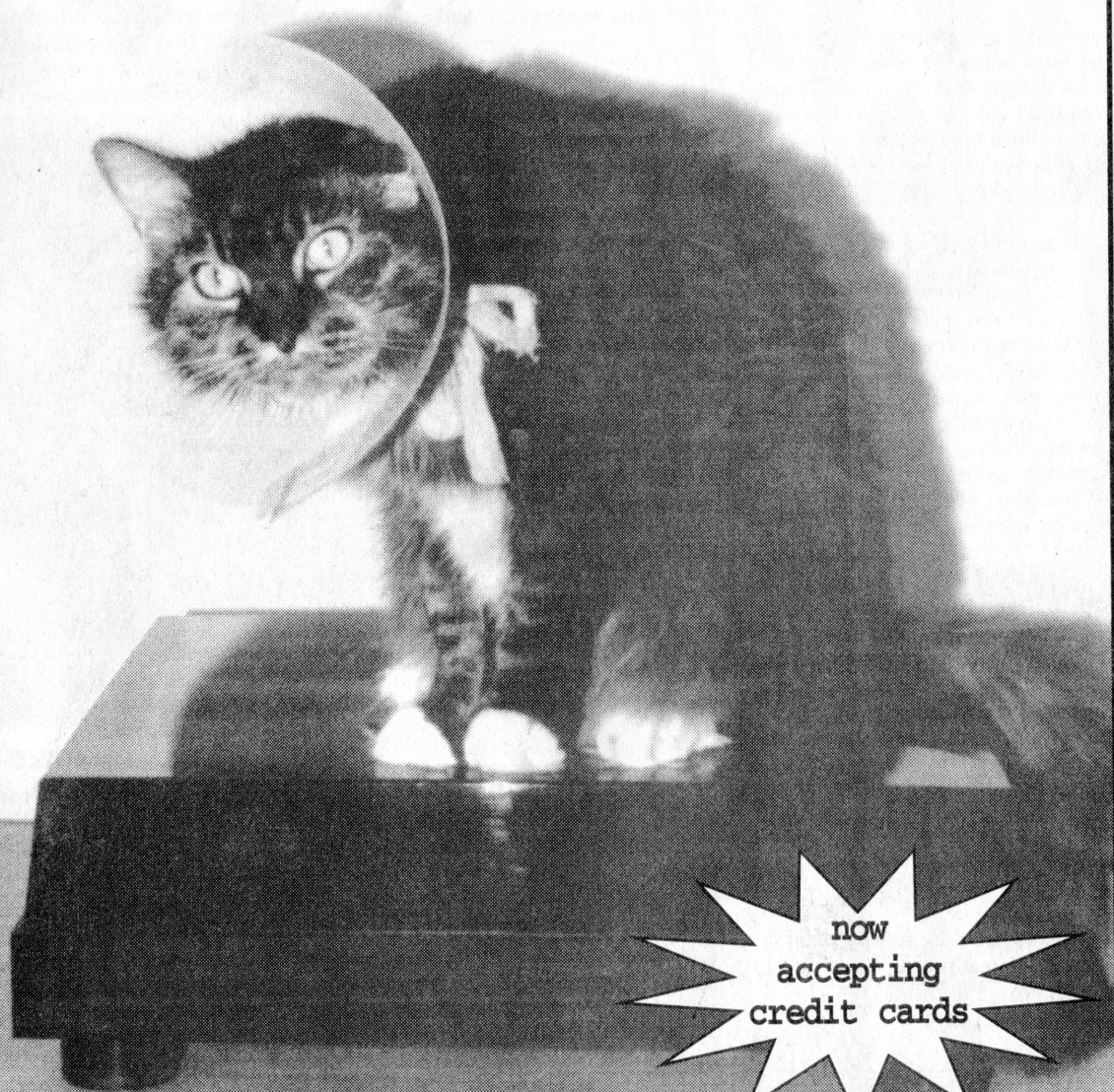


**pop**  
**NARCOTIC**

**mail order CATalog**  
**summer 1996** (the sick  
kitty issue)



now  
accepting  
credit cards



# things we've been liking



**Bill**

- Margaret.
- Steve Wynn's performance with Chris and Thalia from Come.
- Finally releasing the small factory compilation.
- Versus and Sleepyhead for making great music and being great people.
- Jennifer Jason Leigh in *Georgia*.
- Steve Earl *I Feel Fine*.
- Viva Saturn *Brightside*.
- Chris Cacavas *Dwarf Star*.
- Russ Tolman *Sweet Spot*.

**Screamin' Jay**

- Sleeping.
- Screaming.
- Being healthy and free of the cone.
- Rubbing up against Bud.
- Scratching my ears.
- Having my ears scratched.
- Kitty treats from mail order customers.
- Biting Bill and Aliza.

**Aliza**

- Japanese dinners with sugar plant and other guests at my house.
- Louise Bourgeois drawings and writings.
- Tizzy, Karate, Weeping in Fits and Starts, Varnaline, Danielle Howle, Pest 5000.
- The small factory compilation CD.
- Sufi and our new roommate Anne.
- Stirfried hot rice cakes at Koreana.
- Lili Taylor in *I Shot Andy Warhol*.
- Friends that keep me sane.
- Finding ponds to swim in.
- Making sushi and sharing it.

# hi folks,

It was our intention to get this out around New Year's when the beginning of this paragraph started, "Can you believe your eyes? You're holding a new Pop Narcotic catalog without the usual long wait. We guess that means we're finally getting more efficient or something." Funny, huh?

The "Sick Kitty" theme grew out of Screamin' Jay's untimely ear explosion around the time we were planning to first get this out. It caused Bill to skip his Christmas plans. But now Jay is healed, Bill still hasn't gotten to take any time off and we are finally getting this to you.

You will notice a few changes with this catalog. In addition to being our largest to date, you'll also find that we are concentrating much more on smaller labels and bands. As the whole indie rock scene explodes there are more bands and labels every day. For a new label, getting music distributed is nearly impossible. Hopefully, you'll check out some of the new bands and labels in here. There really is a lot of great music out there today and I think we've got a good cross section of it within all genres: indie pop, space rock, punk rock, etc. New entries into the catalog are marked by the symbol.

1995 was a busy year as Pop Narcotic expanded and released its first full length albums. Things weren't quite as rosy as we would have liked in terms of sales and exposure but we learned a lot of things and we dove into 1996 with even more enthusiasm and energy. So far this year, we've released new EPs from sugar plant and Tizzy and small factory's swan song singles compilation CD.

For the rest of 1996, you can look forward to a new 12" single from Buddha on the Moon, the long promised release from Kam Lung and a new EP and album from the Bush League All-Stars.

There are lots of other ideas bubbling around in our brains that are quite exciting. Hopefully we'll be announcing these plans in the near future.

In other exciting news, we can now take orders via Mastercard and Visa. There is a \$10 minimum for credit card orders, but this addition should allow us to get you your orders (and take your money) faster than before. We're also working hard to upgrade our Internet presence. Our World Wide Web page is now up to date and will be the best way to check up on new catalog entries and place credit card orders. Check out the Web page at:

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

In addition, we're going to begin doing regular mailings to our E-mail list. You can add yourself to this list by sending a message to:

[majordomo@world.std.com](mailto:majordomo@world.std.com)

In the body of the message, just say *subscribe popnarc\_mailing*. You can also use the form that you'll find on the web page to subscribe. We plan to do regular monthly updates which will inform you of new merchandise and label updates. This will get you added to the list and you'll get all future catalogs and updates.

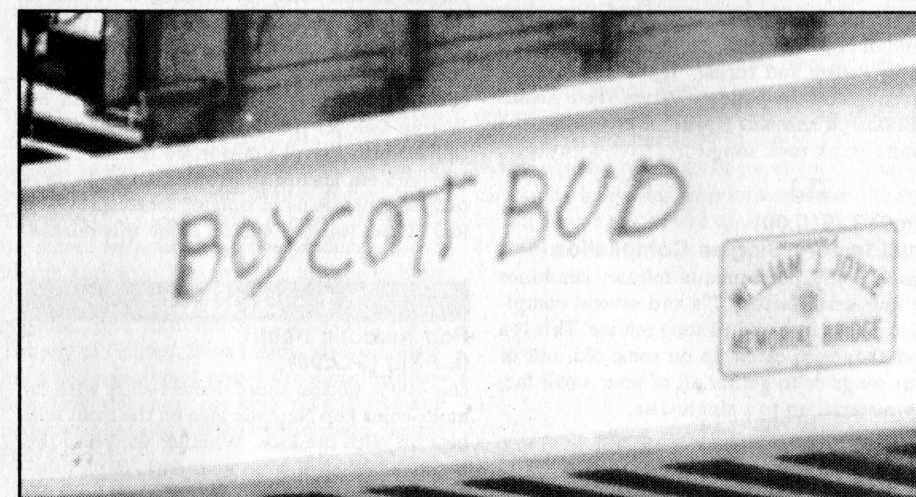
Our mailing list is getting huge and this is the last catalog that we'll be able to send to such a large list. Even if you don't order this time, we'd be glad to keep you on the list, but you have to let us know that you're interested. Staying on the list is easy. All you have to do is place an order, or get in touch with us and let us know you would like to continue receiving mailings. If we don't hear from you, we will have to remove your name. Also, if you move, let us know your new address. This will ensure that you continue to receive future catalogs and updates.

As always, there are several ways to get in touch with us. Feel free to use any of the methods below.

Email: [popnarc@world.std.com](mailto:popnarc@world.std.com)  
WWW: <http://www.popnarc.com>  
Voice: 617-628-4999  
Fax: 617-628-7007

Snail: Pop Narcotic  
1085 Commonwealth Ave. #339  
Boston, MA 02215

thanks, enjoy, and let us know  
what you think  
BILL & ALIZA



After last year's catalog with Bud on the cover the cats got jealous and went on a spray painting mission around Boston. We are still not sure how they got Bill's car started or how they got the covers off the paint cans but their effort did not go unrecognized as you can see from our cover.

credits: aliza did 99.5% of the layout, graphics, photography and copy editing. bill did 99.5% of the writing. J. did 100% of the cat poses.  
special thanks: (for technical assistance) guy jeffrey nelson of New Studio (for copy editing) emily becker.



# pop NARCOTIC releases

## current releases

**narc004 (\$3.50)**

**Helium "Hole In the Ground" 7"**

This single has been in and out of print due to various shortages and problems. By the time this catalog arrives, we should have more in stock. These two recordings, "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"

**narc008 (\$3.50)**

**Kam Lung "Hippie Love Stuff" 7"**

Kam Lung is a side-project of Dave Derby of The Dambuilders. 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.

**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 sounds like a cross between The Fastbacks and Heavenly.

**narc010 (\$10.00)**

**sugar plant *Hiding Place* CD**

This is the debut full length release for both Pop Narcotic and sugar plant. sugar plant is from Japan and is very 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 a Columbus, Ohio band fronted by Dan Spurgeon of Greenhorn. The All-Stars pick up right where Greenhorn left off with their 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 and 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.

**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 (\$10.00)**

**Bush League All Stars  
Old Numbers 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.

**narc015 (\$7.00)**

**sugar plant *Cage of the Sun* CD EP**

This CD-only EP contains six new sugar plant songs which were recorded in the U.S. in Spring of 1995. These songs take their brand of Galaxie 500 inspired pop music and stretch it in new directions. These songs are longer and have a dreamy, droney, Stereolab-like feel to them.

**narc016 (\$6.50 / \$7.00)**

**Tizzy *Befriend Us* 12" / CD EP**

These are the best Tizzy songs so far. Tizzy went into the studio and came out with 7 songs that cover a range of styles from catchy pop to Gang of Four style rock. As always with Tizzy, the songs are ultra-catchy but have a sense of urgency which sets them apart from more typical pop bands.

## future releases

**narc017 (\$4.50)**

**Bush League All-Stars  
Academic CD EP**

We couldn't wait for the new Bush League All-Stars full-length so we decided to release this budget priced EP to help bridge the gap. This EP includes six songs and gives a glimpse of what the new All-Stars lineup is all about. This EP comes packaged in a fold-over package similar to a 7" single.

**narc018 (\$6.00)**

**Buddha on the Moon  
"Esplanade" 12" Single**

What do you do when you get a nine minute song that is so great that it deserves to be a single? In this case, we decided to return to the 80's and do a 12" single. This 45 rpm EP contains three songs. The A-side is a sensitive and largely acoustic recording with intense climaxes. The two B-sides were recorded by Warren Defever (His Name is Alive) and take the Buddha on the Moon sound and add Warren's cut and paste production style for a unique twist. Fans of quieter rock bands like Red House Painters should enjoy this 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

Here's the latest updates on Pop Narcotic bands, past and present. We're always getting requests for information on bands, so here's what we think is interesting at the moment. Some of this may be out of date, but it's the best information we have at the moment.

## Bush League All-Stars

The All-Stars have been busy in the studio again. Last summer, they came to Boston and recorded 6 new songs with Darron Burke at The Cold Room. Earlier this year, they went back to Chicago to record a new album with Bob Weston. Three of the Chicago tracks will be combined with three of the Boston tracks for their new *Academic* EP. This EP should be available in early August. Most of the remaining Chicago tracks will make up their second full-length release *The Thoughtful Stuff*. Since recording their debut album, the All-Stars have also had another personnel change. Bass player Ed Mann has left the band and guitarist Don Hartman has moved over to bass. The new three piece lineup made its debut at the Loud Music Festival in the Spring and it sounded great. This new lineup should allow them to play more live shows to support the upcoming releases.

## The Dambuilders

The Dambuilders have been taking a break after touring to support *Ruby Red*. That record seemed to get lost in the major label shuffle, but they'll be back with a new record soon. The tentative plans call for a more live sounding record without a big name producer. Kevin March and Joan Wasser have also been busy playing in Mind Science of the Mind with Nathan from Shudder to Think and Mary Timony of Helium. Dave Derby has been playing a few solo shows under the name Brilliante. Eric Masunaga has been recording many bands and has also started his own label, Sealed Fate Records.

## Helium

Helium is preparing to record a new album for Matador late this summer. They've been busy touring to support their *Dirt of Luck* album both on their own and supporting Sonic Youth. As always, Helium's live shows are amazing. Mary and Ash have also been recording some material under the name Led Byrd. The first Led Byrd release can be found on the Villa Villkula *Stargirl* EP. In addition, a live version of Helium's "Lucy" appears on a WMBR benefit CD.

## small factory

Since the small factory breakup, Alex and Phoebe have released their first material as The God Rays. Look for their double 7" and full-length album on Vernon Yard. Dave has been busy with his new band, Flora Street, and has also been recording a lot of bands in his home studio. Look for Dave's production work on the new Purple Ivy Shadows album on Zero Hour Records.

## sugar plant

sugar plant recently returned to the U.S. for their second American tour. Their live shows were better than ever and wowed audiences wherever they went. They also have signed to a Japanese major label, Pony Canyon. They recorded their major label debut, *After After Hours* at Studio Red in Philadelphia. This new record goes in a much more psychedelic, spacy direction than their previous releases. Plans for an American release of *After After Hours* are still undecided.

## Swirlies

We haven't been keeping up with the Swirlies that much lately but we did get an update from Gavin of Karate (who toured with them) on the latest Swirlies news. Swirlies toured the U.S. for one month this Spring supporting their new Taang! album, *They Spent Their Wild Youthful Days in the Glittering World of the Salons*. Recently they've been without a regular drummer but have continued to play many Boston shows in various incarnations including shows without any drummer. Christina Files has also been playing with Mona Elliot (ex-Spore) in a band called Victory at Sea. Former vocalist and guitarist, Seana Carmody continues to lead her own band, Syrup USA. They have been playing often around Boston and just released their second 7", "Teen Death."

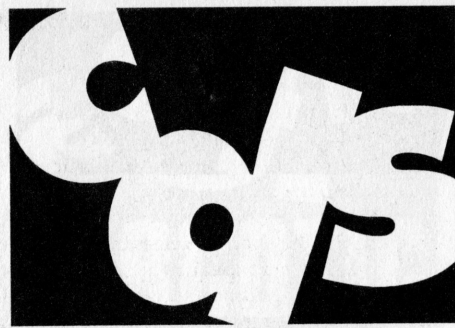
## Tizzy

Tizzy continues to plug away in the New England area, playing as many shows as they can without getting fired from their jobs. They took some time off recently to go out on their second tour. They went out for about three weeks to support their *Befriend Us* CD. The tour had some ups and downs but for the most part they had fun, enjoyed playing and meeting people and made it back safely and with their normally high level of enthusiasm.

## Versus

As always, Versus has spent the past year moving at a frantic pace, with lots of touring and two new releases. The *Deep Red* EP closes out their deal with Teen Beat and their latest album *Secret Swingers* starts off their new deal with Caroline. *Deep Red* is their first release as a four piece and also their most experimental release. *Secret Swingers* is a more typical Versus album and has a couple of stand-out tracks from their live show, "Yeah You" and "Double Suicide." There are also plans for a video for "Yeah You." In the fall, Versus will be back on the road for more live shows all over the U.S. They will also be doing an extensive tour of the Far East as part of an *Ear of the Dragon* support tour with Seam and others.





**Alger Hiss *Settings for Nudes* (Ba Da Bing!) (\$10.00)**

Ba Da Bing! is quickly establishing itself as one of the most interesting new indie labels out there today. You might remember Alger Hiss from its cut on the *Follow the Bouncing Ball* compilation. This new full-length release proves that wasn't a fluke. Alger Hiss brings together a blend of early 80's post-punk, a DC sound reminiscent of recent Lungfish material and a tiny bit of the prog-rock sound. The sum of these influences is a big, loud guitar based album that is unique and jumps out from the crowd.

**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 releases. 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.

**Big Angry Fish *Beluga* (\$10.00)**

Big Angry Fish is a Chicago-based band that recognizes what makes a good power pop song: short and to the point songs that live and die by their hooks. The overall sound is a bit like the Gigolo Aunts but grittier and with less reliance on vocal harmonies. Anyone into pure power pop should dig this CD. It'll sound fine alongside your Tommy Keene and Big Star records.

**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 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, 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.

**Bottom Feeders *Big Six* (Scooch Pooch) (\$10.00)**

Releases like this are quickly putting Scooch Pooch on the map as the new kings of raw, garage punk. If you're looking for rock music with an intellectual side, The Bottom Feeders aren't for you. But, if you'd rather listen to music that could serve as the soundtrack for a film of hot rod car crashes, this may be your thing. This is by no means pure punk rock, as The Bottom Feeders aren't afraid to throw in a well placed (and usually sloppy) guitar lead where it seems appropriate. Also, they often slow down to a tempo that would disappoint narrow-minded punkers. This CD is a wild ride from start to finish, but if you can handle it, it's quite an experience.

