearly five years of hard work but China Drum have managed to release a great debut album. They have done the work, put in the hours, sweated their bollocks off. China Drum are ahead of their peers because they have the talent to write catchy, punky, poppy songs, even if the drummer does sing. An album is a collection of songs, and here are many from yesteryear along with brand spanking new ones created in the studio. Once you put it on you will listen until the very end.

VAR. ARTISTS *Snakebite City #4* (Bluefire)
Back again and volume 4 is even better. Paul Snakebite deserves a medal. he spends hours and hours at gigs selling this — 22 tracks, 22 bands for less than a fiver. Local acts such as Apocalypse Babys and The Shreds along with Wact, Breaker, Wat Tyler, Gink, Cuckooland, etc etc. Those cheeky Glasgow Disco Punks bis contribute a very exclusive track called *Pop Socks* which will never be released elsewhere. The mighty Pink Kross give us *Punk Rock Riot* and Gouge tempt us with *The Scene*. Almost an audiofanzine, *Snakebite City* is a great idea which everyone should support. And Mr. Bluefire is always looking for new bands to be featured on this series of cds. Vol. 4 costs £3.99 inc P&P, cheques payable to 'P.N. Talling', PO Box 16, ALDERSHOT GU12 5XY.

Abuse

THE MAGNETIC FIELDS *Get Lost* (Setanta)
If they don't write 'em like this any more, it's probably because they aren't. What would have been embraced warmly in the heyday of classic electropop may require more than a soft sell in the era of hard-bitten computer dance. This is the latest album from innovative Stephin Merritt whose penchant for arty ambients such as John Foxx combines eerily with countryish, Beach Boy leanings and simple, pleasing melodies. Previous recordings have featured guest vocalists, but here Merritt buries his own singing too deeply in the mix for sense. Sad, really, when the opening cut *With Whom To Dance?* finds him carolling splendidly over a sparse waltzy strum. A more ambitious

approach could have sent the delirious pop of *You And Me And The Moon* or the moody Why I Cry bouncing up the charts. As it is, Merritt keeps *Get Lost* almost wilfully low key at times, although the quality is still as high as on last year's acclaimed *Highway Strip* outing.

HOLIDAY FLYER *Try Not To Worry* (Silver Girl)
Simple is beautiful. That's the formula for this Californian three-piece comprising of sister/brother act John and Katie Conley and cello/bassist Verna Brock. Simple in the sense that these fourteen bitter-sweet evocations of floundering romance are performed to the minimalist of accompaniment, and beautiful for their honesty and Katie's gorgeously vulnerable voice: "I wonder what our friendship means to you/If you don't want me to be seen with you/In front of your friends" she implores on *Runaround*, striking a guilty clang in many hearts. You sense they know the territory here. It becomes one of those albums where you anticipate each song, knowing that there's not a duffer among 'em. *Everyday I Get To See You*, *Is It Hard To Stay Away?* and *Secondhand* are other classic slices of harmony-filled folk pop, whereas the soft chiming chords on *Lost At Sea* recall the Bark Psychosis school of atmospheric. Years from now you'll meet people claiming to have bought this album when it first came out.

THE DIVINE COMEDY *Casanova* (Setanta)
Irishman Neil Hannon has rather confounded critical appraisal to date. Unsure of how to approach his bizarre brew of Scott Walker, Brel, Almond and Nyman most scribes have given a confused thumbs up and wished him luck. *Casanova* is the man's most ambitious score to date with a huge orchestral cast crashing around his often affected, dandy vocals. But Hannon's a craftsman, and these songs work because, or in spite of the risks he takes. *Something For The Weekend* and *The Frog Princess* both camp it up lyrically with the album's title resonating ever more ironically as things progress. The lonesome *Songs of Love* is the best moment of naked intimacy, and the sombre closer *The Dogs And The Horses* makes a fitting finale. But you start yearning for something in the pop class of *Fear Of The Pollen Count* or the last album's *When The Lights Go Out*. It's classy, but studied, and the outlandish theatrics may leave some rather cold. But hey! That's showbiz, innit Neil?

MALI RAIN *Forecast For Storms* (3rd Stone)
What is the purpose of ambient music? It's sleeping gas effect for insomniacs? Popularity among multi-racial irie communities? To shag to? Artistic pretensions for the avant-garde? Probably all of these and more according to one recent interpretation, and apparently we've got Brian Eno to thank/blame. If the intent is to create mood first, and melody last, then Mali Rain (project of one Dave Kirby) don't always comply. Last year's debut outing included *Basking* (replayed here with fussy, intrusive percussion) with its sublime chords and nagging refrains. The title track on *Forecast*... is similarly memorable with a dreamy, catchy hook sweeping through the mix. Elsewhere Kirby creates a hugely impressive interaction of sound and space — possibly the best chill-out record made for some time. But you sense

he's capable of greater adventures into melodic territory than are displayed here. Fine if you want to create only a backdrop of 'noises'. Less so if notions of immortality are driving your career. Over to you, Dave.

THE CRANBERRIES *To The Faithful Departed* (Island)
Given that they're already in the big league, bringing in a producer of Bruce Fairbairn's charisma (AC/DC, Van Halen) could have approached rockbiz gimmickry levels of backslapping. Not so. Opening salvos *Hollywood* and *Salvation* combine Fairbairn's penchant for grand, gutsy guitar riffing with Dolores O'Riordan's lusty, lilting vocals to terrific effect. Less fabulous are her lyrics that occasionally verge on the absurd: "Remember JFK/Ever saintly in a way" she croons on *I'm Still Remembering*. Hmm, not a bad epitaph for the man who brought this planet to the eve of destruction less than thirty years ago. Far more appropriate are the tributes to John Lennon and Kurt Cobain, with the former given a shuddering rock anthem that musically recalls the latter. Remembrance is the theme throughout, whether for teen memories (*The Rebels*), victims of war (*Bosnia, War Child*) or family. The singer's late grandfather is recalled on the shimmering beauty of *Joe*, whilst the dark mystical *Electric Blue* could be anyone's epitaph. Growing up in public seems to have been less traumatic for O'Riordan than Ms O'Connor found it, and despite some naive sentiments, well-meant or not, there's little doubt that *To The Faithful Departed* represents a striking success.

