

pop
NARCOTIC



mail order catalog
summer 1995

things we've been liking

Bill

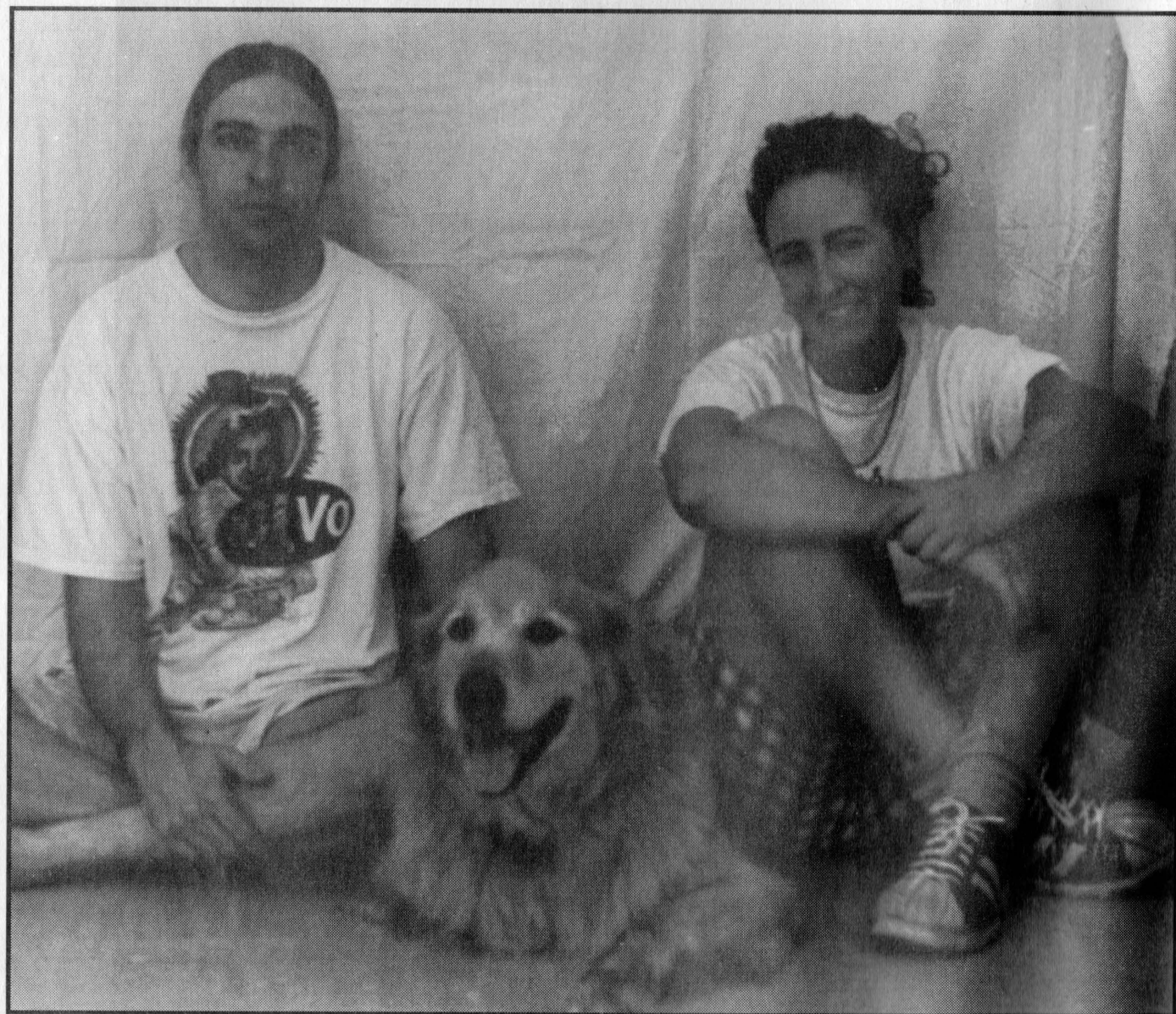
- Guided by Voices - anytime, anywhere, anyplace.
- A real baseball season (even with the bogus 3 division format).
- Buddha on the Moon records and demo tapes.
- Finally meeting sugar plant and seeing them play live.
- Helium's most recent show in Boston.
- Tizzy, both as a band and as people.
- Dan Spurgeon and the Bush League All-Stars.
- The Grifters appearance in the film *Half Coked*.
- *Beer Frame*.
- Having Aliza to help out with Pop Narcotic!

Bud

- Sleeping.
- Digging in the trash.
- Grapes.
- "Hey Lucille"
- Barking at the neighbors.
- Doggie treats from mail order customers.

Aliza

- teaching sugar plant the difference between "mumble" and "mambo" and what it means "to have a crush" on someone.
- Big Japanese dinners with sugar plant.
- Getting hired (here) full time.
- Karate
- The upcoming small factory compilation CD.
- Any music Mary Timony makes.
- Scrawl
- Sane, sober, nice roommates who don't listen to gothic music.
- *Yakuza*.
- Getting to do my first list!
- Eating breakfast on my porch.
- Scott.



hi folks,

Although it's taken forever, you're finally holding a new Pop Narcotic catalog in your hands. In the future, catalogs should come on a more regular schedule. The major reason for this is that the Pop Narcotic staff has grown, from one to two, with the addition of Aliza. Since March, she has booked very successful East Coast and Chicago area tours for sugar plant and has been helping with advertising, this epic catalog and whatever else needs to be done. Thanks to Aliza, Pop Narcotic now also has reasonably consistent office hours for the first time ever. During the days, you can call if you need any information or help with anything in the catalog (*or if you just want to chat, i love e-mail! -aliza*).

The past year has been kind of slow for Pop Narcotic, but the releases will be coming at a much faster pace over the next few months. All of the releases which have been delayed for one reason or another are finally moving. So, you should be seeing singles from Eggplant, Tizzy, The Bush League All Stars and Kam Lung, as well as a full length releases from The Bush League All Stars and that long awaited small factory singles compilation CD. It should make for a busy summer here at Pop Narcotic.

In the meantime, here's what's new in this catalog. We finally have the first full-length release on Pop Narcotic. It's the debut CD and LP from Japan's sugar plant. The LP contains a bonus 7" with Galaxie 500 and Television covers that are available nowhere else. Hopefully, some of you got to see them play on their short U. S. tour this spring. We also have lots of new non-Pop Narcotic releases available. As always, we try to mix up more popular stuff on larger indies with a large number of records and CDs from bands that may not be getting as widely distributed as they deserve. In addition, I've made a real effort to track down some of the new and interesting bands in Boston these days. There are finally a whole lot of new bands in the area that are putting out interesting first releases. I've been excited by bands like Quivver, Karate, Pie, Tipili, Weeping in Fits and Starts, El Tiante, Secret Stars and Syrup. I have records by most of these bands and they're all worth checking out.

New items are being added to the catalog constantly, so get in touch if you need an updated catalog. We also have the catalog and updates available via Email. If you'd like to add yourself to the Pop Narcotic Email list, just send a message to:

popnarc-mail-request@webcom.com

In the body of the message, just say *subscribe*. This will get you added to the list and you'll get all future catalogs and updates.

Unfortunately, our catalog is getting expensive to mail out and we're going to have to trim our mailing list down. So, to stay on the list, you can either *order something or get in touch* with us. Either way you will still receive catalogs (*for free!*).

For a more immediate look at what's going on with Pop Narcotic, check out our World Wide Web page at:



<http://www.webcom.com/~popnarc/>

Recently, the Web Page hasn't been as current as we would like, but hopefully, we'll get our act together soon. We're working on getting sound samples and lots more graphics, but that will take a little time. In addition to that, there is the usual assortment of new stuff in all categories. As always, feel free to get in touch if you have any questions, comments or requests.

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(Note that the phone and fax numbers are new but the address remains the same.)

 bill and aliza 

credits: aliza did 99.5% of the layout, graphics, and photography. bill did 99.5% of the writing. bud did 100% of the dog poses.
special thanks: (for technical assistance) guy jeffrey nelson and kevin turbitt. (for proof reading) emily becker.

pop NARCOTIC releases

out of print stuff

narc001 (\$3.50) Swirlies Error 7"

This was the second release from Swirlies. The two songs from this 7", "Park the Car By the Side of the Road" and "Upstairs" are available on their Taang! releases, so you aren't missing out on any music.



narc002 (\$3.50) The Dambuilders "Smell" 7"

This was the second American release from The Dambuilders. Both "Smell" and "Colin's Heroes" are both available on their East West release, Encendedor.



narc003 (\$3.50) Versus "Bright Light" 7"

"Bright Light" and "Forest Fire" are both available on the Teenbeat singles compilation *Dead Leaves*.

current releases

narc004 (\$3.50) Helium "Hole In the Ground" 7"

This record has been unavailable for a while because we ran out of sleeves. By the time this catalog arrives, we should have more in stock. These two songs, "Hole in the Ground" and "Lucy" are available only on this 7".



narc005 (\$3.50) small factory "So What About Love" 7"

This was the third single from small factory and their first recording with semi-slick production. There are still plenty of these available.

narc006 (\$10.00) Why Do You Think They Call It Pop? double 10" compilation

Two 10" pieces of beautiful pink and yellow vinyl featuring the likes of Sleepyhead, The Dambuilders, Versus, small factory, Polvo, Monsterland, Wingtip Sloat, Helium, Ruby Falls, Twig, Greenhorn, Kudgel and Grifters. Some of the tracks have been reissued in alternate forms, but most are exclusive to this compilation.



narc007 (\$3.50) sugar plant "Cloudy" 7"

This was the debut American release for this Japanese band. Sugar Plant are quiet and dreamy in a style reminiscent of Galaxie 500 and Mazzy Star. Both of these tracks are exclusive to this 7"



narc009 (\$3.50) Eggplant *Because Some Things are Meant to be Throwaway* 7" EP

Eggplant is a three piece band from London, England that have released two singles on the Bus Stop Label. This single shows off their ability to write short, pop-punk songs that stick in your head for hours. Eggplant reminds me of a cross between The Fastbacks and Heavenly.



narc010 (\$8.00/\$10.00) sugar plant *Hiding Place* LP/CD

This is the debut full length release for both Pop Narcotic and sugar plant. sugar plant are from Japan and are totally influenced by American and British indie music. Listening to this CD brings to mind Galaxie 500 and Mazzy Star, but with a unique and compelling Japanese twist.



narc011 (\$3.50) Bush League All Stars "Pencil Weight" 7"

The Bush League All Stars are an all-male, Columbus, Ohio band fronted by Dan Spurgeon of Greenhorn. The All Stars pick up right where Greenhorn left off with their brand of loud, straight ahead Crazy Horse influenced rock and roll. "Pencil Weight" is probably the most "pop" song Dan's ever written and it even has a horn section that includes Bob Weston. The B-side, "Cut from Years" is a stripped down four track song that has a country feel.

narc012 (\$3.50) Tizzy "Igloo" 7"

Tizzy was by far my favorite discovery of 1994. This is the follow-up to their great "New Jersey" 7" on Chunk. Tizzy's songs are always a blend of pop melodies, punk rock energy blended with quirky twists and turns. "Igloo" is a catchy, pop song and the b-side, "Wives Were Meant to Be Kissed and Not Heard" is an all-out two minute punk rock song.

upcoming releases

narc008 (\$3.50) Kam Lung "Hippie Love Stuff" 7"

Kam Lung is a side-project of Dave Derby of The Dambuilders. Also playing on this recording are his friends Alicia, and Claudia Gonson from Magnetic Fields. Kam Lung is a bright, energetic band with jangly guitars, infectious pop melodies and cute lyrics that, more often than not, have to do with food. This is their debut release and it was recorded by Dave Auchenbach of the late small factory.



narc013 (\$10.00) small factory Singles Compilation

This CD-only posthumous release, combines the four small factory 7"s and several compilation tracks into one 14 song release. This is a good chance to catch up on some old, out of print songs or to gather all of your small factory material on to a single disc.



narc014 (\$8.00/\$10.00) Bush League All Stars Old Numbers LP/CD

After Greenhorn broke up, Dan Spurgeon pulled together this new band and within a few months of the first show, they had traveled to Chicago to record this LP with Bob Weston. While not quite as loud and overpowering as Greenhorn, the All Stars continue in the Midwestern tradition with straight-ahead rock songs with a tinge of country. I can't say enough good things about this record. So far, it's my favorite Pop Narcotic release.

t-shirts

Pop Narcotic t-shirt (L/XL) (\$12.00)

Our 100% Cotton short sleeve t-shirt with its multi-color Pop Narcotic logo on the front will be a hit with the kids. Whether you're on the beach, at the club, or in your dark, dank basement all depressed and listening to your favorite sad music, this t-shirt will give you the appearance of being happy.

band updates

We are always getting questions regarding bands who have released stuff on Pop Narcotic. So, here's a quick rundown of what some of the bands have been up to and a little information about their future plans. Some of this may be out of date, but it's the best information we have at the moment.

Bush League All-Stars

Since recording their debut album, *Old Numbers*, the All-Stars have gone through some major personnel changes. This delayed the release of the album, but over the past few months Dan Spurgeon has pulled together a new band and even recorded some new material. This new material will be released on a series of singles and compilations. Following the release of *Old Numbers*, the All-Stars will hit the road to play some live dates.

The Dambuilders

The Dambuilders have just finished recording their second major label album, "Ruby Red." The recording was done with Don Gehman, who is known for his works with REM, Hootie and the Blowfish and John Cougar Mellancamp. I was pretty frightened by the whole idea, but "Ruby Red" doesn't sound that much different from their last record. The album is in the stores now and the band is busy touring with an awful band whose name has no place in this catalog.

Helium

The latest incarnation of Helium includes Ash Bowie (of Polvo) on bass. Recent shows have had more spark and energy than ever. On a good night Helium is one of the best bands I've ever seen. They just got back from their first real U.S. tour and then did a few dates on the Lollapalooza second stage. Recently Ash has been busy playing with Polvo, so Helium has been less active. If you haven't checked out their new Matador album, *The Dirt of Luck*, do yourself a favor and pick it up. It's a great record.

small factory

You've probably heard by now that small factory are no longer a band. After two great records and several appearances on singles and compilations, they finally decided to call it quits. Their final show in Providence was a great way to remember them. They played a good part of the set with the old acoustic instruments, something we haven't seen in years. Even with the breakup, Pop Narcotic will still be releasing the singles compilation CD. Hopefully this will make it out before the end of 1995.

There are already two new offshoot bands. Dave is in a band called Flora Street and Alex and Phoebe are playing together in a band called Godrays. Both bands are recording new material but there are no definite release plans yet.

sugar plant

sugar plant have been very busy. After the release of their debut album *hiding place* on Pop Narcotic, they came to the U.S. and amazed everyone who saw their live show. We're hoping to get them back to the U.S. in the fall to support a new 4 song EP they recorded while in the U.S. The new material takes a slightly different direction as the songs are longer and have a kind of droney, Stereolab feel to them.