**Franklin Bruno *A Bedroom Community* (Simple Machines) (\$10.00)**

This is the first full length release from Franklin Bruno, better known as the guitarist/vocalist for Nothing Painted Blue. This solo album gives him a chance to showcase his songwriting skills in a quieter setting. Most of this disc is solo guitar and vocals and, as always with Mr. Bruno's music, the lyrics are intelligent and witty.

**Bügsköll *Phantasies and Senseitions* (Road Cone) (\$10.00)**

Bügsköll is a band from Portland, Oregon that has an artsy, avant garde sound. This is a difficult sound to pull off without occasionally slipping appearing to be pretentious, but Bügsköll never drifts too far. In some ways, Bügsköll tread in a similar territory as Thinking Fellers Union Local 282, but there's nothing quirky or jarring about the Bügsköll sound. The music is rich in instrumentation with keyboards, violin, clarinet and saxophones being added to the standard rock instrument mix. This is the sort of album that could serve as mellow background music or could be studied closely to pick out every nuance.

**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. 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 syrupy sweet at times, but here they make an attempt to rock a little. They prove themselves to be more than a band that can only make 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.

**Chris Cacavas *New Improved Pain* (Normal) (\$10.00)**

Chris Cacavas is probably still best known as the former keyboard player for Green on Red. Since he left Green on Red, he's been making some of the best music this side of Neil Young. This is his third proper solo album and is vintage Chris Cacavas. It's currently only available as a German import but we managed to get some copies that we are selling at domestic prices. The music is raw and edgy and has a rootsy and sometimes country influenced sound. Chris has a harsh emotional voice which serves him well in delivering songs that often cover serious issues like spouse abuse or gun control.

**Chisel *8 AM All Day* (Gern Blandsten) (\$10.00)**

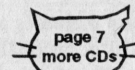
This is the second CD release from DC's Chisel. It picks up where the last EP left off but moves on a more straightforward pop course. The song structures have an even more distinctive Jam influence this time around, but a post-punk DC influence still permeates the songs. This record is a logical step up for Chisel and shows definite growth. It amazes me that Chisel isn't better known. They are absolutely one of the best of the current batch of DC bands.

**Chisel *Nothing New EP* (Gern Blandsten) (\$8.00)**

Chisel produces a unique blend of music. They combining elements of pop music with some harsher sounds, that aren't too far removed from some more melodic Touch and Go bands. The pop elements in their music are not typical of today's indie pop. Chisel's pop music is aggressive and draws from influences like The Jam and Mission of Burma as well as the sounds of bands from their hometown, Washington, DC. Although this CD is listed as an EP, it clocks in at 35 minutes with 11 songs. All in all, this is quality music and a great value.

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

Containe is Connie Lovatt from Alkaline and Fontaine Troups of Versus making sparse, simple and beautiful music. Most of the 8 songs here 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.

**Curious Ritual *God Hilliard* (Dahlia) (\$10.00)**

Curious Ritual remain one of Boston's best kept secrets. They've been around for years, playing shows and putting out records, but somehow they've never quite caught the ears of anyone outside of Boston. For this debut full-length, they traveled to New York and recorded with Kramer. The result is a stunning release that seamlessly blends a multitude of styles, ranging from airy ethereal moments to denser, louder sounds. The two constant elements throughout this CD are the strength of the songs and the strong, beautiful vocals from Linda Jung. Anyone into recent material on IPR should find this CD to be a very pleasant discovery.

**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.

**Doldrums *Secret Life of Machines* (VHF) (\$8.00)**

Every time I get a new VHF release, I rave about it and this is no exception. In fact, this is my favorite release on VHF so far. As with all of their releases, this is a blend of improvisations and has an extremely varied sound. If I had to use one word to describe this CD, it would have to be "ambient," but not in a "Brian Eno" or "modern-trance-dance" way. Instead, it sounds completely organic and ebbs and flows naturally. If hippies had brains, they'd be listening to this rather than those crusty old Grateful Dead boots.

**Eric's Trip *Peter EP* (Murder) (\$8.00)**

Eric's Trip provided their hometown label with this Canadian only release before releasing their last Sub Pop album. As with previous Eric's Trip releases, this one is a combination of pop hooks, guitar squall and occasional all out noise. All of this is topped off with their usual

blend of great male and female vocals. This is a solid release and definitely not a collection of tracks not good enough for their "real label."

**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 spacy 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.

**Füxa *3 Field Rotation* (Ché) (\$12.00)**

Füxa is a big part of the Michigan space rock scene so it's strange that they'd have to go to the British label Ché to get their debut album released. As modern space rock bands go, Füxa tend to work on the melodic pop side of the spectrum. Though there is definitely a Stereolab influence at here, Füxa is more experimental and unpredictable. Thus you shouldn't be surprised to hear a bright, catchy pop number sandwiched between a more droney, drugged-out piece and a long spacy drum interlude. The music on this CD covers so much ground that it's difficult to pin down and never gets dull or repetitive like other bands of this genre.

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

*Revisionist* is the first post-Sub Pop record from this Boston band. They blend a loud, furious three guitar attack with memorable melodies in a 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.

**Half String *Eclipse \*Oval \*Hue* (Independent Project) (\$10.00)**

Half String is a band which play a integral part in the burgeoning noise-pop scene in Arizona. This is a compilation of two early singles and several previously unreleased songs. Half String makes very beautiful music that is driven by heavily processed and layered guitars along with gorgeous male vocals that bring to mind New Order. This EP is a fine example of how to take the early Factory Records sound and change it into something truly original and urgent.

**Half String *Tripped Up Breathing* (Independent Project) (\$9.00)**

Half String is one of the latest in a group of new and interesting bands coming out of the Tempe, Arizona area. Like most of these bands, Half String draws from both British ethereal and American indie pop sounds. This EP takes a slightly less atmospheric approach than their earlier singles. The songs are strong and melodic and a bit like early material from Ride. As with all IPR releases, the packaging is impeccable. This CD comes wrapped in a beautiful letterpress discfolio with a nice full color photograph.

**Halo Bit *Gravity* (spinART) (\$8.50)**

Halo Bit is a band fronted by Alex Kemp (ex-small factory) who is now in God Rays. Halo Bit seems to be an outlet for songs that wouldn't have fit into the context of small factory. These songs are deep and introspective, in contrast to the all out exuberance of the older small factory material. If you liked Alex's work in small factory, you're sure to enjoy this as well.

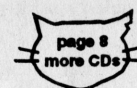
**Heartworms *Space Escapade* (Darla) (\$10.00)**

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 between 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 its 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.





**♫ Holiday "Who's Gonna Find Out?" (March) (\$4.00)**

This is a new three song CD single. Packaged in a simple foldover sleeve we get a CD that sells for almost the price of a vinyl single. The songs here are bouncy and fun. "Who's Gonna Find Out?" is probably the most infectious piece of pop from Holiday yet. The single is rounded out with two songs that are quieter and more laid back. If this single is any indication of the upcoming full-length release, we're in for a real treat in a few months.

**♫ Holiday Flyer "Sweet and Sour" (Darla) (\$4.00)**

This three song EP serves as a nice follow-up to Holiday Flyer's brilliant full-lengther on Silver Girl. While still essentially a two piece, brother/sister duo, this EP sounds a bit more filled-out and less fragile than the previous album. The songs still retain that pretty, forlorn quality that makes them a real breath of fresh air in today's indie rock world.

**♫ Holiday Flyer Try Not to Worry (Silver Girl) (\$9.00)**

It's been a long time since I've heard a record this strikingly beautiful. Holiday Flyer is a West Coast trio whose music is sparse with minimal percussion and touches of cello. Occasionally the songs bring to mind Magnetic Fields, but Holiday Flyer are much more than an imitation. The songs have the personal feel of the best small factory songs but add a more ornate sound to the mix. This is an album that grows with each listen. Anyone who appreciates quieter indie rock bands should own this record. It's one of the best of this genre in the past few years.

**♫ Hula Hoop The Loveliest Ring of Saturn (Silver Girl) (\$9.00)**

When you think of Louisville bands, a certain sound comes to mind. The legacy of Squirrel Bait and Slint has led a lot of people to believe that this is "the Louisville sound." Hula Hoop is a Louisville band that takes a different route. Their intelligent guitar pop has probably never caught on down there, but thanks to Silver Girl, the whole world finally has a chance to hear a full-lengther from Hula Hoop. The catchy pop melodies are the first thing to grab your attention, but multiple listens will bring more detail to the surface. Although Hula Hoop is a pop band, it isn't syrupy sweet. Instead, their music is driven by the interplay between the two guitars and the strong, emotional vocals and lyrics. This gives it a down to earth, rootsy feel that is fairly unique in indie rock today. This is a solid debut.

**♫ Jale Closed EP (Murder) (\$8.00)**

This is a one off EP released only in Canada. It is also the last Jale release with their original

lineup. It has a similar sound to their Sub Pop debut *Dreamcake*, but with smoother and tighter feel. Even with this more mature sound, Jale still have that innocent charm and those beautiful harmonies that made *Dreamcake* an absolute favorite.

**♫ The Jennifers Nine Days Wonder (You Say When) (\$9.00)**

You Say When has been busy mining the Baltimore pop scene and The Jennifers CD is their first full length release. Although this band has a timeless pop sound, they don't fit neatly into any of the categories that exist in today's pop world. Their sound is crisp and clean and owes as much to people like Nick Lowe and Elvis Costello as it does to today's pop music. Instead of the muddy, lo-fi road taken so often in the indie world, these recordings are crisp and clean and the vocals are right out front. The two main songwriters, John Irvine and Chuck Rainville have distinctly different styles. John's songs tend to be more somber love songs while Chuck's are more upbeat rock and roll. This variety ensures that this debut album never gets boring. It's good to see a band with such a heartfelt and honest take on music they obviously love.

**♫ The La Donnas Scooch Pooch) (\$10.00)**

The La Donnas should be the perfect soundtrack for the summer. The music is fast and furious but at the same time fun and melodic. For the sake of comparison, think of the Didjits or The Supersuckers. From a musical point of view The La Donnas take a raw, melodic garage sound and spice it with the occasional surf riff. If you remember the days when punk rock was fun and think we need more of that today, check out this CD. Two and a half chords never sounded so good.

**♫ Ladybug Transistor Marlborough Farms (Park 'N' Ride) (\$10.00)**

The opening chords of this album just cry "Pavement rip-off." Luckily I didn't judge them on the first 90 seconds because it quickly branches out in many different directions. With instrumentation that ranges from keyboards and horns to various percussion instruments, this CD sounds very original. Despite the varied texture of the music, this is still a pop record. There's nothing esoteric or unapproachable about it. It's refreshing to hear a band that can operate from an indie rock base but successfully bring so many other elements together.

**♫ 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.

**♫ Lilys Eccsane the Photon Band (spinART) (\$10.00)**

This, the third full-lengther from Kurt Heasley's latest incarnation of the Lilys brings us surprises. They move on a slow, moody, trance-inducing course. The instrumentation is more varied than in previous efforts with organ, synth, vibraphone and horns added to the mix. Overall this has a laid back, vaguely psychedelic sound that brings to mind an updated version of the Rain Parade's *Explosions in the Glass Palace*.

**♫ 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.

**♫ Log My Evil Friend EP (Anyway) (\$8.00)**

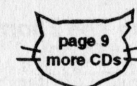
The second CD release from Log takes a very personal and homespun approach. Although the recording quality is much better than their debut, the music is closer to the heart with a rootsy, down home sound mixing successfully with a strong Feelies influence. Once again, Log proves that you don't have to force yourself into any indie rock niche to get your point across. Strong music stands on its own.

**♫ Loren Mazza Cane Moonyean (Road Cone) (\$10.00)**

It's probably quite a surprise to find this in the Pop Narcotic catalog. Loren Mazza Cane is a NYC-based solo, improvisational guitar player. Normally, this isn't my thing; a lot of this stuff strikes me as self-indulgent and wanky. But this CD is a bit different, as it is quiet and avoids the traps of most solo guitar projects. Instead of trying to wow us with virtuosity and chops, Loren just plays songs that meander and flow without getting lost. This is by no means a pop album, but it works great as a challenging, but mellow piece of late night music.

**♫ Madelines Your Motives Kill Me (Sudden Shame) (\$10.00)**

One listen to this record and you have no doubt that Madelines are big fans of My Bloody Valentine and Swirlies. Their guitar sound is almost identical to these bands, but Madelines stress the songs more. Each of the nine songs



on this CD is memorable and unlike so many other shoegazer bands, the vocals are up front and recognizable and don't just act as another instrument in the mix. It's been a long time since I've heard a band mine this musical territory so well.

**♫ 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 straight-ahead, 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.

**♫ Monsterland Loser Friendly (spinART) (\$6.50)**

*Loser Friendly* was the first non-seven inch release from Monsterland. It is also quite a change of pace from their previous releases. With the help of producer Kurt Ralske (Ultra Vivid Scene), they took their normally loud, Hüsker Dü inspired songs and gave them a cleaner and quirkier treatment. Overall, the volume is turned down and the weirdness and feedback are turned up. In spite of these differences the record still features those trademark Monsterland pop hooks.

**♫ Moon Socket (Derivative) (\$10.00)**

Moon Socket is a solo side project from Chris of Eric's Trip. His debut CD release is quite a treat. It comes packaged in a beautiful, silkscreened fold-out non-jewel box package that gives it a professional but still homemade appeal. The music is similar to his 7" and cassette releases. It's lo-fi and personal and consists mainly of simple guitar and vocal tracks recorded at home. There is an assortment of noise interludes and strange sounds added in, but they don't get in the way of the songs. In fact, they actually add a little atmosphere to the album. This is a lot more coherent and melodic than the previous 7" releases and should help Chris get his solo recordings to a larger audience.

**♫ Mothra Leaning on the Fridge (Dead Beat) (\$8.00)**

This is probably the most difficult CD to describe in this catalog. These recordings do not fit into any neatly defined category. I definitely hear a lot of 70's rock influences but they aren't thrown together in a mindless cartoon fashion like Urge Overkill. For the most part, the songs have great, catchy melodies and are delivered in an energetic fashion. Also, the production brings out many nuances that serve to lift it above other music of this sort. Occasionally this CD does drift into slightly self-indulgent territory, but these moments are certainly excep-

tions. The packaging is an added bonus. The CD comes wrapped in foil covered paper inside a well designed cardboard box. This is one of the most creative non-jewel box packages I've come across.

**♫ Moviola Frantic (Spirit of Orr) (\$8.00)**

I have mixed feelings about this release. The concept of taking a vinyl only release, adding a few songs to it and rereleasing it on CD strikes me as a disservice to the people who bought the original vinyl. So, that's why I have big misgivings about this repackaging of the *Frantic* 10" with four additional tracks. One one hand Moviola are a great band and deserve exposure to non-vinyl junkies, but on the other hand why force their loyal fans to either miss out on these new songs or buy them again. OK, enough record label philosophy. You have a choice; you can buy this new CD version or pick up the discounted version of the 10" vinyl. If you want a description of the music, check out our 10" vinyl section and be assured, the four new songs are up to par with anything on the vinyl.

**♫ Pee Now, More Charm and More Tender (March) (\$10.00)**

Pee is a San Francisco band that has put out a string of impressive singles and demo tapes. All of these early recordings were made in a lo-fi manner, so it was a shock to hear this first full length album. The songs are huge and their sound has matured to the point that they are truly one of the best pop bands around today. In many ways, this Pee album makes me think of where Velocity Girl should have gone when they released their first album. The songs have great pop melodies, but blend them with elements of noise and many weird tempo changes that keep the songs from being predictable.

**♫ Photon Band "747" (Darla) (\$4.00)**

Photon Band is from Philadelphia and give us three bargain priced tracks of their loose but melodic psychedelic music. Their music isn't psychedelic in a traditional 60's way, but it's more of a combination of the dense, distorted sound of the Grifters crossed with a tad of drugged out rock. This is a good release for those into the mind-altering sounds of bands like The Flaming Lips and Bardo Pond.

**♫ Pipe 6 Days till BELLUS (Jesus Christ) (\$10.00)**

Next time you hear one of those new bands that MTV is hyping as punk and you start to get depressed, just pop in this CD and you'll be happy again. Pipe is a four piece from Chapel Hill, NC that performs raw, energetic and straight-ahead punk rock. There's no goofy frat-boy antics, metal influences or slick production here, just 13 short but intense songs that represent what punk rock is all about.

**♫ Pipe International Cement (Jesus Christ) (\$10.00)**

I did a double take when I opened up the new Pipe CD and noticed that it was produced by Mitch Easter. It didn't really seem like a good combination. I couldn't imagine Mitch Easter's production style meshing well with the all out punk fury of Pipe. I shouldn't have worried. This second full length release keeps all the intensity of their previous records while adding clearer, cleaner production that serves to increase the intensity rather than downplay it. With this record, Pipe retain their role as the best punk rock band this side of The New Bomb Turks.

**♫ Plumtree Mass Teen Fainting (Cinnamon Toast) (\$10.00)**

This CD sounds like a throwback to the East Coast pop scene of the early 1990's. The sound is upbeat, happy and above all youthful and enthusiastic. Plumtree is four girls from Halifax, Nova Scotia. Although they are barely out of high school, they manage to blend their youthful energy with playing that is better than most bands ten years older. If you dig early small factory or Cub, you'll probably love Plumtree.

**♫ Polvo 7 Song EP (Jesus Christ) (\$10.00)**

This is a reissue of the first Polvo release, a double 7" on Kitchen Puff Records which has been out of print for quite a while. These songs are vintage Polvo and show the band when they were first beginning to merge their pop sensibility with their experimentation in guitar weirdness. As an added bonus, the CD packaging was designed by Bruce Licher of Independent Project Press.

**♫ 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.

**♫ Rake The Art Ensemble of Rake/The Tell Tale Moog (VHF) (\$12.00)**

You may not believe this, but Rake has released a double CD. Both discs run over 67 minutes. One contains 6 tracks, the other contains 75. Are you confused yet? Don't worry. I am too and I've already listened to this thing a couple of times. The music is all over the place, from typical rock songs that go well with their earlier singles, to spacy improv that fits in with the *Rake is My Co-pilot* 12", to newer weird electronic, knob twisting material. This is one of those records that can never be entirely absorbed no matter how often you listen to it. I guarantee that there are plenty of people who will think this is complete garbage while others will listen to it astounded for years.



**α Retsin Salt Lick (Simple Machines) (\$10.00)**

Retsin is a collaboration between Tara Jane O'Neil (ex-Rodan) and Cynthia Nelson (Ruby Falls). This eight song EP seems to be an opportunity for Tara and Cynthia to experiment with musical styles outside the realm of their normal bands. Each song is different stylistically, from smooth Tsunami-styled pop to country-tinged sounds, to intricate but quiet ballads. This is a strong EP that should appeal to fans of Ruby Falls.