Thompson

SKINNY PUPPY *Brap* (Off Beat)
brap (v) to get together, hook up electronic instruments, get high, and record.
Posthumungous double cd containing an album of tracks from the group's early years ('83-'85) and one of live material from subsequent tours ('90-'92), a reminder of how original and inventive they were — hey, seminal even. there are still pretenders recording tapes in their kitchens and lobbing in cuts from TV, film and radio plus their own cryptic verse. Skinny Puppy's first release in 1983 *Back And Forth* comprised only thirty-five cassettes, making it something of a rarity but causing in the first place the devotion which egged on their epic story. So for allwho believe in them (and they call it Skinny Puppy Love) hook up to your favourite listening post and admire.

DOWNLOAD *The Eyes Of Stanley Pain* (Subconscious/Off Beat/ SPV GMBH)
"This is the time we made noises..." (mooooo...) "...playing the game of mixing..." (scratchcrunch...oooo boomratchet boomratchet) (rants about painkiller) "...amputate your destiny..." (boom ratchet mooo...) "...and yet..."
This is music that leaves us meagre wordsmiths dancing about architecture. If music were a spoken language this would be English, a universal elastic language which, whenever it has no word to describe a thing, can mutate, invent a new one even before finishing the phrase. Love it. Terrifyingly trippy, lovingly produced, this material works. It's power in equilibrium, consolidation in abundance, innocent as a harmless schizophrenic, guilty as a destructive virgin, a whole album of Satan talking backwards to your parents — and the collage on the cover does look like a goat if you turn it upside down and that's what Download do to me and my perceptions of music. "Download are the leaders of the city's new generation of underground music. they take a cue from no-wave and deconstructionalist rock and then they perform with a voice and an act all of their own." Believe it. Puppy Gristle indeed.

TACTILE *Inscape* (Sentrax)
A helicopter with a squeaky rotor and wobbly blades is hovering over the roof of your house. It remains there for ages a pulsating and grinding, whirring and throbbing, humming and singing ghost in the machine. *Analogue nouveau*.

MELT BANANA *Scratch Or Stitch* (Southern/ Skin Graft)
Wailing of sirens, screeching and stamping of feet punky treble trill thrash thrill trash featuring a real 'urusei yatsura'.

THE OSMONDS *The Very Best Of...* (Polydor)
Urgh. A whole album of sickly seventies bollocks perpetrated by the big-toothed Mormonic first family. Why inflict the whole lot of them on us? Surely a better idea would be to take *Crazy Horses* and give it a nineties techno remix. Or maybe a gabba version of *Puppy Love*?

PANSY DIVISION *Wish I'd Taken Pictures* (Lookout)
Gay middle class suburban romp through Green Day pop punk with dick-obsessed lyrics a.k.a. Queercore.

Chapel



MAN... OR ASTROMAN? *Experiment Zero* (One Louder)
Intergalactic teen beat pop combo Man... Or Astroman?, on their legendary tour of the Milky Way, developed engine trouble, and having used up their WD40 supply make a catastrophic and unexpected emergency landing on planet Earth. Ejecting before the mothership explodes and they find themselves stranded and attempt during the ensuing years to merge into Western society. Eventually, in an effort to generate enough money to build an escape vessel (and also to enable them to shag lots of Earthwomen) they decide to reform the band by scraping together bits of primitive Earth technology like guitar, bass and drums.
Fast forward to 1996 and the release of *Experiment Zero*, and considering that they're having to use earthly instruments it's a triumph (not a Honda) of frenetic alien energy played tighter than a Ferengi purse, and easily the best album they've made so far. Among the tracks that achieve orbital velocity are the speeding *Planet Collision* the rumbling *Big Trak Attack*, the menacing *Evil Plans Of Planet Spectra* and the scary rumbling and menacing *King Of The Monsters!* It's all highly entertaining stuff; treasure this band, they are something special. And they're massive on Uranus (ooer!).

VARIOUS ARTISTS *The Best Punk Album In The World...Ever Vol. 2* (Virgin)
Despite the presence of talentless twat Bob Geldof and his useless Boomtown Rats; despite Adam and his crap Ants; despite the inclusion of one hit wonders jumping on the Punkwagon (namely The Vapours and Mink De Ville); despite the cheap cash-in nature of this series, there are things to praise.
Wallow in nostalgia as Spizz Energi enquire *Where's Captain Kirk?* ...The Ruts continue *Staring At The Rude Boys* ...Devo still can't get no *Satisfaction* ...Wreckless Eric is still going *The Whole Wide World*. There is the obvious and familiar in the form of the Pistols, The Damned, the Buzzcocks and The Jam (from the days when Paul Weller had talent). More interesting by far is *Best Street* by John Cooper Clarke, a caustic tour de force by Punk's most underrated wordsmith. The Tubes come over all Phil Spectorish with the marvellous *Don't Touch Me There*. Then there's *Sonic Reducer* by the Dead Boys which is a blur of fucked up guitar and stoopid lyrics (which is how it should be) and even Eddie And The Hot Rods sound good with the authentic *Do Anything You Wanna Do*, which isn't so much punk as revved up R&B ...good stuff nonetheless.
But the best comes from the ladies: Polystyrene and X Ray Spex give us *The Day The World Turned Dayglo*; Debbie Harry marries dumb pop and beauty and gives birth to *Hanging On The Telephone*; and finally Pauline Murray, vocalist with the fabulous Penetration screams her heart out on the classic *Don't Dictate*. Sweet dreams are made of this.