Swirlies

There have been a few changes with Swirlies recently. Seana Carmody has left the band to form a new band called Syrup. Syrup is a lot more blatantly pop than Swirlies ever was and is sounding great these days. We have their self-released 7" in this catalog.

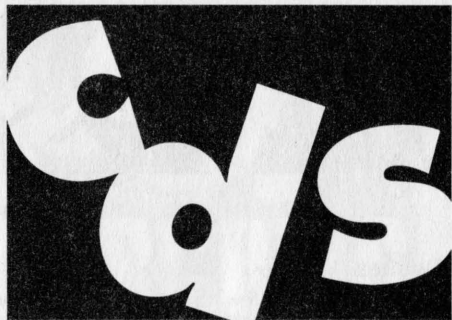
Swirlies has replaced Seana with a new guitarist and vocalist named Christina. After some rocky times, their live show has become stronger than ever. They've recently completed a new album for Taang!. I'm not sure of a release date, but I would guess that we'll be seeing it sometime in the fall of 1995.

Tizzy

Tizzy has been very busy this summer. First, they booked their own three week tour that took them as far South as Atlanta and as far West as Dayton Ohio. Shortly after returning to Massachusetts, they recorded seven new songs which will be released as an EP on Pop Narcotic. These songs are their best recordings to date and we're really excited to be able to release them.

Versus

Versus continues to do things their own way, in an independent and ethical manner. They're one of the hardest working indie bands I know. It seems like they are always out on tour, so I hardly ever get to talk to them to see what's new. They've just released their singles compilation *Dead Leaves* and are busy supporting it with live dates. I'm not sure what the future holds for Versus, but they've never disappointed me in the past, so I'm sure I'll be happy with whatever they do in the future.



**Ass Ponys *Mr. Superlove*
(Anyway) (\$10.00)**

This is a reissue of the first Ass Ponys release on Okra Records. This is my favorite of their releases and it has a much more raw and rural feel than the recent A&M release. The Ass Ponys were doing the country-edged sound long before it became a hip thing and even today, not many bands do it as well as they do. This CD also contains two songs not on the original release.

**Blaise Pascal *E-Filter*
(Cave Canem) (\$7.00)**

I don't think anyone has ever talked about this EP without comparing it to Pavement. That's definitely a good reference point, with their use of pop melodies along with noisy guitars and intentionally lo-fi recordings. Still, there's something about Blaise Pascal that makes them more interesting than your typical "I wanna be Pavement" indie rock band. Their strong songs and honest enthusiastic delivery quickly took me beyond the surface similarities and made me realize that Blaise Pascal are really doing their own thing.

**Blaise Pascal *Foreword*
(Cave Canem) (\$8.00)**

This is the second EP from Blaise Pascal. These eight songs sound more self assured and original than the first EP. While you'll still hear touches of Pavement here, Blaise Pascal are treading in uncharted territory. No one, with the possible exception of Wingtip Sloat, is making music quite like this today. On initial listens, things may sound lo-fi and thrown together in a haphazard way, but closer listening will convince you that everything is there for a reason. Anyone into early Pavement, Grifters and Wingtip Sloat should check it out.

**Bunnygrunt *Action Pants*
(No Life) (\$10.00)**

Bunnygrunt is one of those bands that I really want to dislike because they keep playing up their "cute" image. And if I hear one more reference to playing kickball from them, I'll probably lose my lunch. That aside, this is a sur-

prisingly good record. Sure it's cute and syrupy sweet at times, but on this album, they make an attempt to branch out and rock a little more. The result is surprisingly good and they prove themselves to be more than a band who can only make cute, catchy singles. So, if you like bands like Cub, but wish they would broaden themselves a bit, this may be just the record for you.

**Containe *I Want It All*
(Enchante) (\$8.00)**

Containe is Connie Lovatt from Alkaline and Fontaine Toups of Versus doing their own brand of sparse, simple and beautiful music. Most of the 8 songs on this CD are stripped down to just guitars, dual vocals and minimal percussion. If you like Fontaine's work in Versus and want to hear how she works in a different setting, you'll definitely want to own this CD. This has been a personal favorite of mine since I discovered it.

**Crayon *Brick Factory*
(Harriet) (\$9.00)**

Crayon is one of those bands who is defining what punk rock means for the 90's. Forget about aggressive, testosterone driven rage. Crayon takes the energy and enthusiasm of punk and channel it in a positive direction. They are a three piece from Bellingham, WA who blend childhood themes, lo-fi distorted guitars and slightly off-key vocals into an incredibly likeable mix. After a string of 7" singles and compilation cuts, we finally get a chance to hear 14 songs from Crayon without even having to get up to flip a record over.

**Dambuilders *Tough Guy Problem EP*
(spinART) (\$9.00)**

This EP is probably the best way to sample what the Dambuilders are all about. The five songs on this EP show off all of the different sides of the band. From the complex and subtle pop of "Candy Guts" to the loud, manic energy of "Louisiana", there's not a clinker in the bunch.

**Flower *Concrete Sky (1987-1990)*
(simple machines) (\$10.00)**

This is a compilation of the two out-of-print albums from Flower. The Flower lineup included Richard and Ed Balyut (Versus), Andrew Bordwin (Ruby Falls) and Ian James (Cell). The style of these songs isn't really that different than the present day Versus sound, but the songs have a slightly denser feel and Richard's guitar textures weren't quite as developed as they are today. Still, this is more than just a historical document. The songs are

great and deserve to finally be heard by a larger audience.

**Flying Saucer Attack
(VHF) (\$10.00)**

This British band takes the all too stale British shoegazer sound and gives it a major infusion of life and energy. They also prove that you don't need a major label contract and a quarter million dollars to make an amazingly intricate record. This record is loud, dense and complex. You'll need to listen to it many times to even start to figure out what's going on. If you like My Bloody Valentine and want to hear the band taking this sound to the next level, this is the record to start with.

**Flying Saucer Attack *Distance*
(VHF) (\$10.00)**

This CD is a collection of singles and tracks that never quite made it onto anything else. In the liner notes they apologize for the lack of continuity, but it seems to fit together fine to me. This covers all aspects of the FSA sound, from the muddy pop of their out of print "Soaring High" 7" to all out noise and spacey ambient songs. This is an excellent compilation and a good introduction to the Flying Saucer Attack experience.

**Frances Gumm *Cruella*
(VHF/Land Speed) (\$9.00)**

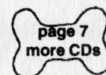
This CD was the best hidden treasure of 1993. I never hear anyone talk about this CD but it easily ranks among the top records of that year. The songs on this CD will bring to mind a range of the bands, from Pavement to Wingtip Sloat to Fugazi, but the influences are blended so fluidly that they've created a sound of their own.

**Green Magnet School *Revisionist EP*
(Sonic Bubblegum) (\$7.00)**

Revisionist is the first post-Sub Pop record from this all male, Boston band. They blend a loud, furious three guitar attack with memorable melodies in a very non-grunge way. This EP contains the first released recordings with their new rhythm section and the result is a straightforward rock album with the melody taking the lead over the noise.

**Heartworms *Space Escapade*
(Darla) (\$10.00)**

Heartworms is a DC based band that features Archie Moore (Velocity Girl) and Chip Porter (Emily's Hip Pocket, Veronica Lake) among its members. The singing duties are split between Archie and Trisha Roy, and songs are split be-



tween sparse, sad songs and fuller, fuzzed-out pop songs. In addition to 8 original songs, Heartworms perform covers of Chris Stein, Brian Wilson and Radiohead (really!) songs.

**Holiday
(March) (\$11.00)**

Holiday is a Connecticut based four piece band that makes no apologies about their love of The Magnetic Fields. There are similarities in their influences and sound but Holiday offers a more youthful and less cynical outlook. As a result they sound fresher and livelier than Magnetic Fields. This is a very good debut CD and is recommended for anyone looking for a good dose of honest, heartfelt classic pop music.

**Lilys
A Brief History of Amazing Letdowns
(spinART) (\$7.00)**

I never know what to expect from the Lilys. After grooving to the post-MBV guitar wash of their first album, I saw a live show that reminded me more of Dinosaur Jr. than MBV. This EP takes a middle ground somewhere between those two extremes. Throughout this six song EP, the pop melodies are accentuated but the guitars still occasionally get cranked up and fuzzed out. This reminds me of a more down to earth version of the Gigolo Aunts or a pre-major label Teenage Fanclub.

**Log *Light Fuse and Get Away*
(Anyway) (\$9.00)**

Log is a four piece band from Columbus, Ohio and this is their first full length release. Log is essentially a pop band, but their songs have an earthy and rootsy midwestern feel. Listening to this CD reminds me of many different bands. Probably the most obvious comparisons would be to The Dream Syndicate, Feelies and maybe even Honeybunch. Log isn't one of the first bands I think of when I think of Columbus, but this CD definitely proves that they deserve some attention.

**Miss Reed *Corn*
(Chunk) (\$10.00)**

This is one of those CDs that I keep telling myself I shouldn't like. There's nothing even remotely indie rock about it. From the first listen, you can tell that band leader, Ray, cut his teeth on classic rock radio. He manages to blend the best aspects of straightahead, hooky rock and roll with a power pop sensibility. Indie rock purists will cringe listening to this, but lovers of rock and roll should enjoy it.

**The Raincoats *Extended Play*
(Smells Like) (\$6.50)**

This 4 song EP contains the first recordings from the new incarnation of The Raincoats (featuring Steve Shelly on drums). These songs were originally recorded for a BBC session and feature 2 brand new songs and new versions of 2 songs that were previously released on the *Oddyshape* and *Moving* LPs.

**The Simple Ones *Worth the Weight*
(Shangri La) (\$10.00)**

The Simple Ones are another band from Memphis, Tennessee. I've listened to this several times now and find that adequately describing it is difficult. The obvious superficial influences are Pavement and Grifters, but stopping there really doesn't do this band justice. I think it's just the dual influences of living in the deep South and listening to indie rock naturally results in a pretty familiar sound. Still, these guys pull the influences together with such emotion and originality that they make the whole thing sound fresh and worthwhile.

**Skullflower *Carved into Roses*
(VHF) (\$10.00)**

Of all the labels I've discovered in the past few years, VHF seems to be developing an identity without giving us a bunch of sound alike bands. Almost all of the recent VHF material (Rake, Flying Saucer Attack) tends toward long, intricate and noisy songs that probably owe more to bands like Can and Neu than to present day indie bands. Skullflower is the most harsh and brutal sounding of the bunch. This album consists of six cuts ranging in length from 7 to 13 minutes. The songs are dense, layered, intricate and frightfully noisy and beautiful at the same time. This music isn't for the faint of heart, but if you are not afraid of noise, you will find this record a rewarding listening experience.

**Sleepyhead *Punk Rock City USA*
(Slumberland) (\$11.00)**

After a couple of great singles, this is the first full-length release from Sleepyhead. This material is produced better than their previous singles but still retains the loose and fun punk rock feel that made those earlier releases so great.

**Small Factory *I Do Not Love You*
(spinART) (\$10.00)**

Small Factory finally give us their debut album and it doesn't disappoint. This self-produced album does a good job of capturing that upbeat enthusiasm that's made them famous

in the indie pop scene while showing off the newer, darker and noisier side of the band.

**Tsunami *The Heart's Tremolo*
(Simple Machines) (\$10.00)**

What a surprise! This album goes far beyond anything Tsunami has done in the past. There's not much upbeat, emotional pop on this release. Instead, Tsunami has taken a laid back and mature approach with tempos that are slower and the guitar interplay that is more complex. It has more of a Slint-type sound than any previous recordings.

**Versus *Dead Leaves*
(Teen Beat) (\$10.00)**

This is the long awaited compilation of all the Versus singles and compilation tracks along with a few cuts that circulated on demo tapes but never reached a larger audience. As always with Versus, every cut is a winner. You can't go wrong with this compilation.

**Versus *Let's Electrify*
(Remora) (\$6.50)**

This was the first non 7" or compilation release from Versus and also the first release on their own label, Remora. As with everything from Versus, this one is essential. The six songs on this EP tend toward the louder side of the band making it a great counterpart to the more quiet full-lengther on Teenbeat.

**Versus *The Stars are Insane*
(Teen Beat) (\$10.00)**

This was the first full length release from Versus and was one that I had a hard time keeping off of my stereo last year. While not as immediately riveting as their early singles, this album showed more depth and stood up better to multiple listens. It's great to hear a band that understands the difference between playing live and making a record. This record trades off some of the sheer power and energy of their live show for a more subtle and complex mix of sounds. Simply said, this is a great record.

**Wingtip Sloat *Chewyfoot*
(VHF) (\$10.00)**

Finally, after a whole slew of 7"s and compilation tracks, Wingtip Sloat give us a full length release. As with everything they've done, it's excellent and unpredictable. Not many bands manage to successfully blend a love for New Zealand pop music with other odder and more obscure sounds. Generally, this LP takes on a cleaner and sparser sound than a lot of the singles, but still it has it's crazier moments. If

you liked the 7"s, you're sure to love this full-length. If you haven't heard the 7"s, this is a great way to get to know Wingtip Sloat.

various artists

A Day In The Park...

(The Now Sound) (\$10.00)

These "superstars of indie rock" compilations seem to be the in thing today and this one does a great job of standing up to the competition. It contains 16 bands including The Dambuilders, Archers of Loaf, Versus, Grifters, Crayon, Nothing Painted Blue, Spent, Portastatic and Blaise Pascal. What else do I really need to say? Those names tell you all you need to know. Good collection!

Does It Float?

(Trinder) (\$16.00)

Trinder is a new label out of New Zealand that seems to be stepping into the void created by the loss of the Xpressway label. On this, their first release, we get 19 bands who cover the whole gamut of the non-pop side of the New Zealand music scene. Running down the list of bands you'll only see a few familiar names (Alastair Galbraith, Sandra Bell, Trash), but by digging a little deeper into the credits, you find familiar names such as Stephen Kilroy, King Loser and Peter Jefferies making appearances with some of the newer bands. Like any compilation of this length, you're not likely to love every track, but if you're into the Xpressway sound, you'll probably find a lot to like about this CD.

Follow the Bouncing Ball

(Ba Da Bing!) (\$10.00)

The first thing I noticed about this CD-only compilation is the great cover illustration. Then I noticed 15 songs, including work by Spatula, Spent, Receptionists, Holiday Flyer, Jessamine, Poem Rocket, Hem, Babytooth and Bardo Pond. But that's not even the best part. Once I listened to it, I realized that this the best compilation of pop music this side of New Zealand. The songs are strong and really do evoke a New Zealand feel even though all of the bands seem to be from the U.S. This is a compilation that gets better with repeated listens.

Gots No Station Volume 2

(WGNS) (\$10.00)

This is an 11 band compilation of songs recorded at the WGNS studios in DC. It includes exclusive tracks from Las Mordidas, Eggs, Jawbox, Pitchblende, Helium (with Joan Wasser), Severin, Sweetie, Edsel, Norman

Mayer Group, Tsunami and 9353. Most of the bands supplied top notch tracks, making this a pretty good sampler of what's happening in DC these days.

