

Artsweek

The Arts and Entertainment Supplement to the Daily Nexus, for April 27th through May 3rd, 1995



Inside: An interview with Louise from [sleeper], page 4A.



Plus: Lots of highly recommended music, and more.



Space: The Final Frontier

Music Reviews of Jessamine, Flying Saucer Attack, and The Electric Company

I'm trying to spread the word: Spacy music is nice! Sure, you can't dance to it, you can't sing along, you generally can't even tap your foot to it. All you can do for the most part is turn off the lights, light candles in your bedroom and *breathe* to it, but hey, what's wrong with that?

I'm not talking new age here — this genre of music can be very quiet but it can also be noisy, indeed. It has roots in industrial music, dance music and even rock. Even Love and Rockets has taken a stab at it on its last album. What space/ambient does best is fulfill the cliché of wide open landscapes of sound. This is music that has weight and color and dimension. It is the soundtrack for journeys inside your head, indeed. German bands may have started the movement 20 years ago, but it is the work of Brits and Yanks that is attracting all of the attention now.

Electric Company is the encephalitic child of Brad Laner, who spends most of his time rubbing metallic objects against one another in the band Medicine. Laner is trying hard to jump on the lucrative ambient bandwagon here, and generally succeeds. I'll admit that no matter how much I like music like this, it's not easy to listen

to a whole album at one sitting, but of the 10 songs on *A Pert Cyclic Omen*, with all of the song titles anagrams of the album title, about half are worth the effort. On the best, Laner incorporates such sounds as urban street noise and low murmuring, chimes and whooshing sounds you might imagine air makes as it skims over the wings of airplanes.

Medicine's trademark screech and danceable beat are prominent on songs like "Polymeric Accent," but "Cyclic Pee Matron" and "Elm Crypt Oceanic" have more of an icebergs-in-motion quality found in bands like Bark Psychosis and Labradford. The final song, "I Can Cop My Tercel," retains its appeal with the inclusion of a whisper that cannot quite be understood. Noises move in and out of the foreground, simulating the stomach rumbles of hungry and cranky machines.

Flying Saucer Attack is two kids from Bristol and a computer. Their newest album, *Further*, differs from previous efforts in its accessibility. While the songs are structured more like "real" songs, i.e. fairly intelligible vocals, acoustic guitar carrying the melody, etc., the tunes are somehow less accessible than before!



Further requires a little more effort to listen to than *Distance*, the singles compilation, perhaps because the singles were designed as complete entities in their own right. With *Further*, one must listen to the whole album in order to comprehend the big picture.

These two have always incorporated water sounds, usually of the tide, in their music. The new album features rainstorms that, including the prominent guitar lines, create the atmosphere of sitting by a campfire with people who definitely were never boy or girl scouts.

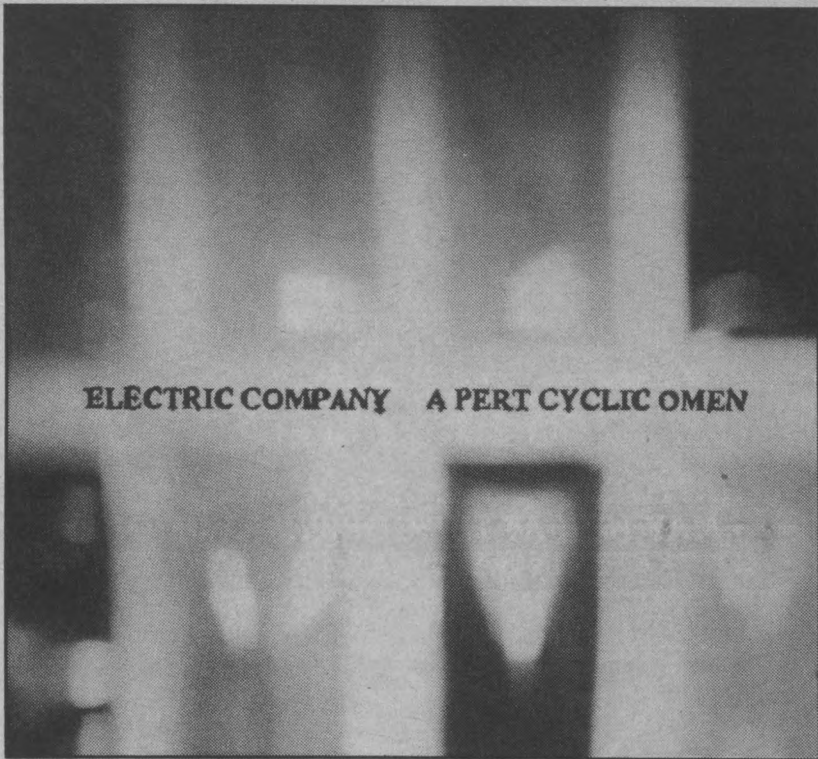
What is missing from *Further* is some of the organic and mystical feels provided by the near-tribal drumming on Flying Saucer Attack's first, self-titled album. The excitement and tension has been replaced by loneliness and longing. This mellowing out may not please those who have heard the band's earlier material, but at least there are other new bands to turn to, such as Crescent and Bardo Pond, for people who miss the freshness of early Flying Saucer Attack.