**α Rotator Cuff (Park 'N' Ride) (\$7.50)**

Although Rotator Cuff are from Highland Park, New Jersey, the music has more in common with British pop music circa 1981. Listening to this CD reminds me of Howard Devoto and Felt, but with a more modern indie rock influence thrown into the mix. This EP is full of very accessible pop songs with just a touch of British aloofness.

**α Scenic Incident at Cima (Independent Project) (\$11.50)**

This was one of the best records of 1995. Scenic is the latest project from Bruce Licher of Independent Project and Savage Republic. This album is presented as a soundtrack for the East Mojave Desert. Amazingly, Scenic pulls off the concept without a hitch. This all instrumental album manages to evoke many moods, from the quiet haziness of a desert night to more upbeat sounds that might serve as a backdrop for a Western movie. The overall feeling this record evokes is calm and peaceful, but there is an edge that that implies something darker is hidden somewhere in the distance. There's nothing derivative about this record. It has a truly unique and compelling sound and is packaged in elegant IPR style. Albums this great don't come along very often.

**α Scenic "Sage" (IPR) (\$9.00)**

The newest release from Scenic continues in the instrumental tradition of their stunning debut. The two new songs on this EP are slightly more straightforward. There's less mystery and more of a traditional rock sound. Still, there's something special in their smooth, shimmering guitar sound that projects a soothing mental image. *Incident at Cima* was a masterpiece album, and this follow up does not disappoint. As an added bonus, the "Sage" CD contains the three tracks from Scenic's debut 7", "The Kelso Run."

**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 stop-

ping 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 original.

**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 sound 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 better produced than their previous singles but still retains the loose and fun punk rock feel that made those earlier releases so great.

**α The Sneetches Starfucker (Bus Stop) (\$8.00)**

Here, the Sneetches dish out a seven song dose of their Beatles/Big Star influenced pop music. These songs were originally recorded as demos for their *Blow Out The Sun* LP, but they stand out as worthy of release on their own. These tracks have a bit of a rock feel to them but still have all of the characteristics of classic pop music. This EP sounds as if the band was listening to mid-period Beatles albums constantly, for the weeks preceding its studio time.

**α Sone Holiday and Sport (Darla) (\$11.00)**

This Sone album has a definite split personality. The first half explores the theme of sports with great rough edge pop music. There's no one obvious reference point to use to describe this music. Instead, it draws from many different aspects of the indie scene. Just as quickly as Sone jumped into the pop sound, they shift gears again for the second half of the album. This second half is a series of drone space rock songs driven by simple synth melodies and a creepy mechanical percussion sound. It's an odd change of pace but both portions work well in their own way. This release is also available on a double 12" format.

**α Spatula Even The Thorny Acacia (Jesus Christ) (\$10.00)**

Spatula is a two piece (guitar, vocals, drums) outfit from the Chapel Hill, NC. Unlike most minimalist two piece bands, Spatula is not the least bit lo-fi or garagey. Also, they are able to create a multitude of different sounds and thus never get predictable or monotonous like some other two piece bands. Spatula creates a unique and intricate brand of rock that combines the pop sensibility of Versus with the quirky guitar weirdness of Polvo.

**α Spatula Medium Planners and Matchers (Jesus Christ) (\$10.00)**

Spatula is probably the most unique two piece band in existence today. This second full-length release is more ambitious than the first and pushes their musical boundaries in new directions. While most two piece outfits try to make up for their size by overplaying, Spatula knows the value of space and aren't afraid to slow things down and make you think. In the area of melodies, the band digs deep and seems to be playing in a strange Eastern way that brings to mind Polvo. In some ways, this Spatula album draws from the same area that Codeine mined a few years ago. That is a hard thing to do well, and Spatula pulls it off just fine.

**α Sportsguitar Fade Cliche (Derivative) (\$10.00)**

The is the first full-length release from the Swiss duo, Sportsguitar. While their singles showed promise, there was nothing that prepared me for this record. As the indie rock world gets more and more predictable and boring, it's wonderful to hear a release so fresh and enjoyable. Sportsguitar have a basic ability to write strong pop melodies, but it's the arrangement and attention to detail that make this album stand out from the pack. Throughout this album, the melodies are driven by the vocals and the mix brings them to the front. Behind that lies a bed of guitar that is sometimes melodically coupled to the vocals, but often is combined with a layer of pulsating feedback. This is a combination that you would expect to be harsh and discordant, but here it seems natural and right. Sportsguitar is taking pop music in a new and exciting direction. Check them out!

**α Super Thirty-One Eye Heavy (Snap!) (\$10.00)**

Super Thirty-One is a Southern California band that takes a distinctively British approach to its music. The songs are fairly evenly split between those that are heavy in atmosphere and those of a more pop persuasion. The atmospheric songs use shimmering guitars to create a mood, but not a free form space rock kind of mood. Occasionally, these tracks make me think of a more guitar oriented version of songs from OMD's *Architecture and Morality*. The more pop oriented parts of *Eye Heavy* beckon back to the glory days of mid-1980's British pop. Imagine bands like The Lucy Show or

The Comsat Angels updating themselves for the 90's with a blend of their old sound and a bit of today's shoegazer guitar wash and you'll get a feel for where this is coming from.

**α Superdrag The Fabulous 8-track Sound of... (Darla) (\$10.00)**

Do we really need a Cheap Trick for the 1990's? Sure, why not? Good, hearty, power-pop never goes out of fashion and Superdrag does a great job of keeping the flame alive. This follow-up to their two earlier seven inches also serves as a preview of their upcoming major-label debut. For the most part, Superdrag uses this EP to refine their sound while still keeping the energy that drove those earlier records.

**α 30 Amp Fuse Wind Up (Darla) (\$10.00)**

First off, I'm a sucker for any record with both a baseball-related title and packaging. Secondly, any band that can capture what was urgent and essential about Hüsker Dü without sounding dull and predictable gets a big thumbs up. And finally, these guys used to live somewhere near the Grifters. What more can I say except that this is one of the best post-punk, power-pop records I've heard over the past few years. These songs have everything: power, energy and the all-essential stick-in-your-brain hooks.

**α Those Bastard Souls Twentieth Century Chemical (Darla) (\$11.00)**

Although disguised as a record from a Dutch band, in reality this record is a side project from Dave Shouse of Grifters. I thought that the Grifters' *Ain't My Lookout* was about as good as it gets, but in many ways, this new band puts that release to shame. Throughout this release, you can't help hearing the distinctive imprint of Dave Shouse. The songs have this dark, bluesy feel to them, but instead of filtering them through a cloud of Southern U.S. murk, these are pulled through a British psychedelic and glam-rock filter. The result is a stunning combination that brings to mind T-Rex, *Revolver* and *Sergeant Pepper*-era Beatles and American blues.

**α Tinsel Finding the Perfect Gift (Jesus Christ) (\$10.00)**

Of all the bands from Chapel Hill in this catalog, I've had the hardest time trying to describe Tinsel because they don't fit any of the convenient categories. In fact, I'd be more likely to say it resembles some sort of Chicago sound. The music is full of twists and turns, and stops and starts. Despite this, Tinsel avoid the "math rock" sound because of the underlying pop sensibility. If I had to make one analogy it would be to the DC band, Edsel but with a harder, more unpredictable edge.

**α Tinsel Quit While You're Ahead (Jesus Christ) (\$10.00)**

On this second full-length release, Tinsel balances slacker rock tendencies with its love of dynamics and rhythm. This is a fine line to walk and they do it well. It's rare to hear a band whose influences are so obviously rooted in the indie rock of the past few years make music this original. Since their first album, Tinsel has shown a lot of growth and produced a much more focused album.

**α Russ Tolman Sweet Spot (Brilliant) (\$10.00)**

Since his days in True West, Russ Tolman has been honing his craft as a songwriter. With this album, his fifth solo effort, Russ works in a mature and subtle manner but avoids producing an overly slick and bland record. Often the songs are reminiscent of Van Morrison with personal lyrics and intelligent arrangements. Actually, there's nothing alternative or "indie" sounding about this record. That's OK, because this could serve as a lesson for many of today's alternative bands: good songs and arrangements never go out of style.

**α Tone Build (Independent Project) (\$10.00)**

This Tone CD is a joint release between Dischord and IPR. Tone is a very unique project. It is an 11 piece ensemble with 8 guitars. Rather than creating a lot of racket, Tone takes a Glen Branca approach, with the guitars layered to create a shimmering mass of sound that is very melodic and pop oriented. At times it is difficult to imagine that this sound comes from eight guitars. Each guitar plays a simple part and the instruments combine in an orchestral way to create this huge but subtle sound.

**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 isn't 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.

**α Tsunami World Tour and Other Destinations (Simple Machines) (\$10.00)**

*World Tour and Other Destinations* is a collection of 22 Tsunami songs from singles and compilations, recorded between 1991 and 1993. This material is some of Tsunami's strongest and this is the first time that most of it is being made available on CD. To top it off, the packaging on this CD is miles ahead of normal, generic CD packaging.

**α Tully Craft Old Traditions, New Standards (Harriet) (\$10.00)**

This is the first full length release from Tully

Craft. Led by Sean from Crayon, this band adds elements of pop without losing Crayon's ragged charm. The twelve songs on this CD aren't nearly as loud and raw as Crayon but still have energy and Sean's distinctive vocals.

**α Two Dollar Guitar Let Me Bring You Down (Smells Like) (\$10.00)**

Two Dollar Guitar is essentially a solo vehicle for Tim Faljahn, although he is backed up by a band that includes Steve Shelley of Sonic Youth. There has never been a more appropriately titled CD, as none of these 12 songs have a single happy moment. Everything here is minimal and quiet but packs an emotional punch similar to bands like Codeine and American Music Club. If you're looking for a record that's going to jump out and grab you, you probably won't be satisfied with this CD. You need to take time to absorb the overall feeling of this record. If you do, you're likely to have a rewarding listening experience.

**α Vehicle Flips In Action (Harriet) (\$10.00)**

Vehicle Flips is the new band led by ex-Wimp Factor 14 leader, Frank Boscoe. Unlike Wimp Factor 14, Vehicle Flips uses slightly more conventional instrumentation. On the surface, Vehicle Flips resembles a conventional four-piece, two guitar rock band. That's until you notice that Mr. Boscoe tunes his guitar like a ukulele. This slight twist seems to give the generally upbeat songs a more restrained and moody feel.

**α The Velmas Landscapes (Beluga) (\$10.00)**

I always figured it was a real cop out to compare a band that uses a violin to The Dambuilders. It just seems too easy, but in this case I can't help it. The Velmas are from Indiana and this debut album has all of the charm that made the early Dambuilders material so likeable. I'm comparing this not to the more aggressive, dissonant Dambuilders material, but to the early singles or the slower material on their recent albums. Everything here has a light, airy and innocent sound that makes you smile and feel good. It's rare to find pop music like this today. There's nothing calculated or blatantly commercial about this, but if the world were a fair place The Velmas would be all over commercial radio.

**α The Veronica Cartwrights One Careless Match (Chunk) (\$10.00)**

The Cartwrights has come a long way since their debut 7" a few years ago. This 16 song CD has a rough, but restrained, Midwestern feel that brings to mind music by Moviola, along with the usual Northampton influences of Sebadoh, New Radiant Storm King and Dinosaurs Jr. All of the songs are highlighted by slightly off-key male vocals. This is a solid release and my favorite from Chunk in quite a while.



**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 Deep Red (Teen Beat) (\$8.00)**

There are so many bands that never live up to the promise of their first couple of singles. That's something that we don't have to worry about with Versus. Instead of falling into a formula, Versus keeps growing and getting better with age. The five song EP is the first with Richard's brother, James on second guitar and this addition is definitely a positive one. The songs still have that distinctive Versus sound but they pick up a depth and texture that has been hinted at but never quite realized. The title track shows us a complete departure with the addition of strings. Surprisingly enough, this orchestration works well. It's great to see a band grow in such a positive way.

**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 for months after its release. 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.

**♫ Vomit Launch Dogeared (Teen Beat) (\$10.00)**

Vomit Launch is a band that should have been huge, but it seems no one has heard of them. This was their final album and is one of the most perfect pop records ever recorded. Vocalist Patricia Rowland has a raw, powerful and distinct voice that perfectly compliments the straight-ahead, but slightly quirky, instrumentation. If I had to make a present day comparison, I'd say that Vomit Launch was a combination of the pop energy and enthusiasm of Velocity Girl with the musical sophistication of Bettie Serveert. This is a highly recommended purchase.

**♫ Vomit Launch Not Even Pretty + (Teen Beat) (\$10.00)**

This is a compilation of Vomit Launch's first EP with 12 other tracks that were either compilation tracks, singles or unreleased studio tracks. As always with compilations of this nature, the CD has a lot of variation stylistically, but it does capture the essence of the

early years of Vomit Launch. These tracks aren't nearly as polished as the songs on *Dogeared* but have that charm and songcraft that made them such an important band.

**♫ Weeping in Fits and Starts This Wreck is Goin' Down (Rhubarb) (\$10.00)**

Boston's Weeping in Fits and Starts follows up its two singles with this strong debut CD. From the opening notes of the title track, the entire CD sets a somber but hopeful mood. The music is often in a classic pop mode and owes more to Elvis Costello or REM than modern day indie stars. Although the album was recorded in several different sessions, the lack of coherency doesn't hide the fact that Greg Jacobs is an extremely talented songwriter. His songs have a sense of urgency and his lyrics cut much deeper than the average pop song.

**♫ The What Gives up all night with... (Bus Stop) (\$8.00)**

Bus Stop has a knack for finding nuggets of pure pop music and The What Gives' sound is no exception. This band is from Lawrence, Kansas and combines the pop sense of Badfinger with a deeply sad and moody touch that brings to mind Chris Bell's solo record. If you're a fan of the moodier material from Big Star or if you generally like the stuff that comes out on Bus Stop, you won't be disappointed by this 11 song CD.

**♫ Windy and Carl Drawing of Sound (Icon) (\$10.00)**

This second full-length release from Windy and Carl is less space rock and more ethereal sounding than their previous efforts. This album consists of five songs with four clocking in at over eight minutes in length. The overall feel of this album is similar to the Michael Brook albums on 4AD with heavily delayed, shimmering guitar washing through each song. The vocals seem to be an afterthought and they contribute as another instrument floating in and out of the mix.

**♫ Windy and Carl Portal (Ba Da Bing!) (\$10.00)**

It's amazing how this whole "space rock" movement has taken off in the past year or so. Windy and Carl are from Dearborn, Michigan and their debut album would sound nice right next to albums from Jessamine or Flying Saucer Attack. "Mood" is the key to this music. The songs tend to be very long and repetitive and are driven by swirling keyboards and pretty acoustic guitars that work their way in and out of the mix. The overall sound ends up somewhere in between the sounds of His Name is Alive and a pure tranced out spacy band. This sort of thing is going to start to get old as more and more bands jump on the bandwagon, but Windy and Carl definitely have something unique and interesting to add to this genre.

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

Finally, after a whole slew of 7" and compilation tracks, Wingtip Sloat gives 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 odd and more obscure sounds. Generally, this LP takes on a cleaner and sparser sound than a lot of the singles, but it still it has its crazy 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 which 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.

**♫ Echos From The Nation's Capital (Third World Underground) (\$9.00)**

This is the first of a series of compilations of Washington, DC bands released by a Tuscon, Arizona label. This volume includes tracks from Trusty, Lungfish, Derf, Wingtip Sloat, Edsel, Liquor Bike, The High-Back Chairs, Candy Machine, and Revision. Overall, this compilation has a Dischord feel to it, but with more melody and no all-out hardcore songs. Stand-out cuts are from Trusty (classic DC-styled melodic punk), Lungfish (weird Dischord meets Mission of Burma rock), Candy Machine (Baltimore band who takes a more mechanical approach to the "DC sound"), Tsunami and Wingtip Sloat.

**♫ Echos From The Nation's Capitol (#2) (Third World Underground) (\$9.00)**

This is the second in the series of compilations of DC bands. This one has 21 tracks and includes Velocity Girl, Las Mordidas, Edsel,

Geek, Liquor Bike, Wingtip Sloat, Trusty and many others. As with volume 1, the quality is consistently high and this one takes a broader view of the DC scene with its coverage of more of the pop scene of the 1990's. This is probably the definitive compilation of up-and-coming bands from the DC area.

**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.

**♫ Give Me a Cure (Radiopaque) (\$10.00)**

This is a collection of 18 Washington, DC bands covering The Cure with proceeds going to the Whitman-Walker AIDS clinic. Like most tribute records, there are songs that I wish never existed, but they are more than compensated for by the great tracks that start off this disc. Highlights come from Shudder to Think ("Shake Dog Shake"), The Ropers ("Jumping Someone Else's Train"), Chisel ("Six Different Ways"), Eggs ("Catch") and DJ Bootious Maximus ("The Love Cats"). Also included are tracks from Candy Machine, Glo-Worm, Tuscadero, Edsel, Jawbox and Trampoline.

**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 think you'll find

more than a couple of new bands that you'll want to explore.

**♫ Lemon Lime Volume 1 (spinART) (\$10.00)**

This is the follow-up to the One Last Kiss compilation that got spinART started a few years ago. This time, instead of reissuing existing tracks on a CD, spinART has gathered a bunch of their favorite, less well-known bands and given them each a track to show off their stuff. Included among the 22 tracks on this CD are songs from Apples in Stereo, Holiday Flyer, Ultra Cindy, Tizzy, Honeyburn, Dunebuggy, Bomb Pops, The Mommyheads, Ditch Croaker and Twig. This compilation is well put together and is a great way to sample a lot of new bands for the price of one CD.

**♫ Little Darla has a Treat for You Volume 2 (Darla) (\$6.00)**

This is the second in the series of retail promotion disks put out by Darla Records. As with the last one, you get songs from a bunch of new bands for a very low price. This time around, you'll find two Pop Narcotic cuts- a track from the new Tizzy EP and a new, exclusive track from The Bush League All-Stars. In addition, this CD contains tracks from Ruby Falls, Holiday Flyer, Racecar, Holiday, Veronica Cartwrights and New Radiant Storm King.

**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 and The Magnetic Fields. As always with Harriet releases, all of the bands have a homespun and heartfelt approach to their music. This CD is a must for current fans of Harriet, or if you're not already, this is a good way to hear 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 the bands Bricks, Jawbox, Velocity Girl, Scrawl, Autoclave, Tsunami, Superchunk, Rodan, Unrest and others.

**♫ One Last Kiss (spinART) (\$10.00)**

This CD compilation of previously released 7" tracks announced the indie-pop revolution to the rest of the world. It's an excellent artifact

of what was happening around the time of the D.C. and Providence indie-pop festivals. Included here are tracks by 19 bands including Swirlies, Lorelei, Magnetic Fields, Honeybunch, Crayon, Jane Pow, small factory, Velocity Girl, Courtney Love (the band!), Lilys, Black Tambourine and Wimp Factor 14. If you are a fan of pop music and don't have this compilation, you're missing out!

