

Exploiting
Others For A
Moment's
Amusement
It's...

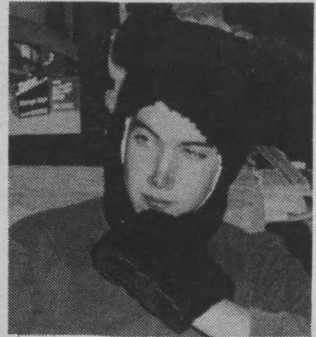
ArtsWeek

The Weekly Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Nexus

Coming to Campus: The Pharcyde

Molloy

BY
TIM
MOLLOY



with Souls of Mischief



**Also Inside: *Locals Only*,
Hip-hop Reviews, A Joint
Review, *Mighty Aphrodite*,
and much more.**

I remember when I saw the Pharcyde at Occidental College last year. It was the best Pharcyde show I'd ever seen. Better than Lollapalooza, better than their set last year in the Hub. (Actually, a lot better.)

My friend Pachuco and brother Ypolete and I heard about the exciting event early one Sunday, I think it was, and we piled in to a Volvo station wagon to attend the show. We really didn't know what the Pharcyde was about then.

Sure, we'd played the album over and over, but our live experiences with the original get mesh crew were lacking. Since we were so un-with it, all we really thought about the show was that it would be a really good opportunity to wear our crazy Dickies gear. A lot of cool people would probably be there, we figured, so probably they'd all be wearing crazy Dickies gear, too, and we wanted to fit in.

It was sort of a jazz festival that they were playing at, and a couple of other really good bands like Solsonics were on the bill, too, so we figured we should be jazzish. We heard the guys behind us knowledgeably noting the origins of many of the samples a deejay played between jazz sets.

"Ah," said one of the music connoisseurs knowingly. "That's a sample from 'Summertime' by DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince."

"No, fellow jazz lover," said his friend. "That is a sample from *Reachin': a New Refutation of Time and Space*."

"I think, actually, that is the music for an LL Cool J song," said a third jazz connoisseur. "It goes *waaaaay* back."

Naturally, Pachuco, Ypolete and I felt very silly to be in the presence of *real* jazz people, although we kind of had an edge on them in terms of hipness because we were wearing Dickies.

So we decided to act in the know. We entered the misinformed debate raging behind us.

"Awww shit," I declared as the deejay brought up a drum loop. "You know who that is on the skins?" My companions looked to me for an answer. "Shit, that's Custer Bluebaker! That goes *aaaalll* the way back!"

They quickly caught on. See, the thing is, with the status of acid jazz or whatever the kids are calling it these days, no one really knows what the hell they're talking about. This is a fact enterprising Dickie-wearing fellows can manipulate in order to look really knowledgeable at jazz shows.

"Whooooo! And listen to that bass!" said Pachuco. "That's motherfucking Peabody Bingbaker! Damn he could play!"

The connoisseurs, I noted with some degree of pity, were impressed. *This was so sad.*

"You hear what I hear on the sax?" asked Ypolete. I knew the next name out of his mouth would make or break our bid for jazz authenticity. "That's BeBe Carlisle!"

Damn, what a name! *BeBe Carlisle*. Where had Ypolete drawn this from? The Pharcyde came on, and the connoisseurs were still in awe of us, and the Pharcyde did a freestyle with Tone-Lōc that was death defying. (Actually, the real trick for most of the performers was to avoid Lōc's friend "Sill," or something, when it came time to pass the mic. The guy was hell.)

After that we were all just pretty much in awe of Pharcyde. You see, while they occasionally have a tendency to deteriorate before an audience's eyes into the laziest emcees alive, (anybody catch them here last year?) they can also be incredible enough to make even stupid fakes like myself, Pachuco and Ypolete suddenly go, "Damn, is that Booty Brown, Tone Lōc and a lame sidekick on the mic? Lord!"

So if the 'Cyde are on, Saturday's show should be an utter festival. If not, at least Souls of Mischief are playing, too. And if they both suck, start making up names for the members of both groups and see if any members of the UCSB "rap community" catch on. Dickies optional.

The Pharcyde will play the UCen Hub with Souls of Mischief Saturday night at 8:30. Both groups have amazing new albums out, so it's very doubtful that the show will suck.