Hotel Massachusetts

(Chunk) (\$10.00)

Over the past few years, Western Massachusetts has been building a unique and interesting music scene. Material from these bands has been popping up here and there, but now we have a single CD sampler showing most of what's happening. This CD includes great songs by some of the bigger name acts like Sebadoh, New Radiant Storm King, Fuzzy, The Lyres and Silver Jews. In addition, it offers a chance to discover up and coming bands like Zeke Fiddler, Home, Tizzy and Queer. Stylistically, it's all over the map, so I doubt anyone will like everything, but I also think you'll find more than a couple new bands that you'll want to explore.

Little Darla Has A Treat For You

(Darla) (\$6.00)

This is a limited edition sampler CD of some of the bands distributed by Darla records. There are 17 songs in all. It's a mix of some exclusive tracks and some which are out elsewhere. Cuts from Cub, Bunnygrunt, Hot Monkey, sugar plant, Vehical Flips, and Tully Craft are highlights. All in all, this is a top-notch sampler and a great way to hear several new bands of different genres.

The Long Secret

(Harriet) (\$9.00)

As part of a celebration of five years putting out records, Tim Alborn put together this collection of 17 songs from bands who have previously recorded for Harriet along with tracks from other bands he admires. Included here are cuts from Vehicle Flips (ex Wimp factor 14), Twig, The Ambersands, The Mountain Goats, Six Cents and Natalie (Crayon side project), Pest 5000, The Cat's Miaow, Fertile Virgin (pre-Twig band), Lotus Eaters, High Risk Group, The Magnetic Fields. As always with a Harriet release, all of the bands have a homespun and heartfelt approach to their music. This is a must for current fans of Harriet, and if you're not already, this is a good way to see what you've been missing out on.

The Machines

(Simple Machines) (\$10.00)

This is a 24 song compilation of the cuts from the six out-of-print machines 7"s put out by Simple Machines over the past couple of years. This compilation contains cuts from Bricks,

Jawbox, Velocity Girl, Scrawl, Autoclave, Tsunami, Superchunk, Rodan, Unrest and a bunch more.

Something Pretty Beautiful

(Brilliant) (\$10.00)

David from Brilliant Records has a knack for discovering new and interesting bands. This compilation gave him a chance to showcase lesser known bands like The Waking Hours, Schwa and Ultra Cindy while giving us good new cuts from bands like Small Factory, Fudge, The Technical Jed, Veronica Lake, Lorelei and Jane Pow. It contains 19 cuts in all.

Sunny Sunday Smile

(Sunday) (\$10.00)

Sunday Records is the American equivalent of Sarah Records in every way. From the style of music to the artwork, it's obvious Sunday has patterned itself after Sarah. This CD sampler of Sunday artists includes The Rosaries, The Proctors, Bulldozer Crash, PO!, The Pristines, Confetti, Slumber, Mrs. Kipling, They Go Boom!!, Sundress, Dolores Haze and The Cudgels. This compilation is put together nicely and is a great sampler of what Sunday has to offer. This is a must for fans of this sort of pretty, low key music.

Ten Cent Fix

(Jiffy Boy) (\$10.00)

Yet another new American indie pop compilation CD from this brand new, New Jersey label. In addition to cuts from a few well known bands like Grifters and Lilys, this CD brings us songs from less well-known bands like The Barnabys, Poole and All about Chad and debut releases from several total unknowns. This compilation does a good job of covering the whole range of American indie rock with a slight tendency toward the more "twee rock" sound.



Blaise Pascal Foreword

(Cave Canem) (\$7.00)

See description in CD section.

Boyracer More Songs About

Frustration and Self-Hate

(A Turntable Friend) (\$8.00)

Listening to their previous 7" on Slumberland didn't at all prepare me for how great this would be. Imagine a band that can combine the pop sensibility of the best Wedding Present songs with the all out recklessness of the early Pavement material. This description doesn't do this record justice and makes it sound less original than it really is. This album hits every possible aspect of the Boyracer sound, from solo guitar/voice to punk rock to lo-fi indie excursions. There are 16 songs in all, so you shouldn't go away disappointed.

Bunnygrunt Action Pants

(No Life) (\$10.00)

See description in CD section.

Guided by Voices

Crying Your Knife Away

(Lo-fi Recordings) (\$15.00)

This is an authorized double LP bootleg, recorded at Staches in Columbus, Ohio. It's limited to 2000 copies (vinyl only). The sound quality is great and the performance in vintage Guided by Voices: drunk but energetic and musically right on target. This captures everything I like about the band and unlike most live records, it holds up very well to repeated listens.

Heartworms Space Escapade

(Darla) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

New Bomb Turks Live on VPRO

(Anyway) (\$6.00)

This five song 45 RPM 12" contains songs recorded a couple of years ago on a live radio broadcast in Holland. If you know the New Bomb Turks, you know exactly what to expect.

It's loud, it's punk and it's a whole lot of fun. NBT is still at the top of the heap of punk rock bands and this release does nothing to sway me in a different direction.

Rake Rake Is My Co-pilot

(VHF) (\$8.00)

This album can be a challenge to listen to, but it's worth the trouble. Rather than being a simple collection of songs, this album works more as some sort of long soundscape. The band took a lot of noisy guitar recordings and spliced them into two twenty minute songs. This record isn't for everyone, but if your tastes run toward Flying Saucer Attack, Labradford and the noisier Stereolab material, this might be for you.

Razorblade Smile

Fastest Wide-eyed Implement

(Sugarfrost) (\$10.00)

I find this record very hard to describe. This is definitely a loud, melodic guitar record, but beyond that, there are so many twists and turns, it defies categorization. On side one, Razorblade Smile create a unique blend of Wedding Present style melodic pop, tasteful riff rock and straight ahead punk rock, all linked together with an occasional and unexpected time change. On side two, they give a more typical British performance, with the guitars toned down and fuzzed, and the melodies turned up. Through all this variation, they manage to stay coherent sounding and interesting.

small factory I Do Not Love You

(spinART) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

Tsunami The Heart's Tremolo

(Simple Machines) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

White Come Come

The Broken Bird EP

(Sugarfrost) (\$10.00)

A four song EP from a Japanese band that seems very influenced by recent British trends. These 4 songs are all very different, so it's very difficult to pin one sound down on this band. Some songs are in the dense, guitar driven MBV vein, while others take the same sound and push it in an American rock direction, a la Medicine. Still others lean towards a catchier pop sound in a Wedding Present or Unrest way.

Wingtip Sloat Chewyfoot

(VHF) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

various artists

A Day In The Park...

(The Now Sound) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

The Birth of True

(Sugarfrost) (\$12.00)

The British label Sugarfrost is one of my favorite new discoveries of the last few years. This vinyl-only sampler is a good way to get your feet wet with the Sugarfrost blend of British and Japanese Pop. This album contains cuts from Nelories, Pure, Secret Shine, B-Flower, Penelopes, Razorblade Smile, White, and White Come Come. Most of the songs tend towards the brooding British pop sound or upbeat happy love rock. *The Birth of True* should appeal to fans of both Sarah-type music and the American indie pop crowd.

Calling at Duke Street

(A Turntable Friend) (\$8.00)

This 15 song, vinyl-only, compilation was put together as a protest against the neo-fascist resurgence in Germany. In addition to being for a good cause, this record offers listeners a chance to sample a bunch of European bands for a small price. Included here are Rolf and Cindy Band, The Orchids, Lorelei, Red Letter Day, Eva Luna, Beatnik Filmstars, Going Public, Antiseptic Beauty, Eggplant, Boyracer (with Even as We Speak), Hellfire Sermons, The Seashells, The Bartlebees, Hula Hoop and The Pristines. Anyone who is fans of the music on labels like Sarah, Sunday, Slumberland and Sugarfrost will probably find a lot to like on this compilation.

Caterpillar / Zen Gorilla LP

(Deadbeat) (\$7.00)

This a split 12" from these two Pennsylvania based bands. Caterpillar follow up their full-length on Compulsiv with 6 new songs. I have a really hard time describing Caterpillar's music. The adjectives "post-punk" and "angular" seem appropriate, but limiting, as these songs are all over the place stylistically. Caterpillar have a knack for making music that's complex and melodic. Often I get a real psychedelic feel from these songs and other times they take on a progressive feel (but never overbearingly so). This is a record that sinks in more with each listen. This was my first exposure to Zen Gorilla and their sound surprised me. The songs here range from a low key take on Butthole Surfers style psychedelia to a straight ahead and raunchy blues sound. Zen

Gorilla are an interesting band but are definitely not for the faint of heart. The record comes packaged in an impressive, multi-color, hand screened sleeve and is pressed on beautiful thick vinyl that just feels good to hold.



Gots No Station Volume 2
(WGNS) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.



Move Into Villa Villakula
(Villa Villakula) (\$7.00)

This record is the third release from Villa Villakula and is available only on vinyl. Villa Villakula is a relatively new label focusing on music performed by women. This compilation features two tracks each from Sleater Kinney, Kaia, Eileen Myles, Tattle Tale, Ruby Falls and Azalia Snail. The songs range from the quieter, acoustic music of Kaia and Tattle Tale to the more rockin' Ruby Falls tracks to the spoken word material from Eileen Myles. All in all, this is a very successful compilation, plus, the artwork is amazing. A limited amount of the covers are hand screened on metallic silver paper. We have a few of these left, and when they run out we will be shipping the offset printed versions.



Autoclave 10"
(Dischord) (\$6.50)

Autoclave receives more attention now than when it existed, thanks to the current projects of bandmembers Christina Billotte (Slant 6) and Mary Timony (Helium). Although you can hear bits and pieces of the sounds of these follow-on bands here, Autoclave really had a sound of its own. They created quirky, angular guitar sounds with some DC punk edge. This EP was out of print for a long time and is still available only on vinyl.



Buddha on the Moon Translucence EP
(Farrago) (\$7.00)

Without a doubt, this is my favorite new release in this catalog. Buddha on the Moon creates a delicate, fragile and melancholy blend of music that often brings to mind The Red House Painters. This 4 song EP shows an amazing amount of growth from their initial single release. Also included on this EP is a brilliant cover of The Magnetic Fields "100,000 Fireflies." One listen to this version and you'll forget forever how badly Superchunk butchered that song a few years back.



Curious Ritual Poles
(Gila) (\$6.00)

This Boston band's first non 7" release is a real surprise. Previously, Curious Ritual sounded a lot like the Cocteau Twins, with of processed guitars and very over the top operatic vocals. While those ethereal influences still pop out occasionally, this 6 song record heads in more of an indiepop direction. Recommended for those who enjoy both the artsier British sounds and a straightforward, East Coast pop sound.



The Dambuilders Tough Guy Problem
(spinART) (\$6.50)

See description in CD section.



Grifters Eureka
(Shangri La) (\$7.00)

This latest 7 song EP from Grifters is probably the most conventional thing they've ever done. The songs are generally straightforward, with

few unexpected twists and turns. Normally this would be a negative thing, but here, I think it's a big plus. Keeping things a little more conventional showcases the incredible talent these guys have for songwriting and arranging. Grifters have a way of making amazingly complex and intricate music and here they've done it all on a 4-track machine. It's impossible to compare them to any other band. They are going in their own direction and I don't think there's anyone who approaches what they are doing.



Hot Monkey Lazy
(Shangri-La) (\$7.00)

Hot Monkey is a solo project from Scott of Grifters. The original Hot Monkey stuff was old 4-track material from the mid-80's. These seven songs are brand new material and are very different than what I expected. *Lazy* is not very lo-fi or sonically-fucked up. In fact, it's full of downright catchy pop songs and simple, thoughtful solo guitar and vocal material. I imagine this EP gives us an idea of what a Grifters song sounds like, when originally written, before it gets "Grifterized" by the entire band. There isn't a throwaway on the entire record.



Kudgel Sea Monkee
(100% Breakfast) (\$6.50)

Sea Monkee is a new seven song EP from Boston's dethroned kings of Lard Rock. Here we get a larger dose of Kudgel's blend of pop melodies lurking under a layer of Touch and Go style guitar madness. Plus hand screened jacket designed by P Shaw is simply the best piece of music packaging I've seen in a long time.



Lilys
A Brief History of Amazing Letdowns
(spinART) (\$5.00)

See description in CD section.



Moviola Frantic
(Anyway) (\$7.00)

After a couple of great singles, Moviola gives us a new ten song 10" record. Moviola draws from the usual indie rock bag of tricks. The big difference between Moviola and a lot of the blatant "indie rock by numbers" bands is the way they blend their midwestern roots with their indie rock influences. On this EP, the songs are generally slow tempo with occasional loud bursts of energy, not unlike some of Wingtip Sloat's material. So, you can add Moviola to your list of great bands from Columbus, Ohio.

Nerdy Girl
(No Life) (\$6.00)

Nerdy Girl is from Montreal. Although they are now a full band, these recordings were made when they were a two piece (with no rhythm section). This six song EP is very minimalist with just two quiet guitars and Cecil's odd but endearing vocals filling out the whole record. The songs are very personal but also kind of light and whimsical at the same time.



The Raincoats Extended Play
(Smells Like) (\$6.00)

See description in CD section.



Action Slacks "Tugboat Mutiny" +2 (Per-ma-nent) (\$3.50)

A couple of the members of this new band used to be in the San Francisco band Pillbox. Action Slacks is more blatantly power pop, but in a good non-kitschy way. They take the energy of Superchunk, the knack for pop hooks of Cheap Trick and just enough quirky New Zealand type weirdness to keep things interesting. This is good pop that jumps out at you, but not in any obviously derivative way.

Alkaline "Soon" (Remora) (\$3.50)

Alkaline is a New York City band who remind me quite a bit of Versus. This isn't too surprising, since one of the members is Connie Lovatt (who plays with Fontaine Troups, of Versus, in the band Containe). The A-side, "Soon," slowly builds from a laid back Lovechild sound to a more intense ending while "She Speaks" captures a Versus-like dynamic, with sparse guitars periodically giving way to a louder, distorted sound. Unfortunately, Alkaline have already broken up, so this will probably be the last we ever hear from them.

Analogue "Average Luck Charm" (Sonic Bubblegum) (\$3.50)

Analogue is a North Carolina band that is successfully exploring the Codeine/Slint corner of the music world. "Average Luck Charm" is an epic, with a long moody intro that nicely segues into a rocking but still subtle ending. The B-side, "Christmas" takes a similar approach, but ends up sounding more immediate and less brooding. These guys certainly don't break any new ground here, but they manage to draw from several genres I like without sounding dull and derivative. The single comes packaged in a nice die cut sleeve as well.

Apples in Stereo Hypnotic Suggestion EP (Bus Stop) (\$3.50)

You probably know Apples in Stereo from its recent full-lengther on spinART. This is an earlier 4 song EP that is every bit as good as the spinART record. Apples in Stereo is a great

pop band. They have a knack for writing amazing melodies and a real sense of how to record pop music. Imagine a band trying to record *Pet Sounds* or *Submarine Bells* on a 4 track. That's what Apples in Stereo do, and they do it very successfully. Even with limited recording technology, they manage to make intelligent music that sounds as lush and as big as music recorded on 16 tracks.

