

# VENGEANCE IS HERS

a conversation with

## DIAMANDA GALÁS

by John Payne

French Pulp Serial Killer  
**FANTÔMAS**

**GUERRILLA GIGS**

From the Libertines to No Age

**STEPHEN MALKMUS**

Under the Pavement, the Golf Course

**PLUS:**

Molly Frances charts your future  
How to use a Magic Wand  
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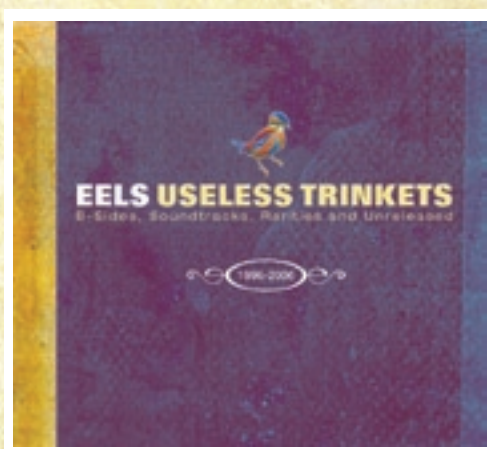
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# arthur

a review of life,  
arts & thought

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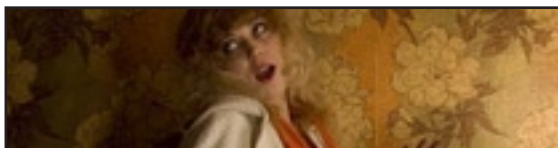
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\*Cover photography by Susanna Howe, New York, 2008.

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Laris Kreslins  
Publisher Emeritus

# Letters to the Editor



Direct correspondence to [editor@arthurmag.com](mailto:editor@arthurmag.com) or Arthur Editorial Offices, 3408 Appleton Street, Los Angeles, CA 90039. All correspondence will be considered for publication unless otherwise marked, and may be edited for clarity.

## HOT GUNK REMOVER TIP

Thank you so much for your recent article ["Kick Out the Chemicals" by Molly Frances, *Arthur* No. 27] on ways to clean without giving yourself brain cancer! I have been self-employed as a housecleaner using only non-toxic products for five years, and I have become a rabid evangelist for the cause of "clean" cleaning. I mean, it's pretty stupid when the shit you're using to clean with is a million times more harmful to you than the dirt you're cleaning up! So I was very happy to see you helping to promote this practice—the people need information!

I have more info for you. I have found the use of microfibre cloths (now pretty widely available) to be indispensable in cleaning without chemicals. They are much more abrasive than a regular cloth, aiding the elbow grease, and their massive surface area (because of thread density) allows them to actually suck up bacteria from surfaces. They can then be washed in hot soapy water to get rid of all the little critters.

Secondly, grapefruit seed extract (GSE) is very handy as a disinfectant and grease-cutter. It is actually sold as a nutritional supplement at most health

food stores. Here is my recipe for an all-purpose kitchen/bathroom cleaner and gunk remover:

**CAUTION:** will remove finish from wood

**Grease Cutting Cleaner**

5 litres water

1/2 cup borax

2 tbsp GSE

generous squirt of dish soap

some essential oils to make it smell nice

Thanks so much for your awesome magazine!

**Alison Therriault**

Vancouver, BC, Canada

Via email

## Payday!

I represent a creative development agency that specializes in increasing viral awareness, and the seeding of brands through web and print publications with non-mainstream credibility. I was referred to your fine publication by one of our clients who was featured in the fashion spread in your latest issue ["Reds," *Arthur* No. 27].

After perusing *Arthur*, I can say with confidence that you would be an ideal partner for a very fruitful and profitable relationship. Recent L.A. and N.Y. focus groups conducted by my firm found a not-spectacular 32% brand recognition of *Arthur* among 30-40 something lawyers, investment bankers, and hedge fund managers. Among NYC and LA creatives, however, brand recognition was a stunning 84%! Of these respondents, over 52% classified themselves as "punk-influenced indy connoisseurs." This means they enjoy bands like Sonic Youth, and Pavement, and attend at least one live show a month at a non-stadium venue. Of these respondents, most owned at least one album on either Sub Pop, SST, Amphetamine Reptile, or Touch and Go during their college years—formative times for the development of future consumer identities. Similarly, most of our creatives categorized themselves as "environmentally aware" in their consumer choices, with a "general distrust" of the establishment. Unfortunately, your brand Recognition was slightly lower than that of Vice; respondents who recognized, and had interacted with *Arthur's* content

tended to be better educated, and more reluctant to part with their disposable income.

Despite these limitations, we believe your constituency represents a crucial, yet underexploited niche demographic that identifies with products (musical and otherwise) that accessorize with their beliefs. This audience presents a veritable goldmine to advertisers.

Especially beneficial is *Arthur's* close connection to the Thurston Moore/Sonic Youth Brand. As you are probably already aware, Sonic Youth's recent partnership with Starbucks opened hitherto unseen channels into various cross-countercultural marketing niches. Thurston is clearly the best vehicle since David Bowie for demolishing shibboleths about "integrity" and a general hostility towards corporations and marketing trends. Thankfully, for many young bands, the ridiculous stigma against "selling out" has been replaced with a realistic awareness of market forces, and a genuine desire to integrate their visual and audio content into the larger mediascape, while delivering their product to the widest possible audience.

Naturally, the *Arthur* demographic is not yet ready for blatant ads for lattes. Skepticism of (large) corporations has led people like myself to adopt a much more flexible approach. Careful use of stealth techniques has allowed us to better triage, horizontally leveraging media consumers, clients and content providers.

The "Reds" fashion spread was an excellent example of cross-concept nonlinear marketing to fashion-savvy types who are leery of traditional advertising approaches. This is exactly the type of thing I specialize in. Especially useful was the employment of archaic slogans like "One Big Union" to highlight the hot wares of Marc Jacobs and others. Such radical phrasing helps ease consumer fears about the integrity of the host publication. In fact, I wondered whether the "Reds" spread might have been the work of one of our competitors (Oglivy, perhaps?). I recently engineered similar spreads featuring "love in the days of rage" themes, set in Paris in May '68, and Seattle '98, respectively.

If you are interested in further discussing a potential partnership that would allow you to benefit handsomely, email me, or give a call at the number below, and we can set up a meeting.

To a future pregnant with possibilities,

**Stan Weckyl**

Via email

**Thanks for the kind words, Stan. We are pleased to let you know that you will be receiving a free year's subscription to our humble rag compliments of *Arthur's* recently instituted "Arthur for Everybody Else" program, which allows patrons to purchase one-year, \$30 gift subscriptions to *Arthur* on behalf of prisoners like yourself.**

## DEPT. OF CORRECTIONS

In last issue's "Reds" Fashion spread, we mistakenly misspelled our wonderful photographer's name. The correct spelling is **Annabel Mehran** ([www.annabelmehran.com](http://www.annabelmehran.com)). Sorry Annabel! We're embarrassed and have only our sticky typewriters to blame. We are hoping to soon upgrade to a totally robotic production team free from human error. Until then, hang in there!

## LABOR DONATED BY...

**Byron Coley** is handy with a shovel.

**Brian Joseph Davis** is just reflecting the realities of thug life.

**Erik Davis** is a writer, fingerpicker, and speaker who lives in San Francisco. His last book was *The Visionary State: A Journey through California's Spiritual Landscape* (Chronicle, 2006). Nearly all of his published articles can be found on his website, [www.techgnosis.com](http://www.techgnosis.com), where he regularly posts on music, religion, technology, and other abiding mysteries.

**Molly Frances** is looking forward to pluto's visit to capricorn.

**Mark Frohman**, with Molly Frances, is Art Director of this magazine. [mark@colornational.com](mailto:mark@colornational.com)

**Susanna Howe** is a photographer who lives in Red Hook, Brooklyn. She is working on a book, *Travel for the Adventurous and Self-Involved*, as well as a collection of

photographs that she will hang on a wall somewhere. [susannahowe.com](http://susannahowe.com)

**Ashley Huizenga** sings and plays keyboards in Hard Place. *Get Your Hopes Up* album comes out in late March. Website is [www.hardplacemusic.com](http://www.hardplacemusic.com), and Huizenga's Epic videos can be found at [www.youtube.com/huizenga](http://www.youtube.com/huizenga).

**Poni Leone** sings and synthesizes in Terminal Twilight. [myspace.com/terminaltwilight](http://myspace.com/terminaltwilight).

**Paul Moody** is the editor of *Socialism* magazine. [socialismmagazine.com](http://socialismmagazine.com)

**Thurston Moore** has edited, with Byron Coley, the definitive account of the New York City No Wave scene of 1975-81, to be published by Abrams late May 2008. He is currently editing a book of photographs by David Markey and Jordan Schwartz on the early '80s Santa Monica punk/hardcore scene called *Party With Me Punker*. Plastic Crimewave aka Steven Krakow resides in the cold windy city spacepunking with

Plastic Crimewave Sound, improvising with a buncha hooligans, editing/creating the *Galactic Zoo Dossier* magazine, and drawing the "Secret History of Chicago Music" strip for the *Chicago Reader*, amongst many other activities.

**Erik Morse** is the author of *Dreamweapon: Spacemen 3 and the Birth of Spiritualized* and the forthcoming *Memphis Underground: A Panther Burns Guide to Rock 'n Roll Ghosts and Highway Spectres* with Tav Falco. His adoration for Morrissey and all things demimonde remains unchanged.

**John Payne** is an L.A.-based writer specializing in new- and non-genre music. His last contribution to *Arthur* was a profile of Jon Hassell in issue 18.

**Joshua Pressman** would smoke music out of a crack pipe if he could. He used to get his fix in LA, but now he's taken his addiction to the hipster-infested non-slums of Brooklyn, NY. He still delivers hyperphilosophical, music-related sermons for LAist, CMJ and his own

music blog, *Bwank!*

**PSHAW** is the alter ego of a big city illustrator, who if at anytime audibly exclaims, "PSHAW!" is promptly bestowed with the combined creative comic strengths of Panter, Segar, Herriman, Addams, & Wolverton. Thus enabled, his mighty pen can steel the shores of liberty with heroic speech and punchy scribbling.

**Dave Reeves** is unavailable for questioning.

**Joseph Remnant** spends most of his time at a drawing table, avoiding human interaction and thus failing to establish meaningful and healthy relationships. Hence his artwork. [www.remnantart.net](http://www.remnantart.net)

Columnist **Douglas Rushkoff** is on book leave.

**Farmer Dave Scher** resides in Highland Park, California, and feels pretty well lately.

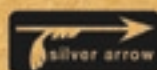
**M. Wartella** is an underground cartoonist and animator in New York City.



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# SHAKE THAT STICK!

## A Word on Magic(k) Wands

Shorty don't believe me?  
Then come with me tonight  
And I'll show you magic  
(What? What?) Magic (uh huh uh huh)  
I got the magic stick  
—50 Cent

It doesn't matter whether you survey stage magicians, witches, or a screaming horde of pre-pubescent Harry Potter fans, the magic wand is perhaps the most encompassing symbol of magic. Equally at home in the white glove of a dapper, tuxedo-wrapped conjuror or in the clenched fist of a cackling old crone, the magic wand immediately summons a magical mood. While such depictions are still commonplace in pop culture, most folks are of the opinion that magic wands are vestiges of a bygone era.

It's certainly true that magic wands have been around for a long, long time. Some of the earliest known examples belong to Egyptian magicians and priests from the 2nd Century B.C. — more than four thousand years ago. But for anyone who's sat around a campfire and raised the glowing tip of a

Just as pointing your finger at someone draws their immediate attention, wands have a way of focusing your intentions on the external world.

fire-kissed stick into the night sky, it's not hard to imagine that our ancestors have been waving magic wands through the air for a good many millennia.

Over the years, wands have played a variety of roles: instruments for measurement, props for illusions, scepters for governance, and, as 50 Cent can attest, as phallic symbols noted for their procreative ability. In the Tarot, the suit of wands represents the fiery, masculine counterpart to the more feminine suit of cups. But whether you point a bone, shake a stick, or flourish your rod, the magic wand is often regarded as an extension of one's own body. Just as pointing your finger at someone draws their immediate attention — especially depending on which finger you point — wands have a way of focusing your intentions on the external world.

As tools for healing we see their continued use in the hands of masseuses and Reiki practitioners; however, the connection to the healing arts goes way



illustration by m. wartella

back. The ancient Greeks, for example, used the rod of Asclepius (featuring a snake coiled around a stick) to represent medicine; a tradition still carried on by today's medical professionals. Ironically, the rod of Asclepius is often substituted with Mercury's caduceus (two snakes forming a double helix around a winged wand), which traditionally represented both commerce and thievery, two traits often associated with the contemporary medical establishment.

Performing magicians have employed wands in their performances for at least the last few hundred years. Waved over top hats and ornamented boxes, wands have frequently added an air of mysterious theatrics while assisting the magician in feats of misdirection. Similarly, wands in the form of scepters have also appeared in the hands of governing leaders. In this case, they can be seen either as symbols of constituent power or as fancy, but ultimately useless baubles that will never yield the positive results one hopes for. And the same could be said of the scepters.

In most instances of ceremonial magick and witchcraft, the wand is seen as a conduit; a sort of lightning rod that connects the beholder to a greater

power and channels the energy to bring about the desired results. Whether that "greater power" comes from within or without is often debated among those invested in such debates; as are the most appropriate materials for constructing such a tool. Should it be made from copper, silver, or brass? From amethyst, bone or obsidian? From wood? Which kind? Willow, oak, or ebony? Should it be dropped by the tree, or cut from it in the bloom of a full moon? And then what? Polished, carved, or left bare? Painted black with white ends? Wrapped in leather, beads, or feathers? Tipped with a crystal or studded with gems corresponding to the body's chakras? Indeed, the options seem infinite. But at least one old grimoire seems to give some guidance:

*A perfectly straight branch of almond or hazel was to be chosen. This was cut before the tree blossomed and cut with a golden sickle in the early dawn. Throughout its length must be run a long needle of magnetized iron; at one end there should be affixed a triangular prism, to the other, one of black resin, and rings of copper and zinc bound about it. At the new moon it must be consecrated by a magician who already possesses a consecrated rod.*

— from the Encyclopedia of Occultism & Parapsychology

It's unclear where the source for these instructions originated; however, it does make a few things perfectly clear. First of all, if you don't know someone who owns a golden sickle and a consecrated rod, you're shit outta luck. Secondly, it certainly takes a position in the debate on whether or not a magic wand can be just any old stick. While the encyclopedic entry doesn't mention who is creating the above wand, or for what purpose, it does seem apparent that the original context was rather specific. One can reasonably assume then, that such a carefully crafted rod was not to be used willy-nilly for any old spell-casting. Yes, on the one hand, the aforementioned instructions seem more than a bit overblown. But on the other hand, they're completely in line with the evolution of specialized technologies.

Like so many useful technologies over the last few thousand years, wands have gone through changes, becoming more and more differentiated, designed, and specialized — for better and for worse. In many cases they are so removed from their origins that we easily choose to forget they are wands. But they are, and the clues remain.

Remember that glowing stick pulled from the pre-historic campfire? The one our ancestors used as a dim light as they stumbled into the dark of their granite crib? The one used to fend off unseen threats lurking in the shadows? Today, the upgraded version of that magic light stick is called a Mag light. In fact, you can even obtain an enhanced security version that includes a high-decibel alarm, and a 600,000 volt taser. That's right. For your convenience, your new high security wand can shoot a beam of light, a sound blast, and lightning bolts to fend off the creepies.

Unlike the burnt stick, however, this wand won't turn into charcoal in the morning, allowing you to draw on your walls and thus explore one of the more creative aspects of early wands. Fortunately, pens, pencils, and "magic markers" are readily available at your local art supply store. You can even find shops selling magic markers that deftly double

continued on pg 16





**Just Added!**

**Sat MAR 1 9pm**

# **Grizzly Bear**

# **Los Angeles Philharmonic**

Brooklyn's indie rock quartet Grizzly Bear co-headlines with the LA Phil. The orchestra will perform works reflecting classical music's influence on Grizzly Bear's sound, followed by a full set by the band.

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# 2 thousand 8 Zodiac!

## ARIES

Success will be yours dear Aries, if you work, work, work. Don't forget to take time to eat your greens and get some exercise. You have special gifts for increasing the quality of your health and career in 2008. Love, love, love you say? Wait till summer. Visualize this: You are an anteater and there are a lot of ants. If you get tired of ants, put chocolate on them and keep going.

## TAURUS

Shake a leg Taurus, its time to go. Anywhere and everywhere. You are a rolling stone in 2008. If you just keep moving maybe you won't get snagged in any messy romantic entanglements, at least not for now. Enjoy life because you deserve it, let go of anything heavy. Visualize this: You are a flying squirrel. You have cool flaps that allow you to glide over troubles. You are soft and unique.

## GEMINI

Don't fret Gemini. Everything will work out. Your schemes are brilliant, you may even feel the rare urge to put down some roots. Be very wise with any money that comes in this year. Visualize this: You are a mother hen sitting on eggs. When you'd rather be out chatting up Rooster, just focus on how cute chicks are.

*by Molly Frances*

## CANCER

Partner up and create something new and beautiful little crabs. Time to look for a bigger shell, one that lets in more light. Keep it sunny. Visualize this: You are a butterfly hanging out with the most beautiful flowers. Be gentle and kind or someone might stick a pin in you.

## LEO

Love and money are big themes for the lions in 2008. Time to get creative in both areas. Everything is new again. Don't fall for the same old thing. Stay away from people on drugs or anything resembling a scam. Be a sweet and humble lion this year. Visualize this: You are an industrious beaver; you have the energy to dam a river in a single night. Just be careful you don't hurt anyone with those sharp teeth.

## VIRGO

Are you afraid of Saturn lording over you for the next two years? Don't be, Virgos are very good at working hard and that's what saturn will reward you for. You get an extra boost of creativity this year. Use it responsibly. Visualize this: You are an ox plowing a field. It sometimes hurts your back, but soon you will throw off your yoke and eat all the food that grows while the plow driver massages your shoulders with shea butter.

## LIBRA CAPRICORN

Redecorate your mind and also your living space magically in 2008. Get rid of everything old and useless including the negative thoughts, memories, and weird childhood garbage that may be lingering in dark places. Fill up on the love that surrounds you. Visualize this: You are a silky mole. Refurbish your burrow and invite friends over. (Only the nice ones.)

## SCORPIO

You can make things happen in 2008. The goal is to keep it positive, not only the words you speak but the words you think. You are up to the challenge this year. Embrace positive thinking and see how it changes everything. Do you think this horoscope sucks? Don't be so negative! Visualize this: You are a unicorn. You spread light and magic when you communicate. Don't be a dark mope or your gold sparklies will flake off.

## SAGITTARIUS

You have been through a lot of chaos, change and tranformation in the past few years. Look forward to feeling more stable in 2008. You feel like buying stuff this year. That means you will need money. That means its time to get to work. Roll up those shirt sleeves! Visualize this: you are a horse attached to a buggy of jerks. Be grateful for your oats and apples. Some day you will own this entire pasture.

Looks like you came down from your mountain Capricorn. 2008 finds you more popular than ever. You have a lot of things to do and people to see or maybe the reverse of that. This is the year to get things done and have fun! Something akin to having cake and eating it as well...just watch out for money pits. Visualize this: You are a smart and sexy pig, you know just where to dig for the biggest and most succulent truffles. Share them with the other animals. Even the snakes.

## AQUARIUS

You are a wild pony. Your mane is blowing in the wind. Doesn't that feel nice? You are free. You are really good at being free. Now you just have to work on being with the one you love most. You can still be you even when there's two. Maintaining your powerful creative force and vision while in the company of others will come easy this year. Visualize this: You are one in a pair of love doves. Turn the ringer off and find a featherbed.

## PISCES

Friends all around are fun, but remember to pay attention to the lessons you are learning with them. You love your freedom, but a tiny bit of structure might do some good in the long run...something like healthy meals or a yoga class once a week to help keep your emotions even. You will be more attractive than usual this year. Meow. Visualize this: You are a kitten. Play nice and share with your mates. There's enough nipples for everyone.



# People Are Talking About

By Brian Joseph Davis

Reality shows created during the writer's strike. What will become of shows such as *Skating With War Criminals*, *I'm From Pitchfork* or even the critically lauded *Second Chances*? Episodes of which followed the Hell's Angels being given another shot at concert security, and Lynndie England working as a summer camp counselor.

How Steven Tyler went one nose job too far and lost all movement above his waist except for the ability to blink his left eye. Don't worry fans, through the use of special interpreters he laboriously blinked out lyrics for the next Aerosmith album and—in what the interpreters claim was a miracle—a lengthy treatment for a series about his ordeal.

Pundit Christopher Hitchens and his wife

Carol Blue's filing of a divorce petition last week in New York. The dirt? She stated that part of their bedroom play included a collection of burkas...and it wasn't Blue who liked to model them.

High School Musical and Footloose star Zack Efron, who when recently addressing a group of National History Month winners, confused "Nazis" with "hobbits" while telling the story of Kristallnacht.

General Petraeus alienating his staff with uncontrolled "Rickrolling."

Kathy Acker's *The Aristocrats*, the unearthed novel coming out from Grove this spring.

New Attorney General Michael B. Mukasey,

who just declared that old interrogation methods will be replaced by a psy-ops protocol designed by Criss "Mindfreak" Angel sometime in 2008. "Trust me" Mukasey told the press, "When a detainee under questioning sees our agents walk through glass or make a Lamborghini disappear, the shock will be intense, but quite within legal limits, and there'll be no need for enhanced techniques."

Bolivia's socialist President Evo Morales. He's miffed that A-list celebs have been passing him over in favor of photo ops with Venezuela's Hugo Chavez. While Chavez has been pressing flesh with Sean Penn, Naomi Campbell, and Kevin Spacey, Morales has had to make do with visits from Chad Lowe, Joey Travolta, and Chris Jagger.

## CHARLIE NOTHING

1942-2007

WRITER/NO FASCIST  
UBU REX



OH CHARLIE, YOU'D TELL US YOU NEVER EVEN EXISTED, BUT WE ALWAYS KNEW BETTER... CHARLES MARTIN SIMON WAS SPOTTED FROTHING AT THE MOUTH, RUNNING/TRIPPING THROUGH THE STREETS OF NYC. HE URGED A YOUNG DEBBIE HARRY ON STAGE WITH THE FIRST UNIPHRENIC CHURCH & BANK BAND TIL THE COPS STORMED THE ALL-BLACK LOFT. THERE YOU WERE SPEEDING THRU SATORI TRYING YOUR HAND AT SAXOPHONE LOVE CRIES FOR THE ALMIGHTY TAKOMA - TINY TIM EVEN LENT HIS UKE TO THE PRECEEDINGS, VOODOO HOUNGANS & A BITCHY FRANK ZAPPA CHIMED IN WHILE YOU PERFORMED IN THE RESTROOM. BUT PERHAPS MOST TRIUMPHANT OF ALL DISCOVERIES WAS THE SOULFUL STEEL OF AMERICAN CARS MADE INTO GUITARS - THE DINGULATORS™ OF DREAMS, FOUND ON THE OCEAN FLOOR. THEIR MANY STRINGS RATTLED THE HAMSTER HIERARCHY WHILE YOU HUMANELY REMOVED STINGING INSECTS AND PRESSED YOUR WORDS ON PAPER. THE LIFE & CRIMES OF CHARLIE NOTHING ARE JUST DUE TO HIT HUMANITY...AND THERE YOU GO THE WAY OF ALL GREAT \*PHILOSOPHER/CLOWNS...









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# Twenty-One Recently Discovered Delights

By Farmer Dave Scher

## 1. Otto Hauser (musician) and Brandy Flower (visual artist)

Two really great men who've never met, but were my 2007 favorites for the same reasons: they are really talented and humble, and they both travel where they're needed and just lay it down, making them pillars of their respective communities.

## 2. Persimmons

I was astonished to eat this thing for the first time... like a desert bread... heard if you freeze them, it's like ice cream.

## 3. Local media in Los Angeles

L.A. morning TV news, papers, and radio stations... I've really been enjoying tuning in to see what everybody's watching and hearing.. never used to do that, but I like the immediacy of receiving something at the same time as millions of other people around you... I'd forgotten that feeling after spending so much time on more obscure books, news sources, music, and movies that you usually watch alone or with a couple of other people, tops... (Channel 9 News, News 980, LA Times, KPFK, KXLU, Dublab.com, Classical 91.5 fm, Latino96.3, Indie 103.1-Jones's Jukebox and Rollins's show)

## 4. NYC

I spent more time there this year than I ever have before, and really enjoyed it. Thanks to all my people over there for taking me under your wings, especially Miss Carol Sharks xox

## 5. Traveling

See the world, get around, gather no moss, get oxygen.

## 6. Symphonic software

Nowadays you can get really decent sound programs that run on your computer and turn you into a one-person orchestra. I've waited years for this technology to develop to the point where quality sampled sounds are affordable and accessible to people everywhere. Faster computers have really helped out, as have the people behind some good new products like MOTU (Mark of the Unicorn) Symphonic, and M-Tron...

## 7. Nocturnalism

I spent more of 2007 in the night than the day. This kind of living has its downsides, but between the hours of 1am and 5am, I was way too happy to care. If you're out on the town, there's plenty of excitement; if you're at home, there's a beautiful stillness and quiet to the world, and sounds float more easily...



Who knows what delights lurk in the world? Dapper Dave knows.

## 8. Marvin Gaye

There's a live DVD that came out recently called Real Thing: In Performance 1964-1981 .... the footage and music video for "What's Goin On?" is really moving and heavy.

## 9. Skateboarding again

Last year I started riding a big '80s deck, big Shogo Kubo wheels, rolling around like they never invented the Ollie and having a great time. I've stopped worrying about finding good parking space. Thanks to Eric Shea in SF for getting me started again...

## 10. Surfing on movin buses / subway trains

Don't hold on to any handrails, bend the knees and roll with the bumps and sudden jerks. Place one hand in the air to act as a vibe antenna. It's a fun practice, and lifts you up...

## 11. Megauploading

Lots of big information flying around really fast between good friends is awesome.

## 12. Pynchon's *Against the Day*

This 1,000+ page book could be a real chore sometimes, but filled with plenty of enjoyments for the Arthurian reader; it deals with some really fun concepts from the world of the late 1800s through the First World War. You get aeronauts and aether, Robber Barons, Icelandic Spar and a lot of Tesla, amongst many other things.

## 13. Pandora

Spins a good thread based on your entered area of musical interest.

## 14. Anchovya the Cat

I've been very happy with this cat.

## 15. Left hand

Develop brains in both hands, try and switch even the most meaningless activities to the other hand... in my case, I want the left hand to be a good low-end piano player. Also switched mouse to left hand to avoid repetitive stress...

## 16. Heatwarps

Good musical source of information.

## 17. J.J. Hat Company in NYC

A fine shop with really classic hats. Thanks to Otto Hauser (see #1)

## 18. Mexico

A nearby faraway place you can still dream in, but staying aware when you're there is a must....

## 19. Elliptical Machines

A good workout for the body without taxing any joints too badly or getting too ripped, muscle-wise.

## 20. Voice development

This life-changing practice involves producing sound via the different resonating chambers of your head and torso.... Really fun and rewarding, great at first in shower and car, then carries over into everyday social life, increasing energy and confidence, alleviating boredom, and boosting conversation skill... just start humming!

