

Artsweek



POOLE
interview, P. 4a

Skiploader
Anxious Restless
Geffen

"I'll have one of those chocolate-covered brake pads, one Scorpion 2000 Attack Wig, a pair of omelettes, and that new CD by Skiploader," I said to the clerk.

"I'm sorry, sir, but that compact disc is not for sale. We do have...."

"Not for sale?" I interrupted. "The sign out front says, 'New CD From Skiploader For Sale, \$9.99.'"

"Correct," he replied. "Just not here at this store."

"Where, then?" I asked, starting to lose my temper.

"I don't know. But probably somewhere."

"Well, give me that new compact disc from Skiploader instead," I said. I had heard that sales clerks on Gordak 7 were easy to trick and figured it was worth a try. What did I have to lose?

"Sorry, sir, but it's still not for sale. Maybe next time."

"Oh, come on, I'm your Salad Shooter," I said, trying to trick him again. Legend had it that Gordakians were easily confused by technically superior, mail-only convenience items. "Plus, those Diamel Abdominizing Bedazzlers aren't worth a Body by Jake," I added.

"Sorry, pal, you're going to have to get your Skiploader elsewhere. The rest

comes to \$47."

I paid the guy and left. "Great," I wondered, "now where I was going to get that disc?" I needed to review it that week for the *Daily Nexus*.

My galactospatchet started right up and I was cleared for take-out. Me and The Tube (what I call my ship because it flies OK, but the tail end sort of drags across the ground) scraped toward Grogan 4, the friendliest galaxy in the universe. They would surely have a copy for sale. I thought, considering they are in close contact with Grodak 11, where 90 percent of the compact discs in the universe are made.

Well, I was right, the first store I went into had several for purchase. I happily paid \$13.99 for one and sped home to check it out.

"Gadzukes!" I shouted as I listened to the first song, "n₂o."

"Double Gadzukes!" I yelled during the second song, "all smiles."

"Whoowee!" I exclaimed, referring to the third song, "trademark."

"Whoa, what was that?" I said out loud. I re-found that part of the fourth song, "12-5-95." What were they saying? It sounded like "Heyyy Peter, nice scat collection." I kept playing it back and then realized that they weren't saying that at all. Instead, it was, "Manny al-

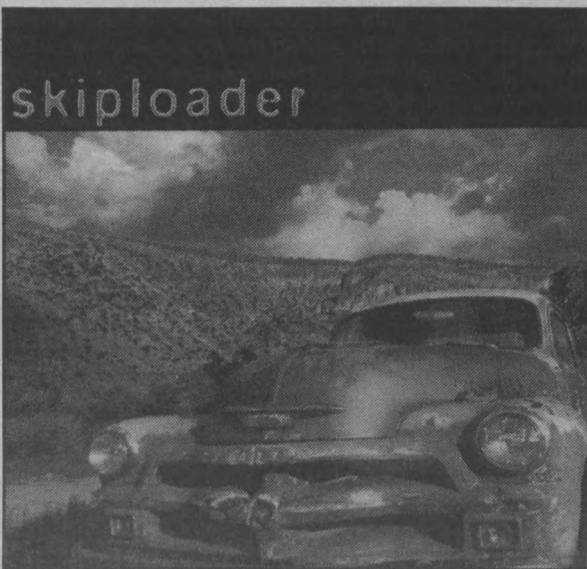
lege, when I had recently discovered the Cocteau Twins, and realized that music does not always need intelligible lyrics in order to move you.

Victorialand is a gentle album, even by Cocteau Twins standards. Perhaps because of or in spite of that reason, it was the Cocteau's album that remained longest on the British music charts. It was released nearly 10 years ago, in 1986, on what was their current British label, 4AD. At that time, the Cocteau were viewed as the "flagship" for the eclectic independent label. *Victorialand* was recorded in a relatively short time (by Cocteau Twins standards) and did not feature their newly hired bassist, Simon Raymonde. It was an insular process, entirely put together by guitarist Robin Guthrie (who produced and played nearly everything on the album) and his longtime partner, vocalist Elizabeth Fraser. The only other musician present during the recording was guest saxophonist Richard Thomas, who was then involved with a little-known 4AD band called Dif Juz.

Of course, there are many wonderful Cocteau Twins albums to choose from. Each one of them has seen me through a particular period in my life. But what I needed to feel was the particular kind of solace that only comes from listening to *Victorialand*. It saw me through my first lonely years of col-



Tales From Gordak 7



ways said behave." Weird, I thought, why would they be saying that? Oh well, I guess it's just a song.

"Stunt Double," the last song, was a real tear-jerker, a cover of a sad old lullaby that I had first heard on Grodakan 22 a little over three years ago. I had been younger then, and hadn't been alive as long. My neighbor, a guy by the name of Sylvie, had had a lawnmower and had somehow convinced himself that it could speak, but only when he wasn't around. Of course, this pestering situation had complicated things in his

brain. He would call the police every other week and complain that the lawnmower was consuming all the beer from his garage refrigerator.