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What: *La Cumbre* senior photos

Place: Storke Plaza

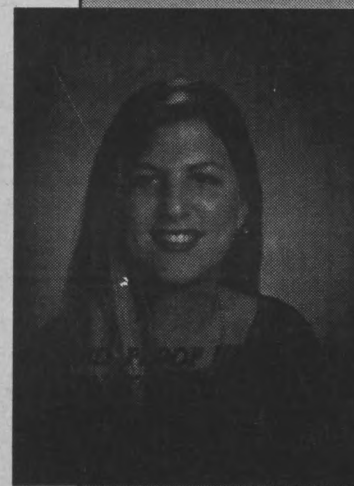
Date: through Nov. 17

Time: 9 a.m.-noon, 1-6 p.m.

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Film

Mighty Good

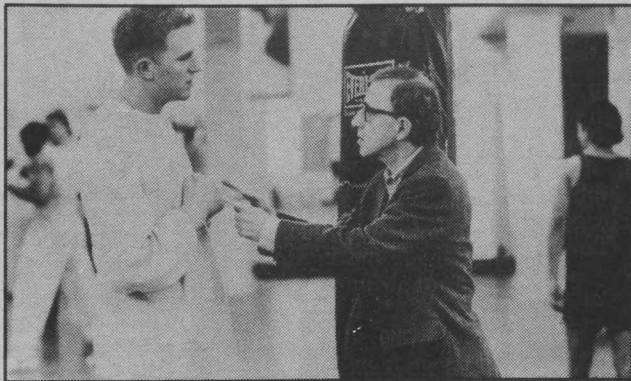
Mighty Aphrodite is Woody Allen's funniest movie in almost a decade, since 1986's *Hannah and Her Sisters*. As always with Allen's work, the characters and their various neuroses are fresh and original, the dialogue filled with sharp wit and irony.

What makes this film unique in his body of work is that it is clear that he is finally over Mia Farrow. *Husbands and Wives* was released in the midst of their public breakup and child custody battle. His next film, *Manhattan Murder Mystery*, starred Diane Keaton in a role obviously intended for Mia, while *Bullets Over Broadway* was a period piece and thus a bit of a departure for Allen.

But Woody returns to his familiar lower Manhattan environs in *Aphrodite*, mocking himself and his ex in the process. After a hilarious opening prologue featuring a Greek chorus, we meet neurotic sportswriter Len Weinrib (Allen) and his wife Amanda (Helena Bonham-Carter) having dinner with their friends, when Amanda casually mentions her desire to have a baby. Len emphatically refuses the idea of adoption, but Amanda finds a baby anyway.

All is sunshine and happiness for our family, at least on the surface, but both are really bored with their marriage. So Len goes on a mission to find his son's birth mother, presumably to find out whether his son's intelligence is genetic or not.

But instead of finding his beautiful, intellectual equal, Len discovers that his son's mother is a ditsy porn star and part-time hooker (Mira Sorvino). Len pities her and tries to improve her station in life so that when his son is ready to find her, she'll be somewhat respectable. At least that's the justification he gives to his friends.



Without ruining the ending, unless you've been living on a desert island all your life and have never seen a Hollywood movie, it's a safe bet to say that love conquers all, so to speak, and everybody lives happily ever after.

Mighty Aphrodite once again proves Allen is the master of human psychology. For a man who lives secluded from the public eye, he understands people remarkably well, including himself.

As always, Allen obtains exceptional performances from his ensemble cast, which includes such notables as F. Murray Abraham, Olympia Dukakis, Claire Bloom and Jack Warden. The Greek chorus and their choreographed musical numbers that appear throughout are delightfully ridiculous. Bonham-Carter is amusing in her first departure from Victorian-era dramas, as is Michael Rappaport as an "intellectually challenged" onion farmer.

But the real scene stealer is Sorvino as the hooker with the heart of gold. Without seeing any other performance this year, Academy voters can rest comfortably if they choose her to win a best supporting actress Oscar.

—William Yelles



Rock This Funky Joint

Various Artists
Hempilation
Capricorn

There is some music that any listener can tell is aimed toward dopers, but most of the time these songs are tucked away in albums as though hearing them is as illegal as lighting up a fat hogle of Acapulco Gold.

This is not the case for the recent benefit album supporting the National Organization to Reform Marijuana Laws (NORML), *Hempilation*. Instead, every song on the entire collection is an anthem of support for the illicit weed, with themes ranging from advocating legalization to just plain jonesing for some mary jane.

NORML was able to round up an impressive roster of artists for the collection, including such acts as The Black Crowes, Blues Traveler, Cypress Hill, 311, Ziggy Marley and the Melody Makers, Sublime and Widespread Panic.