Finally, Jessamine's self-titled debut is an enigma that cannot be easily categorized. There are languid female vocals, à la

Stereolab, on some of the songs, and there are organs and synths and goofy electronic noises, but Jessamine does not exhibit the joyous pop attitude of that band. The organ is used to create an uneasy edge, and the guitars rock out at times. The drums are big, fat, '60s power-trio drums. Secondary buzzes and hums are encouraged, and the overall sound is heavy and "live." There is no worry that Jessamine is only a studio band, manipulated by levers and pedals, soulless and anonymous.

Jessamine is tough: Jessamine is the unassuming bookworm who would rather kick your ass than crack a smile. "Inevitably" begins with an electric growl as a precursor to the noise to come, then features layers of sweet male and female vocals on top. "Cellophane" sounds like regret — a fellow named Sonic Boom from Spectrum is probably fretting that he didn't write it first. There are 10 songs on the CD and not a bad one in the bunch. *Jessamine* is an excellent album to try if you are interested in feisty, not ambient, somewhat psychedelic music.

—Rena Tom



Travel to the Moon

Various Artists
HeadTravel
Moonshine

The other day, I had a friend say to me, "Dude, one day computers are going to take over the world!" Considering the rate at which computers are developing, it is a pretty scary thought. But right now, I think I can safely embrace new technologies without feeling I have sold out the entire human race to world domination by supercomputers. At least for now, I can be comfortable in telling you about a new interac-

tive CD-Plus disc* that Moonshine has just put out.

Moonshine is a well-known dance music label that has nearly cornered the market on dance music compilations. This latest release is something I did not expect to get from Moonshine, but on the other hand, I'm not surprised at all. The dance music being made these days is almost entirely computer generated and therefore already directly linked to new technologies — I guess it was only a matter of time before the house culture joined the

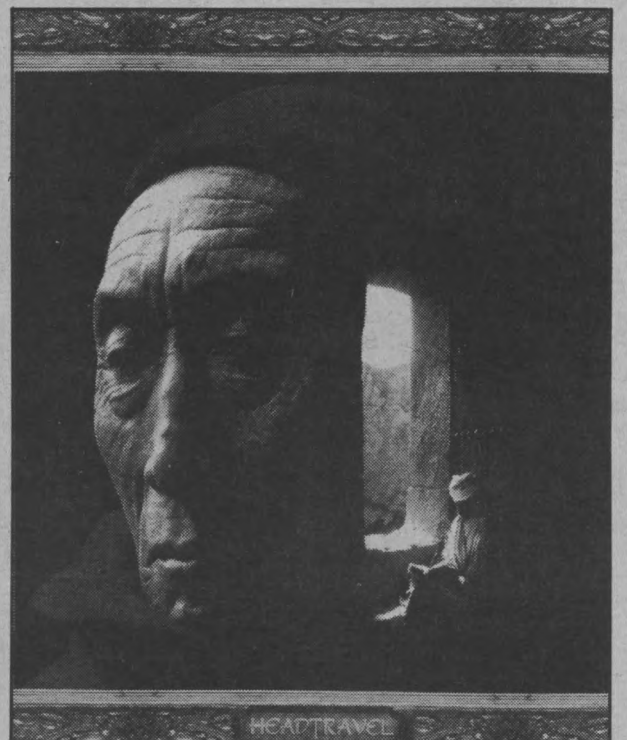
cyberculture in its quests into new technologies.

HeadTravel is a two-in-one kinda jobby that is both a multimedia disc on CD-ROM and a seven-track audio CD that can be listened to on any CD player.

The music on the disc alone makes it a worthwhile buy to me, ranging from the electrofunk bounce of Deluxe's "Eluxtria" to the ambient wanderings of A New Consciousness' "Environment." But the music is only half the fun. The CD-ROM contains digitized video footage: 3-D compu-

ter animation, a coral reef full of tropical fish, assorted flowers, and a haunting snowy owl, swooping down at you and into a black hole. Combined with the music, it's impressive. And the video footage continues with shots of past Bay Area underground parties, which brought back many fond memories and had me thinking of the next time I could make a trip up north. This is definitely something anyone interested in dance music, multimedia or computer graphics should check out.

—Matt Turner



You Talkin' To Me?

iMUS
in the morning

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TALK RADIO

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100mg of Goodness

Morphine
Yes
Rykodisc

The smooth, white ball frees itself from my cue and glides swiftly across a maroon-surfaced table. It sends the tight triangle of pool balls into a flurry. Two stripes in the corner pockets and a solid in the left side. Smoke from a nearby sizzling cigar blurs my vision as it drifts quietly under an illuminating light from above. A jaded man strolls over to the jukebox accompanied by a gorgeous, thin woman draped in blue silk. His glistening gold chain lifts from its dark bed of hair as he bends down to make a musical selection. Morphine's *Yes* begins to seep from surrounding speakers. Perfect.

Mark Sandman leads me into a sleepy sway with his deep voice and two-string slide bass. Backed by the sensual baritone sax of Dana Colley and the gentle drumming of Billy Conway, Sandman creates a mellow mood unlike anything I have heard. The absence of guitar gives me the secure feeling that I can unwind and relax — uninterrupted. A more precise name for the band could not possibly have been chosen.

I was first introduced to Morphine's music in the movie theater, of all places. They provided the soundtrack for the offbeat comedy-with-a-message *Spanking the Monkey*. Morphine's songs, all of



which came from their album *Cure for Pain*, complimented the strange scenes of incest and failed suicide attempts dispersed throughout the film. I could not stop listening to this brilliant album that presented such a foreign sound.