Archers of Loaf The Results After the Loaf's Revenge (Merge) (\$3.50)

This single features two new tracks exclusive to this 7". Don't expect any surprises here. These tracks are vintage Archers: poppy punk with enough rough edges, twists and turns to keep it interesting. Both songs are very strong and won't disappoint any fans of the band.

Atomic Fireball "Youki" double 7" (Super 8) (\$6.50)

Atomic Fireball is an explosive, all male, three piece punk rock band from Japan. They've made brief trips to the U.S. twice within the last year. Each time they played, they left a whole roomful of unsuspecting people smiling with amazement. Atomic Fireball creates a blend of noisy prog/punk rock that strikes me as a cross between The New Bomb Turks and The Boredoms. These four songs were recorded last summer on their first trip to the U.S. and really show off their sound.

Aurora Paralysis "The Messenger" (Brilliant) (\$3.50)

Aurora Paralysis is a Richmond band that blends the best aspects of British bliss-pop and American indie-pop. "The Messenger" is a slow, brooding, but hauntingly beautiful song with slightly buried female vocals. The B-side "Bubble Song" is more pop-oriented and uplifting, but still has that beautiful dreamy, haunting quality.

B. Flower "Strings" (Sugarfrost) (\$4.25)

This is just about the prettiest song I've heard this year. B. Flower is from Japan and goes against the tide by actually singing in their native language. "Strings" is one of those songs that would probably make you cry, if you could understand the lyrics. It's a simple, haunting song with clean sparse electric guitar, backed by nice string arrangements. The B-side "Country Robinson" is a total change of pace with its upbeat pop sound and female vocals blended with, what sounds like a banjo. It all sounds very different from what I'd expect from a Japanese band, but I think that's a

big part of why I like it so much. This is probably my favorite release on Sugarfrost so far.

The Bats Live at WFMU (Merge) (\$3.50)

This 7" features four songs recorded live at WFMU radio in New Jersey during the summer of 1993. Included here are "Sighting the Sound", "Block of Wood", "Streets of Baltimore" and "North by North." As is typical of these live in the studio recordings, the songs are presented in a stripped down, acoustic fashion and the recording quality is great.

Belt Buckle 4 Song EP (Sonic Bubblegum) (\$3.50)

This is yet another project from Sebadoh's Lou Barlow. This 4 song EP also features former Deluxx and current Sebadoh drummer Bob Fay. At the time it was recorded, this was probably the cleanest production we'd heard on a Lou project, but the performances and the songs are more twisted than Lou's recent Sebadoh material.

Belreve "Ron" (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

Belreve did the impossible and outperformed Guided by Voices on their recent split 7", so I was anxious to see what else they had in them. This follow up 7" isn't quite as amazing as the split, but is still a really good single. Belreve doesn't tread any new ground on this 7". The distorted but lo-fi guitars instantly bring to mind a bunch of prominent indie bands. The difference between this and of lessor singles is that Belreve write great songs that would stand up under any recording conditions. Slumberland has a knack for putting out great pop songs and this single is no exception.

Betty Please "Song For Evelyn Hamburger" (100% Breakfast) (\$3.50)

A very promising debut 7" from a new Boston band. The A-side of this single will immediately bring to mind the ballady stuff from *Slanted and Enchanted*. Unlike other bands who are no more than Pavement wannabees, Betty Please put enough charm, feeling and real song writing skill into their music to convince you they mean it.

Betty Please For Sport and Healthy 4 song EP (100% Breakfast) (\$3.50)

Of the new batch of Boston area bands, Betty Please is one of my favorites. If this single is any example of the direction they're headed

in, I want to follow! They have taken a step away from the obvious Pavement influence of the first record and are busy pounding out their own blend of angular, non-wimpy guitar pop. There's nothing incredibly original about what this band is doing, but it stands head and shoulders above most of the 7"s I hear these days.

Bite Canker EP (Derivative) (\$3.50)

Bite are another all female Canadian band, but you won't confuse them with Jale. The mood is dark and dreary, they aren't afraid to cut lose with the feedback at times and the lyrics tend toward serious feminist themes. Bite isn't like your typical Riot Grrrr! band as the melodies are always at the forefront and nothing is particularly heavy-handed. This combines my favorite aspects of the darker sounding Tsunami songs and the Kaia (ex-Adickdid) solo record.

Bite Funbuns (Derivative) (\$3.50)

This is the final Bite single (they have recently called it quits as a band) and it's totally different than the previous release. These two songs are melodic and have none of the harsh edges of the *Canker* EP. The A-side is slow and introspective, with an alluring bassline that holds the song together. The B-side is a more typical upbeat pop song. Both are top-notch and I highly recommend this single.

Blanket "Ocean" (Cher Doll) (\$3.50)

"Ocean" is a surprising new release from a band I previously knew nothing about. The A-side is a feedback filled riff-oriented anthem that sounds like a song that The Dream Syndicate never got around to recording. The B-side is a laid back dreamy song that owes some debt to both Galaxie 500 and R.E.M.

Bob Evans "Getting Off" (Scissor Lady) (\$3.50)

Bob Evans is a Boston band with a bunch of releases on Skenel Records. They blend punk rock volume and enthusiasm with a Midwestern core. Before recording their second Skenel release *Drought*, they went into the studio and did some live two track demos. These demos were talked about all over Boston, but few people ever heard them. This single takes one of those demos along with a recent home recorded demo. If you like early Buffalo Tom,

but think they've lost some of their energy and passion, check out Bob Evans.

Bomb Pops "Girl Daredevil" (A Turntable Friend) (\$3.50)

On this 7", Minnesota's Bomb Pops up the tempo without losing the fragile beauty of the "Paler" 7". "Girl Daredevil" combines bright guitar sounds and melancholy vocals in a very alluring way while "Riverside" is a slow and introspective song.

Bomb Pops "Paler" (Audrey's Diary) (\$3.50)

This is a must-have for fans of Felt. Bomb Pops makes a brand of music that is very uncommon these days. Their music is slow, sparse and moody with classically influenced guitar leads and a British feel. The A-side uses this sound to produce a hook-oriented pop song, while the B-side contains two beautifully textured acoustic/electric guitar instrumentals.

Boyracer AUL 36X EP (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

This new British band gives us six songs containing the most punk rock stuff to come out on Slumberland yet. This band reminds me a bit of early Sleepyhead because they take catchy pop songs and perform them in a raw and sloppy manner. Most of these songs are driven by a melodic, distorted basslines with the guitars providing loud bursts of energy, general feedback and dissonance.

Franklin Bruno The Irony Engine (Walt) (\$3.50)

Nothing Painted Blue's front-man provides four new examples of his always intelligently written and well-arranged pop songs. His songs tend to be simple, acoustic guitar and keyboard based songs, with occasional odd musical twists. Franklin Bruno songs stand up well to repeated listening because his lyrics prove that pop music doesn't necessarily imply simple minded songwriting. Franklin Bruno ranks right up with Stephin Merritt (Magnetic Fields) in the songwriting department.

Bunnygrunt Family Album EP (March) (\$3.50)

This record is another 7" from the band claimed to be the cutest band in the world. The A-side, "Inanimate Objects" is similar to their earlier material. It comes across as a syrupy sweet, ultra-pop version of Tiger Trap. The flipside, "Fish of Life" heads in a totally different direction. With feedback and choppy

male vocals, it comes across as kind of a love rock version of The Fall. The single comes on orange vinyl and is packaged in a cute sleeve printed on notebook paper.

Bunnygrunt Standing Hampton EP (No Life) (\$3.50)

You might remember No Life as the label that gave us that great benefit record for WMBR a while back. *Standing Hampton* is their first release since then and boy is it cute! Bunnygrunt, who are from St. Louis obviously love the stuff on K Records. Try to imagine a cross between Tiger Trap and Jonathan Richman and... well you get the idea. If you're looking for loud, aggressive rock, this probably won't do the trick, but if you would rather hear Cub than Helmet, this may be right up your alley.

Caterpillar "Swim Away" (Deadbeat) (\$3.50)

Caterpillar is a Philadelphia based band with several releases on the Compulsiv label. This single is a DIY affair that they are distributing themselves. Caterpillar creates memorable pop songs and makes good use of sometimes odd and unpredictable tempo changes. The three songs here cover a lot of ground, from straightahead pop songs to a prog rock instrumental. These are the sort of songs that take a few listens to sink in, but you'll find yourself hearing more each time.

Citizens Utilities "King County Derelictics" (Shangri-La) (\$3.50)

Citizens Utilities are the latest discovery of Shangri-La Records. It's probably the most polished Shangri-La release to date and, as is always the case with their releases, it's got a real Southern feel to it (even though the band is from Seattle). The A-side starts off kind of laid back with a pretty guitar pattern repeating for a while before blending with aggressive rock guitar for the remainder of the song. The B-side "Sauk" uses a repetitive, twangy riff with occasional wafts of feedback. When I listen to this single it gives me a nice relaxed feeling and I can't help but think that this is what that awful California "country-rock" from the 70's should have sounded like. This is another of those singles that holds up to repeated listens.

Dearly "Only Between's" (Grimsey) (\$3.50)

With only two releases out, Grimsey Records is making quite an impression on me. Once again the packaging is superb and the music

is even better. This band has an early 80's British feel, from the slow, melodic guitar and subtle organ sound to the emotional and melancholy vocals. Based on this single, I can't wait for future releases by both this band and the label. If you're a fan of Felt or early Postcard and Cherry Red releases, this is a must-have single. It's definitely one of my favorite singles for 1995 so far.



The Dentists *Speak No Evil EP* (Bus Stop) (\$3.50)

Over a year ago, Bus Stop released this Dentists single as part of the *See No Evil, Hear No Evil, Speak No Evil 7"* trilogy. This single contains two new songs and a poem. The songs lean towards the slower, moodier side of the Dentists repertoire. The music they are making here definitely owes a debt to the sensitive pop made popular a few years back by bands like The Smiths. It's good to see at least one band who can draw from this sound without sounding like an imitator or a parody.



Detour 5 Song EP (Snowcastle) (\$3.50)

Detour is a band from Oxford, Ohio and within seconds of dropping the needle into the grooves of this 7", I was happy. Detour remind me of what Crayon would have sounded like if they were forced to play quietly because of cranky, pain-in-the-ass next door neighbors. The songs ooze with the kind of innocence and charm that I feel from my favorite releases on Harriet. This is a really nice debut single!



Dirt Merchants *"Purple Barrel"* (V-HOLD) (\$3.50)

This is the second single from this Boston based four piece. Their blend of straightahead pop hooks and guitar dissonance owes as much to Th Faith Healers as it does to Sonic Youth. Between their debut single and this one, The Dirt Merchants have successfully merged their influences into their own unique and interesting sound. This is a band worth watching out for as their music gets stronger with each new recording.



The Earthmen *"Cool Chick #59"* (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

The Earthmen are from Australia and now have records available on the Seed label. "Cool Chick #59" is one of those amazing pop songs that's just about perfect in every way. This band treads the same ground as Velvet Crush does. They write songs with pop hooks that stick

in your head forever, but aren't afraid to show their love for American rock music. I guess this description could apply to a lot of bands, but very few can successfully combine influences like Badfinger and Crazy Horse and sound distinctly fresh and original.



Doug Easley *"Pildecide"* (Shangri La) (\$3.50)

Doug Easley is the man behind Easley Studios, the studio that brought us many of those great recordings from Grifters. I think this is his first record release. This record sums up what is good about the music coming from the American South today. It's dark and raw sounding and has a rough emotional feel that is lacking in so much of today's indie rock. This is a definite must for anyone into the Grifters sound, but it's by no means a Grifters clone. Hearing this single only makes me hope that the promised full-length release will show up sooner than expected.



East River Pipe *"Bring On The Loser"* (Merge) (\$3.50)

I'm almost ashamed to admit that I'm just discovering the beauty of East River Pipe. East River Pipe is really just one man, F. M. Cornog and his 8 track. Unlike many home recordings these days, there's nothing lo-fi about this stuff. Instead, East River Pipe makes timeless pop music that brings to mind the Postcard Records sound, but with a distinctive American twist. As song writers go, F. M. Cornog ranks right up there with Franklin Bruno and Stephen Merritt. This EP consists of one song from the Merge album and two unreleased tracks.



Eggplant *"Girl Wants a Dinosaur"* (Bus Stop) (\$3.50)

This is single number two from England's Eggplant. Like their first single (below), it's a pretty simple thing; three songs, all less than 2 minutes and all incredibly catchy. I can't help thinking of Tiger Trap when listening to Eggplant.



Eggplant *Sweet Anarchy EP* (Bus Stop) (\$3.50)

This is the debut single from this London pop trio. Imagine crossing the pop sound and vocals of a band like Heavenly with the crunchier guitar sound of the Shop Assistants or The Fastbacks. Look for a future release on Pop Narcotic in the next few months.



Emperor Julian *"Disco Gene"* (Piao!) (\$4.25)

Piao! is a new British label run by the person

who did Chocolate Narcotic and this is the label's first release. This 7" falls somewhere in-between the current crop of raw sounding U.S. Post-Pavement bands and the parallel crop of British bands claiming to be the new wave of new wave. Thankfully, this band pulls off all aspects of these sounds pretty well, avoiding the easy trap of sounding like either a third rate Pavement or something dreadful like S.M.A.S.H. Listening to this brings to mind bands like Wire and Pavement without sounding quite like either one.



Envelope *"Lie Detector"* (Land Speed) (\$3.50)

This is the second single from Gerard Cosloy's NYC rock combo. Envelope's influences seem to be The Fall, Unrest and a whole range of New Zealand pop sounds. This is all blended together to create something that's not exactly original, but is at times very hook-filled and catchy. "Lie Detector" has a solid hook but never seems to gel into a coherent song. The B-side is my favorite on this one. With it's straightahead pop sound and subdued vocals, it comes across as an Americanized version of a Flying Nun band.



Eric's Trip *"Warm Girl"* (Derivative) (\$3.50)

Eric's Trip is another one of those Canadian bands that Sub Pop recently snagged. This band manages to remind me simultaneously of Swirlies and Sebadoh without sounding derivative at all. This single contains 5 songs all recorded on 4 track. Now that Sebadoh have moved up to bigger production, there's no better place to go for lo-fi pop music.



Eva Luna *"Kick Out"* (A Turntable Friend) (\$3.50)

"Kick Out" is a pretty major change of direction for Eva Luna. Following the quieter sounds of the previous two singles, I was expecting more of the same. Instead, this time, they head in a relatively ordinary pop direction. The B-side, "She Shines", has a slightly more subdued sound, but still this single has a much more forceful pop sound than I've come to expect from this band.



Eva Luna *"Loverstay"* (Sugarfrost) (\$4.25)

Both Eva Luna and the Sugarfrost label continue to impress me with each release. "Loverstay" is the most introspective and quiet of the Eva Luna songs that I've heard. It's a beautiful, folky ballad with simple and tasteful string backing and an occasional bit of piano. The two B-sides continue in the low key

direction but are more filled out and upbeat. This single makes a great companion of the B. Flower single on the same label. Both combine nice packaging (featuring a booklet integrated into the 7" sleeve) and great music.