As the bowls are packed and the album begins, the Black Crowes, longtime friends of NORML, give a soulful and bluesy version of Bob Dylan's "Rainy Day Women #12 and 35," a song no doubt selected for its memorable refrain, "Everybody must get stoned."

Blues Traveler attempts to fire up the green herb with their rendition of Sly and the Family Stone's "I Want to Take You Higher." However, the song turns out to be a seedy sack of dirt weed, as they disappoint with an overdrawn and weak cover.

Cypress Hill's live version of "I Wanna Get High" is merely a roach of the original studio production, but the next song, "I Like Marijuana" by David Peel and the 360's, is definitely the high point of the album.

Featuring lyrics like "I like marijuana, you like marijuana, we like marijuana too" and "Marijuana, marijuana, hey hey hey, get high," (sung to the tune of the popular chant most utilized in the final seconds of basketball games) Peel is certainly not making an intellectual argument for marijuana legalization or attempting to discuss the economic benefits of hemp cultivation. However, if you can listen to this song without singing along by the time the second chorus rolls around, you need to roll another reefer and listen again. It only gets better and better.

Government Mule's cover of Steppenwolf's "Don't Step on the Grass" is one of the more political songs on the album, as it accuses the government of spreading lies about "grass."

Hater's weak one-minute track "Convicted" is another dose of the brownest skunkweed, as is High Fidelity's "Cheeba-Cheeba."

Sublime, whose own song "Smoke Two Joints" is a favorite of herb lovers everywhere, chimes in with a faithful cover of Peter Tosh's "Legalize It," perhaps the most famous nod to marijuana legalization there is.

There are a few other songs on the album by prominent artists, but unfortunately, we had burnt too much too quick during the review session and could barely remember to breathe, let alone comprehend the rest of the music.

But if you are an advocate of marijuana legalization, and therefore NORML, make sure to pick up a copy of this album. The money goes to a worthy cause, and you'll probably have enough change to pick up a dime bag after.

—Nick Robertson and Curtis Kaiser

hempilation

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Two local recording engineers have combined their talents to bring a televised music show, *Locals Only*, to Santa Barbara. Since February, Dennis Dragon and Ian Stewart have produced a series of eight successful programs and are now in the process of creating a second season.

Locals Only features local bands and artists and incorporates live performances with spontaneous interviews to create a unique music and video presentation. The masterminds behind this production have hurdled financial obstacles to make the show a success and have con-

W e were doing something that hadn't been done in Santa Barbara for years, playing local bands on television.

How did 17 Slices help you progress towards your television show?

The money that came in we spent on video equipment that we needed, and we started to turn towards the video-making part of it.

Is that how you were able to get funding for your show?

First we went shopping for money. We looked around for someone to be interested in us and then decided we'd have to do it ourselves. From then on, the work

has been non-stop. Day and night is work. All the footage has to be edited, we have to do interviews, coordinate where we are supposed to be, fix broken cameras and sell the show because we're sponsored.

Who are you sponsored by?

By local businesses. Let me talk about the sponsor thing a little bit. You turn on the TV and you see a lot of local sponsorship happening. To get that kind of thing going was a headache because we are on what is called "leased access," which is TV time you have to buy just like personal time. It's commercial time.

Only show?

Well, the main goal is to get this thing happening on a national level, or hopefully to a world level where we are presenting a certain type of music, and the type of music we like to present is local musicians that are good. I guess maybe it's kind of a get-even, too. We've met the big record company guys and nobody really knows who the next Madonna or Nirvana is. It's actually just a bunch of hype is what it is. You could take almost any group, shuffle things around and create a new image and become the next Beatles. With enough money, that is exactly what

The Hosts of *Locals Only* An Interview by Sylvia Barnard

sistently managed to find ways of keeping afloat (they even produce the show's sponsored commercials).

Their efforts have not gone unnoticed. *Locals Only* has become so popular that the show has expanded and is now broadcasting to all of the tri-county area.

Dragon and Stewart have been in the music business for over 50 years collectively, and are currently focusing their work on the promotion of talented local bands. Their impressive bios include Grammy awards and the ownership of a record label, Reset Records, which recently released the new album by The Upbeat, a local band. *Artsweek* recently had the opportunity to speak with Dragon and Stewart. Here's what they had to say.

How did you guys start working together in the first place?

We had a common thing: We're both recording engineers and producers. The first project we did was *17 Slices* [a compilation of 17 local bands released in Christmas 1992]. One day we were just hanging out and all of a sudden we said, "Hey!" [and thought of] a live TV show.

So what made the project so unique?



