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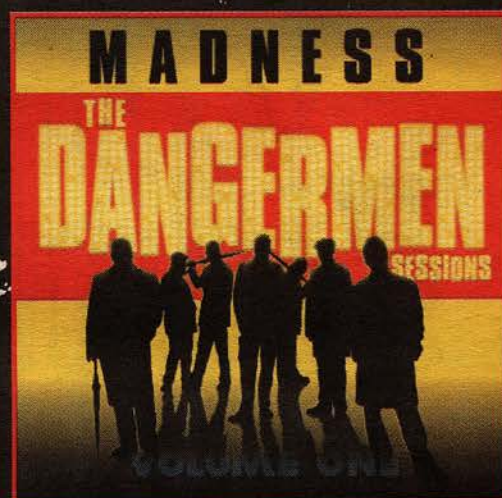
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DEAR ARTHUR

Letter From Illinois No. 1

Where is T-Model's column?!? How can you unceremoniously dump such a great feature? This: since you have the Alan Moore connection, maybe you can get Melinda Gebbie to do some comics—she rocks! She's got the best line of all time in a comic about being dumped by a little runt: "Don't tell me you're addicted to puking!" Maybe she's friends with Sue Coe or Carol Swain and you can get some great woman comics action. Because hey let's face it: too many tits and not enough cock is going on in your mag. I think you know what I mean. On a positive note, Jackie Beat is a keeper! She rocks!

Love,

Mortimer Snerd (a Capricorn)
Carol Stream, Illinois

Dear Mortimer, T-Model Ford was not dumped, he was just out of

range when it came time to do his column last issue. Good points re: wang/boobs ratio and woman comics action. We're working on it with due diligence. And yes, we'll bring that Beat back as soon as possible. In the meantime, enjoy the picture above. Jackie sure is.

Letter From Illinois No. 2

Dear C & D,
You guys are great! I just realized it and went back through all my old editions of *Arthur* to read your column. *Arthur* is like *Mad*, you get into your rut of what you do and don't read and in what order. It's like I've been skipping over the movie parodies and just realized they're really funny & good...

So, I guess it means you're a "rock academic" is you know what "Rutles version of the Stooges" means? I know just what you mean... Neil Innes got sued for his songs, probably out of pique! "Toffee Nose wet weekend as far

as I can see..."

Great column!

Alice Dubois
Elgin, Illinois

Dear Alice, C & D are glad you kept your old Arthurs around for further scrutiny, and they would like to compliment you on your rather apt Mad magazine comparison, as they've always modeled their relationship on Spy. vs. Spy. (For those of you whose friends have been "borrowing" your Arthurs before you'd finished reading them, back issues are available via arthurmag.com.) And yes, Alice, you are a scholar of rock, and don't let any Toffee Nose tell you otherwise.

SEND MORE MAIL, PLEASE

editor@arthurmag.com or
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(Must bear Illinois postmark to be considered for publication.)

NOTES ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

John Adamian is a writer and musician living in South Hadley, Mass. He was in the North Carolina indie rock band Sugarsmack through the '90s. He now plays in a northeast-based West African percussion ensemble and is the managing editor of the Hartford Advocate.

Marc Bell is currently having a fancy art show in NYC at the Adam Baumgold gallery.

Able Brown draws, prays to the moon, and digs getting in Her ocean. ablebrown@gmail.com

Byron Coley is not well suited to the heat of summer. He is thinking about getting a job so that he can buy an air conditioner. Any ideas?

Dennis Culver is a cartoonist living in San Pedro, California. culver@funwrecker.com

Vanessa Davis is the "next big thing." And now she is jinxed.

Oliver Hall was born in Michigan, and motor city oil runs through his veins. He is a member of the band She-Rat, a proud *Arthur* contributor and at work on a novel.

David Lasky is slowly amassing thousands of pages of his comics for his collection, *Encyclopedia Lasky*.

Simon Lund is, according to Dave Reeves, a world traveller film guy in New York where he is taking classes at Williamsburg University majoring in cocaine and minoring in STDs.

Thurston Moore is in Sonic Youth who are in Thurston and Kim's basement in Northampton, Massachusetts writing new SY jams for spring 2006 release "Sonic Life."

John Pantalici is a 19-year-old college student living in exile outside Waco, Texas.

L.A.-based composer/journalist **John Payne** writes about music, film, books, technology and cars in the U.S., Europe and Japan. His music is distributed

through Bluefat. He is eight feet tall and there are five of him.

Daniel Pinchbeck is the author of *Breaking Open the Head: A Psychedelic Journey into the Heart of Contemporary Shamanism* and the upcoming *2012: The Return of Quetzalcoatl* (Viking Penguin, 2006). A founder of the literary magazine *Open City* and a New York native, he is currently launching Metacine (www.metacine.net).

Paul Pope's art has been described as a curved sword slashing across the white chest of a blank page, leaving trails of black ink for blood. He is currently writing and drawing a 200-page Batman graphic novel for DC Comics. He works and lives in New York City.

David Reeves has been ghostwriting terrible films for the past couple of years, and the chutzpah involved in such a poor choice of career made him catch cancer. Currently involved in a plot to overthrow the dominant paradigm through "Defend Brooklyn" t-shirts, which he handsews in his house called The Deep Purple. We will be seeing more of him if he is not killed or caught.

Arik Moonhawk Roper is an illustrator/designer from New York City who specializes in phantasmagorical images for various uncanny clients. www.arikroper.com

Douglas Rushkoff is the author of ten books, including *Media Virus*, *Cyberia*, and *Coercion*. He made the documentaries *Merchants of Cool* and *The Persuaders*, and is now working on a comic book series for Vertigo called *Testament*. He's a professor of communications at NYU, an ordained rabbi and a keyboardist for *PsychicTV*. www.rushkoff.com

Brandon Stosuy contributes regularly to the Village Voice and is a staff writer at Pitchfork. *Up Is Up, But So Is Down*, his anthology of Downtown New York literature, is forthcoming from NYU Press in 2006.

T-MODEL KNOWS BETTER

T-Model Ford is the 85-year-old self-proclaimed "Boss of the Blues," also known as "The Taildragger."

Every couple months we call up T-Model at his home in Greenville, Mississippi and talk about something that's been bothering our mind.

Got a question for T-Model, or something you want him to address? Email it to editor@arthurmag.com

T-Model Ford is featured in the feature-length documentary, *You See Me Laughin': The Last of the Hill Country Bluesmen* (info at www.fatpossum.com).

Is it hot down there in Mississippi this summer?

It's hot... but I'm still standin'.

How do you deal with the heat?

I just sit out under an acorn tree somewhere and drink water. Just don't get where the air can't get to you. You'll be alright.

What about mosquitoes and no-see-ums and chiggers?

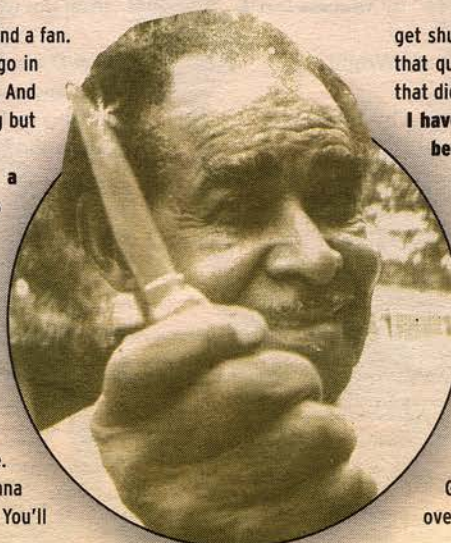
Well, the mosquitoes are at nighttime, and then I'll be inside. Daytime, I'll be out there, when we don't be bothered with them. But at nighttime, heh, you be bothered with 'em.

So what do you do if it's hot at night?

I got an air conditioner and a fan. I let it run, and when I go in there, it's cool in there. And then I pull off everything but my shorts.

Have you ever had a problem with honeybees having a hive at your house?

Get you some diesel oil where you put in trucks. And get your spray gun and pump it up. Don't turn it to just one place, let it spray all over. And you get in there. When it hit em, they gonna leave or they gonna die. You'll



get shut of 'em. You're gonna get that queen bee. He can't do with that diesel neither.

I have a friend who's very sad because one of her friends died unexpectedly. She's even having trouble eating. What's the best way to deal with grief, when you've lost somebody you love? What's the best way to get through that?

Tell her to get on her knees and pray to the Good Lord to let her get over it, and don't worry 'bout

nothin'. If you worrying about something, it's gonna continue, 'til you die. Look at me: all my brothers and sisters done died and left me here. I'm 85 now, and I ain't worried. A tree fell on me, got me in bad shape, but I'm still goin'.

I heard you just drove up to Flint, Michigan in your '79 Lincoln, the one with 200,000 miles on it.

Yes, indeed. It went up there and back down without any trouble. It went 60, 70, 80, NINETY... it took it. And didn't use no oil. And it's ready to go back again.

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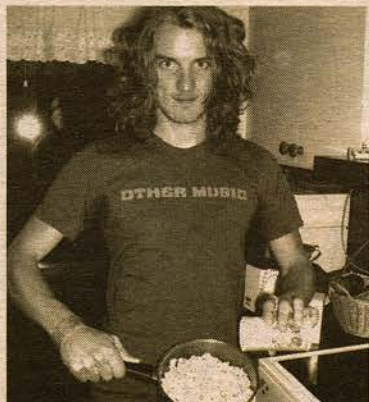
BY Keith Jones 2005

LAZERBRAIN@GMAIL.COM



COME ON IN OUR KITCHEN

Dungen's Popcorn in 16/4



Dungen is a prodigiously talented twentysomething Swede called Gustav Ejstes, whose sunnily melodic psychedelic delight rock, much heralded in the music press when his album *Ta Det Lungt* was available only as an expensive import, is finally getting a proper American release late this summer via the kind hand of Kemado, who've changed nothing—every lyric is still Swedish, every tune is still universal—and added something (a disc full of bonus tracks). Here's Gustav's recipe for popcorn: something familiar, something added...

Gustav Ejstes of Dungen: I used to be called the king of pop. Not to be confused with Mr. Jackson's title in the '80s music press. This refers to the art of making good-tasting popcorn. It is probably the ultimate snack, but could also be the most delicious substitute for a well-made meal.

The thing is, my skills as a Swedish chef are a bit limited. I have never been interested in learning and that has led to experiments with the interesting vegetable corn. Did the Indians discover it first? Is it healthy or not?

I think it is. I have survived for

days by only eating popcorn. And now you all say: making popcorn is the easiest thing to do. Well, if you choose to use microwaved popcorn maybe, but if your only tools are a pot, oven, oil and salt, it suddenly gets a little bit more complicated. The secrets behind my well-tasting popcorns are olive oil and herbal salt.

Everyone knows the basic recipe for making it, but here are a few tricks that you can pick up that will help you avoiding some of the classic mistakes: for instance, half of them stays unpopped, or all of it gets burned.

Fill the bottom of the pot with popcorn and drench them in virgin olive oil and add some herbal salt. Herbal salt is made from pure certified organic ingredients. I use the Herbamare brand, which is based on Swiss naturopath Alfred Vogel's formula: it's made up of sea salt, celery stalk, celery leaves, leeks, watercress, garden cress, onions, chives, parsley, lovage, garlic, basil, marjoram, rosemary, thyme and kelp.

Electric stove: Start out at high heat. When they start to pop, lower the heat to medium. Wait until there is four seconds between the pops, take off the lid and add some more herbal salt, put on the lid and your favorite record and shake the pot in 16/4 beat and then take it off the stove and call your friends. It's time to eat.

Gas stove: Start out with full temperature, but since gas gets hot quicker, make sure you turn off the heat as fast as you hear the corns begin their dance inside of the pot. When using a gas oven it is even more important that you shake the pot in 16/4 beat to your favorite record, otherwise the popcorns gets as burned as Swedes on an Asian holiday.

Richard Hawley's Sheffield Shepard's Pie



Every time we listen to a Richard Hawley album, we get visions of mid-afternoon TV mail order commercials advertising greatest hits CDs by a long-gone-pop country crossover artist, or Neil Diamond, or Sinatra or some other smooth-for-the-ladies-and-blue-for-the-gents crooner/operator with a bag full of hits that just keep scrolling, every fourth title being performed in a cloud of vaseline. Of course the proudly English Hawley is of the here and now, not in some distant UHF-for-mobile-home-

seniors past, but his golden-grained croon, accompanied by strings, organ and the kind of beautifully reverbed guitar figures Chris Isaak used to budget for, is the kind of thing our grandparents might dig too. Hawley's latest is *Coles Corner*, and it's another slow burner of languid, sentimental-romantic music about Sunday afternoons by the seaside and Sunday evenings at the bar: those times and places where people—of all ages—love, lose and laugh again, often to music like this.

Richard Hawley: I used to be in a band called Longpigs in the mid/late '90s. We got on the U2 tour 'round USA which was boss and got to play Giants Stadium and all that. That all went fine, even though we were probably getting a bit too recreational. You can go a bit mad on the back of a tour bus with only yourselves for company. Anyway, we were pretty glad when the tour was coming to an end and heading back to Britain to see our families. It didn't work out quite as straightforward as that, though, as we got offered the Echo and the Bunnymen tour of USA at the last minute. They are one of my all-time favourite bands... Mac is a lovely bloke and Will Sargeant is one of the all-time great guitarists. So we stayed and did that tour... and another immediately after,

with Oasis. It ended up we were touring the States for two and a half years, only going home about four times.

The whole thing ended up being really destructive and we were all mindless gibbering wrecks when we went home to our loved ones. I got back to Sheffield, out of my mind on drugs and drink and burnt out and bewildered at finally being home. I couldn't believe I was there, even though I could see all my home town sites: the pubs, the shops, etc. I was living in a blur.

I arrived at our house completely numb. When I got in, our lass had cooked tea (that's dinner to you Americans): shepherd's pie, with green beans and gravy. I sat down at the table and poured Henderson's (we call it Hendo's) all over the food

and took a mouth full. As soon as I tasted it I began to cry and couldn't stop. Henderson's is made in Sheffield—we have it on everything—everyone does—right since we were kids. But you only get it in Sheffield, nowhere else, so as soon as I tasted it I knew I was home—finally.

I dedicated my first mini-album to Henderson's cus I feel like they helped save me—well, and because it's a condiment for life—everyone in Sheffield has their Christmas pictures when they are kids, all sat round the table for Christmas dinner, and always there's a bottle of Henderson's in the middle of the table.

My highest accolade so far is Henderson's making a special edition 'Richard Hawley's Henderson's.' When he saw it, my Dad said, "Now you've made it, lad."

4 large carrots

2 onions

20 oz. potatoes

2 tablespoons chives

4.5 oz. mince meat (or TVP)

Vegetable stock

Salt and pepper to taste

Henderson's relish

Pre heat the oven to 400 degrees F.

Boil the potatoes and mash them. Slice and boil the carrots. Dice the onions and lightly fry. Add the mince to the onions in the frying pan then add vegetable stock or gravy. Simmer for five minutes. Add chives and salt/pepper.

In a large oven-proof dish, add the onion/mince mixture. Top this first with a thick layer of carrots, and finally with the mashed potatoes.

Bake for 30 mins until the potatoes are browned.

Serve with steamed broccoli, broad beans or your favorite vegetables.

Finally, and most importantly, coat with Henderson's Relish (unfortunately only available via mail order from their factory in Sheffield; info at www.hendersonsrelish.com)


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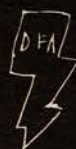
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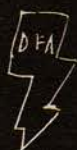


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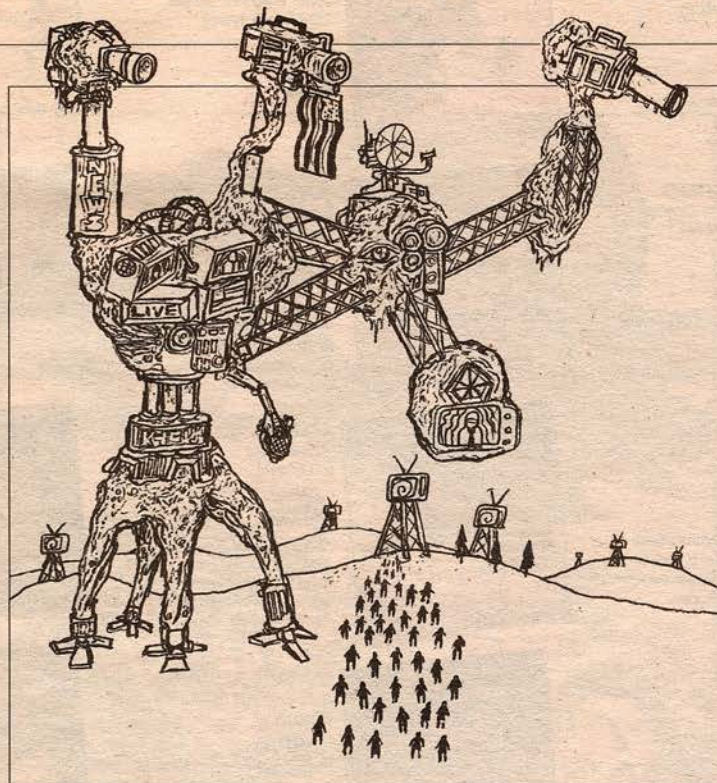
I'm teaching a course at New York University this fall called "Technologies of Persuasion: Marketing, Politics, and Propaganda in a Digital Age." And, beyond the title, I didn't really have anything particular in mind when I pitched the idea to my superiors; only that I was getting sick and tired of students coming to the school's Interactive Telecommunications Program with little motivation other than to apply new technologies to marketing.

I figured I'd call the course "persuasion," just like some course I saw in the Communications Department catalogue, in order to fool the would-be marketers into taking it. Then, a few weeks in, after it became impossible to "drop" the course, I'd reveal my true intent: to apply some critical analysis to the role that marketing and influence techniques have played in both online and offline society.

Then, it occurred to me that marketers aren't the only ones who use technology toward persuasive ends. Everyone from *Adbusters* to Moveon.org employs the latest and most technologically enhanced versions of influence tactics in their campaigns, as well. Sure, many of them might believe it's to better ends, but who is to say, really? Mightn't well-intentioned progressives stand to learn a bit about the assumptions underlying their own use of persuasive technologies?

Take a perfectly ethical and justified effort, like the advertising campaigns launched to keep kids from using cigarettes. In one of these commercials, a young teenager is doing pretty well impressing a girl—until he whips out his cigarette. Then, instead of appearing cool, the girl and her friends make it quite clear that the boy is now considered uncool. Another ad, part of the "truth" campaign, shows kids crashing the lobby of a cigarette company a la Michael Moore, demanding to speak to the lying executives. While the first ad is shot in that quick-cut, off-balance style of the famous late-'90s AT&T ads, the other is faux documentary—handheld, disorienting, and high impact.

Do the ends justify the means, here? The first commercial exploits what most commercials do: a young person's deep sense of insecurity. Is it any better for a commercial to use this insecurity to keep kids off cigarettes than it is to use it to addict them? As far as their lungs are concerned, yes. But as far as reducing their vulnerability to manipulative media, not at all. If anything, the don't-smoke-because-you'll-look-uncool ad only confuses the issue further, turning the choice not to smoke into a fashion statement, and ignoring any of its true advantages. And when a choice as important as what to do with your lungs is reduced to a matter as trivial as which



JOHN PANTALICI

IS IT OKAY FOR THOSE OF US WITH THE BEST OF INTENTIONS TO USE THE SAME THOUGHT WEAPONS AS OUR FOES?

brand of jeans or sneaker to wear, the young smoker is not well served. In fact, kids who are self-aware enough to reject people who advertise to them in this fashion might start smoking precisely because TV is telling them it's uncool.

In steps a more modern breed of advertiser, like those of the Truth campaign, who stage "real" events that inevitably tip the deck in their favor. Like Moore himself, they create terrific drama by surprising the executives they don't like, or demonstrating on tape for all to see that an executive refuses to come to the lobby of his office building to explain his Congressional testimony about cigarettes and addiction. But even the hip immediacy of a DV cam and its nod to bottom-up DIY media doesn't change the fact that these are Ad Council-sponsored spots—meaning adults from big foundations are paying for media to tell kids what to do in a language that might appeal to them.

The question, of course, is whether well-intentioned persuasion is better than evil persuasion. Or, from the perspective of progressives, is it bad when Bush's people create a fake news spot for local stations to air, but okay when a WTO activist does it? Is it okay for Gore to use NeuroLinguistic Programming (essentially, framing techniques) when he bashes Bush at a Moveon.org speech, but wrong for Bush to

recast global warming as "climate change?"

In my opinion—the opinion I'm hoping to persuade you to adopt—persuasion techniques cross the line when they depend on intimidating the target or distorting reality. Most persuasion relies on some form of regression and transference: the commercial or speech confuses the audiences, leads them to revert to a childlike state and then depend on the narrator or presenter to be the parent—to tell them what needs to be done to make everything right. Everyone from Clearasil to Farrakhan uses the same basic routine.

New technology figures into this equation quite nicely. The technology itself—be it the web, a holograph or a special effect—becomes the vehicle through which the target is distracted, confused, or intimidated. Those who don't understand video editing (or that it even exists) can never understand how arbitrarily a news report might be put together. People who don't understand HTML or, say, fake links and email spoofs, are more easily fooled into Internet scams—from bad investments to Paypal fraud.

Sometimes, this lack of knowledge about a particular persuasive technology just makes it more powerful. I can't even count the number of journalists and companies that have got in touch with me, asking me to explain to them how "neuromarketing"

works, and whether they have to go buy some. (It's a fledgling technique where people are put into MRI machines to see how they react to various words or packaging. And no, I don't think it really works.)

But as we learn about all these ways that technology can be used to track us, discern our intentions, or fool us into submission, we become increasingly untethered from our own ability to evaluate how we think or feel about anything. Consumer action groups, like Ralph Nader's for example, take marketers on their word. They protest neuromarketing—going so far as to decry it as a "public health" issue, before the technique is even proven. All they end up doing is giving credence to what may very well be a sham.

The real joke, of course, is that many of these technologies work simply by convincing us they do. Like the mugger who puts his hand in his jacket and says "stick 'em up," the influence professionals using new technologies might have no real weapon to back up their attacks. No matter: as long as we think they do, we'll be susceptible.

Most of us are familiar with the use of persuasion in mass media. Even though media literacy isn't taught in the United States, and *Adbusters* appears to have fallen behind "real" marketers in the race to seduce America's youth, television, billboards, and magazine ads only hold so much mystery. Gone are the days when a television transmission seemed like a magic act, and whoever got his mug on the tube was afforded some automatic awe.

But hi-technology—from iTunes interfaces designed to promote the purchase of more songs, to GPS-enabled cell phones enabling location-based marketing—presents an entirely different challenge to those who might hope to resist the compliance professionals. And by teaching a course—both at NYU and, hopefully, in some form online, I hope to help everyone become more aware of everything that's being done to sway them towards both literal and figurative "buy" buttons.

What about those who will be taking the course in order to apply the techniques to their own propaganda missions? No, not the kids who will get hired by Coke or McDonalds to sell more sugar and fat, but the ones who hope to create campaigns that make people into activists or compel them to act nicer to each other? Aren't they entitled to use these techniques? Isn't it okay for those of us with the best intentions—as shorthand, let's call ourselves the side that doesn't want America to succumb to a fundamentalist fascism—to use the same thought weapons as our foes?

No. First off, they're better at this than

(continued on page 69)



CANYON COUNTRY
There's A Forest In
The Fire
CD (Attack Nine)



"Acoustic Phantasies by Nick
from FREESCHA"
--Sword of Stone



**JOHN WEBSTER
JOHNS**
John Webster Johns
CD (Attack Nine)



**JENNIFER
O'CONNOR**
The Color and the Light
CD (Red Panda)



DREXON FIELD
Stratosphere Control
CD (Attack Nine)



"Electric Boogaloo for your Jam"
--Syntax



LOWLIGHTS
Dark End Road
CD (Darla)



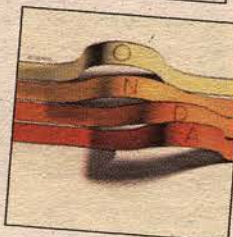
"You've heard all the
comparisons before, Gram
Parsons, Lee Hazlewood, Giant
Sand, Wilco, but this upstart
deserves the praise." --Fred Mills



PIANO MAGIC
Disaffected
CD (Darla)



"Piano Magic's strongest full
length since Low Birth Weight."
-- Pitchfork



ENTRE RIOS
Onda
CD (Darla)



Entre Rios sound like a South
American answer to Saint Etienne.
Pure Summertime pop perfection"
--Mudanesounds.com



MANUAL
Azure Vista
CD (Darla)



"With Azure Vista, Jonas Munk
(known as Manual) delivers one of
the most compelling electronic
records of the past few years."
--Junkmedia.com



**THE SURF
THE SUNDRIED**
The Surf The Sundried
CD (Attack Nine)



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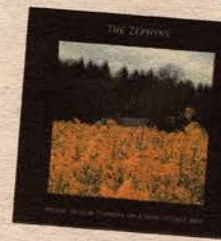
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MAQUILADORA
A House All On Fire
CD (Darla)



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for Brit pop: dismantle the machine
and rebuild it with alien parts."
-- Andrew Paine Bradbury



THE ZEPHYRS
Bright Yellow Flowers
on a Dark Double Bed
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SKELETON WOMEN & FISHER KINGS

In 2003, a distant planet or "planetoid" was discovered on the edge of our solar system. It was given the name Sedna by astronomers, after the Inuit goddess of the deep seas.

From a Jungian or an occult perspective, there is no accident in such appellations, as the planetary bodies also represent aspects of the collective psyche. In an exegesis of the Sedna legend in Clarissa Pinkola Estes' *Women Who Run With the Wolves*, Sedna becomes "Skeleton Woman," thrown from a cliff into the ocean by her father, whom she had displeased. The girl sinks to the bottom of the water, preserved as a skeleton, until a fisherman catches her and brings her up to the surface. In his attempt to flee from this frightening apparition, the fisherman only drags her along. He runs away from his boat into his igloo, but finds the Skeleton Woman collapsed in his corner. He looks at her for a long time, slowly overcoming his fear of her. Feeling stirrings of compassion, he carefully untangles her bones and her long hair, and then falls asleep. While sleeping, he cries a single tear. Skeleton Woman crawls towards this tear and eagerly drinks it up. She reaches into the fisherman's chest, takes out his heart and beats upon it like a drum, calling out, "Flesh! Flesh! Flesh!" As she sings, the flesh returns to her bones; life returns to her. She sings the clothes off the fisherman, replaces his heart in his body, and lies down next to him, "skin to skin." They awaken the next morning, wrapped around each other tightly.

This startling and beautiful myth is an essential story for our time—a kind of instruction manual for the "return of the goddess," denied and defiled by thousands of years of patriarchal dominator culture. After all, it is only in the last few hundred years that women in the West and other modernizing countries have escaped a status equivalent to slavery or property. It is easy to forget how far we have come in this short period of time. Indeed, across large sections of the globe, women are still in bondage, denied their basic rights and freedoms. They are systematically raped during genocidal wars such as the recent Bosnian conflict. In India, they are burnt alive as brides over dowry issues. In China, female babies are often smothered.

In the less developed world, "women's contribution is immeasurable, intense work that is never recognized as valid, never rewarded with money, and never even considered part of the economy," Lynne Twist reminds us in *The Soul of Money*. "In Sub-Saharan Africa alone, 85 percent of the food farmers are women, but their work is unrecognized. It is given no monetary



ARIK MOONHAWK ROPER

THE OLD CONSTRAINTS OF TRADITIONAL MONOGAMY SEEM TO BE CHAFING, AND ALTERNATIVE MODELS MAY BE NECESSARY.

value." Even in the West, compensation for men and women remains inequitable, with traditionally female areas of employment such as nursing and teaching given short shrift in salary terms, compared to work in the military and financial sectors.