Eva Luna *"Tangle"* (sugarfrost) (\$4.25)

On this single Eva Luna show off their brand of low key, sensitive pop. "Tangle" sound like what I imagine early Aztec Camera material would have sounded like if they recorded for Sarah. The B-side is more immediately memorable in a pop sense but still has a fragile and very human quality to it.



Zeke Fiddler *Half Baked/Half Inflated EP* (chunk) (\$3.50)

Zeke Fiddler is one of the best of the up-and-coming crop of Northampton bands. This single makes a nice companion to his full-lengther on spinART. Zeke's melodies immediately bring to mind the songwriting style of J. Mascis, but the delivery is totally different. Zeke isn't afraid to turn down the volume and let his songs stand out front. The net effect is songs that sound raw and exposed yet confident and powerful at the same time. This is a single I keep coming back to listen to over and over.



Glo-Worm 6 song EP (Somersault) (\$3.50)

Glo-Worm is a recent project from Pam Berry. You probably remember Pam from her days in Black Tambourine and her current position as co-editor of the cool *Chickfactor* fanzine. In addition to the four nice originals, there are two great covers: Velocity Girl's "Crazy Town" and Petula Clark's "Downtown."



Glo-worm *"Wishing Well"* (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

This is single number two from Washington, DC's Glo-worm and I like this one even better than the debut. As with the previous single, the songs are very simple with only guitars, stripped down drums and vocals from Pam Berry. The songs are heartfelt and have a charm missing in so much of today's indie pop. As with the last single, there's an odd cover included; this time it's a Bobby Darin song.

Greenhorn *"Through The Thick of It"* (Anyway) (\$3.50)

Greenhorn returns with two new samples of their distinctively Midwestern, rootsy American rock. Greenhorn is equally at home with loud, punk rock influenced songs, as well as low-key sensitive songs. These two songs tend toward the low-key side of things, with the loud guitars turned down a bit and the vocals pushed a little higher than normal. That's fine with me, as Dan Spurgeon has one of the best voices in rock today.



Grifters *"Bronze Cast"* (Shangri-La) (\$3.50)

This is about the 45th Grifters song to come out this year and still they have yet to run out of ideas. This one takes a low key approach and has a much fairly straightforward groove. At first listen I didn't find these nearly as satisfying as some other Grifters songs, but quickly I realized that the unique Grifters sound was there, just in a different way. I can't imagine any Grifters fan not enjoying this one.



Grifters *"Corolla Hoist"* (Shangri-La) (\$3.50)

I guess I shouldn't be surprised by direction changes from Grifters. This one heads in a sparse Pavement-like direction but still retains what makes them so great; they never forget how to craft a good song.



Grifters *"Holmes"* (Darla) (\$3.50)

This new West Coast label picked a hell of a release to start with. This is my favorite of the recent batch of Grifters releases. It's more of their unique blend of fucked up blues and good old punk rock. This one brings back that "on the edge of catastrophe" feel that made "Soda Pop" a favorite of mine several years ago.



Grifters *"Soda Pop"* (Shangri-La) (\$3.50)

Grifters once again proves that catchy hooks and noisier elements can peacefully coexist. These songs tend to grab you with the melody, then amble off into sludgier noise. Just as the hook starts to snap out of your head, they bring it back from the brink.



Grifters *"Stream"* (Derivative) (\$3.50)

Yet another Grifters single and yet another big winner. The A-side, "Stream" is probably the most conventional pop song the Grifters have ever produced. Still, it has all of those elements that remind you that it's a Grifters' song. The

B-side is darker, slower and noisier and sounds like what I've come to expect from the band. Both of these songs fit in well with the material on the *Eureka 10"*.



Hem *"Be Completely Full Of..."* +2 (Fantastic) (\$3.50)

This is the second release on this new Michigan based pop label. Although it doesn't say so anywhere on the sleeve, I think Hem is an English band. On the two songs on the A-side, Hem does a slow, moody, and fairly minimalist pop thing with nice female vocals leading the way. The B-side goes off into weird "space rock" territory and kind of ends up halfway between Labradford and the new Flying Saucer Attack LP. This is a nice release from a promising new label.



Hot Monkey *"Shark"* (Shangri La) (\$3.50)

This Hot Monkey 7" is solo material recorded a few years back by Scott from the Grifters. The raw spray painted sleeve gives you a good indication of what's inside. Hot Monkey is an outlet for unpolished, early takes on songs that sometimes end up in Grifters live sets and albums. Although these songs are a lot more minimal and unproduced than Grifters songs, they have that distinctive feel of being totally haphazard, yet well arranged. It's especially interesting to hear the early version of "Shark" after having heard the song as it appears on Grifters' *One Sock Missing LP*.



Incinerator *"Spin U Round"* (Breather) (\$3.50)

This 7" is the first release from this Boston band. Incinerator is a three piece with distorted guitars, catchy melodies and pretty female vocals. It's hard to describe them without making it sound like pretty-basic-everyday-indie-rock. Still somehow, they manage to stand out from the crowd with their solid songwriting and interesting basslines. Overall, the melodies bring to mind Fuzzy or Bettie Serveert, but the tempos tend toward the slower, Helium end of the spectrum.



Jale *"Emma"* (Derivative) (\$3.50)

Jale is a four-piece band from Halifax, Nova Scotia. They released this single before signing to Sub Pop. It contains a different version of one song from their debut LP and one exclusive song. There are a lot of bands doing upbeat guitar pop with female vocals, but I think Jale does it better than anyone around today. The guitars are simple but have a rough edge and the vocal harmonies are beautiful.

This band picks up where Slumberland-era Velocity Girl left off, but with an earthy, personal feel.



Karate "Death Kit" (The Self-Starter Foundation) (\$3.50)

Karate, an all male three piece, is one of the few bands in Boston that is making interesting music and making it with integrity. "Death Kit" is their first release and it certainly lives up to the promise of their amazing live shows. This single immediately brings to mind Codeine circa *Frigid Stars*. The music has the same sparseness, dynamics and intensity and even more of a sense of melody (as well as pretty male vocals). Karate is a band to watch for and this is a great first exposure.



Kendokwan "Meteor Crater" (Harmless) (\$3.50)

Records like this remind me just how far the indie rock thing has come in the past few years. A few years ago I saw Versus for the first time early in the morning as the first band in an all day rock festival. Now, in 1995, there are bands who obviously grew up and learned to play by listening to Versus. Kendokwan is to Versus as Holiday is to The Magnetic Fields. Their songs sound almost exactly like Versus, from the melodies to the tempos to the mix of male and female vocals. Still they manage to come across as reverent fans rather than pale imitators. Kendokwan will probably go on to find their own sound but this is a great start for a new band on their first release.



Kudgel "Alphabet Song" (Cinder Block) (\$3.50)

I managed to snag a very small number of this debut Kudgel single. I thought it was long out of print and I was almost right. "Alphabet Song" is probably the most accessible pop song that Kudgel ever released. If only Mark hadn't used all of those bad words, maybe this would have received more airplay. The B-side is closer to the traditional Kudgel sound with loud guitars and raw vocals failing to hide the underlying pop melodies.



Kudgel "Chicken Pump" (Waikiki) (\$3.50)

This was Kudgel's second 7" on this Boston label. "Chicken Pump" does a good job of blending a big threatening guitar sound with pop melodies. Anyone who enjoyed their cut on the Pop Narcotic double 10" will probably dig this one also. "Now" trades off segments

of clean, melodic guitar with bursts of distortion and raw screams. Kudgel was one of the few bands that could sound aggressive, nasty, melodic, and friendly all at the same time.



Laurels "Hate Me" (Heparin) (\$3.50)

Laurels is an all-male trio from Providence, RI. Their previous releases were noted for their short songs which brought The Pixies to mind. This single adds a fuller Marshall driven sound on the A-side and a weird loopy, experimental, acoustic song on B-side.



Les Autres "Belle Est Ta Journee" (Cornflakes Zoo) (\$4.25)

France has a reputation for producing almost no listenable music. While that reputation may be deserved, this band shows that there is at least one exception to the rule. These songs are driven by melodic, perky basslines, with loud, fuzzed out guitars, and soft dreamy vocals floating above. Although the British shoegazer sound is definitely an influence, I wouldn't want to pigeonhole them with that label. The melodies are generally upbeat and the overall sound leans towards pop.



Log 4 song EP (Anyway) (\$3.50)

Log just may be the lo-fi 90's version of the Dream Syndicate. This record reminds me of some of my favorite sounds coming out of California during the, short-lived but influential, neo-psychedelic movement of the early 80's. Log give this sound a fresh twist by approaching it with a lighter touch and a distinct pop sensibility. The recording is somewhat muddy and unclear, but that just adds to the honest homespun feel of this record.



Lotus Eaters "Falling" (Harriet) (\$3.50)

This is the first single from this upbeat, bouncy, folk/country tinged band from Boston. The first two songs show the airy, folkier side of the band, while the final one twists off into a more rock-oriented direction.



Lumber "Wax and Fire" (Chunk) (\$3.50)

Lumber is a Northampton, Massachusetts band who seem to be operating with a strange set of influences. Sometimes when I listen to them, I hear a songs that could fit in on a Slumberland single or on the *Ten Cent Fix* compilation. Other times, I hear a rough and distinctly Western Massachusetts sound. The guitars are raw, the vocals somewhat strained,

but the songs still have a light, indie pop feel.



The Lune "The Traveller" (Cinder Block) (\$3.50)

Former members of Toadstool and the Moving Targets team up to create this odd blend of indie-rock mixed with horns and violins. Mark from Cinder Block describes them as "combining the best elements of a high school marching band and your mom's home cooking." How can you go wrong with that?



Lync "Mhz" b/w "Pan" (Land Speed/Magic Pail) (\$3.50)

Lync is a three piece from Olympia that blend punchy punk leanings with twisted, jangly guitar lines and raw vocals into catchy, fun and energetic songs. While they don't have a totally unique sound, I have a hard time finding anyone appropriate to compare them to. These are also songs that I don't find myself getting tired of, as the melodies seem to sink in with repeated listens.



The Mad Scene "the greatest TIME!" (Merge) (\$3.50)

The Mad Scene is a NYC based band consisting of Hamish Kilgour (The Clean) and Lisa Siegel. This EP shows a lot of growth from their earlier material. The songs are bright and poppy with just the right amount of distortion and an especially good use of the trumpet. Fans of Flying Nun style pop music can't go wrong with this record.



The Magnetic Fields "All the Umbrellas in London" (Merge) (\$3.50)

This single contains two new songs from The Magnetic Fields and they sound like total solo efforts from Stepin Merritt. The instrumentation is even more synthetic than usual, bringing to mind 80's synth pop. Lyrically, these songs are darker and more depressing than just about anything Stepin has done in the past. As always, it's good stuff, but this is definitely not light, meaningless pop music.



MOTO Wee Beasties 7" EP (Little Teddy) (\$4.25)

MOTO (Masters of the Obvious) were doing their version of the two piece guitar/vocals/drums thing before I had even heard of Beat Happening and the whole Olympia scene. It's too bad, the sudden popularity of the whole lo-fi, minimalist movement hasn't brought some more attention to them. These four songs were apparently recorded in an attic in their hometown of Chicago and range from garage

rock sounds of "Straighten It Out" to the straight ahead and fun pop of "Satan Always Calls Collect". Although this band has never completely captured their live magic on record, this recording does a decent job of capturing their fun and energy.



Moviola 5 Song EP (Anyway) (\$3.50)

Moviola is another great Columbus, Ohio band. Their sound probably falls somewhere between Greenhorn and Sebadoh. These songs are very down to earth with touches of the blues and country music in them. With so many sound-alike bands trying to be lo-fi these days, it's good to hear a band who's taking this sort of sound in a different direction.



Moviola "All By Myself" +2 (Ratfish) (\$3.50)

Moviola just keep cranking out great records. This one again takes an East Coast indie rock sensibility and filters it through a rootsy midwestern haze. It's difficult to compare this to anything else because it's a pretty good blend of many of influences. The songs are slower and murkier than earlier Moviola material and sometimes take on a Grifters feel. Even with the slower tempos, the songs have a strong sense of melody and hold up well to repeated listens.



Neutral Milk Hotel "Everything Is" (Cher Doll) (\$3.50)

This is one of those bands that is all to easy to lump into the lo-fi category. Sure, they probably didn't spend much money recording, but they definitely put a lot of thought into the recording and arranging of these songs. Probably the best comparison I can make to the A-side is that it sounds like a Bricks song done up in the arena pop style of Guided By Voices. The B-side is introspective but with detailed arrangements that show through the lo-fi recording. I can't wait to hear more from this band.



New Radiant Storm King "Subway Token" +2 (chunk) (\$3.50)

New Radiant Storm King is probably the most famous of the newer crop of Western Massachusetts bands. If there is a "Northampton sound," I guess the key to it is the ability to present strong, melodic songs in a raw and gritty way without the melodies getting lost. NRSK takes a roller coaster-like approach, with

slow, tension filled segments of a song alternating with loud and urgent sounds. Although I can hear other influences in their music, they're blended so seamlessly that it's just about impossible to say that they sound like any other band.



The Non Stop Kazoo Organization "Something Strange" EP (Cornflakes Zoo) (\$4.25)

Despite the really ridiculous name, this is another good French band. This one comes from the low-key, pretty Sarah Records school of indie rock. Nice pleasant, strummed guitars are combined with clarinet, trumpet, sax and violin in a surprisingly nice fashion. This is perfect music for a 7" too. Like the Sarah singles, I like this sort of stuff in small doses, and a 3 song 7" is just about the perfect dose of this.



Nothing Painted Blue "After the House Warming" (Anyway) (\$3.50)

I'll be the first to admit that I don't know nearly enough about Nothing Painted Blue. Listening to this single convinces me that I'm missing out on a lot. This single gives us one NPB original and a cover of a Great Plains song. Both sides of this single rock. The A-side is power pop right up there with the best of them, while the B-side captures that Great Plains blend of raw garage rock tempered with a real knack for writing pop songs.



Pest "Philosophically Dyslexic" (Harriet) (\$3.50)

Maybe my favorite Harriet single so far and definitely one of my top ten 7"s of 1994. This band has it all: stick in your brain hooks, great vocals, a violin and very clever lyrics. I'm usually not a big fan of lyrics that try to be too clever, but Pest does it in a natural way rather than in a way that says, "I'm gonna show you how smart I am." I'll probably be wearing a hole in the vinyl of this one from the constant spins it's getting on my turntable.



Pest 5000 PattiChristSuperstar (Derivative) (\$6.00)

This is the same Montreal based band that used to be called Pest. Now, they've changed their name to Pest 5000 and released this double 7" on their own label, Derivative Records. Here, four of the band members each take their own shot at vocals on each of the four sides. The results range from noisy pop, to Raincoats-like violin excursions to straightahead pop. A great second effort from this band.

Pest 5000 Toast EP (No Life) (\$3.50)

This is the third single from Pest 5000 and it's my favorite one. Finally, they've come up with single with recording quality worthy of the songs. As always, the songs are catchy and the lyrics are clever. To top it off, the packaging is beautiful thanks to the folks at Eye Noise.