**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.

**♫ Our Salvation is in Hand (Theme Park) (\$12.00)**

This is something you probably won't find in too many places. This is a British, 26 track, all acoustic compilation. Included here are tracks from Paul Nini (Log), Simon Joyner, The Mountain Goats, Paste, Franklin Bruno, Steve Lindstrom, John Davis and Hood. The rest of the bands are pretty unknown but they all sound very good. This whole compilation has a nice, coherent sound and is highly recommended.

**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 as well as 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.

**♫ Working Holiday (Simple Machines) (\$10.00)**

This is a compilation of most of the tracks from the Simple Machines Working Holidays 7" series from a few years back. Included among the 22 tracks on this collection are songs from Scrawl, Versus, Codeine, The Cocktails, Eggs, Veronica Lake, My Dad is Dead, Nothing Painted Blue, Lois, small factory, Tsunami, jawbox, Grifters, Crain, Pitchblende, Superchunk and Caterpillar.



# vinyl

## ♫ Alger Hiss *Settings for Nudes* (Ba Da Bing!) (\$10.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Blaise Pascal *Foreword* (Cave Canem) (\$7.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Franklin Bruno *A Bedroom Community* (Simple Machines) (\$8.50)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Bunnygrunt *Action Pants* (No Life) (\$7.50)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Chisel *8 AM All Day* (Gern Blandsten) (\$10.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Chisel *Nothing New EP* (Gern Blandsten) (\$6.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ dis- *The Historically Troubled Third Album* (My Pal God) (\$7.00)

Although the new dis- album sounds great along side the new one from Hurl, dis- takes a very different approach to the genre of math rock. This album is loud, hard hitting and very, very precise. Every instrumental twist and turn is calculated and executed perfectly. Still, dis- remembers that they are not a machine and manage to add a human quality to their music. Plus, they have the greatest song titles. It's really surprising that this band isn't as big as June of 44, as they are working in the same mode and doing it much better.

## ♫ Doldrums *Secret Life of Machines* (VHF) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Grifters *Ain't My Lookout* (Shangri La) (\$7.50)

Grifters recently signed to Sub Pop but Shangri La is releasing the vinyl on this new album. I've loved everything Grifters have ever produced, but this is their absolute pinnacle. *Ain't My Lookout* is their first attempt at a "big stu-

dio" sound and it's obvious that they've mastered the art of 24-track recording as much as they have their lo-fi recordings. If you liked the *Eureka* EP, this is a logical progression, but it's still a surprise in a lot of ways. While there are occasional glimpses of the blues-dirge sound of the earlier recordings, the more cleanly produced tracks have an epic and expansive David Bowie feel to them. All in all this is an amazing record and the ultrathick virgin vinyl makes it sound even better than your typical CD.

## ♫ 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.

## ♫ Hurl *A Place Called Today* (My Pal God) (\$7.00)

After a string of great singles from this Pittsburgh band, Hurl's debut full length release is now available. Although it's easy to categorize Hurl as a math rock band, that label doesn't do them justice. Rather than getting caught up in the musicianship and trying to impress with quick tempo changes, Hurl remembers that the song is most important. Hurl songs have a slow, textured feel to them, the vocals are an integral part of each one and every tempo change plays an important role. This record works best when listened to in its entirety as the songs go together and create a mood.

## ♫ Monaural "Rhodes" b/w "Harmonic" (Burnt Hair) (7.00 ?)

If there was ever a record that cried out "Factory Records" it is this 12" single. From the electronic blips and bleeps that start the record to the Durutti Column guitar style, this has early 80's written all over it. It's easy to make fun of this sound but records like this remind me of what was right with that era. So if you loved the early Factory sound or like today's space rock but wished it rocked a little harder, you'll probably enjoy this release.

## ♫ 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 my opinion.

## ♫ Once Dreamt *Drifting* (Blue Flea) (\$8.00)

Once Dreamt is a space rock band from Dearborn, Michigan. This album features four songs each clocking somewhere between 6 and 12 minutes long. Once Dreamt shares band members with Windy and Carl but takes a more relaxed and soothing approach to their music. The music is mostly driven by slowly moving melodies and sparse, barely audible vocals. Although space rock is definitely an influence, I also pick up bits of more contemporary bands and a slight 4AD influence. This is a nice, blissful, late night album that will probably appeal both to the space rock crowd and to fans of more ethereal music.

## ♫ The Pins *Eleanor* (Carburetor) (\$8.00)

This debut release came as a very refreshing and pleasant surprise. This Minneapolis band plays music that doesn't fit into any one category. Instead they blend a mixture of low key psychedelia, K Records style twee pop and Feelies style rhythms. No matter what the style is on a particular song, everything is infectious and fun. Although the lo-fi recordings make things sound a bit non-distinct and compressed, the songs rise above these limits.

## ♫ 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 out, and the melodies turned up. Through all this variation, they manage to stay coherent sounding and interesting.

## ♫ Scenic *incident at cima* (Independent Project) (\$9.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ small factory *I Do Not Love You* (spinART) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Sone *Holiday and Sport* (Darla) (\$10.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Those Bastard Souls *Twentieth Century Chemical* (Darla) (\$11.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Tsunami *The Heart's Tremolo* (Simple Machines) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Versus *Dead Leaves* (Teen Beat) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Versus *Deep Red* (Teen Beat) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Versus *The Stars are Insane* (Teen Beat) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ White Come Come *The Broken Bird EP* (Sugarfrost) (\$10.00)

This is 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 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 way, a la Medicine. Still others lean towards a catchier pop sound in a Wedding Present or Unrest way.

## ♫ Windy and Carl *Drawing of Sound* (Blue Flea) (\$10.00)

See description in CD section.

## ♫ Wingtip Sloat *Chewyfoot* (VHF) (\$8.00)

See description in CD section.

## various artists

### ♫ *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 toward 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 sound.

## ♫ Caterpillar / Zen Gorilla LP (Deadbeat) (\$7.00)

This a split 12" from these two Pennsylvania based bands. Caterpillar follows 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. Their songs here range from a low key take on Butthole Surfers style psychedelia to a straight-ahead and raunchy blues sound. Zen Gorilla is an interesting band but definitely are 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. 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.

## ♫ October Country (Nate Starkman and Son) (\$5.00)

This is a compilation LP that probably dates back to the mid-1980's. It features two tracks each from four bands representing the American side of the gothic/ethereal movement. The bands represented here are Dark Arts, Autumnfair, Marine and Soul Brothers. Dark Arts was a Columbus, Ohio band who have a spooky, repetitive sound that is driven mostly by percussion and airy female vocals. Autumnfair was probably best known for their releases on Independent Project. In contrast to the more typical goth sounds on these re-

leases, their songs on this album are lush and beautiful. Marine's track sounds quiet, introspective and nearly instrumental while Soul Brothers are the most pop oriented of the bands on this record. As a whole, this compilation is a good representation of mid-80's ethereal music. While it sounds dated at times, it holds up well and serves as a pleasant contrast to much of the music categorized as "gothic" now.



# 10 vinyl

## Abecedarians

### *The Other Side of the Fence* (Independent Project) (\$11.00)

Abecedarians released some records on Factory and Caroline in the early to mid-80's. This double 10" is a collection of rare and unreleased tracks. Even by IPR standards, this is a breathtaking packaging job. Bruce Licher outdid himself with the beautifully die-cut and folded letterpress sleeve. Listening to these songs, brings to mind everything that made the early Factory bands sound so urgent and essential. The songs are somber and downbeat, but have an aura of hope about them. The music is suave and shimmering with deadpan yet highly emotional vocals. Abecedarians never resorted to any sort of the pomp and shallowness that later became associated with the "goth" genre. They just made music that mattered to themselves and to the small number of people who discovered them.

### Autumnfair *Glaciers and Gods EP* (Independent Project) (\$7.00)

This 10" is one of the releases in the IPR Archive Series. Autumnfair has a definite 1980's gothic feel to its music, but not in a silly, campy way. Instead, they fall more into the early 1980's Factory/4AD camp. The closest comparison I can make is to Joy Division, but Autumnfair isn't quite as dark. Also, Autumnfair's songs often have more intricate guitar work and a busier drum sound. As always, this comes packaged in an exquisite letterpress sleeve courtesy of IPR.

### 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.

### Bunny Brains *Beach Bunny Bingo* (The Now Sound) (\$7.50)

If you've heard about Bunny Brains, it's probably due to their crazy live shows. Somehow, they manage to gather together enough stuffed bunnies to toss them at the audience through-

out the entire set. Understandably, it's difficult to pin down their musical course while your watching bunnies fly back and forth. Listening to them on record is an entirely different experience and brings to mind The Butthole Surfers among others. There's nothing consistent about the sound on this record. The music ranges from sparse, spacy instrumentals to completely wacked-out psychedelic jams. I was actually a little surprised that this record held up so well musically. It's so easy for a band to have a gimmick and nothing else, but Bunny Brains seem to go beyond that.

### 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 highly 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 indie pop direction. Recommended for those who enjoy both the artsier British sounds and straightforward, East Coast pop sounds.

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

See description in CD section.

### Dump *International Airport* (Smells Like) (\$7.00)

Dump is a solo recording project from James McNew of Yo La Tengo. This record shows a lot of growth from his charming lo-fi 7" from a couple of years ago. The six songs on this EP are split between home recorded pop songs and amazing, organ driven psychedelic songs. The highlight of this record is the title track, a twelve minute, subdued psychedelic song that brings to mind a more restrained version of one of Yo La Tengo's instrumental excursions. Versus fans will also want to check out Dump's cover of "Flax."

### ESP-Summer (Farrago) (\$8.00)

ESP-Summer is a collaboration between Warren Defever (His Name is Alive) and Ian Masters (formerly of Pale Saints, currently in Spoonfed Hybrid). As with any project involving Warren Defever, this is an odd mix of styles and recording techniques. The songs here range from sparse acoustic pieces to lush and spacy songs to incredibly noisy segments. Nothing flows together in a musically coherent way, but somehow it all seems to work in the same way that His Name is Alive records do.

### Grifters *Eureka* (Shangri La) (\$7.00)

This latest 7 song EP from Grifters is probably the most conventional recording they've ever made. 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.

### 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.

## Lilys

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

See description in CD section.

### Lord High Fixers *Talking to Tomorrow* (Scooch Pooch) (\$8.00)

The Lord High Fixers is pure unadulterated trashy garage rock. Imagine a combination that is one part Cheater Slicks, one part Blues Explosion and one part Lazy Cowgirls. The music is slow and raw and owes as much to early punk rock as it does to raunchy beer drenched blues from the deep south. Few bands manage to combine these styles in such an effective and honest way.

### Moviola *Frantic* (Anyway) (\$5.00)

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

page 17  
more 10's

also kind of light and whimsical at the same time.

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

See description in CD section.

### Retsin *Salt Lick* (Simple Machines) (\$8.50)

See description in CD section.

### Sneeches *Starfucker* (Bus Stop) (\$7.50)

See description in CD section.

### Strapping Fieldhands *The Caul* (The Now Sound) (\$8.00)

The Strapping Fieldhands is one of a new breed of Philadelphia bands who blend psychedelia, noise and just about everything else under the sun into their music. They manage to cram 20 songs of their musical mayhem onto this 10". The songs are short and the sounds diverse, ranging from simple guitar and vocal tracks to meandering psychedelic songs. It's hard to describe the music beyond that. Unlike a band like Bardo Pond, there's no real musical focus. It's kind of a low key musical free for all.





**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.

**Alisons Halo "Dozen" (Independent Project) (\$4.00)**

Alisons Halo is one of the younger bands making up the new ethereal/noise-pop scene in Arizona. This debut 7" is incredible. It blends aspects of a Cocteau Twins ethereal sound with a more profound pop influence. The female vocals are beautiful and have an honest emotional quality. The backing music is lush and swirling but also has a spirited, human quality. The packaging is in typical Independent Project style making it well worth the premium price.

**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. The B-side, "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.

**The Ambersands Annabel Bleach (Harriet) (\$3.50)**

The Ambersands are a five piece from Victoria, Australia. The music is led by an acoustic guitar and organ along with a conventional rhythm section. The vocal duties are split between a male and a female singer. The Ambersands' music is more upbeat than many Australian bands, but while they aren't twee, they certainly are fairly light and poppy.

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

Analogue is a North Carolina band that is suc-

cessfully 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.

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

Atomic Fireball is an explosive, 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 do a good job capturing their sound.

**The Autumn Leaves "You Didn't Say a Word" (Grimsey) (\$3.50)**

The Autumn Leaves is a band that would fit in well on The Bus Stop Label. These two songs are in the 60's pop tradition, but with an added bit of Byrd's inspired psychedelia that makes this single stand out from similar bands. Add to this the well placed backing harmonies and the usual snazzy packaging from Grimsey and you end up with a strong, solid pop single.

**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.

**Bargoyles Seven and Seven EP (Anyway) (\$3.50)**

Bargoyles is yet another hard drinking punk rock band from Ohio. As with most things from Ohio, there's zero attitude and a whole lot of energy. Bargoyles manages to cram seven songs onto this piece of vinyl and the whole thing still seems over before it started. The New Bomb Turks is a definite comparison point but Bargoyles sound is a bit more on the rock side and has more straightforward melodies.

**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.

**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 it's 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 lesser singles is that Belreve writes 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.

**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 Sebadoh drummer Bob Fay, and Eric Matthews of Cardinal. This was one of Lou's first forays into the world of clean, clear production, but the performances and the songs are more twisted than Lou's recent Sebadoh material.

**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 course they're headed on, 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 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.

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

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

**Bite Canker EP (Derivative) (\$3.50)**

Bite is 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 Grrrl 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 Skene! Records. They blend punk rock volume and enthusiasm with a Midwestern core. Before recording their second Skene! 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.

**The Boo Radleys "At The Sound of Speed" (spinART) (\$3.50)**

The Boo Radleys is one of the few bands from the British Shoegazer movement who still do anything for me. There's nothing particularly unique about their fuzzed out guitar pop, but they take a few chances and consistently write appealing, catchy pop songs. This single is recommended for fans of bands like Swirlies and Lilys.

**The Bottom Feeders "69 Drag Pack" (Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

"69 Drag Pack" is big muscular punk rock song about big muscle cars. Since the dawn of rock and roll, music and cars have gone together and The Bottom Feeders has revived this concept for the 90's. The B-side "Doin' the Brainless" sounds an awful lot like Mudhoney. Hearing something that might be classified as grunge usually isn't my thing these days, but when it's done this well, I don't mind at all.

**Buddha on the Moon On Holiday (Quiddity) (\$3.50)**

This Buddha on the Moon single has a split personality. The A side, "Losing" is very much a typical Buddha on the Moon song. It takes on a Red House Painters feel, with HK's emotional, plaintive vocals working hand in hand with the slow, sad music. The other song, "Euclid Ave. Yacht Club" has a completely different tone. It's the first Buddha on the Moon song that I'd call upbeat and bouncy. It still has a somewhat forlorn feel to it, but the more driving music lifts things up in a different way. As always, this is great stuff from Buddha on the Moon.

**Buddha on the Moon "Yardsale" (Entangled) (\$3.50)**

This is the first Buddha on the Moon release since their superb 10" release on Farrago. The two songs on this release were recorded at home on a four-track and have a more personal, homemade feel to them. These songs aren't surprisingly different from previous Buddha on the Moon releases, but take on a more fragile, British feel, especially on the Pale Saints' cover, "A Deep Sleep for Stephen." The 7" is packaged in a handsome sleeve which was printed at the Independent Project Press. Look for a three song release on Pop Narcotic later in 1996.

**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.

**Caramel "My Tailor is Rich" (Harriet) (\$3.50)**

Caramel is a French band which actually sings in its native language. The music is upbeat, largely acoustic pop which is occasionally backed by organ and guitar riffs that give it a psychedelic feel. It isn't outwardly spacy music though the odd touches fit in naturally.

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

Caterpillar is a Philadelphia based band with several releases on the Compulsiv label, but 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 straight-ahead pop songs to a prog rock instrumental. These are the sort of songs that take a few listens to sink in and you'll find yourself hearing more each time.

**The Cat's Miaow I Kept All Your Letters EP (Quiddity) (\$3.50)**

Cat's Miaow is an Australian pop band that have been showing up on singles and compilations over the past few years. This 4 song EP is the biggest chunk of Cat's Miaow material I've heard in one place. The music here is slow, but upbeat with clean, slowly strummed guitars mixing nicely with pretty female vocals. The overall sound reminds me more of the Rainy Day compilation from the eighties than any modern indie pop band. Rainy Day was an acoustic collaboration between many of the members of the "Paisley Underground" scene of the early Eighties and comparing anything to that is a big complement in my book.



**α The Cat's Miaow**  
**This is All I Ever Wanted EP**  
**(Quiddity) (\$3.50)**

Thanks to the good folks at Quiddity, The Cat's Miaow is finally getting a chance to have its music heard in the U.S. This four song EP is very similar in style to the previous EP. The songs are mellow and melodic in a way that makes it easy to compare them to a lot of Sarah Records bands. Although that comparison is valid, I find that The Cat's Miaow have more substance and less fluff than a lot of Sarah bands. This single also includes a very nice cover of Patsy Cline's "I Fall to Pieces."

**α Chisel "The O.T.S."**  
**(Darla) (\$3.50)**

Chisel just keeps banging out great songs. "The O.T.S." is a very mod sounding song that could easily be confused for an American version of the Jam. The B-side, "If You Believe in Christmas Trees" is a Richard Davies composition that appeared on the first Cardinal album. This cover is pretty true to the original, but with a little more energy and guitar punch. Both sides of this single are great. Chisel keeps improving with each release.

**α Chisel "Sunburn"**  
**(Gern Blandsten) (\$3.50)**

This three song EP has a more typical DC sound than the *Nothing New* EP. Still, it is by no means a clone of any other DC band. Chisel takes the emotion and energy of the best Dischord bands and combines it with an edgy, post-punk sound. On top of that, they have a knack for creating pop hooks that sink in slowly over time, rather than hit you over the head.

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

Citizens Utilities are the latest discovery of Shangri-La Records. This is 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 an 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.

**α Citizens' Utilities "Spool"**  
**(Reservation) (\$3.50)**

The second single from Citizens' Utilities is quite a departure from the first one. Both singles have a vaguely southern feel to them,

but this one is more upbeat and has a lot more noise embedded in the music. Citizens' Utilities do a great job of mixing a rootsy sound with a punk/noise rock sound.