All of this provides a necessary backdrop for understanding what seems to be going on in male-female relationships today, at least as I perceive it from my own limited perspective. Among many people I know, and communities that I visit, the old constraints of traditional monogamy seem to be chafing, and alternative models seem necessary. At the same time, attempts to reach a more ideal or liberated erotic life (sometimes denoted by the unsatisfying term "polyamory") are frequently mired in confusion, hurt feelings, and failure. We are being forced to examine programming and conditioning created by thousands of years of patriarchal domination, as well as patterns that may be rooted in biology, or perhaps in deep-set patterns of evolutionary psychology. Whatever change is taking place is still a work in progress.

Laura Kipnis, a professor of communications at Northwestern University, recently published a courageous polemic, *Against Love*, suggesting that our failure to confront and articulate difficult issues

around sexuality and romantic love has deep repercussions across our social and political world. "Why not at least entertain the possibility that there could be forms of daily life based on something other than isolated households and sexually exclusive couples?" she asks. "Why not confront rather than ignore the reality of disappointment at the deadening routinization that pervades married households? Maybe confronting the flaws in married life would be a route to reforming a flawed society? Maybe reforming the fabric of individual relationships was the path towards political renewal?"

In the 1950s the Kinsey Report revealed that human sexual variety was essentially infinite, and that each person was distinct and different in their erotic desires and patterns—but our model of relationships continued to ignore this, enforcing a cookie-cutter approach. A side effect of our fixation on this area is the virulence of gossip about the erotic lives of celebrities and politicians, as well as the scandalized tones we use when dissecting the personal lives of people we know.

Kipnis may have hit upon something very profound here. It just may be that the interpersonal dynamics between men and women underlie our various intensifying global political and socioeconomic crises,

and that we cannot resolve these large-scale conflicts until we understand and begin to reweave the fabric of our intimate lives. The Medieval myth of the Fisher King—suffering from a wound that will not heal, as his kingdom atrophies—also seems applicable to our current situation. According to Robert Johnson, the Fisher King legend describes the "wounded feeling function" in modern man, who suppressed intuition and emotion to attain technological rationality and one-sided dominance. Johnson notes that the English language reflects our emotional paucity. Ancient Persian and Sanskrit possessed more than eighty words for love, denoting different qualities and valences of communal and erotic feeling. Whether we want to proclaim our affection for Krispy Kreme donuts or our significant other, we are stuck with just the single word, obliterating differences and qualities. A new language for partnerships may also be necessary. Some friends of mine have become obsessed with the *ElfQuest* comic books, partially because the social structure of the elf world presents a more nuanced and complex model of relationships. Among the polyamorous elves, different types of partnerships—"life mates," "love mates," and "recognitions"—are known and accepted.

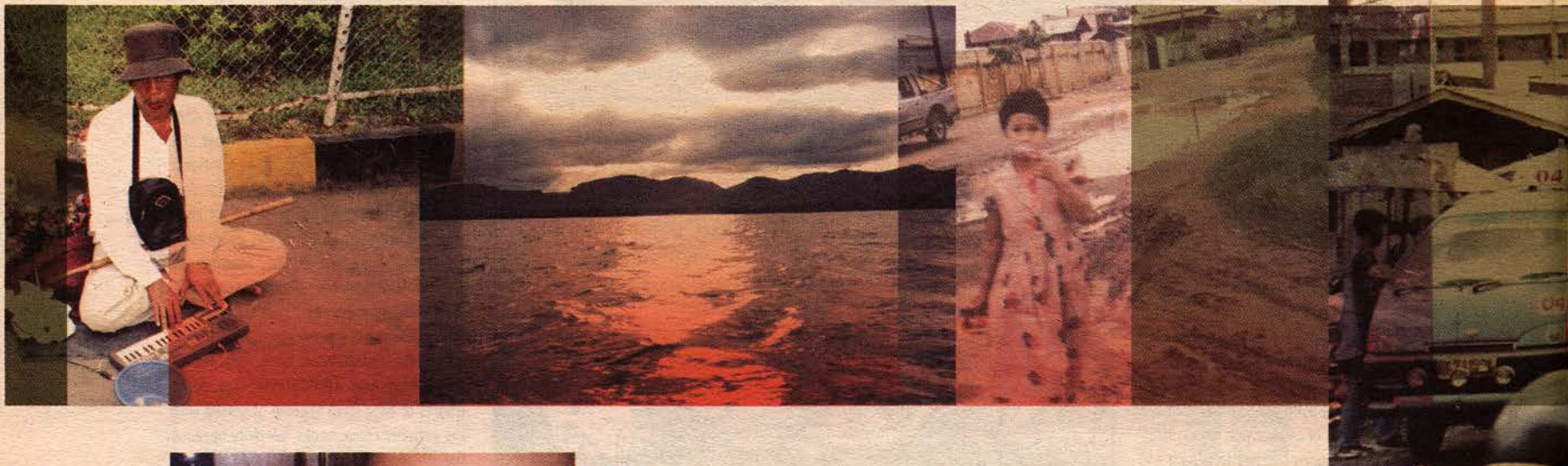
Along with mythology and comic books, we might look for clues and keys to a healthier interpersonal dynamic among our more evolved relatives in the animal world. Dolphins, with brains larger than ours, interact erotically freely, frequently, playfully and openly. And then there is the official mascot of polyamory, those pleasure-loving primates, the bonobo apes. Bonobos are close cousins to the chimpanzee, with DNA more than 99% identical to our own. In their fascinating study, *Demonic Males: Apes and the Origin of Human Violence*, Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson trace the origin of human warfare and "Alpha Male" behavior to male chimps, who attack and kill foreign males in raids and territorial conflicts. Male chimpanzees also routinely batter females into submission, proving their sexual dominance through violent displays and occasional rapes.

But across the Zaire River from the chimps live the bonobos, primate hippies who dedicate their lives to peace, love, and sex. "Bonobos use sex for much more than making babies," the authors note. "They have sex as a way of making friends. They have sex to calm someone who is tense. They have sex as a way to reconcile after aggression." Bonobos have frequent homosexual sex and condone sex between adults and children. When a bonobo group meets a group of unknown bonobos, they generally mate and socialize with them

(continued on page 69)

NO SLEEP TILL BEIRUT

ALAN BISHOP of Sun City Girls speaks with **Brandon Stosuy** about terrorism, travel, clueless Americans and curating the cut-up world music collages of his Sublime Frequencies label.



Alan Bishop in Medan, Sumatra 2004.

CAFFEINE AND NICOTINE are Alan Bishop's self-professed main vices. "Resting is an obstacle," he says. "Napoleon taught me how to take 15-minute naps, and when I drive down the highway late at night and feel drowsy, I narrow it down to a three-second nap. When I awake, and realize I survived again, I'm energized for hours."

Given the range and breadth of his creative output over the last two decades, the 45-year-old Bishop's admission that he's a self-taught low-to-no-dozer makes a lot of sense. For decades, his main occupation has been as a prolific musician and composer. Sun City Girls, a trio he formed in Sun City, Arizona in 1983 with his brother (Sir) Richard Bishop and Charles Gocher, have released 40-plus albums of startling originality: a vast catalog of world music fusion and cheeky agitprop, Eastern music and blissed-out raga. (Two classics are 1990's *Torch of the Mystics*, an impressive Spaghetti-Eastern wrangling of sound, like some kind of cowpoke-infused Bombay pop; and 1996's *330,000 Crossdressers from Beyond the Rig Veda* which is, among other things, a Gamelan drone marathon.) Bishop's also had his hand in non-SCG projects like

Uncle Jim (whose new LP *Superstars of Greenwich Meantime* is due out any moment on the Kentucky-based Black Velvet Fuckere label) and Alvarius B, whose LP *Blood Operatives of the Barium Sunset*, will be out on in October on the Sun City Girls' own Abduction label, which Bishop runs.

In October 2003, Bishop started a new label with his brother (Sir) Richard and filmmaker Hisham Mayet. The label, called Sublime Frequencies, is a collective effort to document and distribute the music of distant cultures, dedicated, they say, "to acquiring and exposing obscure sights and sounds from modern and traditional urban and rural frontiers via film and video, field recordings, radio and short wave transmissions, international folk and pop music, sound anomalies."

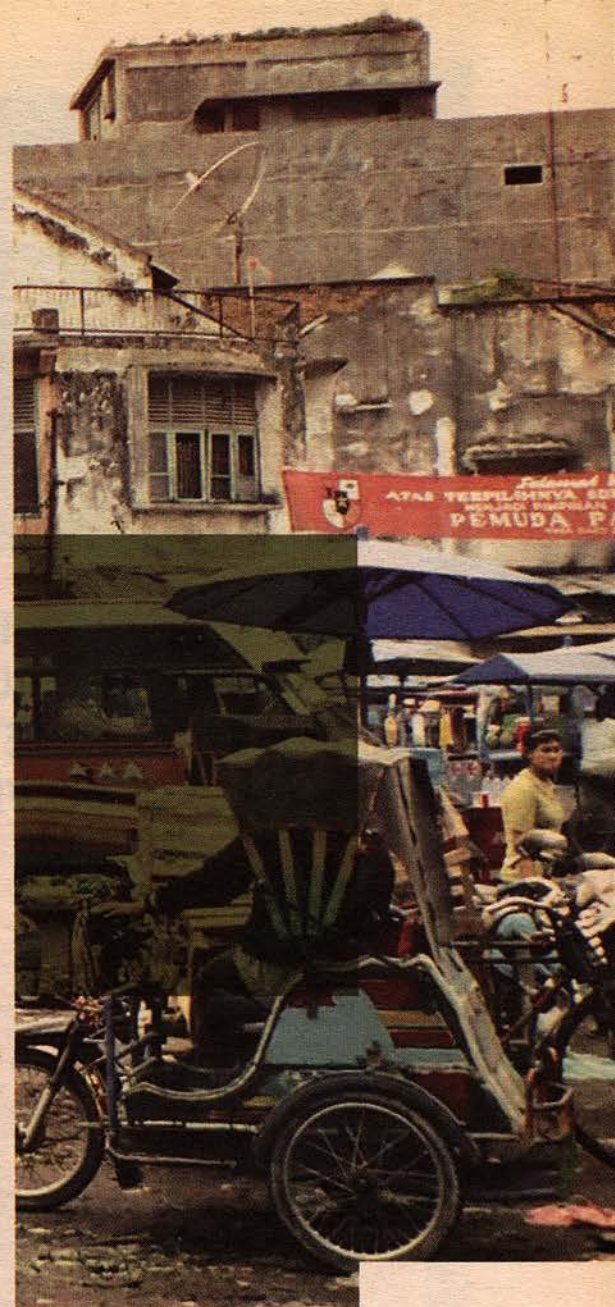
So far, Sublime Frequencies has released nearly two dozen CDs, from *Radio Phnom Pehn's* schizophrenic Cambodian metal/jingle remixed cut-ups to the juicy pop histrionics of *Molam: Thai Country Groove* to the on-the-road brilliance of *Streets of Lhasa*. Meanwhile, Mayet has filmed three DVDs of live performances by unknown musical geniuses based in countries like Syria, Thailand

and Niger for SF, and has finished a fourth, *Niger: Magic and Ecstasy in The Sahel*. The fall finds three new SF CDs, two of which focus on members of the so-called Axis of Evil, Iraq and North Korea. Per usual, the names are as colorful as the sounds collected: *Choubi Choubi! Folk and Pop Sounds from Iraq*; *Radio Pyongyang: Commie Funk and Agit Pop from the Hermit Kingdom*; and *Guitars of the Golden triangle: Folk and pop music of Myanmar (Burma) Vol. 2*.

The label's ragtag contributing cast also includes micro-noisemaker Robert Millis of Climax Golden Twins and Bay Area Porest/Mono Pause/Neung Phak maestro, Mark Gergis; Gergis is the second most prolific SF contributor after Bishop, and is the mind behind the aforementioned Iraqi compilation as well as *I Remember Syria's* double-album cut-up of field recordings, radio excerpts, and "lost" cassette pieces.

Sublime Frequencies isn't your average world music label—in place of the in-depth documentation of records from labels like Lonely Planet, Smithsonian, Latitudes and Hamonia Mundi are reader-baiting sentences like "the equator





runs through only ten countries on earth and I bet that you cannot name them all without consulting a map" and elliptical, beatnik-style prose-rants in which the compilers relay brief anecdotes and impressions of their travels. Bishop, the Kerouac of the crew, goes even further, keeping a running journal related to each project. "I write as much as I record," he says. "Most are 50-100 pages with collage art and photos pasted into the pages. Each book is a different size/style and I always force myself to finish one for each venture." So far he's assembled 40 of them; none of them have been published. The mind reels at the unseen treasures lurking within their pages.

Recently Bishop and I conversed at length via email about his current activities. I began by asking him about *Crime & Dissonance*, a two-disc compilation of work by famed Italian film composer Ennio Morricone slated for release on Mike Patton's Ipecac label this fall.

HOW DID the Morricone project come about? What drew you to Morricone's work in the first place? I saw *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly* when I was a kid on TV. The music destroyed me, just the power of it. Since then I've been listening, collecting and digesting all of his music. There was a feeling that if I could wear the music as a talisman, I would be indestructible. He worked in so many mediums of sound. He composes everything from romantic orchestral music to full-on speaker-thrashing noise. He is known for the Italian Western themes but for those who investigate the massive output of thousands of tracks he's either composed, co-composed, arranged, or directed, speaking about his work in generalities in order to educate the unfamiliar is a pointless task. For the compilation, Filippo Salvadori, who runs Runt Distribution amongst other things, kept me up to date on which

Sublime Frequencies album covers.





Bishop "fishing" radio in Sumatra.

"THE STREET MUSIC WE RECORD IS WHAT IT IS, EVERYDAY, WITHOUT HYPE OR THIS NEED TO OVER-ANALYZE IT AND FILE IT IN THE CEMETERY OF SOLVED MYSTERIES."

Morricone titles were available to license for the CDs. It's a true mess as Morricone has recorded for dozens of labels and licensing tracks from some of them is near impossible, so I was unable to get all the tracks I wanted and had to compromise. Still, it's a great set.

What makes a good soundtrack?

I listen to soundtrack music as music, not as a complementary appendage to the film. So as long as the music moves me, it's a good soundtrack. Mono-thematic scores usually fail me but Morricone is one who can occasionally make a single theme interesting for the length of an entire soundtrack. *La Cosa Bufo* and *The Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* both come to mind.

Can you trace your interest in documenting so-called "world music"?

I traveled around the States a lot when I was a kid, and when I bought a car, I moved from Saginaw, Michigan to Arizona. A cousin had just bought an apartment building in Marbella, Spain and he said we were always welcome to stay for free, so I started saving my money, hustling goods at

flea markets. In 1983 I sold all my Jimi Hendrix LPs to get the rest of the cash I needed to fly to Spain. I was 23. Morocco was only a boat ride from Spain and it was cheap to travel around for a few months, so I stayed as long as my money held out. The second day I was in Morocco I heard that Joujouka sound of the Raitni chanters echoing from an elusive location in the medina of Tetuan. When some kids saw me trying to find the origin of the music they brought me up some stairway to a room filled with pretty women and four musicians performing for them. It was the remnants of a wedding party and I was the only male guest. The musicians gave me some hash and started playing and I danced with the women awhile and we all sat down and had mint tea and snacks, started discussing world events with the older drummer for an hour or so. That's the hospitality of the Arab world. No questions asked. "Want some food? Drink? Dance? Music? Hashish?"

What was the political climate like?

The Polisario Guerilla movement was much more active back then in the Western Sahara and also in Morocco's cities and countryside. There were checkpoints on all the highways and almost every bus I took from town to town was stopped by military personnel. One time I was on my way back to Essouira from Fes - I was in Fes for a couple of days and was carrying a passport for a guy who left it there, doing him a favor by taking it back for him. Some guy got on the bus and sat next to me in the back. About an hour later

we were stopped by the military. The soldiers were checking people on the bus and when they came to the back I kept wondering if they searched me and found that I had two passports including a British one which wasn't mine, what I'd have to explain, but they didn't even look at me. They just grabbed the guy who sat next to me and took him off the bus and that was it. Seemed as if they knew who he was. He was escorted to their vehicle at gunpoint, and shoved in the back seat. Our bus was then allowed to leave. Polisario perhaps? A sympathizer with the Polasario? Or just a common petty thief? I'll never know.

Did you go to Spain and Morocco alone?

I went with Rick [Bishop] and a cat named Dr. Michael Pemulis. We busked around the streets in Marbella making enough cash to extend our money, for a while staying in an empty apartment building my cousin owned. It was right on the beach and he didn't have one tenant yet. Just us. In Spain, I was able to pick up Radio Tanger International, which was this improbable

assortment of music from be-bop to Arab orchestral to Berber folk music to psych rock ... it was all over the place. I started recording it using a hand-held short-wave radio with built-in cassette recorder. I haven't stopped since.

You obviously have an affinity for radio. What do you dig about it?

Radio is superior to television for me. I can access it anywhere at anytime. Doesn't mean that I don't record TV—I do, but not nearly as much because it cannot be manipulated as easily, and its source is more controlled than radio. A radio is a receiver/transmitter of sound. It's a source for sound that is overlooked by those who compose or record or are looking for source material in sound or music. The fact that it provides an unlimited amount of possibilities for sound source material - dependent on where you are on the globe and how you manipulate the radio - is enough to keep me interested in it as THE most practical electronic instrument ever made. I like the options of as many stations/cross-signals and frequencies as I can get to maximize the anomalies of sound I can capture. India/Southeast Asia are excellent for this.

Are these various overseas stations really as diverse as they sound, or do they achieve that through your editing?

A lot of it is due to the editing but

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the recordings ARE straight from the radio overseas ... I edit them for how I want to hear them sequenced so everyone ends up listening to my favorite collection. Listening when I'm there is far superior in terms of entertainment and discovery to any stations here.

You also record on the streets, in people's homes and so forth. How do the musicians generally react to being recorded or videotaped?

Most musicians are cool about it, or they are used to it, or indifferent. Cameras and microphones have been around long enough now as to make this type of thing somewhat routine. Some are hustlers and demand more money than originally agreed on. Some won't take a penny even if you could sell a billion copies. Some have seen the final product and others will in the future when we can make contact. Some probably never will.

That three-year-old on *Streets of Lhasa* is totally brilliant. How are these kids so musically assured?

It's part of their daily life in practice. Instruments and the techniques of playing them are handed down from father to son. Their music seems more informal. The hype doesn't exist as much. It is what it is everyday without need to over-analyze or define to the state of filing it categorically in the cemetery of solved mysteries. I love it AS mystery because I've yet to meet anyone who can truly define it, yet many claim that they have or that they can. That's what turns me off about the academic approach. Americans are taught that they need experts to tell them what's important to know or remember, and where and when they should travel, how and what they should experience when they travel, what to watch or listen to,



and what they should believe as history and what they should believe as an explanation for a current event. Sublime Frequencies are not "educators" or "experts"... Fuck that shit! Some people think that what we do and where we go is some big fuckin' deal or it's hard or difficult. Sure, there can be difficulties but it ain't a pit of terrorists waiting to ambush you and kidnap you or behead you... That's all bullshit.

On the other hand, fearful masters of the remote control are already half-dead anyway and maybe they should just lay on their couch till the casket truck shows up to cart 'em off to heaven.

Certain moments on the DVDs seem like they were tailored especially for a camera. In *Isan: Folk & Pop Music of Northeast Thailand*, there's that ritual where they start tossing rabbits...

If you look closely, the rabbits and birds being "tossed" are actually stuffed animals so the illusion is secured at first glance because they

"WE ARE TAUGHT TO NEED EXPERTS TO TELL US WHERE AND WHEN WE SHOULD TRAVEL, HOW AND WHAT WE SHOULD EXPERIENCE AND WHAT WE SHOULD BELIEVE AS HISTORY OR EXPLANATION FOR A CURRENT EVENT."

employ live chickens and rabbits as a foil, running around to make it seem that they are throwing live animals in the air. Brilliant! Hisham Mayet filmed the *Isan* DVD. He worked his way to the front of that festival and sat next to some high profile general to get the best shots possible.

Do you fear people romanticizing the music that you're documenting?

Not really. There's nothing I can do about it. Once something gets released, we gotta deal with the good and the bad. People have been misinterpreting things I've been involved with for 25 years now. There's not much of a previous framework to relate the releases to, so it creates a challenge for most critics to review it coherently. There are no experts. It's an illusion. That's really the point. It's a war of aesthetics

and what we're bringing to the table is a DIY approach to everything, not dependent on institutionalized engineering of thought about foreign cultures and how they need to be accessed through brokers of politics, communication and finance. But there are some savvy writers out there who have done it justice and a few who are quite impressive in their knowledge of Asian, African, and Middle Eastern music: Marcus Boon, and Jack Cole of Pataphysics, have a nice feel for what's happening. But then there was David Toop's brilliant review of the *Dragonflies* CD in *The Wire* where he refused to believe Martine's recordings were

More vacation photos from the Bishop files.



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Dangdut musicians "The Omega Band", Sumatra 2004 (Right);
Backstage at Nat Festival, Burma 2002 (Below).



real and basically said 'if they were real, I've never heard anything like it and I want to know more' and criticized Tucker's studio methods at achieving such a product. Doesn't get any better than that. I e-mailed him Tucker's address and said: 'Go find out more! They're REAL recordings, not bullshit processed electronics!'

In the liner notes to *Molam: Thai Country Groove From Isan*, Mark Gergis says some Thais consider the style "backward and embarrassing." Is there something analogous in American pop music? Maybe a "trend-conscious" American wouldn't want to admit they like the Grateful Dead [Er...see page 39—Ed.] or Bruce Springsteen or Fleetwood Mac... but secretly they've got their records in their collection but it's not "cool" to like them in front of their friends who all dig hip-hop or post-punk or Japanese noise bands or electronica? I'm just trying to make an example... It may not be quite the same in Thailand, I suppose, but when you ask some Bangkok hipster or contemporary under the age of 40 about Molam, they may say they don't like it because they are sick of hearing it or they come from Isan province and they're now in the big city where people don't think roots Molam is cool... They'd rather listen to the new hits or the slick Molam prepared for modern audiences. But when you get them away from the crowd, they admit their nostalgia for the past. Some



hate it genuinely. I wonder what some of these people think of us when we ask them to point us in the direction of live music. Sometimes we'll ask for a certain type of music or play them a cassette and say: "I want to see THIS in a live concert or club or some band you know that will play this music for us?" Imagine some dude from Thailand walking up to me with a tape deck on the street in Seattle and he plays me a cassette excerpt from "Sister Ray" by the Velvet Underground and then says to me "Where can I see this LIVE?" I may actually be able to find something around that he could hear, but would it satisfy his quest? And what if he went up to anyone else on the street? Would they just look at him and say, "You've lost your mind, foreigner?"

The next releases include collections from North Korea and Iraq. People are obviously going to add political anecdote to their discussions of these discs.

We don't worry about that. It is what it is. Everybody plays the role of an unqualified judge, so all that is routine now. When people start worrying about what other people will say about their work, they are dead and successfully under hypnotic control. Most people are not qualified to even discuss politics because they mimic what any dolt could hear from pundits on television. They are mimics, not free thinkers.

So many of the places documented

"THE FEAR OF TERROR IS A TACTIC EMPLOYED BY THE WORLD ELITE TO KEEP THE HERD FROM EXPERIENCING PHENOMENA BEYOND THE PASTURE."

with Sublime Frequencies rarely appear on America's radar unless there's a crisis. What can you see outside the frame that me, a never-go-anywhere New Yorker, is missing?

It's personal. Whatever I see or feel from my experiences may never translate well for others. But, whatever you do, don't be fooled by the fear patrol out there who say that terror is only a minute away. It's all an illusion. Terror is a controlled commodity like oil, gold, and wheat. Terror will be used when it benefits the plans of the world elite ONLY. Most Americans are still clueless about this, thinking "terror" is a random political tool of extremists as a war against "democracy" that is beyond the reach of our world's great armies and technological expertise. It's completely absurd. The fear of terror being spread is a tactic employed as a mirage to keep the herd from experiencing phenomena beyond the pasture. There's way more bullshit IN the pasture than beyond it.

I've got to ask: what's up with the Sun City Girls these days?

Nothing at the moment other than a few odd studio dates we've been able to work in this year and I've been working on future archival releases slowly. We are playing one show

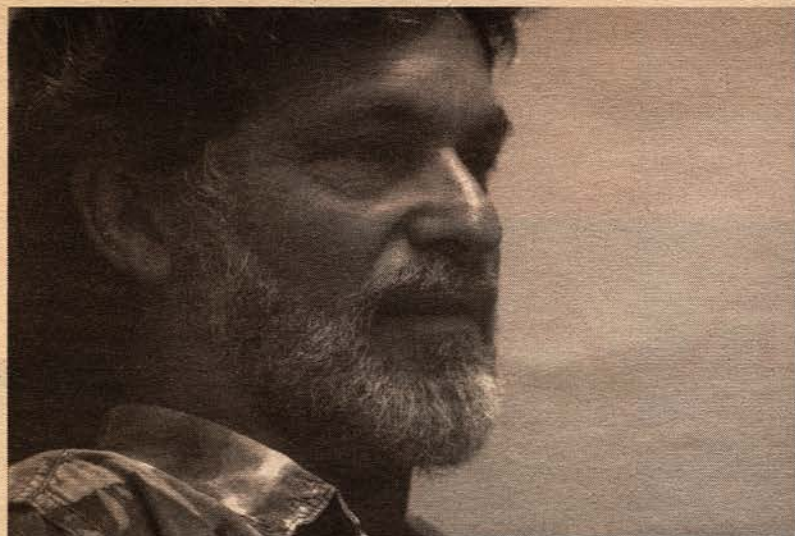
only this year, at the INSTAL festival in Glasgow in October. Maybe some shows and a new studio record next year.

After almost 25 years, how do you uncover fresh avenues and approaches?

I don't know. We all change so there's always new inspiration and we don't take it too seriously. Freedom and no pressure. That must be it.

Sublime Frequencies compact discs and DVDs are available from www.sublimefrequencies.com





black. no sugar.

Tracking The Death Train

I am in Tapachula, a small city on the Guatemalan border in southern Chiapas, Mexico. I'm here to witness what happens to dispossessed coffee growers — more than 600,000 have lost their land and their livelihoods over the past five years as a result of the ongoing coffee pricing crisis — as they try to find a way to support their families.

Tapachula is the starting point for the most important cargo rail line going north, a line that has become the main passageway for a flood of men, women and children heading towards the mythical El Norte, as the U.S. is known.

Every evening around midnight, La Bestia (The Beast), also known as El Tren de Muerte (The Death Train), pulls slowly into the rail yard. Out of the surrounding bushes and embankments, about 200 people scramble to jump on board. They climb to the top of some cars, hold on to the sides of others, or wedge in between cars. It's a dangerous way to travel. Many will fall asleep and fall off during the long hauls between stations. Some will lose their grip on the jolting ride and slip off into the night. Others will be robbed or raped by armed gangs and thrown off. Many of these people will be sucked under the train as they fall. The few who survive the fall are sent back to Tapachula, where they are cared for by a most remarkable woman, Dona Olga, in the small sanctuary called Albergue de Buen Pastor Jesus (Sanctuary of Good Shepard Jesus).

I've come to Tapachula with Marta, a young Ecuadorian woman working with Polus Center, an organization Dean's Beans has teamed up with to provide services and hope to disabled people in

Nicaragua and Ethiopia. We wanted to investigate the Death Train and see what, if anything, we could do to assist Dona Olga.