That was until *Yes* came along. Morphine maintains the general feel of the previous two recordings but is a bit more experimental. Sandman reads his lyrics in "The Jury" backed by loose bass and sax that struggles to find a home. It jumps all over like a bitter foster child. Morphine also provides solid, catchy songs early in the album such as "Whisper" and "Scratch."

Morphine invites the listener into the blue-collared world of abandoned Cadillac, motels and time cards. Sand-

man's music adds complexity and glamour to the sleazy, low-class world from which he gains inspiration. He turns water into wine. "Hotel rock 'n' roll / the discotheque electric super sex." Sandman seems to choose words that will flow unnoticed alongside his echoing bass.

Morphine unselfishly absorbs all of your pain and sorrow and continues unaffected on its way. Feed your addiction and fall into the warm, therapeutic arms of Morphine's *Yes*. You will feel as if there is not a care in the world.

—Brad Mayo



Broun Fellinis
Afrokubist Improvisations #9
Moonshine

A member of Run-DMC once said, "Run's not Hansel, D's not Gretel." What's the point of such superfluous commentary? Is it just for the sake of rhyme? Probably. Broun Fellinis' Crack Emcee says something similar on their new album, *Afrokubist Improvisations #9*: "Broun Fellinis ... not a fascist group or a circus troupe." Just as these two groups have spoken senselessly, I have drawn a senseless parallel between the two.

But it is not senseless to speak about the numerous talents of Broun Fellinis. From San Francisco, Broun Fellinis is a jazz group that employs none of the stuffy "classic jazz" suit-wearing mannerisms. Like their San Francisco counterparts The Charlie Hunter Trio, Alphabet Soup, James T. Kirk and Slide 5, Broun Fellinis are part of a blossoming jazz scene that has produced some of the most accessible jazz in recent memory.

Usually without vocals, the Fellinis use their bass, drums and saxophone to sound the sounds of the city. The saxophone player, David Boyce, is truly phenomenal. He tweets, he groans, he flut-

Straight From BOOHAABIA.



ters nearly out of breath and then grabs a breath and spits onward — no end in sight. Boyce's countless notes and rich tone should cause floods of envy in all aspiring horn players who hear it.

The album's catchiest song, "Dreamstate," is unlike any of the others on *Afrokubist Improvisations #9*. There's wah guitar, there's joyous, booming bass, there's ample xylophone and there's even a sample or two. Crack Emcee rhymes, "in this land of milk and honey / the price of freedom costs too much money." Often and intelligently, the themes of *government vs. the people* and *government vs. the Black man* arise when vocals are present. In

"Dreamstate," an angry voice yells, "We hate oppression!"

The members of Broun Fellinis have invented their own world from which the band supposedly arose: Boohaabia. The Chocolate Buddha and Phofus are two beings from Boohaabia who make up the divine inspiration of Broun Fellinis. Pretty strange stuff, but hey, it's fun. This album is definitely a cut above their debut demo/album, *Chocolate Surrealism*, which was also quite amazing. Unless you're a fascist or are really into circuses, you'll really enjoy *Afrokubist Improvisations #9*.

—Noah Blumberg

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An Interview with [sleeper] By Andy Fraire

Among the many bands crossing the Atlantic and attacking the States recently is a group named [sleeper]. They've just released their first album, *SMART*, and have been quite the talk of England. Recently, [sleeper] was in New York and *Artsweek* had a chance to speak with lead singer Louise Wener. What follows is an edited transcript.

Artsweek: Can you start by telling me how you got started, since not that many people know about [sleeper] yet?

Louise Wener: We got together about two years ago. I formed a band when I was in college, with the guitarist John. And then we both came down to London, got a new rhythm section with Andy and Diid, and we've been signed for just about a year and a half. We're doing our first stuff in America now, which is great.

AW: So is this your first time in the States?

LW: I lived in Boston for three months, which was quite a life then. I came out as an exchange student and spent some time in the city.

AW: How do you go about your songs? Do you have any influences, ideas, or is there something that gets you to write?

LW: I usually sit down with a guitar and just sit in my room. I think you usually know when you want to write, that you've heard something and just got a tune in your head. You just sit down, you start playing, and then hopefully there's a song at the end of it.

AW: Are there any events or anything that you feel frustrated about that prompt you to write a song?

LW: There can be. It's just what is going on in your life at the time. If there's something you're really miserable about or happy about, then the rest of it is a mixture of experience and observation, really.

AW: What are your favorite songs and why?

LW: I love "Pyrotechnician (I think I love you)." I was watching a program and there was this whole bunch of stuntmen, and there's this one guy whose job it was just to set fire to stuff. I thought, this would be the job I'd like to have, just setting fire to stuff.

AW: Have you played with matches lately or set fire to anything?

LW: No, but I'm a bit of a pyromaniac.

AW: What did you listen to growing up?

LW: I grew up listening to Blondie, the Jam, the Smiths and people like that. I was always a big fan of David Bowie.

AW: Do you have any songs that you like to play live?

LW: I don't know, because we just came off a tour, so we've really just got back into all of them. It's strange when you start to do an album and you find that you can't even think about your songs for about a month, then you

go and tour them and you get back into it all again. "Inbetweeners" was really good because that's done quite well in Britain, so that was always really good to do. And "Delicious," of course, is another.