**α Compound Red**  
**"Nothing More Than"**  
**(Lombardi) (\$3.50)**

Compound Red is one of those bands that I missed out on for years. Their press sheet lists an incredible number of singles and compilation appearances, but this recent 7" was the first one that I've ever heard. This single is a breath of fresh air. It's rare to hear a band blend the male angst and guitar roar of a typical post-Big Black Chicago band while adding something more substantial to the mix. In the case of this 7", that addition is a sense of melody and dynamics that serves to add life to this record. A lot of bands mining the old Touch and Go sound could learn big lessons from Compound Red.

**α Countdowns "Ghetto Blaster"**  
**(Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

Scooch Pooch is very quickly carving out a niche as the definitive new garage punk label. This single follows in that tradition. Countdowns craft an appealing blend of 1950's rockabilly melodies, 1960's garage rock recording techniques and 1980's hardcore speed and energy. Throughout, they never forget that melody and hooks are what it takes to make songs like these stand out from the pack.

**α Creeper New & Improved Hit Single**  
**(Seldom Scene) (\$3.50)**

Creeper is a one man band from Columbus, Ohio. Jeff Robertson plays everything (guitar, drums, vocals and occasional harmonica) all at once! For this debut single, he did get a little help from Columbus legend Mike Rep, but the word is that this is pretty close to the live sound. Creeper's music is compact and energetic and often a bit chaotic. It's pretty extroverted for a solo project. Don't expect a timid, "I hate my life" record here. This is a lot more fun and celebratory.

**α The Dambuilders "Colorado"**  
**(Hep-Cat) (\$3.50)**

With this single, The Dambuilders continues their mission to release a song about each of the fifty states. This time they take on Colorado, Mississippi and Michigan. As always, The Dambuilders blend pop hooks, rock energy and their trademark violin sound in these three songs. Colorado is an upbeat rocker, Mississippi is a slower ballad and Michigan is a strange spoken word, "art" experiment.

**Dearly "Only Between"**  
**(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 Brit-

ish 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.

**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 slow, moody 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 parody.

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

Detour was a band from Oxford, Ohio and within seconds of dropping the needle into the grooves of this 7", I was happy. Detour reminds 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 single!

**α The Detroit Cobras**  
**"Ain't It a Shame"**  
**(Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

The Detroit Cobras performs sultry but trashy blues. The instrumentation is pure sludgy garage rock, but with overtones of that are dark and loungey. The A-side is closer to the lounge rock sound with sultry female vocals playing against a band which seems to be holding back. On the B-side, the band gets a chance to rock out in a more standard garage style. The result is a little less subtle but still pretty convincing and satisfying.

**α The Drift "She Lets Go"**  
**(Silver Girl) (\$3.50)**

The Drift is a French band with a knack for catchy pop songs. These three songs would be right at home on a Bus Stop single. Power pop is an influence here, but the all-out energy is tempered with a more subdued and personal sound that reminds me a bit of The Teardrop Explodes. This is more proof that France has its share of hidden pop gems.

**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. In many ways,

this band treads the same ground as Velvet Crush. They write songs with pop hooks that stick in your head forever and 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 soon.

**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 Stephin 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, it's a pretty simple thing: three songs, all less than 2 minutes and all are 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. The songs have a punk energy and attitude, but are pure pop when it comes to melody and hooks. Imagine crossing the pop sound and vocals of a band like Heavenly with the crunchier guitar sound of the Shop Assistants or The Fastbacks.

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

Piao! is a British label run by the person who did Chocolate Narcotic and this was the label's first release. This 7" falls somewhere 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. With it's straight-ahead 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.

**α ESP Family "Jubilee EP"**  
**(Icon) (\$3.50)**

ESP Family is yet another side project of Warren Defever of His Name is Alive. It's described by the label as "Old Time Style Coal Miners Folk Tunes Of the People, By the People, For the People" and that's actually an accurate description. This could have been recorded on a back porch in the same neighborhood as the first Palace Brothers LP. It has a much bouncier and less brutally sad sound than Palace but has that same Appalachian folk influence. Like Palace, I'm never quite sure if I should be taking it seriously, but I like it nonetheless.

**α Estrojet / W.O.D.**  
**(Death Rebel) (\$3.50)**

This is a confusing release from a title point of view. W.O.D. was Women of Destruction, a band who later changed into Estrojet. Anyway names don't really matter here, let's talk about the music. The three songs on this single are varied, ranging from angry, intense punk rock to a looser sound with long effect-laden guitar leads. The common thread that runs through the 7" is the good sense of melody. This is in large part because of the accordion player who adds a soothing keyboard-like sound to the mix. The result is a unique blend of melody and punk rock angst.

**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, they head out on a relatively ordinary pop course. 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 Eva Luna.

**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 a low key manner but are more filled out and upbeat. This single makes a great companion to 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" sounds 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.

**α Jad Fair and Phono-Comb**  
**"In A Haunted House"**  
**(Derivative) (\$3.50)**

This single brings together Jad Fair of Half Japanese and members of Shadowy Men on a Shadowy Planet for a Halloween 7". Yeah, I know it's not the right time for Halloween but the neat orange vinyl and the goth-surf stylings of this single are right for any season. The B-side of this single comes with the warning, "Do Not Play This Side." I took the plunge and played it anyway. You'll have to buy the single to find out the secret.

**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-length on spinART. Zeke's melodies immediately bring to mind the songwriting style of J. Mascis, but the delivery is extremely 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.



**α The Figgs "Christmas Shake" (Chunk) (\$3.50)**

The Figgs are an Albany, NY band and, except for this single, I know very little about them. Here, we get three Christmas songs; two originals and a great cover of the Kink's classic, "Father Christmas." The two originals are tuneful numbers that bring to mind early Elvis Costello, while the Kinks cover is a punked up version that remains true to the original. As much as I usually hate rock bands doing Christmas songs, this single holds up well for year round listening.

**α Frances Gumm *Subtraction* (It Won't Go Flat) (\$3.50)**

After their great debut CD a few years back, Frances Gumm packed up and left Massachusetts for St. Paul, Minnesota. I assumed they had broken up and was surprised to receive this new single a few months ago. While I still hear a bit of that Pavement meets Fugazi sound from their first CD, it has evolved and changed over the past few years. This time around a lot of the DC influence has been replaced with a tad of a heavier math rock sound. Nothing is heavy handed or derivative; it's just another example of Frances Gumm successfully blending several sounds into something all their own.

**α Fūxa *Free Your Soul* (Burnt Hair) (\$3.50)**

Michigan has become home to American space rock and this is another example. This EP takes the attitude that mood is more important than melody. Fūxa uses a combination of spacy keyboard flourishes, sparse, entrancing drum segments and the occasional ambient splendor that brings to mind instrumental Cocteau Twins. This is not the sort of single you'll walk around humming after it's over, but it will certainly affect your mood as you listen.

**α Ghost "Moungod Air Cave" (The Now Sound) (\$3.50)**

Ghost is a Japanese band whose music takes a spacy, Eastern ethnic route. The instrumentation is very percussion-based and makes use of flutes and tin whistles in addition to more standard rock instruments. The music is loose and unstructured and probably owes as much to the Grateful Dead as it does to indie rock. The two sides of this single are extremely different. One is more upbeat rock and the other is strange, droney, "space-rock".

**α Giraffe Boy *The Carlotta EP* (Seldom Scene) (\$3.50)**

Seldom Scene is a new label from Columbus, Ohio. They seem to be digging into an Ohio pop scene that I didn't know existed. Giraffe Boy is a Dayton, Ohio trio that specialize in addictive pop music that would be at home on the East Coast. This EP contains four songs

that combine a clean, clear guitar sound, enthusiastic vocals and low budget recordings. If I had to make comparisons, I'd place them halfway between Bricks and Versus with more than a dash of electronic weirdness thrown in to the mix.

**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.

**α Gravity Wax "Last Call" +4 (Burnt Hair) (\$3.50)**

I think there must be a requirement for all bands from Michigan to show some sort of space rock influence. How else could you explain the odd mixture of charming pop music, odd noises and electronic blips and bleeps? Gravity Wax has songs that could be easily played in a Pavement style. Instead, they blend this with other spacier influences and create something quite unique. This single seems to capture the sound of a band trying to figure out what it wants to be and making interesting stops along the way.

**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 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 on a sparse Pavement-like course 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.

**α Grifters "Slip Knot" (Super 8) (\$3.50)**

This Grifters single goes well with their new Sub Pop album. Although both songs were recorded on 4-track, they show the same sense of togetherness and maturity as the album. The A-side is a bluesy number that is driven by the rhythm section and vocals. The real hit is the B-side "Subterranean Death Ride Blues" which has a sneaky, sexy melody that may be the catchiest song they've ever released. Once again Grifters prove that their songs are strong enough to stand on their own without the sonic experiments that were so common in their earlier material.

**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*.

**α The Hamicks "Oxymorons" (Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

The Hamicks blends equal parts of raw garage rock and late 70's No Wave. It's a sound that really doesn't sink in on the first listen, but after a few it makes almost perfect sense. Imagine the Fall circa 1982 recording for Estrus and writing tirades against modern society and politics. Are you confused yet? If so, it's probably exactly what The Hamicks intended.

**α The Hang Ups "Top of the Morning" (Grimsey) (\$3.50)**

Grimsey Records has been a favorite of mine since I heard their first two singles. This is probably their best release to date, both in packaging and music. The sleeve design makes great use of a simple black and white design and textured, translucent paper to produce a unique looking package. The two songs on the

7" are very different, but both are amazing. The A-side is the best slice of pure pop music since the first Velvet Crush single while the B-side is a folky, country song with as much charm as the A-side. It's rare to find a pop 7" this great today.

**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. With the two songs on the A-side, Hem creates slow, moody, and fairly minimalist pop 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 sounding 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.

**α Hula Boy "January 17, 1912" (Harriet) (\$3.50)**

Hula Boy is a collaboration between Eric Stoess of Louisville's Hula Hoop and Stewart Anderson of England's Boyracer. These recordings consist of mostly guitar and vocals with a little moog and a few other odd instruments thrown in for good measure. The songs are great and are recorded in a simple, heartfelt manner. Fans of Boyracer, Hula Hoop or Harriet Records are sure to like this single.

**α The Jeff Humphrey Trio 6 Song EP (Troubleman Unlimited) (\$3.50)**

The Jeff Humphrey trio are from somewhere in New Jersey and that's about all that I know about them. This EP is a great debut record. On one side, the songs have a natural, down to earth feel. These songs have a melodic, rootsy sound that brings to mind both quiet, acoustic Neil Young and early Buffalo Tom. The songs on the other side take a more well-trodden indie rock path and could easily be compared to more upbeat, well-recorded material from Sebadoh. Both sides are good, but I'd love to hear more of that rootsy sound on the next release. Either way, this still goes down as one of my favorite singles of 1995.

**α Hurl *Bessemer Process EP* (Peas Kor) (\$5.00)**

Despite the overabundance of neo-prog rock bands today, Hurl manages to keep drawing from this genre without sounding stale and derivative. This double 7" gives them a chance to broaden themselves even more. Their sound is precise, with harsh jagged edges but still manages to be melodic and emotional at the same time. Unlike a lot of bands following in the shadow of Rodan, Hurl seems to understand that their is more to music than mathematical precision. These four songs seem to capture the band as they're coming into their own. I'm anxious to see what the future has in store for Hurl.

**α Hurl "Madison Earful" (My Pal God) (\$3.50)**

I tend to run for cover when someone compares a band to Slint or Rodan. There are a million bands going for that sound, and most are just plain boring. Mathematical precision does not necessarily equal good rock music. Pittsburgh's Hurl are one of the bright exceptions to that rule. Their musicianship is impeccable and their sense of dynamics and songwriting skill are on par with the best bands of this genre. The music on this single alternates between slow, moody segments and loud crescendos without sounding forced or contrived. Hurl may have missed out on the hype of the last big "math rock" movement, but they're definitely a band to watch out for in the future.

**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.

**α Incredible Force of Junior "Walter Johnson" (Cher Doll) (\$3.50)**

This is an odd single. The A-side is a new interpretation of the Jonathan Richman classic "Walter Johnson." Although the lyrics are the same, the music was completely reworked in a more modern indie rock fashion. The B-side "Stronger" uses a lot of distorted guitars and feedback but still manages to sound quiet. It seems that the band can't decide if they want to be a loud post-punk band or a quieter indie pop band. The tension between these two competing sides creates an interesting listening experience.

**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 tons of bands doing upbeat guitar pop with female vocals, but 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.

**α The Karl Hendricks Trio "Coming in September" (Peas Kor) (\$3.50)**

This single has to win the award for nicest cover illustration in this catalog. Plus, the music is no disappointment either. The Karl Hendricks Trio is a Pittsburgh band that blends excellent pop with rough edged post-punk. There's nothing particularly distinctive about their sound, but there's still something very special about this band. It's the strong songwriting and playing that makes this music stand out. This is a single that should have wide appeal to all fans of pop music.

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

This was Kudgel's second 7". "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.

**α The La Donnas "Invasion" (Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

The La Donnas keep cranking out their fast and furious, but totally harmless punk rock. The whole La Donnas concept is more than a bit cartoonish, but the music is real and exciting. These two songs don't break any new ground, but then neither did the Ramones.

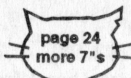
**α La Donnas "Long Legs" (Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

This is no-holds-barred, fast and furious punk rock with a small amount of a garage rock sound. The Scooch Pooch release sheet compares them to Motorhead and there is definitely some truth to that, but La Donnas is more of a fun punk rock band. So if you cross the all out fury of The Stooges or Motorhead, with the fun antics of The New Bomb Turks you might come up with something that sounds like this La Donnas single.

**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.



### LiLys "Returns Every Morning" (Ché) (\$3.50)

With this single, LiLys gives us their best straight-ahead pop recording since their debut single on Slumberland several years ago. This one goes in an entirely different direction. There's no sign of My Bloody Valentine worship on this single. Instead, Kurt and company mine the music of the Beatles circa *Revolver*. This is a tough thing to pull off and on both of these songs LiLys do it flawlessly. They manage just the right mix of studio wizardry and pop sense and produce two songs that put the new Beatles songs to shame. Every time I think good indie pop music is a thing of the past, I stumble across a single like this to restore my faith.



### Lint "Fifth Floor" (Plumb) (\$3.50)

Everything about this single sided 7" is cool. The record is packaged in a black and white sleeve with a package of crayons so that you can color-by-numbers your own full color sleeve. It is pressed on beautiful white vinyl with an etching on the B-side that can also be colored to bring out the image. The music is some of the best pop music to come out of a Boston band this year. It's simple and melodic with great shared male/female vocals and just enough harshness to give it a rough, personal feel. This is what a 7" should be all about- a great song and truly interesting, unique packaging!



### Liquorice "Stalls" (Simple Machines) (\$3.50)

Liquorice is the recording project of Jenny Toomey, Dan Littleton and Trey Many. Unlike Jenny's other side project, Grenadine, it's not at all loungey. The sound is stripped down with just guitars, vocals and minimal percussion making up the mix. This single has three songs and surprisingly, the distinctive Warren DeFever recording style doesn't really make

itself known on the two proper songs. One is sung by Jenny and one by Dan. These are both straight-ahead recordings with no studio trickery to get in the way of the songs. Finally on the last song, "Squawk of the Town", Warren gets his way and plays some of the studio games that he's made famous in his own band, His Name is Alive.



### 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, paisley underground movement of the early 80's. Log gives 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.



### The Lovelies "Love-Lack" (Cher Doll) (\$3.50)

Cher Doll gives us another big winner with this single from England's The Lovelies. Based on the band name, I was expecting quiet, soothing music in the Sarah Records vein. To my pleasant surprise, The Lovelies draw a lot more from The Wedding Present. There are glimpses of that distinctive Wedding Present guitar sound, but it's combined with a slightly more bubbly pop sound and a tiny bit of vocal attitude that brings to mind Mark E. Smith.



### 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?



### 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.

### Madelines *Fit to Travel* (Sudden Shame) (\$3.50)

Madelines are a pop band from Burlington, Vermont. This debut single is a refreshing slice of post-shoegazer rock. Both songs seem to be influenced by British pop, but have a more down to earth accessibility. "Fit to Travel" is an aggressive, upbeat song while the B-side "Used to Believe" is slower and dreamier. Both sides are first rate and that's a rare thing for a 7" these days.



### Madison Electric "Heavy Petal" (Quiddity) (\$3.50)

When it comes to pop music, Michigan is becoming a pretty happening place. This is the debut 7" from Madison Electric and each of the three songs is centered around the repetition of some relatively simple guitar sound, keyboards that add atmosphere, and soothing male vocals. This isn't the sort of music that hits you over the head, but it does stay with you for a long time. Madison Electric is a band that draws from bands like Stereolab and Polyrock but adds enough space and originality to create something fresh and new.



### 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 Stephin 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 Stephin has done in the past. As always, it's good stuff, but this is definitely not light, meaningless pop music.



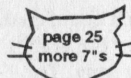
### Mega City Four "Android Dreams" (Park N' Ride) (\$3.50)

Mega City Four perform a brand of accessible pop music which is very stylish right now. The problem is that they've been doing it for years and haven't been given the MTV buzz bin treatment like many of today's bands. If you like a blend of The Buzzcocks' punk edge and Cheap Tricks' raw and hooky sound, this Mega City Four single should suit you just fine.



### Memphis Goons "San Antonio Desert" (Shangri La) (\$3.50)

There are plenty of indie rock bands with a sound that is rooted in Southern Blues. Some do it quite well and some come across as cold, calculated imitators. Leave it to the folks at Shangri La (who introduced many of us to Grifters) to dig deep and remind us what the real thing sounds like. The Memphis Goons were a Tennessee based band from around 1970 who were blending traditional, piano based blues with punk rock long before punk rock even existed. This mono recording captures something that was out of style in its time and still doesn't quite fit in with anything else out there today. These three songs are raw and



crudely recorded but capture a band with no commercial aspirations who were just doing their own thing. This is something we could use a lot more of.



### Chris Mills *Plays and Sings* (Skyco) (\$3.50)

Chris Mills is a solo performer from the Chicago area. This debut 7" has one original and one traditional country number. The original, "Nowhere Town" is a deeply moving ballad led by Chris' raw, gruff and emotional vocals. This song has a rare quality. It manages to capture the mood and lyrical feel of Bruce Springsteen's *Nebraska*, but has an emotional pull that brings to mind Mark Eitzel much more than "The Boss." The cover tune is similar in nature, but a little less compelling. All in all, this is a great single. If you like a band like the Scud Mountain Boys, but wish that they had more emotional impact, this might be right up your alley.



### The Mitchells "Five Minutes" (self-released) (\$3.00)

The Mitchells are a Northampton, Massachusetts band that blends a quirky American pop sound with a definite Smiths influence. You can't help but notice that the vocals sound remarkably like Morrissey, but the music is unique with it's catchy rhythmic and hooky nature. The Mitchells are a band making great pop music and not following any of the current indie trends. This is another good example of some of the new pop sounds coming out of the Western Massachusetts area.