Entering the small, cramped building, I am assaulted by a swirl of sweat, infection and antiseptic. The four small rooms are jammed with wheelchairs, crutches and old medical equipment. Twenty-six men and women currently live at the Albergue. They come from El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and elsewhere. They have two things in common: They were trying to go north to send money back to their families; and

and help others. He is motivated by altruism and by fear of returning home to Honduras as a burden to his family.

In the local hospital, Benito, 16, waits to be sent to the shelter. He looks around the hospital room in total bewilderment. Two weeks ago, he was heading north to help his family. Now he is in a hospital bed he can't pay for, in a country he is not allowed to be in, and is missing his left arm and right leg. I can't even fathom the despair. Marta leaves the room in tears.

Dona Olga spends much of each day rounding up donations, buying medicine

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they are friendly and open. Many are coffee farmers. They willingly share their stories with us. The problems come from the police and from the organized gangs that roam the yards and terrorize the migrants. The largest and most dangerous is Mara Salvatrucha, made up of ex-L.A. gang members deported back to Mexico. One of the migrants tells me he's gone without food in order to hold on to ten pesos. He needs to have extortion money when he's assaulted. Otherwise, the Mara will throw him off the train. We pull together a plan to share with Dona Olga. We set out to identify the needs and desires of each person at the Albergue, and sculpt a program for each. We commit to repatriating Maria and setting her up in her dress making business, and we meet with the El Salvadoran consulate to make it happen. We agree to help Donald gain administrative and computer skills, and provide the salary for him to become the administrator of the Albergue. This is a good beginning.

As the program evolves, I intend to solicit contributions from Starbucks, Green Mountain and some of the other big coffee companies that have made record profits during the crisis. Hopefully, these companies will recognize that it was our collective behavior as an industry that drove Winston, Donald and so many people to risk their futures on the Death Train, and be willing to support our small efforts to make amends.

Dean Cycon
Dean's Beans
Organic Coffee Company
June 2005

**The problems come from the
police and from the organized
gangs that roam the yards and
terrorize the migrants.**

they had all lost arms, legs or both to the Death Train. Some were waiting for prosthetic limbs. Some were learning how to walk on them. Others just seemed to stare blankly ahead.

Winston worked on a coffee farm in Honduras, but lost his job when the price paid for coffee sank below the cost of growing. He lost an arm and a leg to the Death Train. He sits in a wheelchair and tells me that his dream is to go back, build a house and grow coffee again. Maria lost both legs above the knees, and waits for prosthetic legs. She wants to go back to El Salvador and start a dress making business to support her three kids. Donald wants to stay at the shelter

and visiting the victims. She is an immensely loving presence, and must seem like a true angel to those who wake up after amputation to see her soft, caring face.

That night we go to the Death Train. We are there with Francisco, the head of BETA, the state migrant's protection group. Francisco goes to the train every night to give food packages and information to the migrants. He is also there to keep an eye on the state police, who are dressed in black, carry machine guns and often extort money from the migrants. We were told that it is very dangerous to go to the train without an escort. But it is not the migrants who are the problem,



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THEY ARE AFRIRAMPO

Oliver Hall encounters Osaka's number one freedom paradise rock duo.

Photography by W.T. Nelson.

WHEN AFRIRAMPO arrive at the Smell in downtown Los Angeles there is nothing about them that suggests the powers they will soon deploy on stage. Certain performers have a way of carrying themselves in venues that tells you not to approach them unless you have something important to say about the sound system or how many drink tickets they get. Oni and Pikachu, despite looking road-weary, and dressed down in floral prints with naked faces, hold themselves with that kind of authority. Not that it stops (male) fans from approaching the two, or the band from receiving them graciously. But they do not look like the creatures you'd expect

to see after reading their website (where they describe themselves as **"young Japanese girls rock duo from Osaka JAPAN! / Naked rock!!!! Naked soul!!! Red red strong red dress!! / Freeeeeeeeedam paradise rock! Jump! With improvisation. / Sooo fantastic & wild performance!"**) or their press clips, which portray them as sex demons, noise futurists, musical athletes, punk sibyls who, when asked for their favorite three albums of all time responded, "1. AFRIRAMPO 2. AFRIRAMPO 3. AFRIRAMPO"...

Afirampo's recording career began with *A* (not to be confused with *A'*, presumably to be read "A-prime," a collection of early recordings), a shrieking garage-thrash record with guitar, drums and two girl voices; if the music on this record had any antecedents, it's the startling moments of weirdness and the playful, conspiratorial spirit of the early '80s Swiss female punk band Kleenex/LiLiPUT, who, like Afirampo, enjoy letting music wreak havoc with familiar vowels. Afirampo's new album, *Kore Ga Mayaku Da* on John Zorn's Tzadik Records, is similarly playful but more elaborate and scary, like classical theater.!

My intention was to interview Afirampo at the bar behind the Smell on Main, but as we turn from Harlem Alley onto Third Street, Oni exclaims, "Japanese food!" They had identified something that would relieve their homesickness: a plain burger restaurant with a marquee-style menu behind the counter, sparsely decorated with objects whose strangeness I wouldn't have noticed if Oni had not been so taken with them.

"I like frogs," she says, pointing to the giant ceramic vase in the shape of two frogs on the counter. Plastic pieces of fruit spread out like a rebus on the shelves in one wall and a painting of two ballerinas in a dance studio hung opposite.

"Looks like Japanese," says Pikachu.

"European," said Oni. They seem to contradict each other often in conversation in this breezy way, just as one of them will suddenly, frighteningly take over a song in the middle of a performance. When I ask them how music in Japan, especially in their hometown Osaka, is different from music in America, Pikachu frowns, "It's the same!" "Very different," says Oni. "Especially in Osaka, like underground scene? Noise? Strong, and also more deep, especially in Osaka, for now. Interesting, more than America."

Oni seems to love the words "strong" and "deep," referring, for example, to Keiji Haino, Acid Mothers Temple and the older generation of "out" Japanese musicians they've played with as "deep, deep, crazy old guys." Despite these connections, Afirampo does not see itself as a noise band.

"Not only noise music," says Oni.

"Actually, not noise music," says Pikachu.

"Strange music," says Ono.

"I want to know more about strange music of America," says Pikachu.

I ask their views on America's political situation. They had made a salutary proposal for the commonwealth in their *SF Burning* e-mail interview last year, when Pikachu suggested President Bush "should play the drums or live in AFRICA with pygmy." Taking what William S. Burroughs liked to call a broad, general view of the situation, Oni elaborated: "Fucked UP!!"

"I really like American people, but I really don't like American government," Oni says now. "So it's really weird, and I'm so sad because American people so nice that I met this time, before... really friendly, active. But, yeah, the government's so bad. People have so much energy. American people have so much energy, so if the government changed more... peaceful, or better... more

(continued on page 69)

Who are they?
They are
Oni (front)
and Pikachu.



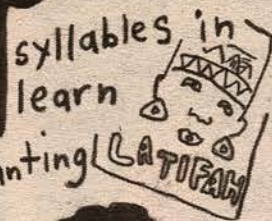


So I practiced for my bat mitzvah RELIGIOUSLY

Preparation Information

By Vanessa Davis
2005

I color-coded the syllables in my torah portion to learn the trope of the chanting!



Even still, doing a runthrough with the actual torah for the cantor, I felt WOOLY

I am gonna BARF. But if I stop now she'll make me do it again from the beginning

Va-ah yeh-hee-eee... yahh-

And then I fainted



A lot of my friends had theme parties. I had to think of something



And if there wasn't a theme, there was a dazzling stunt



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DEATHROCK CUTTER by jolene siana

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— Doug Harvey, LA Weekly

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BIG DEAD PLACE

INSIDE THE STRANGE AND
MENACING WORLD OF ANTARCTICA

By Nicholas Johnson
Foreword by Eirik Sønneland

A grunt's eye view of America's Antarctic Program. Here the heroic camaraderie and romantic desolation of the usual polar literature give way to sterile buildings populated by characters like a crazed manager who fills his boots with antifreeze, Boozy the Clown, ghosts that haunt the food freezer, and horny employees who grab rare private moments coupling on the altar in the Chapel of the Snow.

"Far from the pure white landscape of our collective dreams, Nicholas Johnson's Antarctica stands out as the toxic spawn of America's culture of corpo-dementia and shit-the-bed planetary greed..."

— Jerry Stahl, author of Permanent Midnight

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No Magic Man by **Sunburned Hand of the Man**

New studio album from the ritual funk throb mob spotlight in *Arthur* No. 7. Sayeth *The Wire*: "Some of Sunburned's most punishingly rhythmic heart-punches to date. Pete Cosey-era Miles cut up with Lhasa street song and stand-up stonerskits...the logical Heavy Metal extension of Tony Williams' experiments with electricity as part of Lifetime alongside guitarist John McLaughlin and organist Larry Young... Possessed of a uniquely squelchy analog bottom end and between tracks there are some wowing cut-ups from various found sources that add a beautiful veneer of mystic shit to the already precariously dosed proceedings." Edition of 1,000. Going fast.



Million Tongues Festival curated by **Plastic Crimewave**

The creator of *Galactic Zoo Dossier* drops a built-to-blast compilation of underground psych. Features Michael (Yonkers) and the Mumbles, LSD March, Espers, Josephine Foster and the Supposed, P.G. Six, Fursaxa, Spires That in the Sunset Rise, Matt Valentine and Erika Elder Medicine Show, Simon Finn, Frankie Delmane, Nick Castro, Kawabata Makoto with Kinski, Shimura Koji and Takuya Nishimura, Nisennenmondai, Inner Throne, Plastic Crimewave Sound, The Civilized Age, Taurpis Tula, M.V. Carbon, Jutok Kaneko and Panicsville.



Golden Apples of the Sun curated by **Devendra Banhart**

"Landmark" says *Mojo*. "Sparkling" says *The Wire*. "A perfect introduction to the new generation of folk-oriented singer-songwriters" muses *Other Music*. "8.6" snorts *Pitchfork*. Featuring Vetiver (with Hope Sandoval), Joanna Newsom, Six Organs of Admittance, Viking Moses, Josephine Foster, Espers, Vashti Bunyan & Devendra Banhart, Jana Hunter, Currituck Co., White Magic, Iron and Wine, Diane Cluck, Matt Valentine, Entrance, Jack Rose, Little Wings, Scout Niblett, Troll, CocoRosie and Antony. All artwork and lettering by Devendra himself.



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"Aw Come Aw Wry alternately captures the rousing feel of a late-night tent revival and the subtle, subdued nature of a funeral service." *Flagpole*



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A View From the Floor

"Slow Dazzle is the Mendoza Line if they were asked to score *Twin Peaks*. Too late for that, but maybe David Lynch should take note and consider giving Bracy and McArde a call for his next project." *Alarm Press*



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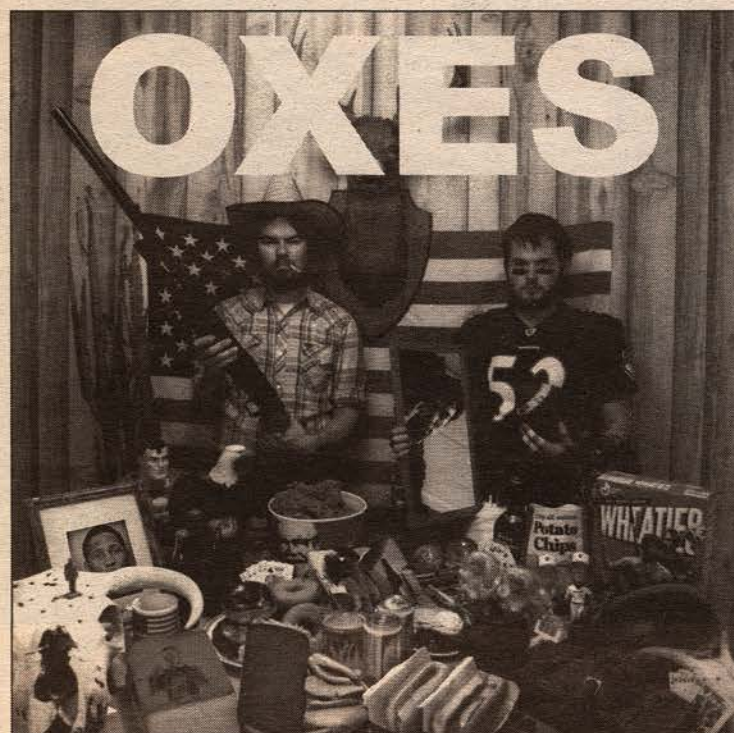
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The exhibition then travels to Nora Eccles Harrison Museum of Art, Utah State University, Logan, Utah, January – March, 2006; Ulrich Museum of Art, Wichita, Kansas, April 21 – July 9, 2006; Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, Berkeley, California. August 16 – November 12, 2006; Grey Art Gallery, New York University, New York, New York, January 16 – March 31, 2007. Exhibition catalogue published by Distributed Art Publishers, Inc.



THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF HIM

For decades, **Jon Hassell** has been making sensual, Technicolor music for a new world. **John Payne** catches up with the composer, trumpeter, gourmand, intellectual and hedonist. Photography by **W. T. Nelson**.

JON HASSELL is a wildly disciplined blurrer of boundaries. Does he write "serious" music? Does he play "jazz"? Is he an electronic skull-scratcher? Does he make earth music for an ethnologically melting-down new world society? Does he in fact "rock"? And what does nouvelle cuisine have to do with it? Does it matter? Yes, it does. No, not at all.

Memphis-born and Stockhausen- and Eastman School-trained, Hassell has collaborated with every kind of musician and artist, including Brian Eno; Farafina, a traditional ensemble of drummers and dancers from Burkina Faso; director Peter Sellars; fashion designers Issey Miyake and Rei Kawakubo; choreographers Merce Cunningham and Alvin Ailey; the Kronos Quartet and David Sylvian; Bjork and Ani Di Franco, even. He's also the inventor of "Fourth World," a hugely influential composed and improvised music that hybridizes African-derived polyrhythms, Indian microtonality and Balinese sonorities, smelted through recombinant aesthetics made possible by digital technology. On occasion, he's moved to play his trumpet absolutely straight. Never say never, he'd say, if I didn't just say it for him.

Fourth World is not just a musical style but a way of viewing life, or "a permanent Technicolor oasis in my spirit," as he has called it. And that well describes the effect of his latest disc, the just-out *Maarifa Street (Magical Realism 2)* on his own Nyen label. A deconstruction/reconstruction of several pieces he's either released or performed in the past, engineered and co-conceived by his producer/bandmate, bassist Peter Freeman, *Maarifa* is . . . well, it's music that, hearing it, one wants never to end: seven cuts of blissfully spacious yet deeply physically satisfying dubby globe-groove, familiar in tone to old fans via Hassell's raga-inspired electronically-harmonized horn lines tracing see-thru lacerie across the stars. *Maarifa Street* is incredibly seductive: its fragrant sound structures soothe and stimulate like a soak in ambrosial seas. It's also the best of Hassell's formidable achievements all rolled up in a big, round, smooth yet strangely unsettling ball.

Which is in essence what he's done on *Maarifa*: the album is a digital reconceptualization-reperformance of several pieces generated in European concerts, which were themselves based on previous Hassell works from his catalogue of 13 or so albums. It reflects Hassell's longstanding interest in making a sensual music

(continued on page 29)

THE
NORTH
AND
SOUTH
OF
HIM

**"WE NEED TO CREATE AN ALTERNATE
SCALE OF 'MARKET VALUE'—ONE
WHICH ACCOMODATES THE SAMBA AS
WELL AS THE MICROCHIP."**

THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF YOU

An Erotic Worldview by Jon Hassell

"I love the East, West, North and the South of you..."

—Cole Porter, "All of You"

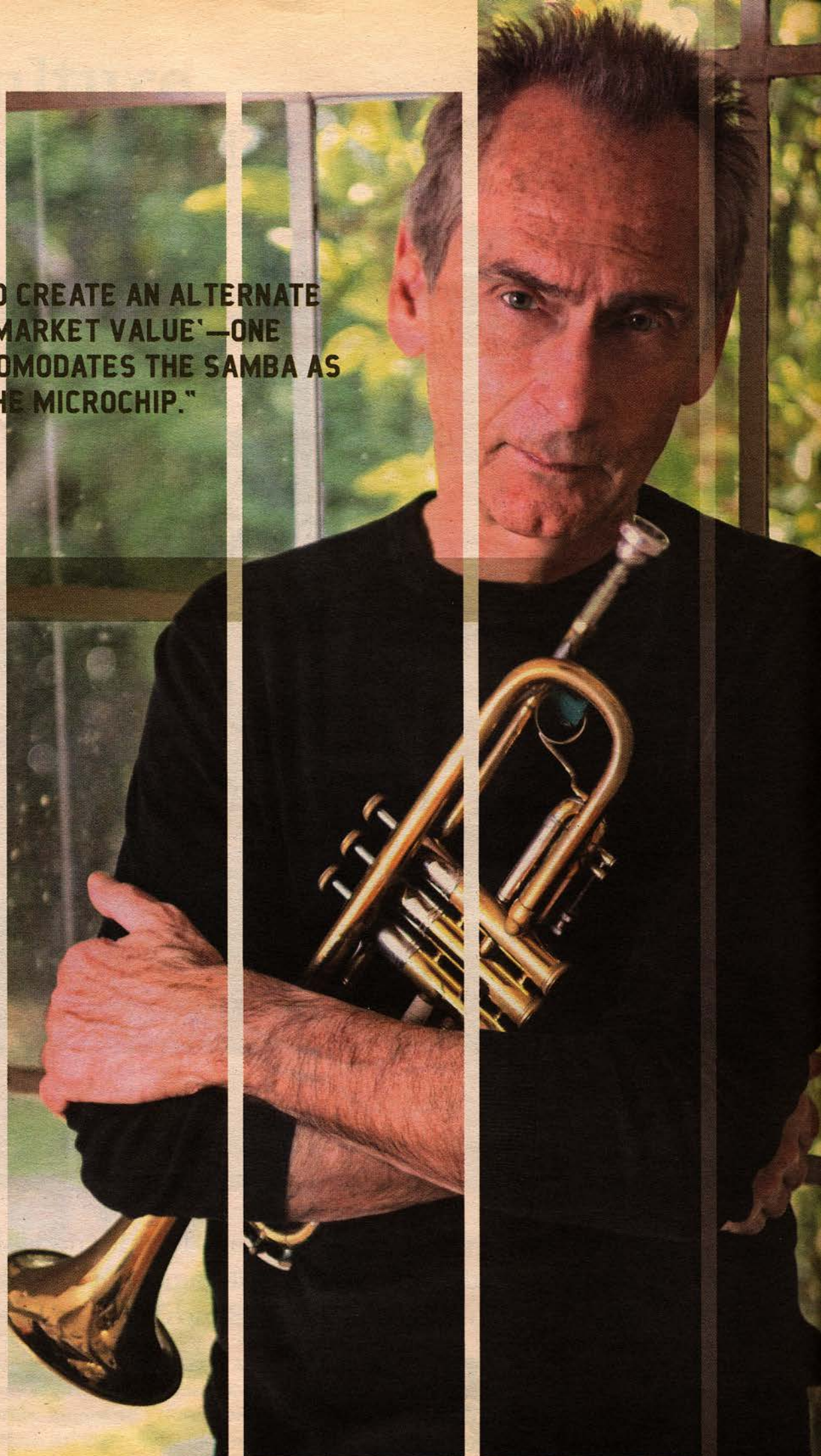
A TALE OF TWO EQUATORS—one around the planet, another at the waistline—and how the present global imbalance between a "developed" (technological) North dominating an "underdeveloped" (but culturally rich) South is a projection of the imbalance between the "north of you" (head, intellect, abstraction) and the "south of you" (hips, sensuality, emotion).

Could the story be as simple as the difference in how people turn out after centuries of evolution in a cold, hostile climate versus a warm, friendly one? And if it were, what are the chances that such a simple answer would be accepted by those whose minds have become so deeply etched with the printed circuits of language and abstraction that what is obvious on a sensual level is routinely "explained" out of existence?

Relieved of the necessity of struggle in order to stay warm, southern peoples turned toward the "art of living": decorating experience with a surround of color and pattern and rhythm. This was in contrast to northern peoples who—in order to merely survive in the cold—had to become resourceful in the way that later became known as "technology." A few thousand years later, this branched into communications technology—the form which had the power to change the world more than any previous development. So the northern worldview—one reflecting the cumulative psychology of struggle—was the first to be projected worldwide in the seductive new forms of mass media.

And as the science and technology paradigm became the gold standard by which the rest of the world was judged (creating the cleavage into "first" and "third worlds"), many of the life-enriching gifts of the South—the ones which are often most treasured in our personal experience—have gone deeply undervalued, appropriated, or simply, gone.

A different kind of "global warming"—an emotional one—is called for as the basis for creating an alternate scale of "market value"—one which accommodates the samba as well as the microchip, one which reflects the actual degree of pleasure and cultural enrichment which is brought to our lives from the South, and the south of us.



(continued from page 27)

that contained his self-generated versions of a *kind* of spirituality and consciousness of folkloric musical strains within the context of a darker and stranger modern digital milieu. The album's first track, "Divine SOS," sounds like a chapter heading in Hari Krishna training manual, but it's actually named after the frequency-analyzing software the band used in the recording, the Divine "505" (becoming "SOS" after having been written down incorrectly in session notes). The album's sound stage is extremely wide, the placement of sounds surprising and extraordinarily subtle—evanescence made audible through sensitive balancing of a mouth on brass, old animal hides petted and prodded, the finest in massaging low and caressingly high frequencies courtesy late-issue digital instrumentation.

Structurally, these are fascinating new forms of symmetry, not just jammed out like a jazz orchestra, but containing actual interludes and episodes—such as the seismic shift at the end of "Darbari Bridge," which balloons suddenly up and out on a cloud of electronic gamelan.

"We'd been playing some version of that, 'Darbari Extension,' which comes from *Aka/Darbari/Java*, and on that record is the gamelan cloud the new piece ends with; in a way that was almost like a 'Darbari Suite,' with some of the same elements, for instance the melody thing that I do comes from another track off of that record, but it's been extended harmonically,

into this whole cloud; and we took Abdou Mboup's drum part [from a performance in Paris 20 years ago] and reconstructed it in this Divine Machine software. The thing warps into another dimension, you know."

The album will receive further transformation as a "prequel" with Brian Eno's reconfigured version, due for release in a few months.

For Hassell, it's how the past can be used that spells any possibility for new things to come. "Anytime," he says, "I love getting out of the box of, like, here's this bass line, here's this rhythm, here's whatever; it's really more like reaching back into the bag of goodies that have developed over the years. There's always something there, and it's seeing what somebody does with things that are already there, how to recombine. It's interesting to think about where someone used elements that are continually refreshed by their context."

Why not resort to food metaphors here and say that, to Hassell, the recombination made possible by the newer digital technologies "is like 'fusion cuisine.'"

"Did you see that bit in *The New York Times* food section," he asks, "where these super chefs make 'Sci-fi Cooking,' I think they call it? They have these incredible combinations of things, like things served on little glass tube with a burning cinnamon stick inside of it so the aroma of the thing is part of the dish. We know what prosciutto is, and we know what watermelon is, we know all these sort of elements. Well, then you combine them; in fact, one of them is even using crushed Altoids [laughs] as part of the dish. Or another guy is using Pop Rocks as a little burst."

"I want to make something that's beautiful but sexy, you know, makes girls pay attention, and at the same time has some mysterious combination of things. Musically, a familiar sort of melody that drops

SOME UNTRIED COMBINATION OF PIGMENTS

A Beginner's Guide to the Music of Jon Hassell

THE TIMBRE of Jon Hassell's effects-drenched trumpet is unmistakable. There's nothing else like it. Imagine being a painter who stumbled on a color—some untried combination of pigments—that no one had ever seen before, and you get an idea of the ear-opening shock of Hassell's music. The nebulous sound of Hassell's tricked-out trumpet has almost no attack whatsoever. The tones swell and bloom. It's as if the swarming and droning music is the product of some extreme humidity. Hassell's visionary approach to playing and composing has earned him admirers and collaborators in practically every genre—jazz, pop, classical, experimental and world music. Even if you've never heard of him, you may already have several recordings of Jon Hassell's music.

On *Remain in Light*, Talking Heads' landmark 1980 Brian Eno-produced record, Hassell provided the horn arrangement and trumpet on "Houses in Motion." If you're not paying attention you might not hear the restrained punctuated trumpet dabs that Hassell applies in the verses, but you can't miss his solo—it's part elephantine blast, part stormy ululation and part muzzin's call.

Hassell's "Pano Da Costa" (Cloth from the Coast) is performed by the Kronos Quartet on their 1987 release *White Man Sleeps*. The quartet takes inspiration from the sound of Hassell's horn, gamely mimicking the barometrically charged tone, the insectoid flutters and the dizzy phrasing. Strong percussion often propels Hassell's music, and with shakers, rattles and aggressive bowing, Kronos conjure the right friction and mystery.

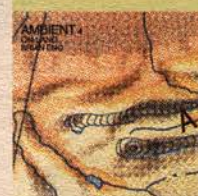
Along with numerous other Eno projects, Hassell appears on *Ambient 4*, *On Land*, and his horn supplies that ominous touch that keeps Eno's ambient music from being solely soothing. Hassell helps to unsettle things. (If you can fathom this, Hassell also plays on records by k.d. Lang, Ani DiFranco, Manhattan Transfer, Baaba Maal and Bjork, and many others. If you're looking to dig deeper, Hassell has skads of other projects worth checking out, if you can find them.)

Years before West Africa became the favorite stomping ground of world music collaborators and record producers, Hassell took up the idea. This collaboration was a logical extension of Hassell's philosophy of Fourth World music. On 1993's *Flash of the Spirit*, Hassell teamed up with Farafina, an excellent percussion and balafon group from Burkina Faso. The Eno-produced record, which draws its title from scholar Robert Farris Thompson's legendary study of Africanisms in the New World, shows how suitable the pairing of West African polyrhythm, tumbling phrasing, call-and-response and all-around kinetic music energy is with Hassell's approach.

One of Hassell's most haunting records is *Dream Theory in Malaya*, the second volume of "Fourth World" collaborations with Eno (volume one is also worth seeking out). Thick with rhythms made from the sounds of splashing water, hypnotic gongs and the earthy ping of pottery drums, the music here achieves a shamanic intensity. It's both startling and soothing somehow.

Maarifa Street, out this year, is a fitting cap to a roundup of Hassell's recordings. With dubbed-out effects and clubby rhythms, Hassell summons up *On the Corner* or *Bitches Brew*—era Miles Davis, folded in with bits of Arabic singing and Senegalese drumming. Like Hassell's aesthetic, it's smart, expansive, experimental, global, and, most of all, ecstatic.

—John Adamian



back into the parallel, major triad with the harmonizer, and then this sort of resulting exotic melody—to me that's a dish, that's like something to eat. It has beautiful curves, but all these other things are like gurgling around it, and all these decorative Pop Rocks."

HASSELL IS A FASCINATING hodgepodge of influences and interests, a former musical cerebralist who has rejected the straitjacket of the European classical tradition for some kind of music more deeply rooted in his own body and heart. He takes great pleasure in discussing the joys of Fellini, who once advised that it was never a good thing for an artist to be too conscious about what he was doing. He paraphrases the director: "For me what makes the work interesting is not where it came from or what style it is or what epoch or whatever, but whether it has vitality." And I think that's important to me, for something to be *vital*."

You can see, hear, read and experience much, much more about this giant in our midst on his website, www.jonhassell.com, which features an incredibly rich section called "Atmospherics," an ongoing and ever-evolving collection of sound clips, visuals and whatnot accompanied by texts relating the story behind each snippet. And soon come, hopefully, will be Hassell's completed *The North and South of You*, his book of musings, notes, drawings and diagrams defining the complete Fourth World paradigm and its potential uses as an inspiration bible for musicians, writers and artists alike.