SYLVIA BARNARD/Daily Nexus

Silver greens presents YOUR DAILY HOROSCOPE BY LINDA C. BLACK

Aries (March 21-April 19). It's time to go through that mountain of mail, find the bills and pay them. Balance your checkbook, too. Get these chores done before dinner, because you're really not going to feel like doing them later. This evening is better for a very private conversation.

Taurus (April 20-May 20). It's a good day for getting organized. This evening, relax with that one special person you can tell your secrets to. Tonight is good for doing something you've always dreamed about but never dared try. A change could work your advantage.

Gemini (May 21-June 21). Today is very good for learning how to invest your money. If you don't have any money to invest yet, discuss a business idea with somebody who has more experience than you do. An idle flirtation with a co-worker could lead to jealousies, so don't do it.

Cancer (June 22-July 22). Prioritize your chores today or you'll never get them done! This would be a good evening to go through the closets and get rid of stuff you don't need anymore. A person you love who's been hard to pin down may be just about ready to commit.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22). Are you using your time effectively? A new toy may help you get organized. A friendship might turn into a more serious relationship tonight, if you let it. You might not always agree, but a partnership formed now should be very stable and productive.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22). You're probably learning a lot right now, but hold your questions until later. You'll make a better impression if you figure out the answers for yourself. Tonight, get together with your favorite financial and spiritual advisor and make plans.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). Think of something a friend would like and do it this morning. You could make a very valuable contact in the middle of the day, possibly concerning romance. Tonight's good for discussing financial matters, but keep that conversation confidential!

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). Be patient and you'll win, as usual. Don't believe a rumor you hear from a friend. It may have been garbled in the translation. You've got tremendous influence, especially if you're working with a group. Consider the consequences of your actions.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). It's payback time! Do what you promised or there'll be trouble. The other person is tired of waiting, even if she or he hasn't said anything recently. Also, tidy up your workplace. An older person is in a picky mood today. Things will get easier soon.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Your energy level should be very high, so make the decision and get going. Travel is favored all day, as are long-distance business deals. Tonight, a club or professional meeting could be the source of valuable assistance, and maybe even romance.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). It may be time to do your accounting homework. Make sure you know how every cent has been spent before you ask for more. Later, an old friend may want to upgrade to more intimate status. Take care; a whimsical promise made tonight will stick.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20). You may find it even more fun than usual to take care of other people today. You'll be so good at it, you may draw favorable attention from an authority figure. Your love life could get interesting. Try to comply with your sweetheart's imaginative suggestions.

Today's Birthday (Nov. 16). Take action and you may get what you want in romance this month. It'll be worth the expense. Use old skills in a new way in December. Don't believe everything you hear then, though. A stressful situation in March could be bonding. Make sure that happens. Make a legal decision in May. Vacation in July so you can work in August. A team effort should do well in September. That's also a good time for a family reunion.

Now that we are growing, we are approaching corporate sponsors and are starting to die out with the mom-and-pop stuff. We've got Domino's going for us, we've got the Wherehouse and next week we are putting together the finished purchasing on our deal with Miller beer. It's coming along, but it would be nice to get a huge cash injection to get some groovier cameras.

Where did you guys meet?

We go way back to Santa Monica.

So what was the original plan?

It's always been presenting bands. Something that's going on with this town that I noticed as soon as I moved up is that there is a lot of really good music here. Good diverse music. There's great jazzers up here, rockers and grungers. It's not like they are so great they should make it immediately, but there are elements of greatness and originality. And so that's when we decided to get a hold of these bands and record them.

What is your main goal for the Locals

can happen and that's what we don't like. *Have you ever run into a band that you decided not to show?*

Yeah, we've got tapes that we're not going to play on the air. We've also been offered some money to do some things, but we've stuck to our guns. I'm not saying we're gods either. We're not giving ratings on who is thumbs up or thumbs down. We've been playing all our lives, we're accomplished musicians. Now we are in a different seat here and can identify real talent and appreciate it. We are trying to present that to the people. The Upbeat is coming out and it is a one-disc deal—we are not signing them on for the rest of their lives. If they get launched because of this thing, that's great. Or if they sell a lot of records with us, that's great, too. We're not going to tell them that they are ours and we have to sign a record deal for the rest of their lives. See, we've had that done to us.

Do you help them with promotion? Yeah, we've got a TV show and that's a pretty good promotional vehicle.

Have you guys done videos for MTV or have you considered it?

When you see MTV videos, you are looking at a million dollars a minute exchanging hands there. We don't ever expect to be acknowledged or appreciated by MTV or some huge corporation like theirs. That's Viacom. MTV is so big that there has to be an alternative to them and that's what we do.