Pie "Superhorse" +3 (Cream Cloud) (\$3.50)

Pie reviews usually have some kind of Pavement comparison in them, but I don't get it. Sure the recording quality brings back memories of those early Drag City singles, but the songs are just pure, noisy pop. If I had to draw comparisons, I'd be more likely to compare this to that old Deluxx 7" on 18 Wheeler than anything else.



Pillbox "The Sound of Scissors" (14th Floor) (\$3.50)

"The Sound of Scissors" is the first release from this band from Berkeley, CA. Upbeat driving rhythms mix with jangly guitar and an occasional odd prog-rock bassline to create a cool blend of New Zealand type pop and the early 80's Athens, GA sound.



Portastatic Scrapbook double 7" (Merge) (\$6.00)

Portastatic is a home recording project from Mac McCaughan of Superchunk and it's about as far from Superchunk as you can get. These two 7"s contain 3 original songs along with a brilliant cover of a Brian Eno song. I really liked the first Portastatic single from a few years ago, but this new stuff is miles ahead of that one. These songs tend toward the slow and sensitive side of things but still pack the passion that sometimes gets lost in the sheer volume of Superchunk.



Prickly "Fashion Sense..." +2 (Self Released) (\$3.50)

Prickly is a Boston band which never caught my ear when I saw them live, but their recordings definitely have. You may have heard a previous song of theirs on the recent Harriet CD compilation. This single brings us three new tracks from the band. The melodies are slow and moody and both the dual guitars and vocals play off one another in a compelling and mesmerizing way.



Primordial Undermind "Ache" (Penultimate) (\$3.50)

Primordial Undermind is a new West Coast project from Eric Arn. Eric used to be one of

the guitarists in Crystalized Movements. While there are some similarities to that band here, Primordial Undermind seems to have a better sense of melody, and a lot less self-indulgence than Crystalized Movements. "Ache" is a slow and moody epic that brings to mind the poppier material from The Bevis Frond. The B-side, "Walk Me Home" alternates between noise/feedback and bright, melodic elements.



Purple Ivy Shadows "Psychic Baby" (spinART) (\$3.50)

Purple Ivy Shadows does a great job of taking ideas from British ethereal bands and blending them with an up-to-date and down-to-earth indie rock sound. It's nice to hear a band take these influences and avoid sounding pretentious or artsy. These two songs are atmospheric in nature but very human sounding. "Circle" is the more gentle and upbeat song while "Psychic Baby" takes a moodier approach.



Pussycat Trash

Plink Plonk Pink Punk EP (Chocolate Narcotic) (\$4.25)

I guess this band is best known for touring Europe with Huggy Bear and some American Riot Grrrl bands. But to categorize them as just another of these bands would be a mistake. Pussycat Trash takes a more laid back, melodic but distinctly punk rock approach to their bands. Anyone who enjoys music like Sleepyhead, Crayon and Kicking Giant would probably love to add this 4 song EP to their collection.



Quivvver "Mermaid" 7" (Jook-A-Teena) (\$3.50)

Quivvver is another Boston band that isn't worried about trends or major label contracts. They just have a good time playing and in the process make incredibly compelling and interesting music. Quivvver is an all female trio that blend a rootsy rock sound with a sort of seventies classic rock feel. I know that sounds like a bad combination, but in practice it really works. "Mermaid" is a infectious, upbeat song that shows off the pure fun energy of the band, while "Star" is a slower ballad that shows that blatant rock influences can be a positive thing. This is probably my favorite single from a Boston band in 1994.

Radiolaria "Fade Away" +3 (Juanita) (\$3.50)

Radiolaria is a Cincinnati, OH band. On these 4 songs they bring to mind the light and airy pop sound of Swirlies' "Chris R," but I get the feeling that they're much more explosive live. This single has a nice mix of male and female vocals, with the male vocals occasionally bringing to mind a civilized Mark E. Smith. Overall, this sounds like a band you might have found on an old Slumberland 7" or on the *One Last Kiss* compilation.



Railroad Jerk 02.20.93 EP (Walt) (\$3.50)

Railroad Jerk takes a breather from the loud-rock sound to give us an acoustic take on their brand of deconstructed blues. Even without the volume they manage to sound as raw and raunchy as their electric live set. This is a must for any fan of the rootsier side of indie rock. File this one right between your Palace Brothers and Gibson Brothers' records.



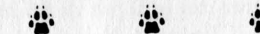
Razorblade Smile "Vertical Orange" (Chocolate Narcotic) (\$4.25)

This single sounds like it could be a split single with two different bands. The songs are that different sounding. The A-side is a fairly minimal pop song with a catchy melody and noisy, fuzzed out guitars. The B-side is dense, dark and noisy with an industrial/Gothic edge meshing with a British indie-pop sound. Both songs avoid falling into any obvious category, but combine elements of several musical genres that seldom come together.



The Ropers "Sunbathe" (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

If there was ever a band that sounded like they belonged on Slumberland, it's the Ropers. This is low key, melancholy pop music at it's best. Airy, floating vocals go together with simple strummed guitar lines and a textured guitar sound which has a British feel. This is one of the best things to come out on Slumberland in the last couple of years.



Ruby Falls "The Spirit Is Willing" (Villa Villakula) (\$3.50)

This new label gives us the second Ruby Falls single as its first release. Listening to this single, it's obvious that Ruby Falls has been around a while and has refined and hardened their sound quite a bit. This single takes a direct, hard hitting approach and Cynthia Nelson's vocals take on a harsher, more dynamic and less pop oriented tone here. This is an excellent follow up to their first single.

Scrawl "Your Mother Wants to Know" (Simple Machines) (\$3.50)

Even if this single wasn't totally fantastic, I'd still tell you to buy it because it has the most amazing packaging I've ever seen. It's almost impossible to describe but it's sort of an origami package that you receive in a flat form but which can be folded into pyramid type object. To top it off, the music probably the best that Scrawl has ever done. There's no slick production here; just raw, urgent emotion and energy.



Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet Take Outs (Derivative) (\$3.50)

I guess I'd have to describe these instrumentals as indie surf rock. That doesn't really do these songs justice as they're a far cry from your typical Ventures cover band. Here Shadowy Men show restraint as they blend these surf licks with laid-back instrumental sounds.



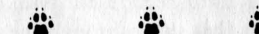
The Shapiros "Month of Days" (Fantastic) (\$3.50)

The Shapiros is a DC band featuring vocalist Pam Berry (Chickfactor, Black Tambourine) along with other DC scensters from the Velocity Girl/Slumberland camp. The songs are what you'd probably expect- slow, soft and pretty. The Shapiros will fit perfectly in your record collection if you're a fan of soft British pop and the early Slumberland sound.



Sleepyhead "Punk Rock City USA" (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

I thought this single was long gone, but it looks like Slumberland found a few copies. This is definitely a good thing because this is my favorite Sleepyhead release. "Punk Rock City USA" is just what it sounds like: a straightahead, high energy, melodic pop-punk song. The B-side is a slow, melodic cover of Game Theory's "Like a Girl Jesus", sung by drummer Rachel McNally.



Smackmelon "Space Shot" (Mag Wheel) (\$3.50)

This is all male Boston band fronted by ex-Bullet LaVolta guitarist Duke Roth. This band heads in a much more straightahead punk rock direction than later-day Bullet LaVolta. The A-Side "Space Shot" is a slow, emotional song that brings to mind Buffalo Tom, while "I'm Not Cool" is a straight ahead melodic punk song that would make Bob Mould proud. This is a very promising debut.

Small 23 "Noodles" (Land Speed/Matt) (\$3.50)

Every time I start to think the whole pop/punk thing has gotten stale and run its course, along comes a song like "Noodles" to restore my faith. This song is as good as the catchiest Superchunk tunes and it's guaranteed to make you pogo in your living room! The B-side "Wet Cement" tends a little more towards the early Afghan Whigs emo-pop sound and has hooks almost as catchy as the A-side.



Small Factory "Lose Your Way" (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

Because this single was recorded years before it finally got released, you'll find that these two songs sound like a step back into small factory's past, before they jettisoned the acoustic instruments and made their sound a little slicker. So, if you were into the first two small factory 7"s, you're sure to love this one. If you're new to small factory and want to check out some of their earlier material, this is probably the best place to start.



The Sneetches Think EP (Bus Stop) (\$2.50)

The first time I heard this single, I was at a party and someone remarked, "Ric Menck must somehow be associated with this record." Well he isn't, but that sums up the sound of these two songs. They are pure Beatle-esque, 60's style, pop. The closest modern comparison has to be Velvet Crush's first long-lost 7". If you're a lover of pure pop music, you should really own this 7".



The Softies 4 Song EP (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

The Softies are a new two piece band (featuring ex-Tiger Trap member, Rose) that use two guitars and vocals, only. These songs tend toward a quiet, folky sound and just sound beautiful. This will probably appeal to fans of the old Courtney Love (the band) 7"s and earlier, acoustic material from Lois.



Sourpuss "Rocket Day" EP (Self Released) (\$3.50)

I don't often like to describe music as quirky, but it's an appropriate term for this single. Sourpuss is a new, young band from Western Massachusetts, and they totally understand what was cool about new wave. My favorite of the 3 songs is "Stab," it has the bouncy energy of an XTC song with the added bonus of cool female backing vocals. The other 2 songs

are almost as good, but in a more subdued way. Anyone who likes good pop hooks and has fond memories of new wave should check out this single.



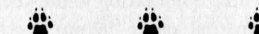
Spatula "Radio Helmet" (The Now Sound) (\$3.50)

Spatula is a guitar/vocal/drums duo from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Upon first listen, you find two things that are pretty unique. First off, they're from Chapel Hill and have absolutely no discernible Superchunk influence. Second, the two piece sound isn't in any way lo-fi. OK, now that I've told you what they don't sound like, here's a shot at what they do sound like: "Radio Helmet" starts off as an understated, sparse guitar song with vocals that sound like they're filtered through a CB radio microphone. This song builds to a dense climax before returning to the sparse, repetitive sounds that opened the record. The two B-side songs head in a similar direction, but with a brighter pop sound reminiscent of something on Flying Nun.



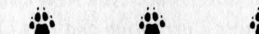
Spool "Callous Makers" (Derivative) (\$3.50)

This is a great pop single. I keep trying to figure out what other bands to compare it to and I keep coming up blank. Spool blends bits and pieces of many sounds, but deep down they just make great pop songs. These songs sound like what the songs I thought Pavement should have done after *Slanted and Enchanted*. The songs are catchy but there are enough twists, turns and general weirdness to make it unique and interesting. I can't wait to hear more from them.



Sugar Plant "Orange Filter" (A Turntable Friend) (\$3.50)

This is the debut single from Japan's sugar plant. As with their Pop Narcotic single, the sound is rooted in slow, moody, melodic and VU influenced pop. The obvious comparisons are to bands like Galaxie 500 and Mazzy Star, but sugar plant adds a Japanese charm that makes their songs stand out from other bands treading similar ground.



Superdrag "HHT" (Darla) (\$3.50)

On the A-side of their second single, Superdrag slows things down a bit and take a dense, psychedelic approach. The B-side goes in a direction closer to their first single with the loud, trashy sounding guitars trying unsuccessfully to overpower the pop melodies below. Because they blend a raw Southern feel with more familiar indie sounds, Superdrag brings to mind

The Archers of Loaf. However, Superdrag seem to have a lot more tricks up their sleeves.



Superdrag "Senorita" (Darla) (\$3.50)

For their second release, Darla records continues mining the Tennessee music scene. This time, they introduce us to Superdrag from Knoxville. Superdrag does a brand of raw, unpolished power pop that falls somewhere between the Gigolo Aunts and Superchunk. Although it's not the most original thing in the world, the songs are the type that stick in your head for hours after each listen.



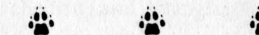
Syrup "Joie de Vol" (Tru Luv) (\$3.50)

Syrup is a new band fronted by Seana Carmody who used to play guitar in Swirlies. Her new band is a lot more blatantly pop than Swirlies. There's less noise and feedback and you can actually hear her voice without layers of guitar pushing it into the background. This band also uses keyboards giving it a swirling, Stereolab-like sound at times. This is a top notch single and should appeal to any Swirlies fans. Both songs were produced by Eric Masunaga of The Dambuilders.



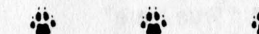
Teen Angels "Jesus is on My Side" (Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)

This is the debut release from this Seattle band and label. Teen Angels is a heavy sounding, all-female trio. Normally, this sort of music does nothing for me, but this single is great. With these songs, Teen Angels capture an energy and intensity that bands like Hole or L7 don't even approach. And they do it all without resorting to any of the heavy metal cliches that are so common today. This is pure punk rock.



Television Personalities "Not Like Everybody Else" EP (Little Teddy) (\$4.25)

This 4 song 7" compiles covers of songs originally recorded by The Kinks, Joe Meek, Nancy Sinatra and John Lennon. It's hard to describe the style of these covers other than to say that they are performed in true TVP fashion. This record probably won't appeal to those not, at least somewhat, familiar with the TVP sound. Fans of the band will probably find this EP hard to resist.



Tipili Christmas Vacation EP (Eek) (\$3.50)

For this 4 song 7", Tipili is pretty much a one man show. Ryan Klauk wrote songs and recorded them in his bedroom with a little help

from a few friends. The songs are slow and sad and they sound like they were recorded on the first take with all of the imperfections and feeling left in place. People like to compare this to Lou Barlow, but I really don't get it. Apart from the recording method, the songs really have nothing in common with Lou. I just hear someone who is young and vulnerable saying things through his music that he'd probably never say outside of his bedroom recording studio. This is a very nice record.



Tizzy "New Jersey" (Chunk) (\$3.50)

Tizzy is a three piece from Northampton who have quickly become one of my favorite bands in the area. Tizzy is a quirky pop band that draws as much from the Buzzcocks as they do from Throwing Muses. "New Jersey" is a quirky pop song with an ultra-catchy bassline and tons of tempo changes. The flipside, "Betty vs. Veronica" takes a straightahead, melodic punk rock approach. The nice, individually hand painted sleeves add another personal touch to this single. Watch for their upcoming release on Pop Narcotic.



Tree Fort Angst "Tilting at Windmills" (Bus Stop) (\$2.50)

Tree Fort Angst perform a brand of low-key, wimpy pop that sounds more British than American. This EP contains four songs that, like their cut on the spinART *One Last Kiss* CD, have bright upbeat melodies but have something deeper and darker behind them. Even though the music and production is miles away from XTC, I can't help but hear an Andy Partridge influence in the songwriting.



Tugboat "Not Going Anywhere" EP (Pop Goes On) (\$4.25)

Tugboat is a band from Ontario, Canada and this is their debut single. The music is simple, heartfelt, well arranged and covers a lot of musical ground. I hear influences as diverse as the Sarah Records pop bands, low key American bands like Galaxie 500 and Codeine and the country tinged sounds of Uncle Tupelo and The Palace Brothers.