Meanwhile, for Hassell it's ancient to the future all the way.

"Faced with a choice of Brown (James) or Beethoven (Ludwig van) as my only records on a desert island, I'd say J.B. wins hands down. But the balance of structure with on-the-spot fun which is transmitted by the polyphonic after-the-hunt music of the Ba-Benzélé pygmies endures beyond both. My whole life has been toward rediscovering the North and South of You. Getting in touch with your South. And rebalancing the overbalance of the North."

©

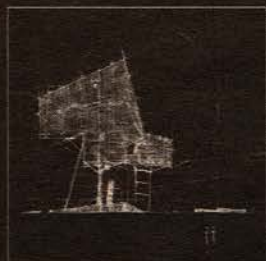




BENJY FERREE

LEAVING THE NEST

Planaria and Box Theory Records present the debut CDEP from DC songwriter Benjy Ferree, "Leaving the Nest," recorded with the help of Brendan Canty of Fugazi. Contains songs of foot stomping ballads.



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One Starving Day is a band blending the fury and despair of hardcore, the intimacy of post-rock and the sideral empty spaces of kraut-rock. For fans of Neurosis and godspeedyoublackempire. Packaged in silver ink and black jackets. Take care and bleed...



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LETTER TO RACHEL

As you remember...

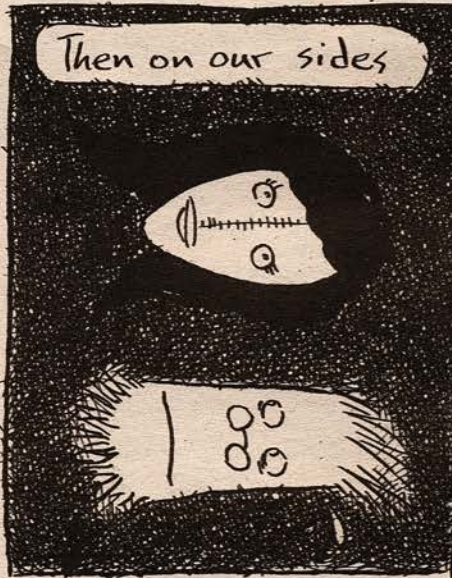
It began in the third month of my sabbatical



We lay in the dark
On our stomachs



Then on our sides



And at last on our backs



Digits unmingled



Lips to ourselves



I inhaled you and drifted in



You looked at the moon
and said it was beautiful

Yes



You said you loved being
there

Yes...



...With me

A fresh warmth, not to
be believed



Continued...

INSOUND

PROTECTING WHAT THEY
WANT TO DESTROY

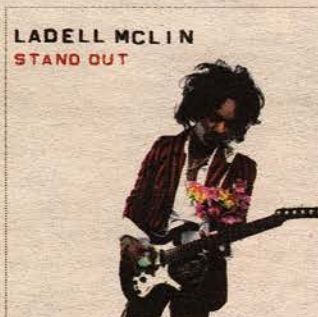
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KONONO NO. 1
Congotronics LP

Traditional Congolese trance armed with the artful reuse of found magnets, carved wooden microphones, and indigenous instruments like the likembé. File under: Electrified thumb piano & used car-part African noise

ACHE RECORDS



LADELL MCLIN
Stand Out

"[Ladell McLin] is the New Era Blues Messiah we've all been waiting for. He will become a mega-star with the under-30 audience, yet he will also be admired and respected by those of us who remember when music meant something socially, politically and spiritually." - Real Blues Magazine

GIGANTIC MUSIC



FOUR TET
Sun Drums and Soil

Four Tet's new single "Sun Drums and Soil" gets the remix treatment from Sa Ra Creative Partners. It's a wild, futuristic vision riding the line from Model 500-era Detroit techno to *Bitches Brew* fusion and Bronx-style electro. Includes Four Tet's own reversion entitled "Sun Drums and Gamelan."

Upcoming Fall Tour with Koushik, Hot Chip, and Jamie Lidell. See www.fourtet.net for details.

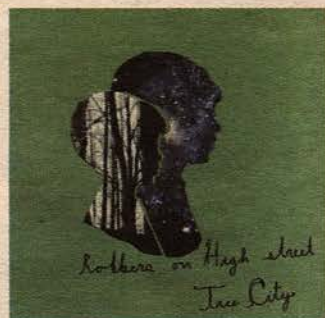
DOMINO



FOUR TET
Everything Ecstatic

Four Tet's latest masterpiece is winning high praise on both sides of the Atlantic from Q, Mojo, XLR8R (cover story), SPIN, Blender, Entertainment Weekly, and more. *Everything Ecstatic* builds on the success of *Rounds* and stands as one of electronic music's most adventurous and melodic albums.

DOMINO



ROBBERS ON HIGH STREET
Tree City

Tree City offers 13 tracks of brash, aggressive song craft blending youthful swagger and boundless energy with an insightful, introspective undercurrent. "Superbly ragged rock with dirt under its fingernails, the right amount of attitude and a sense of humor" - Blender

SCRATCHIE / NEW LINE



POPSTAR ASSASSINS
Moderne

Popstar Assassins give us a sweet, expansive and aurally pleasing concoction that climaxes in waves of big, buzzy guitars and fizzy, sizzling synths. Inspired by Spoon and The Shins, they coaxed unbelievable songs from a humble home studio to create their finest record to date.

TRIANGLEBULLETLINES REC CO



THE SIGHTS
The Sights

The Sights combine the unobtrusive honesty of The Band with slivers of influence from their own personal record collections: Ike & Tina, Solomon Burke, Everly Brothers, Bob Seger, and Tim Hardin. The result is an album that's classic, not derivative - filled with swagger and deference - and ridiculously catchy.

SCRATCHIE / NEW LINE



SHELBY
The Luxury of Time

"Shelby has a timeless sound like those bands that used to envelop you in a duvet of sound, bands like The Wedding Present and My Bloody Valentine." - XFM Radio London

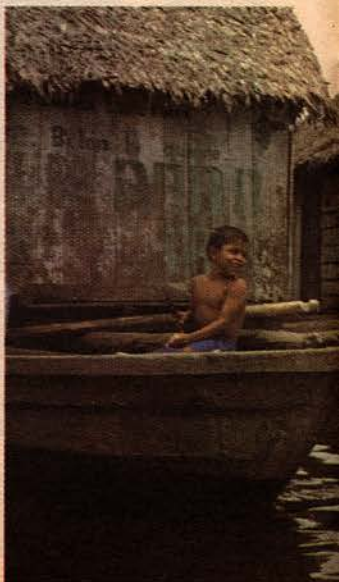
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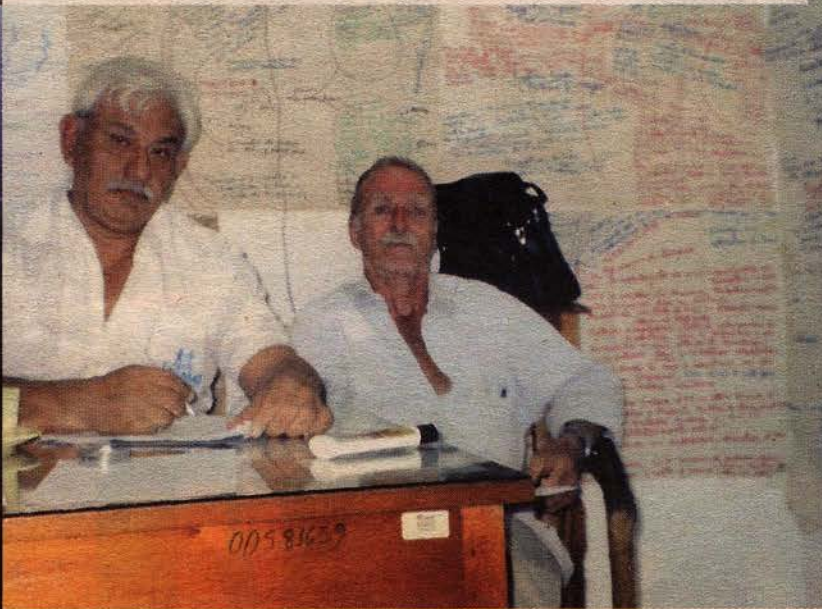
TROPIC O





I'M NOT BRAGGING, but I have skin cancer. I walked around L. A. trying to generate sympathy with it, maybe get a free beer. I told a friend of mine and he insisted I come to a rainforest clinic near his hotel in Iquitos, Peru. "There's no cancer here," he said.

This is the very rainforest where big pharmaceutical companies come to crib traditional medicines from Amazonian witch doctors for a "healthy profit."



This is the government-run Instituto de Medicina Tradicional where they openly claim that they can cure cancer and alleviate the symptoms of AIDS. They charge 12 dollars per visit.

Although the cancer was only present on my (red) neck, the doctor (pictured here on the left) insisted that I remove all of my all clothes so that he could check me thoroughly. After the examination, he asked if I ate a lot of chicken. I tried to explain to him about how I live near the Zankou Chicken stand in Los Angeles, but Doc was immune to soliloquies to garlic sauce and insisted I quit eating there because of the harmful hormones he insisted they put in the chickens to make them grow faster.

The Doc wrote me a script for some shots. He intimated that cancer was an American invention borne of tainted food, and further, that I had somehow gotten the wrong skin for my body.

The script for the shot went to the orderly who ran outside and picked the plants prescribed, then brought them to the lab where they were milled and distilled on the spot. The nurse took blood out of my arm, mixed it with the plant liquor and reinjected it into my right ass cheek.

The transfer from plant to blood took an hour. Once injected, I could feel the potion patrolling the confines of my cheap Irish skin looking for the cancer. Later the shots made me feel drunk and unstable, which is like situation normal for me.

F C A N C E R

Stricken by skin cancer, **David Reeves** journeyed to Iquitos, Peru.

There, he found witchdoctors, ayahuasca, macho hippies, fears of American 'facepeelers'... and the boat from *Fitzcarraldo*. Photography by **Simon Lund**.



When the food comes in Peru they say, "Let's eat a little of life and death."

No one starves here as fruit falls out of the tree right on your head. If you can't hook a fish, just wait for one of these ugly bastards to crawl up on land.

The population of Iquitos is estimated at a half a million people, but there is no way to parse the burgeoning chaos of the floating ghetto called Belen.

This "Venice of Peru" is tacked together from the continuous stream of balsa rafts floating down the Amazon. Harvesting balsa is profitable only when used to hide the great bulks of cocoa paste sent down river. It is in this way that the world loses its last rainforest to gain another slum.

All day and night the saw blades shriek in the mills lining the river, giving the air a fresh piney scent.





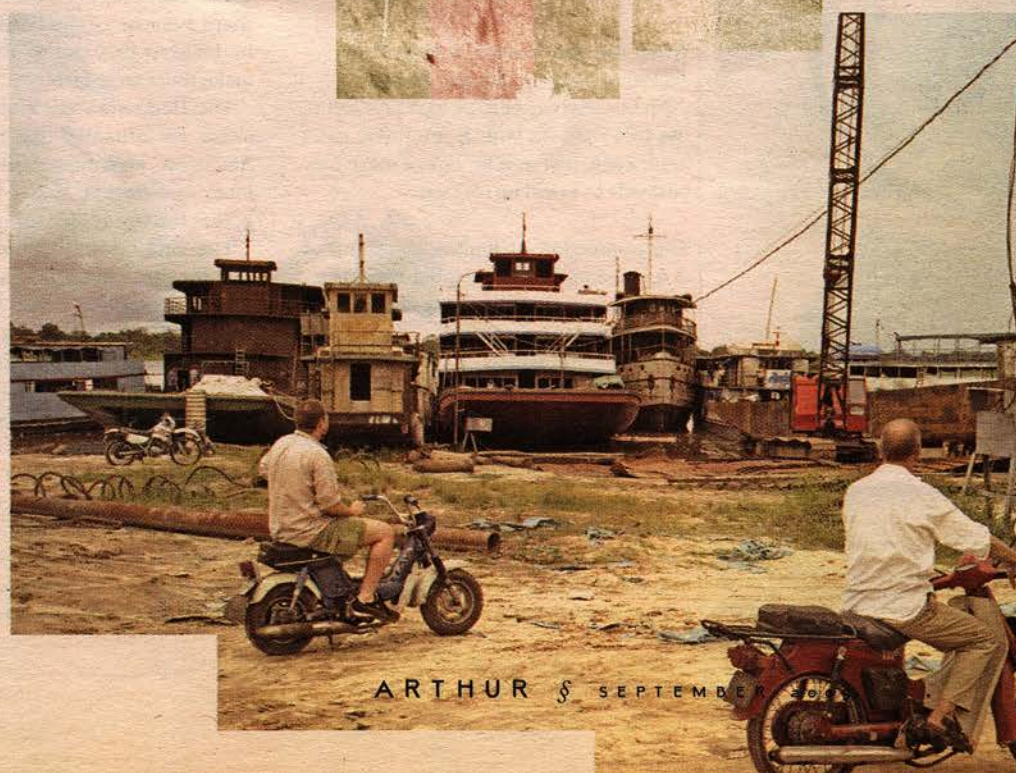
Back when the Soviets had money they provided Peru the bulk of its economic aid. In order to sabotage those godless Commies, the CIA exponentialized the cocaine trade by facilitating the formation of cartels that moved coca from the cradle of cocaine to labs in Colombia and then to American ghettos where it was wildly popular and generated enough profit for a lot of really wonderful covert CIA operations. (Google it.)

This was a blow to the Soviets, and so they started a great rumor that has apparently killed more missionaries than the DEA. The rumor goes like this:

The Americans have a squad of silent glider planes that land at night and harvest the fat of children, which is used to fuel our rockets to the moon. These glider pilots are called "Pellacarres," which means "Facepeelers," after their habit of cutting the child's face off to pry out the valuable eyes from their little heads.

Soon after this picture was taken a group of women (you can see them in the 'alley' in the background) started screaming "Pellacarres!" at us. Our host, Walter Saxer, knew the quality of their fear from experience and got us out of there. "They get hysterical about this shit," he said. "If you are white, you don't go back in there."

So we got in our stealth gliders and flew back to the moon.



The tall skinny boat here is the steamboat that played the *Molly Aida* in Werner Herzog's film *Fitzcarraldo*.

Walter, who has been Herzog's production manager for 30 years, built this boat from scratch for the film, steamed it through some of the biggest water on the Amazon and then hauled her over a mountain, tasks which few people in the world would pretend to undertake, fewer still would bring to fruition and even fewer still would do for just a movie... actually, scratch all that, nobody else in the world would even try to do that crazy shit for any reason.

The boat's real name is the *Jhulian*. She sits stripped in the muddy river, still fit to float, and visited on occasionally by German tourists who idolize the film's star, Klaus Kinski.

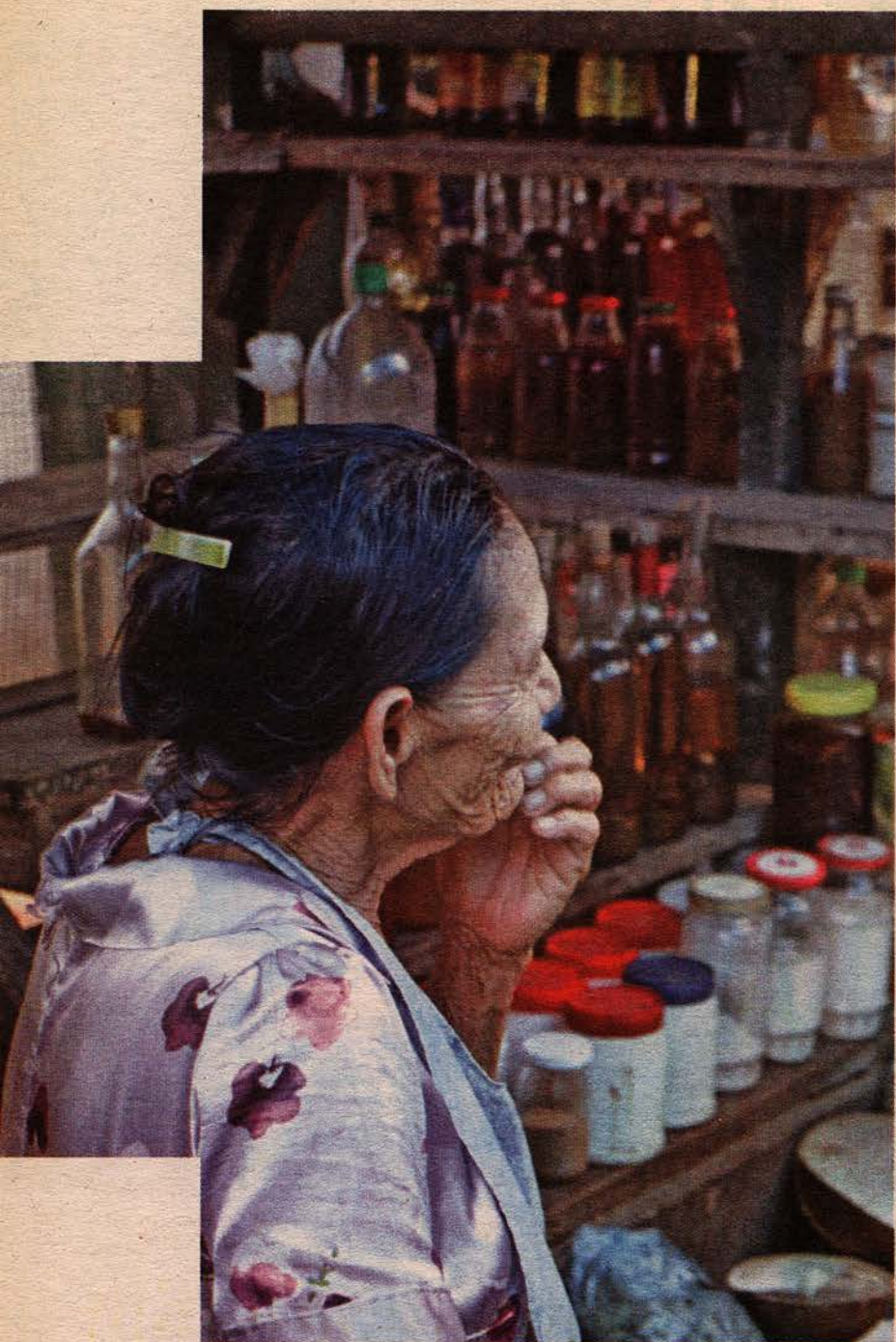


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hysteria

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AN EXPLODING STILL LIFE. A THORN.
A BUBBLEEE. A BOMB. A MOLOTOV.
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This is a true witch market. It's more than just a pun to say that here lie the "roots" of modern medicine, as these women actually sell roots and shoots to be taken to your garden and grown into a plant, the leaves and stems of which are then boiled to make a tea. Planting the shoots is the first step down the slippery slope toward "Brujeria."

Amongst the skins and bones of endangered species, jars of "Boa oil" and bottles of purple viagra potions labelled "Fuck Her Seven Times," there are lengths of Croto Chupa vine, covered in a soft brown moss like a monkey arm, used to cure bladder and prostate problems; the antidiarrheal Pampana root; a parsley called Chaka Piedre used to flush kidney stones; and bags of

CutiCuti for diabetes.

We shunned the dubious roots for "justice" and the little red bulbs for birth control (the population of Iquitos has trebled in the last 20 years), opting instead for the root "to make a man open his hands and not be stingy." The root proved itself when we opened up our hands and bought the ugly thing.

The Bruja on the left offered to sell us a root which, when applied intravaginally, would lead to intercourse so stimulating that a man would never be able to leave the woman who applied it.

Here also were skin cancer remedies: a lotion marked "Copacba" that smelt like sun tan oil, and a red seed which is crushed up, boiled and pressed to the cancer. I bought both





This is the famed Ayahuasca vine from which New Agers and ethnobotanists hope to achieve instant karma. Experiencing this vine will supposedly cure a junkie of his habit, though I noticed it didn't do a thing for Burroughs. This vine has been so popularized by dilettantes that macho hippies try to do a "tourist trip," leading to a seriously ruined vacation. Yes, if you take ayahuasca you will puke and shit and see stuff but this will also happen if you drink gasoline.

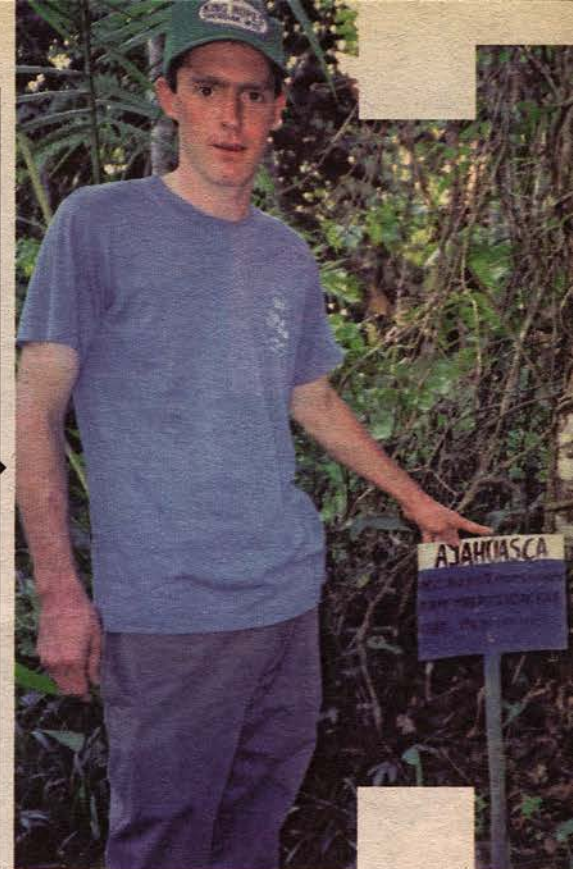
Iquitos is full of cosmic cowboys talking all this corny noise about getting in touch with their "plant teacher." Look past all the romantic white man talk and you will see that the infamous "ayahuasca treatment" comes from a rainforest tribe where the women call the shots. In this tribe, if the boys get naughty the girls take a vote and make them do the brew as a punishment. In short, the fabled "ayahuasca ceremony" is just colonialism for masochists.

Nothing will keep the trustafarian tribes from trying to earn their dreadlocks by ingesting this "Yage." The end result is that everyone is forced to endure these hours-long nonsensical diatribes where a fool "relates" visions of what he saw while he was puking and shitting his fried little brains out. "And then it was like a snake a mile long and then there was this like...this big dog...and

he told me that I was a...Christ..."

A shivering hippy out by the pool at "Casa Fitzcarraldo" said he'd done the "ceremony" five times over the last five years, and couldn't really recommend it as a path to enlightenment. He felt he had become a stranger to others and a stranger to himself. He suggested we try some "Special K" instead, adding that it was freely available at any drugstore. We informed him that in New York City, ketamine cat tranquilizer is favored by house music clubbers in order to induce blackout so they can listen to drivel. He was, disappointed as K had been sold to him as a "powerful experience." We assured him that blacking out and feeling like you are stuck in a piece of bubble gum is a powerful experience.

The locals love to see hollow-eyed gringos on their "vision quest." Walter said a squad of Swiss had adopted a local "Ayahuasquero" who charged them a thousand American dollars a head for an "experience" consisting of a \$20 boat ride and a some tea made of vines that grow all over the place. When the Swiss returned a year later to get some more of that thousand-dollar experience they were surprised to find their shaman's name plastered all over town. He had taken their money and run for mayor of Pucallpa. (He lost.)



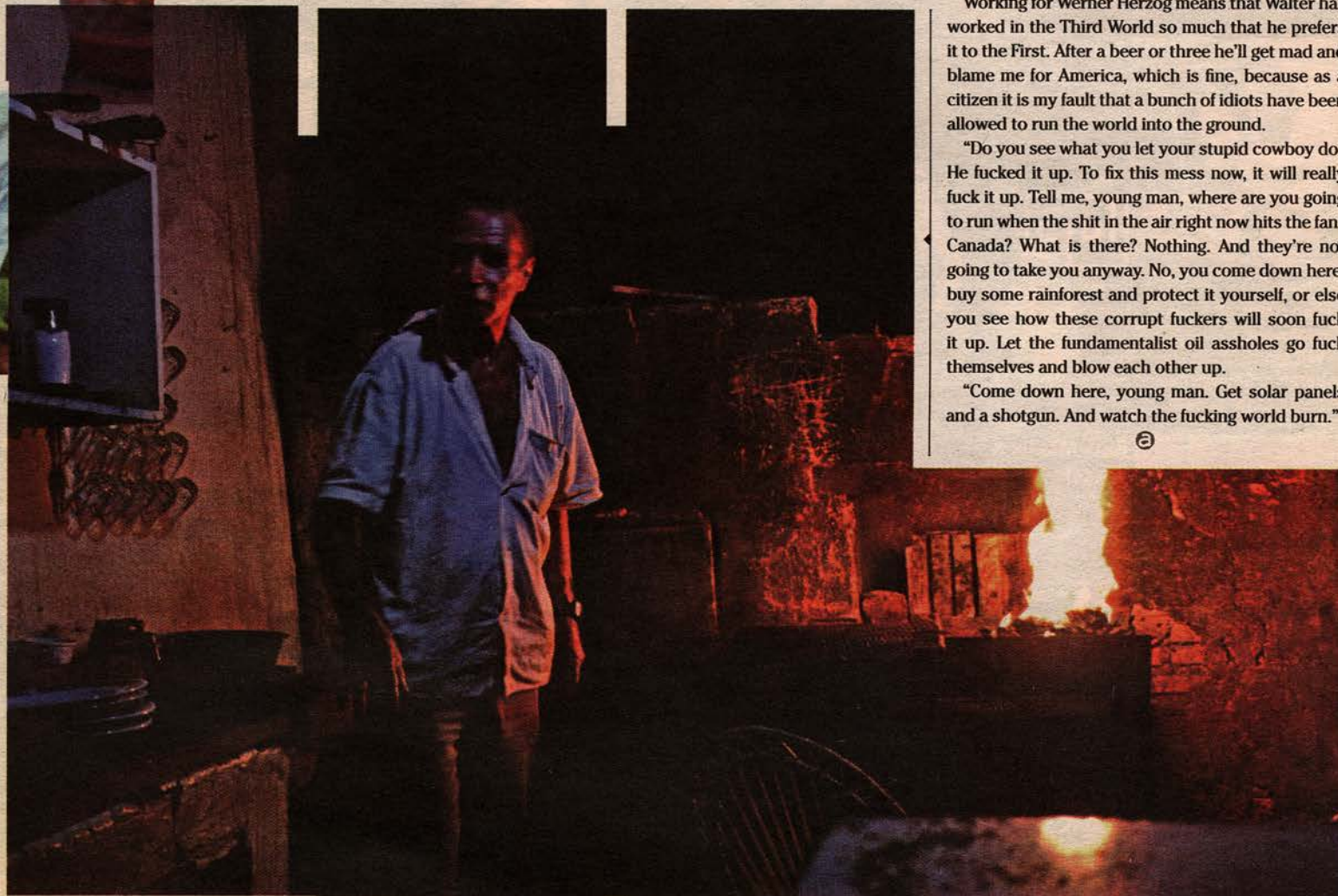
Casa Fitzcarraldo is the name of my buddy Walter's place in Iquitos. It's not in any backpacker guide because it's a secret spot, but those in the know can get a cold beer, the best food in town, swim in a naturally cooled pool and observe the triple canopy jungle from the tree house, a hundred feet off the deck.

Working for Werner Herzog means that Walter has worked in the Third World so much that he prefers it to the First. After a beer or three he'll get mad and blame me for America, which is fine, because as a citizen it is my fault that a bunch of idiots have been allowed to run the world into the ground.