## 21. Aging

Getting on in years, more patience and tolerance, greater perspective... Also, inner depths become vaster, brighter/darker, and way more controlled/chaotic. I've really enjoyed marking these changes in myself, friends and relations... 🐼

Need more delights? We've posted "Best of 2007" lists by Alan Bishop (ex-Sun City Girls, Sublime Frequencies), Kevin Doria (Growing), BookBeat bookshop owner Cary Loren, Plastic Crimewave, artist/historian/ace blogger John Coulthart, humorist Michael Simmons, author Trinie Dalton, enthusiast Richard Pleuger, photojournalist Stacy Kranitz, cartoonist PShaw, instigator Steve Knezevich, Ben Blackwell (Dirtbombs, Cass records head), artists Tracy Nakayama & Jeremy Yoder, music journalist John Payne, author Steve Aylett, artist Arik Roper, enthusiast/deejay Zach Cowie, musician Paloma Parfrey (ex-Sharp Ease), photojournalist Eden Bakti, David Katznelson (Birdman Records), musician/designer Elisa Randazzo, author Joe Carducci, Jennifer Herrema (RTX), Elisa Ambrogio (Magik Markers), artist/musician Eddie Ruscha, Dan Auerbach (The Black Keys), Patrick Carney (The Black Keys, Audio Eagle Records head bird), Ian Christie (author, Sound of the Beast) and the mighty Joe Preston (Thrones, etc) for your delectation at [www.arthurmag.com](http://www.arthurmag.com)



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Their dual vocals interplay like an intimate bedroom conversation between two lovers ... you're almost ashamed for listening to something so personal, so voyeuristic and so close.  
*The Portland Mercury*

**THE FELICE BROTHERS // THE FELICE BROTHERS**  
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Right now my favorite drinking buddy is The Felice Brothers. It's music best described by my friend: it's three in the morning, sleepy drunk, secretly holding the hand of the one you love.  
*The Guardian UK*

# RECORDS

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**Plastic Crimewave Sound**  
**No Wonderland CD**  
*Mammoth psych jams, acid punk, soundscapes, heaviness and calming drones.*



**Rings Black Habit CD**  
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**Beach House Devotion CD/2LP**  
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# The Ultimate Monkeywrench

## Human beings are basically bi.

Bifocal, binaural, bipedal. Because of the basic symmetry of our bodies, and the cleavage of sexual difference, we have a yen for binary distinctions, for dualisms and polarities. Dark and light, male and female, day and night, active and passive, happy and sad. Such pairs are usually continuities, of course, and it's impossible to draw hard and fast borderlines between the two poles. There is always a dusky, in-between realm, a zone of interdependency that confounds clear distinctions. Even something as seemingly evident as the sexual difference between male and female is maintained through a kind of blindness, not to mention the medical violence routinely practiced on the bodies of those rare birds who confound the scheme. But we love to polarize our world and ourselves, probably because in some sense we need to recognize pattern in the world to

Whatever the benefits of the Digital (and they are considerable), the psychic and cultural costs of bit-driven interconnectivity are mounting.

recognize ourselves, like the way we need to see faces in clouds and weathered stones. The trick is to know when our binaries bind us, and when they serve the deeper greening.

The first time I started to think about the metaphysics of polarity was in high school, when, as a mystic stoner, I became obsessed with the I Ching. At the heart of that many-layered oracle book, whose shamanic core is over-laid with Confucian do-goodery, lies the distinction between Yin and Yang, those two forces pictured in the famous t'ai chi symbol that still serves as a primary logo of the hazy post-hippie groove. On paper, many of the symbolic associations of Yin and Yang are, at this point in cultural evolution at least, pretty predictable. You have feminine and masculine, firm and yielding, dark and light, etc. There are some nifty associations as well, like the south and north faces of a river, the north being Yang because it gets more sun. But the real strength of the system is how these polarities are implied in one another—the dot of darkness in the white wave, the seed of light in the black, and, even more suggestive perhaps, the sinuous line between them, a sine wave itself lodged within a fixed circle.

This circle suggests that the dynamic interplay of

Yin and Yang are ultimately contained within the single flow of the Tao, a flow that springs from the depths of the same organic world that furnishes the lion's share of the I Ching's symbolism. At the same time, the divinatory mechanics of the I Ching are also based on a weirdly modern and even technological scheme: binary code. In order to construct the solid and broken lines that make up the 64 hexagrams, Yin and Yang in effect become zero and one. In one 11th century diagram, the developmental stages of the hexagrams are rendered in a perfect anticipation of binary computation. The Tao, in other words, is also digital.

Which brings us to another polarity, one that underlies much of our cultural turbulence and forms the inspiration for this column: the technological tango between Analog and Digital. On one level, Analog and Digital are simply two different ways that we have discovered for coding information and transmitting forces with our machines and media. Analog is characterized by a wave of continuous variation; Digital by a discrete arrangement of discontinuous bits. If an era can be defined by its media, then our times represent the ascendant Empire of the Digital, which from another perspective looks like the wholesale slaughter of the Analog. In 2009, for example, the FCC has mandated an nearly complete switchover to digital television, which means obsolete TVs and the loss of old-school broadcast signals. But this is just one sign of the dwindling fortunes of the Analog.

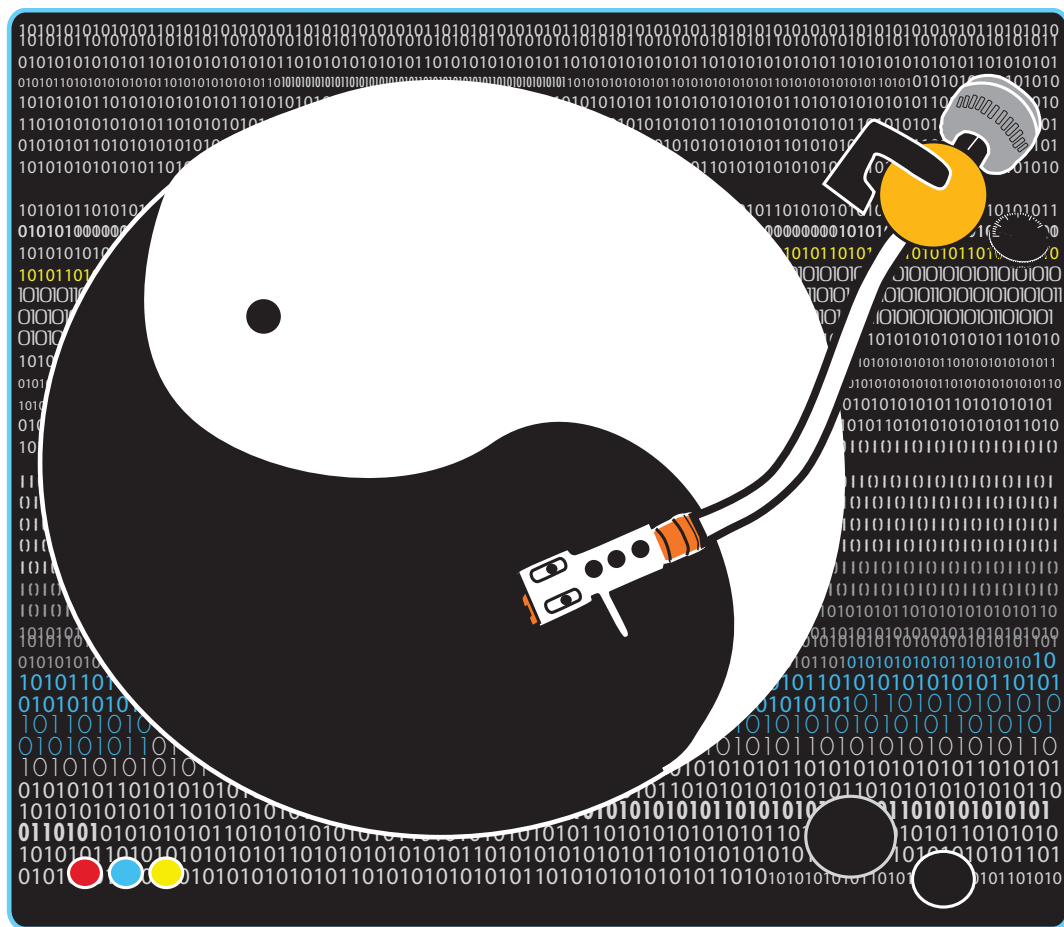
On another level, though, Analog and Digital are metaphysical metaphors as powerful as Yin and Yang. Besides reflecting a tension between waves and particles that reverberates throughout reality,

these different coding regimes reflect fundamentally different ways of structuring and communicating our experience of the world. As the Digital Empire continues its remarkable and imperialistic take-over of the media we use to make our culture, not to mention how we communicate with one another, then we would do well to tune into these deeper differences. Whatever the benefits of the Digital (and they are considerable), the psychic and cultural costs of bit-driven interconnectivity are mounting. In the face of this, more and more folks are embracing the Analog life, as both media and metaphor.

**Like a lot of people who did not grow up** plugged to a circuit board, I first tuned into the difference between Analog and Digital because it had something to do with music, with how sound was generated, recorded and reproduced. The epochal shift from Analog to Digital was, needless to say, controversial. From the perspective of Joe Music Consumer—or at least a Joe Music Consumer old enough to have permanent paper cuts from ripping the plastic off of new LPs by sticking his thumb nail into the sleeve pocket—the controversy erupted most loudly with the introduction of the compact disc in the late 1980s. These tacky spangled discs, now piled in closets and thrift stores like millennial flotsam, vaguely recalled 7-inch 45s but represented an entirely different media beast. This different beastiness lies in the physics of sound.

Sound is a magical mind-vibe that occurs when your ear registers the fluctuating pressure of the air that surrounds it. The air is more like a fluid than

continued on pg 16



m frohman



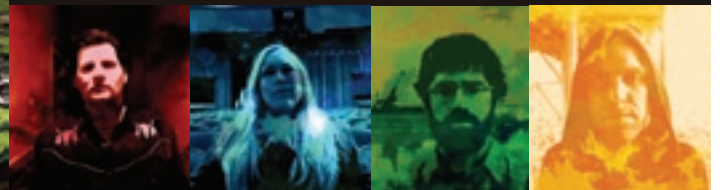


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earth

THE BEES MADE HONEY IN THE LION'S SKULL

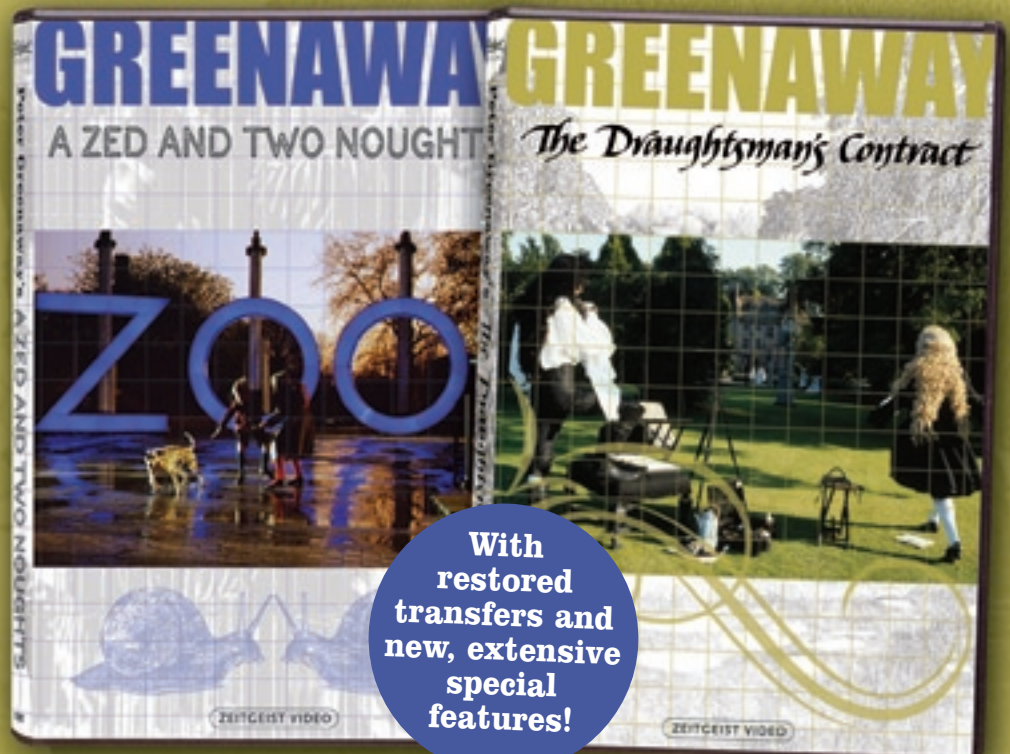
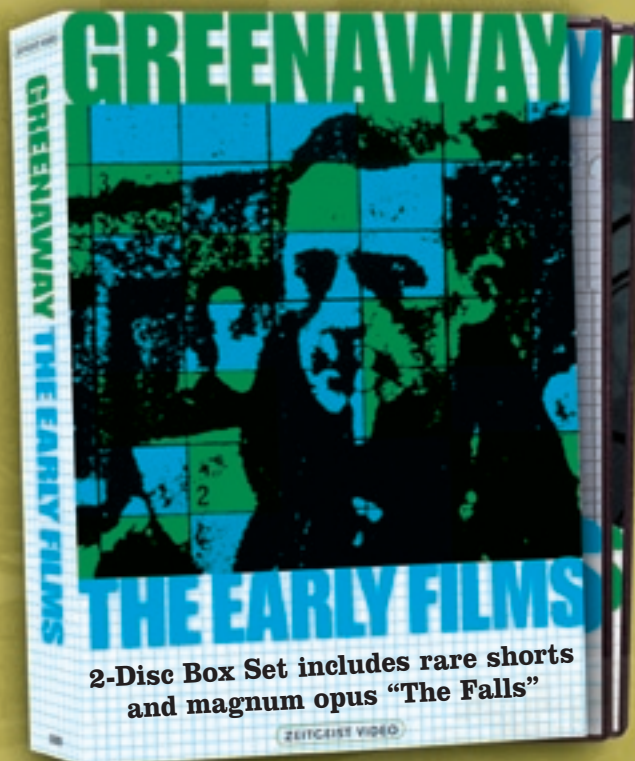


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## Applied Magick *cont. from pg 6:*

as secret stashes and one-hitters, so you can re-create shamanic rituals that start by smoking out and end by drawing your visions.

If face-painting is more your style, there are a number of cosmetics companies that will sell you on the magic of their products. Among the more obvious examples, are Maybelline's "True Illusion – Undetectable Concealer" and Bare Escentual's brushless mascara, suitably named the "Magic Wand". Both will enable you to disguise your appearance; however, it's questionable as to whether you can use the "undetectable concealer" to mask your nail-clippers when the airport screener frisks you with his metal detecting security wand. If this high-tech wand doesn't divine the presence of your concealed clippers, you might be free to pass. That is, of course, if you didn't accidentally pack your, ahem, "body massager" in your carry-on luggage. You know the one; the vibrating Hitachi "Magic Wand" that's been bringing a bit of the mystical to erogenous zones worldwide since 1970.

Indeed, these wands may not meet all of your magical expectations; yet, they only begin to scratch the surface. From barcode scanners, to UV purifying wands, to remote controls, and beyond, magic wands are consistently being re-envisioned, re-presented, and re-packaged. And while marketing mages will tell you to be sure to use the right wand for the right job, most witches, wizards, and magicians insist that it's not the wand but the person holding it who contains the magic(k).

■

## The Analog Life *cont. from pg 14:*

an empty void, so that your eardrum registers vibrations the way the shoreline receives the waves generated by a heron splash in the middle of a lake. The analogy underscores one of the most important facts about soundwaves: that they are waves, shimmering vibrations of pressure that mimic the ripples on the sea, or the fluttering of stratus clouds. For decades, the devices we used to record and reproduce sound simply transposed these undulating waves into different media. The variations in air pressure moved a needle which passed on the vibrations to the surface of a wax cylinder, and later a vinyl disc. When a needle subsequently rode that groove—which resembles a long continuous valley—its movements traced a waveform that was then amplified into more vibrating air. Once again your ears would be swimming in sound, but a ghost sound curiously

transposed, especially once variable waves of electrical current got in on the act. Analog is analogy, a poem of information transfer: this is like that.

Digital recording and reproduction proceeds by an entirely different metric. Rather than analogy, the Digital proceeds by simulation. Instead of mimicking the continuous waves of the air, the Digital chops up those waves into discrete bits which can be etched onto plastic discs with the rigor of math. Though they are discontinuous, these bits are sampled from the original wave at such a rate that, once the corresponding frequencies are struck, the ear hears a flowing wave where, in reality (wherever that is), there is a step ladder of discrete points. There are great reasons for chopping up sound waves into these discrete and abstract units—accuracy, greater dynamic range, and resistance to noise (plus, if you are a big record company, the ability to resell your entire back catalog). Analog is intimate with decay, so that analog copies always degrade—the blurry, xerox of a xerox punk-poster effect. But digital copies are technically indistinguishable from the original, a fact that, among other things, destroys the very distinction between source and copy and unleashes a huge, messy hoard of file-sharing rodents into the cultural pantries of intellectual property.

I am no Luddite. Human beings are partly composed of their tools, and those tools, I believe, are destined to evolve. My bread and butter—the written word—remains one of the most revolutionary media technologies of all, so profound we think it almost "natural." The emergence of digital computing may wind up having a similar if not greater effect, and cultural workers like myself need to have enough sympathy with the new regime to understand its logic and to amplify its creative and liberatory characteristics. But you don't need to be an off-the-grid anarcho-primitive who wants to toss a monkey-wrench into the works to see that there are serious problems with a thoroughly interconnected and digital world. For one thing, this world suffers from an excess of light—an always-on, always-linked, always-chattering intensity that suffocates culture and consciousness as much as it amplifies them. While some of the problems with the Digital feed into some of the massive planetary bummers now careening toward us from the near horizon of the future—massive surveillance is a pertinent example—the level that I want to focus on here is the cultural and personal. This is where I believe we can still illuminate and create a human future that does not shirk from

the posthuman techno-apocalyptic world, but does not simply capitulate to an admittedly overwhelming tide. The ultimate monkey-wrench, perhaps, is the mind.

I first thought of the "analog life" when I interviewed Joanna Newsom for this magazine. Newsom, whose *Ys* album was recorded and mixed in analog, and designed to appear as a gatefold LP, talked about how she chose not to have a CD player or play any digitally encoded music in her house. It all seemed a bit precious to me—I am a format polygamist, although I draw the line at 8-tracks—but it got me thinking about the real differences between Analog and Digital when it comes to making and enjoying music. (Hint: it's not about fidelity.) And this led me to think about all the ways that people choose to create and share culture outside of (or at least alongside) the manic, overhyped hothouse of the Web and its extended electronic networks—and, moreover, why it's desperately important that we continue to do so. So in part this column is going to be about bringing reflection to bear on how and why we use different technologies, old-school as well as new-fangled gear, and about questioning the razzle-dazzle shimmer that still cloaks digital and Internet culture despite the collapse of so many

of its earlier utopian dreams.

But I am also going to run with the football here, and take the Analog Life beyond the confines of technology. Analog means analogy, remember, those poetic correspondences that link This and That because This is like That. And what the Analog is like is the world that oftentimes appears in the rear view mirror as we jack into the posthuman future of data glut, surveillance, and the sort of twitchy multitasking that drives the pathologies of online mania. The Analog Life means Moogs and Polaroids and string bands, but it also means the life of organic matter, of flesh and animals and dreams and plants and planets. Some critics contrast technology with real life or nature or soul. I want to contrast two different ways of relating to technology, which at its essence is bosom buddies with poetry and the creative imagination. Analog and Digital are the Yin and Yang of human making and human communicating, and maybe even the human soul. We'll be wrestling with them folks, at least until the whole cathouse goes up in flames. But until that time, which hopefully will not arrive, and maybe beyond it if it does, the Analog Life will parry the Digital—as escape tactic or guerilla theater, as ballast or bomb.

■

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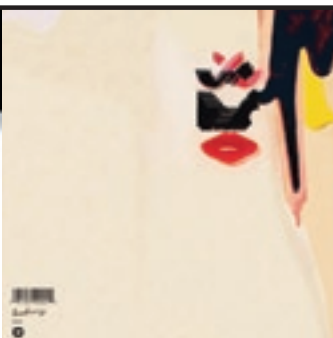




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Early in 1911 popular French publishing house Fayard released the first of 32 monthly serial novels of Marcel Allain and Pierre Souvestre's *Fantômas*. Subtitled 'A Shadow on the Guillotine,' this ultra-violent pulp tale recounted the exploits of the eponymous master villain as he reined blood and magick upon the boulevards of Paris. Pursued by police inspector, Juve, and his journalist sidekick, Jerome Fandor, Fantômas slaughters members of French high-society indiscriminately before stealing away with their wealth and, often, their very identities—in his travels between the Dordogne and Paris, Fantômas dispatches the Marquise de Langrune, her steward Dollon, Lord Beltham, Princess Sonia Danidoff, the famed actor Valgrand and a passenger liner full of travelers en route to South America. When Fantômas, alias Etienne Rambert, alias Gurn, is apprehended by Juve at Lady Beltham's villa, he is brought to trial at the Palais de Justice, found guilty of murder and condemned to the guillotine. However with the aid of his mistress, Fantômas steals away from his Santé prison cell and fills the vacancy with an unsuspecting look-a-like who is left to the blade. When Juve discovers the ruse, he proclaims, "Curses! Fantômas has escaped! Fantômas is free! He had an innocent man executed in his place! Fantômas! I tell you, Fantômas is alive."

Within months of its February debut, the *Fantômas* serial became a pop smash with the reading public, profiting no doubt from the French public's unquenchable thirst for violence, mayhem and pulp. At 65 centimes a copy, sales for each volume reached easily into the hundreds of thousands. American poet and *Fantômas* enthusiast John Ashbery contends that the real success of the serial was its transcendence of class, education and sex, from "Countesses and concierges: poets and proletarians; cubists, nascent Dadaists, soon-to-surrealists. Everyone who could read, and even those who could not, shivered at posters of a masked man in impeccable evening clothes, dagger in hand, looming over Paris like a somber Gulliver, contemplating hideous misdeeds from which no citizen was safe." Such was the popular reaction to the Fayard publication, Marcel Allain would later recall, with some hyperbole, "The adventures of Fantômas have surpassed those of the Bible."



# REIGN IN BLOOD

The secret mark that French pulp villain Fantômas left on the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

by Erik Morse

Nearly a hundred years later, we can see the frightening metastasis of the master of crime's "brand"—from his beginnings amongst the Right Bank sophisticates who released him upon the world, to the marauding gangs plundering and murdering in his name, to the sacrificial cults who would congregate at the witching hour to reenact his sins. His transgressions—bold, fiendish and inexplicable—were the narratives of nightmares. *Fantômas* captured the imagination of his admirers and extended his influence through the artistic genealogies of Europe, leaving a catechism of excess, debauchery and violence to a brood as varied as Pablo Picasso, Andre Breton, Jean Cocteau, Georges Bataille, Alain Robbe-Grillet, James Joyce, Guillaume Apollinaire, Robert Desnos, Jean Marais, Alain Resnais, René Magritte, Francois Truffaut; and the Mike Patton-Buzz Osbourne-Trevor Dunn-Dave Lombardo art-rock superband of the same name. In their major contributions to the century, the words and deeds of France's supreme villain pullulate still more revolutionary achievements and still darker crimes.

Here, in this extended *fait-diver*, is the unedited, uncensored and untold history of the criminal of the century.

The successful careers of Pierre Souvestre and Marcel Allain in the pulp crime milieu have the unlikelyst of origins. Pierre, born in 1874 in Plomelin, Finistere, was a relative of folk writer Émile Souvestre, best known for his tale of savages in *The Last of the Bretons* and the science fiction novel *The World As It Will Be*. Pierre moved to Paris where he received his law degree at the age of twenty, and until 1898, simultaneously pursued a career in journalism, publishing under the *nom de guerre* of Pierre de Breiz while working as a newspaper editor. After a tour in England covering auto sport races, Souvestre returned to France, where he wrote for *L'Auto* (*The Car*) and *Le Poids Lourd* (*Heavy Trucks*); by 1904 he had become a successful editor of the latter. It was at *Le Poids Lourd* that Souvestre was introduced to Marcel Allain, ten years his junior, who would briefly work as his secretary. Allain, born in 1885 in Paris to a successful attorney, received his baccalauréat in literature at the prestigious lycée Janson de Sailly, a secondary school situated in the fashionable 16<sup>th</sup> arrondissement

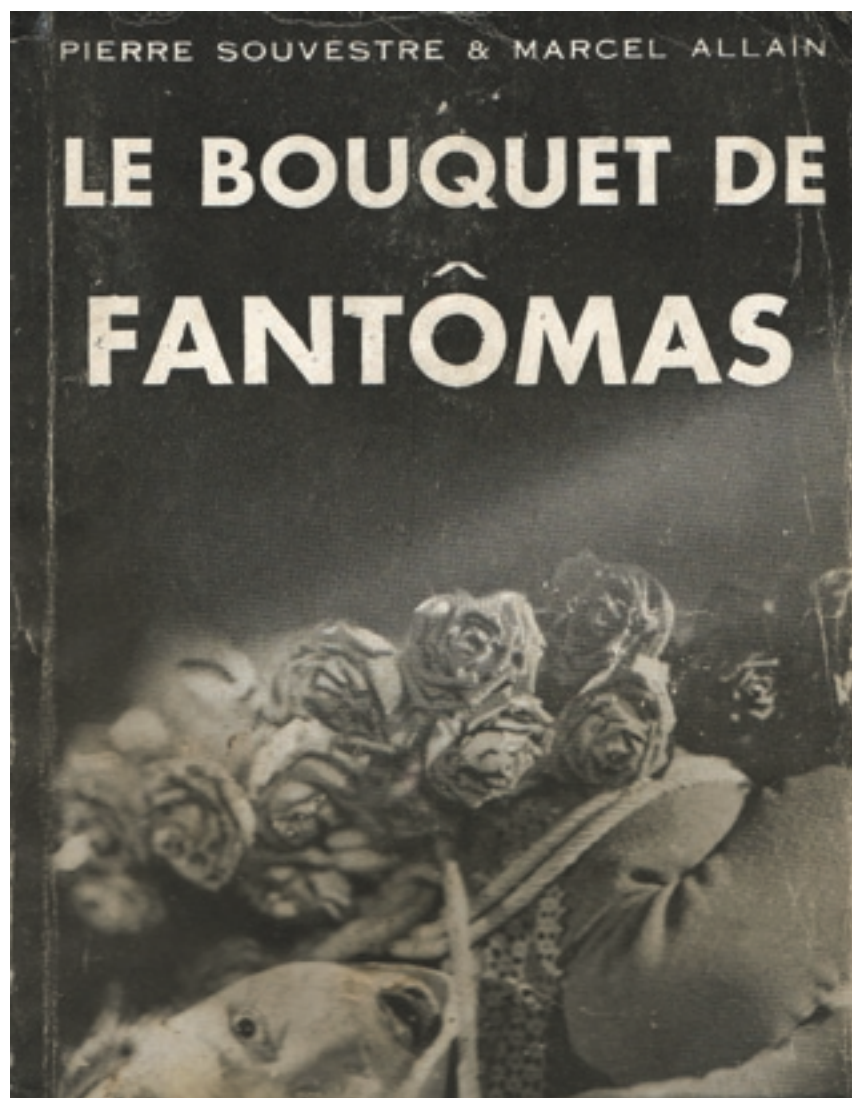


and attended by such French elite as Roland Garros and Claude Levi-Strauss. Allain had published his first serialized text, 'La Vengeance du Marin' in the monthly magazine *Nos Loisirs* (*Our Leisurely Times*)—a supplement of the *Petit Parisien*, the most popular daily during the Third Republic—a year before meeting Souvestre. During his tenure at *Petit Parisien* Allain had encountered the infamous gangsters and molls of the Belle Époque who would provide inspiration for the adventures of Fantômas.