So what would you say that the future holds for you, ideally?

I'm worried whether the planet is going to hold up, personally. I think it's obvious where we're trying to go, we're going in a national direction in some way. We try to make it fun and try to cut through all the negative. The musical performances aren't perfect, but when you go to a club and hear a band, you don't hear perfect. We like to present, and we do present, musical truth.

Locals Only runs every weeknight at 8:00 p.m. on channel 8, with an additional late-night slot on channel 40. Check out the show and tune into some groovy bands!

Check this out!

- Thursday, November 16, 7:00 pm. Film: Utmaro and His Five Women. UCSB Campbell Hall. FREE. Call 893-3535.
- Friday, November 17, at 7 & 9 pm. Film: Warren Miller's Endless Winter. Isla Vista Theater. Repeated Saturday, November 18, at 4, 7, & 9:15 pm. Arlington Theater (1317 State Street).
- November 17-19, November 28-December 2, Play: Cloud 9. Studio Theatre. Call 893-3022.
- Friday, November 17, 9:00 pm. Band: KID POWER. The Annex. FREE.
- Saturday, November 18 & Sunday, November 19, 8:00 pm. Performance: Pilobus. UCSB Campbell Hall. Tickets: \$10-\$20. Call 893-3535.
- Monday, November 20, 4:00 pm. Lecture: Gurinder Chadha, "Cultural Identity and Global Processes in Diasporic Cinema". UCSB MultiCultural Center Theater. FREE. Call 893-3535.
- November 24-December 17. Musical: The Music Man. Santa Barbara Civic Light Opera. Call 966-2324.
- Sunday, December 3, 8:00 pm. Concert: Duke Ellington's arrangement of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker Suite. Lotte Lehmann Concert Hall. Tickets: \$7-\$10. Call 893-3535.

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A HIP-HOP TRILOGY

Various Artists
The Next Chapter
Immortal

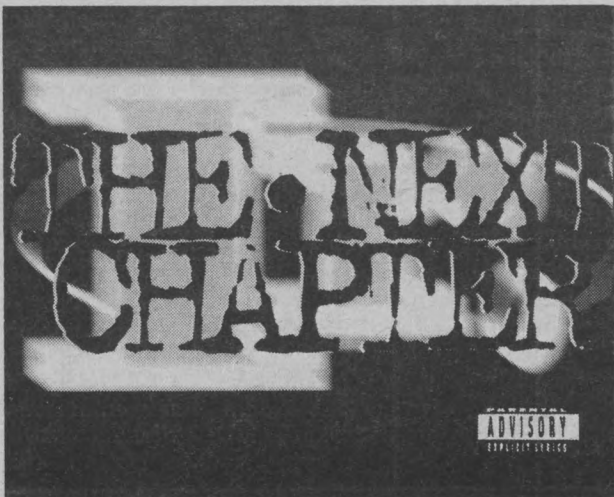
Immortal Records has put together a compilation of 16 unsigned groups and artists from across the United States. The label received numerous submissions for this compilation and eventually narrowed it down to a field of 30, who competed for the final 16 spots. The result is one of the best hip-hop compilations I have ever heard.

The thing that stands out the most is that all of these groups are in fact unsigned, showing how much talent is out there to be found. Every song has its own flavor; from the East to the West, no hip-hop fan will be left out. One of my favorites on the compilation is Laswunzout with "Just to Be Famous." I had the chance to see Laswunzout live, and after hearing a couple more of their songs, I walked away liking them even more than I did after hearing their contribution to *The Next Chapter*. Their beats are tight and their lyrics are well written and delivered nicely.

Another of my favorites is Vooodu! with "Pay the Price." Vooodu! along with Ras Kass and Meen Green make up the Western Hemisfear crew. "Pay the Price" is Vooodu! letting emcees know that they better not test him or his crew. After hearing this song, I'm glad I'm not an emcee.

Many of these artists have what it takes to make it in hip-hop. Pick up this compilation and check it out for yourself.