### Monsterland "Peanut Butter Karma" (spinART) (\$1.75)

I thought this single was long-gone, but spinART came up with a bunch of them at a bargain price. This was the single that brought Monsterland well deserved praise all over the UK. The overall sound combines the power of Hüsker Dü with a 90's indie-pop sensibility. The recording quality is a bit rough but the songs rise above that and create a memorable pop 7".



### Moon Socket "Feeling Around" + 7 (Ratfish) (\$3.50)

Moon Socket is a solo project from Chris of Eric's Trip. The music is simple and personal and consists of vocal and guitar accompaniment along with assorted additional weirdness. There's definitely a Lou Barlow influence here but it also draws a lot from Chris' work in Eric's Trip. On this single, the melody and lyrics win out over the weirdness, so don't worry about getting too much incoherent noise. This is an all-around solid single.

### Moped "Sibling" + 2 (Hep-Cat) (\$3.50)

On these three songs, Moped treads a lot of familiar ground but still produces a compelling single. At times they sound like early Superchunk and at other times they sound like the Blake Babies. In some cases, I'd cry "rip-off" but Moped pull it off with integrity because the songs are strong and truly infectious. Good, upbeat pop music is becoming scarce, so Moped is a great find for 1996.



### 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 keeps 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 as 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.



### My Favorite "The Informers" (Harriet) (\$3.50)

It's hard not to be moved by the spirit and enthusiasm that My Favorite puts into its music. The music they are making is not at all stylish. It's distinctively British and has a bit of a mod feel to it, but by no means is it a knockoff of the Jam. Instead, My Favorite takes a more pop approach to their sound that draws as much from The Smiths as it does from the mod movement. While politics do play a part in the music, it is more personal politics instead of issue oriented politics. The songs

aren't always happy, but the overall feeling from the band is uplifting and hopeful.



### My White Bread Mom *Hot Damn!* (Anyway) (\$3.50)

With the recent punk rock revival in full force, leave it to a Columbus, Ohio band to go one step further and bring back early 80's hardcore. This is pure, high speed, high energy punk rock with trashy, lo-tech recording and virtually unintelligible vocals. Isn't that the way punk rock should be anyway?



### 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 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.



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

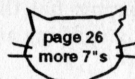
I have to admit that I don't know nearly enough about Nothing Painted Blue. Listening to this single convinces me that I'm missing out. This single gives us one NPB original and a cover of a Great Plains song. Both sides rock. The A-side is power pop right up there with the best of them, while the B-side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



### Now We Are Six *Heliotrope* EP (Harlequin) (\$3.50)

Now We Are Six is 3 teenagers from Connecticut who create simple twee songs that land somewhere between Jonathan Richman and Beat Happening. Everything is direct and any musical imperfections add to the innocence and charm of these recordings. Even though these four songs are originals, it stands as a fine tribute to Jonathan Richman in pure energy and lack of attitude.





**Number One Cup**  
**"Malcolm's X-Ray Picnic"**  
**(Derivative) (\$3.50)**

This is one of those singles that doesn't seem significant on first listen. Once I got through listening to it, I found that it had dug its way under my skin and I wanted more and more. Everything about this single is slow and deliberate but not in an obvious Slint-like way. Instead, Number One Cup takes a smooth and sophisticated approach. If I had to make comparisons, I'd probably mention Seam, but with a sparser and less tension filled sound.



**Oswald Five-0 "Heavy Shoes"**  
**(My Pal God) (\$3.50)**

Oswald Five-0 is a big sounding punk rock band from the Pacific Northwest. These melodic songs are driven by powerful female vocals. These vocals and a slightly rootsy Gun Club-like sound are what sets Oswald Five-0 apart from the huge pack of melodic punk rock bands.



**Pencil Tin "Poignant"**  
**(Quiddity) (\$3.50)**

Quiddity is doing a great job mining the Australian twee-pop scene. I'm not sure of the exact makeup of Pencil Tin, but I think there is some sort of connection to The Cat's Miaow. "Poignant" and "In Dreams" are pure pop songs that sound like an upbeat, playful version of Felt. The final song, "Hold Me" is the most straight-ahead pop song of the bunch and is guaranteed to leave you humming long after the needle picks up.



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

This may be 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 from the constant spins it's getting on my turntable.



**Pest 5000 "Cold Feet"**  
**(Derivative) (\$3.50)**

It's been a long time since we heard a new single from Pest 5000. Fortunately, they made it worth the wait. "Cold Feet" is vaguely reminiscent of their song "Toast," but the guitar and violin textures are more restrained. The B-side, "Where the Moon Is," takes an entirely new approach. It has an ambient dub sound that reminds me a lot of Pram. While this is not something I expected to hear from Pest 5000, it works well and is my favorite of the two songs on this single.

**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 a shot at vocals on each of the four sides. The results range from noisy pop, to Raincoats-like violin excursions, to straight-ahead pop. This is 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 made a 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.



**Pirate Jenny "Conversation X"**  
**(Red Hot) (\$3.50)**

This is the debut 7" from Northampton MA's Pirate Jenny. "Conversation X" is a gritty, bouncy pop song with a raw, garage attitude and well arranged melodies and hooks. "Folly" is a slower and more thoughtful song, but it still has a clean catchy guitar hook that sticks in your head throughout. Along with The Mitchells and Tizzy, Pirate Jenny are helping to define a new era of DIY pop music in Northampton.



**Pocahontas double 7"**  
**(Insignificant) (\$4.50)**

These days, when I say a band is influenced by Nirvana, I'm usually making a derogatory comment about their lack of originality. With Pocahontas, I can't help but make that comparison, but there is nothing blatantly derivative about their sound. In fact, I doubt there is a conscious effort to mimic Nirvana in any way on this release. It's just the passion, emotion and ability to mix pop melodies with crunchier instrumentation that bring that comparison to mind. This 6 song double 7" is a solid debut that makes me want to hear more from this band.



**Pop Defect "I Am a Poseur"**  
**(Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

This is definitely the most pop sounding release from Scooch Pooch. Pop Defect is a punk rock trio which subscribes to the Peg Boy, Big Drill Car school of melodic punk. "I Am a Po-

seur" is somewhat out of character as the added saxophone gives the song a 60's garage rock character to the song. The B-side "Every Day is Brenda Day" is vintage Orange County pop/punk and sounds like an out-take from Pegboy's *Strong Reaction* album.



**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 "Fancy Party Hairdo"**  
**(Harriet) (\$3.50)**

This second Prickly release shows a big step forward. This 7" does a good job of showing off two different sides of the band. The A-side is a bouncy upbeat song that is largely acoustic and driven by the nicely matched female harmonies. The B-side is a bit slower and sounds a lot more like their first single.



**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. The melodies are slow and moody and both the dual guitars and vocals play off one another in a compelling and mesmerizing way.



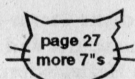
**Primordial Undermind "Ache"**  
**(Penultimate) (\$3.50)**

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



**Punchbuggy "Dressed for Success"**  
**(Mag Wheel) (\$3.50)**

You don't find singles like this too often anymore. Montreal's Punchbuggy supplies two nearly perfect pop songs. Each song lasts less than two minutes and leaves you wanting more. Both songs are rooted in power pop with thick layered guitars driving the melody, but each has its own unique twists. "Dressed for Success" has a down to earth, rootsy feel while



"My Voice is Weak" is lighter with the "oh-oh-oh-oh" vocals giving it a vintage pop sound.



**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" is the moodier one.



**Push Kings "Macy, Macy"**  
**(Sealed Fate) (\$3.50)**

The second Push Kings 7" is a major step up from the first one. The Pavement influence is still there but it's combined with more of a 60's influence and a lush 1970's sound that brings to mind the work of Richard Davies and Eric Matthews. Simply put, this is a well crafted pop single that stands heads and shoulders above most of the releases on the market. Everything is arranged superbly and the Eric Masunaga recordings are clean and crisp without being overly slick.



**The Push Kings**  
**Slow Down, This is not Monte Carlo**  
**(Chunk) (\$3.50)**

This first Push Kings' 7" is probably the most perfect Pavement imitation ever made. Back when it first came out, I was a bit annoyed by the whole idea, but now these songs seem just fine. Sure, they have the slow pop side of Pavement down to every small detail, but they also write great pop songs that would sound good in any context. Now that The Push Kings have grown beyond their earliest influences it's fun to put on this single to see how they started out.



**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 music. Anyone who enjoys bands 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, Ohio 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 the split single of 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 Receptionists 6 Song EP**  
**(Ba Da Bing!) (\$3.50)**

The Receptionists have created quite a buzz among the micro-pop scene on the East Coast starting with this, their first release. The Receptionists are a three piece that creates sparse, simple songs with very minimal instrumentation. In addition to the vocals, guitar and stripped down percussion, they use penny whistle, toy piano and accordion to create their unique sound. These songs would seem totally out of place in a rock club, but are perfect when played informally in a kitchen or bedroom. Fans of Harriet and Shrimper releases should definitely check this one out.

**The Receptionists**  
**Keep Your Secrets EP**  
**(Harriet) (\$3.50)**

As a follow up to their Ba Da Bing! 7", The Receptionists gives us this four song EP on Harriet Records. As with their debut, these songs are sparse and minimal and have bits of odd instrumentation mixed in. The vocals are soft and pretty with harmony arrangements that occasionally remind me of the Raincoats.



**Ruby Falls "Hysteria"**  
**(Silver Girl) (\$3.50)**

This is the third single from Ruby Falls and like everything else they've done, it is a winner. "Hysteria" alternatives soothing and melodic verses with louder guitar driven choruses and interludes to produce a vintage slice of their style of rock. The B-side, "Café No Problem" is a live radio recording that has a slower, earthy sound. All in all, this is another great single from Ruby Falls. Fans of their earlier material should not be disappointed with these new songs.



**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 lot. This single is direct, hard hitting 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.



**Salteen "Green Light" 7"**  
**(Ba Da Bing!) (\$3.50)**

Salteen is a pop band which reminds me of Scrawl but with less rock in their sound. They alternate slow, pretty portions of their songs with loud, more rocking peaks. The female vocals are pretty, but not syrupy sweet and the three songs on this single show a lot of variety. This is a very nice debut single.



**Scenic "Sage"**  
**(IPR) (\$4.25)**

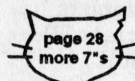
This 7" has two new songs from Scenic which continue in the instrumental tradition of their stunning debut. These songs are slightly more straightforward. There is less mystery and more of a traditional rock sound. Still, there's something special in their smooth, shimmering guitar sound that projects a soothing mental image. These songs and Scenic's debut 7", "The Kelso Run," have been released together on CD. For more information, see our CD section.



**Scrawl "Good Under Pressure"**  
**(Simple Machines) (\$3.50)**

This looks like the last indie release for Scrawl since they've recently taken the plunge and signed to Elektra. With this 7", they leave the indie world in style. "Good Under Pressure"





picks up right where the last Simple Machines full-lengther left off, with the sparse, dry production-style adding even more power to the music. "Chaos" is a loud, more filled out song that nicely complements the more tension-filled sounds of the A-side. As always, Scrawl produces nothing but top-notch material.



**Secret Stars "Wait" (Simple Machines) (\$3.50)**

This is exactly what the seven inch single is all about. Take two perfect songs that have brilliant melodies and hooks and put them together on one slab of vinyl. Without a doubt, this is my favorite single of 1995 and the best release ever on Simple Machines. This is the first vinyl release from Secret Stars and follows two well-received cassette releases. For this 7", Secret Stars is a two piece, with Geoff Farina (Karate) joined by Jodi Buonanno. Each sings on one side of the record. Geoff's side ("Wait") is simple, quiet and very pretty, bringing to mind an unplugged version of Codeine with less male angst. Jodi's side ("Riot Kill") is simply one of the best songs ever pressed on to vinyl. It's incredibly catchy and has amazing and slightly cryptic lyrics.



**Sentridoh "Losercore" (Smells Like) (\$3.50)**

Of all the non-Sebadoh material that Lou Barlow has released, this is probably the best. Sentridoh is the name Lou uses for a lot of his solo material. This single was one of the first things released under that name. Both songs are simple and nicely recorded with intelligent lyrics and an emotional delivery. If you're a fan of Lou Barlow, this is a must-have single.



**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. (or if your last name is Shapiro, like mine. -aliza)



**Shiva Speedway "Twister" (Fire Eater) (\$3.50)**

Shiva Speedway is a three-piece band from

Boston. Their instrumentation consists of two guitars, drums and vocals. Their sound is similar to Unwound but has more space and breathing room in the sound. "Twister" is a straight-ahead song with dense guitar riffs and little bursts of feedback accompanied by harsh, shouted female vocals. The B-side is more disjointed and has a bit more of a prog-rock feel to it but its roots are in punk rock, more so than anything else.



**Silkworm "Quicksand" (My Pal God) (\$3.50)**

This is the first recorded appearance for the new three piece incarnation of Silkworm. The change is quite dramatic. Instead of the detailed, two guitar arrangements that made the *Libertine* album one of the best of last year, the new Silkworm is a stripped down and more pop oriented band. "Quicksand" is a track from their Matador debut while the B-side "On the Road, One More Time" is a quiet acoustic number that seems heavily influenced by Neil Young. It's a peasant surprise to get such a rock solid B-side and this alone makes this 7" worth owning even if you already have the Matador LP.



**Simple Ones "Toothpaste" (Shangri La) (\$3.00)**

If the Grifters were to admit that they were a pop band, they'd probably start creating songs that sound a lot like this. Simple Ones uses a lot of the same dark, bluesy elements as Grifters do but blend them in a more coherent, melodic way. These songs do have moments where they meander away from the main melody, but these excursions are shorter and more controlled with Simple Ones.



**Sissy Bar "Sad to Say" (Moo-Tron) (\$3.50)**

My first thoughts upon listening to this 7" was "Bunnygrunt goes country." The music has an innocent twee quality to it, but the addition of banjo and keyboards gives it a uniqueness that I can't quite figure out. I don't know whether to take it seriously or write it off as some sort of novelty. Either way, it's an appealing first single. Only time will tell if there's something more significant behind it.



**The 6ths "Rot in the Sun" (Merge) (\$3.50)**

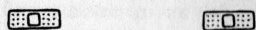
The 6ths are a side project of Stephin Merritt of The Magnetic Fields where he performs songs with other indie rock folks. On this, the first set of recordings made by the 6ths, Stephin teams up with Robert Scott of The Bats. The end result sounds an awful lot like The Magnetic Fields, but that's never a bad thing.



**Skinner Pilot "New Sun" (Good Sin) (\$3.50)**

Quite a few people have been wondering what happened to Elizabeth Sharpe, former drum-

mer of New Radiant Storm King. Well, she relocated to Athens, GA and formed Skinner Pilot with Steve Healey (formerly of Frances Gumm). Like so many bands these days, Skinner Pilot was definitely weaned on the Slint and post-Slint scene and these neo-prog-rock influences show throughout these two songs. Both of these songs twist and turn through a multitude of moods and tempo changes. Of all the records in this catalog with prog rock influences, this is probably the most musically complex and challenging of the bunch.



**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 straight-ahead, 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.



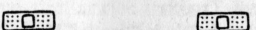
**Smackmelon "Space Shot" (Mag Wheel) (\$3.50)**

This is an all male, Boston band fronted by ex-Bullet LaVolta guitarist Duke Roth. This band heads in a much more straight-ahead 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 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.



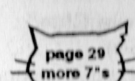
**The Sneetches Think EP (Bus Stop) (\$2.50)**

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 own this 7".

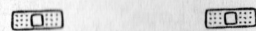


**Sourpuss "Rocket Day" EP (Self Released) (\$3.50)**

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

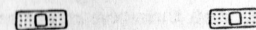


Massachusetts, and they totally understand what was cool about new wave. My favorite of the 3 songs is "Stab," it has the bouncy energy of an XTC song with the added bonus of cool female backing vocals. The other 2 songs are almost as good, but in a more subdued way. Anyone who likes good pop hooks and 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, though they're from Chapel Hill they have absolutely no discernible Superchunk influence at all. Second, the two piece sound is not in any way lo-fi. 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 out on a similar path, but with a brighter pop sound reminiscent of something on Flying Nun.



**Spent "Sinking In" (spinART) (\$3.50)**

Of all the American bands making music influenced by the Flying Nun stable of New Zealand bands, Spent does it better than just about anyone else. "Sinking In" is pop in the style of the Bats or The Clean: crisp, pure and instantly catchy. The real highlight of this 7" is the B-side "West." It has the catchiest hooks this side of Dunedin and the combined male/female vocals add an extra element that pushes this song over the top.



**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.



**Sportsguitar "He's So Funny" (Derivative) (\$3.50)**

Sportsguitar is a two piece pop band from Switzerland. The A-side "He's So Funny" is a simple, upbeat pop song with a catchy fuzzed out bassline. The B-sides goes in a totally different direction. "Short Day" is a slow song with some sort of woodwind instrument pro-

viding a feedback-like sound over the simple, repetitive guitar base. Finally, "Police Academy" closes the single with another short simple pop song.



**Styrofoam Ceiling "Troubles and Dreams" (Polystyrene) (\$3.50)**

This single is amazing in every way. It comes packaged in a transparent vinyl sleeve with a single page of information and liner notes arranged in a sparse Factory Records style. The music falls somewhere in between the slow drone songs from Unrest's *Imperial* frr album and the sort of space-rock that is in style today with bands like Jessamine and Flying Saucer Attack. The music isn't outwardly hook-filled, but it does sink in pretty deeply after a couple of listens. I find it stuck in my head at odd times for no apparent reason. This is definitely one of my favorite seven inch discoveries of 1995.



**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.



**sugar plant Window Pane (Sunday) (\$3.50)**

This sugar plant single is very different from the Pop Narcotic material. Instead of the big sound that pays debt to Galaxie 500 or Stereolab, these songs are more stripped down and raw. It is quieter and has loose ends that aren't pulled together with a climatic guitar lead. The end result is a simpler and more deeply personal version of the sugar plant sound. This is the one sugar plant single that would sound right at home on a Sarah Records compilation.



**The Summer Hits "1000 Moments of Natural Floatation" (Silver Girl) (\$3.50)**

The Summer Hits are probably best described as a lo-fi, drugged out version of Swirlies. They draw from the fuzzy, post-MBV sound that was so popular a few years ago. From this starting point, they pile on weirder deranged sounding ideas and attempt to pull it together with production ideas they probably borrowed from Brian Wilson. This is definitely one of the weirdest pop singles I've heard in a while. They pull their influences together in an original and interesting fashion.