Belle Époque, the so-called “beautiful age” synonymous with the ascension of the French Third Republic, had a very ugly side. Although it provided an unprecedented level of convenience and wealth, the uneven distribution of riches left the eastern arrondissements of Les Halles, Belleville and Menilmontant in anachronistic poverty. Famed for its proximity to the Bastille and Pere-Lachaise, two Parisian landmarks which were ground zero for revolts in 1789 and 1871, the Belleville neighborhood was notorious for its subversive past. Here, amidst the circuitous alleys and dilapidated shanties, were the opium dens, bordellos, *assommoirs* and *coeurs de miracles* where Edith Piaf sang for her supper alongside stiletto-wielding gangs and gamine prostitutes. Remembering her native Belleville years after she left it, Piaf would sum up the philosophy of most of its residents: “I was hungry. I was cold. But I was also free. Free not to get up in the morning, not to go to bed at night, free to get drunk if I liked. To dream...to hope.”

The *Parisien*'s editor-in-chief M. Lafage assigned the young Allain to interview Belleville's other legendary femme fatale, Amelie Helie, known throughout the city as *Casque d'Or* (so called because of her 'golden helmet' of hair). Helie was a beautiful singer and prostitute, immortalized in the paintings of Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, who had sparked a bloody gang war between her suitors on the gritty rue des Haies four years before. The intrepid journalist Allain tricked his way into Santé Prison to see the aging beauty and scribbled out a quick interview for his editor Lafage. As Allain recalled in 1967, “I gave him the finished article, he read it and said to me: ‘You certainly have an imagination. But there is not a word of truth in the whole thing and I won't publish a line of it.’ I swore to all the gods above that my report was true, and I will say it again. But he did not believe me.”

Following their earliest meetings at the offices of *Petit Parisien*, Souvestre and Allain began co-authoring articles for *L'Auto* and *Le Poids Lourds* until it



Little pulp of horrors: lurid covers to early Fantômas serials, seen above, attracted a wide and devoted readership.

became evident that while the elder gentleman was a constant source of new ideas, his young protégé was the creative dynamo who could write long swathes on any given topic. Allain was thereby promoted from secretary to partner, and his first order of business was to create a serial called “Le

Rour”—described as a sports-meets-exotic Hindu mystery—for *L'Auto*'s editor M. Desgranges, when a last-second advertising glitch gave Allain his chance to show his stuff. Convincing Desgranges that they had a serial written and ready to print, Allain negotiated a deal on site without so much as

a page to offer while Souvestre looked on in disbelief. “What are we going to do now?!” Souvestre moaned to Allain after the meeting ended. “We have nothing to give him!”

“Not to worry,” his young partner responded. “We can write it with no problem.”

“How?” Souvestre pleaded.

It was obvious to Allain. A gifted wordsmith who had once churned out a 17-page article in a mere two hours as Souvestre looked on in rapt amazement, Allain had only to rush home and do what came naturally. “Le Rour” proved such a monumental success for *L'Auto* that the ambitious Allain hit upon a second scheme. They could take the daily drafts of “Le Rour” and rework them slightly, then submit them pseudonymously to another publisher for an additional sale. The reworked stories, published as “Le Four” (‘The Flop’) began appearing daily in rival magazine *Le Velo* (*The Bike*) and doubled the duo's income, with no one the wiser. But this was only the beginning of Allain's clever machinations. To drum up publicity for their columns, Allain and *L'Auto*'s editor Desgranges concocted news of a phony criminal syndicate in the auto racing world that the duo of Allain and Souvestre promised to investigate for the paper's readers. So realistic were their accounts that Maurice Bunau-Varilla, founder of Paris' daily newspaper *Le Matin* and an avid auto racer, became convinced that he was somehow implicated in these fictitious felonies.

Eventually they were found out, but the stunt had an unexpected bonus. When famous publishing magnate Artheme Fayard II discovered the writers behind the *Le Matin* scandal he contacted Souvestre and Allain for a meeting. Fayard was extremely impressed with “Le Rour” but his interest was in creating a completely new project that would exploit the writers' taste for scandal and talent for sensation. The serial he wanted would not be dedicated to sports or motor races but to the Parisian underworld. The novel-sized volumes would explore crime and intrigue and would need a title that would capture the public's imagination. As they had entered Fayard's office, Souvestre had inexplicably etched the name FANTOMUS in large letters across the front of his notebook. When the editor spied the unusual appellation during the meeting, he misread the name as Fantômas. “Fantômas, ah, this is a very good name, Fantômas,” he declared.

Fayard ordered three initial volumes, and work on the monthly installments of *Fantômas* commenced. According to Robin Walz, *Fantômas* scholar





and author of *Pulp Surrealism: Insolent Popular Culture in Early Twentieth-Century Paris*, the four-week process of producing a near 400-page novel was a regimented and mechanical collaboration. The first week would involve creating a basic outline of the plot, chapter titles and characters. A pivotal scene would be relayed to

Fayard illustrator Gino Starace who would begin work on creating a sensational cover. The second and third weeks found the authors dictating their own particular chapters to transcriptionists or onto recording devices. The texts would then be edited and returned to Souvestre and Allain for final changes, and in the fourth week, the chapters would be stitched together to form a coherent novel. Allain explained the formula of the serial's success: "We sought to amuse, to intrigue, to put on the first page something that will make the reader stay for the last. This is the true goal of

the serial. You don't read a serial like you do literature, you read a serial for the excitement."

Many of the plotlines and tableaux in *Fantômas* were plagiarized from turn-of-the-century crime serials, which featured characters like Pierre Alexis Ponson du Terrail's adventurer Rocambole, Maurice Leblanc's gentleman thief Arsène Lupin and Léon Sazie's hooded villain Zigomar. Introduced in July 1905, Arsène Lupin was the most popular villain of the Third Republic, a Robin Hood character who inspired high regard from his readership despite being on the wrong side of the law. In his suave dress and aristocratic thievery, Lupin was loved more than feared, in much the way that *Fantomas* would be.

But where the adventures of Leblanc's Lupin featured plotlines and bonhomie, Souvestre and Allain's *Fantomas* serial concentrated on lurid scenes of violence and fantasia. *Fantômas* was less a 'Whodunnit?' than a kind of chronicle of urban *Stimmung* (a delusional paranoia induced by setting or atmosphere), featuring narrow Parisian alleys, anonymous hotel rooms, suffocating prison cells and *Fantômas* himself, in all his criminal guises. According to historian Francis Lacassin, the power of Allain

and Souvestre's fantasy "is in the night which opens to reveal a procession of monsters and phantasms...and in the swirl the Master of Dread, the Torturer, the Emperor of Crime, the elusive: *Fantômas*." In *Fantômas* the narrative of the crime—its commission, investigation and conclusion—are eschewed for the scene of horror itself, duplicated and reduplicated by innumerable suspects, one or all of them *Fantômas*, until the act of transgression dissolves into an ambience of dread.

Likewise, the presence of law and order throughout Souvestre and Allain's serials is farcical at best. The foils of *Fantômas*—Inspector Juve and his young protégé Fandor—do not inhabit the Sherlock Holmesian paradigm of prescriptive rationality that separated the British crime novel from its French counterpart at the turn of the century. In fact, as secondary characters, Juve and Fandor often provide a bungling comic relief as their attempts to capture *Fantômas* are forever thwarted either by the villain's superior intellect or their own incompetence. And, complicating and accentuating the violent fetishism of the serial plots, the motives of *Fantômas* are rarely ever made transparent to the reader. His increasingly violent adventures across Paris, and beyond, have all the hallmarks

of spectacle and bloodlust—a corpse is filleted, passenger ships are sunk, a plague is introduced into the populace, a royal castle is bombarded and a king kidnapped. When Juve crosses paths with *Fantômas* at each serial's climax, he is often dragged into a bloody finale, his fate left unresolved until the next installment.

Crucially, Souvestre and Allain never endowed *Fantômas* with a backstory, never traced the source of his criminal nature, never explored his motivation. The mysterious and oft-adumbrated lineages the writers would concoct as temporary sub-plot devices—the daughter of *Fantômas*, the son of *Fantômas*, the hint of blood ties between Juve, Fandor and *Fantômas*—inevitably implode or disintegrate in the face of the villain's only true heir: crime. In Souvestre and Allain's fabricated Belle Époque nightscapes, the master of crime was an ahistorical specter, never born of man and never to die at his hands. Unlike the literary and cinematic villains before and after, *Fantômas* was never satisfied with the common objects of crime—money, sex, revenge, even world domination. His passion was always in luxuriating in the transgression itself, the very experience of subterfuge and evil.



Top left: Souvestre. Lower page, left to right: vintage French edition; Allain as young man beneath his older self; official French postage stamp; classic Italian pulp covers.





In 1911 the burgeoning 'industry' behind French cinema was controlled by two powerful surnames: Pathé and Gaumont. Since the first exhibition of the Lumiere Brothers' cinematograph in 1895, rival inventors, filmmakers and producers had vied for control of the public's imagination with this wonderful new device. The first successful auteur was Georges Méliès, a magician, carnival performer and artist, who released a fantastic series of *truc d'arrêt* ["trick films"] between 1896 and 1905, including *Voyage to the Moon* and *The Impossible Voyage* through his own Star Films production company. Méliès' oeuvre was a constant source of fascination for a public raised on the exotica of the fairground and the prestidigitation of the Robert-Houdin Theatre, stage for France's most celebrated magicians. But Star Films was quickly overextended, and eventually outmatched by the appearance of a film factory system and the construction of suburban cinémathèques at the behest of rivals Pathé Frères and Leon Gaumont. Through the prolific direction of Ferdinand Zecca and Alice Guy, in-house auteurs for each company, Pathé and Gaumont were able to out-perform Méliès at his own game and monopolize cinema.

Louis Feuillade came to Paris from Lunel, Hérault, in 1898, and following a brief flirtation with the right-wing press, entered the Gaumont system as a writer in 1905. His interests in literature and vaudeville made him an ideal candidate for creating and adapting short scenarios to capture the public's imagination. He replaced Alice Guy as artistic director within two years and began a directing career that would span two decades and over 800 films. Feuillade's earliest, inchoate shorts were heavily indebted to Ferdinand Zecca and Méliès, utilizing elements of fantasy, magic and trick photogra-



phy. Nearly 200 films later, Feuillade would find his own unique cinematic eye. According to the Cinematheque Française's Jacques Champreux, "The series with the most ambitious realism to date, *La Vie telle qu'elle est*, completed in 1911, marked a watershed moment in Feuillade's career...and the first symptoms of his genius which would burst open with *Fantômas*." But as *Fantômas* was not the first crime serial of the new century, neither would it be the cinematic debut of the noir genre. Zecca had directed *L'Histoire d'un Crime* (which depicts a murderer's journey to the guillotine) and *Victimes de l'alcoolisme*, while Victorin Jasset had filmed a successful series of villain-versus-detective serials, including *Zigomar contre Nick Carter* (which set Léon Sazie's criminal against the famous American pulp detective). Feuillade and Leon Gaumont were eager to make their own crime film in hopes of competing with Pathé. After negotiating the film rights for *Fantômas*, Feuillade commenced production at the Cite Elge studios at Buttes Chaumont in early 1913. There, amidst the daily pandemonium of the burgeoning dream factory, he would craft some of the greatest of cinema's earliest masterpieces.

"Although it is situated within Paris, on the side of the Chaumont hills, the factories of Gaumont have their own streets, trams, clothing stores, furniture depots, workshops for woodworking, of sculpture and painting, a printing works, a workshop for artists, théâtres and...zoological gardens," wrote a local reporter of the director's workshop at the time. "Gaumont city is the city of the cinema."

Feuillade's technique was improvised play from the actors based on loose scenarios culled from the adapted volume. In *What is Cinema?, Volume*



## INTO THE HANDS OF SATANUS

A look at *Les Vampires*, Feuillade's second masterpiece



With *Fantômas*, Louis Feuillade announced himself as Paris' most celebrated director. But it was his 1916 ten-part serial *Les Vampires*—a silent 'documentary' of the notorious Vampire crime gang—that would cement his legend.

With episodes entitled "The Severed Head" and "The Poison Ring," *Les Vampires* mimics many of the violent plot devices and suspenseful ornamentations of *Fantômas*. But rather than the solitary villain of *Fantômas*, *Les Vampires* features a murderous criminal syndicate led by Le Grand Vampire (Jean Aymé) and his black-clad femme fatale, Irma Vep (played by the famous cabaret singer Musidora). Hot on the Vampires' heels are reporters Philippe Guerande (Edouard Mathé) and Oscar Mazamette (Marcel Levesque) as well as rival crime boss Juan-José Moréno (Fernand Herrmann), all determined to find the Vampires before they loot and kill again. Murder, robbery, capture and escape follow as the cat-and-mouse game leads Guerande deeper into the Vampires' dastardly web and into the hands of the underworld demigod known as Satanus.

Much has been made of Feuillade's improvisational style of direction and seemingly arbitrary use of settings in Montmartre and Fontainebleau. The truth is that *Les Vampires* was shot at the height of World War I when many Paris streets were abandoned. Surely Feuillade was aware that filming where he did would add to the strange tension and sense of dread that permeates these films; after all, he utilizes many more exterior tableaux than before. Whether purposeful or accidental, there is a feeling of miasma that infuses *Les Vampires* as it teeters from one violent sequence to the next, from desolate alleys to secret passageways, from hand-mirror reflections to living paintings.

So intent was Feuillade in fabricating a 'natural' exaggeration of the criminal world—where every corner and crevice promised dangerous secrets—that it would not be hyperbole to call *Les Vampires* an opera of hermeneutics; or, to borrow a term usually reserved for literature, an opus of magical realism. It makes sense that the serial is a favorite of Spanish Surrealist director Luis Bunuel and *nouveau vague* auteur Alain Resnais, who interpolated the malleable concept of reality with fantasy in much of their works. The French government temporarily banned *Les Vampires* for fear of it inciting copycat crimes and

violent unrest throughout Paris. Rumors persisted that gangs of anarchists calling themselves the Vampires were looting and killing in the city's poorer quarters. Much like the aftermath of *Fantômas*, the royalist director would suffer the regrettable success of these characters spilling from his own fantasies onto the very real and very violent corridors of Eastern Paris.

Feuillade would answer his moralist critics with the 1916 release of *Judex*, a serial that celebrated a master detective rather than criminal. But having found his most successful formula in the crime epic, he returned in 1918 with a *Les Vampires* sequel entitled *Tih Minh*, where the remaining Vampires have fled to Nice and are setting about avenging the deaths of their comrades. Though it was another financial success for Gaumont Studios and featured Feuillade's brilliant visual efforts, *Tih Minh* could hardly recapture the anarchic magic of the original. By the mid-1920s, the cinema of Feuillade was all but forgotten by the general public, and most of his 700-plus films have since been lost.

Following its increased popularity with academic and countercultural cineastes in the late 1960s, *Les Vampires* eventually insinuated itself into pop culture legend, straddling the lines of *haute* art and midnight horror camp. Called "one of the su-



Above: A Vampire at work; a Vampire at rest.

preme delights of film" by noted American critic Jonathan Rosenbaum and named one of the *Village Voice's* "100 Best Films of the Century," Feuillade's greatest achievement continues to hypnotize horror and crime enthusiasts with its magical realism. It has also inspired any number of remakes and tributes, including Olivier Assayas' 1996 film *Irma Vep* and a series of porno films by smut director James Avalon. A collection of the ten serials was made available on VHS with English subtitles in the mid-1990s but it was only with the 2005 Image Pictures 2 DVD set, which includes new tintings, intertitles and score, that *Les Vampires* has received the treatment it deserves. (*Les Vampires* is also available to view in its entirety on Google Video—thank you, Internet!)

*Les Vampires* remains a bellwether of early French cinema, elevated beyond mere spectacle to art—a concept Surrealist/provocateur André Breton recognized when he called Feuillade's second and last masterpiece, "the reality of this century. Beyond fashion. Beyond taste."

—Erik Morse



One, *Cahiers du Cinema* critic Andre Bazin explained Feuillade's "writerly" technique as it proceeded throughout his directorial career:

Feuillade had no idea what would happen next, and filmed step-by-step as the morning's inspiration came... hence the unbearable tension set up by the next episode to follow and the anxious wait, not so much for the events to come but for the continuation of the telling, of the restarting of an interrupted act of creation... Both the author and the spectator were in the same situation, namely that of the King and Scheherazade; the repeated intervals of darkness in the cinema paralleled the separating off of the Thousand and One Nights. The "to be continued" of the true feuilleton [serial] as of the old serial films is not just a device extrinsic to the story. If Scheherazade had told everything at one sitting, the King, cruel as any film audience, would have had her executed at dawn. Both storyteller and film want to test the power of their magic by way of interruption to know the teasing sense of waiting for the continuation of a tale that is a substitute living which, in its turn, is but a break in the continuity of a dream.

Feuillade's use of a stationary camera and limited close-up shots established a long, spatial surveillance of the mise-en-scène in which the characters of *Fantômas*, Juve and the supporting cast would maneuver like fluid props. This was no more brilliantly exhibited than in the very opening sequences of 1913's *Fantômas: In the Shadow of the Guillotine*. Feuillade begins the first reel with a beautifully staged robbery at the hotel of Princess Sonia Danidoff, the camera following her continuously through the lobby, along each floor as she ascends in an elevator and into her suite. From behind the curtains the figure of Doctor Chaleck (actor Rene Navarre, to whom we are introduced in an opening montage) leaps upon her with an almost gallant step, demanding her silence with a flick of the finger, then proceeds to pocket her money and jewels. Before exiting he hands her a blank white business card and prays for her continued silence. Feuillade's camera follows Chaleck as he descends floor by floor to the lobby, mugging and robbing a bellhop of his clothes in the interim. He is able to escape from the hotel undetected before Danidoff calls to report the heist. In a final moment of magic, Feuillade returns to the suite and employs a rare extreme close-up on the white card – in bold, black letters materializes the name "FANTÔMAS." In his use of fluid

mise-en-scène, Feuillade was the first to perfect what Bazin called a realist's *la profondeur de champ* ["depth of field"]. Rather than concentrate on the disintegration of character and object through a violent temporal redaction which moves the eye continuously, Feuillade maintains the space of the long-shot with every coordinate location being equally dense with possible significance...and ambiguity. As critic

ferences between characters, objects and mise-en-scène. In *Fantômas* these 'planes' of viewership often supersede the plotted action in their ability to inspire suspense and dread.

Large portions of the original Allain/Souvestre debut had to be excised for the 54-minute film, including much of the portrayal of the French upper-class that might be considered the only element of social commentary present

apprehended and sentenced to death, Feuillade uses the brilliant sub-plot of Valgrand's (an actor who has a striking resemblance to the prisoner) vain folly to spring the criminal from Santé at the last moment. In the closing moments of the film, a tortured Juve sits in his office at the precinct, imagining the elusive *Fantômas* disguised in black tie, top hat and mask appearing before him, teasing him to his feet only to dematerialize in his grip like a Méliès apparition.

The first *Fantômas* was released on 9 May 1913 at the massive Gaumont-Palace as a French cinematic event. As Jacques Champreux writes, "The triumph was immediate...An official statement published in the *Petit Journal* advertised the unbelievable figure of 80,000 spectators in a week..." But the theater-going public's hunger for this cinema of crime did not often extend to the bourgeois circles who were increasingly looking to the American epic film—with its emphasis on characterization, plot development and pathos—as the standard-bearer for cinema-as-art. For them, Feuillade's *Fantômas* was nothing more than a serial-come-to-life, a retrogressive display of violence and senseless thrills.

With each successive installment of the *Fantômas* films, Feuillade expanded both the visual language of the mise-en-scène and the spectacle of violence. In *Juve Against Fantômas* a foiled train robbery at Gare Lyon hatched by Loupart—another disguise employed by *Fantômas*—and his newest mistress Joséphine-la-Pierreuse ends with a tragic derailment and explosion, killing hundreds of passengers. When *Fantômas* decides to murder Juve in the middle of the night, he releases a boa constrictor into his room to execute the deed. The inspector, who has learned of the plot but not of the method, covers his body with metal spikes. The ensuing bizarre melee between Juve and the snake is a model par excellence of sadomasochistic transgression. The psychosexual motif extends to the first glimpse of *Fantômas* en cagoule, covered from head to toe in a tight black bodysuit, a nihilist's shroud which inverts the usual campish fashion and counterfeit costumery of the master of disguise. In one of the most disturbing images of the film, this creature swathed in his black raiment extends and writhes his body in a weird sign of victory after detonating a bomb meant to kill Juve and Fandor.

*The Dead Man Who Kills* finds *Fantômas* navigating through claustrophobic interiors to commit another series of murders and heists. The titular crux of the episode revolves around a



David Bordwell has remarked, "Seen from this standpoint, Feuillade becomes a forerunner of Welles, Wyler, Renoir, and the Italian Neorealists." This use of depth accentuates the hidden caches and stalking villains who play in the chiaroscuro webs of presence and absence as they retreat between foreground and background. This constant shifting of space creates multi-planar narratives within each filmed sequence and obscures the dif-

ferences between characters, objects and mise-en-scène. In fact, Allain and Souvestre would attempt to insert transparent, Zola-inspired ribs at the haute-couture of the Right Bank aristocracy in each volume of *Fantômas*. But to Feuillade's credit, he cut through the authors' patronizing Naturalism and instead concentrated on the frequent masquerades of the master of crime as he entrusts himself to Lady Beltham and evades capture by Juve and Fandor. When *Fantômas* is finally



particularly gory ruse whereby the villain has graduated from disguising his identity with clothes to human skin. His ensuing crimes are then attributed to a man whose mangled corpse has been left in the sewers. Princess Sonia Danidoff reappears just long enough to be re-victimized by Fantômas. Her fiancé, M. Thomery, is then lured by Lady Beltham to the hideout of Fantômas, where his newly acquired band of outsiders, all clothed *en cagoule*, kill the intruder in the film's most infamous scene. Throughout the initial five reels of *The Dead Man Who Kills* the fate of Juve has been left unresolved, leaving Fandor on his own in tracking and capturing Fantômas. In fact, Juve has outmaneuvered his nemesis and infiltrated the inner circle only to reveal himself in the final reel in order to save Fandor. To heighten the sense of indeterminate spaces and psychotopological dread that infuses *The Dead Man Who Kills* Feuillade uses various odd angular shots and mutable stage sets. When *Fantômas* disappears into a hidden passageway at the film's conclusion, it seems that Feuillade has reified the intense labyrinthine play to which he has subjected the viewer for nearly 90 minutes. With its emphasis on mise-en-scène, ambience and suspense, Feuillade's lens invokes the dense phenomenologies of writers Jorge-Luis Borges, Maurice Blanchot and Raymond Roussel, arguably making *The Dead Man Who Kills* the most inventive and rewarding member of the serial.

In *Fantômas Against Fantômas*, suspicion is mounting that Juve himself is the nefarious villain. At the film's opening, he is taken into custody and once again it's up to Fandor to capture Fantômas and prove his friend's innocence. Meanwhile, Fantômas employs another prop-bag of false identities—including the superannuated Pere Moche and the hilariously named American inspector Tom Bob—to stage a charity ball in his own honor. Aside from the beautiful sequence where three

hooded figures enter Lady Beltham's villa and only two exit, there is also a vividly gory moment in the first reel that has Tom Bob discovering a corpse hidden in an apartment crawlspace by way of a bleeding wall. The ongoing theme of ambiguous identity is further compounded as Fantômas foists another anatomical ruse upon Juve and

**Recognized as a figure of sublime beauty and horror, this black-clad urban phantom was, for the artists suspended above the void of total military destruction, nothing less than an oracle foretelling the grand guignol of War.**

nearly convinces the police chief of the inspector's complicity. The narrative of *Fantômas'* apaches—the criminal syndicate that surrounds him—is expanded here, as is the number of the gang itself until it is quite pathologically portrayed to be an invisible world order of chauffeurs, bums, shopkeepers, street-walkers, gendarmes and more, all carrying out *Fantômas'* most quotidian whims and ensuring his freedom.

Allain and Souvestre together completed 32 volumes of the *Fantômas* serial, concluding with the villain's death in *The End of Fantômas*. Their collaboration would

certainly have continued had it not been for Souvestre's untimely death during a Spanish influenza outbreak in the early winter of 1914. Allain would later resuscitate his most popular character and continued writing *Fantômas* sporadically from 1925 until 1963, completing 43 volumes in total and another 400 volumes comprising other serials. In an odd postscript, he would also marry Souvestre's longtime girlfriend, Henriette Kistler, in 1926.

But it was not in the original compositions of Allain and Souvestre, nor in the film adaptations of Feuillade, that Fantômas would achieve his greatest notoriety and take on his most influ-

cooperatives, cafés and galleries at the north and south ends of Paris, in the Montmartre workshop of Pablo Picasso, Max Jacob and Guillaume Apollinaire and at the bustling café tables of La Closerie des Lilas, La Coupole and Le Select, that Fantômas would become less entertainment and more a radical totem of twentieth-century psychic revolution. For the artists suspended above the void of total military destruction, Fantômas was recognized as a figure of sublime beauty and horror, a black-clad urban phantom, an oracle foretelling the grand guignol of War. To these first generation groups, alternatively labeled Cubists, Fauvists,



Bottle Up and Go: Fantômas on film, 1912.

ential role. When the popularity of Fantômas was at its height just prior to the outbreak of World War I in 1914, the master villain's most important influence was measured neither in mass public reaction nor in bourgeois critical circles, but in the inspiration the serial had given to a new generation of poets, painters and philosophers living and working in the outskirts of Paris. It was here, amidst the renegade artistic movements blossoming in the

Surrealists, Dadaists and Futurists, the nightmarish visage of Fantômas—whether in dainty masquerade or hooded like an executioner—was the modern, industrial incarnation of 19th century-Europe's various anti-heroes: Sade's libertine, Maturin's Melmouth and Lautréamont's Maldoror.

Here Fantômas, an *objet d'art*, transcends the social milieu of its origin and becomes reformatted according to the ideology of a new petit bourgeois





art movement. For despite the representation of Fantômas as a renegade or iconoclast of middle-class law, the political backgrounds of his creators, Allain, Souvestre and Feuillade were entrenched in the established conservatism of the State. All three shared Catholic and monarchist sympathies that were quite opposed to the revolutionary ideology of the *avant-garde*. This gap in ideologies was indicative of the large spectra of political allegiances that dominated French, and particularly Parisian daily life, on the eve of the First World War. But its origins had been years in the making. From the

rampant injustices at the turn of the century. "What petty whims of a few higher-ups trampling the nation under their boots, ramming back down their throats the people's cries for truth and justice, with the travesty of state security as a pretext." Zola's political sentiments reached a crescendo during public scandals like the Dreyfus affair which exposed the factionalism and racism of a divided country. Falsely charged with treason and publicly cashiered from the army, Captain Alfred Dreyfus – a highly decorated soldier and Jew – became a *cause célèbre* for both conservatives and radicals.

But as a precursor to Dada and the Surrealist movements by more than five years, the SAF proved essential as the initial rebel yell for the young, dispossessed artists living in the northern *banlieue*. And Fantômas was to be their totem.