Haylock

SCOOTER *Our Happy Hardcore* (Club Tools)
My relationship with Scooter goes back to when I first saw them on the now defunct dance music show BPM. They made me laugh. Months later came crunch time, a new single out and I have to say Scooter are the type of group you'd be embarrassed to buy even as an anonymous punter in a megastore. I bought it that tho', the *Move Your Ass* ep. It made me laugh. Months after that, another single. Mmm. Now wouldn't buying this one ruin, the... well, magic? So I din't, until months later when I saw it cheap. *Back In The UK* and still laughing. So finally it happened, the album's out. Do I or don't I? But I'm a great believer in that you should always follow your heart, especially

if you are holding a record in your hand that makes you smile and shake your head 'cos of the cheesy cover and 'cos of song titles like *This Is A Monster Tune*, *Crank It Up* and *Rebel Yell* (the clincher, I'm a sucker for a cover version). So I'm still laughing at three German lads who can't speak English too good (and they know it, I think) making comedy techno (well it meks me laff). It's all one big happy package. from the lyrics ('Posse' is pronounced 'Pessay' here and there is liberal use of buzz phrases like "Hold Tight Crew", "Kick Up The Bass" and "Hardcore!") to the music: (loads of horns, crowd noises, pianas and synths played in the style of using no more than two fingers all crafted around a crazy 'disco' beat). Who sez German's han't got a sense o' 'umour. And what does 'teutonic' mean?

C.I.?

MORCHEEBA *Who Can You Trust?* (Indochina)
They don't like being labelled trip hop do Morcheeba. I'm all for labels meself. Anything that makes buying records easier and less exclusive I'm all for. But it is unfair to file their debut under 'trip hop'. It has more in common with the 4AD set (The Cocteau Twins, Dead Can Dance, This Mortal Coil) than the Bristol set (Massive Attack, Portishead, Earthling). Their debut is quite simply stunning and deserves to be up there with the other classic 90's ('new dance' shall we say) albums. Most of the beats are very very slow, maybe they've been smoking too much. But it all works well to construct a groundbreaking-ish lp that you'll go back to listen to months and years from now still amazed at how good it all is. Except for *Small Town* a lame dub reggae tune (but then all all dub reggae is lame). Fortunately not even that can bring it down, tracks like *Howling* (a 90's *Song To The Siren*?), the epic title track, *Col*, the more uptempo *Moog Island* and *Posthumous* as well as the singles serve to distract you from this discrepancy. Plus the bonus that Morcheeba don't take themselves too seriously, like most trip hop artists do. Trip hop artists, who are just that, 'artists', stuck up their own arses creating their precious art. Buy and feel free to dispose of, though you probably won't.

RUBY *Salt Peter Remixed: Revenge The Sweetest Fruit* (Creation)
"Some of the most exciting music around right now is not so much a rejection of rock, as a ruthless deconstruction of it," spoke a review of The Unkle Mo' Wax remix of *DJed* by Tortoise. If it's so exciting why remix it? The same applies to Ruby. Initially the concept of a remix album seemed plain stoopid. It's perfectly wicked-guy on it's own. But I was surprised how good it is. The only downside is that it fits into that standard remixer's formula — take most, if not all, of the vocals out. Remixers just don't get it. It's usually the vocals that make the piece, especially in Ruby's case. Anyway, its all good stuff, not a duff track in sound. From downtempo (a label which can actually be applied to some of these tracks), to uptempo to drum 'n' bass/jungle with *Flippin' The Bird*, *Paraffin*, *Hoops* and *Heidi* (both versions) standing out as tunes that stand out. *Revenge* (that sounds familiar) is an essential purchase along with the original. Don't dare have one without the other.

PSYCHED UP JANIS *I Died In My Teens* (This Way Up)
Have you ever listened to a lot of swingbeat? Well, it all basically sounds the same. I wonder what possesses people to sit down and create music which is just a copy. I wonder the same thing about 'indie' bands. Sorry, back to the drawing board.

BACKWATER *Shady* ep (Che)
It starts with *Shady*, very American 'indie' — you know, drums, bass-line, a few plucks on the guitar, quiet vocals then noise, then back again. The set up with Backwater, when it works best, can be described as this: the band were recording in the studio, this geezer was walking past, heard 'em, thought "Whoa! They sound wicked!", broke and joined in. *Vehicle* and *You Gave Me Life* have that sort of, ooo, spontaneity. They've got that American indie-rock sense of humour so they'll go far. But only if they keep on that track. The other track in't that good.

FOKKEWOLF *Bullet Festival* (Trent Bridge)
They've got that distinctive Nottingham sound. Angry and frustrated. Knowing that however good you are you will be relegated to the East Midlands gig circuit (if you're lucky). Also knowing that whilst Nottingham is a great city with great bands, the rest of the country doesn't think so. Another band to see live rather than listen to at home. They went to town on their cassette cover, it's nice to see bands making an effort in all areas of the 'business'. They also get props for putting it out on Trent Bridge records.

C.I.?

THE TOFU LOVE FROGS *Rentamob* (2tr)
The Tofu Love Frogs have long been the kind of band who do more with the problems of the world than just than just sing about them. Anyone who catches them live will know that their aggression is more than mere showmanship. Thankfully this is a cd which matches the stomp 'n' sweat experience and packs so much into the eleven tracks you'd never believe its sub-forty minute length. But then, to be quite honest, if it was any longer your ears would fall off. Excellently packaged with full lyrics and infolines to back up its anti-CB, anti-drug ignorance line of attack. Scrumpythunderbird up the blue touch paper and stand forward. Punkassfolk.