**Super 5 Thor Tubeless Ignition EP (No Life) (\$3.50)**

The world would probably be a better place if The Jesus and Mary Chain were as influential

on today's indie rock as My Bloody Valentine or Pavement. Super 5 Thor make their contribution by giving us this 4 song EP that draws a lot from *Darklands* era Jesus and Mary Chain. The songs all have a slow, rich, inviting sound but you sense that there is something darker and more sinister down under that could rear its head at any moment. This darkness never really jumps out in an obvious manner, but that just adds to the overall edge of this material.



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

On the A-side of their second single, Superdrag slows things down somewhat and takes a dense, psychedelic approach. The B-side is made in a manner 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 seems 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 makes a brand of raw, unpolished, power-pop that falls somewhere between the Gigolo Aunts and Superchunk. Although it's not the most original sound in the world, the songs are the type that stick in your head for hours after each listen.



**The Joey Sweeney "Friday Evening" (Clubland) (\$3.50)**

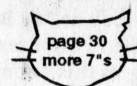
Joey Sweeney used to be in Philadelphia's Barnabys. A few months back, he released his debut album. That release had a few good moments but somehow didn't quite come together. This follow-up 7" shows him pulling things together. The songwriting is strong, the singing passionate and the backing band (featuring Alex Kemp of The God Rays) is tight and energetic. The music is straight-ahead, but the use of a lap steel guitar gives it a vibrancy and life that pulls it above the average slacker rock combo. If this single is any indication, Joey Sweeney is someone to watch over the next few months.



**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.





**☾ Syrup U.S.A. "Teen Death" (Tru Luv) (\$3.50)**

The first Syrup single caught a lot of ears in Boston and all over the country. This follow-up 7" shouldn't disappoint anyone either. The key to Syrup's sound is the way Seana Carmody (ex-Swirlyies) voice and guitar intertwine with the Frafisa sound from Matt Fine. "Teen Death" is an short, upbeat song while "Mysterious Dog" is slower and acts as more of a mood piece.

**☾ Teen Angels *The Early Years* (Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

With this single, Teen Angels once again prove that they are for real. The music is loud, intense and totally in your face. To top this off, the vocals are raw and intense and my throat hurts just listening to it. Teen Angels shows that you don't have to water down your music or resort to metal clichés to get your point across. Look for their full-length release on Sub Pop.

**☾ 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 clichés 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 don't get it. Apart from the recording method, the songs 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 that has 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" is straight-ahead, melodic punk rock. The individually hand painted sleeves add another personal touch to this single.

**☾ Totfinder "Sno-Cones" (My Pal God) (\$3.50)**

Totfinder is New Jersey's answer to the North Carolina band Bricks. This two piece band plays stripped down songs with simple instrumentation (including Rubbermaid garbage cans for drums) but with killer hooks. For once, I've found a two piece band that bears absolutely no resemblance to any Lou Barlow project. Instead, these songs are upbeat and poppy, but also sincere and homespun.

**☾ Travis "C'est La Narcoleptic" (My Pal God) (\$3.50)**

Travis is a Wisconsin band with members of Seam and dis-. On the A-side, the music has harsh, angular guitars and sparse shouted vocals. The B-side has a melodic feel with driving guitar riffs and fast, spoken word vocals. Fans of Shellac and Seam will probably dig this single.

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

Tree Fort Angst performs 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 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, 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 "Bailey Park" (Cher Doll) (\$3.50)**

This is single number two from Tully Craft. Like their "True Blue" single on Harriet, this release is a pop masterpiece with the uplifting melodies tempered by Sean's geeky sounding vocals. The real surprise on this release the final track- a fun disco version of Crayon's "Pedal."

**☾ 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 distortion, 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.

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

This is the debut release by Twig, 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.

**☾ Twig "Parade" (Harriet) (\$3.50)**

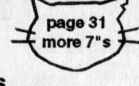
It's been a long wait for a new Twig single and they haven't let us down with this one. The two sides of this single are extremely different. One song is very similar in style to their previous releases. The music is upbeat and catchy with great vocal harmonies and a slightly crunchy guitar sound driving the song. The other side goes in a direction that they've been experimenting with in their live shows but which they've never released on vinyl. The pace is a lot slower with one noisy guitar up front and on the edge of feeding back throughout. This is offset by the second clean guitar and the usual excellent vocal harmonies. This single shows a lot of growth for Twig. Let's hope they get us the next one sooner.

**☾ Two Dollar Guitar "Lost Bird" (Smells Like) (\$3.50)**

This is the first release from Two Dollar Guitar. Unlike the full length release, this single is two solo recordings by Tim Foljahn. These two songs consist of Tim's simply strummed guitar and vocals. As with the album, the songs are dark and unhappy, but still have an uplifting quality at times. Nick Cave could be an influence here, though Tim's manner is more stripped down and personal.

**☾ V-3 "American Face" (Anyway) (\$3.50)**

V-3 is yet another great band from Columbus, Ohio and are absolutely impossible to classify. "American Face" takes a fairly ordinary Seattle grunge guitar sound and throws in some interesting twists to create a sound truly their own. Odd tempo changes lead the way into a vocal chorus that sounds like something from a British psychedelic band. The B-side is more avant-garde with flourishes of violin and almost spoken word vocals leading the way. This is a very unique and appealing single. I can't wait to hear the upcoming full-length.



**☾ 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 uses more conventional 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.

**☾ Versus "Big Head" (Teen Beat) (\$3.50)**

Despite the incredibly ugly cover artwork, this is another great Versus single. The A-side "Big Head" is vintage Versus with all the melody and power of their songs. The B-side "N.I.T.A" is a cover of a song by Young Marble Giants. They do a major transformation on this song as they take the largely electronic original and perform it in their own distinctive style.

**☾ 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. Vineland is in the same camp as bands like Rodan, but with a more concise, straight-ahead rock sound.

**☾ The Vix Krater "Power Tools" (My Pal God) (\$3.50)**

On their second single, this Chicago based three piece takes another step forward. First off, this single's packaging is miles ahead of the first. Second and more importantly, the band continues to combine that blend of low-key repetition and pop melodies to create a mix that falls somewhere between Seam and Bedhead. On this single, The Vix Krater tries out a few new ideas. The A-side features some cello, giving it a more lush sound. The B-side is denser sounding with thicker distorted guitars adding energy to the mix. After listening to the two Vix Krater 7"s, I'm amazed that they aren't more well known.

**☾ The Vix Krater "Underground" (My Pal God) (\$3.50)**

The opening notes of "Underground" immediately made me think of Bedhead. The slow, mellow, textured guitar sounds make that an obvious comparison. Still, don't buy this expecting a Bedhead clone. The Vix Krater is definitely more pop oriented and less reliant on repetition and mood. Even as the songs build to more powerful climaxes, the band doesn't fall into any of the stereotypical Chicago sounds. Subtlety and restraint, along with a good pop sensibility make this an impressive single.

**☾ 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 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 are more upbeat and one has vocals with a beautiful and lazy Kendra Smith feel to them. This is an interesting first single. Wandering Lucy has recently released a second single on K Records.

**☾ 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 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.

**☾ Weeping in Fits and Starts "Bridge to Nowhere" (Rhubarb) (\$3.50)**

This single shows Weeping in Fits and Starts delivering on the promise of their debut single.

Weeping in Fits and Starts is a band fronted by Greg Jacobs. Greg has an obvious knack for writing perfect pop songs that bring together the pop hooks of Tommy Keene with more forlorn, but hopeful lyrics. This is a classic pop single that will stand up through the next dozen indie trends and sound fresh and honest 15 years from now.

**☾ Windy and Carl *Instrumentals EP* (Burnt Hair) (\$3.50)**

This EP is exactly what you'd expect from the title: three instrumentals from Michigan's Queen and King of space rock. These songs tend to take a sparser, less effects driven approach, but have that distinctive dreamy, meditative quality that is common to all of Windy and Carl's music.

**☾ 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.

**☾ Wrong Pipe *"One/Blue Story"* (Remora) (\$3.50)**

Wrong Pipe is a new collaboration between Roger Miller and Clint Conley. This is the first time they've recorded together since the demise of Mission of Burma. Therefore, it was impossible to know what to expect. Fortunately, even ten years later, the songwriting chemistry still seems to exist. It's great to hear Roger and Clint trading vocal parts and Roger's tremolo guitar sound still packs the same punch it did over ten years ago. These songs are a lot sparser and lo-fi than Mission of Burma, but they still capture the same magic. This is an absolute must for fans of Mission of Burma.

**☾ Yak *Exiles on Montgomery Street* (Squealer) (\$3.50)**

The title of this EP gives you some idea of some of Yak's influences. The song "Jacket" has a definite middle period Stones sound, but the other three songs branch out in different ways making it difficult to describe this EP. One side is influenced by 60's rock and the other side is influenced by present day indie rock. Either way, Yak comes off sounding amazingly original.

**☾ Zeke "Chiva Kneivel" (Scooch Pooch) (\$3.50)**

Zeke is a new punk rock band from Seattle. Like a lot of the Scooch Pooch bands, Zeke break no new ground. Instead they take a style that's been done a million times and make it sound fresh. If you listen to the huge number



of mediocre punk rock records around today, you'll realize that this is quite a feat. On this 7", Zeke takes a couple of different approaches. The A-side is pure Seattle grunge. The tempos are much slower and the vocals bring to mind something from a 1970's garage band. The B-side is the most furious batch of punk rock this side of The Lazy Cowgirls. The music is fast and urgent and sounds like a roots rock band out of control. Both songs manage to add a new life to otherwise tired genres.

## 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 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.

### 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 with a definite 1980's post-punk sound. 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 Washington, 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)

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*. 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.

### Boobytrap! Volume One double 7" (Derivative) (\$6.00)

Boobytrap! is a new series of double 7"s released by Derivative Records. Volume One contains tracks from Starbean, Saturnine, The Ladybug Transistor and Blaise Pascal. Starbean is a guitar/keyboards/drums trio featuring Jon of Pest 5000. Their contribution sounds like Stereolab meets Syrup. Saturnine contributes a cut of their low key, Galaxie 500 inspired pop. The Ladybug Transistor's approach starts off similar to Saturnine's, but quickly moves into the quirky pop that made their debut CD such a pleasure. Finally, Blaise Pascal close out this compilation with a quiet piece which feels like an simple, naive version of a Pavement song.

### Champagne Dance Party (Cher Doll) (\$3.50)

Cher Doll Records gives us their second compilation record and this time we get seven tracks all on one 33 RPM single. It has songs from Beanpole, Sno Boy, Names for Pebbles, Orange Cake Mix, New Bad Things, Stuffed Bear and Neutral Milk Hotel. The two sides of this compilation are split between the calm and pretty music on side A and the more lo-fi, weird material on side B. As with all Cher Doll releases, this one oozes with an honest charm that hits you as soon as the needle lands on the vinyl.

### Chisel / Brian, Colin and Vince (Sudden Shame) (\$3.50)

On this split single, each band covers a song from the other band. This is what a great split single is all about, as each side seems to be a drastically different interpretation of the original. Chisel gives us an edgy, emotional anthem that sounds like the honest side of Smashing Pumpkins crossed with the post-punk Chicago sound. It's a very moving, emotional song. Brain, Colin and Vince are light years away from the Chisel sound. Their Chisel cover is stripped down and acoustic and is a nice change of pace after the all out angst of the Chisel performance.

### Cobra Verde / Moviola (Wabana) (\$3.50)

This split single showcases Columbus, Ohio's Moviola and Cleveland's Cobra Verde. Moviola gives us three songs that showcase their unique lo-fi songs. There are always bands to compare Moviola to, but as always they end up sounding like no one but themselves. Cobra Verde is a big rock band and the 70's sounding vocals may scare off some people. Despite this, the overall sound is more influenced by

early 80's post punk than cheezy rock.

### 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 on their contribution. French Marigold supplies a pleasant but haunting and simple 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. 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)

This is 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.

### Double Agent #1 (Double Agent) (\$3.50)

Double Agent is a new label run by Peter Green from Splashdown fanzine. His first attempt at releasing a record is a huge success thanks to his fine choice of bands. This 7" contains one track each from Rose Melberg (Softies) and Dustin Reske (Rocketship), Papas Fritas, Zaius and My Favorite. The Rose/Dustin collaboration is as pop as you would expect it to be, but with unexpected noise and feedback which adds more life to the song. Papas Fritas contribute an old song that is a lot more raw and garagey than their Minty Fresh debut, but does a good job at capturing their enthusiastic, Jonathan Richman influenced pop sound. Zaius is a solo recording project from Peter that pays tribute to *Planet of the Apes*. Finally, the Long Island mod band My Favorite closes out the record with an early song of theirs called "Cult Hero, Come Home." This song is the highlight of the 7" and owes as much to American indie pop as it does to The Jam.

### Drive-In / Season EP (Drive-In) (\$3.50)

This is the first release from Michigan's Drive-In Records. For this first release, they've teamed up with Australia's Season Records to produce a 7" compilation with two American bands (Shapiros and Madison Electric) and two Australian bands (The Cat's Miaow and The Singing Bush). All of these bands take a low key and quiet approach to their music but none of it is pointlessly twee. The music has real depth behind the beauty. If you like the quiet pop sounds of DC or Australia you are sure to like all of these bands.

### Eric's Trip / Moviola (Metoo!) (\$3.50)

This is the first release from Metoo! Records, and it's a good one. Eric's Trip contributes a song that starts off as if it's going to rock the roof off the house only to settle back into a slower quieter groove before punching back in with more fuzzed-out guitar. Moviola contributes two songs which show that these Ohio boys never run out of ideas. This is some of their strongest work yet, especially "Payday" which is sad and moving.

### 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. 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.

### Halogen / Treiops Treyfid (Kilogram Denial) (\$3.50)

Kilogram Denial is yet another new label and this is their first release. Hologen is a Western Massachusetts band that has definite math rock tendencies, but doesn't sound like a sorry excuse for a 70's band or a Rodan-clone. Its sense of melody and cool "ooh-oooh" vocals make sure of that. Treiops Treyfid was a member of the late-great Pitchblende. I really expected blasts of experimental noise from Treiops, but instead he gives us one of the best slices of Mission of Burma-influenced pop I've heard in a long time. I always knew there was a great pop band lurking under the noise and power of Pitchblende and this proves it.

### Ninian Hawick / The She-Brews (Grimsey) (\$3.50)

Ninian Harwick seems to be a large collection of friends doing a one-off project with the title

"Scottish Rite Temple Stomp." I guess the use of bagpipes makes it vaguely Scottish sounding, but it's certainly not traditional Scottish music. The She-Brews is a side project of The Legendary Jim Ruiz Group that takes a folksy, electric 1960's direction that sounds a bit like the Kendra Smith songs from the *Rainy Day* album.

### Honeyburn / Cigarhead split (Lo-Fi) (\$3.50)

This split single is from two relatively new bands from Dayton, Ohio. Honeyburn (who also appear on the spinART LemonLime compilation) lead the way with their ethereal female vocals and American pop sensibility. They manage to blend the British shoegazer sound with pure catchy pop. Cigarhead take a slightly artsy, stop-start punk rock approach that occasionally shows the influence of fellow Dayton rockers, Brainiac.

### Hood / Carmine split (Orange) (\$3.50)

Two European bands share the first release from a new DC area label. Hood is from England and have a vinyl only full-lengther on Slumberland. Their songs on this 7" sound like a cross between Lou Barlow acoustic material and Flying Saucer Attack. Spare, simple acoustic songs grow into heavily overdriven and noisy guitar experiments on some songs and just stay quiet and soothing on others. Carmine is a French band whose music is repetitive, rhythmic and slightly spacy. I guess the best description of Carmine would include references to Jessamine, Pram and Stereolab. All in all, this single exposes two relatively unknown European bands to American fans.

### 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 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 actually sounds like it was made in Memphis!

### Indie Rock Flea Market 7" (Go Compact Discs) (\$3.50)

This four band 7" was released by the folks who run Go Compact Discs in Arlington, VA in conjunction with the 1995 Indie Rock Flea Market. Included here are tracks from Low, Andrew Beaujon (Eggs), Edsel and Heartworms. Low is the highlight of this 7" with their typically quiet, edgy and understated song. Andrew Beaujon provides a real surprise with his song. It's a pure pop song but is performed in such a strange style that it's hard to

compare it to anything else. Edsel performs a great song that's a lot more downbeat and moody than their usual style. Heartworms finishes things off with its song which is weird, kind of goofy and sounds like a twisted children's song.

### Instress Volume 1 (Road Cone) (\$3.50)

The Instress series is a set of split 7"s dedicated to solo recording artists. Volume 1 has one track from Sandra Bell and four from John Davis. Sandra Bell is a New Zealand artist associated with the lo-fi Xpressway segment of the Dunedin scene. Her track on this single is very sparse with just guitar, accordion and spoken word vocals. It has a soothing but haunting quality and stands up well to her other released material. John Davis is probably best known for his collaboration with Lou Barlow in The Folk Implosion but his solo material stands up well on its own. His tracks here are simple home recordings and range from noisy, experimental pieces to nicely arranged, beautiful songs. John Davis' solo music has more in common with Lou's music than it does with what they play in Folk Implosion.

### Instress Volume 2 (Road Cone) (\$3.50)

Volume two of this series gives us tracks from Thurston Moore and guitarist Loren MazzaCane Connors. Thurston starts things off with an instrumental that sounds more like a Sonic Youth song than anything on his recent solo album. It has all the subtlety and atmospherics of the best Sonic Youth songs without sounding like a generic outtake from the band. Loren MazzaCane Connors brings a much more freeform style to a solo guitar track. The song included here, covers a lot of ground, ranging from dark foreboding segments to smoother and more soothing sounds. Every portion of this song flows in a coherent manner making it a very interesting listening experience.

### Instress Volume 3 (Road Cone) (\$3.50)

Volume three of this series brings us lesser known artists with tracks from Capital Eye and California. The Capital Eye songs split pretty equally into two parts, with the first half going a space rock way that would fit in well with some of the stuff on Kranky. This segues into a segment of noisy freeform guitar that is close to what Psychic TV was doing in the *NY Scum Haters* days. California is just plain weird. If Ralph Records were around, they'd certainly have signed California. Their song on this 7" is an odd mix of repetitive electronic sounds and rhythms. This isn't far removed from the post-Throbbing Gristle electronic sounds that Chris and Cossey made. Just when you think that this is all California is about, they jump into a short improv banjo piece that sounds more like Eugene Chadbourne than any Throbbing Gristle alumni.



# **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 on my turntable most 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 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 hard to adequately describe what they're doing, but it's one of the more interesting and original sounds. 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 label out of Baltimore. Its 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 (which seems 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.

# **Masturbating Twat (Fistful) (\$3.50)**

This is a compilation of female bands and solo performers from Boston. Included here are Squawk, Quivvver, Mona Elliott (Spore), Cheesecake, Megan McLaughlin and Lint. This package also includes a 16 page booklet with band information and writing from Tineuvial of Villa Villakula Records. The music is varied, ranging from the classic rock influenced pop of Quivvver to the rough and raw sounds

of Cheesecake. This single is quite a bit more harsh than the normal Pop Narcotic release but should be of interest to fans of labels like Kill Rock Stars and Villa Villakula.