AW: The song "Hunch" is a song that I'd like to hear live. I had read that it is about people who are normal or are trying to be normal.

LW: Yeah, it's really about sort of fitting in. I think people spend so much time trying to fit into some sort of clique or group. You spend all your time

throwing bits of candy on stage, which was really funny.

AW: Any good candy in particular?

LW: It varied, but sometimes, depending on where we went, we'd get hailed with it. The guitars and drums were just getting covered in stuff.

AW: Do you consider yourself a "frontperson"? I've seen you referred to as becoming the frontperson of 1995.

LW: I think you kind of have to. I think all sorts of good bands have a figurehead somewhere along the line. I think it's quite

yourself being in a band in the next 10 years?

LW: I hope so, because it's what I've always wanted to do. It's brilliant, going out and playing, and we've already signed for the next album.

AW: Well, I'm looking forward to seeing you in L.A.

LW: Yeah, it's gonna be great.

[Sleeper] will play the Whiskey on Saturday, April 29, with Polara.

[sleeper]



and just do the right thing and be right. Also, we should stop judging other people for not being normal. We've played it every night on the tour because it's quite a new song and since we've finished we've got it together for the live show.

AW: What are the future tour plans for [sleeper]?

LW: We're touring Europe after we play in New York, Boston and L.A., and then we're coming back in June to do a full tour for a month.

AW: Have you felt caught up in the hype, with all the new bands from England such as Elastica and Oasis? Do you think you've been caught in their success?

LW: It's hard to know, really, because we've just come over, but I think it's really good that a lot of bands are coming out here and doing stuff. It's a whole different thing for us, so we'll see what happens.

AW: Any tour stories?

LW: We've got a mailing list in England and we asked people to bring us presents on tour, and they often would bring sweets and pies. We had people

important.

AW: Where did the idea come from to make a comic for "Inbetweeners"?

LW: We just thought it would be a good idea to make a comic, instead of using regular artwork, because we're into that style of comics.

AW: With all the negativity surrounding your songwriting, it seems that you've been misunderstood.

LW: I think it's just the way in which the English press likes to hype bands. If they can't think of anything else to say about them that week, then they'll make up some sort of controversy. You write one song that has some kind of sexual connotation and suddenly that's all you write about. You write something against political correctness and it's all hyped out of proportion. It's very strange. I think a lot of what they write is just them trying to caricature you. Especially with the female-fronted bands in Britain, they kind of put you under a microscope, so everything you say gets taken to the nth degree.

AW: Is it too early to ask if you think you see

A
Review

of
SMART

by
Sleeper

The singles released off an album are often the best representation of an artist's work — or the only songs on the album worthy of hitting the charts. Singles are usually catchy pop tunes which often provide the music fan with an indication of what an album will sound like as a whole. Sometimes these cool singles you hear on the radio are so great that a listener's expectations of an album can be blown out of proportion, often leaving the fan unable to be satisfied by the actual album. Such is the case with [Sleeper] and their album, *SMART*.

The success of the single "Inbetweeners," which receives a great deal of airplay in [Sleeper's] homeland of England, has produced an aura of hype around the band. Louise Wener, the lead singer, adds to the buzz surrounding [Sleeper] by making open proclamations about her sex life (although you really can't blame her). All of the additional press she gets for talking about her sex life only makes her band more of a household name.

"Inbetweeners" is a brilliant pop song. Unfortunately, the rest of the album was marred by my high expectations after hearing it. The lyrics on the track "Amuse" are poetic — lines like "you're tragically vain, you know I'd adore you for it" — and the construction of the different instrumental lines was decent. But due to my expectations, I found myself listening intently for what was wrong with the song. I found what I was looking for at the end, and while a casual listener probably wouldn't notice Wener's final words on the song were flat, I did.

There are a few pop songs on the album that could potentially be further single material, such as "Bedhead" and "Vegas," but the majority of the tracks probably won't make it to the shelves by themselves.

[Sleeper] is a decent band. They are reminiscent of the sort of garage band that all the seniors at your high school were fans of just because everyone knew about them. They played well, but there was just something weird about the band that you couldn't quite put your finger on. [Sleeper] is the sort of group that grows on you, either because you keep hearing about them or because people keep playing their music for you so that it becomes permanently implanted into your head.

—M. Jolie Lash



Hover Craft

Hover
Almost Everything
Dewdrops/Club Fub

It's always nice to hear a new album by an indie pop band. Hover, from Vermont, is no exception. They are quite a young band, the first suspicion of which comes from the sight of the blissful playground scenes that decorate the sleeve.

Well, actually, I bet they've left their tanbark days behind them, but the images of carefree dusk translate to similar sounds inside.

I think it will be a few years before the band's talents hit their stride and leave the shadows of other bands and other kinds of bands behind. It isn't as if they don't write good, pretty music, I just feel as though I can place all the elements with something already done. A song will



some Stereolab or other.

The production, in particular, is like a brand on their sound. The sleeve reads "recorded at low tech studios," but what they really have is that notorious *middle fidelity*.

Hover's levels grow on you. And on some tracks, like the echoed "5:30," the band is gaining confidence and deliberateness. Some day, the identity will solidify. Hover is worth keeping an eye out for.