SHAMUS O'BIVION & THE MEGADEATH MORRISMEN *Yee-ha!* ep (Listenear)
a welcome dusting down of some old Shamus faves, this time including the metal meanderings heard only since the last (frankly, lo-fi) release. This four-track ep, available on cassette or cd, proffers *Yeeha*, *Matty Groves* (again), *In Dublin's Fair City*, and *Fight For Your Right To Party* all delivered as only Shamus O'Blivion know how, though thoroughly stickless (shame). So how about plumbing some new depths of folk fun, boys? Sticks on. Yarhee!

Christy O'Neil

JOCASTA *Go* (V4)
Jocasta are the sort of band that Chemistry students will like. This single isn't awful, in fact it's slightly catchy in that you find yourself singing along, but after a while it really does get on your tits. Jocasta are a more beefy Longpigs, they most likely want to sleep with Thom Yorke but don't know how to ask him. Go has a slightly mid-80's guitar feel to it, completely unfashionable. see you in the Top 40 in, erm, erm, the year 1999. Probably. Dickheads will like Jocasta.

dWEEB *Chart Raider Space Invader* (Fierce Panda)
Oh how I could I could tell you the tale of how this South East London trio sent out a grand total of four homemade tapes and managed to create one of the biggest A&R buzzes of this year. But enough of that. dWeeb are a very now! band. They don't like drummers so they employ a drum machine, and create space-punk-disco for the masses. Of these two short, sharp, spiky tunes the b-side *Scooby Doo* is

probably the stronger song. dWeeb are about being young (average age eighteen), drinking, popping pills and being naughty. They will soon be coming out of their bedrooms and onto a waiting public. Odds on they will pull it off and they make it look so easy. Already many pundits are stating “ dWeeb will be the next big thing. ” Many bands are going to be very jealous of this lot. Why? Because dWeeb ar laughing. all the way to the bank.

STERLING Everest Eyes (Mantra)
Oh blimey! Is there really anyone out there who actually likes this sort of lame guitar pop? Years ago some of us could have labelled this “fraggle”. I can’t see why such a lightweight, throwaway, average band wants to exist in 1996. Next!

BEN FOLDS FIVE Underground (Caroline)
The really good thing about Ben Folds Five is that they are going to piss off a lot of kids. There aren’t enough bands around these days who wind up the kids. A wonderful breath of fresh air, Ben Holds Five have no guitar; instead they employ a piano. Hooray! A sort of better Possum Dixon, crossed with a wine bar singer. I get the impression that these Americans are quite young. Hey! shouldn’t they be playing punk rock? Well, it seems their parents must have had large record collections. all three tracks on this cd are perversely good. Bored of bands who all sound the same ? Then this single is for you.

SCARFO Bingo England (Deceptive)
Are Scarfo doomed to live on the toilet circuit for the rest of their lives? Sadly, if they continue to make average records like Bingo England the answer is ‘yes’. Their debut single *Skinny* was a grower, but this goes nowhere fast, nor even after a few weeks. Oh well. One of them used to be in Blyth Power. I think that says it all.

CHARLIES ANGELS
It’s Never Going To Happen to Me (ORG)
The band that seem always to be on TV. They went on tour with PJ & Duncan and the kids loved them. Sadly it would seem that not many other people do. We are talking pure pop but they still play the pubs of London where they shouldn’t be seen dead. I often wonder if they are doing it all wrong. ‘Why support Audioweb in Middlesbrough or Earl Brutus in New Cross? they are wasted on the indie kids. This is bedroom poster pop from the best band in London by miles. Wake up, smell the coffee, pure pop hasn’t tasted or sounded so good for years. Believe me, (*we do, Sid, we do* —Ed) Charlies should be huge. Somebody somewhere must be trying hard to make to prevent justice. I thought record labels liked selling lots and lots of records. Fuck Upside Down, Peter Andre et al. Charlies Angels are the ones who should be inheriting to the crown from Take That.

ASH Goldfinger (Infectious)
Bugger, these kids are cleverer than I first thought. *Goldfinger* is a masterful song that sounds so good on the radio. Ash have come of age, so to speak. Their debut album will sell bucket loads; their gigs are life affirming events, their fans know how to have a good time. An added bonus is that on the cd single you will find the smart *Get Ready*. Fab.

MAGNAPOP Open The Door (Play It Again)
They are back and a million times better. The impressive song here is *True Love* which strangely sounds like Pink Kross— well, a Pink Kross who can play more than two chords. Magnapop are back and this time you will have to take notice.

P.A. SKINNY Stellar (Transmitter)
If I remember correctly, the press release for this mumbled on about it being to fi pop. Blimey, this is sort of catchy. It’s not a cracking record— he sounds like the bloke from Perfume on a bad day and The Sweeny do this sort of thing much better. Passable but I wouldn’t spend my pocket money on it.

MAGOO Eye Spy (Noisebox)
An off the wall indie guitar band who seem to release a record every week, Magoo throw everything in and at times manage to pull out something really interesting. therefore, a huge thumbs up. Think Flaming Lips, Pavement, Beatnik Filmstars et al. Indie thrills galore, some say it’s very trendy to like Magoo at the moment. Blimey! Seven songs on a 7” (17.5 cm) is pretty cool. Watered down puke yellow vinyl. Of course it’s stupidly limited to about twelve copies).

YAM YAM The Spectacle 12” (Nation)
Great idea! Samba-style drumming meets a funky back-beat straight from a B-boy’s boom-box. Add to that bass sounds which could draw blood from a soundman’s ears and this is a heavy groove. It chuggs along without hurry and establishes an irresistible flow of rhythmic impulses allowing a little melody to creep in. But such an impressive idea deserves more.... more.... humph as it develops, just a bit more

interest factor. I’d love Nation to do another mix with a bit more happening. It begs for a couple of climaxes.