"Do you see what you let your stupid cowboy do? He fucked it up. To fix this mess now, it will really fuck it up. Tell me, young man, where are you going to run when the shit in the air right now hits the fan? Canada? What is there? Nothing. And they're not going to take you anyway. No, you come down here, buy some rainforest and protect it yourself, or else you see how these corrupt fuckers will soon fuck it up. Let the fundamentalist oil assholes go fuck themselves and blow each other up.

"Come down here, young man. Get solar panels and a shotgun. And watch the fucking world burn."

Ⓢ





GOOD GOODBYES
s/f CD E.P.
OMB 47

Onyx

Get Nailed

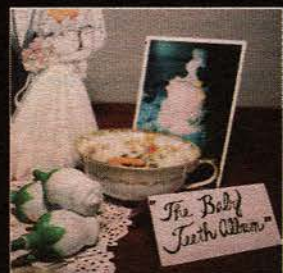
"Crafted in the harsh southwestern sun, indie-pop journeymen **Good Goodbyes** manufacture bright, poppy sounds that betray their desert origins. **Good Goodbyes** are something of an indie-rock super group, comprised of members of **The Shins**, the **Busi Signals** and drummer **Ryan Holmes**. The band's debut...EP is a fresh take on early '90s sensitive dude rock like **Sebadoh** and **Matthew Sweet**. Soft melodic guitars à la **Lou Barlow** are given a sharp electronic twist...lending this EP a layered quality reminiscent of **The Walkmen** and the **Postal Service**." - *Spin.com*



RIDDLE OF STEEL
Got This Feelin'
ASC 13

ASCETIC

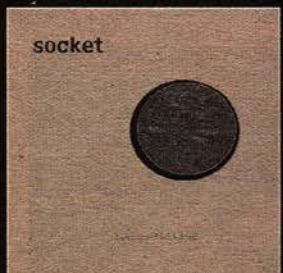
Writhe, sexy babies, for the blinking starry skies of the future entrance tonight to the tune of *Got This Feelin'*, which titillates, invigorates, tests the limits and, above all, satisfies both rock's primal need to kick ass and the human instinct to progress.



BABY TEETH
THE BABY TEETH ALBUM
LUI 27

LUI

Baby Teeth dusts off the centimeter-dust sunshine of **Hall and Oates**, the feathery foppishness of early **Elton John** and the growly, muttering navel-gaze of late **Van Morrison**, throws them all into a white 1984 **Lamborghini Countache** and drives it off of a cliff in a blaze of suicidal glory.



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AME 17

AMELET

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TRAINDODGE
TORCH EP #2
NOK 28

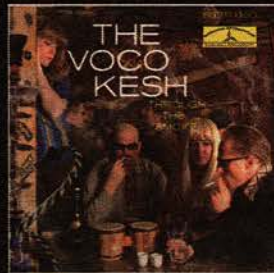
NK NO KARMA RECORDINGS

Remastered! 36 minutes of ferocious rock from Oklahoma's most powerful power trio. "Sweltering songs that drive and churn, course and crash...epics that could stretch effortlessly beyond their allotted four-to-five minutes." - *Copper Press*



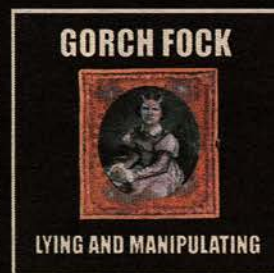
THUJA
PINE CONE TEMPLES
SAA 3233

Thuja coalesce otherwise disparate interests in field recordings, found sound, experimentalism, improvisation, folk and psychedelic rock into seriously detailed and immense sonic journeys. Assembled from recordings that span 1999-2004, *Pine Cone Temples* is perhaps the most organic and deceptively beautiful ambience **Thuja** has conjured to date.



VOCOKESH
THROUGH THE SMOKE
SAA 34

Following up their darkly hallucinogenic fourth album *The Tenth Corner*, **Vocokesh** mastermind **Richard Franecki & Co.** sequestered themselves in their sonic laboratory, fiendishly concocting the next platter of extraterrestrial, psychedelic soundtracks. *Through the Smoke* is the result, yet another brave excursion into the netherworld of rock. Eerie and sonically provocative, *Through the Smoke* is one intense mind-moving hallucination.



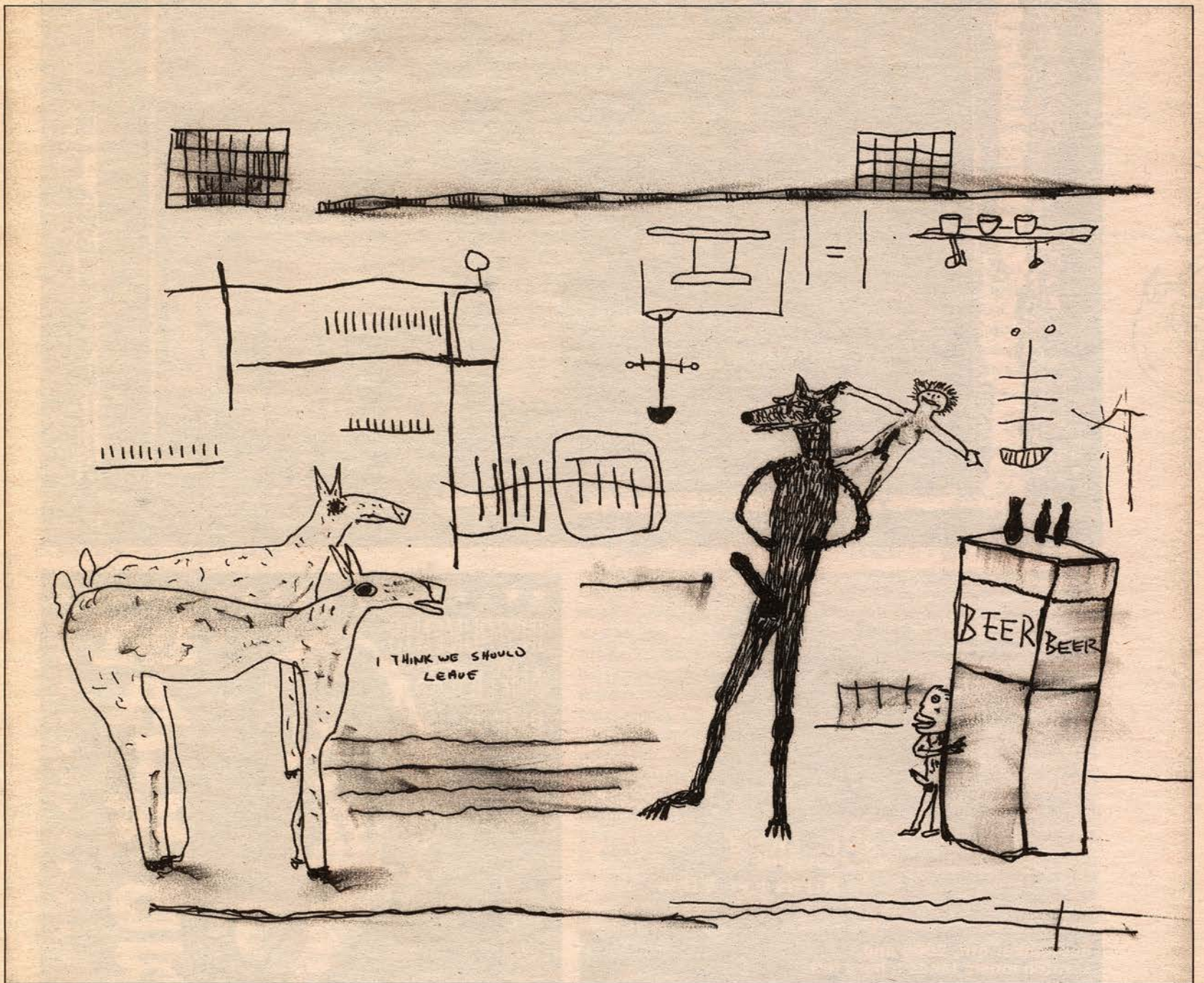
GORCH FOCK
LYING AND MANIPULATING
ACG 2

This Austin septet erupts forth with a thunderous ooze of dueling drummers and trombone skronk, weaving heavy bass lines, screaming twisted guitars, digital billows of smoke and extraneous looped mayhem. See also **Gorch Fock S/T** from **Australian Cattle God Records**.



ATTACK FORMATION
SOMEBODY AS ANYBODY
ACG 6

"Avant-garde know-it-alls masquerading as pop savants." - *Austin Chronicle*. A perfect reflection of this constantly-evolving musical collective plows through raging rock songs and meanders through post-rock compositions, never losing sight of its pop sensibility.



I Think We Should Leave by John Lurie

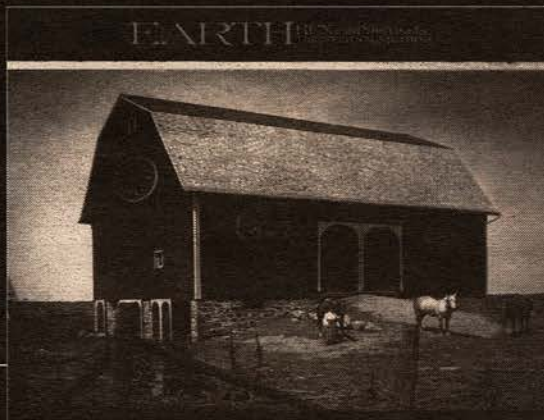


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Birds Eye View

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LISTEN TO THE DEAD

Dear Arthur,

Okay, so a lot of people in *Arthur* have been coming out of the Deadhead closet lately. Someone, maybe Bastet, maybe someone else, should put out a mix CD or two of some of the Dead's material that might be most likely to impress the contemporary drone/noise/psych/improv and/or free(k) folk scene(s). I have enjoyed a very small percentage of the G.D. that I have heard, and have been unwilling to delve through the catalog in search of the gems. I am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt, and would like to hear a carefully selected mix made by discerning ears. Example: Garcia solo piece on *Zabriskie Point* soundtrack.

Rick Swan
via email

Dear Rick,

There are over 2,800 Grateful Dead shows available for free download at archive.org, and, depending on who you talk to, at least a half-dozen studio albums worth checking out. That's a lot of music to sort through, even if you can get your hands on most of it without laying down any cash. So, we convened a conclave of Arthurian Deadheads to help you and any other greenhorn seekers of the Dead find your way around. The Knights who answered the call for this Round Table meeting were:

Geologist, a member of Animal Collective, that incredible international post-hippie string band.

N. Shineywater, of Alabama's creamiest slow-folk practitioners, Brightblack Morning Light.

Ethan Miller, of the mighty Comets on Fire.

Daniel Chamberlin, a contributing editor at *Arthur*, and the author of "Uncle Skullfucker's Band" (*Arthur* No. 10) about life as a closet Deadhead.

Denise DiVitto & Brant Bjork: Owner-operators of Duna Records, which releases records by Mr. Bjork (co-founder of Kyuss) and other worthy artists.

Erik Davis, *Arthur* contributor, native Californian and the author of *Techgnosis: Myth, Magic and Mysticism in the Age of Information*.

Barry Smolin, the host of the essential "The Music Never Stops" Dead showcase on Los Angeles's KPFK, 90.7 FM.

Michael Simmons, a contributing editor to *Arthur* and secret connector of the universe's

underground.

The Seth Man, a/k/a The Seth Man, editor of *FUZ* and author of "The Book of Seth" review column on Julian Cope's headheritage.co.uk website.

I

GEOLOGIST (Animal Collective)

The birth of my father was a mistake, an unplanned pregnancy in the 1950s. As a result, his brothers, and my cousins, are much older. During the '80s, my cousin Adam was my idol. I was in grade school, he was in high school and later went to college in Athens, GA. The guy was all about "rock & roll." He had *Live...Like A Suicide* by Guns N' Roses on vinyl in 1986. He predicted the worldwide stardom of REM and the B-52's as far back as I can remember. But his first musical love was, and as far as I know, still is The Grateful Dead. By the end of the '80s he had been to over 100 shows.

As I got older and began to hunger for more music than what was being fed to me on MTV, I of course turned to him. Like any true Deadhead, my cousin immediately pushed me towards their live material. His Dead collection was just a box of tapes with dates written on them; I don't really remember seeing any albums. It is to this aspect of the Dead's output that I would direct any new fan. I listen to the '66-'74 era, pretty much exclusively. An easy place to start is

the live albums released during this period, specifically *Live/Dead* (from '69) and *Europe '72*. The former has my all-time favorite Dead jam, "Dark Star" into "St. Stephen," and the latter contains my second favorite, "China Cat Sunflower" into "I Know You Rider" (affectionately known to Dead fans as "China Rider"). In addition, there is a killer CD release of a Fillmore East show from 2/11/69, which has some of the same tunes. And for 1974, the *Winterland* shows from February of that year totally rule, even though you have to endure the awful background singing of Donna Godchaux.

I certainly don't mean to discount the worth of their studio albums, because there is no denying the greatness of *Anthem Of The Sun*, *Aoxomoxoa* and *American Beauty*. I love them all and listen to them frequently, but I still lean towards the live stuff. The reason for this is simply "good times." I recently got into an argument at a bar about whether or not you can give credit to someone for nothing more than "good times." I say you totally can. Why not? Isn't that pretty much what most of us want on a day-to-day basis? I was fortunate enough to see the Dead on one of their last tours in 1994. I was 15 years old, and had moved from Philly to Baltimore, where I was in the early stages of becoming best friends with the dudes I still consider my closest

friends in the world. At the time, however, I dearly missed my old friends from middle school. They managed to get tickets to the Dead show at the Philly Spectrum, and my parents, being the wonderful folks they are, let me skip school for three days and hop on the train to catch the show. Jerry may have been old and forgetting some lyrics here and there, but man, good times were had by all. I've never since been in an environment as positive as that concert. As people who are passionate about music, especially music that is outside of the mainstream, we sometimes get caught up in our own brand of snobbery. But when I catch myself acting like a dick, I try and think back to that night wandering around the burrito stands and hacky-sack circles in that parking lot. If people continue to care about the music we make and continue to come see us play, I really hope our parking lots will look and feel like that one day. Good times.

N. SHINEYWATER**(Brightblack Morning Light)**

Early-era Dead songs resonate with me, so I would maybe dig a collection of songs featuring Pigpen. The first recording I heard by Grateful Dead also served as a successful backdrop to a good time. It involved my native Alabama woods, an old Jeep chasing another old Jeep through the mud, and the constant doobie. The friend of mine who was driving the jeep let The Dead's *American Beauty* repeat over and over... Somehow a very long early version of the song "Dark Star" appeared on the homemade cassette, and when this came on we had just taken a doobie break. One friendly sister starting throwing mud at me, so I threw mud back at her and the next thing I saw was this dancing grey mud flying and hitting smiling bodies of friends.

One time this same Jeep-friend had to drive across the country in a new Ford van. He happened to know he was going to be using reefer along the way. The van had only one sticker, plain in style, that read,

(continued on page 43)




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– Other Music

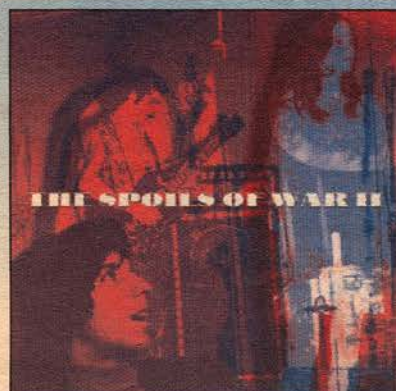
SHADOKS MUSIC



BANGO
S/T CD

The psych experts at **Shadoks** come through again with a gem from the vaults. *Bango*, originally released in **Brazil** in 1970, is filled with extra-extra heavy riffage and spectacular songcraft. Bango, like most Shadoks artists, was featured prominently on *Love, Peace and Poetry*, the compilation series on Shadoks' sister label QDK. Along with *Modulo 1000*, Bango defines Brazilian underground psych rock. A killer record. Run for your lives.

SHADOKS MUSIC



SPOILS OF WAR
II CD

Somewhere in a dark studio, 1969, Jim Cuomo finished up a landmark US electronic release, called *Spoils of War*. The first LP, with its dedication to Musique Concrete and distant psychedelia, became an underground success 30 years later. Now **Shadoks** has culled together the final remaining tapes for release. For all *Red Krayola* or *50 ft. Hose* fans.

SHADOKS MUSIC



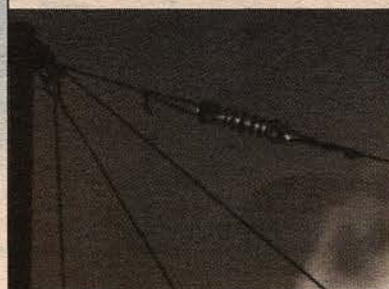
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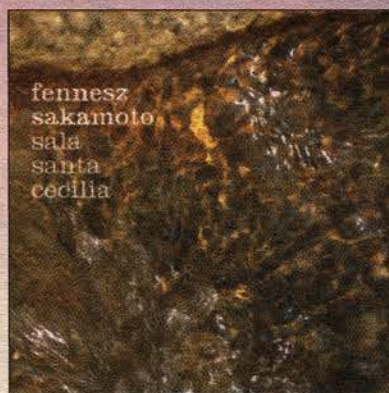
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Irdial



FENNESZ SAKAMOTO
Sala Santa Cecilia CD

A future-forward document that will stand proudly in your collection, *Sala Santa Cecilia* is an overture for a larger piece to be released later. In November 2004, the two met in Rome to debut a new collaboration. Expect more from this duo in the months ahead, but until then, here is a wonderful 19-minute slice. **Christian Fennesz** plays with **Ryuichi Sakamoto**. What else is there to say?

TOUCH



FLANGER
Spirituals CD/LP

Electronic visionary **Uwe Schmidt** (aka **Atom Heart** aka **Señor Coconut**) and dub scientist **Burnt Friedman** are **Flanger**. This is not what you expect, to say the least. After three albums on *Ninja Tune*, Flanger turns to Burnt's label and releases **expert antique jazz**. Think **Chet Baker**, think flappers, think speakeasys. If nothing else, *Spirituals* demonstrates that Schmidt and Friedman are two of the most talented musicians working today. How do they do it? (Nonplace)



aswe fall
Bleed. CD/EP

From renowned Parisian aesthete **Clément Vaché** and Jay Jay Johanson producer **Léo Hellden** comes this slice of trend-predicting pop. *Bleed.* recalls the sound of the early 90s, like **MBV** and **XTC**, but aswe fall updates it with occasional beats and high-style. Featuring vocals from Daniela D'Ambrosio (**Nouvelle Vague**) and others. Cosmopolitan electro-folk sounds for your electro-folk life. (Kill the DJ)



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asthmatic kitty

(continued from page 43)

"GOOD OL" really large, followed very small by "GRATEFUL DEAD." It wasn't the kind with little orange bears; it was red, white and blue. He chose this plain sticker to avoid attracting the Man. Yet he knew that he wanted to share his love of Grateful Dead music. It was a risk he didn't mind taking.

Later in life he led a Greenpeace effort to successfully lower himself and a few others over the side of the Mitsubishi building in Oregon with banners that read, "BOYCOTT MITSUBISHI, MITSUBISHI DESTROYS RAINFORESTS." The last I heard of him he became a river guide.

ETHAN MILLER (Comets On Fire)

First off, I loved that article by Daniel Chamberlin in the July 2004 *Arthur*. It inspired me to try and track down the more extreme avant-garde Dead stuff that the author of that piece talked about being fooled into thinking that it was Dead C. or Sonic Youth or whatever.

I came to love the Dead after I got into underground and extreme/experimental music. However, I never did go down that online bootleg-trading path to seek that shit out. And to this day I have heard a ton of Dead and never heard anything that I mistook for Fushitsusha, ya know? A funny thing about Deadheads (by that I mean even avid fans that don't go to the concerts) is that I think a lot of times the explosions, the feedback and the edges of the earth exploring that they hear are all in the eye of the beholder. Whereas Sun Ra or Keiji Haino make the pushing of boundaries and the assaults on the senses an obvious and fundamental thing and bring the abnormal and danger and deconstruction into a bound and constructed world to be presented, there is something about the Dead which is off in its own little world—you have to go there to dig the presentation, and partly that's because once they had that weird huge traveling built-in fan base, it was so intense that they could completely ignore musical trends. Sudden radical changes in the sound of their albums wasn't even a reaction to what was going on around them musically. When you engage with the Grateful Dead music, you engage on their terms and step inside of their huge complex

A DEAD MIX BY THE SETH MAN

"Born Cross-Eyed" (from *Anthem of the Sun*) / "Caution (Do Not Stop On Tracks)" (*Anthem*) / "Rosemary" (from *Aoxomoxoa*) / "Mountains Of The Moon" (*Aoxomoxoa*) / "What's Become Of the Baby" (*Aoxomoxoa*) / "Dark Star" (from *Live/Dead*) / "Feedback" (*Live/Dead*) / "Bird Song" (*Garcia*) / "Late For Supper" (*Garcia*) / "Spidergawd" (*Garcia*) / "Eep Hour" (*Garcia*) / "An Odd Little Place" (*Garcia*) / "The Wheel" (*Garcia*)

If that doesn't work for you, perhaps the title track on *East/West* by the Butterfield Blues Band or "A Beacon From Mars" by Kaleidoscope (US not UK) might. *East/West* got the ENTIRE ball rollin' in a big way, and without it, I would hazard a guess that West Coast jamming might have sounded very different, indeed. There's a 1996 compilation on Winner Records called *East-West Live* with three different versions of "East-West" from 1966-1967. It's some of the earliest and best improvisational psychedelic rock music extant.

bubble. And in that way and within that realm their music means many different things to different folks—including a great outlaw philosophy and a devious and experimental heart. And those not willing to engage on their terms I think just fucking hate the shit.

In my band, myself and Ben Flashman love the Dead. Utrillo loves only the melodic, earthy "song" albums, not the "jam" albums so much. Noel Harmonson and Ben Chasny

you're sipping on.

My first advice is that if you've checked out the Dead and don't like what you've heard so far but want to hear what makes lovers of the avant-garde and experimental set like them is: Don't even bother. Those fuckers have been brainwashed and enchanted like all Dead fans.

My second advice to you if you don't feel like you've given them a fair chance and are

THE DEAD BRINGS OUT A WEIRD REACTION IN PEOPLE: USUALLY, EITHER AN ENCHANTMENT SPELL IS CAST, OR YOU FEEL LIKE SOMEONE JUST SHAT IN THE BEER YOU'RE SIPPING ON.

seem to hate the Dead with every ounce of their musical being. Chasny says they are "a rock band without balls" and Noel just sort of snuffs and smokes a cigarette real hard while turning red and staring out the window when I try to put them on in the van on tour. And these are dudes that are into Crosby, Stills & Nash or Mamas and the Papas or Moby Grape all the way. But again, the Dead brings out a weird reaction in people—usually, either an enchantment spell is cast, or you feel like someone just shit in the almost empty beer

bound and determined to go on, is to get these three albums and check them out:

American Beauty: the distillation of all they could do with harmony and the three to five minute "song."

Live/Dead: I'm sure real Deadheads would laugh at this recommendation claiming that oh, there is a way cooler version of "Dark Star" on 14 different shows from the '86 pass through the East Coast, but this album shows their improvisational majesty, or at least a pretty solid idea of what you're in for if you go

DANIEL CHAMBERLIN'S TOP FIVE DEAD LIVE

1. February 14, 1968 at the Carousel Ballroom, San Francisco, CA + October 12, 1968 at the Avalon Ballroom, SF, CA.

<http://www.archive.org/audio/etree-details-db.php?id=15483>

<http://www.archive.org/audio/etree-details-db.php?id=15521>

The hippies seem to have control of San Francisco and the Grateful Dead is blowing people's minds with nearly every show. Do not be intimidated by the inclusion of a song called "New Potato Caboose" in the second set: It is a silly name for a psychedelic masterpiece and this is some of the most expansive acid rock that ever was. As heavy and choogly as Acid Mothers Temple, as delicate and pretty as the Byrds and as scuzzy and fried as Royal Trux.

On top of that, they dedicate a monstrous "Cryptical Envelopment" to the recently deceased Neal Cassady. I mean, fucking Neal Cassady was

(continues)

down that online-bootleg-file-sharing road.

Anthem of the Sun: This is as close as I've heard the Dead sound to experimental music as we speak of it today—huge walls of sounds, tape loops, harsh noise and silence utilized to confusing extents and serenity and melody engulfed and destroyed by devious musical gremlins.

If you don't dig any of these three records then personally I just think you don't like the Grateful Dead and there is no use in fuckin' diggin' any deeper. If that doesn't draw you in I don't think anything Dead will sound good to you, no matter how experimental they get on the boots. But you could always ask Chamberlin for recommendations—he obviously has already done a lot of work in finding the deep and out-there shit by them.

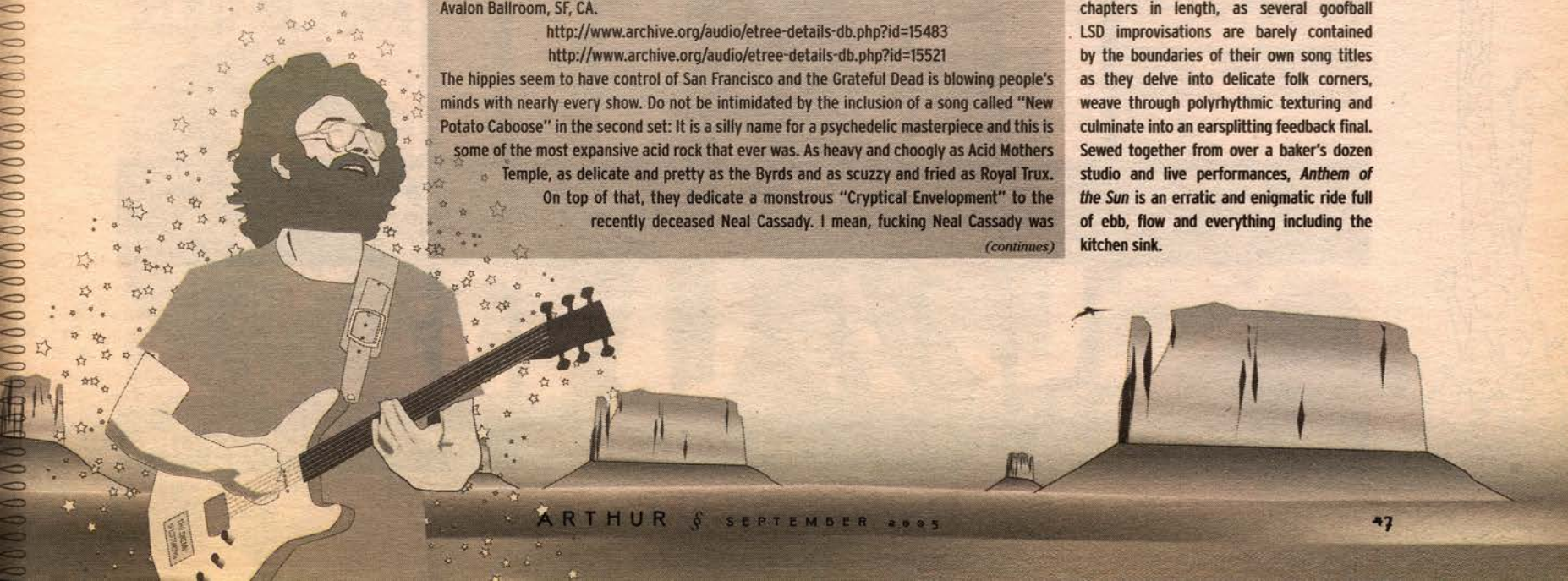
II

Barry Smolin: A great place to start is *Rare Cuts & Oddities*, a collection of rehearsal and studio stuff from 1966. This is rip-roaring weird-ass proto-garage-punk shit, a huge surprise to anybody who thinks of the GD as some kind of bloated swamp dinosaur. Garcia at his wildest. You can hear the young bluegrass banjo player learning how to be a rock and roll guitar god. All very clunky and wonderful.