"what they really have is that notorious *middle fidelity*"

seem like a Cub song here, or a Dentists song there. Jan Toffer's vocals are sometimes doubled — two emphatic powerful voices going at once — like a similar production effect on

The vocals are mixed kinda low, and the sound is plain, apparently as if they're right next to you. Some people recoil at the middle fidelity, at that off-the-cuff feeling, but

Dewdrops Records and fanzine is located in L.A., so Hover should be simple to get a hold of at 1817 Corinth Ave. #10, Los Angeles, CA 90025-5567.

—Kevin Carhart



Musical Royalty

Bandit Queen
Hormone Hotel
Playtime Records UK

If Pat Benatar had been born, say, 10 years later, grown up in the U.K., and been exposed to the "alternative" pop music scene, she might have produced something similar to Bandit Queen's music. Your early Pat Benatar and your current Bandit Queen both share a kind of glamorous punk edge. The only difference nowadays is that Pat Benatar's was prefabricated.

Bandit Queen's Tracy Godding does what she does for very personal reasons. There's a little bit of P.J. Harvey in her voice and guitar style, and a similar lyrical introspection. But P.J. Harvey role-plays other people's dreams and nightmares — Tracy Godding role-plays her own.

she writes songs about South American painter Frida Kahlo, and idolizes herself as one of Frida's subjects. She writes songs about low self-esteem and understands it all too well. She borrows the intro to Radiohead's "Creep" for Bandit Queen's "Nailbiter," and belts out lyrics like "Nailbiter/boredom fighter/self-despiter/You're eating yourself away." Instead of wallowing in hopelessness like Radiohead does, Tracy sounds supremely pissed off at herself and everyone else who chooses to do so.

Bandit Queen is at its most potent when Tracy channels her menacing guitar lines and sleekly muscled pop into powerful rockers like "Give It to the Dog" and "Scorch." The former's lyrics seem to be pointing at a girl who has spent her life denying

sexual abuse by her father ("Hell Is for Children," anyone?). As the song builds to its pulverizing climax, Tracy sings without argument, "Don't ask me why she's got a soul two inches high."

The P.J. Harvey-inflected "Scorch" finds Tracy fantasizing about a lover, although the genders are blurred and it's not clear whether the lover is male or female. "Scorch me," Tracy begs repeatedly, and then chastises her male/female lover, "You let that creep put his hand on your arse."

There's more excellent pop and gender switching with "Miss Dandys," in which Tracy tells of an early friendship with an older (or perhaps just more experienced) girl who would put on men's clothing and escort her about town. "I've watched

you bandage up your chest/So there really is a middle sex/Doesn't everyone love a cross-dressed gigolo?"

Tracy pokes fun at her own lovestruck giddiness in "Big Sugar Emotional Thing" and at her hormonal imbalances on "Oestrogen," with lyrics like "Don't talk the wrong way/Better watch what you say/Don't you know my hormones are the law?" She gently but unflinchingly scourges her personal closet on the wistful "Overture for Beginners," singing, "I grind my teeth to chalk/Don't you know I'm viciously ambitious?" She even wallows in warm sexuality on the title track ("When you need someone to ring that bell/There's always room for you at the Hormone Hotel"), but no song on this album is without its

Not Dead But Hot

The Graceful Punks
Uncool Not Punk
Sasquatch Records

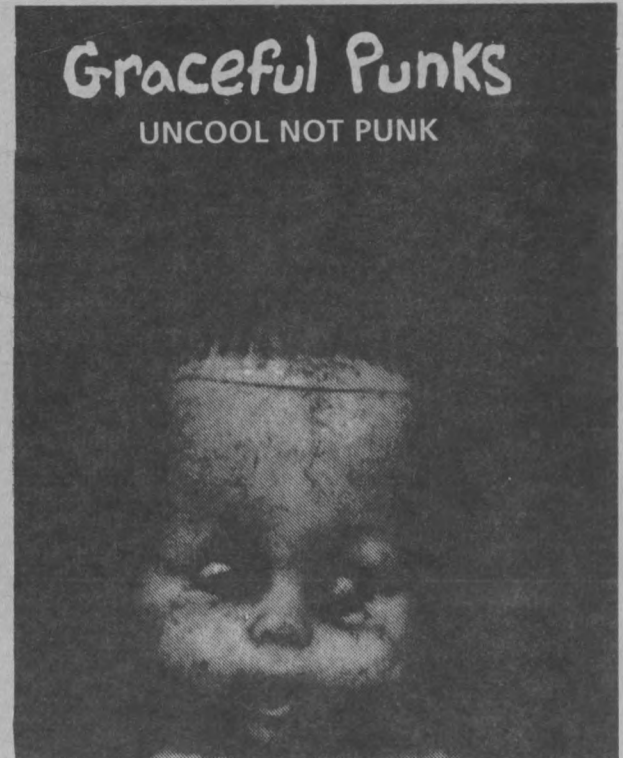
The first time I saw the Graceful Punks was at one of their frequent noontime Storke Plaza shows in spring of 1993. After hearing their catchy pop-punk sound for about an hour before class, I realized that this trio was exactly what I had been looking for in the Isla Vista music scene.

Some students might remember when the group won the Battle of the Bands in the Pub on the strength of its cover of Technotronic's "Move This." That victory landed them a spot on the Extravaganza bill at Harder Stadium.

Since then, the Punks have released two four-song tapes, *Melt* and *Uncool Not Punk*, their latest offering. *Uncool* shows off the songwriting and musical talents of the Punks, drummer Matt Amott, bassist/vocalist Andrew Ferguson and guitarist/vocalist Tony Mark. Formerly an "I.V. band," the Punks are now based in Los Angeles.