MARMION Three After Midnight (Superstition)
The Spark, The Flame And The Fire opens at a canter and continues apace for ten minutes before the next track gees up to a gallop. both remain curiously gripping. The third track, entitled *Marmion’s Island Pt. 2: The Unknown Territory* does sound like a sci-fi film soundtrack with its doomy swirls and funeral marching beat. Classy stuff.

BILLY WHIZZ UVX (Magick Eye)
Featuring remixes by Astralasia of what sounds like The Shadows on acid. Big Hank-style guitars behind hard techno trance blast and rush of breakbeats, with a filthy squidgy fini collapso on the *Disco Mix* Byrne ‘n’ Belton. Ace. Strictly for headbangers and non-purists.

WHO MOVED THE GROUND?
Good Question (Icarus)
Goddess help us. Ambient brit-pop quasi-ska acoustic Madness. “ *Do you ever think/ when you’re buying a drink/ of the couple of quid that you lose?* ” Well, no, as it happens— I’d go fucking nuts. They go on to rhyme “relieve all” with “evil” and “pocket” with “wallet” in a cheeky Chas & Dave ... nay, facetious vein. Apparently top fun live.

SMALLER Stray Dogs And Bin Bags (Better)
Same goes for you, too. furthermore, adding a weird sample at the beginning and a weird ending won’t stop you from drowning in the Oasis from which you drink. Who could ask for less? still, “Now the telly’s blown up/ what am I gonna do?/ I put it in the garden/ and make it look at you/ I wanna be somewhere else” is an interesting verse.

OPTIMUM 4 2 track demo
If this’d been made in the 80’s it’d’ve been wicked-guy. But it wasn’t. Don’t get me wrong, it’s pleasant enough to listen to, but you want a bit more than that to drag you away from *Stars In Their Eyes*. *Empathy* is very... maudlin, is it? Drum machine, bass, jingly guitar, synth strings. *Skin Tight* is more jolly. Erasure-esque? She sounds a lot like thingy outta Echobelly. I expect a bit more from Nottingham. Given time they might come up with the goods.

RACHELS BASEMENT Shake demo
Cool, chugging guitar pop from the depths of Birmingham. Exuberant, driving and damn good live, I bet. “*Shake off the whole wide world,* ” exhorts Daniel Rachel before sliding off into a bluesy ending. (0121 449 8680)

RALPH demo
Palatable AOR-ish fare with a surge of Britpop. *Don’t Ever Leave* is instant and brief enough for any radio programmer with half an ear, whilst stabbing organ chords herald the neat, hippyish Tasty.

SOUR MASS demo
Chunky chords form an eargrabbing intro to the stomping *That*. Clear clean sound, good placing of strong voice in the mix combine to make a firm impression. Next up, *Surge*, does exactly that with a whirlwind electric pulse. *Dropping* is catchy and grinding with a brief lull in the middle of the storm.

DIVIDED OPINIONS demo
A straight leap into folk territory provided by Juliette Heath and band. Bright and breezy with insistent percussion keeping the acoustic instruments in line. Heath’s voice stands out well over the backing, both tuneful and focused. *Shallow* is pretty and poppy with barbed lyrics, and Fictional Friend strolls through firm chords with an appealing flute overlay. *Eyes Of A Child* is flowery but strong and the balladic *Soldier* closes an impressive tape. (0181 441 2705)

VALVE Woman’s World cassette single
Short, fast and straight to the point, the front play pop like other people hammer nails. Like a speedy Blur/Buzzcocks they don’t mess around and the two tracks on this sampler are just fine.

SLZ demo
A mass of samples over hatrdcore techno breakbeats and grinding guitars, a bit of Acid House, anthemic stuff, weird shit, ambience, drum ‘n’ bass, industrial— shit, this tapes a party. I keep playing it but can’t put my finger on why. Not greatly original but an interesting collection of ideas, which need extrapolating before further production.

THE PLATTERS THAT MATTERED IN APRIL to D? C.I.?

1. RUBY Hoops
2. ADAM F Aromatherapy
3. BONAFIDE Super Bad
4. HYDRO The Bomb Shit
5. RUBY Salt Water Fish
6. RUBY Swallow Baby
7. MORCHEEBA Moog Island / Posthumous
8. EUSEBE P.O.L.I.C.E.
9. LA FUNK MOB 357 Magnum
- 10.RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE

- 11.LIONROCK Packet Of Peace
- 12.INGRID DE LAMBRE Poesies
- 13.THE MIGHTY BOP Zazie “Zen”
- 14.MOBB DEEP Shooks One Part 2
- 15.SUBJECT 13 Spirit Breakdown
- 16.DAVID HOLMES Gone
- 17.D.O.S.E. feat. MARK E SMITH

- 18.ALEX REECE Jazzmaster
- 19.SCOOTER Rebel Yell
- 20.THE PRODIGY Firestarter

And the nation’s number one is... Ruby off the remix album, dancefloor trip hop, likewise Morcheeba and La Funk Mob, a reissue from, I hate to say it, Mo’ Wax. The other two gems from Ruby are off the original album still, er, kicking, especially Salt Water Fish. The Lionrock b-side filled that Chemical Brothers gap (but it would ‘cos it’s a Chem. Bros. mix). Bunched together doing that drum ‘n’ bass ting are Adam F, gorgeously uplifting in a positive handbag kinda way, Bonafide managing to be original (sampling James Brown) and unoriginal (sampling James Brown) in the same breath, and Hydro (a gorgeous eight minute epic in a more subtle fashion). Not much hip hop, couldn’t get hold of the stuff I wanted, but Eusebe’s album track rediscovered on the b-side of the not very good current single kept it real, British, and Mobb Deep got wheeled out ‘cos I only got the album last month. Rage Against did, well, funk. Two more French tunes, Ingrid De Lambre (trip hop at either 33 or 45rpm plus a drum ‘n’ bass mix) and The Mighty Bop (Le Jazz Acid Franchise) contributed to the b-side of the Back with handbag d ‘n’ b, David Holmes grew on me, Subject 13 din’t need to and Alex Reece’s backside to the Feel The Sunshine remixes was the closest I’d ever get to playing jazz (Fever’s DJ Pablo informed me that it’s a slow bossa nova). D.O.S.E.’s thump thump thump thump mix got the vote instead of the Chem. Bros type versions (does this mean I’m heading onna house tip?). Prodigy stayed in— just (I’m no snob). And finally Scooter supplied a bit of comedy techno, ‘cos if ya dint laff you’d cry, innit?