Michael Simmons: I adore *Rare Cuts & Oddities*. It's the period that if the Warlocks had broken up and never become Dead, they would've ended up on *Nuggets* and revered by the Ramones.

The Seth Man: As a non-Deadhead music lover drawn to the more unique strands and aspects of rock music, it's definitely the work of the late-'60s Dead septet comprised of Jerry Garcia, Phil Lesh, Bob Weir, Bill Kreutzmann, Mickey Hart, Pigpen and Tom Constanten that hit the mark hardest. *Anthem of the Sun*, *Aoxomoxoa* and *Live/Dead* are by turns loose, experimental and are pinnacle releases of West Coast '60s psychedelia, period. They get short shrift just because they're Dead albums and because they're not as obscure as the Chocolate Watchband or something but they'd be every bit as legendary had they'd broken up after these three albums.

Anthem is a run-on sentence that is chapters in length, as several goofball LSD improvisations are barely contained by the boundaries of their own song titles as they delve into delicate folk corners, weave through polyrhythmic texturing and culminate into an earsplitting feedback final. Sewed together from over a baker's dozen studio and live performances, *Anthem of the Sun* is an erratic and enigmatic ride full of ebb, flow and everything including the kitchen sink.





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Were it not for three tracks *Aoxomoxoa* could be viewed as an obvious prelude to their next studio album, the country-tinged *Workingman's Dead*. But since "Rosemary" is so beautiful and elegiac an acoustic piece, "Mountains of the Moon" a late night astral projective set to harpsichord and the elongated "What's Become of the Baby" is so scary, so epic, so weird...it can't. Listen to these three in the dark, and you will be moved.

Simmons: *Aoxomoxoa* is the single album I'd recommend Arthurians as a starter. It's dripping with trippy. "What's Become of the Baby?" is a barely tonal Jerry solo vocal (no instruments) with a funneled-through-a-tube, compressed sound. Sheer weirdness.

The Seth Man: *Live/Dead* begins with "Dark Star" and for this one improvisation alone, *Live/Dead* is essential listening (just so you know, a section of it was used in the film *Zabriskie Point*) as is the ending "Feedback" improvisation. "Exploration" not "noodling" is the word that comes to mind.

Simmons: "Dark Star" is the Dead in wall-melting form. I prefer the late '60s GD to early-mid '70s because they still had a grungy edge at the earlier time, whereas *Europe '72* (a brilliant album tho' it be) shows signs of the slickness the band devolved into. Dig Garcia's guitar solo on *Live/Dead's* "Dark Star." It's nasty. He lost that edge as he got older and enveloped in opiated haze.

I'd also recommend 1970's *Workingman's Dead*, which is usually explained as the Dead's return to their folk roots, but keep in mind it's a weird variety of folk that has as much in common with the Incredible String Band as it does with country music.

The Seth Man: Also check out Jerry Garcia's first solo album, *Garcia* (as opposed to his second one of the same title.) The front cover features a photo collage (possibly of highly stylized US flag?) that contains a patch of blue sky, a woman's nude torso, a set of four dials, a Ten of Diamonds playing card, and a hand with a severed middle finger (apparently, Garcia's own.) Don't be put off by the album's opener "Deal," for the following track "Bird Song" is beautiful. The rest of side one is some material The Dead would perform in live sets in the early '70s, but side two is almost entirely taken up with experimental instrumentals the like of

friends with these guys. Do you think you're too cool to like the Grateful Dead? You are wrong.

October 12, 1968 at the Avalon Ballroom in San Francisco is more of the same, just more intensely focused. It's a single-disc set described by one poster to Archive.org as follows: "It is RAW, fluid, HEAVY, TRIBAL: some of the most powerfully transformative music EVER played on planet Earth!!!!!! Listen to this one LOUD and involuntary headbanging will have your neck stiff in the morning. HOLY SHIT!!!!!!!"

2. May 15, 1970 at the Fillmore East, New York, NY

<http://www.archive.org/audio/etree-details-db.php?id=14555>

If you're after the cosmic Americana vibe of the Dead, this massive show has it in spades. 1970 was the year of both *American Beauty* and *Workingman's Dead* and the folky, acid-fried cowboy vibe was in full effect, especially for this date's two CSNY-aping acoustic sets. Lots of vocal harmonies and finger-picking on songs about sex, the Devil, miners and funerals. They played this show—and many shows from this era—with the New Riders of the Purple Sage, a country music offshoot of the Dead that was sort of like a super-stoned version of the Flying Burrito Brothers. Be warned: If you don't like the Dead... Woo boy, you are gonna hate the New Riders. You'll also miss out on Jerry Garcia's amazing pedal-steel solos that melt my ears every time. Like a lot of shows from this period, this starts with an acoustic set, proceeds to an hour or so of NRPS and then launches into a meltdown of electric Dead. This is quite similar to Vol. 8, from the Dick's Pick's series, 5/2/70 in Binghamton, NY. That show is also very good—it gets high scores in the Deadbase surveys of Dead tapers—but I like the electric set from this date much more.

3. May 8, 1977 at Barton Hall, Ithaca, NY

<http://www.archive.org/audio/etree-details-db.php?id=12279>

Next to February 13 and 14 in 1970, this show is widely held as the Dead's finest performance. Detractors allege that this is because this was one of the few high-quality live Dead recordings available throughout much of the '80s, making it—in the words of one hater—"as common as patchouli" at Deadhead shindigs. Be that as it may, it's also some of the juiciest psychedelic music I've ever heard, though there are a few heavy doses of the cheese that would characterize a lot of their post-'77 output. Watch for the incredible guitar solo on "Loser," and an absolutely lysergic "Scarlet Begonias" into "Fire On The Mountain" jam. (Efficiently known as "Scaret Fire" to the initiated, this is the LSD-friendly set-piece that took the place of "Dark Star" for a time.) This is the recording where I realized how good they were live, the first time I subjected myself to three straight hours of Dead and the first time I caught myself mentally describing Garcia's solos as "rapturous," "ego-free" and "orange." Most of the shows from early May of '77 are of similarly high quality... despite the unfortunate inclusion of awful latter-day selections such as "Lazy Lightnin'."

4. May 14, 1974 at the Adams Field House, University of Montana.

<http://www.archive.org/audio/etree-details-db.php?id=12579>

This is the first Dead show that I came across on my own, not through taper recommendations or Deadbase surveys. I first downloaded it because of the location: I love the idea of the Dead playing their freaked-out country music in such a rugged, Western setting. Happily, I found inside one of the best reggae-tempo versions of "Row Jimmy" and a 20-minute version of "Playing In the Band" that is almost Miles Davis perfect until Donna Godchaux crashes in with her out-of-tune Janis Joplin parody. Top it off with the coolest, most mellow "Dark Star" that fades into such a quiet... tingly... gentle place and then WHAM!... it just fucking clobbers you with a fuzzed-out meltdown so noisy that I bug outta my chair every time, sure that my speakers have been done-in for good.

5. John Oswald's *Grayfolded*

If you want Dead music free of all the hippie-trippy country-time cornball stuff that is actually the essence of what makes them such a weird and wonderful band, then you want *Grayfolded*. John "Plunderphonics" Oswald went into the Dead vaults and came out with like, literally, every recording of "Dark Star." He cut and pasted scores of these recordings into an epic, two-hour version of the song that opens with "layered tuning sections combining at least one hundred members of the Grateful Dead" and crescendos with what sounds like a dozen Jerrys time-stretched into a chorus of "Daaaaaark Star crashes." It's cutting-edge sampling technology that is a little bit Four Tet and a little bit Teo Macero. The results is an incredibly complex guitar-dominated landscape.

which are very un-Dead sounding and very psychedelic.

Simmons: In terms of avant-sound sculptures, there's Phil Lesh/Ned Lagin's 1970s *Seastones*, which I remember digging a long time ago. And I don't recall hearing any of the Acid Test stuff from mid-'60s, but I'm sure there was some weird-ass free-rock.

Smolin: The *Seastones* stuff was performed live between sets at a bunch of Dead shows in 1974, most famously at Roosevelt Stadium on 8/6/74, one of the most highly regarded Dead shows ever. The Dead stuff from that day is captured on *Dick's Picks 31*, though the Lesh/Lagin stuff isn't included in the official release. Many of the shows circa '72-'74 contain some of the most avant-garde music ever created by a rock band, but you also have to wade through a good share of lame ballads and cowboy covers to find the freakiness within. Of course, pretty much every "Dark Star" from 1969-1974 is worth a listen. The 1989 release *Infrared Roses*, a collection of some of the "Space" segments from latter-day Dead shows, has some cool meanderings.

III

ERIK DAVIS

The Dead archive at Archive.org is a truly astounding work of geekery, canniness, and devotion. Where superior tapes have drop-outs, lesser sources have been seamlessly spliced in. My advice is simple: hone in on shows in 1969 and 1973-74, read the comments after the shows to learn the canon and download the longer songs. That said, while I have loved this stuff forever, I believe the usual reasons for disliking it are generally accurate and indefensible. Jerry's famous comment about licorice comes to mind: "Not everybody likes licorice, but the people who like licorice really like licorice."

DUNA RECORDS STAFF

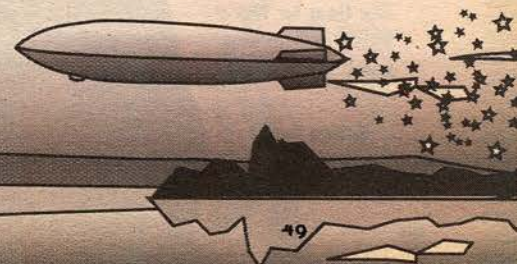
(Denise DiVitto and Brant Bjork)

The Dead were the most magical live band ever and really nailed a complete conceptual feel all the way down to every last piece of artwork. Unfortunately, the Dead were never really able to capture that level of enchantment in a studio recording. Part of it may be that you can't mass-package mushrooms and tabs of acid, but in my opinion, you just couldn't package the vibe they had.

What we would recommend however, besides random bootlegs, are two recently released DVDs: *The Grateful Dead Movie* and *The Closing of Winterland*. They're really the closest thing you can get to going back in time to be seduced by a smiley bearded man, wearing an old black T-shirt and having eyes so sparkly and beautiful, you couldn't help but feel the love within.

Ⓔ

Special thanks to Zach Cowie.



BULL TONGUE

Byron Coley & Thurston Moore
explore the voids of all known undergrounds

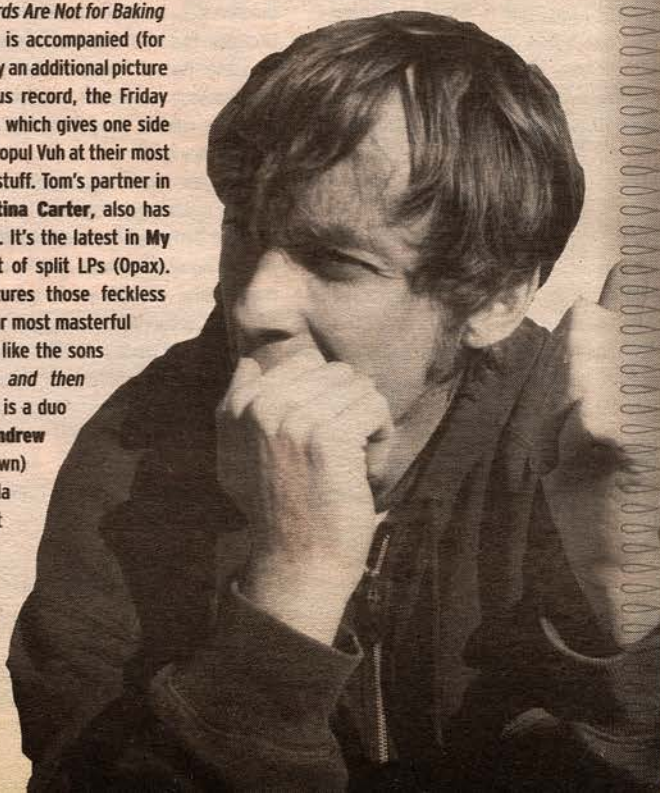
Beautiful (in every which way) is the debut LP by Knoxville, Tennessee's **Picks & Lighters**. *TVA/Starvation* (Living Room). The fact that it came out in 1997 does not detract from its glory one jot. A trio at the time of this recording, two guitars and one drum sullenly slam into each other with the lo-fidelity magnificence that so many strive for, but so few achieve. Rambling in a way that is almost incoherent at times, this is music made by humans and you're never allowed to forget that for a second. It also has a cover that will make you slap your forehead and say 'WHY THE FUCK DIDN'T I THINK OF THAT?' Their new, eponymous, *Picks & Lighters* CD (no label) shows off the band's latest incarnation. Expanded and regrouped, they make sounds that range all over the place, from further scum-blues dirt-investigations to disabled semi-acoustic ramblings that move around the sofa like Jandek at sleepypime. It's all bitchen and comes with the highest commendations.

The great **Tom Carter** (Charalambides, etc.) pops up on a coupla fine fine disks this time around. The eponymous debut LP by **Zaika** (Eclipse) documents a duo project he does with **Marcia Bassett** (Double Leopards, etc.) and it's truly puce. Two guitars shimmer and duck under each others' beams with the lazy and luminous grace of twin zebras. It's quite a show, and a beautiful production by every measure. Tom is also a member of a wild instrumental quartet called **The Friday Group**. Their eponymous debut LP (Beta Lactam) is a stunning ride through mountains of sustained-string/key blather. Filled with monumental creations of feedback and drone that stretch and swoop into imaginary sunsets, *The Friday Group* is an ethereal charmer. Prog rockers will dig its latter skysaw phrases the most! And as it's part of Beta Lactam's *Records Are Not for Baking* subscription series, it is accompanied (for subscribers anyway) by an additional picture disk 12". On the bonus record, the Friday Group add percussion, which gives one side of this set the feel of Popul Vuh at their most tranced out. Brilliant stuff. Tom's partner in Charalambides, **Christina Carter**, also has a comely new release. It's the latest in **My Cat Is an Alien's** set of split LPs (Opax). The MCIAA side features those feckless Italian brothers in their most masterful space mode—bubbling like the sons of Tangerine Dream and then some. Christina's side is a duo improvisation with **Andrew MacGregor** (aka Gown) and is really a kinda new thing for her, at least in compositional terms. She focuses a

lot on small repeated figures (almost like Tara Burke in *Fursaxa*) while Andrew does some vocal moaning of his own, and splashes out small spouts of acoustic guitar. Packed in another cheery hand-painted cover, this is one for the archives.

A most valuable read can be had by picking up **Sun Ra: The Immeasurable Equation**, compiled by James L. Wolf and Harmut Geerken (Waitawhile). This hardcover collects pretty much every bit of poetry and prose that the great Ra scribed. Which means it's no longer necessary to try and track down all the obscure pamphlets in which they originally appeared. Ra's own material is appended by a buncha good (though sometimes impenetrable) critical and historical essays. Plus, there are some very swank snapshots. It'd be a dang nice present for someone special. Maybe even yourself!

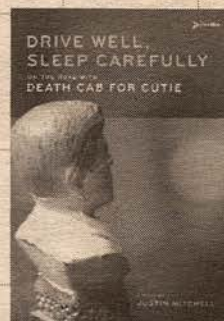
The peripatetic **Richard Youngs** has a new duo LP with **Andrew Paine**, although it's not being released under the band name **Ilk** (which is what we thought they called their duo). Regardless, *Mauve Dawn* (Fusetron) is a titillating space-out assemblage of keys and phases and tones that stretch from here to Venus. This one woulda nailed me to my dorm bed in '74 or so, since it has a vibe that (in parts) reminds me of nothing other than the Gong tracks on the second *Greasy Truckers* compilation (which must be one of the great dorm-bed-nailers of all time). And hey—it still sounds pretty damn piercing now. Youngs has another excellent duo LP, *Beating Stars* (HP Cycle), he did with **Alexander Neilson**. This one's a little bit noisier than the other, but it still fits into a virtual space-groaner bag. And the opening track—a killer noise-folk version



Richard Youngs

new dvds from plexifilm

[an independent dvd label]



019

drive well, sleep carefully:
on the road with death
cab for cutie
justin mitchell

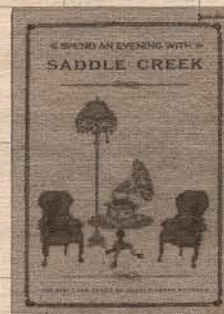
Stunning live footage of Death Cab's 2004 tour mixed with candid conversations with the band. Over 2 hours of interviews, outtakes and extras.



020

saint etienne present:
finisterre
paul kelly and kieran evans

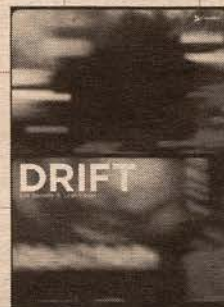
A film about London that takes us on a journey from the suburbs to the heart of the city, with a mesmerizing score by Saint Etienne.



023

spend an evening
with saddle creek
jason kulbel
and rob walters

The Saddle Creek Records story as told through interviews, home movies, rare performances and archival footage with Bright Eyes, Cursive, The Faint and many more!



026

drift
lee ranaldo and leah singer

An experimental audio/visual collaboration between artist Leah Singer and musician and poet Lee Ranaldo. Includes a 112-page book of images, poetry, and essays.

coming
soon!

026 **guided by voices:**
the electrifying conclusion
024 **dutch harbor**
braden king and laura moya





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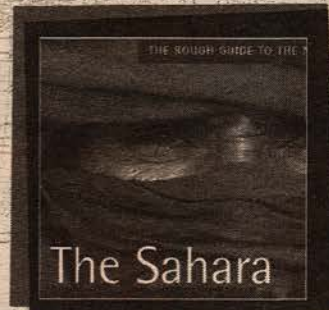
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ROUGH GUIDE TO THE SAHARA 12⁹⁸ CD

Various Artists
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of the traditional "Rolling in the Dew"—is guaranteed to slay anyone who hears it.

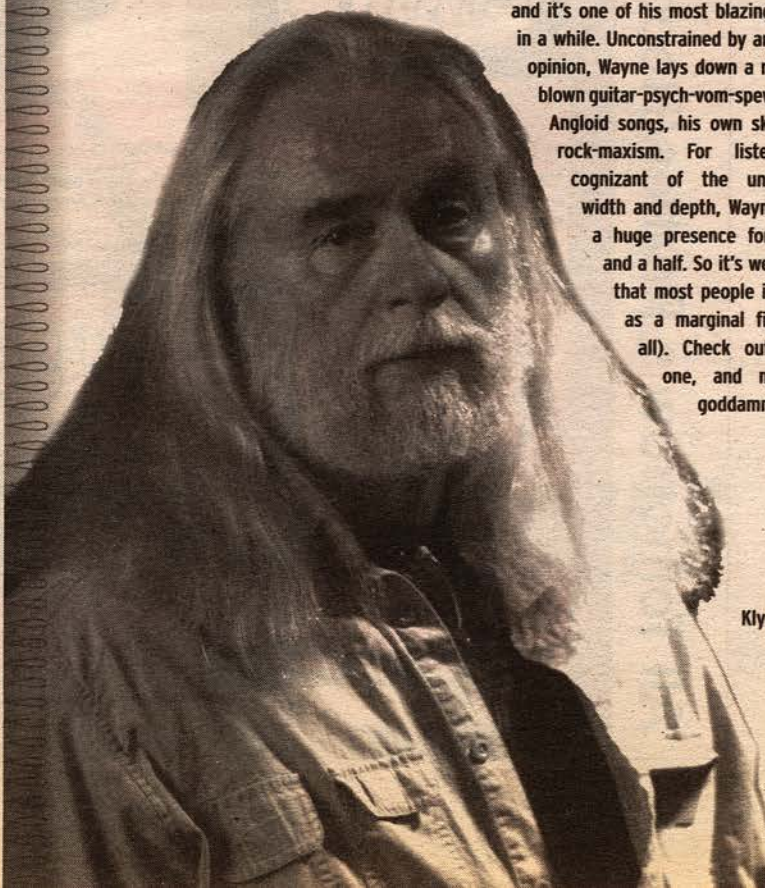
L.A.'s **Trinie Dalton** sent us a couple of very fucked up books she did over the past whenever, and they both have a very evil whiff of magnificence. *Touch of Class* is a disturbed visual rumination on the world of unicornology, including a very wild critical essay of the Eno's early works, viewed from a unicorn perspective. Yikes! The other is *Rodentia*, which is a collection of art and essays about rodents as pets and/or pests. The crazy mix of low-art/high-art vibes here is pretty damn invigorating.

Stone classic punk rock action on *Further*, the debut LP by Chicago's **Vee Dee** (Criminal IQ). You can hear moves nipped from The Nomads, the Misfits, Radio Birdman and other masters of in-your-face guitar snarl. Especially nice is the fact that they mix their aggression with lyrics that sometimes lean in a kinda freakbeat direction. Cool. More totally ace punk-shit arrives via the archival *Karate Party* LP, **Black Helicopter** (SS). This Sacramento band had only a small amount of stuff released in their lifetime, but their approach made a vast impression on the nascent A-Frames. *Helicopter* collects their known releases and throws in a sweet load of previously unheard material, all of it in stripped down UK-DIY/Urinals/Middle Class chopper mode. Even the Devo cover. Honest. It's a totally solid listening and head-frogging experience and should be "had" by "all." Fave leftfield punk slab this outing must be **Human Eye's** self-titled debut LP (In the Red). There seem to have been about a thousand people in the band, but the sound is basic, whipped quartet-scumpunk (Electric Eels style) with primitive art-damage hallmarks. These Detroiters even manage to toss some keyboard munge into the mix without making it sound like revo-new-wave-puke. Nice choppers!

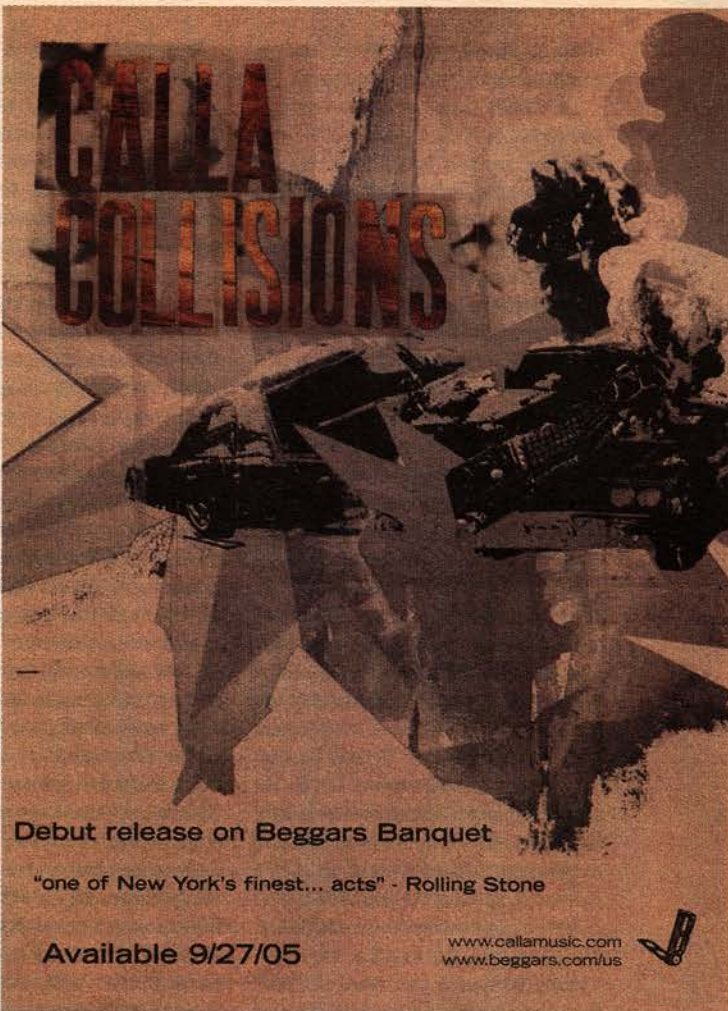
Klyd Watkins is not a poet we recall running into before, although we surely have, since he was involved in most of the *Poetry Out Loud* LPs. Anyway, he has a sweet new book of poems, *5 Speed* (The Temple), that is about nature and desire and waiting around and going places and nipples and sorta other stuff. His rhythms are very natural, his images have a soft, strong humor to them, and his voice is incredibly becoming. Seems like he has a buncha other stuff out as well. If you don't check it out, we will. The publisher of *5 Speed* is the great poet, **Charles Potts**. And there is a new splendid collection of his out as well. *Kiot* (Blue Begonia) is a selection of poems from '63 to '77 and includes a buncha (what we feel) is the most mind-battering work by this brilliant writer. The poems are arranged by the places in which they were writ, and the travelogue they present will allow you to roam across the belly of an underground (and of a natural world) that no longer exists. All Potts' books are essential, but this one would make an excellent introduction for anyone. Even babies!

The *Keep America Mellow* LP by Montana's **Ex-Cocaine** (Killertree) is one of the season's more fascinating finds. The duo (guitars, some drums, some voices) is led by a long-time running mate of John Olson, and their sound is a unique chunk of basement invention. Parts of it are extendo-jam string-weaving, other parts are reminiscent of Robert Pollard's dustiest early experiments, still others are some of the sweetest bongo/guitar-raunch duets you'll ever hear. It's very excellent to think that this was made in Montana (for some reason), and we can't wait to hear more.