It's difficult to try to compare the group to other bands, but they cite The Replacements, U2, Pavement and Superchunk as some of their influences, so that might be a good start.

My favorite on *Uncool Not Punk* is the second



song, "Sell My Fortress," written and sung by Ferguson. The song starts out with a snappy bassline and slowly sung lyrics, before Mark's guitar comes in and speeds it all up. "Fortress" continues to change tempos until it nears the end of the song, when it steadily speeds up and builds intensity.

The tape opens with Mark's "Sweets for Sweet", a song built around his rhythm guitar, and is perhaps the catchiest tune on *Uncool Not Punk*. "Mother's Day", the third song, is a powerful ballad that reaches a strong crescendo during its chorus. The song is built around Ferguson's bassline and Mark's lead guitar.

The final song is Mark's

"Riot Grrl," which begins with some fairly slow power chords before moving into a frenetic pace for much of the rest of the song, showing off the Punks' punk side.

Although the Graceful Punks are no longer in I.V., they're not a band to forget.

The Graceful Punks will perform Saturday at 2 p.m. at the Residence Hall Association's Earth Day Celebration on the lawn near Santa Rosa Hall. Other bands scheduled to perform include *Rhythmic Sushi*, *D'Jango*, *Evil Farmer*, *Middle Earth*, *The Fuzz and Soil*. The Graceful Punks' tapes and records are available at Mornin-glory Records in I.V.

—Curtis Kaiser

Bandit Queen



hormone hotel

dark side.

Bandit Queen probably won't be an overnight sensation, but it's got enough sharp-edged stamina and that magic pop ingredient to promise big things. Three to four months down the line, when *Hormone Hotel* is released

domestically and Bandit Queen is signed to some major American label, just you wait and see if KJEE doesn't start playing its song. (It'll probably be "Scorch.") Wouldn't it be nice to say that you heard them first?

—Miz E.

Surreal Animation comes to Isla Vista Theater tomorrow night. At 7 p.m., *The Cameraman's Revenge*, and shorts by the Brothers Quay, including the His Name is Alive video, "Are We Still Married?" At 8:15 p.m., *Faust!* Check it out....





Elastica: Survey Says...

elastica
elastica
DGC

For the past few months my ears have been filled with heavenly bliss. No longer do I frequent record stores in search of a music staple I can listen to over and over again. Now, rather than flipping through the dozens of nameless bands on the record shelves looking for something good, I have found myself on a mission to collect every article, CD, single, record, tape and anything else put out by elastica.

To say that I am obsessed with this band does not do justice to my true feelings for their music. As I sat down to write a review for the UCSB community, I found myself thinking, "Gosh, how the heck am I going to write an honest review for my fellow students about my heroes elastica?"

In order to get a variety of opinions about the album, I presented a questionnaire to a selection of random people, whose names have been altered to protect their innocence.

The first question posed to my troupe of reviewers was about their initial impressions of elastica's full-length debut. Among the adjectives used to describe it were *pleasantly raw*, *metallic*, *British*, *clubby* and *groovin'*.



Next, specific songs were presented to the reviewers, who were to write down what sort of activities they felt the songs would correspond to. Everyone liked "Line-up," which takes a clever stab at groupies: "drivelhead loves all the bands, knows them like the back of her hand."

The highlight of the track is the invigorating heaving sounds Justin Welch makes during the song's intro. Torn Bohee described the song as "cutely '70s, naive like early Police" and wrote

that "Line-up" would be the kind of song one should pull weeds to.

The biggest controversy between the random students was over the song "Stutter." When lead singer Justine Frischmann's mom first heard "Stutter," Justine apparently had to skulk out of the house because the lyrics are somewhat explicit. Bohee wrote, "'Stutter' rocks and hints at what's to come from elastica." However, Toonz Leery thought the vocal quality from Justine sucked.

My favorite song, which

utilizes many facets of sound quality, did not receive the kind of attention I thought my random reviewers would give it. Burna Shartuks was the only one who said "S.O.F.T." was her favorite song, adding that it was the kind of song one should eat nachos to. Bohee thought the track was "good for parties where people don't really know each other."

Leery summed up his favorite part of the album, writing, "Besides the excellent sound quality, I liked how kickin' their

Once again, it's the KCSB TOP THIRTY

1. Common Sense
2. (sleeper)
3. KMFDM
4. Mobb Deep
5. Funkdoobiest
6. Team Dresch
7. Cherries
8. Alkaholies
9. Sinister Six
10. 18th Dye
11. Clouds
12. Ben Lee
13. Jewel
14. Cub
15. Pete Rock and CL Smooth
16. All
17. Foetus
18. Ahmad/Rass Rass/Saafir
19. Raekwon
20. Leftfield
21. Knapsack
22. Tsunami
23. Gaunt
24. New Jersey Drive sndtrk
25. Kittywinder
26. Freaky Chakra
27. Trickycy
28. Blink
29. Poole
30. Notorious B.I.G.

bass is." Of course, personally I agreed with Leery on this point, but I don't think I would have used the word "kickin'."

The final question was whether the reviewers believed elastica would conquer the American music charts — two out of three believed they would. Only Leery thought they

wouldn't, but he claims Pearl Jam as his favorite, so what does he know.