Breezin The Chart

1. AXIS Dusted / One In Ten (Good Looking)

2. MODEL 500 Wax Doctor Remix (R&S)

3. THE SPIRIT Mendacity (Timeless)

4. MILITIA Dread / StepOn/Step Off (Breezin) 5.

NEIL TRIX Untitled (Bang-In Tunes)

6. FUNKY ELEMENTS Fire & Ice

7. PHOTEK Untitled (promo)

8. TANGO Understanding (Creative Wax)

9. FELLOWSHIP Celebrate Life (Xpressive)

10. BLAME Neptune (Moving Shadow)

11. FORCES OF NATURE Dimensions

(Clean Up)

12. PHOTEK Still Life (Razors Edge)

13. LEMON D L.A Fantasy (Sony)

14. SKANNA Sorrow (Skanna)

15. ALEX REESE Touch Me (Al’s Records)

Compiled by DJ M.R.B.

Breezin is a monthly journey into drum ‘n bass at Deluxe. (See listings, Friday 24th)

FRIED ALIVE!



THE GROUNDHOGS photo: Rob Pitt
Nottingham The Running Horse
The combined smell of Patchouli oil and Newcastle Brown Ale permeates the air as we are magically transported back to 1970. Guitar solos fill the claustrophobic confines of the Running Horse, like swarms of head-banging mosquitos. Beautiful riffs from a bygone era make me almost tearful. We get *Garden* and *Eccentric Man* from *Thank Christ For The Bomb* ...great chunks from the seminal *Split* (required listening for any self respecting guitar groupie) plus various blues work-outs and it all ends with *Cherry Red*...well, not quite because Tony returns to the stage minus band to give us a blistering solo version of *Groundhog Blues* displaying his undisputed mastery of the slide guitar. We hardly have time to wipe the tears of memory from our bearded chins (and that’s just the women) before the flying saucer of pop takes off again, leaving a gaggle of ageing devotees (me included) muttering to each other “fuckin’ great, that”.

John Haylock
CLIVE LIVE Nottingham Clinton Rooms and Congregational Centre
Kicking off the deep mid-winter season with a Salsa night once again saw the Latin groove pack the dance-floor, as the broadening appeal of irresistible wiggling is further proven. Wiggling was more evident in mind than body in the collision of Perfect Houseplant’s jazz noodlings with the medieval plainsong of the Orlando Consort. This fusion certainly had its moments but was not consistently compelling, though with more time spent on development it just might be. Shooglenifty’s fiddly folk dance brought wiggleness firmly back to the feet though the move from toe-tap to full frenzy was hard wrought despite their contagious acid folk fusion. Uzume Taiko Ensemble brought their big drums and showmanship, and although their Canadian roots betrayed their Nippon ambitions with cutesy educationisms rather than deep drum explo, their stagecraft was never in doubt. Here’s looking forward to a summer’s open air eclecticism and autumn’s indoor musing courtesy once agin of our tight-strapped councilissarios. Respect due, as well as amount.

Christy O’Neil



GONG Sheffield The Leadmill
Ears yr passport et ton saxpert, a subMarina of a different kettle of worms sayeth da Overlord as I adjusted my lifebelt. O Mill of Lead we have come to ear yr wits of wordsdom. Having done the William Burroughs forming Soft Machine and the Paris riots bit wot happened next woz this Dingo Virgin with Shakti Yoni, Bloomdido, Pip and T Being joined by Steffi Sharpstrings in the spots before my eyes. While the subMarina saxpert collared Keith Da Missile Bass I witlessnessed *Camembert Electrique*, *The Flying Teapot*, *Angel’s Egg* and *You* in virtually full entirety with *Ooby Scooby Doomsday*, *Y Never Blow Yr Trip Forever* and *The Isle Of Everywhere* resurrected under the healing fingers of Mike Howlett. Gong presaged acid jazz pop and KLF-style myth-making by twenty years, and this supposedly ‘old hippy bollox’ is still ahead of this and other games, spiritually danceable and cup of tea, too. You who know already understand, if not you have been fooled by the NMME propaganda fallout. You who don’t know, like the sad subMarina, missed the point. Mind the crap and hit the zeroming button while I safely splashed down to a pub lunch tomorrow. U.R.I.N.I.M.U. Bye bye!

Christy O’Neil
(Oh well, this is what happens when you send Howard Mills and a Hippo to review something trippy in an old Morris Marina. Should have been there —Ed)

RUTHLESS BLUES/MICK PINI BAND Nottingham The Meadow Club
Two premiere division blues acts to make your mouth water all over your gob harp. The only M.P. worth voting for kicks off proceedings. He feeds us his original Blues (very British, very classy) and the amply stuffed Meadow Club lap it up like pigs gobbling truffles. At times funky, always strutting, Mick strokes and pets his guitar making it behave just the way he wants it to. The band feature many tracks off the new *Big Boss Man* album including a storming version of *Key To The Highway* and the superb *Mojo Boogie* and deserve the tremendous applause they receive. Ruthless Blues hit the stage amidst much well deserved anticipation. Unassuming frontman Stevie Smith on vocals and harp settles in quickly and is surrounded by pure professionalism. When Stevie talks, you listen, and when John Knightsbridge’s guitar slides by, the only place to go is up on

your feet. Sax playing muppet Zoot had a son, called him John ‘Irish’ Earl, taught him all he knew and then got him a job in Ruthless Blues. Top quality sax always adds a depth and feeling to the Blues. John Earl is the standard other sax players may reach, but I doubt it! Ruthless Blues bubbled to the top of England’s champagne saturated Blues scene, long may they tickle our noses!