Boston guitarist **Wayne Rogers** (Crystalized Movements, Vermonster, BORB, Magic Hour, Major Stars) has a new solo LP out. It's called *Blues-UI Albi* (Twisted Village) and it's one of his most blazing inventions in a while. Unconstrained by anyone else's opinion, Wayne lays down a mix of fully-blown guitar-psych-vom-spew, delicately Angloid songs, his own skewed sorta rock-maxism. For listeners fully cognizant of the underground's width and depth, Wayne has been a huge presence for a decade and a half. So it's weird to think that most people imagine him as a marginal figure (if at all). Check out this new one, and make some goddamn room for



Klyd Watkins



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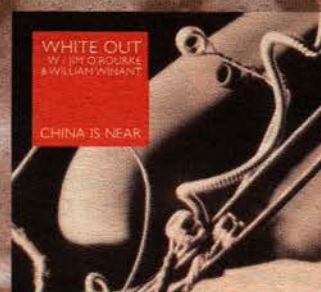
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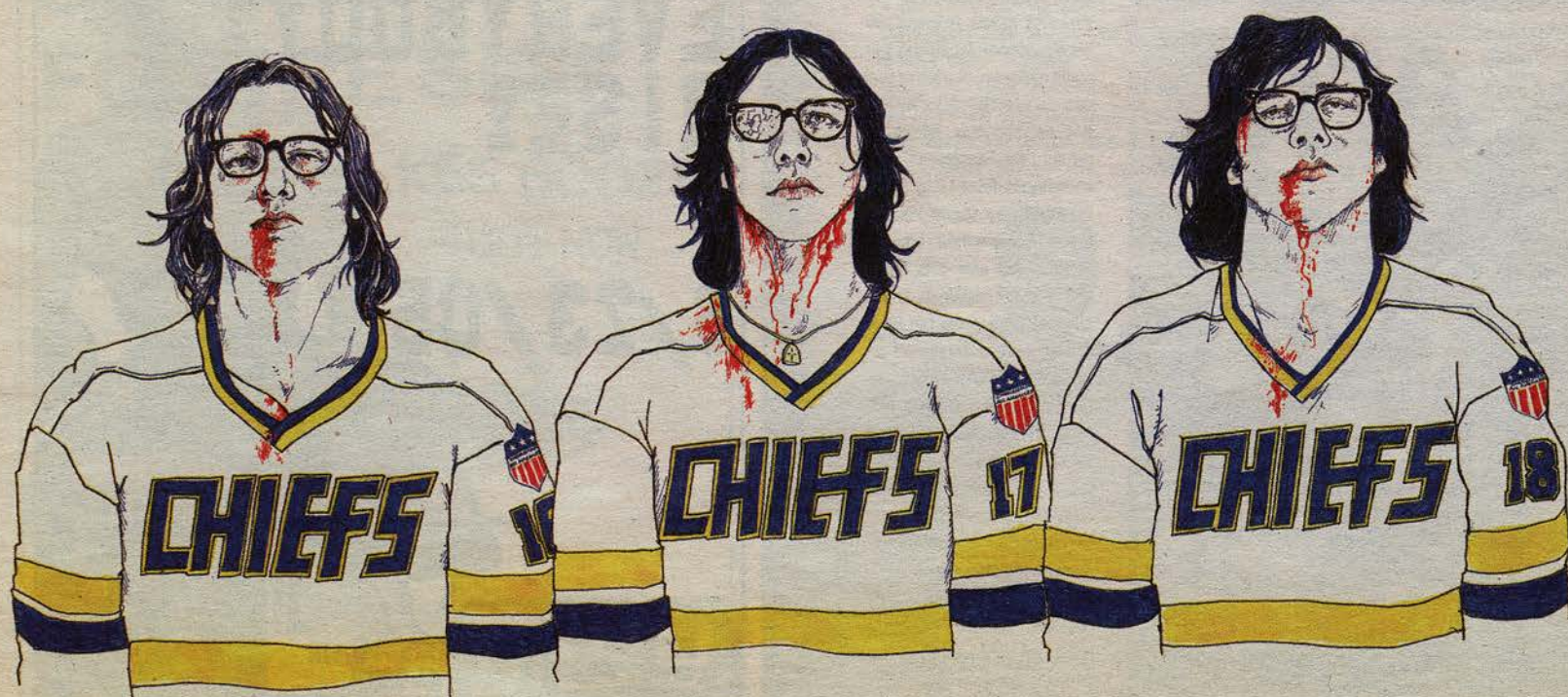
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a champ. Okay? Meanwhile Australian guitar player/artist **Marco Fursinato** (whose series of "Free" singles is one of the greatest art/noise concept-packages ever) has a new, completely fucked batch of records. *Synaesthesia Edition* (Synaesthesia) is a group of four LPs, available only as a set. The LPs don't really have any music, but they're pressed with representative cuts of concentric-groove drawings that Marco did. So you could play them, I guess, much in the style of so many classic anti-records. I haven't tried yet, but they look great, and disk 4, in particular, looks like it might be fun to hear the next time I find a cheap turntable. Whee! Another solo guitar record of note is **Paul Metzger's** more-or-less untitled LP (Mutant Music). Paul is a member of Minneapolis' great TVBC, but this record is a set of acoustic rhubarb-gargles on a homemade fretless guitar. There's enough Mideastern strangeness and unusual attack stub-dangling that you might imagine you were listening to a Rick Bishop album or something. But you're not. The name is **PAUL METZGER**. Now you know.

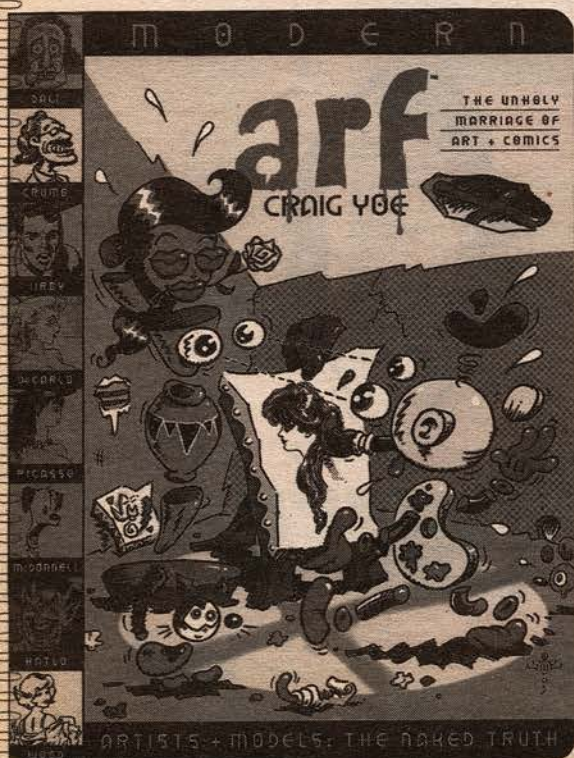
New issue of *Paper Rodeo* just arrived and it is as toxically lush as you might expect. For anyone who doesn't know it, *PR* is an amazing Rhode Island graphic newspaper filled with post-ratty drawings and comix, all of which convey the insane vibe of that city's wildest bands. If you need a soundtrack (or even eyetrack, if you're an ADD type) we suggest using the new *Pick a Winner* comp (Load), which is a very nuts collection of music and vids by folks associated with the Providence scene by hook or by crook. If you haven't visited it, do. Soon. Similar, in some way, is *Rothkop*, a small magazine that combines comix with collages and found images in a way that is pretty fucked up. The issue I have before me now seems to have something of a seawater theme, and that

aspect of life is explored by a wide variety of largely European artists in ways that are sure to make your legs quiver. Another eye feast is *Modern Art* (Fantagraphics), edited by Craig Yoe. This oversized paperback anthology explores the place where comic art meets high art in a variety of ways, all of which are great to look at. There's a fantastic chapter on Dali's cartoon work and influence on cartoons, a brilliant collection of pieces about the artist/model relationship, stuff about cartoonists' visions of hell and plenty more. Not quite like any anthology we've seen before, and well worth peeks.


Another charming visual cocktail is *Chronicles Vol. 1* (Nieves) by **Kim Gordon**. It functions both as an artist's book and a scrapbook of photo images of Kimberly through the years, so you can enjoy it equally be you prole or connoisseur! Handy! The first 100 copies also come with a copy of *something for the girl with everything* #1, which is the first bound evidence of **Thurston Moore's** post-glam collage work. Sweet! Mr. Moore's cassette-shaped book of cassette mix tape lists is also out now. *Mix Tape* (Universe) is an ostensible art book, but it's made up of music minutiae and funny essays by people who dig sounds. I dunno why there're so damn many Glen Friedman/Pushead tapes, but what the hell. Somewhat related is *Vito Hannibal Acconci Studio* (Museum d'Art Contemporani Barcelona). This is a massive compendium on the poet/artist, which includes reprints of the entire run of the little magazine, *0 to 9*, and also an interview about same by Mr. Moore. This is what you call a jumbo read.

Swankish debut LP by a new Baltimore duo, **Leprechaun Gathering**—a duo comprised of Tom Boram and Jason Willett. *Lychees, Kumquats* (Ehse) is a rather spasmic assemblage that draws equally from the dizzier traditions of electro-thud and random improvisation. The vibe is similar to the cut-n-scam aesthetic of the material Willett released on his Megaphone label, and you could easily break a leg to this one. So exercise due caution. Not heeding this advice, it seems we misplaced the eponymous debut LP by Santa Cruz's **Whysp** (Good Village) for an unspecified amount of time. But now it is found and it is a charmingly fruity piece of work. From the label art (an excellent take-off on Harvest's classic design) to the name checks (Forest, ISB, et al), this is a well-imagined set of UK-style large-group folk-freak musery of the early '70s variety. And that's something we dig quite a bit. And you might as well.


The 1972 film *French Sex Murders* (Mondo Macabro) just came out on DVD and like so many other in this series



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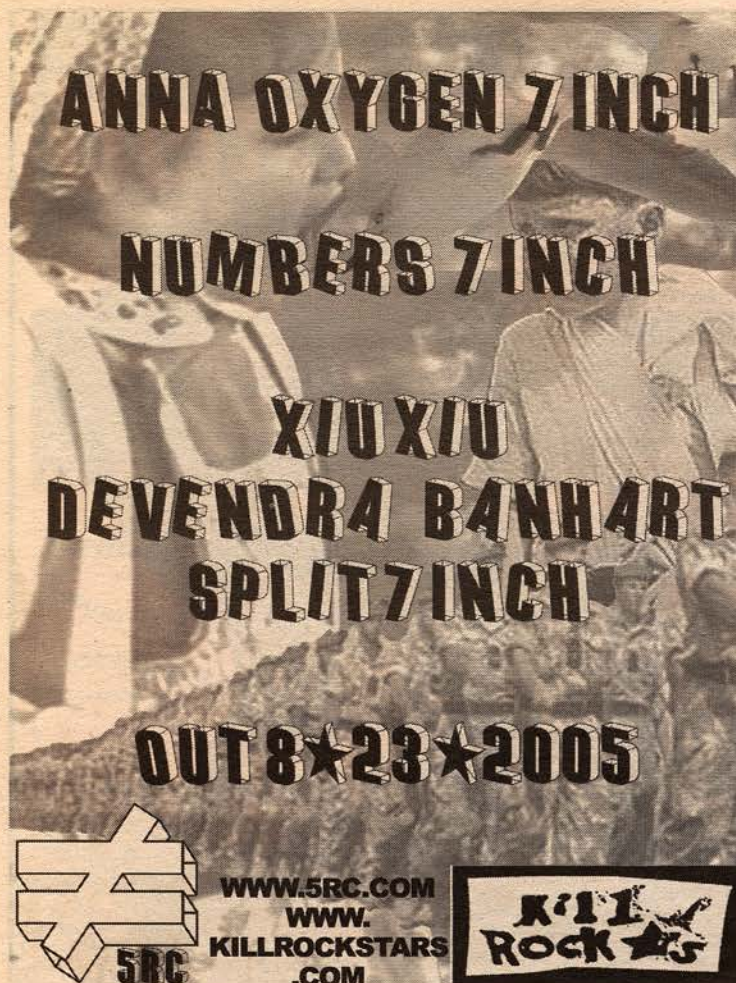
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it's a wildly jake Euro trash classic. Anita Ekberg as a madame, one of the screwiest Bogart impersonations ever by a French film detective, a totally nutty incestuous scientist leaps off the Eiffel Tower, what more could you ask? Well, whatever it is, chances are it's available in another Mondo Macabro title, *Dangerous Seductress*. This 1992 Indonesian flick is an insane mix of bikini-girl-zombies with astral-projecting g-spots, Indonesian man-dance moves, blonde worship, and all manners of topless mayhem. Another of their Indonesian finds is 1998's *Lady Terminator*, which can only be described as an EVDSP (Extended Vagina Dentata Set Piece). As always it has a lotta symbolic stuff (at least we assume it's symbolic, rather than random) which you'd have to be a Sun City Girl to absolutely decode. But all you need to enjoy it is one or two eyes. So dance on up!

Last year (or so) there was a supposedly great CDR by *Samara Lubelski* issued by C.O.M. Could never exactly lay hands on it, though, so it's a damn good thing that it's now available on vinyl. *In the Valley* (Eclipse) is the solo debut by this legendary New York undergrounder (Tower Recordings, Hall of Fame, Jackie-O Motherfucker, etc.), and it is an absolute masterpiece of spaces-blues-logi, almost entirely for solo violin. Samara bends tones, notes and moods to her will, letting them twist themselves silly in the pre-dawn breezes of the city. There's a definite Henry Flynt vibe to the thing, which is just the thing for a day such as this. Ms. Lubelski is currently touring as part of *Bummer Road*, a cosmic-blues band with MVEE, and Michael Ehlers, but she is not on their debut CD. That does not mean, however, that *Future Ragas & Blues* (C.O.M.) should not be on your must-buy list. The mix of harmonica and strings touches a deep nerve here. I am reminded of some tapes that John Fahey once played me of veena/harmonica duets with Al Wilson. And that's a damn nice memory. Another member of the Bummer Road touring band is Portland, Maine's *Nemo Bidstrup*. Nemo also has a solo project called *Drona Parva*, and the first full DP LP just came out. *Salvia Door* (Time Lag) mixes key drones with acoustic guitar drones/figures and waffling

night mists in a way that recalls hand-drawn maps of lost dream syndicates. The music is delicate but extremely involving and the packaging is incredible. Nice work, Nemo!

Dream Magazine's editor, George Parsons, has done his standard thing, and created a blimp filled with cool interviews (Tom Rapp to Gary Panter to the Sun City Girls) along with a jillion reviews of obscurities we've never heard of, and a sampler CD that plays as fine as a very ripe cheese. Very old school in its punkzine approach is Troy Colvin's *Hell's Half Acre*—single staple, xeroxed writing about movies, bands and DVDs he likes down there in Melbourne. Seen it a million times before, sure, but this one holds together pretty well. Two new issues arrived of the *Prague Literary Review*. This is a beautifully produced lit magazine, primarily in English, with wonderful graphics, a certain NYC street connection and extremely interesting material. The samples of new Slovenian writing in the latest are particularly brain-watering. We also got an issue of the English language Czech art magazine, *Umelec*, which has tons of documentary, critical and political stuff on and about the Eastern European art scene. A lotta the references are a little lost on me, but it's a fascinating mag and one that is sure to divulge many secrets if we leave it near the clubhouse throne for long enough.

Beta-Lactam Ring releases include *Le Combat Occulte* by *La Societe des Timides a la Parade des Oiseaux*. This LP reissues some '90s material by this fully freaked French combo, who operate in a fairly aggressive RIO vein, with additional nods to everyone from Heldon to Snakefinger-era Residents. The way that their vocals and instrumentals appear to have been recorded at completely different speeds is especially bracing. BLRR've also issued the 2LP version of *Legendary Pink Dots' Poppy Variations*, which is one stoned horse of a set—ranging in tone from Can't-like muzz-oblivion, to droney, baggiped marches through the mushroom glades at night. All of it is riven with the Barrettly presence of *Ka-Spel's* throat and a very wiggly time is guaranteed. Related to that is a new Ka-Spel solo LP, *O Darkness O Darkness*. A concept album of mysterious origins, *Darkness* is filled with great slabs of ominous

Vee Dee



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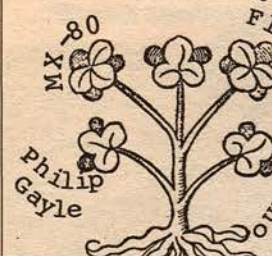
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sound-sput and very little of Ka-Spel's singing. His vocal presence is more or less random and more incantoric than usual. A wonderful late night weedful listen. Such a headspace will make the great die-cut cover especially fun to play with. Also from BLRR comes **Current 93's** 2LP set, *How He Loved the Moon*, done for the late Jhonn Balance (of Coil). This includes an almost unrecognizable remix of the classic *In Menstrual Night*, in a form that is even ghostlier and statelier than the original. Spread over four sides, the music is unlike anything else in the C93 catalogue, and a very fitting tribute to a man who was besotted with the pull of open gravity. The label also conjured up a great new LP by Finnish smoke-traders **Kemialliset Ystävät**. Entitled *Kellari Juniversumi*, it continues their trek into the glades of deep forest space. Rural as hell (it almost sounds like a C.O.M. release at times), it's also a dandy extension of what folk music might be, if we all had good drugs and frigid nights.

More Finnish hijinks are available on the **Maniacs Dream's** *Die Learn No Way* LP (HP Cycle) which stays away from the country's forests in order to bring you a sort of whizzing, weeviling free-rock-pout-n-pucker that is quite fetching. Keys are wanged as hard as drums are pounded and so on and so forth into the dizzy darkness of midnight. Second LP in a series (or so it seems) from saxophonist **Paul Flaherty** and drummer **Chris Corsano** (who recently visited Finland!) *Steel Sleet* (Tyyfus) is another impressive page in their expanding "book." Recorded at WMBR in January, 2004 (just as *Last Eyes* was) this session has a lot of spatial and tonal variations. Each of them drops back for long periods, only to come surging up like a rabbit shot out of exhaust pipe. And the mood ranges from post-bop tenor-assed soul-searching to Euro-style clatter, with many stops in between.

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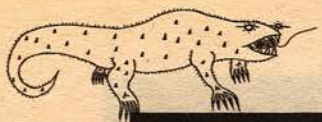
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C and D

Two guys bicker about new records.

Ween

Shinola Volume 1

(Chocodog/ween.com)

C: Ween, the house band of Arthur.

D: Not that they'd ever come to our house.

C: Coming through with an album of outtakes. But it doesn't—

D: [Singing along to opening track "Good on the Bun"] "Tastes! Tastes! Tastes good on the bun! Tastes! Good on the bun! Tastesssss..."

C: Another great Ween album. I mean, this is just a guide vocal, and a Miami bass drum pattern and the Deaner wanking away.

D: And we wouldn't want it any other way.

C: Once I was talking to the singer of a band who shall remain nameless who went on tour opening for Ween. All the people couldn't wait til Ween came on, and when they played a 20-minute version of "Push the Little Daisies," people were in tears, just losing it. That's when he realized his band was never going to make it.

D: Which is a terrible thing to realize.

C: [Listening to "Boys' Club"] "You can talk of the future/you can talk of the past/you can go find yourself a nice piece of ass": What is this, a jingle for the Catholic Church? Amazing. And "Israel" is a Jersey Jew, perfunctorily giving a benediction, backed by the greasiest Sopranos saxophone possible...

D: It's a one-man bar band at a bar mitzvah—

C: He just pressed the "pan flute" button on the Korg.

D: The cheese is frying on this one, that's for sure.

C: I heard someone say these guys are one step removed from Weird Al—

D: Totally ridiculous.

C: Weird Al changes the words to popular songs. Ween write the best songs all of your favorite bands should've written. That's a big difference, bro. "Gabrielle" is total Thin Lizzy action—

D: [Spilling beer, exclaiming] Thinner Lizzy!

C: Please, D, contain yourself.

D: Like you've never spilled a beer! [muttering] So arrogant!

C: [continuing] And "The Rift," which I think is "Roses Are Free" slowed down—is like the worst slash greatest Styx song possible. "I am the commander of time/in my vessel of god/I go through the rift/to the palace of ice ... we may not come back from the palace of ice/because the rift is a door"—it's prog written by the guy who got held back in eighth grade. I know I'm not saying anything new here but they're the closest thing we have to Zappa, sending up everything they love, without mercy. These guys are a national treasure. And like Zappa, just as scatologically obsessive.

D: Pass the Shinola, bro!

Shel Silverstein

The Best of Shel Silverstein

(Columbia/Legacy)

C: Speaking of national treasures, here's a compilation of stuff by Shel Silverstein.

D: I must confess, I do not know him.

C: Sure you do. He wrote *Where the Sidewalk Ends* and *Light in the Attic*, which is like required reading for the young and intelligent. Funny poetry for kids, he does these hyperdramatic readings of them here—

D: Sounds like Joe Cocker's creepy uncle—without his pants on.

C: Plus, he wrote story-songs like "Cover of the Rolling Stone" and "A Boy Called Sue"—

D: I know that one, of course—

C: —and then there's tracks like this "I Got Stoned and Missed It" and this one by Dr. Hook, the orgy ode "Freakin' at the Freakers' Ball." [reciting lyrics] "Everybody's kissing each other/brother with sister, son with mother/smeat my body up with butter/take me to the freakers' ball/pass that roach please/and pour that wine/I'll kiss yours and you'll kiss mine..."

D: Sounds like a pretty good time at the freakers' ball.

C: "Well all the fags and the dykes/they are boogieing together/the leather freaks are dressed in all kinds of leather/The greatest of the sadists/and the masochists too/are screaming, 'please hit me/and I'll hit you'..." A funny guy into music, drugs, storytelling and kink—who drew gag cartoons for *Playboy*? He must've been the most popular dude alive in the '70s...

D: And looking at these pictures of him, I bet—

C: I know. Total human bonobo.

Devendra Banhart

Crippled Crow

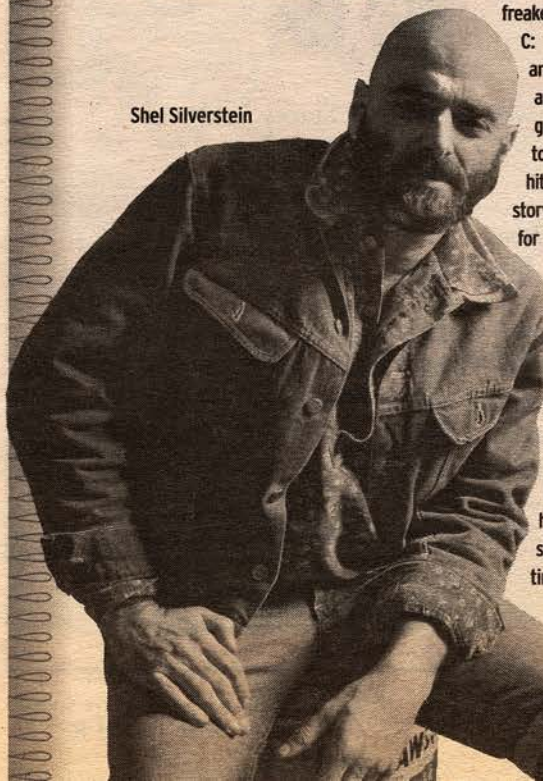
(Beggars Banquet)

C: Devendra has a lot more hair on his head than Shel, but I think there's a certain similarity in sensibility. Good times, weird times, you know he's had his share.

D: He knows where the sidewalk ends.

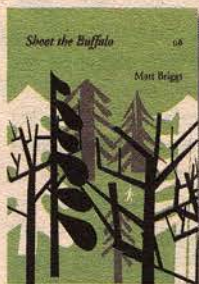
C: So this is Devendra stretching it out in studio splendor,

Shel Silverstein



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Shoot the Buffalo by Matt Briggs

0-97223234-7-3

The summer Aldous Bohm turns nine, his parents, working class hippies in post-Vietnam America, move to the woods "to reinvent the American family." Sweeping in scope yet unerringly precise in its detail, *Shoot the Buffalo* conjoins the dead end narrative of American masculinity with its stubborn twin — the Romantic ideal of nature — to suggest an ambivalent way forward, a path out of these woods.



Frances Johnson by Stacey Levine

0-97223234-6-5

Frances Johnson doesn't want to attend the town dance. But there is pressure. The people of Munson, her small Florida town, make their needs known. Nearby, a volcano the townspeople call "Sharla" spews lava and stones, lighting the sky with its portentous burning. At once measured and suspenseful, *Frances Johnson* is a comedy of manners in the tradition of Jane Bowles.

Clearcutpress.com



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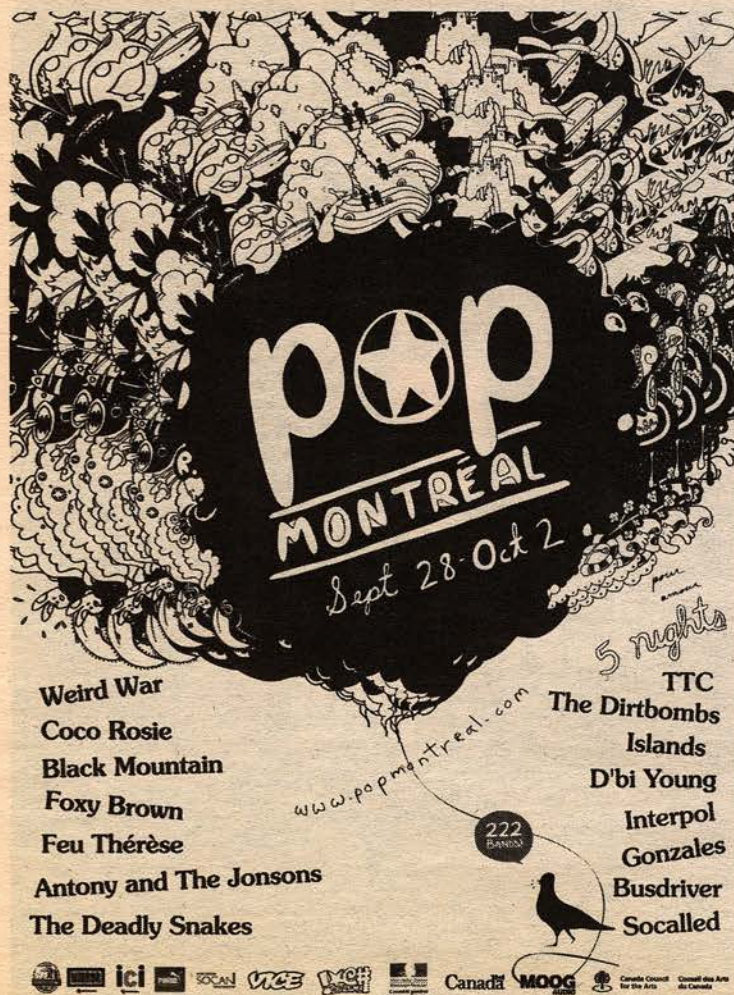


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playing solo, playing with a band, playing a ton of acoustic guitar and piano songs. In English, in Spanish, in jest, in all seriousness, in duet...

D: [listening to "Now That I Know"] In the style of St. Nick Drake.

C: Such a range on the album as a whole, you can hear it in just the first five songs [out of the album's 22]: whispers, tropicalia, a gentle piano protest lullaby, dreamtime-in-the-hasheden psychedelic-folk...

D: These songs... [listening to "Mama Wolf"] Every syllable is soothing, which is not something you hear done that often anymore. [seriously] Listen to me: Something magical is going on here.

C: Check out the singing, probably the best he's ever done: that's a guy who's going for it in a heavy, trembling way—without losing it. He didn't used to be able to sing like that. Incredible. And the lyrics, "Yeah when they come over the mountains/we'll run yeah we'll run right round them/we don't have no guns/no we don't have any weapons/just our cornmeal, and our children..."

D: I'm joining Devendra's unarmed forces.

Silver Jews

Tanglewood Numbers
(Drag City)

D: [grimacing after a few seconds of the first song] I think I'm going to need three more beers. Immediately.

C: Don't worry, I've got this one covered. [pulls out sheet of paper, clears voice] And to think this man formerly claimed he was nearly "hospitalized for approaching perfection"! Whatever D.C. Berman's been smoking, his voice is shot. He once had a stentorian authority on par with Kristofferson and Robert Frost, now it's lost. This might be a mere symptom of his decline—

D: Or the need for throat-coat tea and a personal trainer.

C: —or at least to mix the vocals up front—

D: Maybe he's been freaking a bit too much at the freakers' ball?

C: —but it dovetails with another problem, which is that since he is not a performing artist, he has never learned how to improve his craft by translating it live to an audience.

D: Which doesn't help when it comes to making a record.

C: He now sounds as if he's reading from a script rather than singing songs. His lyrics are great though, maybe as good as ever, like this choice couplet from "Sleeping Is the Only Love": "I had this friend named Marc with a c / his sister was like the heat coming off the back of an old TV" altho' his never ending quest for the ultimate bohunk cliché—"I'm getting back into getting back into you"—can be a little trying. There are a couple nice guitar moments, probably

attributable to the Malk—

D: Who?

C: Steve Malkmus from Pavement, who's on this album. [continuing] Otherwise the music is a detour-round-this junction of indie and bar band. Oh waitaminute, the seven-minute "The Farmer's Hotel" is a sprawling gothic masterpiece: Breece DJ Pancake meets Stephen King meets Rick Brautigan in, apparently, a pernicious country inn where "there was no air of slumber/ there doors they had no numbers"...call it an analogue to being a Silver Jews fan: you can check in but you can never check out.

Sinead O'Connor

Throw Down Your Arms
(Sanctuary)

C: Sinead does an album of extremely faithful reggae covers, recorded in Kingston with Sly & Robbie. It had to happen.