So immersed was Magritte in the novels and Feuillade films that he would once tell an interviewer, "I am Fantômas." Here, Magritte strikes a pose beside his beloved anti-hero.

humiliating loss of the Franco-Prussian war to Otto von Bismarck's powerful German army, the bloody riots of the Paris Commune and the foundation of the Third Republic in 1871, France had been marked by a persistent national identity crisis propelled, in part, by a gaggle of rival political parties who vied for control of the government. "Ah, what a cesspool of folly and foolishness, what preposterous fantasies, what corrupt police tactics, what inquisitorial, tyrannical practices!" wrote Emile Zola of the state's

In response, party lines across the city tightened with an increasing intellectual intolerance. The Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière (SFIO), the prominent socialist party mounted a major propaganda campaign against Action Française—led by the Catholic monarchist Charles Maurras—who had been largely responsible for inciting the public condemnation of Dreyfus. Maurras' popularity rested on a prevalent French xenophobia which blamed the *quatre états confédérés* ["four confederated states"]—Jews, Protestants,

Freemasons and immigrants—for the loss of the Prussian War and the rise in liberal ideology. For Maurras, these *quatre états confédérés* were proof that the effects of the Revolution had to be reversed if France were to be saved.

The Third Republic was also the age of the so-called apache. "A crime reporter for *Le Journal*, Arthur Dupin, had first used the term 'apache' to embellish his accounts of Paris street gang rivalry in 1902 and it soon became a code word for the urban criminal activity allegedly threatening French lives and property," writes Richard Abel in *The Thrills of Grande Peur: Crime Series and the Serials of the Belle Époque*. As if to add insult to social injury, roving apaches, also known as *mauvais garçons*, would often adopt the sobriquet of the era's most popular villain when committing their crimes, so that real robberies, muggings, and murders would often be blamed on a seemingly ubiquitous Fantômas. The phenomenon would recur so often that by the release of Feuillade's next serial *Les Vampires*—a gothic tale of a murderous Parisian gang led by their sultry dominatrix, Irma Vep—the city government would institute a temporary ban on his films. [See sidebar on page 25 for more on *Les Vampires*.] Assassination, political intimidation and gang warfare were all common practices used on both the left and right to ensure territorial victory. In this environment the murder of SFIO leader and antimilitarist Jean Jaurès just days before mobilization against Germany had the very senseless fingerprint of Fantômas.

The first artistic flirtations with Fantômas came with Apollinaire's July 1914 review of the Allain/Souvestre serial in the literary review *Mercur de France*, where the perpetually overzealous writer baptized the work an "...extraordinary novel, full of life and imagination...from the imaginative standpoint, *Fantômas* is one of the richest works that exist." If this was the first call for the apotheosis of the serial character, it would certainly not be the last. Apollinaire's absolutist and inflammatory declaration incited his fellow artists from Montmartre and Montparnasse to match his loquacious prose. In an August edition of *Les Soirées de Paris*, Apollinaire collaborator Maurice Raynal wrote of Feuillade's *Fantômas*, "And now, dare I or don't I? Well, take courage and trust in the grace of God. Now... Fantômas! What nobility! What beauty! It's one of those things that stuns you; its serene majesty, like inimitable brilliance, leaves you breathless, dazed and mute...It is like the best of Hugo, and more beautiful

in fact!" In Max Jacob's 1916 collection *Le Cornet à dés [The Dice Cup]*, the Montmartre eccentric includes a playful lyric of two gourmands' unlikely encounter with the master villain in "Encore Fantômas." Soon other outspoken writers would add their kudos, throwing their hats into an ever-widening ring of "Friends of Fantômas." "Absurd and magnificent lyricism," claimed the cravat-and-laced dandy Jean Cocteau. "The modern *Aeneid*" countered poet and essayist Blaise Cendrars. Even James Joyce was a follower, penning a typically Joycean neologism "Enfantomastic" to describe his adulation.

Painters and sculptors experimenting in the burgeoning cubist style found in Fantômas a dark, foreboding icon they could insert, scatter and deconstruct upon the canvas using the 'poetic' methods of collage and decoupage. Juan Gris' 1915 painting *Fantômas (Pipe and Newspaper)* centered on the bricolage of a café and included a copy of the serial novel among the scattered objects. Yves Tanguy, a friend of surrealist poet Jacques Prevert and an eventual ally of Andre Breton, produced an homage to the master of crime in 1925 using the angular, biomorphic styles of Giorgio de Chirico and Salvador Dali. ("Even in an atypical 'literary' painting such as this, no very accurate reading is possible," wrote John Ashbery of the piece in 1974. "Space and perspective are methodically distorted; it is impossible to gauge distances by the size of the figures, and there is some iconography... which seems not to relate to the story of Fantômas. The stage seems set for the radical transformations which will very shortly sweep it almost bare.") In a 1966 article for *Film Commentary* entitled "Early Surrealist Expression in the Film", Georges Sadoul recounts in an interview with critic Toby Mussman, "... how he, Jacques Prevert, Yves Tanguy, and [writer] Raymond Queneau would spend whole evenings discussing their knowledge of the various episodes of the Feuillade serials..."

Belgian expatriate René Magritte employed Fantômas as a subject throughout his work in the '20s. In his 1926 *L'assassin \_heate (The Menacing Murderer)* Magritte reproduces a famous "depth of field" image from *The Dead Man Who Kills* where two members of Fantômas' gang lie in wait against a doorway, preparing to commit their nefarious deed. Beyond the cinematic images of Rene Navarre's character, Magritte used Gino Starace's serialized covers to great effect. For example, 1928's *Le barbare (The Barbarian)* is a *tromp l'oeil* that uses a Starace-inspired Fantômas cam-



ouflagé amid the tessellations of a brick wall. And in 1943's *Le retour de flamme* (*The Return of the Flame*), Magritte uses Starace's iconic landscape of Paris with the masked villain stepping over the Eiffel Tower. So immersed was Magritte in the novels and Feuillade films that he would once tell an interviewer, "I am Fantômas."

The first legitimate cult dedicated to the master of crime appeared in Montmartre in 1913. Despite its impressive and oblique title, the "Society of Friends of Fantômas" (SAF), as it was initially called by founder Apollinaire, was no more than a loose cadre of artistic apaches who lacked any central manifesto or political agenda. But as a precursor to Dada and the Surrealist movements by more than five years, the SAF proved essential as the initial rebel yell for the young, dispossessed artists living in the northern *banlieue*. And Fantômas was to be their totem.

The foundation of the SAF also lay in Apollinaire's personal connections with the Cubist school established by Picasso and Georges Braque (also SAF members) between 1908 and 1911. The SAF headquarters were located at Picasso's workshop near the Sacré-Cœur Basilica and the Moulin Rouge, the infectious center of Montmartre's bohemian enclave. Thousands of poets, painters, musicians, critics, dancers, grifters, thieves and *flâneurs* called the neighborhood between the Butte Montmartre and the Rue Pigalle their home and stomping ground. It was here that the poet/dandy Jean Cocteau would meet Picasso and form an immediate artistic bond that would last nearly half a century. It would also provide Cocteau *entrée* into the underground art world inhabited by composer Erik Satie, Russian director Serge Diaghilev and Blaise Cendrars. So wild and licentious were the days and nights of Montmartre, with its cabarets, brothels, saloons and opium dens, that it singularly defined the French term *demimonde* ("underworld") as a nexus of crime and artistic invention. But its riotous extremes were not limited to the northern end of Paris. In 1911, when Da Vinci's *Mona Lisa* was pilfered from The Louvre in what the police considered an "inside job," the conspiracy led straight from the Seine to Picasso's workshop. Apollinaire and Picasso were both arrested on suspicion and hauled in front of a magistrate at the Palais de Justice for questioning. They were eventually exonerated for lack of evidence.

If the artists of the SAF romanticized a certain conceptual violence which they grafted onto the page or canvas as an act of cultural rebellion, the dizzying bloodshed of war may have come as a

bitter reward indeed. With the arrival of *le grand guerre* in August 1914, many of Montmartre's artists and poets were mobilized on the Eastern front or fled Paris to avoid conscription. Picasso was drafted by the military to produce large simulated canvases of French soldiers and foliage to confuse the German invaders in the trenches. Cocteau was a medic on the Belgian front but fortunately shuttled back and forth to Paris regularly and saw little action by the war's end. Others were not so fortunate. Apollinaire suffered a massive head wound from flying shrapnel in 1916 and was decommissioned short-

eccentric who would tragically kill himself in 1919. Other young poets and painters, like Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia left for America before the war began, outraging many of the pro-French artists who were determined to fight for their homeland.

In spite of the massive physical and psychological destruction incurred in Calais and the Ardennes in 1916-17, life among the Montmartre vanguard continued in Paris at a fever pitch. One of the most notorious cultural events to echo across the city during the height of the war came with the performance of *Parade* at the Théâtre

rations of the Cubists and surrealists. In fact, the term *surrealism* was first coined in the performance playbill by a crippled Apollinaire who wrote that *Parade* was "une sorte de surréalisme". So divisive was its debut that *Parade* is often compared in notoriety to the 1913 performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* which caused riots across Paris. "If it had not been for Apollinaire in uniform," wrote Cocteau of the evening, "with his skull shaved, the scar on his temple and the bandage around his head, women would have gouged our eyes out with hairpins." The imagined scene of mayhem recalls nothing short of the most violent purges of Fantômas.

The predominantly French surrealism movement was developing in tandem with its more outrageous Swiss cousin, Dada. Dada's first public recitation had come in July 1916 at Geneva's infamous Cabaret Voltaire and resident theoretician Tristan Tzara published his earliest manifesto two years later. When the regulars of the Voltaire dispersed at the conclusion of the War, Tzara traveled to Paris where he discovered compatriots Apollinaire and Breton waiting anxiously for his arrival. But it was Breton and not Tzara who would take the reins from Apollinaire after his untimely demise in the influenza pandemic of November 1918. Breton had already begun to amass a newer generation of young writers and aesthetes and, with their support, easily slipped into the ceremonial position left vacant at Apollinaire's death. In the following year Breton, Aragon and Soupault debuted their own 'surrealist' magazine *Littérature* and a collaborative novel *Les Champs Magnétiques* [*The Magnetic Fields*] – published in 1920 – was the first piece credited to the automatic writing technique and officially licensed by Breton as *surréalisme*.

"Surrealism will usher you into death, which is a secret society," wrote Breton in 1924's *Le Première Manifeste du Surréalisme*. "It will glove your hand, burying therein the profound M with which the word Memory begins." In a profound evocation of the SAF and the mysterious violence of its idol, the proputed tenets of surrealism claimed its *raison d'être* to be a celebration of the *le merveilleux quotidien* ["the everyday marvellous"] and its individual corollate, the 'un'conscious. What Dada had instigated as a reactive, anti-Art campaign against the traditional, bourgeois valuations of aesthetics and class, surrealism had expanded upon with a neoteric regimen of Freudian analysis, Hegelian dialectics and radical politics. Breton's infectious distillation of art and philosophy might well have



ly thereafter. The complications from the hematoma would cause the poet severe pain and dizzy spells until his death in 1918. Ferdinand Léger, another cubist-inspired painter, nearly died during a mustard gas attack at Verdun. Poet André Breton spent the war caring for patients in a neurological ward in Nantes. There he would meet one of his greatest Surrealist inspirations, Jacques Vaché, a writer and Pere Ubu

du Chatelet. Purportedly developed by Cocteau in response to dance director Serge Diaghilev's daring words "Etonne-moi!" ["Astonish me!"], *Parade* was a carnivalesque spectacle filled with jugglers, acrobats and ragtime dancers. Premiering in May 1917 with Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, music by Erik Satie and stage sets by Picasso—all members of the SAF—*Parade* was one of the earliest synergistic collabo-



driven those unaffiliated artists around him to join his ranks in the beginning – including artists from the rue Blomet and the rue du Château and the so-called Grand Jeu – but it was this very rigid idealism that would make of them mavericks. Despite what he had claimed as a surrealist aphorism *par excellence* – “*The exquisite corpse drinks the new wine...*” – Breton’s celebration of the narrative of the body was tempered with an increasing dependence on psychoanalysis and Marxist politics. His descriptions of the marvellous had always favored chance and random juxtaposition, neurosis and the dream-state, but refused to negotiate the more sinister categories of excess and atrocity – desire, violence and death. When Breton allied himself with the French Communist Party in ’27 amid an ultra-militarized left the focus of *surréalisme* became a political rather than aesthetic Revolution. All notions of literary and artistic decadence, primitivism and hermeticism were excised and condemned within the group.

“Our modern art is ... fashioned round a core of inner violence,” rejoined Bataille in a précis of his counter-surrealist manifesto, “...art that rather quickly presented a process of ... destruction, which has been no less painful to most people than would have been the sight of the ... destruction of a cadaver.” Bataille’s stinging invective against Breton, appropriately named *Un cadavre* [*The Dead Body*], attempted to enumerate what the theoretician of excess had viewed as the folly of surrealism and the beginning of a new historical mysticism. Under Bataille’s philosophy, the spell of Fantômas was less a spectacle for the imagination and more a meditation on real crime and horror as a vivisection of the body—a historical landscape of grisly murders perpetrated by the likes of Christine and Lea Papin, con-man Henri Landru and medieval alchemist Gilles de Rais. The icon of Fantômas was transformed, in Bataille’s imagination, from a simple surrealist motif to a physical, historical and religious ‘Other’—something that could not or would not be named. For Bataille, Fantômas was not only a specter of literature but of society, preying on its fears of anarchy and ecstasy. The Surrealists had missed the point. The master of terror was not a representation of dreams or ideology but a literal convict marginalized by and terrorizing the populace.

It was this attraction to a world beyond the confines of the surrealist catechism – to the criminal and the transgressive – that caused the expulsion of poets and writers Desnos, Soupault, Artaud, Bataille, Raymand

Queneau, Roger Gilbert-Lecomte and others from Breton’s ranks by the end of the 1920s.

“These young writers felt that society had lost the secret of its cohesion, and that here was precisely what the obscure, awkward and sterile efforts of poetic fever were seeking out,” wrote Bataille of the wave of surrealists who defected and soon joined his ranks. These so-called counter-surrealists appropriated the character of Fantômas to invoke a mysticism of immedi-



**For the young artists maturing in the necropolis of World War II, Fantômas became an object of incomparable confusion and violence which they studied and referenced like a stigmata, an Iron Cross, a badge of dishonor.**



Clockwise, from top, Fantômas fans Jean Cocteau, Andre Breton, and Geroges Bataille. Opposite page: old Allain.

ate experience. Bataille’s arts review *Documents*, published from ’29-’30 and co-authored by fellow dissidents frequently included photo collages of carnival masks, anonymous *cagoules*—reminiscent of the hypersexualized image of Feuillade’s villain—close-ups of human anatomy and Starace’s *Fantômas* covers alongside critical essays analyzing ‘The Abattoir’, ‘The Eye’, and ‘The Sun’. For Bataille the evil tableau of Fantômas—and its Orphic cult of worship—transcended the mere philosophical and literary influence of *Documents*. To further explore the historical experiences of ritual and sacrifice he founded the controversial Collège



the other inside, the inside being tumult and chaos, and the outside the surpassing with a view to a new order. The ceremony took place outside while inside only waiting existed. On their own the open eyes made two absolute stains outside as well as inside.” His description betrays an uncanny resemblance to the violence and pagantry of Allain and Souvestre’s novels in the wake of Bataille’s critical mysticism.

In November 1933, fellow excommunicant Desnos used Fantômas as the inspiration for a theatre of cruelty-style production, *La Complainte de Fantômas*, performed on Radio Paris and featuring some 100 artists from opera singers to clowns, a score by composer Kurt Weill, and Artaud in the title role. Artaud would later develop this villainous alter ego to unimagined heights in the controversial radio play *To Have Done With The Judgement of God*.

**M**eanwhile, back in popular culture, the cinematic adventures of Fantômas continued after Feuillade’s five films. A 20-episode series directed by American Edward Sedgwick and produced by Fox Studios appeared in 1920, but a disagreement forced Fox to rename the serial *Les Exploits de Diabolos* during its French run and shorten the series number to twelve. Anthropologist and Hungarian expatriate Paul Fejos directed – and reinterpreted – a feature-length sound version of *Fantômas* in the early ’30s to little critical attention. On the advice of Jean Cocteau, Jean Marais starred in a three-part adaptation of *Fantômas* directed by André Hunebelle from ’64 to ’66, all of which recontextualized the original serials with a comedic, retro-futurist glamour that combined Carnaby Street style and MI5 espionage.

While the Allain/Souvestre characters lived on in these homages, they shared very little in spirit with Feuillade’s unique metropolitan Gothicism. Rather than celebrating Fantômas as an avatar and archetype of the super-villain, filmmakers emphasized the camp qualities of the character so as to stand out in a market saturated with anti-heroes. The exception was Weimar auteur Fritz Lang’s underworld phantom, Doctor Mabuse, who would appear in a loose series of films produced from 1922 to 1960—*Dr. Mabuse*, *The Spider*, *The Testament of Doctor Mabuse* and *The 1000 Eyes of Doctor Mabuse*—based upon Norbert Jacques’ pulp creation. An obvious descendant of Fantômas—but with characters and motifs explored in *Metropolis* and *M* and thus

de Sociologie at the Galeries du Livre, a tiny Parisian bookstore whose store-room served as the school’s lectern. The “religious” wing of the college was altogether more secretive and abstruse in objective with an appropriate sobriquet, *Acéphale* [“headless”]. Proported to have included poet and writer Queneau, essayist Pierre Klossowski and sociologist Roger Caillois, who swore an oath of allegiance and absolute secrecy, the *Acéphale* conducted costumed rites, lamentations and mutilations in the dark of night all for the inner experience of absolute negativity. Michel Fardoulis-Lagrange, a member of *Acéphale* spoke prophetically of the secret society’s philosophy: “Mystery had two faces, one turned outside and



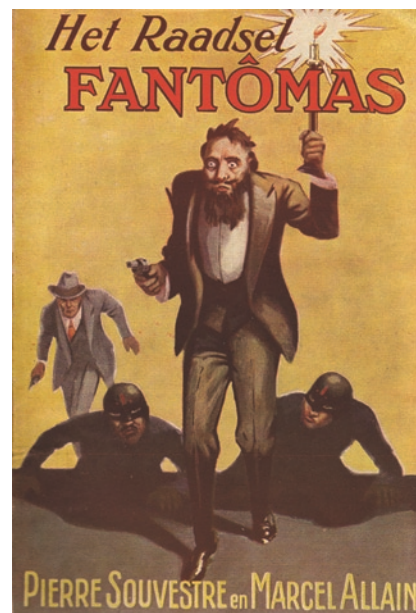
archetypally Langian – Mabuse was a criminal genius whose use of hypnosis and psychogenic fugue creates an army of followers who attempt to destroy the world.

With the ascension of the *nouveau roman* movement after the Second World War, the Allain and Souvestre novels found a new generation of literary enthusiasts. This so-called “new novel” resurrected the playful formal stylings of the serial and prefigured the use of pastiche and pop culture in postmodern art. It also extended the experimental subterfuge of surrealism and counter-surrealism in the face of its somber cousin, existentialism. Alain Robbe-Grillet, a central figure of the movement, was particularly inspired by the master villain in his stories of crime and intellectual ennui, having discovered Fantômas through his friendship with René Magritte, whose painting *L’assassin menacé* he used as a central pictorial trope in his novel *La Belle Captive*. Robbe-Grillet’s work pointed to a larger fascination the literary underground had developed for the scandalous and gruesome *fait-divers* [“odd story”]—crime stories that had been printed in Parisian dailies since the 19th century. Essayist Roland Barthes, another prominent Fantômas devotee, believed the appeal of these criminal stories was in their “disturbing violence, accidents and irrational impulses below the surface of the everyday...We are thus in a world not of meaning but of signification, which is probably the status of literature, a formal order in which meaning is both posited and frustrated: and it is true that *fait-divers* is literature, even if this literature is reputed to be bad.” A better argument for the popularity of Fantômas has yet to be articulated so precisely. For the young artists maturing in the necropolis of World War II, Fantômas became an object of incomparable confusion and violence which they studied and referenced like a stigmata, an Iron Cross, a badge of dishonor.

In the same atmosphere of radical artistic change, filmmaking entered a new era and Feuillade began to gather a greater appreciation from young directors and movie-goers. Much as the *nouveau roman* was redefining the goal of the novel in the image of the *fait-divers* and the crime serial, cinema’s *nouvelle vague* [“new wave”] was incorporating images of gangsters, crime and urban ennui to its avant-garde palette. There was also a comparative cross-over in these artistic movements much as there had been between Allain and Souvestre’s Fantômas—the literary icon—and Feuillade’s film villain. While the *nou-*

*veau roman* sought to bring the formality and structures of film to literature, the *nouvelle vague* attempted to bridge modern literature’s dense textures and tropes with film: in the New Wave, authors like Robbe-Grillet and Marguerite Duras were as central to the filmmaking process as Jean-Luc Godard and Alain Resnais. It was in the seeds of this interdisciplinary collective that the work of Feuillade was resurrected from the charnel house of the silent-era and attained a new vogue.

Much of Feuillade’s contemporary scholarship resulted from cineastes Georges Franju and Henri Langlois who co-founded the Cinémathèque



Française in 1937 and exhumed many of the director’s forgotten films from the vaults of Gaumont. Franju, a director in his own right, inspired as much by surrealism, the Grand-Guignol Theatre and Fantômas, produced a series of documentaries—*The Blood of the Beast* and *Hotel des Invalides*—that explored a similar poetics of violence. Many of his narrative films like *Eyes Without a Face* (famously described by Pauline Kael as “perhaps the most elegant horror film ever made”) and the comedic remake of Feuillade’s *Judex* owe much to Feuillade in style, tone and mise-en-scène. Franju would also make short documentaries on Marcel Allain and Georges Méliès during his career. Similarly, Feuillade devotee Alain Resnais combined the documentary/narrative style in his funereal *Night and Fog* which explores in uninterrupted panoramic shots the landscapes of Auschwitz in conjunction with archive footage of the Nazis’ atrocities. But it was Resnais’ classic meditations on psychotopology and memory—*Hiroshima Mon Amour* and *Last Year at Marienbad*—that most evoked Feuillade’s use of “depth of

field” cinematography, claustrophobic and ever-shifting interiors and tones of sinister Gothicism.

“Feuillade is my god,” Resnais is famously quoted as saying. “I had always been a fan of the *Fantômas* dime thriller novels, but when I finally saw the films at the Cinémathèque in 1944, I learned from him how the fantastic could be more easily and effectively created in a natural exterior than in a studio. Feuillade’s cinema is very close to dreams and is therefore perhaps the most realistic kind of all, paradoxical as this may sound.”

In *The False Judge*, Feuillade’s fifth and final adaptation of *Fantômas*, released just months before France’s entrance into the War of 1914, the tone of the film slips noticeably into a somber and nihilistic dread. Opening with the sinister close-up of René Navarre dressed *en cagoule* and glaring at the viewer with the contented air of a condemned man, there is a repetitive inertia seemingly at play, casting the master villain as the perennial recidivist, the subject-hood of crime’s inexplicability, an *aporia* of meaning. In a startling legal and moral reversal of the grand narrative of Fantômas, *The False Judge* finds the former intentionally sprung from a Belgium prison and replaced by none other than Inspector Juve. With his new freedom secured, Fantômas returns to France where he promptly kills Judge Pradier in Saint-Calais and assumes his identity. Using his judicial and political position to increase his own coffers, Pradier conspires to murder and extort thousands from the wealthy Marquise de Tergall. But when *Fantômas*’s apaches decide to conspire against him and steal his riches, he kills one of them in a cathedral bell, causing a shower of blood and jewels to cover a funeral party below. In a final ironic twist of *Fantômas*’ legal masquerade, the master of disguise preempts his own capture and execution by signing the release as Judge Pradier. As if prefiguring the moral indeterminacy of the Great War – when the “authority” of nationalism would be buried under mounds of the dead – *Fantômas* has not only eluded the Law from the outside but infiltrated its mechanism and transformed it from within like a cancer. Here the categories of good and evil are conflated to a zero-degree of meaning. The most insidious of *Fantômas*’ transgressions result from his dashing of reason and order to a shadow play, a dissimulation, an invitation to the absolute crime of ecstasy and excess.

While the cult surrounding *Fantômas* was always quintessentially French and

his popularity beyond the country has never reached that same fever pitch, time has certainly insinuated the villain into the subconscious of the larger art world. In the nearly 100 years since Fantômas’s debut, he has been the object of sustained fascination among writers, artists and historians intent on uncovering the urban mythology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. After more than 60 years without an English edition, Fantômas’s place in American letters was secured when a translation of the serial’s initial two volumes were released as a mass paperback by Ballantine Books in 1987 with an introduction by John Ashbery. After going out of print for more than a decade, the first volume was republished this past year by Penguin Classics. Black Coat Press, a California-based independent publisher established in 2003 by Jean-Marc Lofficier and dedicated to pulp fiction and French serials, has gone one step further, adapting the later editions of Allain as well as comic and cinematic interpretations of *Fantômas*. In only four years, Black Coat has introduced American readers to an entire genre of *fait-divers* and dime-store authors whose heroes and villains—like Arsène Lupin, Nick Carter and Rocambole—defined popular culture in Europe at the turn of the last century.

In 2000 Gaumont Studios and the Cinémathèque Française restored Feuillade’s five *Fantômas* films on a three DVD *coffret* with a new score by Jacques Champreux, additional images of the original movie posters, character biographies and interviews with Marcel Allain. British distribution company Artificial Eye has since issued a subtitled version of each film in their own box set, allowing English-speaking audiences their first glimpse of Fantômas in translation—and one of the first masters of cinema, Louis Feuillade. As David Thomson wrote, “*Fantômas* is the first great movie experience, Feuillade the first director for whom no historical allowances need to be made. See him today and you still wonder...” The master of terror, it seems, continues to haunt our collective artistic fantasies, manipulating the sinister words and images of a century dedicated to the ecstasy and violence of his name.

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# GUERRILLA WARFARE

**Five years ago, London's gig-goers experienced a cultural upheaval the effects of which are still being felt today. Paul Moody takes up the story.**

It seems so long ago now. But just under five years ago, London's nightlife found itself at the center of a seismic cultural explosion that still reverberates around the U.K indie-verse today.

As with the psychedelic scene based around the UFO Club in Tottenham Court Road and the punk movement's Soho HQs The Roxy and The Vortex, it involved a small group of movers'n'shakers taking control of the pop apparatus to create something new, exciting and—whisper it—revolutionary.

For a short while the fat-cats of the British music business—a dismal alliance of promoters (tell me, have you ever seen a skinny one?), lazy managers and idea-free labels—were on the back foot, and oh, what pleasure it was to be alive to see it and be involved in it. In its place? A new form of night-time activity, where gigs could take place on a bus, a subway train or even, at one memorable soiree in Regents Park, up a tree, and the old ways—not least the capitalist chicanery of (yawn) advance credit card bookings—could go swing.

Ever since The Stone Roses had attempted to subvert the medium with their gig at Spike Island in 1990—deemed a failure by anyone who hadn't actually been there—promoters in the U.K had ensured that any free expression amongst bands was brutally clamped down upon. At many venues—not least the once-prestigious The Rock Garden in Covent Garden—young bands were even forced to endure a “pay to play” policy which meant they had to cough up £50 before they could even get on a stage. Worse, it was an unspoken rule that if any band dared go beyond these preset boundaries, there would be hell to pay.

I'd had firsthand experience of it myself.

As a member of London art rock band Regular Fries, in the late '90s, I'd found any means of creative expression conducted outside the studio frowned upon. Our determination to play gigs involving film projections, banks of TVs and an array of props brought despairing looks from our own management, so you can imagine what promoters made of it when we walked through the doors of venues clutching six-foot high “Fries” letters. The idea of playing gigs outside the established circuit—a well-trod path involving The Barfly, The Garage and The Astoria—was treated like heresy. Why couldn't we just play by the rules like everyone else?

Promoters actively discouraged us from playing at venues no one else had with lame talk of “bad acoustics.” “Why do you think no one else plays there?” was an asinine excuse we'd regularly be subjected to.