Chris Carter
The Mick Pini Band appears at *The Running Horse* on Sat. 1st June

OUT OF THE BLUE Nottingham The Running Horse
Cooking was not the word...steaming, more like. You could hear and feel the atmosphere within fifty yards of The Runner tonight, as Blues cats flocked in to check Out Of The Blue. But wait a minute something’s wrong, lead vocalist, guitar and song-writing frontman Kevin Thorpe has gone down with flu. So at the last minute Helen Kirke slotted nicely to take over crooning responsibilities, and she was the business! Guttural, soulful and what power, with or without the mike, from the heel of her boots to the tip of her nose. Guitar slinger Eddie Tatton is one of those guys who make it look so easy and is worth checking out for the worlds first guitar strip-tease. Slender, teasing, almost inaudible notes begin to fall to the floor prompting whistles from the crowd. The tension mounts as Eddie unzips the sound from his guitar and all at once hearts are a-flutter as the full frontal guitar noise bumps and grinds around the room to tremendous howl and applause. Eddie and keyboard whizz kid Johnny Duke then join forces to produce a superb electro duel. Johnny’s fingers fly and flail, but from the chaos of digits comes perfect order. Featuring tracks from their cd *Blues In A Bottle*, *Out Of The Blue* gave a master class on how the Blues should be played and enjoyed. Clearly top of their league.



LEFTFIELD Nottingham Rock City
OK, I’ll be honest I don’t like Leftfield. Every time I hear or see their name it epitomises all that’s bad in dance music. It’s perfectly produced, it’s hyped by majors, it’s pompous and worst of all it tries via rock ‘n’ roll tactics to please everyone. Throw in a bit of dub, a bit of House, a bit of trance, a bit of hip/trip-hop, a splash of drum ‘n’ bass and wa-hey! instant crossover appeal. When Leftfield make something that truly inspires me, then maybe I’ll believe the hype.The problem is they make neither memorable pop dance nor quality underground grooves, seeming only to teeter on middle ground touching other people’s sound-bites. Tonight, despite eerie intros, Goa style Conga slapping, sweeping synth links and arty doodlings on a Theremin and some bit of wood with string attached (which looked stoopid) It seemed the best they could do were sad pastiches of *French Kiss*, the 49ers’ *Touch Me* and what sounded like the whole of Guerilla Records’ back catalogue. Their clumsy merchandise emblazoned with the logo ‘Liveism’ should surely read ‘Plagiarism’. Or maybe even ‘Tourism’. Dub house fucking disco indeed.

Dael

THINGS TO DO WITH YOUR SPARE DEMOS # 9

1. **Organ** is the biggest selling zine on the scene, and now producing free broadsheets as part of the series. It's the one to be in and has it's ear close to the underground unlike what it refers to as 'Kings Out Of Reach Tower'. Now available in size A4. They only review it if they like it, promote gigs at the Camden Monarch and also have an increasingly successful record label, so best efforts to Sean, Organ, Unit 205 The Old Gramophone Works, 326 Kensal Road, LONDON W10 5BZ. Send sae for full list of goodies.

2. As well as being a fanzine **DESTROY ALL MUSIC** "is a new kind of label specialising in lo-fi-noise-art-punk-jazz-no-wave-experimental and anything with an alternative edge or viewpoint, also a queercore label written big and proud and wants confrontational bands." They also have a few other labels, Destroy All Tapes (for £1 you get literally a destroyed tape), and Destroy All Jazz, described as "handmade" #2 in the series is called It's Jazz Jim But Not As We Know It, also £1. Cheques to 'J.Bates' 40 Windermere Avenue, Roath Park CARDIFF CF2 5PR.

3. **PERSONALITY CRISIS** claims to be 'the fanzine to be seen on buses with'. Issue #2 features interviews with Northern Uproar, Marion, plus loads of reviews including Mansun, Oasis, Bowie, Bjork, the Charlatans and X-Ray Spex. There's also some poetry in it and what's more it's local, so let's assume those buses are green and cream. It costs 50p, so if you want a copy send dosh with your demo to Anna, 7 Peveril Drive, The Park, NOTTINGHAM NG7 1DE.

4. **nothing to declare** zine is also only 50p (+ stamp) for issue #7 which features Eat Static and Alice Nutter (Chumbawamba). Send your demo to Nine, 44 Craighdaragh Road, Helen's Bay, Co. Down BT19 1UB.

5. **REPEAT** is up to #4 and seems to be a Manics mag. but also includes Garbage, Gorky's Zygotiic Mynxi, Honeycrack and Joyrider. It's co-edited by 10 year old Dweeb, is £1 (payable to R. Rose) for 56 A4 pages so there's plenty of room for your demo to be reviewed if it's reviewing. Contact Richard, 7 Ferry Lane, Chesterton, CAMBRIDGE CB4 1NT.

6. **WORDS I MIGHT HAVE ATE** is a big magazine, and it too is local. I saw it at a Stereolab gig. It has a definition of a fanzine writer's role, lots of informed and well written reviews and features, stuff on guided by voices, Uresei Yatsura, Tortoise, Magoo, Yo La Tengo. It's worth the £2.50, in fact it's worth more than your demo but send it alongside these send a demo to Dee, PO Box 345, CHESHAM, Bucks HP5 3DT. Then you can buy it in Selectadisc for £1 (add 40p p&p if you send off for it) and see what they thought.