Elastica is godhead, and they have already arrived on U.S. shores and shelves (even the mainstream stores). This is not the sort of album that should sit at the record store, collecting dust, so please don't let it.

—S. Liam Jhelo

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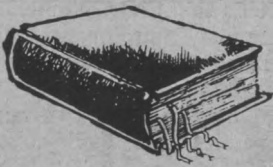
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Smokin', Slackin' and Tokin'

Between San Francisco and Seattle, a new crop of disgruntled youth are slowly rising into obscurity. Marked by a lack of ambition and the knowledge that they will never succeed like their parents, they spend their time hanging out in coffee shops, smoking marijuana and generally doing nothing more productive than contemplating starting a band.

Michael Hornburg's first novel, *Bongwater*, is a glimpse into this lethargic lifestyle. It is the story of people who wake up around noon in their shack-like apartments, wander around town for awhile with no real destination, work on scoring a sack, dream of moving to New York and spend their nights in sleazy bars where poor-quality aspiring grunge bands attempt to capture fame through their discontent.

I actually hail from Marin County, where I know many people who fit this description. They don't really have a name for these folk, although I've always called them vagrants, but not in a derogatory way. So, when my editor approached me with this book, I knew I had to check it out, and the fact that it was 4/20 only reassured me that this reading was meant to be.

However, although I enjoyed *Bongwater*, it kind of failed to meet my

expectations. The tale of David, a skateboarding, small-time Portland dope dealer, and Courtney, a wannabe rock star who actually moved to the Big Apple and hates it, the book is a love story more than anything else, obscured by drugs, cross-dressers, strip bars, raves and psychotic recluses who live in the woods and grow weed.

Courtney, as roommates, but she took off to New York with a schizophrenic mid-level rock musician quickly after the fire. For a majority of the novel, the storyline jumps from coast to coast, following the lives of both "misunderstood" youths. (For the most part, I found these guys to be more full of themselves than misunderstood, but

best of what he has, which is damn little since most of his possessions ended up resembling mesquite charcoal briquettes after the fire. Because his dream career of making films about obscure Northwestern superheroes (called the Ministers of Disco and Ambassadors of Love) with a Super eight-millimeter camera doesn't pan out, he maintains himself by selling the pot that his woodland hermit friend Phil grows.

Of all the characters in the book, David is the one who portrays the most believable burnout traits. I personally know about five guys who fit David's description from back home and have observed their behavior extensively by befriending them and living their lifestyle for weeks at a time. Hey, anything for a quality review.

But anyway, on the Atlantic, Courtney finds herself leaving her nuts boyfriend and going to a big rave with her friend Jennifer. There, she is drugged and raped by the club's owner. That's the last straw — she decides it's time for her to leave New York for good. She travels back to Portland, where she meets up with David once again, and they discover that they've actually been in love the whole time. Awwwww.

Bongwater doesn't have much of an original

plot, but the theme and setting are very timely. Each character is very realistic, and you can probably visualize them if you've ever hung out at Java Jones or Cafe Roma. By far, my favorite part of the book was when David and his brief flame, Mary, drive to Phil's neck of the woods to pick up a shipment of buds. The description of the journey strongly reminded me of a similar journey I took with a fellow Marinite to Gar-

berville last summer. It's obvious that Hornburg has lived the lifestyle he depicts in his book, so if you are curious about the underachiever sect of the West Coast, *Bongwater* is the book for you.

—Nick Robertson

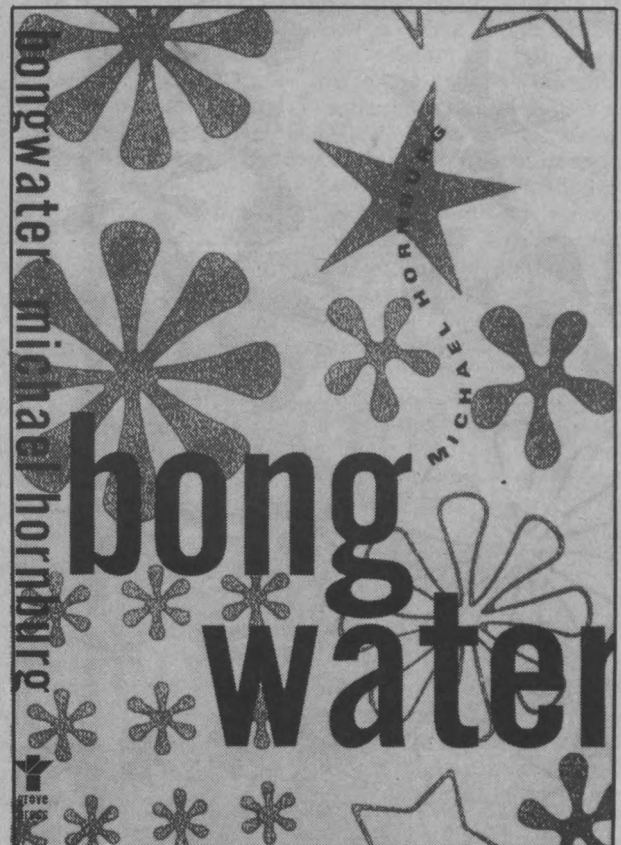


"They don't really have a name for these folk, although I've always called them vagrants, but not in a derogatory way."