This came to a head when, due to a fire, a headline gig at London University (ULU) was cancelled at the eleventh hour. Hastily, we printed up flyers to paste over the front of the building telling our fans to head to a nearby venue in Camden where another promoter—sensing a windfall—had hastily juggled his bill so we could play last.

Within minutes, our well-intentioned belief that “the show must go on” had all but turned into an international incident. The promoters at ULU threatened violence for advertising another chain of venues on their doorstep. Our own promoter blew a fuse at our temerity in organizing an alternative ourselves. And our manager even warned us darkly that if we played the gig, our agent would never book us a tour again. All because we wanted to play a gig at short notice.

It was in this climate that the concept of the

**At the heart of it, inevitably, were The Libertines. Chaotic, quixotic, and blessed with an in-built D.I.Y. credo, the Libs started by using their own lounge at band hang-out 'The Albion Rooms' as a place to play. Young, reckless and mercifully minus a seasoned manager, agent or publicist, they just did what came naturally—playing gigs to friends without any plan or strategy.**

“guerrilla gig”—which peaked in June 2004 with a “happening” at Buckingham Palace, headed by Pete Doherty—took root.

At the heart of it, inevitably, were The Libertines. Chaotic, quixotic, and blessed with an in-built D.I.Y. credo, the Libs started by using their own lounge at band hang-out 'The Albion Rooms' as a place to play. Young, reckless and mercifully minus a seasoned manager, agent or publicist, they just did what came naturally—playing gigs to friends without any plan or strategy. It didn't end there. Impromptu soirees would be conducted in parks, bus shelters or, most often, at friends' flats, with instructions being given out by text only hours before each show. Fans arriving at a designated point—usually a nearby phone box or anything typically British—would be met by Pete, brandishing a bag of sweets. It should be noted that for all the tabloid paranoia which was to come, Doherty at this point was the very picture of good manners, even reassuring one teenage fan's mother

over the point that she'd be looked after and cash organised for her to get a cab home—which duly happened. Sarked by The Libs' example, a new generation of musicians quickly seized on this anarchic spirit to put on their own underground soirees.

Almost overnight chroniclers of the capital's live scene noticed the same thing: something serious was stirring in the seedy backrooms and cellars of London. From the New Cross D.I.Y scene headed by Art Brut (first covered in NME's May 15, 2004 issue) to the sleazy emissions from Whitechapel's Rhythm Factory to the relentless guerrilla gigging of The Others, an urchin militia of bands and fanzines—young, angry, weird, clever—emerged, sick to death of rock clichés, plastic chart pop and conventional “indie” strategies, determined to create their own alternative.

You only had to scour the listings or log on their websites to see what was going on. The level of energy was relentless. In the week of Glastonbury 2004, whilst Oasis bickered over the size of the dressing rooms and The Strokes moaned of exhaustion, The Others played a gig on a tube train. Take for example, one week in April as proof that this new gestalt was taking root in the capital:

Monday: The Rakes, The Ludes and The Souls play a Fierce Panda album launch party called 'On the Buzzes' (cover image: a Routemaster bus).

Tuesday: Babyshambles play an unannounced show.

Wednesday: The Others play a guerrilla gig in the foyer of Radio One, followed by another up in a tree in Regents Park.

Friday: Neils Children, The Rakes, and Twisted Charm play a packed gig at the Verge.

Saturday: Selfish Cunt plays a launch of new label '1,2,3,4' in a warehouse in Aldgate with half of London on the guest list.

Money wasn't an issue for any of these events purely because no one had any. South London's The Unstrung couldn't afford bed-and-breakfasts for their tour supporting The Paddingtons, so they pitched up at campsites across the country instead.

“The scene had been growing over the previous few months” explained Andy Macleod, promoter of Club Fandango at Camden's Dublin Castle. “The bands all wanted to play together. It was healthy, it meant they had a mutual support system which meant they could spread their message more quickly...”

If recent pop culture had been about re-cycling traditional macho rock stereotypes of speed and power (Kings of Leon, Black Rebel Motorcycle Club, Jet) then these groups promoted the opposite: self-doubt, rejection, a sense of worthlessness, partially, you suspect, brought on by this lack of encouragement to play live. Art Brut bawled, “Popular culture no longer applies to me” (“Bad Weekend”); Neils Children yelled “I Hate Models.” The Rakes sang “Something Clicked And I Fell Off the Edge.” And you only had to look at their names to see they were out to give radio programmers nightmares: Dogs, The Others, Selfish Cunt.

At the heart of the guerrilla gig scene was London itself. As Peter Ackroyd writes in his definitive bi-



ography of the city, "London refuses no one," and, just as the Libertines first sought the coordinates for their mythical "Arcadia" here—a fantastical Edward Lear-ish land dream't up by Doherty, where park benches were made of denim and cigarettes grew on trees—so these groups came to the capital because they were unable to get such freedom anywhere else.

"I had to come here," said Martin Tomlinson, singer/lyricist with Selfish



Scenes from the Arthur-organized Los Angeles River secret gig featuring No Age in November 2007. It lasted for 19 minutes before being shut down by Park Rangers. Clockwise, from top: The setup, the band, the bust, the power, and the crowd.  
All Photos by Joshua Pressman.

Cunt, and editor of 'Vomit In The Mainstream' fanzine. "I'm from Blackburn. It was horrible, just full of gay bashers, very patriotic. I couldn't do what I wanted there. London gave me that freedom. I've got one weapon, my voice, and I'm learning how to use it. Now I want to play as many gigs as I can, everywhere, across the country. I want to set this country ablaze, north to south."

Acknowledged leaders of the guerrilla gig phenomenon were The Others. Led by charismatic singer Dominic Masters—a Britpop scruff with strawberry blonde hair, electric-blue eyes and retro-jumble sale wardrobe, Masters took on the role of an indie Pied Piper, in command of a highly devoted posse called the "853 Kamikaze Division" who would turn up anywhere at the drop of a text.

"When we've sold a hundred thousand albums the first thing I'll do is open a pub," Masters told me at the time. "There will be one in the north and one in the south, an all-ages place."

"I'll show all those people who don't believe in me. Look at New Year's Eve! After the gig I provided a party for 350 kids of all ages until 5am. Everyone got in free, smoked hash, took coke, and did what they wanted..."

Smart, charismatic and media-savvy, Masters was a master media-manipulator blessed with a warm-hearted Somerset burr, unrecognizable from the cockney blitzkrieg he employed on record. Wherever Dominic went, he was accompanied by a constant electronic bleeping. Armed with a mobile and his blackberry pager, he claimed to have the number of 1,700 fans programmed into his phone, whilst his conversation was peppered with references to 853 members like "Dave from Belfast," "Sally from Wakefield" and "Harley from St. Helens." The story goes that on Christmas Day, Dominic switched his phone back on after cooking the turkey to spread a message of festive cheer to his ever-growing flock.

"Look at us! We're not the Strokes! We're not the fucking Kings of Leon! We were never gonna get signed on our image," he explained. "No fuckin' label would touch us! I had to go beyond the image barrier and touch people on a different level. I'm protective of my fans because they're my friends. I speak to them every day. I text message them. I email. I talk to them. I go clubbing with them. I do drugs with them. I know who my fanbase are!"

Such mutual devotion saw The Others memorably invade a Circle Line tube train, and—armed with a toy

drum kit (brought from Argos), a microphone and a hundred members of the 853—staged the world's first mobile, underground gig, an event which exploded across the pages of the NME thanks to Andrew Kendall's pictures, and which soon saw everyone from The Guardian to BBC News running articles on this new phenomenon.

Such was the anarchic spirit involved, guerrilla gigs were almost impossible to police. The band would turn up with instruments and battery-operated amps, a crowd would be contacted by text, and the gig would last as long as it took for the police to come along and disperse the crowd—usually at least half an hour, thanks to the chaos involved. Promoters, appalled at the prospect of bands not doing what they were told, would tell anybody who'd listen that such reckless behaviour was a passing phase, and Christ, wasn't the sound quality awful?

For the bands involved—all without major deals—the industry was as gridlocked and over-mortgaged as the city itself. Who—went the rationale—needed a huge advance when you could print up a 7" single yourself or get a like-minded label to do it for you?

It was the classic cycle. Every now and then, those who haven't been given the opportunity to shine throw their misery back in the faces of those

who would stop them. The flowers in the dustbin. If anything, the spirit was more like a return to the spirit of early rave culture than anything else: setting up word-of-mouth gigs, distributing records there and then, and making up the rules along the way.

No wonder the New Rave scene of 2006, which has since spawned the Underage Scene (destined to be the big U.K media buzz of '08), took so many cues from this cultural explosion. As for imitators, well, U2 got on the bandwagon barely months after The Others' antics hit the UK media, launching their dreary "How To Defuse An Atomic Bomb" with a series of 'im-promptu' gigs across New York. And only last month the multi-millionaires of Radiohead performed a cynically contrived showcase at Brick Lane's new Rough Trade shop in order to flog more copies of *In Rainbows*, which must, at the very least, have made Pete Doherty and Carl Barat smile.

The corporate waltz goes on, inevitably, but for a short while, we rolled some beautiful marbles across the dancefloor. ■



# THE WOMAN WHO

**"Get up off your knees, you weak bastard, and fight!"**

—Katzanzakis

**D**iamanda Galás made her solo recording debut in 1982 with *The Litanies of Satan*, a bloodcurdling blast of screaming, sighing, sneering, spitting sonority based on texts by the poet Charles Baudelaire. Recorded in a freezing cold basement studio in London after she'd been awake for 24 hours, *Litanies* is a glossolalic galaxy further perverted by insane floods of reverb, spatial delay, complex signal processing and overdubbing. Twenty-six years later, it remains quite terrifying in effect.

That initial recorded outpouring established Galás as a troubling and troublesome singer of the avant-garde and beyond, one who boasted a multi-multi-octave voice of unparalleled power and technical command along with a contemporary-classical/new-thing piano style the equal to and great leap forward past the storied prowess of your baddest dudes of the modern jazzbo scene. But all that's just the mechanics of it; her performances have combined these vocal acrobatics with electronics and triple- and quadruple-mike techniques that'd fling the voice around in horrific battles between the Devil, God and all us poor victims—sometimes with her back to the crowd. Her topics? AIDS, rape, torture, genocide.

Galás was born in San Diego in 1955, daughter of a Turkish-Armenian father and an Armenian-Syrian mother. She grew up in a very strict and isolated kind of environment—no TV, no radio, no nothing like that. She wasn't allowed to wear a two-piece bathing suit, couldn't go on any dates, not until she left the house at the age of 19. So she and her brother Philip-Dimitri, a future renowned playwright, got real good at creating their own very individual worlds holed up at home, where, they both dug the dark stuff from early on: Marquis de Sade, Friedrich Nietzsche, Antonin Artaud, and Edgar Allan Poe, especially.

Diamanda's father pushed her into piano lessons at a young age, but he forbid her to sing, 'cause he thought singing was basically for idiots. He'd been a lounge band leader and had conducted gospel choirs, which by age 12 Diamanda had begun to accom-



pany on piano or listened to from the top of the stairs. "Then when people would leave I would sing the music by myself, because I loved this music so much," she says. By age 14, she was playing with the San Diego Symphonic Orchestra.

Galás was a pre-med and then biochemistry student at Revelle College at UCSD. Though she became involved in the neurochemistry department at the UCSD medical school, she became aware during this time that what she really wanted to do was to use herself as a guinea pig.

"That was not an unpopular concept in the '70s," she says, "and so that is what I did. This led to a complete destruction of my previous ideals and put me in the perfect place for vocal research later, although at the time I was exposed to Pasolini, Lilly, B.F. Skinner, Janov, Nietzsche and so on. But I had the uncomfortable feeling that I had no idea how to combine research with music-making until the vocal experimentation work was begun six years later.

She enjoyed her biochemistry studies in college, she wasn't just killing time. "But I ended up spending too much time in the practice room playing the piano and singing and doing things like going into anechoic [silence] chambers and taking LSD and then trying everything with my voice, and getting into a lot of thinking that dealt with sensory deprivation, and that went with using your body as an instrument for your research, how the voice, words came out of it. If I couldn't

# KNOWS TO

## A CONVERSATION WITH PIANIST

**AVENGING QUEEN OF THE DAMNED, OBVIOUS MUSICAL GENIUS AND THE ONLY PERSON ALIVE WHO'S A FAN OF BOTH DORIS DAY AND VLAD THE IMPALER.**

**BY JOHN PAYNE. PHOTOGRAPHY BY SUSANNA HOWE. MAKE-UP AND STYLING BY KRISTOFER BUCKLE.**





# OO MUCH

## T-VOCALIST DIAMANDA GALÁS:

hear the reverberation inside, then nobody could hear me outside, and that was the most important thing to me. I didn't want anyone to know what I was doing. I wanted to be completely free to do what I was doing. That was just an instinct."

While Galás' training in biochemistry enabled her to form solid views

on medicine, and on music as well ("It trains you in seeing things as paradigms, seeing large situations; it influences the way you perceive things, how things work"), her experiences in school with a sado-masochistic boyfriend held equal fascination, and led to her channeling the discipline's extremist views into her art. Early per-

formances of her vocal experimental works were done in mental hospitals, fittingly.

"I was asked by some guys in the Living Theater, they said that was what they were going to do and I should do it, too. At that time, I was just standing with my back to an audience and I would not make a sound for maybe

10 minutes, until I felt it was kind of kicked out of me. Then I would do this for 15-20 minutes. And when I did, there were some very interesting responses. The strongest were from women, who really liked the freedom of that, the freedom of inappropriate behaviour." She laughs.

During her school years Galás played and sang in a weird variety of bands, such as a circa-'74 combo in Pomona that included jazz critic Stanley Crouch along with Butch Morris, David Murray, Mark Dresser and several other heavies of the new-jazz thing. She also served time as an organist at a Holiday Inn lounge, doing Carpenters covers in a band with avant guitarist Henry Kaiser.

Though she'd had extensive formal training on piano, Galás' vocal techniques were from the start purely instinctual. And at some point a few



years into it, she decided that it was important to develop maximum vocal power so that she could sustain long phrases, and sing without harming her vocal cords. In 1979, while Galás was still pursuing a postgrad degree in neurochemistry, Yugoslavian composer Vinko Globokar offered her the lead role as a Turkish torture victim in his opera *Un Jour Comme Un Autre*. In order to meet the harsh vocal demands of

The Litanies of Satan and its accompanying piece, *Wild Women With Steak Knives*, were deliberately titled to provoke, and when they appeared in 1982 they did generate a lot of early controversy about Galás. *Wild Women* was inspired by the Greek tradition in which women preside over the funerals by carrying large knives. Although Galás calls it a ritual of female empowerment, meant to inspire revenge for the dead, its use for a

explored the AIDS epidemic by linking it to texts from Psalms and the Book of Leviticus. Today she calls *Plague Mass* a documentation of “the process of slow death in a hostile environment” in confrontation with “those who’ve twisted Christ’s teaching into socially sanctioned condemnation of sexual difference.” Her brother Philip died of AIDS in 1986, the year she began the work; she dedicated the trilogy to him

and dark angels. Her late-’80s work included vocal contributions to the score of Derek Jarman’s film *The Last of England*, which also deals with the AIDS epidemic. She also released the third installment of *Plague Mass*, entitled *You Must Be Certain of the Devil*, wherein she rails against bogus piety and homophobia.

Galás’ fame as a virtuosic performer grew in large part because of her reputation as a cultural/political agitator. In 1989, she was arrested while participating in a “die-in” at St. Patrick’s Catholic Cathedral in New York City, objecting to what she calls a “war against people with AIDS” by Cardinal O’Connor, who was trying to stop safe sex campaigns. Galás charged the Cardinal with complicity in the plague. In 1990 Galás performed the entire *Plague Mass* at the Episcopal Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City, where she doused her naked torso with blood while performing at the altar. In 1994 she performed *The Masque of the Red Death* in Italy, whose Christian Democratic Party formally accused her of blasphemy at the recitation in Italian of a section of *Masque’s* text. In the USA, Christian television shows put her alongside Ozzy Osbourne on their official lists of Satanic celebrities to be purged or blocked from the airwaves.

Galás remained brutally outspoken, calculatingly callous. In 1991’s influential *Re/Search: Angry Women* anthology of interviews, she ripped a few memorable zingers: “I believe childbirth is obscene. I consider it very alien . . . The myth I always aspired to was that of Artemis or Diana, the goddess of the hunt. She was a warrior and a fighter who had nothing to do with procreation”; “You’re either part of the Resistance or you’re a collaborator” [on AIDS activism]; “I pity weak men: They should be dragged out into the middle of the street, beaten, humiliated, degraded and sodomized by my friends and me just for sport. I love seeing weak men cry—my heart races.”

In all of her pieces, the vocal sound is more than simple beautiful sound, it’s an articulation of suffering – an idea that played a part in Artaud’s *Theatre of Cruelty*. The chilling 1993 *Vena Cava* album of solo vocal and electronic processing effects involved up to four microphones and a tape delay system; lyrics came from a text written by her late brother while enduring the mental and physical degradations of AIDS. *Schrei X* (1996) is a densely technique-packed 35-minute piece for solo voice, ring modulators and other electronic treatment, performed in quadraphonic sound and total darkness; it deals in sensory deprivation, rape and violence with no escape.



Globokar’s piece, she trained like a boxer, and set her goal of becoming the world heavyweight champ of the voice. Her 1980 work in Paris on the late Greek composer Iannis Xenakis’ extraordinarily complex microtonal pieces quickly sealed her reputation as perhaps the only singer physically capable of performing these works’ devilish difficulties.

staged performance resulted in Galás’ interesting early notoriety as both a radical feminist and misogynist.

It was a reputation the bad bitch of new music seemed to relish. As if to further provoke reaction from both sides of the cultural divide, she began composing her crucial *Plague Mass*, an eventual trilogy of late-’80s works including *Masque of the Red Death*, in which she



and Tom Hopkins, another close friend and AIDS victim.

Galás soldiered on with a series of confrontational and musically groundbreaking performances akin to a new Greek tragedy in defense of the displaced and diseased, whose timeless reversals of fortune were decried with the instinctive bloodlust of a frothing mad dog and the doom of a thou-



At times Galás seems to be seeking her fate by enacting and fulfilling her own modern Greek tragedy. Her beliefs are in part a byproduct of hearing her father tell her stories of growing up

***I don't want to be in the new-music ghetto, I don't want to be in any ghetto; I think I'll just use my own name, and that's the ghetto I'll settle for.***

barely second-class in his own country, or worse, his friends hunted down by the Turks, literally pushed into the sea. She has a burning need to set the record straight on our shared history of atrocity. That is the material essence of recent works such as *Defixiones*, *Will and Testament: Orders From the Dead*, a solo voice and piano work based on texts related to the Armenian and Anatolian Greek massacres of 1915 and 1922. A grandly ambitious work involving extended passages from the Armenian liturgy, recitations of poetry such as Adonis' *The Desert* and various other settings of Middle Eastern poets as well as Galás' own "Birds of Death" and the gospel traditional "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean," *Defixiones* is a harrowing maelstrom of Eastern vocal modes and volcanic piano explosions, as Galás intones "the world is going up in flames."

If only to prevent devolving into a caricature of her wicked self, or perhaps to take a kind of breather (who could blame her?), by the early '90s Galás had begun developing the art of the "homicidal love song" in a series of song cycles. In '94, she and Led Zeppelin bassist John Paul Jones collaborated on *The Sporting Life* (Mute), a very bent and very, very heavy set of "rock" tunes taken to epically bizarre extremes, and funny as well, Galás soul-wailing with abandon while pumping a mean whorehouse piano. The song cycles include *The Singer* in 1992, *Malediction and Prayer* and the live *La Serpenta Canta*, scaled back the epic proportions of her previous decade's work to explore equally disturbing nuance in blues and gospel standards such as "I Put a Spell on You," "Balm in Gilead/Swing Low Sweet Chariot" and "See That My Grave Is Kept Clean." The lat-

est in the series is the live *Guilty Guilty Guilty* (out in March on Mute UK).

Today, Diamanda Galás is having toast and tea in the back booth of a restaurant in breezy, sunny San Diego, not far from the waterfront. She's a tall woman, dressed in black, as you'd expect—heavy black

truths obviously, in black and white. But Diamanda's Morticia-like character tends to stomp on mere camp. She knows too much. She is all the while shockingly human; she sips her tea, and tattooed on the fingers of her hand I see: "We are all HIV-positive."

**ARTHUR: First, tell me a little bit about what set you off on your own**

want to be in the new-music ghetto, I don't want to be in any ghetto; I think I'll just use my own name, and that's the ghetto I'll settle for.

In the '70s, if you decided that you were gonna do jazz, then that meant that it had to be about music that had this swing, and I'm like, buddy, sometimes I want the music to swing, sometimes I don't want the music to fuckin'



Above, Diamanda with gun (photo: TJ Eng). Opposite Page, clockwise from top: Diamanda circa 1984 (photo: Paul Harris), James Galás (Diamanda's father) playing the flute, and Diamanda after a *Defixiones* performance at the El Claustro del Sor Juana, the Cloisters of Sister Juana.

coat, blackest long snaky hair, blacker still eyes that don't drill holes in my forehead but rather dart and flicker about the room, leaving singe marks across the naughahyde counter stools. She wants to go deep inside her music, to make the *how* of it understood, so she's talking and talking, gesturing widely with long spindly arms, then talking some more, there's so much to say.

Galás expresses herself in forceful and earthy and beautifully direct ways, in a melodious, cackling rasp. While she's onstage—and probably in most of her daily interactions with people—she is quite an actress, of high, high drama and blackest, gruesomest comedy. Camp is valuable for how it speaks

**musical path. You must have had reasons why you needed to break all the rules.**

**DIAMANDA Galás:** It was the middle of the '70s, and I had come up as both a jazz and a classical pianist at the same time. Doing improvisation without reading first, then reading music. And then after playing classical music for a while, and classical concertos, including Cesar Franck, wonderful, wonderful, and Beethoven, and doing Fats Waller, and then doing things with some guys who had been influenced by Ornette and Ayler and stuff. I just decided that the fact is that the voice is the leader of the band, but I don't want to be in the jazz ghetto, I don't

swing. Like, what the fuck do I care if the music swings?

**From the beginning, you've been as concerned with pure tonality as with the subject matter of the words you sang. One listen to the colossal piano sound on *Guilty Guilty Guilty* makes that clear.**

It's like a nine-foot Steinway, then there's a smaller one, so there's different pianos. When I play a nine-foot, I like to play a nine-foot, I like to get into the meat of the piano. I don't wanna play the E-Z Key, Elton John whatever fuckin' suckass pianos, I wanna play the ones with the really hard action where you can really jump into the fuckin'



thing, because it's like you're jumping into the piano, you're jumping into the void, like bambabam! And it's so great that this woman [the sound engineer] took care to really work in the mastering to get that piano up as close as you could get to a live performance.

***People at labels  
in America have  
heard this record  
and they think it's  
too freaky for them.  
All right, far out,  
man, be stupid.***

I told her, "I've done these live records and they don't sound anything like those live performance, and I'm just so sick of it, I can't even fuckin' handle one more of 'em." [wicked laugh]

People at labels in America have heard this record and they think it's too freaky for them. All right, far out, man, be stupid. The person who's importing it in England knows a lot more about what stores are interested in now than a lot of people who would just get this for the first time. So that's fine.

**You seem to get treated with a lot more respect outside your own country. Now why is that?**

It's wonderful for me to go to Italy. The food is wonderful, they give me a beautiful fucking suite to stay in, they treat you like a real artist. They do a lot of advance publicity, like months

and months, even in advance of the contracts. And then when you perform, the place is filled, the people understand passion, they understand that you could do in the same concert something that might be perceived by some people as avant-garde, and then a song by maybe fucking Petula Clark, and BB King and then maybe Arthur Brown. They don't have any trouble with that, and then moving on to Pasolini. Because they've always had to be accepting of and interested in many different cultures, and they're bordered by so many different countries and they speak different languages and they have an education and they actually know how to read. That'll always separate the men from the boys as far as America's concerned. People don't read here. If people don't read, then something happens to the brain. It stops diversifying, it stops building

new labyrinthine cellular structures. It's like you don't exist without a vocabulary of more than seven words. Then what's going to happen? It's 7 x 7 is 49 and that's the end of it.

In Mexico, South America, Italy, Portugal, Greece, places like this, everything is fine. Then I come back and I see the garbage that passes itself off as radical shit. Just . . . makes . . . me . . . I see these boys in their mothers' nightgown pretending to be rappers, for the record company. It's this commissioning by the music industry to sound like a fucking moron so you can convince other people to sound like a fucking moron so they can all be fucking morons together, and make no progress while some fucker who's sounding like a moron is making a million dollars.

**How do you go about selecting the material to cover in your song cycles?**





I choose to do X number of songs that I get inspired by. You find this song, you like this song. I got the words to 'Fire' by Arthur Brown, and I haven't done it yet, but I'm definitely gonna do that song. I love Arthur Brown. He was just such a monster. Have you seen his videos? His videos are fucking hilarious. I mean, there's Arthur Brown and there's Sun Ra [laughs] and there's Screamin' Jay Hawkins. I'm just talking about the visual aspect of songwriting, you know. I mean, Screamin' Jay Hawkins and Arthur Brown, my fucking Jesus, my fucking Jesus. He had this hat, this little Egyptian thing, and the fire was coming out of it. I did some jazz festivals in the '80s, and they said, "Yeah, Arthur just did a show last night, and he jumped out in the audience -- he was on fire!"

I found this song last night by Sharon Jones, and God! [laughs] Damn! My friend Michael Flanagan, last night he sent me this song "100 Days, 100 Nights." First I loved the song, then I loved how she was doing it. I couldn't believe that a band like that would exist now. It reminded me of Howard Tate, that kind of power. Then I saw the words and I said, 'I'm doing it.' So that's how it works.

**Your decision to interpret the old standard "Autumn Leaves" on *Guilty Guilty* was inspired. It's so beautiful.**

My friend Bradley Pickleheimer is a drag queen from West Hollywood. He picked me up from the airport two years ago, I was in his car, and he played me "Heaven Have Mercy," Edith Piaf singing it. I think it was written for her. I couldn't believe how beautiful it was, and the orchestration, and these Eastern European chord progressions. And I continue to try to describe to people who don't know what I'm talking about, I say, "You guys keep talking about such and such song, and you always talk about the singer instead of the guy who wrote them."

People always say, "'Autumn Leaves' is a Billie Holiday song," and I say, "It's a Joseph Kosma song, all right?" And everybody always says, "Well, nobody would have ever heard it if it weren't for Billie Holiday." But that is just not true, because it was huge in France, with Edith Piaf. Nobody needed Billie Holiday to hear that song. Nobody knows that Joseph Kosma had written lyrics, and he and Chopin had written a lot of *chansons*, and he knew that whole tradition: If you listen to Chopin, if you listen to Liszt or you listen to Cesar Franck, you hear the same chord progressions in the songs, which were incredibly emotional, and you don't

even need to know what the words are to know what the song's about. When I heard Chet Baker singing "The Thrill Is Gone" -- not the B.B. King song -- I said, "My god, I know exactly what that song is." I knew immediately what the song was about.

**But those chords you're playing on "Autumn Leaves"! What exactly is going on there?**

Well, at the period of time I was working on a lot of the arrangements to the songs on *Guilty Guilty*, I was getting into these films and hearing their songs by different singers, because some of the arrangements you could

playing these songs with my father's band, and then after that in bars up in Santee, California, wearing a gold-se-quined, low-cut dress playing the piano, and then the drummer was this guy with an Afro wig on, singing Charley Pride songs . . . ugh!