7. **D** is on #6 now with features on Mansun, Gorky's, Charlies Angels, The Mystics, Soul Coughing, Uresei Yatsura and The Wannadies. Also Theatre and cinema reviews, demos and vinyl reviews include Backwater, Bear, bis, Cable, Done Lying down, Five Darrens, Garbage, Gorilla, Heave, Inaura, Joyland, King Prawn, Pullover, Pura Vida, Rhatigan, Scheer, Solar Race, Stereolab, Telstar Ponies, and The X Rays. A damn fine diverse selection, so if you think your music can stand up alongside these send a demo to Dee, PO Box 345, CHESHAM, Bucks HP5 3DT. Then you can buy it in Selectadisc for £1 (add 40p p&p if you send off for it) and see what they thought.

8. **CUTE KIDS ON MEDICATION** Issue #4 interviews Belly, Moreau's Island, Poppuns, Shriek and Spare Snare. It costs a quid and you get a free 7" (hard vinyl) single from 4, Threewells Place, FORFAR, DD8 1EW.

9. **A POCKET GUIDE FOR REVOLUTIONARIES AND SEX SYMBOLS** says "Music is the last digestible core of Youth Culture Fraud. MUSIC IS DEAD killed by the nouveau riche vulgarity and piercing blue-eyed Indie escapism of the New Cretin culture parading (its) tacky blank verse and vacuous empty spaces reliant on sustained ignorance and happy shopper fanbase. ROCK 'N' ROLL HAS BEEN CANCELLED the time has come to take back the glamour, the danger, the swagger, the savagery, the beauty, the anger, the threat, the poetry, rip it from the useless clutches of the conservative, complacent, and consumer-based, return it to the radicals, the idealists, activists, and assembled masses." Send your (angry) demos to Flat K, 23 Plymouth grove, Longsight, MANCHESTER M13 9LU.

10. **BOREDOM Images** #10. A full length version of the above is featured in this "Personal Zine" i.e it explores the cultural world of its editor Ade L. Vice of Alfreton which is where Alfreton Road leads if you keep going. It contains reviews of cult films and features including a Shoppers Guide to Cheap Records, plenty of book reviews and vinyl reviews. He also publishes FIRE'N' SKILL "36 A4 ripping pages of Cultural 'ows yer Father" on issue #2. Contact Ade at 43 Priory Road, ALFRETON, Derbyshire DE55 7JT.

afterall: The Problem With Music

by Steve Albini

Whenever I talk to a band who are about to sign to a major label, I always end up thinking of them in a particular context. I imagine a trench, about four feet wide and five feet deep, maybe sixty yards long, filled with runny, decaying shit. I imagine these people, some of them good friends, some of them barely acquaintances, at one end of this trench. I can also imagine a faceless industry lackey at the other end, holding a fountain pen and a contract waiting to be signed. Nobody can see what is printed on the contract. It's too far away, and besides, the shit stench is making everybody's eyes water. The lackey shouts to everybody that the first one to swim the trench gets the contract. Everybody dives in the trench and they struggle furiously to get to the other end. Two people arrive simultaneously and begin wrestling furiously, clawing each other and dunking each other under the shit. Eventually, one of them capitulates and there is only one contestant left. He reaches for the pen, but the lackey says, "Actually, I think you need a little more development. Swim it again, please. Backstroke."

And he does, of course.

I. A&R Scouts

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

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

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

The A&R person is the first person to make contact with the band, and as such is the first person to promise them the moon. Who better to promise them the moon than an idealistic young turk who expects to be calling the shots in a few years, and who has had no previous experience with a big record company. Hell, he's as naive as the band he's duping. When he tells them no-one will interfere with the creative process, he probably even believes it.

When he sits down with the band for the first time, over a plate of angel hair pasta, he can tell them with all sincerity that when they sign with company X, they're really signing with *him*, and he's on their side. Remember that great gig I saw you at in '89? Didn't we have a blast. By now all rock bands are wise enough to be suspicious of music industry scum. There is a pervasive caricature in popular culture of a portly middle-aged ex-hipster

talking a mile a minute, using outboard jargon and calling everybody "baby". After meeting "their" A&R guy, the band will say to themselves and everybody else, "He's not like a record company guy at all! He's like one of us." And they will be right. That's one of the reasons he was hired. These A&R guys are not allowed to write contracts. What they do is present the band with a letter of intent, or "deal memo", which loosely states some terms, and affirms that the band will sign with the label once a contract has been agreed on. The spookiest thing about this harmless-sounding little "memo" is that it is, for all intents and purposes, a binding document. That is, once the band have signed it, they are under obligation to conclude a deal with the label.

If the label presents them with a contract that the band don't want to sign, all the label has to do is wait. There are a hundred other bands willing to sign the exact same contract, so the label is in a position of strength. These letters never have a term of expiry, so the band remain bound by the deal memo until the contract is signed, no matter how long that takes. The band cannot sign to another label or put out its own material unless they are released from their agreement, which never happens. Make no mistake about it, once a band has signed a letter of intent, they will eventually sign a contract which suits the label or they will be destroyed.

One of my favourite bands was held hostage for the better part of two years by a slick young "He's not a label guy at all" A&R rep, on the basis of such a deal memo. He had failed to come through on any of his promises (something he did with similar effect to another well-known band), and so the band wanted out. Another label expressed an interest, but when the A&R man was asked to release the band, he said he would need money or points, or possibly both, before he would consider it. The new label was afraid that the price would be too dear, and they said no thanks. On the cusp of making their signature album, an excellent band, humiliated, broke up from the stress and the many months of inactivity. Next month: **Part II. What I Hate About Recording.**

Pride Of Erin



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