Tully Craft "True Blue" (Harriet) (\$3.50)

Since Crayon had such a unique sound, I didn't know what to expect from Sean's new band, Tully Craft. Although, it definitely sounds like an Olympia, WA band, it's very different from Crayon. Their songs take it easy on the distort-

tion, placing them closer to Lois than Crayon on the loudness scale. Still, they have the punk rock energy and basic nerdiness that made Crayon so distinctive and fun.



Turkish Delight "Try Harder" + 2 (Gull) (\$3.50)

This is the debut 7" from this Boston band and they manage to give us three songs that sound totally different from each other, while still developing a sound of their own. Turkish Delight are a 4 piece with a female singer. The sounds range from the slowed down, and tension filled sounds of "Try Harder" to the punk rock "Turn Off" to the melodic "In My House". No matter which song you listen to, singer Leah manages to frighten you a bit while sucking you into the songs even more. This is definitely one of the better singles to come out of Boston this year, plus it has the coolest hand made packaging this side of Wingtip Sloat!



Twig "Fall of Love" (Harriet) (\$3.50)

This is the debut release by a band containing a couple of ex-members of Fertile Virgin. Twig makes upbeat, fun and energetic pop music with great dual female harmonies built over a bouncy and sometimes gritty guitar pop base.



Vehicle Flips "Our Returning Champion" (Harriet) (\$3.50)

Vehicle Flips is a new band fronted by Frank Boscoe (ex Wimp Factor 14). With this band, Frank manages to take a more conventional approach to instrumentation while keeping the simple charm that made Wimp Factor 14 so much fun. The guitars are bright and clean and the lyrics are miles beyond your typical rock and roll band. Fans of Nothing Painted Blue and most Harriet bands will be happy to add this to their collections.



Velocity Girl "Your Silent Face" (Merge) (\$3.50)

Velocity Girl dishes up two covers for this single. "Your Silent Face" is a New Order song off of the *Power, Corruption and Lies* LP. Velocity Girl do a nice, and fairly faithful, cover. The B side gives us a Brian Wilson song called "You're So Good to Me" done with male lead vocals and Sarah doing backing "la-la" vocals. I have no idea what the original sounds like, but I certainly like this version. It's got a bubble-gummy feel that puts it somewhere between Big Star and The Beach Boys.

The Veronica Cartwrights "We Believe Amy F. EP (Chunk) (\$3.50)

The Veronica Cartwrights are another of the new batch of bands coming out of Northampton, MA. They take a folky, but gritty and emotional approach to the indie rock sound. The A-side contains an up-tempo rocker and a heartfelt ballad. The B-side is a throw away joke cover, but that's OK. Just look at this as a good two song single which you never have to turn over.



Veronica Lake "Threnody" (Audrey's Diary) (\$3.50)

Veronica Lake has released quite a few songs over the past couple of years and I never know quite what to expect. This time they veer off into the part of the musical spectrum normally inhabited by the likes of Codeine and Idaho. They've filled out the basic guitar, bass and drums setup with some additional keyboards and great backing vocals from Pam Berry (Black Tambourine). This is great rainy day music- pretty and soothing but a little bit sad at the same time. One of my personal favorite selections from this catalog.



Vineland "Archetype" (Land Speed/Matt) (\$3.50)

Vineland is one of the new breed of 90's prog rock bands that seem to be the current indie rage. They're also a supergroup of sorts. Led by ex-Bitch Magnet member Jon Fine on vocals, this incarnation of Vineland also included Bob Bannister on guitar and ex-Das Damen drummer Lyle Hysen. The Vineland sound treads the same ground as bands like Rodan, but with a more concise, straight ahead rock approach.



Wandering Lucy 4 Song EP (CEW) (\$3.50)

This is the debut 7" from Wandering Lucy. This seems to be a one woman project from Vancouver, but I can't really be sure. The songs are all very simple with nothing but guitar, casiotone drums and (sometimes) vocals. The first two songs are instrumentals that have a cheezy, but appealing Western feel. (Imagine an indie rock Western with Jad Fair playing the part of the cowboy). The two songs on the second side take a more upbeat approach and one has vocals with a beautiful and lazy Kendra Smith feel to them. This is an interesting first single. Wandering Lucy is now working on new material with Pat Maley in Olympia.

Weeping in Fits and Starts "Big Fish" + 3 (BHS) (\$3.50)

For these four songs, Weeping in Fits and Starts is pretty much a one man studio project with Greg Jacobs playing just about everything. It's hard to pin down one particular style, as the songs range from a polished pop sound, reminiscent of something like Tommy Keene, to a twangy instrumental that sounds like it could serve as the soundtrack to a Western. Greg's vocals have a sincere and sometimes imperfect quality that adds life to these recordings.



Wingtip Sloat "Return of The Night of The Ardent Straggler" (VHS) (\$3.50)

This is probably the first Wingtip Sloat single whose packaging could be described as elegant. As usual, each one is slightly different. Oh yeah, the music... it's probably the best one yet. The usual mix of covers (Tall Dwarfs this time), ballads and general lo-fi coolness. If you're a Sloat fan, you know what to expect and you won't be disappointed.



Yukio Yung Jeff Lynne EP (Little Teddy) (\$4.25)

OK, I can't lie, I really think this sucks. This EP consists of five ELO covers. The really frightening thing is that Yukio Yung seems to be very serious about these covers. If you're an ELO fan, this might have some appeal, but I can't honestly recommend it to anyone else. With any other purchase, you can have a copy of this for \$2.00 (seriously!).

various artists

"Ain't This Bliss With You and This" (Spin The Bottle) (\$6.00)

This new San Francisco label makes a very strong debut with a survey of "indie-country" music. Of the five bands on this double 7", I had only heard of The Ass Ponys. Dieselhead, Tarnation, The Buckets and The Doubters were all brand new to me and none of them disappointed. Anyone into bands like Uncle Tupelo, American Music Club and Greenhorn, and is curious about other bands treading that line between country music and indie rock, should check out these records. This is one of my favorite releases of 1994.



Amazing Phantom Third Channel (Cher Doll) (\$3.50)

Cher Doll Records just can't put out a bad record. This one is no exception, with great new cuts from Crayon, Neutral Milk Hotel,

Paste and newcomers (to me anyway) Watercolor Sunset. This is one of the few labels that are so consistent that I can be sure that I'll like every single release.



Appalachian Death Ride / Geraldine (Anyway) (\$3.50)

Yet another great single from Anyway. This one showcases a couple of bands from Athens, Ohio. Appalachian Death Ride had a single out on Anyway a few years ago and this is the first I've heard from them in a long time. They play straight ahead rock with punk influences, but with too much melody to be categorized as simply a punk band. The music is raw and loose, but at the same time, catchy and compelling. Geraldine is a new band to me. Their music is grinding and herky jerky sounding. The phrase "post-punk" comes to mind often when listening to this song. This single is just another reason to love the state of Ohio.



Archers of Loaf / Monsterland (Radiopaque) (\$3.50)

This is the third release in a series of benefit 7"s with the proceeds going to the Washington Free Clinic. The recordings are taken from live, studio recordings done for WHFS in DC. On this record, Archers of Loaf supplies an acoustic version of "Telepathic Traffic" and Monsterland does an only slightly, stripped down version of "Angel Scraper". As with previous releases in this series, it's a quality package with good recordings and beautiful design by Steve Raskin.



The Birdy Num Nums / Holly Golightly (Giant Pool Balls) (\$4.25)

I have no idea how these bands chose such horrible names but don't hold that against them. Both of these bands are from Germany and this new label is a collaboration between the people who run two great European magazines, *Pearl* and *Sunset*. Anyway, as for the music, The Birdy Num Nums fills the first side of this single with two of their songs which blend Beatles-like vocals with a more rootsy guitar sound. Holly Golightly takes over the B-side and give us two tracks of their own brand of 60's styled, harmony filled pop. Both of these bands would probably appeal to fans of Velvet Crush and lovers of lost vintage pop classics.



Contrast Split Single #1 (Contrast) (\$4.75)

This is the first of a series of split singles put out on this new Belgian label. This one features three bands, Antiseptic Beauty (from England), Mosaic Eyes (from Belgium) and Les

Autres (from France). Antiseptic Beauty performs a very restrained and beautiful song that reminds me of Felt and The Pale Saints. Mosaic Eyes also takes a quiet approach to their music but head off in a slightly psychedelic direction. Finally Les Autres gives us another dose of dense swirling pop. All three songs on this record are very strong so this is a good chance to check out their music for a fairly small price.



Contrast Split Single #2 (Contrast) (\$4.75)

This is the second in a series of singles spotlighting pop bands from all over the world. This record brings us four bands: Cat's Miaow (from Australia), Last Party (from England), French Marigold (from France) and Maylove (from Japan). Cat's Miaow gives us a short upbeat, head bobbing pop song. Last Party takes a brooding and distinctly British approach to their contribution. French Marigold supply a pleasant but haunting and simply strummed pop song, while Maylove does a pretty, Sarah inspired song with nice female vocals. As with the first volume, this is a consistent single showcasing a bunch of bands that aren't easy to hear otherwise.



Daniel Johnston Tribute Vol. 1 (Little Teddy) (\$4.25)

Volume 1 of this well-done tribute to Daniel Johnston contains cuts from TV Personalities, Bartlebees, Wimp Factor 14 and Hanshalf Trio. This is worth owning for the TVP's song alone, as it captures the essence of the original artist better than just about any other tribute song I've ever heard. The other cuts are also good. It's obvious that the bands on this single were really fans of Daniel Johnston and put some effort into choosing and arranging their songs.



Daniel Johnston Tribute Vol. 2 (Little Teddy) (\$4.25)

Another 4 song tribute to Daniel Johnston. This one features more unknown artists than the last one. This one has songs from McTells, Paisley Shirts, Fellow Travellers and Yukio Yung. On this record, the bands seem to do drastic reinterpretations of the originals. This collection doesn't seem quite as heartfelt as Volume 1 but from a solely musical point of view, it's probably more successful than the first.



Guided by Voices / Belreve (Anyway) (\$3.50)

Like the Hot Monkey/Linda Heck single, people are going to buy this for the better known band, but may go away liking the less

well known band's song better. And it's not like Guided by Voices to give us a bad song either. The GbV song has an artsy, orchestral feel to it. It's pretty different from their normal style but it's very, very good. Belreve just totally amaze me with their song. It treads on the same ground as Guided by Voices, but does so in a fresh and non-derivative way. Every time I play this single I wake up the next morning humming the Belreve tune. I can't wait to hear more stuff from this band.



Hot Monkey / Linda Heck (Shangri-La) (\$3.50)

On this split 7", Scott from the Grifters gives us two new Hot Monkey songs. This time around, the emphasis is on the sounds rather than the songwriting. These two songs are a lot more experimental than other Hot Monkey material and are often just plain weird. I really wasn't prepared for what I heard on the Linda Heck side of the single. Her song is the real reason to own this 7". I was expecting a kind of bluesy solo thing, but instead she's got a full band complete with a sax player. Her song is upbeat and energetic and really sounds like it was made in Memphis!



I Like Walt! (walt) (\$3.50)

This is a six song compilation featuring one song each from Franklin Bruno, The Mountain Goats, Guiding Genius, Dump, Marcellus Hall and Butterglory. After listening to the Franklin Bruno song, I felt that I'd gotten my money's worth and things didn't go downhill at all. Each song has a simple homemade feel, but I can't really define any of it as particularly lo-fi. If you're a fan of any of these bands, this is a must have. If not, why not start here?



Karate / The Crownhate Ruin (Art Monk Construction) (\$3.50)

This single is a big winner in every way, from the clean, sparse full color packaging to the music itself. Boston's Karate gives us their best song yet, as they delicately balance the loud and the soft along with the fast and the slow. If you liked Codeine, but wished they rocked a little harder, check out Karate. They'll probably be just the thing you're looking for. The Crownhate Ruin is a band from the DC area. They take an angular punk rock approach. The two bands match up quite well but the Karate side ends up spinning around on my turntable more of the time.

Karate / The Lune (Lonesome Pine) (\$3.50)

In the Boston music scene, it's rare to find bands making interesting music, and also doing it in a personal and relatively hype-free way. This single showcases two bands doing everything the right way. Karate gives us another batch of their slow, but energized music. It has a moody feel, but moves away from the obvious Codeine influence with flourishes of beautiful melodic guitar that tend to tie the pieces of this song together. It's been a while since we've heard from The Lune and they've certainly made the wait pay off with this release. The Lune blends tasteful use of horns with quirky and interesting guitar work. It's really hard to adequately describe what they're doing, but it's one of the more interesting and original things out there today. Buy this single if you want to know what's really happening in the Boston music scene in 1995.



Magic Eye Singles #1 (Magic Eye) (\$3.50)

Magic Eye is a brand new label out of Baltimore. Their charter is to release a series of four band compilations featuring odd songs from some well-known bands along with stuff from new bands. This single includes cuts from Sleepyhead (a 4 track home recording with just Chris and Rachel), and June of 44 (a lo-fi answering machine recording) along with a new band called Half Calf (who seem to draw something from Wimp Factor 14) and Experimental Pollen #69 (solo stuff from Jon Cook of Crain). Every song is very different from previous recordings made by these people. So, this is a good chance to check out another side of some bands we already know.



Papercut Records 7" Compilation (Papercut) (\$3.50)

This is the first vinyl release from the folks who bring you *For Paper Airplane Pilots* fanzine. This compilation contains one cut each from Cub, Raggedy Ann, Tully Craft and Weakling. Side 1 is the "cute side" with Cub and Raggedy Ann both giving us their versions of love rock or cuddle-core or whatever silly name is in fashion this week. Side 2 is the rock side of the record, as Tully Craft give us another shot of their post-Crayon, lo-fi, quirky rock and newcomers Weakling takes a more straightahead pop rock direction. As with their zine, Trey and Rob have done a fine job with their first vinyl offering.



Paul Nini / Steve Lindstrom (Anyway) (\$3.50)

This is the first release in a series of Anyway releases showcasing songwriters. I'm not sure

what that really means, but from the sounds of this 7", it's just a chance to hear some of Bela's favorite performers playing outside the context of their normal bands. Paul Nini is in the band Log, and his solo song is a great acoustic song. It's kind of folky but not in a typical sappy way. I'm not sure who Steve Lindstrom is, but his solo cut follows in the folk tradition. The Paul Nini cut makes this 7" worth owning and both cuts are nice because they prove that there are still people who can make simple, heartfelt music and not sound anything like Lou Barlow.



Red Sleeping Beauty / Benito (Grimsey) (\$3.50)

The first thing that struck me about this single was the incredible effort and detail put into the packaging. The sleeve is printed on this unique paper that has a sort of rough sandpaper quality to it. It is also die-cut, with a hand written postcard inserted into the slots. As if the packaging isn't enough, the music is great as well. Red Sleeping Beauty are a Swedish band with female vocals and a pretty but energetic sound. I've heard them on several compilations in the past and their songs never disappoint me. I'm not really sure where Benito are from, but they remind me of the Beach Boys and maybe ELO (if they were forced to make music in an inexpensive and stripped down way). Based on the first two releases, this is a label to watch out for. It's rare to see such attention to every detail these days.