# **The Mommyheads / The Jennifers (You Say When) (\$2.50)**

On this single, upstart Baltimore pop label You Say When pairs San Francisco's Mommyheads with Baltimore's The Jennifers. The Mommyheads contribute a fine track, "Day Job." It has a quirky pop feel that blends XTC style pop leanings with a touch of Bay Area psychedelia. The Jennifers follows this up with a classic pop track that sounds like it could have come from an early 80's skinny tie band. Both songs on this split single are pure and unpretentious pop.

# **New Radiant Storm King / Guided by Voices (Chunk) (\$3.50)**

There's not much to say about this one. Guided by Voices covers "The Opposing Engineer Sleeps Alone" while New Radiant Storm King covers "I Am a Scientist." As always, two strong bands covering strong material makes for a great split single.

# **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 from Log provides a great acoustic song. It's kind of folksy 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.

# **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 gives us another shot of its post-Crayon rock and newcomers Weakling takes a more straight-ahead pop rock direction. As with their zine, Trey and Rob have done a fine job with their first vinyl offering.

# **Poplicks Box Set (spinART) (\$16.00)**

This is another of those releases that I thought was long-gone. This box set consists of 6 dif-

ferent singles from 6 different bands on 6 different colored pieces of vinyl. Included here are 7"s from Swirl, Throw That Beat in the Garbagecan, Poole, Trampoline, Suddenly Tammy! and Veronica Lake. These bands are a good introduction to the variety of pop sounds on the spinART label. These singles cover a lot of ground, from the goofy B-52's inspired pop of Throw That Beat, to the smooth piano driven rock of Suddenly Tammy! with lots of other styles of pop filling in the gaps. All of this comes packaged in a replica of a Popsicle box packed full of toys and games.

# **Rocktober Fest (Roctober) (\$3.50)**

Roctober 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 from The Royal Crowns). All of the bands have a low key, rockabilly thing happening- 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 single 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 think the lack of studio gloss really helped 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, "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 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 comes 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.

# **Six Cents and Natalie / Huffu (Sudden Shame) (\$3.50)**

Six Cents and Natalie is an ultra-lo-fi project from Sean of Crayon and Tully Craft. Six Cents and Natalie is very different from Sean's other projects in that it is totally home recorded and is mostly electronic instruments alongside Sean's distinctive voice. There are no pop anthems here; just simple and somewhat lonely

pop songs. Huffu is a Burlington, Vermont band which performs low key music that deals with seemingly trivial childhood subjects. Under this exterior they are actually writing effectively about various forms of teen anxiety.

# **Slow Children Playing / Bumblepuppy (Clunker) (\$3.00)**

This low budget split single shows that heartfelt songs really do still exist. Slow Children Playing is a New Jersey band that gives us a heartfelt ballad with painful, personal lyrics and a melody that slowly builds and releases over time. Bumblepuppy is a Rhode Island band which takes a Neil Young meets twee pop approach. The nasal, slightly off key vocals are pure indie pop but the music has a slightly twangy sound giving this song a unique twist.

# **Stand GT / Potbelly split (Mag Wheel) (\$3.50)**

This single has two Montreal bands paying tribute to legendary Canadian band The Nils. Comparing the two songs, Stand GT's loud pop song wins out for pure catchiness. Imagine a slicker and more pop version of Pegboy or Big Drill Car. The Potbelly song is much less pop. It clocks in at over seven minutes and operates more in an angular, post punk fashion. There are several abrupt volume and tempo changes to keep you on your toes. Think early 80's post punk like Gang of Four or Mission of Burma.

# **Stargirl EP (Villa Villakula) (\$6.00)**

This is a double 7" consisting of the four extra tracks that were included on the CD version of the *Move in to Villa Villakula* compilation. Included here are tracks from Led Byrd (with Mary and Ash from Helium), Kore, Denise Monahan (ex Milk Money) and DQE. Mary and Ash contribute a slow, moody piece that seems insignificant upon first listen but soon grows into something quite nice. The two tracks from Kore are sparse and laid back but have angry under currents that make for a tense, edgy sound. Denise Monahan contributes a compelling spoken word track and DQE finishes up the EP with two tracks of their stripped down folksy music.

# **This is Cowtown Volume 4 (Anyway) (\$3.50)**

This is the latest in the series of Columbus, Ohio band compilations on Anyway. This one includes tracks from Monster Truck Five, Moviola, Gun-shy Ministers and Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments. Monster Truck Five does a loud and trashy style of punk rock that draws as much from a garage band like Bassholes as they do from more typical punk bands. Moviola contributes another track of their quirky,

homespun rock music. This is my favorite song on this single and quite possibly my favorite Moviola track to date. The Gun-Shy Ministers features a couple of members of the new Bush League All-Stars and the sound is Replacements influenced. Finally, the king of Columbus rock, Ron House leads the Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments through a relatively slow and clean song. Columbus has an excellent music scene and as always, the Cowtown compilations do a great job of showcasing both the popular and the up-and-coming bands from this area.

# **Tiara / Preston Furman (Seldom Scene) (\$3.50)**

This split single gives us the debut releases from two Columbus, Ohio bands. Tiara's songs are slow and moving with quiet interludes that build to louder but still never aggressive climaxes. It's a bit like Moviola crossed with a big Chicago rock band. Preston Furman is much more punk rock. The songs are mid-tempo rockers with a loose but coherent feel.

# **Treepeople / Archers of Loaf (Sonic Bublebum) (\$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.

# **Unloved (chunk) (\$6.00)**

This is 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 especially enjoyed the New Radiant Storm King and The Veronica Cartwrights songs.

# **The Van Pelt / Radio to Saturn (Sudden Shame) (\$3.50)**

From a musical point of view, this split doesn't make a lot of sense. Each band has a very distinct personality, but both do a great job on their songs. The Van Pelt takes a dense, angular approach that brings to mind Lungfish and Shellac. The music has an edgy, spooky feel which builds and releases with louder, harsher segments. Radio to Saturn has shown a lot of growth from their first single. Their three songs have a homemade pop feel but avoid falling into the trap of sounding like a million other home recording projects. The music is catchy and more charm than 90% of the indie rock being made today.

# **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 to The Eagles are often made and aren't far off target. Steve Westfield, backed by two guys named Lou and Murph does an upbeat rootsy song. This is worth checking out if you're into the country side of indie rock.

# **Winters Mist Volume 1 (Silver Girl) (\$3.50)**

This is the first in a series of twee-pop compilations from Silver Girl Records. This 7" contains tracks from Veronica Lake, The Serenas, Huck and Snowball. These bands sum up the indie pop attitude from around 1990. There is no attempt to rock in any conventional sense. Instead these bands are happy to make quiet and sometimes badly recorded music that is honest and real. Fans of the quieter stuff on K and Bus Stop should enjoy this compilation.

# **Winters Mist Volume 2 (Silver Girl) (\$3.50)**

This is the latest in Silver Girl's series of twee-pop compilations. It contains one track each from Love Bandits, Allen Clapp, Meek, McTells and Dufflecoats. As you can imagine from the choice of bands, this collection has a Bus Stop or Four Letter Words feel to it. The surprising thing is the clean production and mastering that allows you to really absorb the music without having to burrow through the usual layers of haze. This is one of the finest twee pop collections I've heard in quite a while.





**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 this band, but I would never have guessed there was any relationship between these bands. The Band Called Bud song on this flexi is almost 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 its song is my favorite of the two. It's a nice pop song that sounds like it could have come off of a Bus Stop 7". It reminds me a bit of something Tommy Keene or Matthew Sweet might have made.

**Great Plains Live at The Electric Banana Cassette Tape (Lower) (\$6.00)**

Great Plains is one of the most neglected bands of the 1980's. They released at least three records on Homestead but still no one seems to remember their name. In fact, I think their name only gets mentioned these days because Ron House of Great Plains now fronts the mighty Thomas Jefferson Slave Apartments. Great Plains took an entirely different approach than the Slave Apartments. Instead of throw-back, barroom-style punk rock, Great Plains' approach is garagey and goofy. Quirky keyboards weren't in style in the 1980's and that's probably a big part of why Great Plains didn't gain the same fame as Squirrel Bait and Volcano Suns. This cassette is a great chance to check out what this band was all about. The sound quality is great and the performance is vintage Great Plains.

**Grifters video (Shangri La) (\$8.00)**

This tape contains two videos for songs from the 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 Records 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.

Please use this chart to figure out accurate postage rates for zines outside of the US:

- ☞ indicates new small zine
- ☛ indicates new large zine
- ☞ indicates small zine in last catalog
- ☛ indicates large zine in last catalog



**Adventure Playground #2 (\$1.50)**

Adventure Playground comes straight from the British school of fanzines- crude, xeroxed photos and lots of tightly set Courier typeface. The dense type is worth digging into as this is a very good zine. It's personal, opinionated and shows an honest love for obscure and often twee British pop. This issue contains musings on the end of Sarah Records, information on the obscure Slampt! record label, zine reviews and loads of personal ramblings related to music. Steve tells us what he cares about in a convincing way. That's really what a good fanzine should be all about.

**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 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.

**Beer Frame #5 (\$2.00)**

As always, another great issue of *Beer Frame*. There's not much you can say about any individual issue of *Beer Frame*. You really need to read Paul's reviews and comments to fully get it. Just trust me, this is still the number one zine around.

**Beer Frame #6**

Whenever a new issue of *Beer Frame* arrives, I can't help but sit down and immediately read it from cover to cover. It's so rare to find something written with so much intelligence and wit. As always, Paul Lukas reviews odd products, services and printed material in his typical cynical, tongue in cheek manner. This issue brings us canned pork brains, Crayola Magic Scent Crayons, body glue, toasting bread, livestock markers, canned whole chicken and much more. It's impossible to describe just how great this magazine is. You really need to read it and see for yourself.

**Bunnyhop #6 (\$4.00)**

This is such an excellent magazine! Everything from the design to the writing is well executed. It is a lot more than a music magazine as each

issue attempts to explore a new theme through articles and essays. This issue focuses on the concept of "normal". It covers everything from an article about circumcision to an interview with Lisa Carver and her partner Boyd Rice and their "normal" life. In addition, there is musical content including reviews and interviews with Steel Pole Bath Tub, Helium and Red House Painters.

**Caught In Flux #3 (\$2.00)**

*Caught in Flux* is a fairly new zine put out by Mike Applestein. Generally, Mike is into indie pop 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, Rastrol and The Loud Family. Also, there is a series of stories on life after high school from various indie rock people and the usual slew of record reviews. As always, *Caught in Flux* is intelligent, well written and worth taking a look at.

**Caught in Flux #5 (\$2.00)**

Mike Applestein is back with another issue of *Caught in Flux* and as always, it doesn't disappoint. This issue includes interviews with The Pastels, The Receptionists, Delta 5, a Nik-L-Nip tour diary and lots of record and zine reviews. You can always count on Mike to avoid the trendy and obvious and explore music scenes either long forgotten or new enough that no one else is writing about them yet.

**Chickfactor #9 (\$3.00)**

This is the last one as the chicks have called it quits. They go out with a bang though. In this issue Pam and Gail interview almost every cool girl around: Sally Timms, Tara Key from Antietam, Rachael from Sleepyhead, photographer Cynthia Connolly, Lida Husik and Runt editor Lara Cohen. As always there are a lot of well written reviews and interviews with non-girls as well.

**Cool Beans #4 (\$3.50)**

*Cool Beans* #4 is a 72 page fanzine that comes complete with a 7" featuring The Mountain

Goats and Wckr Spgt along with Biscuit and Three Day Stubble. In addition, the zine includes interviews with Silver Jews, Biscuit and Polvo and coverage of the Yo-Yo a Go-Go festival. Finally, there's the usual assortment of reviews which cover a broad variety of styles of music. *Cool Beans* is kind of conventional in content, but well executed throughout, especially in the insightful interviews which give you a glimpse of the bands' personalities.

**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 very regular schedule and it's full of the completely 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.

**Four Days in the Life of Applebee's (\$1.00)**

At first we thought this zine was just a joke. Seth Borgard is a 16 year old who is obsessed with the Applebee's restaurant chain and especially Applebee's chicken fingers. His life's work seems to be eating as often as possible at Applebees and writing this and several other zines. After several readings it's still difficult to figure out how much of this zine is serious and how much is tongue in cheek. This is not a music zine, but it is a great read. It's funny, and more than a tad strange.

**Jaboni Youth #4 (\$4.50)**

This is a very professionally put together zine. It stands out from the pack due to its in-depth interviews with Franklin Bruno of Nothing Painted Blue and Dennis Callaci of Shrimper Records. Also included here are fanzine reviews, indie rockers making funny faces and a free 21 song cassette with Franklin Bruno, Refrigerator, Push Kings, Six Cents and Natalie, Holiday and Paste among others.



**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 somewhat messy and cluttered, but it contains a ton of 7" reviews and 7" charts from most of the radio stations that still value vinyl.

**No Depression Vol. 1 No. 4 (\$4.50)**  
*No Depression* bills itself as The Alternative Country Quarterly but that is an understatement. While they do spend a good portion of each issue exploring newer country influenced acts, they also cover many traditional country artists that are often forgotten in mainstream country circles. This issue includes articles on Ass Ponys, Scud Mountain Boys and Cheri Knight and Jimmie Ryan of The Blood Oranges. In addition to the reviews of modern acts there is information on more traditional artists such as Merle Haggard, Jimmie Dale Gilmore and George Jones. Each issue gets bigger and better. Reading *No Depression* is a great way to become acquainted with newer country music as well as its roots.

**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 straightforward 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 present this in a funny and non-preachy way. This issue contains interviews with Azailia 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 #2 (\$3.00)**  
Issue #1 of *Science Geek* was one of my favorite fanzines ever. In case you aren't familiar with *Science Geek*, it is written by Doug Larkin who is also a high school science teacher. He tries to blend his true love of science with his love of pop music and as a result he produces this incredibly unique fanzine. This issue includes interviews with small factory, Spent and Poster Children, along with articles on Quantum Physics, the probability of coin tosses and various other science and music related topics. Doug brings a real enthusiasm towards his zine and it jumps out at you as you read it. This is still one of my absolute favorite fanzines.

**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.

**Splashdown #4 (\$2.00)**  
*Splashdown* is a small, Boston-based zine dedicated to Peter Green's favorite pop music. This issue has interviews with Heavenly, My Favorite and Papas Fritas, along with the usual zine, show and record reviews. There's also a section on how various bands picked their names. As with the last issue, the design and layout are very nice.

**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.

**Wind Up Industrial Burnoff #4 (\$3.00)**  
Both in content and appearance, *Wind-Up* (the name changes with each issue) sits near the top of the heap in the world of music zines. It is very professionally laid out and has intelligent interviews and features. It also avoids the common trap of page after page of boring record reviews. This issue includes interviews with Stinky Puffs, Six Finger Satellite, Silk-worm, Dick Dale and the Renderers alongside writing by Stephin Merritt and reviews of fanzines and live shows.

**Yakuza #5 (\$2.50)**  
*Yakuza* is probably the most conventional look-

ing 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.

**Yakuza #7 (\$4.00)**  
This latest issue of *Yakuza* is quite a departure from previous issues. It's printed in a 7"x7" format and is actually a split release with Lara Cohen's Runt zine. The *Yakuza* half of the zine stays totally away from the world of music. Instead it covers the theme of grandparents. Most of the issue is one long story from Dave McGurgan, telling some of memories of his grandparents. Also included are some amusing anecdotes and stories from one of Dave's grandmothers. The Runt side is more music oriented with short interviews with the McTells, Hood and Vehicle Flips making up most of the content. Also included is a 7" single containing a song from Lara Cohen's band Nik-L-Nip and an amusing message from Dave's grandmother, Nana B.

**Yakuza #8 (\$9.00)**  
*Yakuza* is back with a more conventional issue after the previous split issue with *Runt*. The magazine includes a great 14 song CD with Zen Guerrilla, New Radiant Storm King, Lee Ranaldo (with Epic Soundtracks), Cobra Verde, Caterpillar, Refrigerator, Loren MazzaCane Connors and others. The zine steers clear of music and concentrates on pet stories, travel journals, allergy self-help and much more. We also get the concluding portion of Dave McGurgan's cross country travel diary that started in issue #6. As always, everything is well written and interesting. *Yakuza* is always a good read.

# Ordering info.

All prices are postpaid for orders within the U.S. All other orders should add postage as shown in the chart to the right. Note that shipping rates have gone up due to the a recent increase in postage rates.

All payment must be in U.S. currency (well concealed!), or a check or money order in U.S. funds that I can easily cash in the U.S. Generally for overseas customers, that means some sort of international bank check or money order. For U.S. orders, personal checks are welcome.

If any items are out of stock, we'll issue a credit slip unless you list alternates or make other arrangements.

We're generally really good about getting orders mailed out within 3 days of receipt, although I wouldn't be surprised if we slipped a little behind for a few weeks right after the catalog is mailed.

All U.S. orders go special 4th class rate and every-

thing outside of the U.S. goes via air mail. Other shipping arrangements can be made upon special request. Just get in touch if you have any special needs that aren't covered here.

If you have any questions regarding anything in the catalog, or want to inquire about an order, feel free to write, call, fax or Email.

Send orders to:  
**Pop Narcotic**  
1085 Commonwealth Ave. #339  
Boston, MA 02215

Voice: 617.628.4999  
Fax: 617.628.7007  
Email: popnarc@world.std.com

Item	Canada	Europe / Asia	Pacific Rim
7" records, small fanzines	\$0.25 first item \$0.25 each additional	\$2.50 first item \$1.50 each additional	\$3.00 first item \$2.00 each additional
Other vinyl, CDs, shirts, large fanzines	\$1.50 first item \$0.75 each additional	\$4.00 first item \$2.00 each additional	\$6.00 first item \$4.00 each additional
Videos	\$4.00 first item \$4.00 each additional	\$8.00 first item \$8.00 each additional	\$10.00 first item \$10.00 each additional

cut here. fill it out. **WRITE LARGE.** send it in. cut here. fill it out. **WRITE NEATLY.** send it in. cut here. fill it out. **WRITE CLEARLY.** send it in.

name		address		phone	
				fax	
				email	
	how many	catalog number / artist / title		format	price
1.					
2.					
3.					
4.					
5.					
6.					
7.					
8.					
9.					
10.					
alternate choices					
subtotal					
shipping (non-US orders only)					
total-total					
payment method	cash, money order, check or...				
	master card or visa acct. #				
	(\$10.00 min. purchase for credit cards)		expiration date	name as it appears on card	



**from:**

Pop Narcotic Records  
1085 Commonwealth Ave. #339  
Boston, MA 02215

**to:**