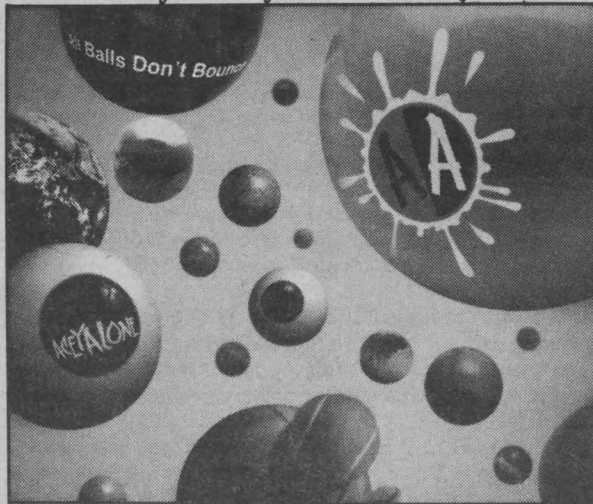
—Todd One



Aceyalone
All Balls Don't Bounce
Capitol

This album has been the talk of the hip-hop underground forever. Its release was delayed and many people thought it would never come out. Finally, it has. Consistent emcee innovating is what Aceyalone is all about. He's simply one of the most creative and well-rounded emcees alive.

Formerly of L.A.'s Freestyle Fellowship, which disbanded because of problems with their label, Aceyalone made a name for himself with his stop-start, quick style of rhyme. *All Balls Don't Bounce* is a further progression of this style. The lyrics are extremely varied with



cryptic storytelling, tales of old girlfriends, rhyme free-association and some of the more creative emcee dis rhymes: "Now you wanna get indignant / Showing your stupidity and act all ig-nant."

The first single, "Mic Check," is exceptional. The heavy, fierce bassline pushes the song as Aceyalone flows forever. "Keep It True" is really, really funny. It's a parody of that stupid L.A. genre of rap that features a meaningless hook/chorus like "Keep it real" or "This is how we do it," with some unnecessary female singers. The first lyric is, "This isn't really what you think it is."

Hip-hop fans will be hard-pressed to find an album as refreshing and enjoyable as *All Balls Don't Bounce*. Every emcee claims to be the best in countless different ways — Aceyalone is one of the few who isn't lying.

—Noah Blumberg



Genius
Liquid Swords
Geffen

If Geffen's most recent hip-hop offerings mean anything, it looks as if the label may be looking to redeem itself after ignoring a thriving and significant art form for several years. (I can't think of even five rap acts to ever be signed to the label!) After releasing (and fucking up on the promotion of) the excellent debut album by Philly's The Roots, Geffen has dropped a solo album by a member of the Wu-Tang Clan, a good move for a label trying to bolster its street credibility.

The man is Genius (GZA), and the album is *Liquid Swords*. For once, *The Source* had an excellent point when a writer recently noted that a traditional review of this album would be somewhat superfluous. Wu-Tang has released so many great albums, as a collective and individually as solo artists, that it's hard to discern which is the best or to give valid reasons as to why. The point is, Wu-Tang is consistently one of the freshest crews out. Resident beat miner RZA is a great producer, the emcees each have unique and appealing styles, and the tracks, as wholes, are always solid. How can you expect Genius' new album to be any different from its predecessors?

It isn't. *Liquid Swords* is right up there among the ranks of the greatest of Wu-Tang efforts (and hip-hop records in general). There isn't anything that fans of the group haven't heard before (besides the decidedly non-ninja-sounding "Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth"), but for now, that's the way it should be. It's obvious that the current philosophy of the Clan is to let each member shine on solos and save the new shit for the next group album, where they will undoubtedly take hip-hop to the next level.

—Arik Steuer

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EPIC SOUNDTRACKS

Passengers
Original Soundtracks 1
 Island

Don't let the name fool you — it's not the band that should call themselves Passengers, it's the listener. With music that creates unique atmospheres, *Original Soundtracks 1* takes the listener on a journey.

A collaboration between U2 and Brian Eno, who has co-produced the band's last four full studio efforts, it neither sounds totally like U2 nor Brian Eno. But the two elements combine to remind the listener of both. So be warned, this is *not* a U2 album — expect some very different and experimental music.

With U2 and extra Passengers Luciano Pavarotti and Japanese singer Holi, Eno acts as a conductor on the journey, guiding the group's musical talents to fit his vision of each song.

Alternating between more Eno-esque tracks such as the soft "Theme From the Swan," an ambient string arrangement, and some with a more U2 influence, including "Theme From Let's Go Native," reminiscent of the band's *Achtung Baby* single "The Fly," the album was recorded in a few weeks this summer to create music for films, many of which did not actually exist.

The highlights are "Miss Sarajevo" and "Your Blue Room." Both of these low-tempo and beautiful songs, featuring soft vocals by Bono, come the closest to achieving the U2-style sound borne of *Zooropa*.