D: [stroking chin, deep in thought] I believe Sinead was the first celebrity I'd ever heard of who checked herself into a rehab center for addiction to that demon weed. Sometime in the mid-'90s, it was.

C: And didn't she retire from the music industry a couple of years ago? So this is an interesting turn of events.

D: The main question is whether she has grown the dreads or not. The answer, thank Jah, would appear to be no.

C: I gotta say combining the stridency of the Irish with the righteousness of the Jamaican reggae artist doesn't seem like the best strategy, and most of this album is the dull hybrid I feared it would be: too serious, too austere. Missing is the sense of playfulness.

D: She is just doing the songs she wants to do, without regard for what anyone else thinks.

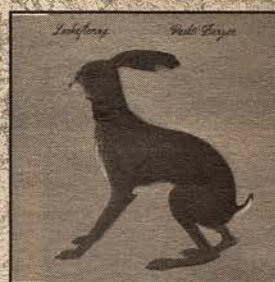
C: Respect to her for that. It is weird to hear a woman with her range do songs that offer her so little room to exercise her pipes. You get the feeling that these are songs that she's sung along to a thousand times...the versions are so faithful, at this point, she's more of a mimic than an interpreter.

D: I think as usual you are being too hard. If you were sitting there and a girl across from you started playing "Downpressor Man" on acoustic guitar and singing, it'd be all over.

C: Her take on Lee Perry's seduction ballad "Curly Locks" is certainly seductive.

D: And "Untold Stories." And "Vampire." Come on, man!

C: I'm just saying, when Sinead does an album



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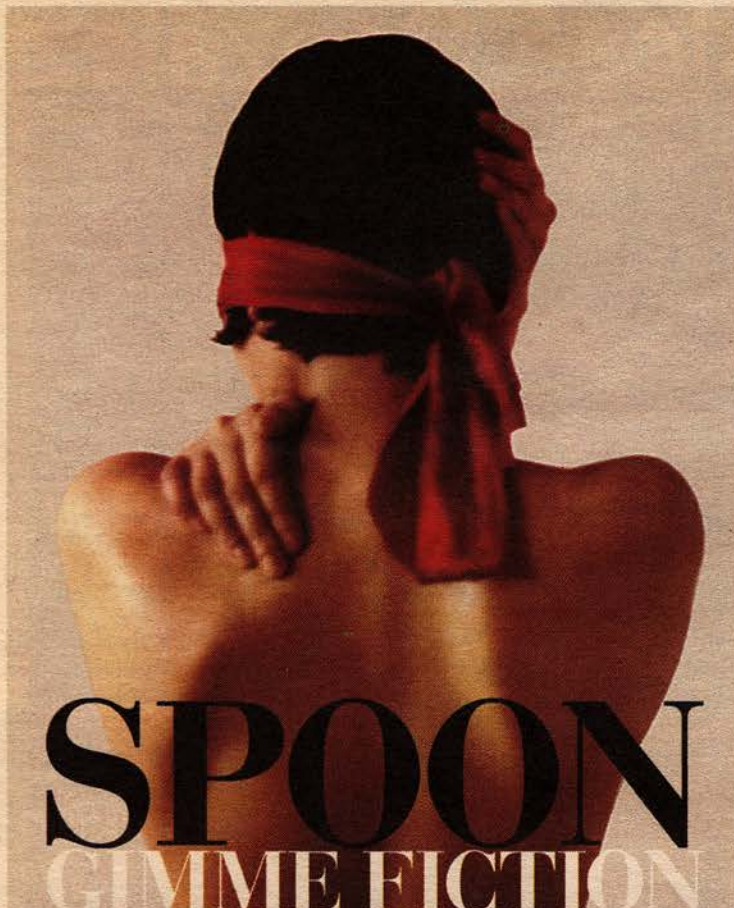


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of Ween covers, then we'll really be getting somewhere.

Terry Reid

Superlungs
(astralwerks)

C: The legendary Terry Reid gets a long-overdue compilation. A soul singer more than a rock singer, he came up in the '60s at the same time as Steve Marriott, Rod Stewart and all those guys. He's best known as the guy Jimmy Page asked to front Zeppelin, who had to turn it down cuz of contractual obligations.

D: Doh!

C: They said Plant sang like a woman, and Terry Reid does too. Guess Page knew what he wanted. To paraphrase *My Fair Lady*,...

D: [singing] Why can't a man sing more like a woman?

C: In that case, it's a man singing like a woman singing like a man. In the tradition of Tina Turner and Mavis Staples or Inga Rumpf from German blues rockers Frumpy

D: This guy is a super-rocker. A mod-era master. He fucked it up, though.

C: Not as bad as Dave Mustaine. Better to have Led Zeppelin yelled at you on the street by the local smartcakes than Metallica.

D: [listening to "Stay With Me Baby"] Ian Gillan of Deep Purple totally took from his voice.

C: "Speak Now Or Forever Hold Your Peace" is unbelievable—the propulsive, tuneful, template for Slade, and by extension Oasis.

D: But Liam's not a soul singer.

C: It's very Faces. "Tinker Taylor" is the same thing. Word to the Djs out there: this is the only album you need to keep the dance party going...

The 88

Over and Over
(Mootron/EMK)

C: Second album from The 88 from around Silver Lake...

D: Ha! That's L.A. guys doing late-'60s U.K. vision of California a la the Kinks' *Muswell Hillbillies*. I like it. This is MUCH more potent than that Paisley Underground revival stuff that was going down in '84. Silver Lake, eh?

C: But it's not just Kinks stuff. That's a big Elton John roadhouse ballad on here, which they can do cuz that guy can really sing.

D: If you're going to do this, you better be able

to take on El Dorado.

C: [Listening to "You Belong to Me"] Such a good singer, great voice. Too bad about the completely unrepresentative album cover, which doesn't do them any favors.

D: Surprisingly sophisticated, this shit. It's like known puzzle pieces being put into a new revised order... Man, if this comes from Silver Lake, this isn't such a bad area! Maybe I should come by every now and then on a Saturday afternoon to hang out with these guys? Because they're basically hip-hugging mod-haired Sixties guys, on a mission to pull through the gates of rock. That's what I am too.

C: ...

D: Although I am a bit older.

Flamin' Groovies

Shake Some Action
(DBK Works/Runt)

C: Weren't they the band that made rock dangerous again?

D: Yes. This came out in '73, can it be? They wore white shirts and black tailored suits - they were the best dressed band besides the Band. During the glam period. The good ol' teenage rock band but played by some slightly older guys. Critics' favorites who never had a hit. I think *Shake Some Action* was their only popular song, though they had plenty more worthy ones that got ignored.

C: [Reading liner notes] "Dave Edmonds, formerly of Love Sculpture, produced." For garage rock, it's pretty reedy and thin.

D: But it's not garage, it's...well, it was retro even back then. They were going for the high school hop sound. They were the conservatives of rock n roll. Which is not a very conservative thing to be.

C: While you are busy speaking paradoxically, I am reminded of the time I went to a Johnny Rockets with my father and he said "This is exactly what diners were like in the '50s!"

D: Ah, so you see, retro can be a happy place to be.

The Time Flies

"Fly"

(Birdman)

C: 90-second Ramones party songs. Four-second solos. One of the dude from The Cuts.

D: Sounds like really early, VERY tuneful punk. Pre-Stooges DMZ without the amps. And like Wire on the drums. Tss-tss-tss.

C: [listening to "Jailbait"] Not just punk-bubblegum, too. 1974. Sweet and their kind. Or closer: Kim Fowley.

D: The mighty Runaways.

C: There should be a track on here called "Paging Rodney Bingenheimer."

D: [looking at sleeve] Whoa, do you look at the protrusion in the pouch of this punk's jeans? How do you like his cucumber?

C: More importantly, how does Jimmy???

D: You know what they say: Put your best something forward.

Black Rebel Motorcycle Club

Howl

(Virgin)

C: [after listening to "Ain't No Easy Way"] You'll

José González

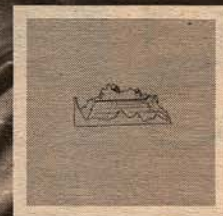
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"Dark, still, oddly powerful elliptical folk songs that suggest Paul Simon's Duncan or John Martyn's Solid Air adrift in Arthur Russell's 'World of Echo'"
- MOJO MAGAZINE

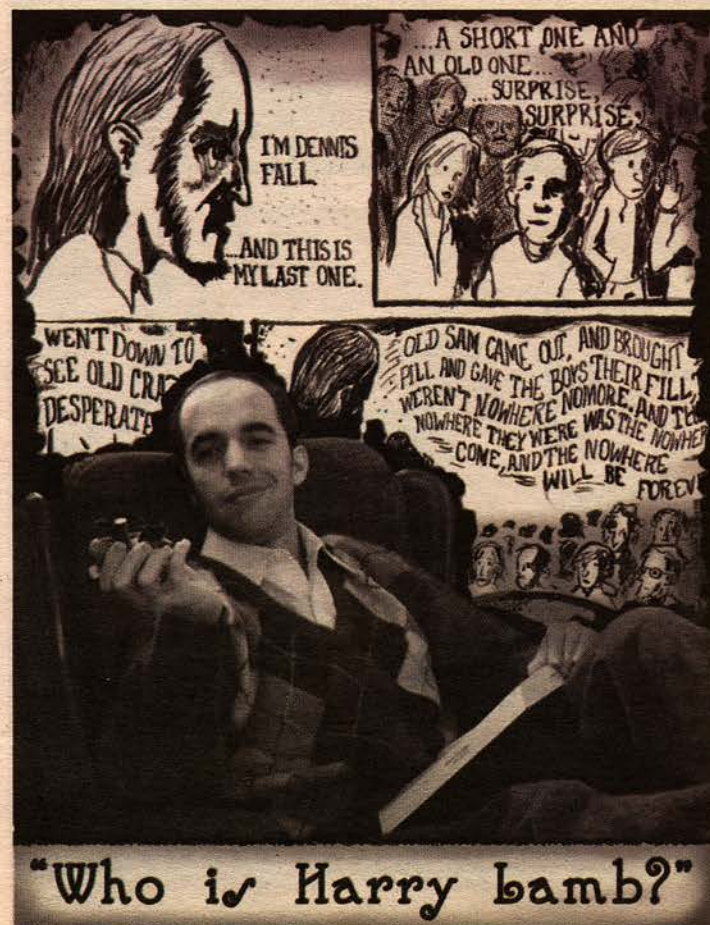
"Marries [Nick] Drake's mournful minimalism to deftly picked, Latino guitar"
- UNCUT

Veneer

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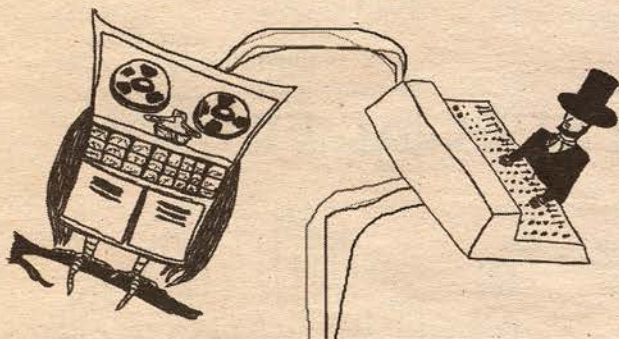
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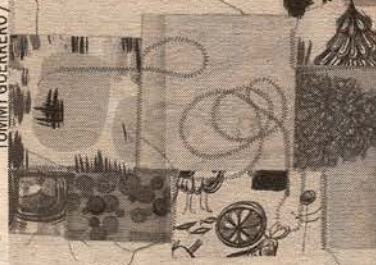
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never guess who this is.

D: Full-on Led Zeppelin. with the harmonica, slide guitar and the fucking Bonham stomp in the house. [looks at sleeve] Whoa. A double gold star surprise. Before they bored me to death with their one-two chord guitar bullshit, which is good for one song on the first record. But now they come back as the guys who stole the spear of destiny, a full-fledged rock 'n' roll monster.

C: It's a pretty amazing transformation. I guess Spiritualized's path is what they're following, headed into gospel and blues stomps.

D: [starts waving hands around enthusiastically] Tav Falco says the blues was a howl before it became a song. People were hollering about their pain, in the kind of land where you hope a train will come through and take you far away. Music...music can be about the EQ, not the IQ. The emotional quotient is what's important here. Here they display the will to break through the final door, which you have to do to be a good band. What the hell happened? I am floored again, in a good way.

Chris Cunningham

"Rubber Johnny" short film DVD and image book

(Warp Films)

C: We should let the people know that it's a four-minute Aphex Twin music video—and a very good one, I'll admit—with a minute padded to each end to make it a "short film." For 12 bucks. And the revolting photos on the DVD cover and inside the books are not images from the film. So...

D: It's Joel Peter Witkin meets Floria Sigismondi, but this stuff is ten times better. All this creepiness comes from this guy Gottfried Helmwein (shouting people with bandages on). It's just the sort of thing that comes from being a lanky weird kid being permanently confronted by non-lanky weird-in-the-other-way kids. And probably suffering beatings from them.

C: Basically it's The Elephant Man in a wheelchair shooting lasers out of his hands in time with the music, between snorting lines off a camel's scrofulous rump. Unbelievable editing. But...yikes.

D: This is the alternate ending of *Eraserhead*. [thinking] Which it's kind of like, in another way. They asked Lynch questions, and he always changed the subject. "What about the baby?" "What was that?" "Is it real, or is it not real?" "Did you kill it?" This guy Cunningham likes to leave things open like Lynch did. What are those photos of?

C: [looking at screen] Well, that's definitely a chihuahua.

D: I think I just dropped my chalupa.

Bjork

the music from *Drawing Restraint 9* (One Little Indian)

C: New one from Bjork, the soundtrack to the new film by her bugaboo Matthew Barney, who is at the art museum edge of the New Grower Cinema—

D: I don't give an ant's fart about Bjork—

C: Well I adore her, but I gotta say this one might be for collectors only...

D: Always the same thing: Starts low, goes high. Whoa-ohhhohhh-ah! Same trick she's been doing since the Sugarcubes.

C: She's barely singing on this one though. Just a lot of very musically simple interludes, a weird curiosity tune with Will Oldham that's interesting the first time you hear it—

D: Excuse me while I yawn.

C: —and then a lot of grunting and what I guess is a holy man's tuneless mewling and—

D: To quote Beavis: This sucks!

C: To quote the dad of Lars Ulrich: I would say, delete that.

Birds

In the World

(Important)

C: Some 3-D Monsterism going on on the cover here. Good ol' Peter Fowler.

D: Let me look at that. The Super Furry Animals designer guy scores again!

C: It's Cotton Casino from Japanese cosmic freakout collective Acid Mothers Temple, with another dude from Iceland. Recorded in Osaka and Oslo.

D: What a package vacation that would be....

C: Yeah, lots of people booking that one. This reminds me a bit of the Boredoms' latest record, in that it opens with a woman doing a lengthy a capella piece before going into something totally different.

D: Although this isn't a drum circle in a hurricane.

C: Naturalist psychedelia without special effects: just nature and her voice. Like they recorded it in the nude.

D: I dig this song but it might be one of those over-the-edge things. It's music that you play after a catastrophe with stuff that's lying around. The lost souls are still flying around trying to find out what happened to them.

C: Yep, I know that feeling.

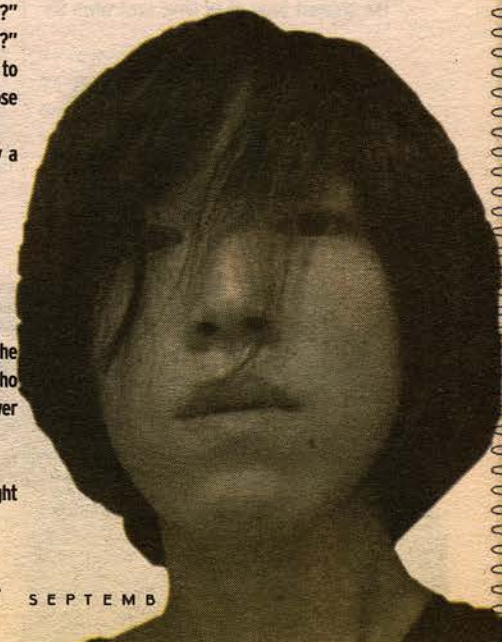
August Born

August Born

(Drag City)

C: Another duo collaboration between people at long distances from each other. This is West Coast guitarist-singer Ben Chasny from Six Organs of Admittance and Comets On Fire, in

Cotton Casino chan.



quiet, experimental mode, working with the Japanese guy named L, who was in Ghost at one point and has been involved in other cool stuff through the years.

D: Difficult music.

C: There's a song here where there's three melodic lines going along and they shouldn't work together— they sound so separated—and yet it all works.

D: It's like tuning your ear to accept unusual signals from the old psychedelic music man up on the mountain, hanging out above the fog clouds with Popul Vuh.

Coco Rosie

Noah's Ark

(Touch and Go)

C: Pretty much same as the first Coco Rosie record: two gifted American sisters making music box speakeasy music that's part Billie Holiday homage, part experimental ageless whatsit. Sublime to some, unbearably mannered and pretentious to others. I go back and forth, honestly.

D: I do not enjoy this style of music, but "Beautiful Boys" with Antony is a sad knockout.

Modest Lemon

The Curious City

(Birdman)

D: A facemelting beast machinery soundtrack. Like Suicide, the band.

C: Oneida's march-thrust crossed with Fiery Furnaces' unapologetic quirk factor five.

D: With some of the driest singing not by a band called Om.

The Dick Cavett Show: Rock Icons

(Shout! Factory)

D: Sly & the Family Stone live on television in 1970? A full hour of performance and interview with an extremely nervous David Bowie in 1974? Stevie Wonder in 1970?!? A full disk of Janis Joplin... Joni Mitchell, George Harrison, Paul Simon, Jefferson Airplane?

C: Whoa, look at Grace Slick! Her spray-on tan seems to eerily predict Jessica Simpson as Daisy Duke. But I would buy this whole thing just for the Sly Stone segment, where, after showing up late—of course—he and his band put on the funkier bar none live television performance I have ever seen. They make it look effortless. The greatest band of all time, even when Sly

has a cold. And when he tells Cavett he writes music in the mirror, well... I won't ruin it, except to say this DVD is a good argument in favor of television.

Sonny Sharrock

Black Woman

(Water/Runt)

C: Reissue of vintage Sonny Sharrock, a mighty out-there jazz guitarist in the '60s. He wanted to play jazz like Coltrane but he couldn't play a horn cuz of asthma. So he got a guitar. Here he's with his wife Linda, who's just singing her soul out. He's playing these weird drone chord progressions that cloud out into clusters-clots...

D: I couldn't even begin to find words to try to describe this. When everything is so constricting, you need a place to be where you're allowed to expand into these sorts of orgasmic explorations. She uses her voice like a hawk. Does anyone dare to sing like this today?

C: Do you know any couple that dares to get this gone in public, today? With this naked go-for-itness? Just mindblowing. Coley says "they were ready to collapse the universe" here in the liner notes.

D: Sounds accurate to me.

Earthless

Sonic Prayer

(Gravity)

D: This is the Kyuss shiznit.

C: Two songs, fortysomething minutes, totally instrumental like a more straightahead Ash Ra Tempel. One song is called "Flower Travlin' Man," a homegrower's nod to the Japanese Sabbath-Zeppelin chopper-riding groop the Flower Travlin' Band.

D: They're holding the torch again. New blossoms in the desert...

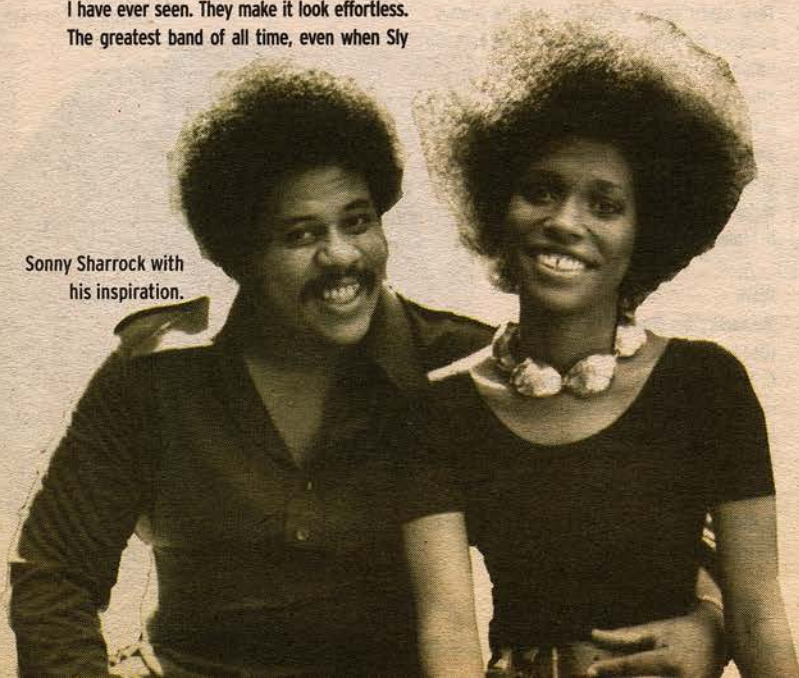
C: They're actually from San Diego but I know what you're saying. They're jamming it out and they keep going, he just keeps riding that groove—

D: Yeaahh. you can run but you can't hide from the wall of thunder! [thoughtful] I'd like to review this record every month.

C: Who knows? We just might...



Sonny Sharrock with his inspiration.



Able Brown

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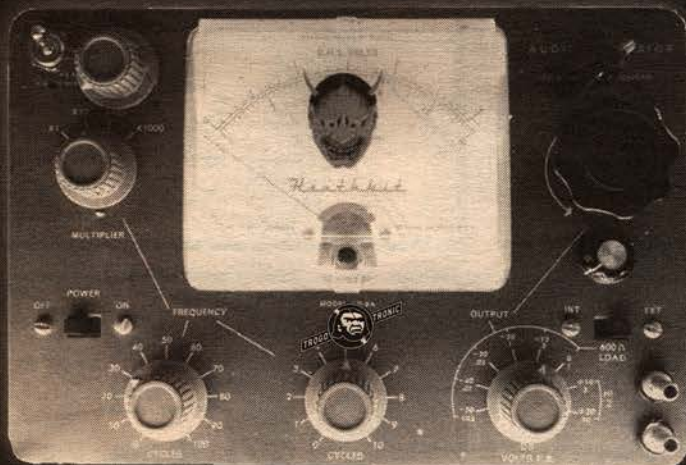


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AFRIRAMPO

DANIEL PINCHBECK

(continued from page 21)

more more nice country."

Osaka, Oni says, is "smaller than Tokyo—Tokyo is really business, but Osaka more small and [has a] more deep community. So [that's why] I think we make a lot of strange music.

"We used to have a party, free session jam party in Osaka. Castle Park, three years ago, in summer, every month, once in a month. It's really...freedom [laughs]. And now we cannot do it because now it's a problem. The police came: *Oh, don't do it.* In Japan it's really hard to play music outside. So we cannot do it right now, but the party was like in the park, at night, all night, and many strangers came to the party, and it was just like noise music... [laughs] So drunk! But it was so good party."

Pikachu mimes beating a stone with a stick and said, "One guy only hit stone, two hour, three hour... only make noise by stone. So free."

"Strange" music tends to be oddly male-dominated. I ask Afrirampo if there are other women musicians they play with who are making the same kind of music.

"Lately, Yoko Ono," says Oni, as casually as if I had asked her what time it might be. I had not realized that, at the most recent All Tomorrow's Parties festival, curated by Vincent "Four More Years" Gallo, Afrirampo had performed with Ono, "a real monkey," which they mean as a compliment.

"So amazing," Oni says. "You know she's almost 70 years old? I cannot believe it. She was like FLASH!"

A cell phone at the table behind us rings, playing a theme from *The Barber of Seville*, and the three of us sang merrily along, swinging our arms back and forth like a glad crew of sailors.

LATER, BACK AT THE SMELL, Afrirampo take the stage in brilliant white dresses, full makeup and matching plastic rings with flashing lights inside. Their set comes to a close with the crowd bearing Pikachu from the stage to the front door as Oni takes over the drums and sings *Sayonara! Sayonara!* It is that rare, thrilling thing that happens when a band plays brave and dangerous music nailed down with precise rhythm, climbing up the ropes with muscles and unwavering purpose, carrying you along a highwire from beat to beat.

Don't look down.

Ⓐ

(continued from page 11)

rather than try to kill them. Slight changes in food sources and feeding patterns may have allowed the bonobos to stay together in larger communities on their side of the river, unlike chimpanzees, who must break off into small parties to hunt for their favorite fruit and meat sources. In these larger and more stable groups, female bonobos were able to form permanent social bonds and resist the aggressive urges of the males. Female bonobos evolved to hide their ovulation patterns, which put them more in control of their biological destinies and made it less clear to males when mating would lead to offspring. The authors of *Demonic Males* conclude that the potential for future human harmony lies, as with the bonobos, in the increasing power of the female, something they see developing in the advanced Western democracies.

From our present vantage point, it is difficult to envision what a truly sex-positive culture might be like. Sexuality is still shrouded in aggression and mistrust (the words "fuck" and "screw" are hurled as curse words), with young women's hyper-sexualized bodies endlessly used as props to sell products. Not only a rethinking about sexuality and relationship models, but a resacralizing of eros, may be called for. According to various spiritual traditions, including Eastern tantra and Western alchemy, beyond the use of sex for procreation, eros can be repurposed for spiritual self-creation. The disciplined and highly conscious use of sexuality required for attaining transcendent states of being is inconceivable in a cultural ambience where "Sex and the City" and "MTV Spring Break" are seen as positive models of erotic behavior. Although tantra is offered in various workshops and has become a cliché of New Age culture, a true tantraism is probably not possible until men and women find a deeper basis of trust, understanding, and partnership on all levels—a discovery that would be not just an evolutionary shift, but a revolutionary one as well.

Ⓐ

DOUGLAS RUSHKOFF

(continued from page 9)

we are. Their hearts are in it: they have no ambivalence about lying and manipulating to get their way. Second, and more importantly, the techniques they are using are as much the problem as the beliefs they mean to impose through them.

The shortest way out of this mess is not to learn to manipulate through our new technologies—or even to teach others how to do it. We must instead figure out how to use all these tools to tell and disseminate the truth as best we can discern it, as honestly and transparently as we can. The way we share our partial truths may prove more important than the truths, themselves.

Ⓐ

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Sketching this comic

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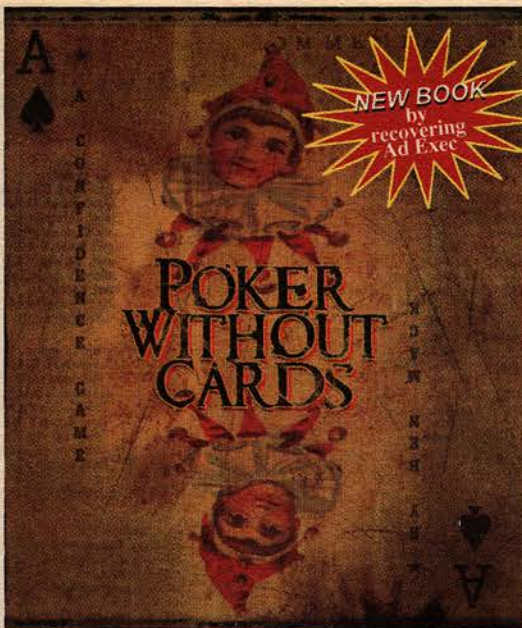
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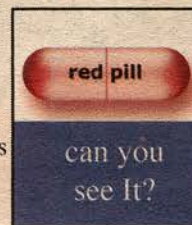
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