**A great song is seen as a good piece of material to work with, like high-quality clay might be in the hands of a sculptor.**

If you start off with a song, you master the changes, then you find out what the story is that the composer is trying to tell. Then you look at the words, that's next,



Two beasts: John Paul Jones and Diamanda, 1994. Photo: Stephen Sweet.

only hear on the film, for some reason, like *Imitation of Life* [1959; music by Frank Skinner and Henry Mancini]. I'm just going to think about a movie that Doris Day was in, *Love Me or Leave Me* [1955].

*Love Me or Leave Me*, I don't know who did the orchestration, but it's just gigantic. [Percy Faith and George E. Stoll are credited for the music.] When I heard the orchestral introduction, I just said, yeah, that is definitely gonna influence my interest in the song. Well, it ended up influencing the beginning to "Autumn Leaves," which is written in the key of A minor, and so it starts out [sings it], and then you go into these diminished chords, you know, then you go into the major chords, then you go back to A minor seventh, D major . . . [hearty laugh]

It comes from years and years of

and then you sing the song. When you have a song like "Autumn Leaves," which has all those changes already in it, those changes are telling the story before the words are. Well, Johnny Mercer wouldn't say that, but, whatever. I worked with my brother on exactly two songs, and he was so brilliant. I'd give him the changes and he would just have the words right away. My brother could take any chord changes and just get the rhythm, and bam! He was fuckin' brilliant with words. I don't know how he did it.

**Listening to new album, I said, damn, this is the best piano playing I've ever heard. John Paul Jones says you're his favorite pianist, too.**

He always says that in his interviews. [She almost blushes; not quite] He is

the most generous musician in the world, he really is. That's another person who doesn't want to be a woman onstage. A lot of these guys, they really wanna be bitches. He's the opposite.

**How did you two create the music on *The Sporting Life*?**

We did this kind of tradeoff where he would give me the rhythm and then I would put the changes on top of that, and then put the words on top of that; or I would give him the changes and then he would just lay down the rhythm. Or I'd give him the rhythm and the changes and then he would say, "No, I think the bridge should be this." I wrote a lot of them, but then he layed down a lot of the rhythms. In "You're Mine," he put a bridge in there that I would never have thought of, just a total rockabilly bridge, and I was like, "Wow, that's just slammin'." 'Cause I was getting into this modal thing, and I was going on and on, and he says, "You know, that's a little bit repetitive," and I says, "What?" [She laughs.]

**Your admiration for singers seems to have a lot to do with how skillfully (musically) they could interpret and manipulate, even mutate, the words. That's an art which should not be left in the hands of lightweights.**

I never liked Judy Garland, never. And then I saw her on *The Judy Garland Show*, and Peggy Lee was on it, and they were doing different songs and then a duet. Judy Garland sang "Never Never Will I Marry" . . . Wow. And there was this rhythm thing, dun do do do do, "never, never . . . will I marry" dun do do do do. Wow! That chick's slammin'. I can't believe that she's singing like that. It was a total distortion of the song. She knew the changes, but then took it into another thing.

Then I took it another step. Because when these singers like Peggy Lee, when they sing a song they have to sing it straight first. But she knew the changes, she was a great musician, and then when she takes something out, it gets my respect, because you're still hearing the song; you're still hearing what the song is about. It's not like some shit-ass alternative bands who'd take the song, "'Autumn Leaves,' oh, autumn leaves, I like those words, oh wow, that's in A minor, I can do this fast, then it's like another minor chord," suddenly it's three chord changes, duh duh duh, "gloomy autumn leaves--oh yeah, it means deadly in French, wow man," and then suddenly it is dead, it's fuckin' horrible, it's like the worst fuckin' thing you've ever heard, and they're, like, all attitude-y about it, like



arty. You mother fuckers, why don't you just write your own songs? Don't touch that shit.

Because that shit is actually classical music, I mean classical to the jazz repertoire, but classical music also, and classic, and just leave 'em alone.

#### Tape's rolling, Diamanda, go for it.

And usually they're doing it like they want to be so influenced by Billie Holiday. It's so funny, 'cause they're doing it back-asswards anyway – you don't do a song because you wanna sound like Billie Holiday; you go to a song because you go to the song. I can't even listen to Billie Holiday. I haven't heard Billie Holiday for years, I can't even listen to her, because there's just so many other singers out there that nobody's ever heard. She did what she did with that voice, and it worked really well. But there's Lorez Alexandria,

she decides to finish a phrase. I really respect that, because she could take those phrases the way Peggy Lee could listen to an Ellington song that nobody else would ever sing because they couldn't hear it, and she would sit there and she would do that line of an Ellington song and then she would write the words to it. She would write the words to it, but she'd sing the head of it and the words to it, in the right time, not missing a single page, 'cause she could hear it.

And that's amazing. I mean, these broads don't get credit. Their image is so flashy that people aren't looking beyond it. And then Doris, the timbre of her voice—ahhhh—there's a stone for it, this emerald quality. I'm not saying that I like all the songs she sang, or had to sing, all those real stupid purebred Pollyanna fuckin' Christmas songs or whatever, I'm not interested in that. But when she's singing beau-

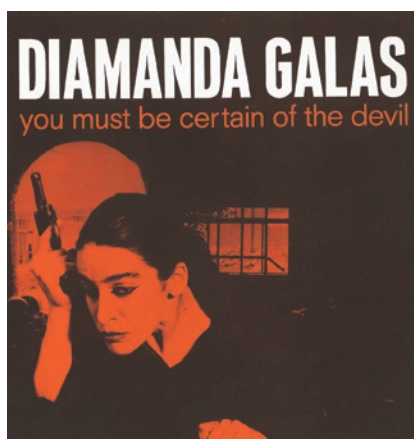
just, I'm like why? When I hear singers now doing that, I'm like, you know what? You should shut up. Someone should take your skull and just bury you like the Indians would do, in the sand with your face looking up to the sun, and then tell you, right as you're about to die, you can't ever sing scat again.

Really, it's so insulting. It truly insults Ella Fitzgerald, as far as I'm concerned, because she was diabetic, and she had to play in Stockholm and then go to Berlin the same night, she did two gigs a night, and then, under the circumstances, the way they traveled in those days, with diabetes? She was an incredible workhorse; she was a workaholic and a great singer.

I've studied about Ella Fitzgerald, I really respect her as a musician. But I just hate scat singing, with the exception of some of Betty Carter's stuff—not all of it, 'cause it tends to sound all the

there's an interlude in the middle that seems plonked down on top of the song, like it wasn't meant to be there yet appears somehow related, you just can't put your finger on it. You're doing that with your voice, but it sounds like a hovering spacecraft. Is that an example of what you call "multiphonics?"

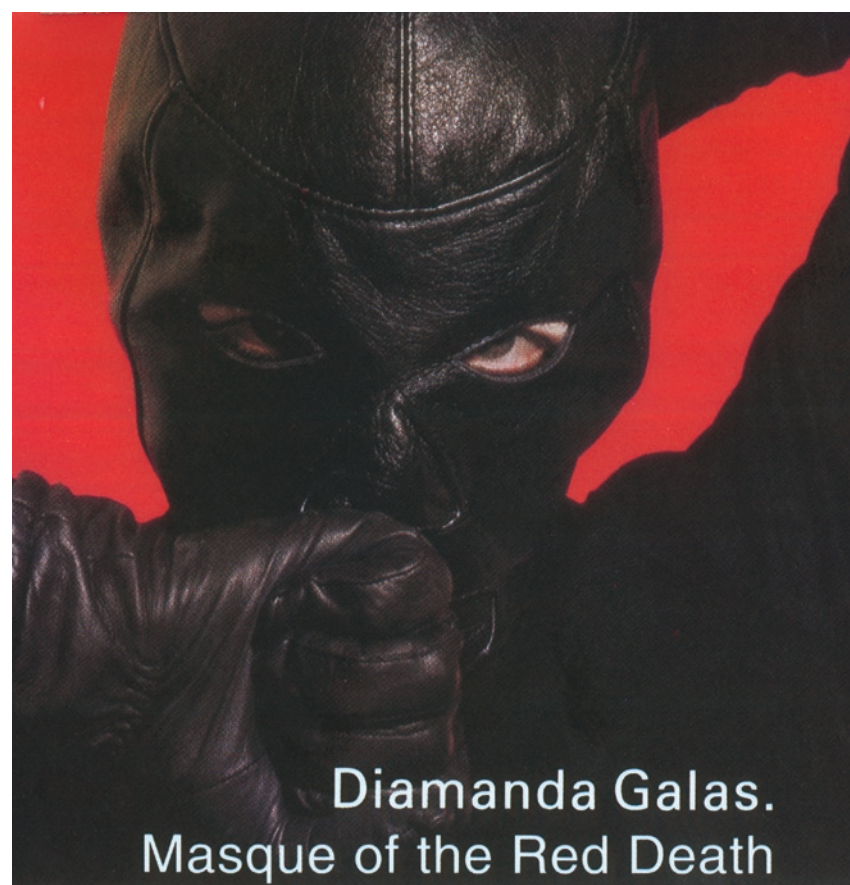
I was reading something about a doctor who heard the sounds of people in the military when they were suffering really horrific stuff, and he heard these sounds. Roy Hart, this English singer, ended up doing a tape that I heard, where he sang the words "I am Dionysus," and he sang it from the lowest possible voice, which is the bass, to the highest. That really was impossible—no woman can do that, because you have to be a male to go that low with the kind of power that he had. Unless you're gonna rip your throat apart.



there was Dinah Washington, Carmen McCrae, there are millions of things happening that are fantastic, and people don't hear about them – or maybe they want it just pretty. Like Sharon Jones, you know, she used to support herself as a prison guard at Sing-Sing.

#### Some people might be surprised to hear about your high regard for Doris Day.

My favorite subject in the world is Doris Day. Here we have a woman who people thought of as just a pretty face, a dancer and a Pollyanna. I don't care about that; what I know about this woman is, she had the most incredible legato I ever heard in my life, for pop music or jazz or whatever. And they don't call it jazz when she does it, they look at her and think "pretty little blond white girl, so she's not a jazz singer." Well, that's a bunch of shit, because she is, man. Legato legato legato—her phrases aren't chopped up because they have to be, because she's run out of breath—uh uh, if she decides to finish a phrase, it's because



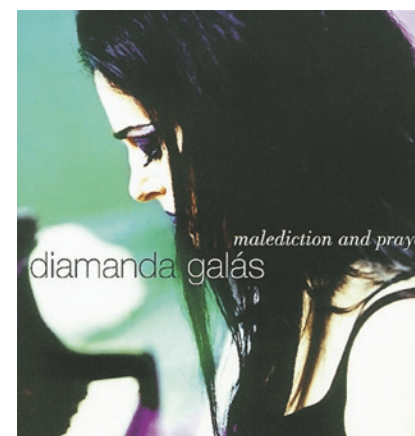
tiful songs, where you have a full orchestra, and the voice is not supposed to be fucking around or doing that horrible scat singing that I hate.

#### The Curse of Ella . . .

Yeah, though when Ella's doing it, when she takes it to its most far out, when you hear the multiphonics and it could be part of the Korean vocal tradition, then I love it. But if it's just straight-up scat singing, I mean, that's

same after a while. I just don't like it, because I'm like, Why would a singer ever want to sound like a horn player? Why would you want to make those double-stops, why would you want to interrupt your vocal line or legato unless you had to already? It's hideous. Awful.

**On *Guilty Guilty Guilty*, you do a version of Ralph Stanley's "O Death,"—which you say is a love song, too—for the Grim Reaper. In "O Death,"**



#### Just for the record, your own range is what? It's been reported to be up to eight octaves.

Oh, they're just fuckin' liars. I don't think they know what they're talking about. I don't even know what it is. People say three octaves, four octaves, five octaves – I have no idea what it is, but I sure know it's not eight octaves. I mean, maybe when I go into multiphonics, it's a detached octave down there.



**If you're getting overtones in there, you might say it's eight octaves going up the other way. Dogs are barking.**

This is what I do: I get onto a note, I sing it in a very relaxed vocal production, but you know exactly where the breath is all the time, and you know where the resonance is, it's right up front, but it's got this diaphragmatic thing going, constantly giving it air, and it's very relaxed. You have to have the throat completely open; if it's tight you can't make a sound at all. And then what happens out of that tone is you can resonate tones that go much lower than that.

I don't know what I'm doing, really, it's just that I can feel that the resonance is in the sternum, and then the nose, and then once that goes, you can somehow get higher notes from that first note, then you've got like

the voice, doing the kind of work I do, to know what you're doing technically. I learned it from having a father who's very musical and who also sang and who would talk about Sinatra learning from Tommy Dorsey, learning from breath, you know, what a trombonist has to do in order to do long phrases. But also later on I was studying, because what I was trying to do was theoretically impossible, in many ways. It was an attempt to be able to do a lot of what horn players do with circular breathing – but voices, we don't have circular breathing.

There are lots of people who do this, all over the world. I don't know where they do it in the Middle East or in Greece, but the closest sound may be in Georgia—in the Black Sea area there are a lot of interesting parallels, because they have these looow bass choirs, and maybe some of them are doing something like that. My father's

sing, like, a semitone scale, just for a laugh. And I do it sometimes right in the middle of a piece. I'm just having a blast improvising.

**In live performance, your music seems to contain then release enormous waves of mind, muscle, sex and heart. Is that because you're filled to bursting, or are you a chaneller of some kind? A bit of both, I expect.**

God, there's this shithead out there, Mike Patton. He imitates me. He imitates everybody. That motherfucker short fuckin' midget, he was at all my shows in the '90s. He wrote in *Wire* magazine that I don't improvise. I just laughed. I go onstage completely empty, and for what I do you have to be vocally wound up. There are all these people who just go onstage and make weird noises, do whatever they can do to get through the performance, and that's fine. But for me, I have to have phrasing, and go between multiphonics or bel canto or all these things, and I can't be, "Oh, I'm going from the high voice to the chest voice to the multiphonics," I can't be thinking like that onstage. So I have to be ready for it, and the technique is good, and I can't have a lot of chattering going on in my head. And then I just go onstage and play.

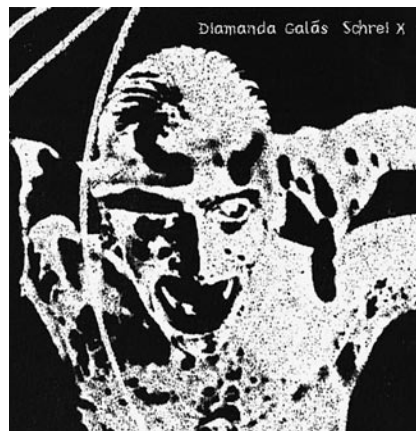
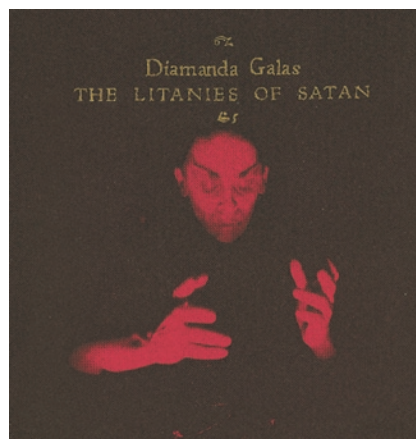
**And it's just you and a piano, which is amazing, considering the orchestral sound you're making. A full band**

changes here and then maybe doing a kind of tonal thing, and then kind of laying the boards over that.

It's like that Hitchcock thing, where you just keep it clean and you know why you're there at a particular time. And you know and I know that those blues guys like John Lee Hooker and certainly Howlin' Wolf, they'd be changing the rhythm all the time. It's not like what I hear blues people doing now, this stinky fucking line that just goes on and on and on, and at the end of the song I'm like, "Well? And so what happened?"

**What happened is that now you are 10 minutes older.**

Interestingly enough, since 9/11, a lot of people coming from the Middle East are saying there would be no blues if there were no muezzin singing, and I said, "Well, you know, the reason I won't argue with that is that music comes from Byzantium, from the mixture of all these cultures in the Middle East, including Anatolia, Turkey, Greece." Where did the music of Islam come from? Well, it came from the Arabs, originally. Who did the Arabs get it from? The Arabs took it from the Greeks. They all changed music together in that melting pot of the Black Sea and Egypt and Turkey; in all those Arab countries, there was this exchange of music. So you have this bending of the tones, and you don't just have a five-note scale—what is that? All these taqsim and the makams, all these



three of 'em going. So then it's more a sensation, and you have to have the correct sensation, you have to be very relaxed to do it. And when you do it, it's a blast, it's really easy. And it's very healthy for the voice, because there can be no tension in the vocal cords.

**You had to have trained a lot to reach a point where that kind of facility with the voice was possible.**

It's mandatory if you want to extend

father was from the Eastern part of Turkey, and I've heard a lot of music from that area that has some of that quality.

**When you hear it played back, does it sound different than it does inside your head?**

It's a sensation in your skull, it's great, it's just intense. And it sounds louder because it's amplified, obviously. I have so much fun with it—I can literally

**would most likely just screw it up, anyway.**

With my Bosendorfer, with the black keys I can do the drums as well; it's almost like it's not even tonal anymore, it's like FedEx to the office on the black keys. With the piano, I can change all the rhythm, but all the notes are a function of the rhythm. So they're not superfluous, they're a function of changing the rhythm. So I'm changing the rhythm or then playing either the solo stuff or the

scales.

And that is what I hear when I listen to most interesting blues music, which I feel is from Somalia and Ethiopia right now, because they have to get up there and be really good qaraami singers—the improvised music of that whole part of the world—and then they have to be pop singers and blues singers, too. So they get up and they start the solo with the qaraami, then they go into the song, and they go back into the qaraami. The qaraami is





**niques do get called Turkish; Western music critics use “Turkish music” as a big umbrella term.**

That’s what Turkish imperialism is. They are a very rich country—in between what they get from America and what they get from Israel, they do real good. They can afford to have plundered the Assyrians, the Kurdish, the Greeks, the Armenians and many Arabic cultures and call it Turkish. They have borrowed from everyone, and other cultures as well have taken from them. But there is no such thing as a united Turkish music. That is just a bunch of shit.

This whole thing about insults to Turkish people, in Turkey they put people in jail for it. If you say you’re Assyrian, that means you’re insulting Turkish people; if you speak Greek, that’s an insult to Turkishness. And still, those two cultures melted into music that is now called Turkish music. Anatolia was a huge area that was inhabited by many cultures, and now they call it Turkey. And they say it’s “The Land of the Turks”—only because they killed everybody else off that lived there before.

**Of course, modern Greek musicians frequently refuse to sing certain songs because they think the song’s roots are in Islam. But in reality, they don’t know where that song came from.**

There are a lot of people who refuse to perform certain music because they think they’re performing music by the enemy tribe. And they’re not. It’s part of their own music. The Turks employed Greeks, Armenians, Assyrians and Jews to compose music for the sultans. Then they called it “Turkish music.”

**The imperialistic impulse, taken to its worst extremes, leads to genocide of varying shades of evil, such as the prohibiting of musicians from singing in their own languages. This is related to the issues you addressed in *Defixiones*, to a lot of outcry and protest in the U.S., Europe and Australia.**

The U.S. doesn’t want to recognize the Armenian genocide because it’s going to bed with Turkey. Now is not the time to discuss an Armenian genocide, and now will never be the time to discuss these things “because we have our national security to think of and that of Armenia,” said the Clinton administration. Selling billions of dollars of attack helicopters to Turkey to safeguard its national security and that of Israel—these things get in the way of settling an old score of minor players, so to speak.

Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon

sung by church singers also. But these are real singers—I hear it and I think about where the blues is, what the Americans have done to it since then, which is just: repeat.

**Though they seem to specialize in it, that overly reverent regard for mu-**

**sical genres’ classic forms—stylizing them till they petrify hard enough to put them up on museum shelves—is not an exclusively American problem.**

But when people try to get into this ethnic purity thing, like with Wynton

Marsalis or Stanley Crouch, it’s the same thing that people do when they think about Armenian music—“Well, this scale or sound here is probably Turkish.” And I say, “How do you know if it’s Turkish or not?”

**A lot of musical idioms and tech-**



Peres called the Armenian Genocide Resolution “meaningless” and said, “We reject attempts to create a similarity between the Holocaust and the Armenian allegations. Nothing similar to the Holocaust occurred. It is a tragedy what the Armenians went through, but not a genocide.” Peres did this in April 2001 while asking Turkey to support Israel against the Palestinians, and going into business with them in their purchase and possible co-production of the Arrow anti-tactical ballistic missile interceptor—developed by the U.S. and Israel—and while discussing the sale of Turkish water to Israel. Turkey threatens not to renew the mandate for U.S. forces using the Incirlik air base in southern Turkey to patrol the no-fly zone in northern Iraq—if there is any mention of “an Armenian genocide.”

We have a lesser but nonetheless painful situation with our leaders in Greece, who are so crazy about peace with the Turks that they turned in [Kurdish separatist rebel leader] Abdullah Ocalan as a gesture of friendship. It is never the time to give any kind of importance to people of no importance.

The Armenian Genocide Resolution was blocked by the combined interests of Turkey, Israel and the United States. The same genocide denial will occur with the Anatolian Greeks and the Assyrians, who were starved to death and slaughtered in death marches under the guise of deportation. [More than one million Greeks were forced to leave their Asia Minor homeland in 1922-1923, during the Greek-Turkish exchange of ethnic minorities.] Now that the Eastern Christians have been finished off, the Kurds have become the new irritant to the concept of the national [Turkish] order. When the Turks buried the Greeks in mass graves, they said, “We don’t know what happened to these people. You are exaggerating the numbers of deportees.” And we know what happened to the Greek Cypriots: Los Desaparecidos.

Some of the Greeks in power, they don’t need the Turks to fuck them, they fuck themselves. They just say, “Okay, we want to be Europeans, too,” and a lot of people I know who are Greek activists, Armenian activists, Assyrian activists, Kurdish activists, we have to fight that all the time, because it’s like saying, “Okay, I accept you killing my culture.” The analogy is very close to the way the Indian culture was killed by the Spanish culture: “You don’t exist, you don’t exist. We are raping your culture, you don’t exist.”

As I wrote in that proclamation for the memorial for Hrant Dink [the assassinated Armenian-Turkish journalist]: “Robbery is not just the robbery

of money or human flesh; it involves the soul murder of cultures which will soon die if they have no more songs to sing. Especially in the desert. And survival in the desert has been proven to be perilous.”

**You seem to derive some of your greatest joy in the stories of people you admire, many of whom we aren’t normally supposed to admire.**

Turkey is truly a sultan’s country, ‘cause that was the whole sultan thing, going to the countries like Romania, where Vlad the Impaler was in charge, and saying, “We need 500 boys for the army”—for fucking. But that’s why Vlad was impaling all his own people; he

***I find it interesting when I hear people say I’m doing dark subjects, because I think they’re thinking that because what I’m doing is the opposite of being dead, and maybe I have to be extremely energized, or I’m fighting to get away from something, just getting away from that depression, so I have to fight harder than other people, and maybe that struggle is evident.***

said, “You steal from your neighbor and I can tell you that the only way to get our country to be morally strong enough to fight the Turks is if you fear me.” He got people fuckin’ terrified so they could fight the Turks.

**Vlad the Impaler was a political hero?**

He did it with big ol’ stakes, they went right through the asshole, right through the larynx. People took five days to die. He said, “You’re not afraid to be decapitated anymore. I’m gonna give you something to be afraid of.” Gotta respect a man like that.

**Your 2002 dedication of three concerts to Aileen Wuornos—a Florida prostitute convicted and executed for multiple killings of several johns Wuornos claimed had raped her—was done for related multifarious reasons.**

I can understand why some person

who gets no justice from the law goes around having to kill. Most street prostitutes get raped several times a year, or they get stood up for their money or they get beat up afterward. After so many years of what Aileen Wuornos was doing, that was what you call critical mass, like, okay, that’s it. And after one murder, what’s another six? It’s just academic.

**Yet you speak for the dead. At least that’s what the press releases say.**

People say that, but I don’t know what they mean. [laughs] I’ve felt dead enough in my own life. Not to glamorize it too much.

But I am not a Goth, I’m a Greek.

and maybe that struggle is evident.

**I think of another hero of yours, the great singer Patty Waters from back in the ‘60s. She had a kind of woeful sound.**

She was . . . morose? Yeah, maybe in an inward, introverted sense. But I’m afraid of that word – as in unending.

**There’s a kind of sadness that makes you want to do things, and a kind where you don’t want to do anything.**


There’s the kind where you don’t want to do anything but sit in the middle of a bunch of trash on your floor... I know a lot about that. [laughs] I think it’s just a real misanthropic, kind of an asocial thing. I’m the person who doesn’t go out, that kind of person who—I just want to do my own music and just be left alone and let’s not all get along type of thing.

**You’ve called Xenakis a hero, too. What did he represent?**

Xenakis as a Greek was a hero, as a Greek resistance fighter, which is what in fact he was in the war. But he’s a hero to me because he represents a lot of things to me. He really annoyed and shocked lot of people in the new music world. Very radical figure, as far as I’m concerned. He had his own experimental laboratory in Paris for his work, he had his own system of how he operated. And he didn’t work for performers, he composed the work and then performers chose to do them. He was really his own man.

When you actually get a chance to do what it is you know how to do, you remember who you are. And the rest of the time you can literally walk around feeling like a weird homeless person. Like what do I do, actually? Who am I, actually? And that stuff makes you mentally ill. Because living on the edge like that pushes you into places that we’re all too vulnerable to in the first place.

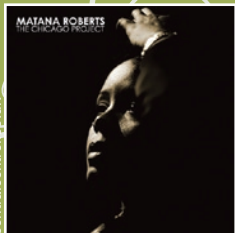
**In the beginning of “O Death,” we hear a woman singing in the old Greek tradition typical of a dying soldier’s prayer on the battlefield—when he calls for his mother.**

While you’re alive and healthy, you believe that you don’t need something—but, you know, we’re all good gamblers, and we say, well, if there is a god, I’ll take you. [laughs] It can’t hurt. 









**Matana Roberts**  
*The Chicago Project*  
CCI 6



Central Control debut from saxophonist **Matana Roberts**, featuring stellar performances from **Jeff Parker**, **Josh Abrams** and **Frank Rosaly**, recorded by **Vijay Iyer** and **John McEntire**. "Roberts is a rising star, whose quality is imprinted all over this remarkable set" — *The Wire*



**The Lesser Birds Of Paradise**  
*Space Between Ltd. Edition Vinyl*  
CTP 64



Ltd edition vinyl version of what *All Music Guide* calls "a small psych-folk gem". Comes equipped with free digital download to boot. Single notes, pump organs, xylophones, muted drums, and echoing voices layer in a warm, seductive embrace.



**BEVEL**  
*Phoenician Terrane*  
CTP 63



Featuring members of **Califone**, **Boxhead Ensemble**, and **Manishevitz**. Languidly plucked guitar lines, string embellishments, and transient gypsy-laden tones cast in a soft, psychedelic haze. "... beautiful and strangely perplexing." — *Babysue*



**The Pack A.D.**  
*Tintype*  
MRI 111



*Tintype* - the debut album from **The Pack A.D.** 17 tracks of loud, edgy and unforgiving garage rock steeped in the blues. "The whole beautiful mess will have uptown turkeys running in terror back to their **Eric Clapton** blues CDs." — *The Georgia Straight*



**Dengue Fever**  
*Venus On Earth*  
M80 101



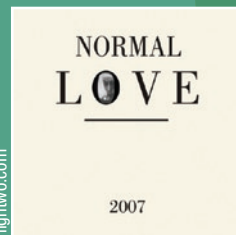
"A unique and surprisingly danceable group that combines a beautiful Khmer-language vocalist from Cambodia and a quintet of seasoned locals with a knack for mixing Southeast Asian pop, Vietnam-war- era lounge music, klezmer, ska, surf rock, and Ethiopian jazz." — *Spin*



**His Name Is Alive**  
*Sweet Earth Flower: A Tribute to Marion Brown*  
HGH 14



Iconoclastic Michigan band **His Name Is Alive** reinterpret the music of legendary free jazz icon **Marion Brown** (with help from members of **Nomo**). Lauded by *Signal to Noise*, *Downbeat*, *AllMusic.com* and others. Mandatory for fans of either artist.