"Miss Sarajevo," the first single, is a haunting tribute to the citizens of the besieged Bosnian city as they assemble a beauty pageant in the midst of war all around them. Written to accompany Bill Carter's award-winning documentary on the contest, the song includes a vocal contribution from Luciano Pavarotti, who adds his tenor in an elegant fashion.

One of the pleasures of the album is the way each song takes the listener to a different realm, enhanced by the liner notes describing each film.

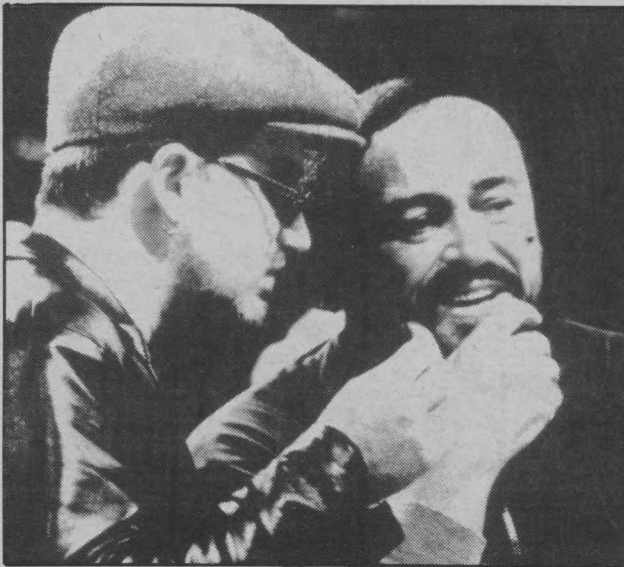
The best example of this effect comes on the opening track, "United Colors," which accompanies a movie about a Japanese business executive who falls asleep on a Tokyo bullet train and dreams about duped associates coming back to exact revenge. Making use of drums, various synthesizer sounds and occasional blasts from a saxophone, one could easily picture whizzing through Japan on the high-speed train.

My advice to those considering *Original Soundtracks 1* is to listen to the album late at night, with the lights low and the volume soft, letting your mind wander. This is not an album one blasts at an I.V. party — this is mood music to *listen* to.

I have admired the experimental steps U2 has taken on the last two albums and this side project, but alas, all good things must come to an end. Bono recently stated to the British press that U2's next album, due out by mid-1996, will be a true rock 'n' roll album.

Fortunately, the band, with this album, has contributed some *truly alternative* music to the Nirvana offsprings running rampant on MTV and radio today.

—Michael Ball



HIS MASTER'S VOICE
Pandemonium
 SIDE A ●●●●●●●● 1995
 Jason Sattlers Without Hats

It really bothers me that pancakes are generally considered only a morning food. I think they are perfect any time of day.

They taste so sweet! Especially when they are topped with butter and maple syrup. I really enjoy sprinkling powdered sugar on my pancakes, too. But I never remember to buy any at the store.

Pancakes are just like cakes, a food too special to be served at meal time. At times I'm angry and dissatisfied with food in general until I realize I have been neglecting pancakes in my diet.

Jeff promised to make pancakes for everyone, then he disappeared into the kitchen to begin preparing them. I don't think anyone really believed what was happening. No one really expects to get pancakes in the middle of the night for no reason. So, I tried to explain that Jeff makes really great pancakes.

He does. But sometimes they are doughy in the middle. I don't mind doughy. It makes the incomparable pancake sensation stay in your mouth even longer.

Jeff's pancakes are lowfat, too, which is neat if you watch what you eat like we all do nowadays.

"Jeff's pancakes are so good!" I said to everyone in the room.

No one seemed interested. That worried me. What if they didn't like Jeff's pancakes and instead of just not liking them, they hated them because they heard they were good.

I went into the kitchen and said, "Jeff, I'm sorry. But I told everyone how good your pancakes are. I totally built them up. Now there is all of this pressure on you."

Jeff, who already had his first pancake on the grill, just said, "My pancakes are *soooo* good, baby."

I freaked out. "Yeah!" I yelled with more than a hint of girlish delight. "That's the fuckin' confidence I need." I couldn't believe I had doubted Jeff's pancakes.

Those sweet little cakes have always come through for me on days that seemed too tough to even face. Jeff always seemed to make pancakes whenever my will for life was about to expire.

Jeff prepared his pancakes one by one, making each one as large as he possibly could. The first one looked good — each successive pancake looked better. How my tummy warmed in anticipation of pancakes coming my way.

I waited patiently as Jeff made a stack of four pancakes to give to the guests waiting in the other room. He smoothed the stack with "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!" and syrup, and I brought it out to them with a fork.