At the beginning of the book, the reader finds David living with a gay couple who let him move in after his apartment burned down. David lived with

whatever.)

David longs to leave Portland and make something of his life but has nowhere to go, so he remains in Oregon and makes the



The MultiCultural Center Presents

A Jon Moritsugu film: **Terminal USA**



Directed by Jon Moritsugu, *Terminal USA* (54 min., 1993) is a highly charged story of a Japanese American family rocketing headlong into the abyss, soap-opera style. Moritsugu is an independent, punk filmmaker who has directed numerous films including *Der Elvis*, *Hippy Porn*, and *Mod Fuck Explosion*.

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Small Minds, Smalley Movie

Unbelievable, isn't it?

A reasonable human being just wouldn't come up with the idea. Seriously, a feature film based on Stuart Smalley, one of the lamest and most tedious of recurring characters ever created by the once-proud *Saturday Night Live* TV show? C'mon, it would never happen!

But alas, it has, and the result is the new movie *Stuart Saves His Family*, playing — at least for the moment — on big screens across America. Again, it's absolutely unbelievable that anyone would take a TV comedy skit as lacking in substance as "Daily Affirmations With Stuart Smalley" and stretch it out nearly two hours. What is

entirely believable is how thin the premise becomes when stretched that far.

Although not at all good, this is a truly landmark film for several reasons. First, it effectively sounds the death knell for *SNL*, which has been rapidly declining in both ratings and quality in recent years. When even Al Franken — one of the show's original writers — cashes in on a quickie flick, you know the end is near. Franken has proven over the years that he has a keen sense of humor, so he must know better than anyone how unfunny the Stuart Smalley routine is. That he would now bring Stuart to the big screen is the clearest indication yet of the desperation of all of those now clamoring to

get out of the sinking *SNL* ship.

Speaking of which, you've got to figure that this is the end of Lorne Michaels' filmmaking career. The *SNL* producer has now brought to life five movies based on the show's characters in the last three years, and they haven't exactly been raking in the cash. Although *Wayne's World* (1992) was a big hit, its 1994 sequel was a flop, as was the 1993 megabomb, *The Coneheads*. Last year's *It's Pat!* was so lightly regarded that it was never released to theaters, and now *Stuart* is being left by the studio with practically zero advertising dollars. For anyone who thought that Michaels had found the cutting edge again

while serving as executive producer for the fabulous *Kids in the Hall*, think again.

Stuart also proves that you just can't make a funny movie about truly

as easy to laugh at debilitating alcoholism and bitter family arguments. The truth of the matter is that many Americans are so mired in their self-pity and self-loathing that they turn to one (or more) of Stuart's many 12-step programs for help, accepting the "disease" from which they are perpetually recovering but of which they are never cured. And that's sad.

need an infinite number of monkeys tapping away on an infinite number of keyboards to come up with a better screenplay — a half-dozen of each would cover it. This is the movie's truly inspiring message: The idiots in Hollywood will make a film from almost anything, even this, so you might as well write a few scripts of your own.

If you're still thinking of



dysfunctional families. Sure, you can make stupid jokes about how much Dad drinks, about what a doormat Mom is and about the loser brother who still lives at home, smoking pot all day. But the fact is that these people's lives do, in fact, suck. It's easy to laugh at someone's misfortune when they do a slapstick pratfall. It's not

Finally, this movie is the ultimate beacon of hope for would-be screenplay writers. The acting performances in *Stuart Saves His Family* are actually fine — although Franken embarrasses himself by being in this dud at all, he does well in his first major film role. This movie is garbage because the script is garbage. You wouldn't

seeing this film (as if the thought had crossed your mind), here's the deal: If you've watched even one *SNL* "Daily Affirmations" piece, you've already seen it all. If you've never had the pleasure, then there's no reason to start now. Either way, you won't like this movie.

And that's ... OK.
—Scott McPherson

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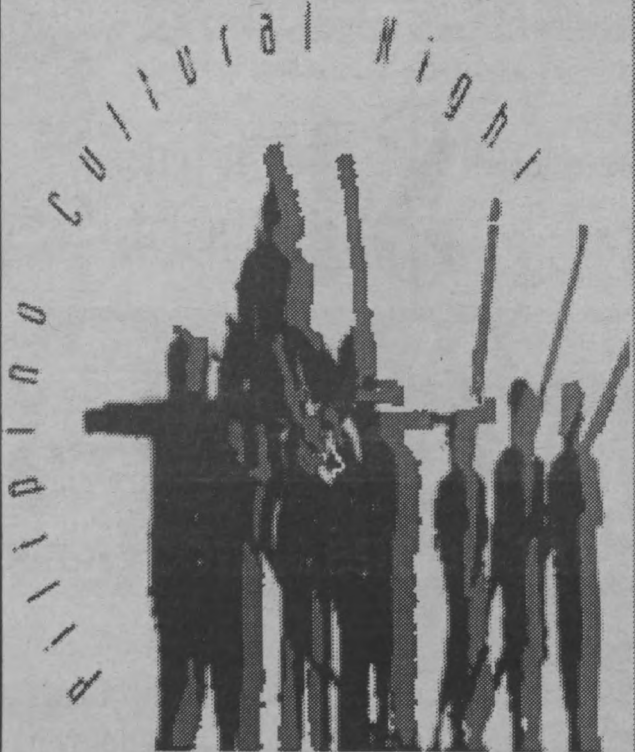
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