**Normal Love**  
*Normal Love*  
HGH 15



Stoking the community since '06, **Normal Love** is a Philadelphia-based quintet comprised of amplified violin, two electric guitars, electric bass, and drum set. The band's debut is loud and brutal, precise and discordant -- intricately reckless. For fans of **Zs**, **HEALTH**, and **The Flying Luttenbachers**.



**Lafcadio**  
*Kibosh*  
JNR 21



Powerfully regulated, densely organized wall-of-sound metal and delirious, spastic, often sublime experimentation braiding together in an insane double helix of truly inspired rock music. RIYL: **Melvins**, **US Maple**, and **Sleepytime Gorilla Museum**.



**17 Hippies**  
*Heimlich*  
BUD 860150



"An engaging blend of pop sounds and traditional eastern European folk melodies." — *Chicago Sun-Times*



**Various Artists**  
*Audio Eagle Presents A Compilation Of Bands From Ohio*  
AER 4



Twenty-one engaging tracks showcasing some of the best new artists coming out of Ohio's dynamic music community, hand-selected by the infallible executives of Ohio's premier tastemaking label. Old-fashioned indie rock fun from America's heartland.

# NAIL DISTRIBUTION



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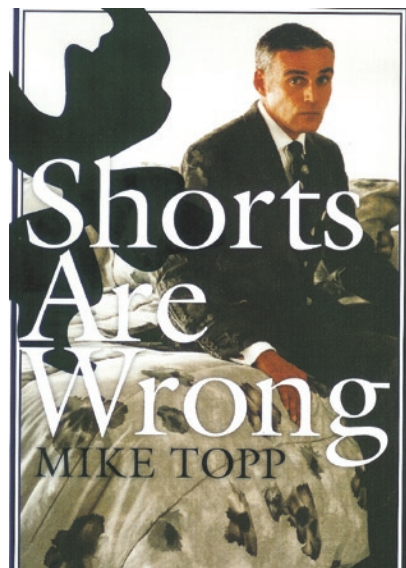
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to-99 copies cassette of *Black Zurnai* by **Electronavn** and it rolls off the tape heads with curious ghost-tones and pulsing sound-meat. A good place for statesiders to check this cat's crazy cool emission. Not Not Fun also graces us with a warm and woozy double cassette called *Earth Lodge* by **Ajilvsga** which is the Oklahoma duo of **Brad Rose** and **Nathan Young**. Like their recent releases on Peasant Majik, Arbor, and Arroyo this pair's southwestern streams of sun-sound make for excellent sweet listening. It's accompanied by striking collage art by **Manda** from **Pocahaunted**. An LP is forthcoming from **Palindrome**.

One other cassette on Not Not Fun we'd like to alert you to is certainly the rock n' feedback drive of *At The Mountains of Madness* by **Magic Lantern**. This Long Beach 5tet has been together for a year or less and are already melting the hairwaves with a new youth-psych **Taj Mahal Travelers** induced orgiastic repetition hardcore



drone fry that is completely boss.

As far as vinyl ala Not Not Fun, well they should be as ecstatic as we be with the release of two amazing LPs. First up is **Heather Leigh Murray**'s *Devil If You Can Hear Me* which is raw un-fi recordings of Heather unfolding pedal steel dark and heavy improv moves allowing her thoughts to suddenly extol stirring and lovely voicings. Side two's side-long "Candy Butcher" is wildly wonderful and ends as if slurped by a black void. Second up is probably one of the coolest, most stirring LPs we've ever heard. A split between **Christina Carter** and **Pocahaunted** that reaches into some very narcotic and raw fields of music-love-magic. Christina's side is four stark and personal readings on 1. Aging, 2. Death, 3. Solitude, and 4. Dreams. An involving and deep affair touching on the more nether vibes of Jandek but with an introspection distinctly Christina's. Pocahaunted's side, particularly "Sweat Lodge" is probably

the most killer jam they've published. Super eerie and soul-licking. A divine experience and one you gotta taste post-haste.

Supremo ass-squelch of a distinctly Canadian order is in full anal gland grip by the sound of the *Hachinki* cassette by **Bonsai Forestry** (Wintage). That is until the meat-radio kicks the buttplug loose and all liberated sickness signals are unleashed. These kats are all krunk nature lovers packaging their masterpiece into a velcro'd carboard box with tree-jizz pasted on and a tape holder made of tuff-flaking foam. Blip n' scrape fun but you best wash yr hands after handling.

**Cody Ranaldo**'s first release on what is presumably his own label Western Unconscious is entitled *Beating You Up* and while there is a rather insistent power strum to Side A augmented by over-fuzzed footswitching it is music of a young and wise soul more gentle than naught. Raga ripping is the character at hand, though it all goes out the window with side B's investigations into beatbox offness. Hopefully more from this dude will come our way.

The **No Fun fest** earlier this year was a completely unhinged miasma of orgiastic brain-crushing bliss. A lot of it had to do with the premier stateside performance of **Incapacitants**, hands down the most remarkable and stultifying practitioners of rapacious noise-bleed onslaught not only from their homeland of Japan but the goddamn universe. **No Fun Productions** has released the *Live at No Fun Fest 2007* CD of that performance alongside the one by Japan's **Pain Jerk**, also killer. It's all a total slashing, slamming, sizzling physical barrage of hurricane meat-sound and it comes at a time when a retrospective look at Japan as ground zero for global noise history is due. Thanks to No Fun's hellbent release schedule we are gifted with a primary overview of **C.C.C.C.**, one of Japan's most notorious outfits from the '80s featuring **Fumio Kosakai** (later of **Incapacitants**), founder **Hiroshi Hasegawa** and porn-pain queen **Mayuko Hino**. The four-CD boxset *Early Works* is essential to anyone seriously into this genre either as curiosity seeker or full on devotee. It is probably the most relentless fuck-the-universe noise document ever compiled for one band and the Kosakai liner notes are amazing, real and hilarious. Incapacitants' **T. Mikawa**, a remarkable man who works daily in the straight world of high finance and literally explodes into a noise demon at night is featured on a great tape release with legendary Japanoise outfit **Crack Steel** from a live 2006 event called *Fuck My Ass: Live At Binspark* (Cipher Productions). The tape is adhered to an excellent booklet of photos from the



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The brand new album out 1/29. Produced by Bernard Butler.



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event with delirious memoir by "Soddy" (whereabouts unknown).

**Fantastic Sleep** is **Ged Gengras** (**Fantastic Ego**, **Antique Brothers** and **Thousands**) and **Grant Capes**



Lexie Mountain Boys

(**Sleepwalkers Local 242**, (VxPx), and **Thousands**) deciding to make non-boring drone music which is quite an ambition as yes there is a lot of bored and boring droneism being executed at any given time. Thankfully these lads have some pretty stellar moves and know of which they drone and thus have created this hep drone tape **New Master** (Phantom Limb). Do we need a drone war? Or would that just be another drone bore? (help).

There's this guy **Ignatz** from Brussels, well that's not his real name, his real name is **Bram Devens**, but he identifies with the mouse Ignatz, or is it a rat, whatever it's a rodent who was known to throw bricks at **Krazy Kat**. Do you know your cartoon history? Krazy Kat was this kind of accident-prone, imperious and sentimental feline who was knocked viciously to reality with a brick thrown by Ignatz the mouse. The characters were created in 1910 by **George Herriman**. The thing with Krazy Kat is he always decoded the brick smacks as declarations of love. **Weirdness** and **Devens** uses Ignatz as his nom de plume for deploying love-sounds wrapped in vintage mortars. Dude's involved with the Belgian Kraak scene, put out a CD and LP, and he released a cassette on Canada's Bennifer Editions. All of which are choice, but what's been stuck in our players is this new mysterious jam called **Atlantic Woman**. It's by an Ignatz/Bram Devens sub-ego called **Miles Devens** and it's on the **Skaters'** tape label New Age, so good luck locating this gem. You may want to try the regular distros of the irregular like **Volcanic Tongue** in the UK and either **Fusetron** or **Eclipse** in the USA. Also check out the Skaters fan site on **Myspace**. It offers leads. The music has a sort of more-beneath-the-ether vibe of **PG Six's** earlier gloops but more shrouded and clouded. The tones are sweet, sensual and spooked.

It's encouraging to see some of the better small presses keep it happening in these dreary days of virtual desire.

Chicago's Pitchfork Press has wisely changed its moniker to The Silver Wonder Press but not before allowing one more Pitchfork rag to be constructed. It belongs to **Gerald Locklin** who has been writing strong and steady since the early '60s with over 3000 poems in print within 125 books and rising, including this fine stapled edition titled *The San Antonio, Savannah, & Daytona Beach Poems*. His is an eagle's eye on the American landscape of humanity and all its frenzied lassitudes and is worth reading for the sake of connecting to honest rumination in the face of TV death. Dig? Two issues under the new Silver Wonder imprint are one each by **Guy R. Beining** and **Robert O'Neal**. Beining has a long history of writing supersonic slices of minimalist poetry. **Outside The End** has some of his most choice new jams alongside some drawings and collages to help crack the sweet code. A few lines from "almost complete, 5/7/01-monday": "those golden notes / are from a cave / & the black acid drops / come from the t.v. / where its widening / white circle is lost / in protraction of the skull. / why not bang another / bone on the floor..." **Robert O'Neal** works somewhere in southern Indiana as a sweeper in a car repair joint. Perfect poet environment and he rips wicked lines left and right in both anger and solace in search of righteous juice. One poem rolls off into a litany of fuck declarations: "Fuck high fructose corn syrup. / Fuck computers dumped in the 3rd world. / Fuck dirty bombs & sanitized word bombs..." Fuck yes. (Newsbreak: Silver Wonder Press has just issued **Hello From the American Desert**, a 40-page collection of **Lee Ranaldo's** spam-inspired poetry, accompanied by artwork by the **Meat Puppets' Curt Kirkwood**)

**Nondor Nevai**, by all accounts, should not still be alive. It's very possible he isn't. We first caught sight of him on the infamous "free-glam" tour of **To Live & Shave In L.A.** a few years back. He was a ferocious black metal scum bandit raging way past the band's set with unbridled drum pounding and sweaty headbanging inanity. He made fellow bandmates **Weasel Walter** and **Misty Martinez** appear absolutely docile. All we know is ex-Chicago resident **Jim O'Rourke** claimed the best band name ever in Chi-town was Nondor's legendary and infamous **Vagiant**. So we had hoped to hear **Vagiant** as a recording session happened but it never was released. As neither was the **Aborted Christ Childe** LP that **Tom Smith** was to release. One other **Nondor** group called **Hatewave**, again with Weasel Walter, did release a CD and it's one of the best outsider sick-metal projects out there, though "true" black metal freaks are oblivious to it for reasons of elitism inherent to the genre. But trust us who



listen outside of the box, it destroys. Anyway Nondor is a satanic power metal freak of nature and we just found the compilation of his lost and sundry works as produced by Weasel on the Nihilist label. It's titled *The Best Of Nondor Nevai* and it is crushing, hilarious and delivers the damaged goods. Available only on cassette, keeping it out of sight to aboveground ears, it features tracks from the unreleased *Vagiant*, *VVarvolk* and *Aborted Christ Childe* LPs. A lot of Beefheartian voiced ruminations on straight up boner-boy sex with a shot of art history thrown in. Fucking weird and fucking awesome. From the liner notes: "Nevai has manipulated the very fabric of reality to create his work, and as a result, documentation has been scarce. Much of his legend exists thus far in the domain of oral history and rumors. Equal parts GG Allin, Otto Meuhl, Andy Kaufman, Kim Fowley, Ted Kaczynski, Charles Ives, Gurdjieff and Dennis Hopper. Nevai has fucked with death and survived so many times we must regard him as superhuman. What you will hear on this release are the ravings of a madman, drunken with lucidity." ~ Weasel Walter

The Psychform, Black Horizons and Steronucleosis labels have gotten together to release a split LP by **Anakrid** and **Blue Sabbath Black Cheer** where both outfits mix and manipulate each

other's tracks. South Carolina's **Anakrid** are a self-identified concrete electro-acoustic minded concern while Seattle's **Blue Sabbath Black Cheer** have a bit more savage take on things. What you get is both outfits creating fantastic dark noise extracts that leave you panting on the cellar floor. Particularly the two **Anakrid** tracks that BSBC finagle with. Really wrenching, noise clang destruction with a heavy horror blackness.

Thurston's top 40 of 2007

- 1. Christina Carter / Pocahaunted - split LP (Not Not Fun)
- 2. Aaron Dilloway - Chain Shot LP (Throne Heap)
- 3. Grouper - Way Their Crept LP (Type)
- 4. Rodger Stella - Foucault Zombie LP (Gods of Tundra)
- 5. The Jasons - LP (Tovinator)
- 6. AA Magazine 1 (AA Records)
- 7. Pengo - Counterfeit Memories (Nashazphone)
- 8. John Weise & C. Spencer Yeh - Live In Nottingham LP (What The...?)
- 9. Can't/Carly Ptak/Heather Leigh/Zaimph - split 10" lathe (Curor)
- 10. Blues Control - LP (Holy Mountain)
- 11. Visitations - LP (Time-Lag)

- 13. Unholy Crucifix - Séance of Death cs (Northern Sky)
- 14. Sunburned Hand of the Man - Weekend at Burnie's 2 LP (Lost Treasures of the Underworld / Blackest Rainbow)
- 15. Joe McPhee - Soprano LP (Roaratorio)
- 16. ffh/Prurient - Women in the War split cs (Hospital / Roots of Slavery)
- 17. Sam Goldberg - Halcyon cs (Wagon)
- 18. Jason Crumer - What is Love cs (Hospital)
- 19. Bone Awl - Meaningless Leaning Mess LP (Nuclear War Now! Productions)
- 20. Robert Ashley + Walter Marchetti - October 25, 2001 Merkin Concert Hall NYC 2XLP (Choose)
- 21. The Folk Spectre - The Blackest Medicine LP (Woodsist)
- 22. Deathroes - Final Expense LP (No Fun)
- 23. Squamata - Cumshot Wounds cs (Harsh Head Rituals)
- 24. Josh Lay - Abandoned By Christ cs (Long Long Chaney)
- 25. Mutant Ape - Doom Ape 7" (Turgid Animal)
- 26. Altar of Flies - "...Hate This City" 7" (Daisy Cutter)

- 27. Work/Death - Dedicated to Peter O'Toole cs (Ekhein)
- 28. Jewish Uprising - Desperate Prince Charming cs (Monorail Trespassing)
- 29. Dead Machines - Plays Kwaidan 7" (iDEAL)
- 30. Bruce Russell - 21st Century Field Hollers and Prison Songs LP (Rococo)
- 31. S.A. Griffin - Numbskull Sutra book (Rank Stranger Press)
- 32. Below PDX - Summer 2007 fanzine
- 33. Gown - The March Towards the End Continues Despite Any and All Efforts ... CDR (Blackest Rainbow)
- 34. Splash - Slippery Beach Trash Gamelan cs (New Age)
- 35. Wally Shoup/Chris Corsano/ Paul Flaherty - Bounced Check LP (records)
- 36. Social Junk - cs (JK Tapes)
- 37. Suzy Shaw and Mick Farren - BOMP! Saving the World One Record at a Time book (Ammo)
- 38. Befoul - At the Devil's Mass cs (Northern Sky)
- 39. Three Legged Race - Ringing Order cs (Rampart)
- 40. Dude War - Noise Wizzards cs (SSS)



The Gutter Twins are Greg Dulli and Mark Lanegan



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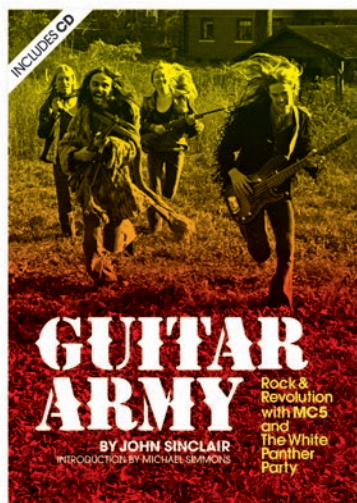


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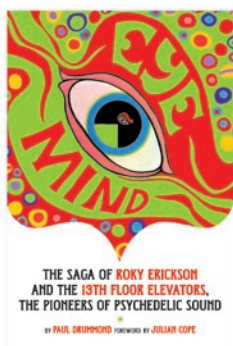


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### Byron's Suggest Reading List

(in no particular order)

1. **Brendan Mullen:** *Live at the Masque* (Gingko)
2. **Rejean Ducharme:** *Go Figure* (Talonbooks)
3. **Leonard Cohen:** *Book of Longing* (Ecco)
4. **Don Cauble:** *This Passing World* (Author House)
5. **Joe Carducci:** *Enter Naomi* (Redoubt)
6. **Mario Panciera:** *45 Revolutions Vol. 1/UK & Ireland* (Hurdy Gurdy)
7. **Richard Kern:** *Action* (Taschen)
8. **Isis & Electricity Aquarian:** *The Source* (Process)
9. **Dough Harvey (ed.):** *Heart & Torch: The Transcendence of Rick Griffin* (Gingko)
10. **Paul Schimmel (ed.):** *Chris Burden* (Locus)
11. **Jon Clinch:** *Finn* (Random House)
12. **Genevieve Castree:** *Roulatheque Roulatheque Nicolore* (l'Oie de Cravan)
13. **Bill Nace:** *Drawings* (Open Mouth)
14. **Ken Waxman:** *The Sound of Squirrel Meals – The Work of Lol Coxhill* (Black Press)
15. **Thomas Kellein:** *The Dream of Fluxus* (Thames & Hudson)
16. **Joshu Glenn & Carol Hayes (eds.):** *Taking Things Seriously* (Princeton Architectural Press)
17. **Bill Shute:** *In Perspective* (Kendra Steiner Editions)
18. **Alan Licht:** *Sound Art – Beyond Music Beyond Categories* (Rizzoli)
19. **Charles Potts:** *Valga Krusa Vol. 1 & 2: the Yellow Christ & Shit Crackers* (Green Panda)
20. **Brian Chippendale:** *Maggots* (Picturebox)
21. **Tobias Petterson/Ulf Henningsson:** *The Encyclopedia of Swedish Progressive Music 1967-1979* (Premium Publishing)
22. **Gerald Locklin:** *The Ristorante Godot* (Bottle of Smoke)
23. **Mick Rock:** *Psychedelic Renegade* (Gingko)
24. **Benoit Chaput:** *Les Pirates au Couvert* (Myrrdin)
25. **Tom Franklin:** *Smonk* (Morrow)
26. **Valerie Webber:** *Thin Little Arms Build Castles* (Big Baby)
27. **Jan Wenner/Corey Seymour:** *Gonzo* (Little, Brown)
28. **Richard Krech:** *We Are on the Verge of Ecstasy* (Green Panda)
29. **Julian Cope:** *Japrocksampler* (Bloomsbury)
30. **Robert Mathieu/Brian Bowe:** *Creem – America's Only Rock 'n' Roll Magazine* (Collins)
31. **Bob Flaherty:** *Puff* (Harper Collins)
32. **Jonah Raskin:** *American Scream – Allen Ginsberg's Howl and the Making of the Beat Generation* (University of California)
33. **Marci Denesiuk:** *The Far Away Home* (NeWest)
34. **Ingrid Swanberg & Larry Smith:** *d.a. levy & the mimeo revolution* (Bottom Dog)
35. **Dave the Spazz (ed.):** *Best of LCD – The Art and Writing of WFMU-FM* (Princeton Architectural Press)
36. **Raymond Pettibon:** *Whatever It Is You're Looking For, You Won't Find It Here* (Verlad fur Modern Kunst Nurnberg)
37. **John Sinclair:** *Guitar Army* (Process)
38. **Michael Layne Heath:** *Sacred Grounds* (Kendra Steiner Editions)
39. **Patrick Rosencranz (ed.):** *You Call This Art?: A Greg Irons Retrospective (Fantagraphics)*
40. **d.a. levy:** *UKANHAVYR FUCKINCITIOBAK* (Robert J. Sigmund)

### CONTACTS

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# C & D

**Two guys who will remain pseudonymous reason together about some new records.**

**Note:** C & D is a dialogue presented as a series of record reviews, and intended to be read straight through.

**C:** [While rummaging through the teeming mail bin.] Hey, look at this. It must be from that new guy who's always lurking around. What's his dealio anyway? He's what my gran would call a nosey nelly.

**D:** I think he's here to like, streamline shit. [Reading aloud] To Whom It May Concern: "In my private meetings with *Arthur* staff and contributors, we have received many disturbing reports regarding the personal, professional and spiritual-energetic conduct of **C & D**, or as they fancy themselves, 'The *Arthur* Music Potentate.'

"There is widespread unease amongst *Arthur* staff about **C & D**'s taste in music, which has been described to us as 'bewildering,' 'psychedelic parochial,' 'arguably harmful,' 'contrary to the public's interest,' 'more narrow than their trousers' and 'frankly vampiric.' I don't quite know what all that means but it's interesting.

"Moving forward, I have been unable to confirm that **C & D** are receiving payola from eighty-six record companies and nineteen out of our fair nation's top twenty coolmaking marketing firms, but verification of such nefarious activity is only a matter of time.

"I am also unable to confirm their membership in the 'Brownie-Meinhaus gang.'

"However, in my own cross-examination sessions with **C & D**, in which, I am preparted to testify, we did not waterboard at all ;-), I was able to determine that they have indeed 'lost the keys'—their words—for two of *Arthur* humor/motorcycle advisor Peter Alberts' Royal Enfield motorcycles; they have indeed borrowed *Arthur* contributor Paul Cullum's all-region DVD player for an 'increasingly indefinite period'; they confess to doing two cut-and-runs at Sugar Hair Salon in Silver Lake; plainly abused Mandy Kahn's standing offer to drive them to and from various watering holes of ill repute; and, as you may have surmised, it was indeed they—or them? I can never remember ;-(- who



Carbonas, not glue.

affixed 'Ex Libris C &/or D' label-plates to all the reference books in the staff library.

"Furthermore, **C & D** have charged 38 parking tickets to the *Arthur* expense account since last June. Woe betide their decision to start chillaxing out in Malibu.

"**C & D** have presumptuously intercepted others' mail, especially advance vinyls from the Holy Mountain label. They play the Carbonas self-titled LP at bicuspid-crushing volume everyday before lunch. They crack each other up at staff meetings by prefacing every statement with 'You must learn, we are the Gods of this magazine!' They are always ordering curry. Plus they've used up all the paperclips, and not, I am saddened to report, in a fashion that paperclips were designed to be used.

"The Editor-in-chief, art directors and even the printer have complained that **C & D** are always late with their copy, which in turn

Harmonia

holds up production of the magazine and inhibits crucial cashflow, all for something that, quoting the Editor, 'nobody really reads or cares about anyway.'

"In my many years of optimal-sizing firms, I have been forced to make many difficult and even gut-wrenching decisions. This however is not one of them! ;-). **C & D** should be shown the door, and the sooner the better. We will call it a suspension of enduring duration. Now would really be the time to pull the trigger on this. I know people who can do it.

"JUST SAY THE WORD."

**D:** [gulps] Doh!

**C:** I always told you we are the men who knew too much. [puzzles] But how did they find out about the brownies? I told you to watch out for those new surveillance cams.

**D:** I thought they were fake. And chicken tikka is not a curry.

**C:** Ha! And neither is lamb biryani. Wait a second... Fake surveillance cams? That's a GREAT idea.

**D:** I know a guy! Just say the word!

**C:** [cackling] Okay but first let's get one more column in, shall we? "They" never read this so we can say whatever we like and they won't know til it's at the printer, hahaha! The funny thing is we REALLY ARE the potentate around here. But if our services are no longer required here, we'd like to say one thing:

**D:** SAYONARA BITCHES!!!

**C:** Because we are in control of the horizontal. We're the last people that see this bad boy before it's sent to the printer...

**D:** Oh yeah! Heh heh.

**C:** ...which means whatever we type here gets printed.

**D:** Which means...

## The Carbonas

*The Carbonas*

(Goner)

**C:** They come from Memphis, they sound like Wire and the Buzzcocks, nine songs in 22 minutes. You know what you have to do.

**D:** Wire and the Buzzcocks? More like attach a wire to your bollocks! [helpfully] And they have a song called "Assvogel."

**C:** That's not a song, it's a movement. And I think you know what kinda movement I mean...

**D:** Ahem. It is on the Goner record label. Which is what we are now. Goners.

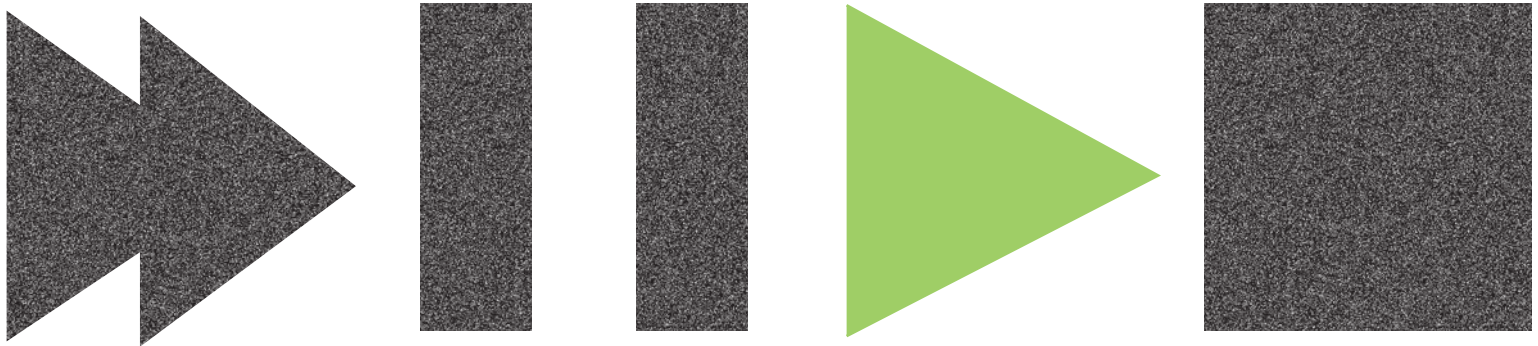
**C:** Memphis is the one place I'd be interested in moving to. Start the car, I'll get my duffel. Here's to life in exile after abdication!


**D:** [brightens] I've been a goner since the beginning.

continued on pg. 52










**DIE! DIE! DIE!**  
*Promises, Promises*

Fresh off a hectic touring schedule, performing with such acts as Blood Brothers, Wire, Slint and Wolfmother, **DIE! DIE! DIE!** returns with *Promises, Promises*. Reminiscent of the spirit and sounds of Black Flag, The Pixies, the Wipers, Wire, and Bailerspace, *Promises, Promises* delivers cathartic, direct, indispensable, no glitter, no make-up, no phony sass rock.



**MARAH**  
*Angels of Destruction!*

**MARAH**'s sixth album, *Angels of Destruction!* finds the kids from Philly in a brave new world; new sobriety, new members and of course, new songs. Culled from a Niagara-like output of songs over the past year, *Angels of Destruction!* is, as David Bielanko puts it, "...the tip of the iceberg and the bottom of the well."