As I came back into the kitchen, Jeff was focusing on his fifth pancake. It was a monster. Not a perfect, golden brown circle like those served at Denny's. I hate to disappoint anyone who eats at Denny's, but all of their pancakes are frozen and allegedly infested with lice.

"I call this one Pangaea," Jeff explained calmly.

"That's a good pancake," I said.

"Would you like this pancake?"

Boy, did I. I had already planned on begging for a pancake of my own. I almost teared up when Jeff offered me Pangaea.

"Can I?" I asked.

"It's for you."

I grabbed a plate and handed it to Jeff as he scooped Pangaea out of the pan and flipped it on to my plate.

I quickly covered it with only syrup — I forgot that "I Can't Believe It's Not Butter!" is considerably lower in fat than margarine. I bit into the pancake and swallowed my bite whole. It wouldn't be long before I needed another.

"How is it?" Jeff asked.

With my mouth full, I answered, "It's pantastic."

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Luna Eclipse

Luna
Penthouse
Elektra

Penthouse, Luna's latest release, has the sort of sound you can fall into from the outset. The smoothly layered, unfurling grooves calm the senses and the mind into a slower state. Yet the genius of the album is that Luna does not allow this sound to take on a comfortable, unoriginal sameness that some fusion bands create.

The band's bass-heavy sound is initially very similar to that of Morphine or early Cowboy Junkies, but Luna's vocal stylings quickly dissipate comparison. Singer Dean Wareham's vocal range is narrow, limited to a warbling, off-key tone, but the dissonance between the band's vocal and instrumental elements allows Luna to elude the fusion tradition. The jarring quality makes you pay attention to the contrast. The lyrical aspect adds to the elusive quality of the band. The songwriting completely casts off any premise of meaning or significance. "Chinatown," for example, has a tongue-in-cheek rhyme: "You're out all night / Chasing girls / You're late to work / And you go home earlier."

The band's unique take on fusion takes some considerable musical skill. Luna incorporates a 12-string and cello on "Moon Palace"; the cello creates a beautiful



backdrop to the extensive 12-string solo. "Kalamazoo" vacillates between intense electric guitar stabs and quiet, drowsy vibes and bass. The intensity steps up considerably on "Freakin' and Peakin'," slowly building up from a sort of question-answer interchange of guitar and bass (often found in blues) into an experimental combination of single-chord repetitions.

Penthouse finishes with a "hidden" track, a duet entirely in French. Luna drags out the novelty a bit, but the song proves the band's willingness to incorporate various elements into their sound.

—Nicole Milne



Rockin' Robben

Robben Ford and the Blue Line
Handful of Blues
MCA

Da Blues. Originating from the fertile soil of the Mississippi Delta, the blues are a strictly American art form.

Unlike in most musical genres, blues guitar players respect the work of their predecessors while adding their own flair to the craft. It is in this vein that Robben Ford's new album *Handful of Blues* progresses the blues tradition.



Ford's style is a collaboration of those of past masters; Albert Collins, Albert King, B.B. King and Stevie Ray Vaughan, to name a few, are all noticeable influences in Ford's style. However, Ford pushes the blues forward into the 21st century with impeccable phrasing and a personalized kick.

Bend, scream or slide, Ford can trade licks with the best of 'em. "Rugged Road," the album's first cut, sets an impressive pace for the album. Building off traditional blues lyrics, Ford lays down spicy, jitterbug guitar lines in a polished, momentum-building rhythm.

Ford's band, The Blue Line, accentuates his talents, whether dropping impromptu harmonica solos or driving the song home with crisp drums. The Blue Line is a force to be reckoned with.

All blues artists have a cover song, and the song they choose speaks volumes of their history and stylistic leanings: Vaughan did Hendrix's "Little Wing," Hendrix did Albert King's "Born Under a Bad Sign" and George Thorogood remade John Lee Hooker's "One Bourbon, One Scotch, One Beer."

Like the smooth professional he is, Ford chose to remake the 1950s classic "Don't Let Me Be Misunderstood." This is cool because the song is more R&B than blues, but Ford straightens things out with his guitar, blues style.

Ford's version takes the song to another level, carefully weaving blues lines with classic pop sensibility. Like the rest of the album, this remake has a polished studio sound to it. Normally, this warrants skepticism on my part, but Ford successfully merges traditional blues with pop/R&B smoothness. By doing this, Ford is innovating rather than imitating, in the process creating a solid work of blues that is well worth buying.

—Peter Sansom

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