Rocktober Fest (Rocktober) (\$3.50)

Rocktober is a Chicago based fanzine and this is their first music release. This 7" contains tracks from Boss Fuel, Tart, The Goblins and Creep Factory (2/3 of small factory playing along with their friend Colonel Johnny Creeper). All of the bands take kind of a low key, rockabilly approach- sort of what Reverend Horton Heat would sound like if he did a record for Estrus.



Shonen Knife / Shudder to Think (Radiopaque) (\$3.50)

This is another split singles recorded at WHFS studios in DC. All proceeds go to the Washington Free Clinic. Shonen Knife performs "Little Tree" which originally appeared on their Rock Animals CD. I'm sure the lack of studio gloss really helps out this song because this version sounds great and most of Rock Animals didn't. Shudder to Think gives us a riff heavy and rocking song called "9 Fingers On You" that somehow makes me think of Led Zeppelin. This is probably the most consistently good single in this series and as always the Steve Raskin artwork is amazing to look at.

Silver Jews / New Radiant Storm King (Chunk) (\$3.50)

This split single contains one new NRSK song and two new ones from Silver Jews. As everyone knows by now, the Silver Jews shares a band member with Pavement, but the bands don't really have much else in common. On this single they show off two very different sides of the band. "The Sabellion Rebellion" is a great lo-fi pop song, while "Old New York" is their attempt at lounge music. (Trust me, it sounds nothing like Combustible Edison.) On the other side, NRSK come through with yet another memorable pop song. I think I have just about the last copies in the world of this one, so grab it quick if you're interested.



Tiger Trap / Henry's Dress (Slumberland) (\$3.50)

This split 7" features songs from two Northern California bands. The all female quartet Tiger Trap provides a brooding version of their usually upbeat pop sound while Henry's Dress heads off in a dark, dirgey, feedback filled direction. This single is a lot darker sounding than the usual Slumberland fare but is satisfying nonetheless.



Treepeople / Archers of Loaf (Sonic Bubblegum) (\$6.00)

Each disk of this double 7" is devoted to one of the bands. Each band gives us one new original song and covers a song from the other band. I was interested in hearing the covers, but in the long run it's the originals that shine from both bands. Archers of Loaf gives us another hunk of their post-Pavement brand of punk rock while Treepeople gives us a piece of their high-octane punk rock with their trademark wiggly guitar lines.



Twitch Hazel / Technical Jed (Brilliant) (\$6.00)

This split double 7" is shared between two Richmond bands. Twitch Hazel is a now-defunct band which featured two members of Fudge. Both of these bands bring to mind the pure pop of 60's bands and modern indie bands like Velvet Crush. The accent is definitely on the song writing rather than layers of effects and guitar textures. The Twitch Hazel tracks tend more towards the pop while Technical Jed occasionally branches off into a chugga-chugga rock sound.

Unloved (chunk) (\$6.00)

A four band double 7" tribute to Arthur Lee and Love, featuring one cut each from New Radiant Storm King, Lyres, The Veronica Cartwrights and Supreme Dicks. I know just about nothing about Arthur Lee and Love so I won't try to judge how well the bands did in their interpretations, but I did especially enjoy the New Radiant Storm King's and The Veronica Cartwrights' songs.



Steve Westfield / Scud Mountain Boys (Chunk) (\$3.50)

This single acts as a good introduction to some of the slower, country-tinged bands coming out of Western Massachusetts these days. The Scud Mountain Boys are kind of an adult contemporary version of The Palace Brothers. Comparisons are often made to The Eagles and really they aren't too far off target. Steve Westfield is backed up by two guys named Lou and Murph and does an upbeat rootsy song. This is worth checking out if you're into the country side of indie rock.

Other stuff

A Band Called Bud / Martini Age split flexi

(Kreature Comforts) (\$2.00)

A Band Called Bud is some sort of pre-Grifters project. I'm not quite sure what Grifters members were in the band, but I would never have guessed there was any relationship between the bands. Their song on this flexi is like New Wave. The guitars are very processed and the vocals are quirky in an early eighties kind of way. It's a good song but it's nothing like Grifters. I know nothing about Martini Age, but their song is may favorite of the two. It's a nice pop song that sounds like it could have come off of a Bus Stop 7" and reminds me a bit of something Tommy Keene or Matthew Sweet might do.



Grifters video

(Shangri La) (\$8.00)

This tape contains two videos for songs off of the latest Grifters' EP, *Eureka*. The first one, "Banjo" is a black and white conceptual video with lots of quick cuts. The second one, for "What Ever Happened to Felix Cole" is a color video that features conceptual footage as well as live band action. This is a good opportunity to check out the Grifters and finally see their idea of a music video.



Munch (Part 1) Video

(Season) (\$20.00)

Season Record is an Australian label which has released this video containing 20 clips from The Cat's Miaow, The Haywains, The Magnetic Fields, Tender Engines, The Edsel Auctioneer, Meek, Girl of the World, Pavement, Ripe, The Sugargliders, Stinky Fire Engine, Throw That Beat, Heavenly, The Earthmen, Black Tambourine, Afterglow, Boyracer, Even As We Speak, The Ambersands and Des Garçons Ordinaires. These clips are all very low budget and are either live performances or simple homemade conceptual clips. The sound and video quality is good throughout. This is a good opportunity to see a lot of videos that will never make it into the more commercial outlets.

zine

Beer Frame #3 (\$2.00)

Without a doubt, *Beer Frame* is the best fanzine I have ever read. Don't buy this expecting the usual record reviews, live show reviews and general bitching about life and the indie scene. Paul Lukas reviews products, services and printed matter. His product reviews cover things like bowling pins, Hostess Cup Cakes or Saurkraut Juice and his print reviews are much more likely to look at The U.S. Army Field Training Guide rather than the latest issue of Maximum Rock and Roll. Paul approaches everything he writes about from an odd and totally sidesplitting point of view. It's hard to describe what makes this such a great zine, but once you read it once you'll understand and want a copy of everything Paul Lukas does.



Beer Frame #4 (\$2.00)

Another Beer Frame means another great cover to cover read for me. If you don't know about *Beer Frame* by now, you really need to hop on the bandwagon. In this issue Paul "reviews" office chairs, a garlic press, cold medications, tampons, candy bars and a variety of other products and services. As always the humor is subtle but brilliant. I can never get through a new issue of *Beer Frame* without shaking my head in admiration. This is a unique zine and well worth checking out.



Caught In Flux #3 (\$2.00)

Caught In Flux is a fairly new zine put out by Mike Applestein. Generally, Mike is into indiepop music like The Magnetic Fields and Flying Nun bands but he'll occasionally surprise you by revealing his love for a band like Killdozer. This issue is very short on the normal record reviews and band interviews. Instead, Mike devotes his time to asking various indie rock notables how they discovered music. In response to this question, we get essays from 31 musicians, label people and fanzine editors describing their earliest exposure to music and how it has affected them to this day. Some of the people included are Mark Eitzel, Lois Maffeo, Stewart Moxham, Mike Schulman, Kristen Thomson and Jenny

Toomey. This is great reading and highly recommended.



Caught In Flux #4 (\$2.50)

This is yet another great issue of Mike Applestein's zine. This one includes a long interview with former Raincoats and Slits drummer Palmolive along with other interviews with Bunnygrunt, Rastro! and The Loud Family. Also, there are a series of stories on life after high school by various indie rock people and the usual slew of record reviews. As always, Caught in Flux is intelligent and well written and worth taking a look at.



Chickfactor #6 (\$3.00)

Chickfactor's been getting raves all over the fanzine world and they deserve every one of them. Gail and Pam put together a nice looking, informative and totally fun zine that shows their love for music. This issue contains interviews with Team Dresch, Mark Eitzel, Mary Lou Lord, Robert Pollard (Guided by Voices) and Clare and Matt of Sarah Records. Other parts of this issue are devoted to fantasy dates from indie rockers, indie rock crush lists and lots of record reviews.



Chickfactor #7 (\$3.00)

This latest issue of Chickfactor lives up to the standards of all previous issues. This time we get interviews with The Pastels, Fontaine Troups of Versus, Stephin Merritt of Magnetic Fields, The Cat's Miaow, Miss Lily Banquette of Combustible Edison, Candice Petersen of K Records and Containe. Other features include first concert experiences from indie rockers, the Chickfactor travel guide and lots of record reviews.



For Paper Airplane Pilots #4 (\$2.00)

There are many zines out there covering the indie pop scene, but few can manage to pull it off without acting overly cute and generally making me want to puke. The folks at FPAP make none of these mistakes. Generally they stick to the lighter side of the indie scene. This issue gives us a review of the Yo Yo A Go Go festival written by Cub, interviews with Low, Boyracer and Nothing Painted Blue along with the usual record and zine reviews. In addition, they give us an informative, hilarious hands on review of many different brands of malt liquor. All in all, For Paper Airplane Pilots is a fun, attitude-free read that shows a true love for the music they write about.

For Paper Airplane Pilots #5 (\$2.00)



For Paper Airplane Pilots is what zines are all about. It's kind of haphazardly laid out, it doesn't come out on a real regular schedule and it's full of the totally biased opinions of the people who write it. It just so happens and Trey and Rob love pop music and want to tell the world about it. This issue has interviews with Tattle Tale, Butterglory, Spatula, Lou Barlow, Ivy, Kicking Giant and Charles Shultz along with record reviews and an amusing parody of *Chickfactor* called *Chuckfactor*. Trey and Rob have a honest enthusiasm for what they do and it shows with each issue of the zine.



Gormandizer Salsa Issue (\$2.00)

This is a fanzine devoted to the discussion of music and food. Erik scours the indie scene trying to understand the connection between music and food. This time we get a profile of famous gourmand, "Diamond Jim" Brady, H. L. Menken responding to food questions from Steve Albini, mustard reviews, recipes and music reviews. This is always an entertaining read and where else are you going to find a recipe for breaded pig's knuckles only a couple of pages away from a Tsunami interview?



Nipple Hardness Factor #6 (\$2.00)



Chuck Arnold who also runs No Life Records also "edits" this zine. NHF is kind of a low tech indie alternative to The College Music Journal for fans of 7" vinyl. This zine contains nothing but 7" reviews and charts from college radio stations reporting what 7"s are getting airplay. It has a very *Shrimper*-like feel with hand written reviews thrown down in seemingly random order and orientation, but what it lacks in style in makes up for in charm and content. Recommended for the 7" junkie who gets frustrated by major magazines who are afraid to dig past the trendy bands and labels.



Nipple Hardness Factor #7 (\$3.50)



Yet another issue of Nipple hardness Factor, but this time it comes with a 7" single featuring new cuts from Smells Like! artists Blonde Redhead and Sammy. Also featured are the usual tons of 7" reviews, college radio charts, and interviews with Blonde Redhead and Sammy. As always, Nipple Hardness Factor acts as kind of a "Consumer Reports" to help guide you through the glut of 7" releases.

Nipple Hardness Factor #8 (\$3.50)

Wow! As if the Sammy/Blonde Redhead split in #7 wasn't enough, this time they give us a Franklin Bruno/Refrigerator single. As always, Nipple Hardness Factor is a bit messy and cluttered, but it contains a ton of 7" reviews and 7" charts from most of the radio stations that still value vinyl.

Noise for Heroes #22 (\$3.00)

For years, Noise for Heroes has been the definitive punk rock fanzine. It was well put together, intelligently written and true to its roots. Editor Steve Gardner likes punk rock, not hardcore or any other of the less melodic offshoots. Steve also has an incredible amount of knowledge of European punk rock, so along with features on bands like Superchunk and The Lazy Cowgirls, you'll find articles, interviews and reviews of a million European bands you'll read about nowhere else. I don't always agree with Steve's musical taste, but I love reading this zine anyway. There's no attitude and everything is written in an intelligent but straight forward style. I can read any one of Steve's reviews and immediately know whether I'll like the record or not. That's not something I can say about too many zines. Unfortunately, this is the final issue of Noise for Heroes, so if you have any interest in punk rock, you should grab this while it's still around.

Pawholes #5 (\$3.50)

The self-proclaimed, "Feminist Do-Me Reader" is back with issue number five and as always it's a great read. Deborah and Keren have a feminist slant to their zine, and presented in a funny and non-preachy way. This issue contains interviews with Azalia Snail, Mudwimmin and a female stock car driver along with articles on cleavage, touring with a small town metal band and the latest installment on how to pick up men. This is a great zine to read and the layout is a notch above the typical zine.

Science Geek #1 (\$3.00)

I'm a real sucker for these "indie rock and _____" type zines, but this one is one of the best I've ever seen. Who would have ever thought you could interview indie rock bands and have them talk about science? And who would have thought that it would be a fun and entertaining read? I certainly didn't, but I was wrong. This first issue contains inter-

views with Versus, Barbara Manning and The Dambuilders along with articles about fractals, Mercury, the electromagnetic spectrum and superconductivity. This is a very nicely put together and refreshing zine.

Splashdown #3 (\$2.00)

In three issues, *Splashdown* has gone from being an overly cute indie pop zine to a well designed, fun to read music zine. This issue includes interviews with Tattle Tale, Versus, Mike from Slumberland, Kicking Giant and lots of music and zine reviews. Usually I steer clear of the more straightforward music-oriented zines, but Peter proves you can still stick to music and produce a high quality, interesting zine.

Whirlpool #2 (\$4.00)

The magazine reminds of what *The Big Takeover* would be if Jack Rabid was a lot more up on what was happening these days. It has all the elements that made *The Big Takeover* so essential a few years ago: a love for pop music, good solid writing and great in depth band interviews. This issue has interviews with The Wedding Present, Love Spit Love, Half String, East River Pipe, Low, Polvo, Jale and Idaho as well as a ton of record reviews. This issue weighs in at 88 pages so it's well worth the cover price.

Yakuza #5 (\$2.50)

Yakuza is probably the most conventional looking of all the zines reviewed here. It's your standard 8.5" x 11" magazine full of typical things like record reviews, live reviews, interviews, travel logs etc. Don't assume that this is a run of the mill zine, because Dave McGurgan does such a great job with everything he writes about. In the world of travel, Dave tells of his adventures touring with Vineland, goes to a scary medical museum full of the remains of diseased and freakish human bodies and travels to a mall in New Jersey. On the musical side of things, we get an interview with Lisa Carver and about a million well written and no holds barred record reviews. This is a good read from start to finish and it looks great too.

Yakuza #6 (\$4.00)

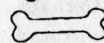
Each issue of *Yakuza* gets bigger and better. The cover price is a little higher, but that's because it comes packaged with a Matthew Shipp 7". After the overload of reviews in issue #5, this one takes a refreshing "no record reviews" approach. The main theme for this issue is "The World of Jobs" with lots of indie

rock folks telling about their lives in corporate America. These accounts are entertaining and often very humorous. There is also a great interview with the people at Siltbreeze Records, an interview with Jazz Artist Matthew Shipp and an incredibly well-written and fascinating diary of Dave's trip across the U.S.A. As always, *Yakuza* is professionally designed and is well worth the cover price.

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