**LIAM FINN**  
*I'll Be Lightning*

The twenty-three-year-old New Zealander **LIAM FINN** plays nearly every instrument on his first solo release, *I'll Be Lightning*, a responsibility he doesn't relinquish when performing live. On *I'll Be Lightning*, Liam has translated the shambolic energy of his live show onto vintage 2-inch tape, yielding a studio album of frightening power and endless hooks.




**REVEREND ORGANDRUM**  
*Hi-Fi Stereo*

The Reverend Horton Heat aka **JIM HEATH** dabbles in funk, soul and lounge on **REVEREND ORGANDRUM**'s *Hi-Fi Stereo*, trading in the psychobilly freakouts for smoother faire including classics ("Honky Tonk"), TV/movie themes ("James Bond Theme") and vintage soul-jazz nuggets ("Groovin").



**THE FLESHTONES**  
*Take A Good Look*

On *Take a Good Look*, fuzzy guitars, vintage organ and cocksure swagger abound as the band re-stakes its claim on early '60s garage. Co-produced by session vet Ivan Julian (The Clash, Richard Hell, Elton John), the album seethes with party anthems and head-bopping mod rhythms.



**VARIOUS**  
*What's Happening In Pernambuco*

7th in the Brazil Classics series, *What's Happening in Pernambuco: New Sounds From the Brazilian Northeast* is an explosion of punk-rock-funkrap-electronic sound, infused with the maracatu, coco, ciranda and embolada rhythmic traditions of the rural northeast of Brazil. "These artists make the US indie scene, sound by comparisons, like dimwitted amateurs" — *Harp*



**THE WHITSUNDAYS**  
*The Whitsundays*

**THE WHITSUNDAYS** certainly have a knack for writing yellowed, reverb-wrapped pop music, borrowing from the grand tradition of English psychedelia, garage, and vintage organ rock. With nods to the flower-picking whimsy of the Zombies, the red-faced bluster of the Animals, and the delightful inanity of Syd Barrett, this self-titled debut is a charming hodgepodge of '60s musical ephemera.



**THE BLAKES**  
*The Blakes*

As noted by *Pitchfork*, **THE BLAKES'** mix of "swampy guitars, twitchy rhythms, and power-pop vocal harmonies" recall the stinging catchiness of early Who, Kinks, and other spitfire rock bands. Mixed and mastered by Martin Feveyear (Kings of Leon, Crooked Fingers) the "energetic and unmannered romps" of their self-titled record is the stuff of rock and roll dreams.

**PRESS  
PLAY**





Earth

**C:** Being a goner is a serious thing. Who do you think is the original goner?  
**D:** Robert Mitchum, no question. Yeah, that's it, the Carbonas are the Robert Mitchum of rock!

**Dead Meadow**  
*Old Growth*

(Matador)  
**C:** I've been into these guys since before everyone else!  
**D:** Except for me. I invented these guys. I put a bunch of purple pills in a blender along with a soiled LedZep patch from my older sister's jean jacket. Shazam!  
**C:** 'Old Growth' is on the shortlist for greatest album title ever, and it's a pretty good description of the music.  
**D:** Here's a better one: take a grandfather clock made of diamond-cut crystal, fill it with molasses and drop it on your head!  
**C:** I can't believe they're firing you, D. You just keep getting better. Woah, this song is some serious blues shuffle. It's like a beer commercial for really stinky homebrew.  
**D:** There's something about this guy's voice that hits me like an arctic wind. Pass me my mittens. And the b-o-n-g. It's been a bong time since I rock 'n' rolled!

**Graveyard**  
*Graveyard*

(Tee Pee)  
**D:** Graveyard, eh. Must be a Goth band.

**C:** Actually they're not Goth. They're not even American!  
**D:** [listening to first track, 'Evil ways'] Right away you know that no matter what happens, you're gonna at least hear good tone guitar. This is far too good to be American.  
**C:** You are correct sir. They are in fact Swedish.  
**D:** The world's greatest mimics. The arch-inhabiters.  
**C:** He pitches his vocal a bit Danzig, a little bit Bobby from Pentagram. A little bit Jim Morrison. A little bit of the mighty John Garcia.  
**D:** And it must be admitted, a little Cornell.  
**C:** A little bit'll do ya. This is Ween-quality mimicry here! Reminds me of that band Witchcraft in that they're going further out. [listening to "Lost In Confusion"] That's basically the Doors, right there.  
**D:** It is like Witchcraft, but this singer has more hair on his chest.  
**C:** ... So, what do you think of that drumming?

**D:** Kinda...jazzy.  
**C:** Well you know, all those old rock drummers used to play jazz drums too: Ginger, Graham...  
**D:** Keith, Charlie...  
**C:** I listened to this album several times without realizing it. Just kept coming back. I keep coming back to the Graveyard, D.  
**D:** That's where you're gonna end up. Might as well get there early and check it out.

**Harmonia**  
*Live 1974*

(Water)  
**C:** Vintage live recording from krautrock greats Harmonia, never-before-released!  
**D:** How is this possible? Harmonia are some of the original electronic goners.  
**C:** If you turn it up loud enough you can hear people talking—  
**D:** I can't hear anything except analog electronic perfection.  
**C:** Frankly I am perplexed by the liners which

talk -like this Harmonia are barely known, even to konfirmed krautrock fans. Says here, these guys exist somewhere out beyond the "how to buy Krautrock section in your local record shop." Is this guy insane???

**D:** There is no local record shop!  
**C:** No, I mean I don't think I've ever seen a Krautrock section at a record store that DIDN'T include Harmonia. And there is a local record shop, actually. It's not final for vinyl just yet, my friend.

**Cloudland Canyon**  
*Lie in Light*

(kranky)  
**D:** Oh ho-ho, here we go. Straight from Harmonia into their young disciples.  
**C:** Steady pulsing *kosmiche* jam. two-man band from Memphis. Or Brooklyn. Or Germany.  
**D:** It's roadtrip music for a midnight drive on the Autobahn. I'd like to see these guys in a steel cage match versus Fujiya & Miyagi. Then we'll see who's the real king of next-gen krautrock!  
**C:** Cloudland Canyon scores early by using "Krautwerk" as a song title. They're certainly inhabiting a role.  
**D:** I prefer inhabiting a roll, if you dig my way. Anyway, I dig their seriously skulled-out drone vocal dual harmony trip too. And, as a bonus, they appear to have put photos of their seriously babetastic girlfriends on the inner sleeve.  
**C:** Don't give up hope, D. Those may be their sisters.

**Monade**  
*Monstre Cosmic*

(Too Pure)  
**C:** It's Laetitia from Sterolab's band.  
**D:** [definitively] Stereolab arranged by David Axelrod.  
**C:** Axelrod would say he could make this 5000%

better. And he'd be right!  
**D:** I still think it's pretty good.  
**C:** Stereolab is one of those bands for me like where one day you realize you own 11 albums and you can't remember how that happened. Like Tom Petty or something. They're just there, they sound good all the time, never totally essential but always dependable.  
**D:** Musical comfort food.  
**C:** Not the deepest stuff but something pitched a bit differently—more steady, life isn't so bad while we're playing this rhythm.  
**D:** It'd be a finer world if people hacksacked and threw their frisbees to this rather than to Umphrey's McGee.  
**C:** But would it really?  
**D** [thinks]: Maybe it IS the hacksacking itself that's the problem.

**Clark**  
*Turning Dragon*

(warp)  
**D:** I say heck no to techno.  
**C:** I say turn it up! I love to rave as long as I don't have to leave the house. Ooh, nevermind chocolate and peanut butter, I wanna know who got the crystal meth grit in my tub of Vick's Vap-O-Rub! [leaps off couch and begins swinging arms like a baboon in heat] Does the Aphex Twin know that Clark is running away with his fanbase?  
**D:** It's like the saying goes: Last night a DJ stole my wife.  
**C:** This album is immense, mind-melting, and has big digi-balls under it's crushed microchip-covered bib. Phwwaaaaaargh!!

**Earth**  
*The Bees Made Honey in the Skull of the Lion*

(Southern Lord)  
**C:** ...And then turned my bones into gelatinous

Dirtbombs





masses.

**D:** E – A – R – T – H: beautifully decaying, slow gothic western-toned dark time music.

**C:** I nominate this as the soundtrack to the books-on-tape version of that book *The Pesthouse*.

**D:** Great idea!

**C:** Let's make it happen.

**D:** I know a guy!

### Dirtbombs

(In the Red)

**D:** New Dirtbombs.

**C:** Sounds like old Dirtbombs.

**D:** Dirt don't change.

**C:** Can you imagine ol dirty dirtbombs?

**D:** I can, actually.

**C:** A band that sprang fully formed, tupla-like from the brain of journalist and tchoupitoulian bear farmer Gabe Soria.

**D:** I believe Gabe Soria also is the original creator of the Felice Brothers.

**C:** But Staggerin' Stan Lee always takes all the credit.

### Stephen Malkmus & the Jicks

*Real Emotional Trash*

(Matador)

**C:** A blastmaster from the past, back again! Just when you thought the Malk had already done his best work, he returns with a masterwork.

**D:** He's kinda like Roger Clemens in that sense.

**C:** Wellllll....I doubt Clean Steve is shooting HGH into his jugular. He did something way better and got Janet from Sleater-Kinney to play drums in his band. Now *that's* playing with power.

**D:** If there was a Cy Young Award for drummers, Janet would have won it more than once.

**C:** [listening to the breezy fretwork of "Cold Sun"] Dude, where's my hacksack!

**D:** [eyes pop out as the next track's choogle-blooz-boogie revs up] This is the best guitar playing, since, since, I, uh...

**C:** You are actually dribbling down your chin in disbelief!

**D:** Once the Malk was a preppy wiseacre, now he's a sage-like poetaster. His music is heavier than it's ever been, and I daresay he's grown into his trousers. "Can't be what you wanna be/ gotta be what you oughtta be."

**C:** That's pretty good, but how about this lyric:

""He was dancing like a pit bull minus the meat."

The song's called "Hopscotch Willie" – it's like a dimestore crime novel with a dimebag inside.

**D:** Yeah a dimebag of high-grade Quicksilver riff pummelage! Listen man, this is just too good. We should call the Malk.

**C:** You sure he wants to talk to you? What about you hijacking his golf cart at the Dinah Shore open back in '99?

**D:** The cart-jacking? That's bongwater under the bridge, my friend. Here, I'll call him... [dials on his cell phone while C looks on incredulous] Hey, Steve.

**Steve Malkmus:** Yo.

**D:** Um, Steve, first things first, I hope there's no hard feelings about the golf...mishap...of some years ago.

**SM:** We're cool.

**D:** But, I mean, what is it about you and golf courses?

**SM:** Well, golf courses and country clubs – which is what I wrote my thesis about – use all this iconography from old England. It's an English game, in England it signified money, so you're belonging to something older, like the Mayflower or something. Golf courses themselves... in America they're kind of a perfect fit with Manifest Destiny, and with the idea of the West being this wide-open nature, this big American image in people's minds, and a golf course is like a perfectly... it's like nature, it's wild, but it's been refined by man a bit. You've conquered nature but you've just mowed it so it's just right, so you're sort of in the wild but it's an American wild. Our golf courses are much different than English golf courses. How it started was the courses were just next to the beach. They didn't refine them really. They were just flat hills, rolling hills that you played on. But we've made these ones that are just perfectly manicured. You can put a Hawaiian-style golf course in Minnesota.

**D:** Are there golf courses in Portland?

**SM:** Oh yeah. There's a lot of water here. It's not like Palm Springs. I went to Palm Springs there with my dad. They have these little tiny watering things, little black strips, for every little plant. There might as well be CIA bugs at every corner. You don't even know, it's so manicured and manufactured. But here, it rains a lot. All you need is a lawnmower, I guess, and good drainage. I've been with these sort of wild guys, they're like contractors, almost Jackass-inspired, you know, they get a 12-pack of Pabst Blue Ribbon and drive around and gamble on every hole and be sort

Steve Malkmus and The Jicks







Beach House

of like hooligans. They're not really taking it back so much as getting a little rowdy within the system. But that happens on \$27 public courses, so it's not like they're not sharing a locker with the oncologist or something.

**D:** "Sharing a locker with the oncologist"? Steve, you are a great man, and we thank you.

**SM:** No problem. I mean, you're welcome.

**C:** Wait, before you go Steve, any endorsements?

**SM:** Amplifone guitars.

**C:** Political endorsements?

**SM:** Well, we've been told, and it seems it's gonna happen, that John McCain... I'm not saying I like John McCain or anything but my dad's friend is running for the Senate seat of that guy that got caught in the bathroom of Minnesota, and it seems like McCain is their guy, he's not only gonna win the Republican thing, he's gonna win the whole election and it's already decided, you know? Like that's how the Republicans think: four steps ahead. Even if it's not true, they just believe the hypnotism. They really understand hypnotism. "It is because I say it is. Until it isn't." I don't know. Giuliani tanked. McCain's like the guy that's at the golf course with guys like my dad. The white males relate to him. At least he thinks for himself, he's slightly in that tradition of Goldwater, where being Republican almost blurs into liberal in terms of individual rights and stuff like that. We're pulling for Obama here. My wife's from Chicago. He'll be our candidate til he loses. We'll vote for

Hillary if she beats him. I can't imagine a president being named Huckabee but then again "President Obama"? I'd probably be surprised by that too.

**C:** Thanks for the real talk Steve.

**D:** And for rocking our day!

**SM:** Bye guys.

#### Beach House

##### *Devotion*

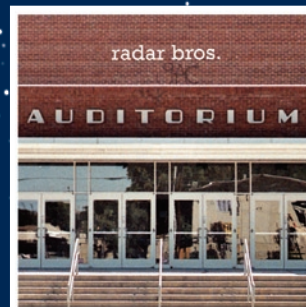
Carpark

**C:** Great record for rainy days with your sweetie, if you have one. And if you don't, you should!

**D:** [singing] "Because she's a BEACH...house!"

**C:** And with that, we are out of here.

**D:** SEE YOU BEACHES!!!



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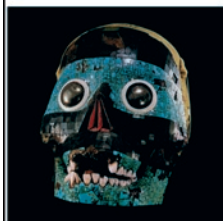
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skullflower  
six

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SKULLFLOWER

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**SAMAMIDON**  
*All Is Well* CD/LP

Sam Amidon's follow-up to 2007's acclaimed *But This Chicken Proved Falsehearted*, taps the deep well of Appalachian folk and fuses it with subtle electronics. Coupled with Nico Muhly's orchestration and Valgeir Sigurðsson's production, *All Is Well* may already be the best record of 2008.



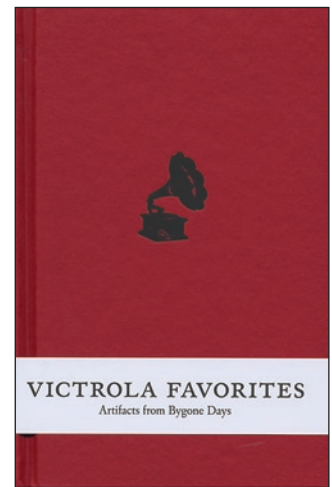
**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*An Anthology of Noise & Electronic Music Volume 5* 2CD

Fifth volume of this proposed 7-volume series, and one of the crown jewels in Sub Rosa's amazing catalog. 2CD deluxe digipack with 54-page book and rare and unreleased tracks by Gil Wolman, Mauricio Kagel, Richard Maxfield, Pere Ubu, Charlemagne Palestine and others.



**BOB HITE**  
*Dr. Boogie Presents Rarities from the Bob Hite Vaults* CD/LP

First in a series mining rare blues recordings from the legendary collection of Canned Heat's Bob Hite, compiled by musicologist Dr. Boogie. Raw unbridled madness from hotshots like Elmore James, Earl King and Otis Rush, and lesser-knowns like Googie Rene and Mad Mel Sebastian.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Victrola Favorites: Artifacts from Bygone Days* 2CD/BOOK

Compiled by Robert Millis and Jeffery Taylor (Climax Golden Twins) from their collections of 78rpm records and design ephemera, *Victrola Favorites* takes its cue from Yazoo's *Secret Museum of Mankind* series, Harry Smith's *Anthology of American Folk Music* and record labels like Sublime Frequencies and Ocora but with its own unique approach. The two CDs feature Burmese guitars, Chinese opera, Persian folk songs, hillbilly, jazz, blues and much more. Housed in a deluxe 144-page cloth-bound book filled with images of record sleeves, photos, labels and needle tins. Simply amazing.



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Achtung! German Grooves: 20 Instrumental Dancefloor Killers from the 60s and 70s* CD

This comp features wild rare grooves & slick funk workouts, wah-wah guitars & Hammond organs – everything the sleazy '60s and '70s had to offer. Peter Thomas, James Last, Max Greger and others kick out some burners for the dancefloor crowd!



**MEIC STEVENS**  
*An Evening with Meic Stevens* CD

On July 24<sup>th</sup> 2007, the man they call "the Welsh Bob Dylan" played his first London gig in over three decades, and Sunbeam was there to capture the event for posterity. This performance showcases both his late '60s numbers as well as recent ones, and proves that Meic is still at the top of his game.



**MICHAEL HOLLAND**  
*Simple Truths and Pleasures* CD

Third solo release from Michael Holland, co-founder of the critically acclaimed Jennyanykind (Yep Roc, Elektra). With the assistance of the Big Fat Gap Bluegrass Band, Holland continues to mine the Harry Smith *Anthology* – earthy songs inspired by Blind Boy Fuller, The Carter Family and Hank Williams.



**ANNA JÄRVINEN**  
*Jag Fick Feeling* CD

Debut solo release by Anna Järvinen, formerly of Sweden's Granada. Recorded with members of Dungen and The Works, *Jag Fick Feeling's* tone is full of longing; delicate orchestration, flute, vibes and piano topped with Anna's voice, reminiscent of The Sundays' Harriet Wheeler.



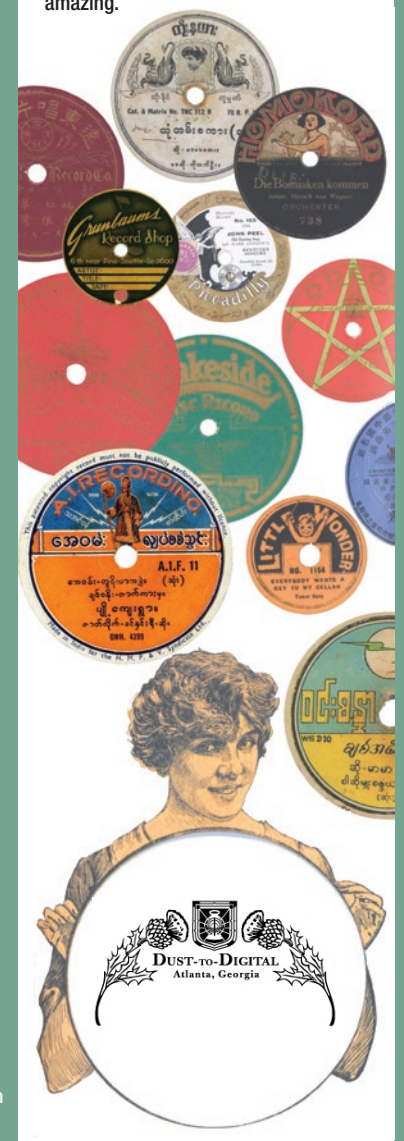
**BOX**  
*Studio 1* CD/LP

Debut release by this supergroup of sorts, comprised of Raoul Björkenheim, Trevor Dunn, Ståle Storløkken, and Morgan Ågren. With their collective résumés including John Zorn, Secret Chiefs 3, Kronos Quartet, Jah Wobble and others, it's no shocker that *Studio 1* is forward-thinking improv at its finest.



**GAVIN BRYARS**  
*The Sinking of the Titanic (1969-) CD*

2005 live recording of Gavin Bryars' seminal piece re-envisioned by Bryars with Philip Jeck and Italian new music group, Alter Ego. This open, semi-aleatoric work illustrating the failure of technology is as relevant and as stunning as ever.





# THE GIRLS WHO FELL TO EARTH



STARRING  
**ASHLEY HUIZENGA**

WITH PONI LEONE AND JONI LEONE

DIRECTED BY MOLLY FRANCES & MARK FROHMAN



Opposite Page:

Raincoats    **Dawn Sharp**, available at *Madley* (Venice)  
                    & *Sirens and Sailors* (Echo Park)  
Tights         **American Apparel**  
Sunglasses   **Dita**

This Page:

Velvet Dress   **Dawn Sharp**, available at *Madley* (Venice) & *Scout* (LA)  
Shoes         **Sigerson Morrison**

THE HARSH REALITY OF GRAVITY







FASCINATED BY OUR MODERN PLEASURES



Gold Jacket **vintage**  
Silver jumpsuit **vintage**  
Sunglasses **Dita**

## ANALYZING OUR ADVANCED TONAL SYSTEMS



## THE LONG RIDE HOME

Opposite Page:

Blouse **Marc Jacobs**  
Coat **Dawn Sharp**  
Stockings **American Apparel**  
Shoes **Chie Mihara, available at Vamp Shoes**

This Page, left:

Dress **Miss KK** ([www.misskk.com](http://www.misskk.com))





*There were Laws, but they were not feared. There were rules but they were not worshipped like laws and rules and cops and informants are feared and worshipped today. —Hunter S. Thompson, "Fear and Loathing in Elko"*

If you are reading this magazine then there is a pretty good chance that you break some stupid ass law every other day. Be it dabbling in tax evasion, watering your lawn on Thursdays, smoking weed, walking your dog without a leash, or drinking two and half beers before driving home, you are overdue to beg for the non-existent mercy of some unlaidd grinch posing as a judge (you know who you are, Kirkland Nyby). I'm here to tell you that being a white non-violent person with all your teeth will not be enough to save you from doing hard time for minor infractions anymore.

America has slid far past the point where a well-regulated militia would be able to relieve us of our vicious tyrants. The myriad weapons and tactics perfected over the course of our many stupid foreign wars are too easily turned against the American civilian population. We are cowed behind the magic of infrared radar helicopters, electronic ball breakers, automatic weapons and a skein of surveillance cameras: the American population rendered naked to the aggression of a police state gone corporate.

I have seen the future and it is California. That which is not illegal is mandatory. If you find yourself in California, here's what you should do:

**1. Avoid arrest.** The best ways to do this are:

- a. Don't be black or have a beard or anything like that.

Get your mind right and acquiesce to Total Conformity. If you are reading this, there is good chance you fucked this step up already.

- b. Trust the government.

Call the cops about everything, all the time. If you don't call in every infraction, they might charge you. Burroughs sums it up nicely: "Get there firstest with the brownest nose."

- c. Give up now.

Give up early and often. Take no shortcuts.

**2. If the cops come at you with some specious charge, you are good as guilty.** It's not the pigs' fault, they're just trying to make their quota. Don't take it personally when the son of a bitch lies on the stand to put you away. You should expect to be framed by a cagey bastard with no concept of karma. Miss Justice is blindfolded so she can't see how she is being pigfucked.

**3. If the State comes after you for anything, hire a \$10,000 lawyer.** That ten thousand is just for starters. If you can't afford it, you're going to jail. If you can, you are OJ. The old OJ.

**4. When dealing with the State, forget about being righteous in your innocence.** Innocence is no virtue in a court of law. Buy a bunny rabbit and practice being very afraid. Tremble a lot.

**5. Going to jail can be fun.** Not really, but there are ways to lessen the blows. Pick an illusion, and your myth won't fail. What I mean is, you are about to have to play a role. Get the kind of haircut that racists get. Shave your head so you look like a dick-with-ears gangster cop or gangster gangster.

# CITIZEN HEAR ME OUT!

## THIS COULD HAPPEN TO YOU!



illustration by Joseph Remnant

**6. Don't get any tattoos.** I didn't have a one and everybody in the joint knew me for the new breed of supermax genius criminal with the foresight not to have identifying marks scrawled all over my body.

**7. Get a motorcycle jacket.** It provides a shorthand for cops and criminals about who you are and shivs won't penetrate through the kidney plate in the back. Plus you can sleep on the lock-up floors all day without the cold creeping into your bones. It's going to be a long time between when you turn yourself in and when they truck you to County.

**8. If you're scheduled to go to jail on a certain date, get drunk as fuck for it.** I was so drunk when I surrendered that I almost threw up on the bailiff. What were they going to do—put me in jail? You ain't doing a damn thing for the next day or so except sleep on that cold, cold floor with people that don't speak much English. Plus, Latinos respect the bravado of man who can sleep face down on the concrete. By the time I woke up in Burbank lock-up, my southside homeboys were calling me Chuck Norris, la neta.

**9. Learn to rap.** It's racist that you can't rap. Listen to a rap station for the week before you go in. White people are way outnumbered up in the jizzie, my nizzie. There is no music in there and it doesn't hurt to keister in a beat. My rap attacks while playing spades earned the respect of King Tee, who invited me to his after hours club when we got out. That is called networking.

**10. Remember that sherriff cops are their own race.**

Regardless of color, creed or whatever, all sheriffs are nerds from high school on steroids. These shitheads go to jail five days a week for less than what a teacher makes because they live to power trip. I was incensed when I almost got tasered by a giant sherriff while I was butt naked, until the old cons explained that it is better to be naked when tasered, other wise you'll be wearing pissy pants until laundry day.

**11. If you are Jewish, stop now.** I don't mean get a nose job or any of that Beverly Hills wannabe WASP shit. By dint of your pale skin you will be counted as white unless you affiliate with "the blacks", the paisans or the southside Mexican gangsters. In short, upon entering L.A. County jail, I became a "Wood" which is the little brother of the white supremacist gang known as the Peckerwoods. This deal has been set up with the sheriffs' apparent consent. The phones are segregated and you will get "bu bopped" (beat up) for talking on the black phone. The kicker is that all the phones are black. The peckerwood/Latino gangster phones should be painted beige. I had to do a hundred and twenty-three pushups for talking on the black phone or else take a beating. One hundred pushups were for talking on the phone and the next twenty three were for "W" which stands for 'Wood.' I'm not lying. Realize that there is no parental supervision in County. In my experience the sheriffs strolled through about twice a day pretending to monitor a dorm of a 140 criminals. The inmates run the asylum. You get your toothbrush, soap, comb, aspirin and your back up in a fight from a representative of the Aryan Brotherhood. So keep your mouth shut about your bar mitvah because for some reason skinheads stopped worrying about Jews and gave them a "don't ask don't tell" type deal. Mighty white of them. Practice eating the forbidden meat because you are going to the land of ersatz pork in the form of the three main dishes: baloney, "ham and motherfuckers" [beans] and a vulgar soy/ham sausage known as a "donkey dick."

**12. Be gay.** If you are gay, you get a cell all to yourself. If you are not gay, the sherriffs make you stand around naked in a 20 x 20 room with forty naked men. The math says that means a man every foot. So... it's actually gayer not to be gay in jail. Next time I go I'm going to show up in a dress so I can get a cell to myself and write heterosexual Genet prose with a two and half inch pencil.

**13. When dealing with pigs, jettison your sense of humor.** Cops don't have one. Why should you?

**14. Buy a gun.** Cops have them. You should too. Besides, if you have a gun and some juevos you also have The Option. Trust me, kid, if you are smart enough to have read this drivell down to here then you might prefer topping yourself to reading torn copies of crime dramas while sitting in a room full of staph infected career criminals fighting out a petty race war and bullying you out of your peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. So, when they kick down your front door how you gonna come? Maybe those of us who are still free might find the only place to hide from the new tyranny is beyond the pale. Let the meeks have the earth. They can't jail the dead. Yet. ■



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