I had overheard him one time. I had jumped his fence to recover the ninja suit that I had conveniently launched into his yard. I heard him say, "But officer, could you please just take a look? No, this is not a prank, you gooney bird! It's drinkin' my dang beer!" Sylvie was yelling, "Just you wait 'til I tell your superior, Mr. Buddy Head!"

When I heard that last

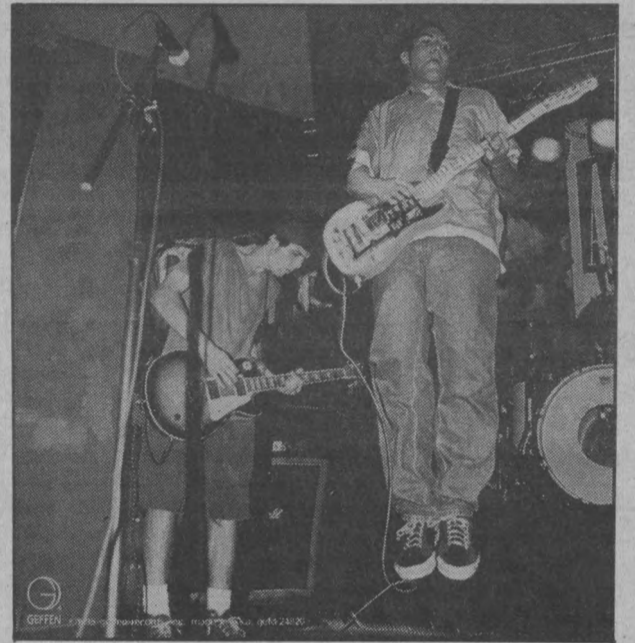
part, I took off back over the fence into the land of the sane and ran all the way to my room. A week later, Sylvie moved away and I was really sad. And when I was at my saddest, the original version of "Stunt Double" was playing on the radio. "... Stunt Double, that's who! Who can do crazy things with that thing. Some dangerous hero. He's the one that can do stuff that is hard to do. Some dangerous hero, he's the Stunt Double,

Stunt Double...."

I eventually got over it, though, when my mom told me that he had only moved across the street. Nevertheless, that song still makes me sad when I hear it.

But hey, no need to weep. How about those guys! Skiploader! Is that some powerful good tunes or what? Great music, great memories and a steady beat that really socks it to you!

—David Potter



The other day when I came home from work, I just wanted to sit on the edge of my bed and not think. It had been a long and trying day, and I wanted to listen to some music and "veg out." I wanted to hear something soothing, cozy and familiar — an album I knew by heart, like the streets of my hometown, that had become an irreplaceable part of my memories.

I could have reached for anything in the already tottering stack of new CDs that I've purchased so far this year: Belly, Bandit Queen, Tricky, the Golden Palominos. But none of these albums are as familiar to me, fit as easily in the palm of my hand, as the album I reached for instead. What I wanted — needed — to hear at that moment was *Victorialand* by the Cocteau Twins.

Of course, there are many wonderful Cocteau Twins albums to choose from. Each one of them has seen me through a particular period in my life. But what I needed to feel was the particular kind of solace that only comes from listening to *Victorialand*. It saw me through my first lonely years of col-

lege, when I had recently discovered the Cocteau Twins, and realized that music does not always need intelligible lyrics in order to move you.

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What they created was something that shimmered with longing, mystified with whimsy and was as unquestionably beautiful as a deep, still pond of snowcapped mountains when viewed from a distance. A good friend of mine once described the effect of *Victorialand* on him as a journey through the seasons, from the languid summery drift of "Lazy Calm" to the breathlessly wintry heights of "The Thinner the Air." In between are the sprightly spring awakenings of "Little Spacey" and "Feet-like Fins," and the haunting strains of "Whales Tails" and "Throughout the Dark Months of April and May." Autumn leaves skim through the sparsely stream-like dance of "Oomingmak," while "How to Bring a Blush to the Snow" suggests a frosty winter landscape.

Of course, I don't always experience these things every time I listen to *Victorialand*. It depends on the amount of attention I am giving to the music. When I am balancing my checkbook or filling out tax forms, it can be a pleasant, relaxing background sound. I have come to



know the album so well that when there is a momentary spate of drums during "Feet-like Fins" on an otherwise drumless album, it does not disturb my equilibrium. On the other hand, if I am paying attention to the music, allowing my mind to follow the journey, that spate of drums is an exhilarating, disturbing moment.

What hooks me in are the melodies — vocal melodies layered over counter-dialogues and effects-laden acoustic guitar layered over subtle electronics and keyboards. They seem to follow a random pattern, but always manage to connect in the most beguiling way. As Elizabeth's apparently nonsensical diction might not be intelligible when written on paper, or Robin's neglect of anything resembling a chord progression might seem "illogical," on record it makes complete and perfect sense.

Especially, as I said,

Audiotherapy



when you are in one of those moods when you are looking for something familiar to fill your mind with imagery other than the usual pictures that flitter around in your braincase. Of course, some people find certain drugs will do the same thing, but you can also find *Victorialand* in your local record store,

along with many other Cocteau Twins albums that have since been reissued on Capitol Records in the United States. You might even find some in the used bins — for those who like their mood music a little less atmospheric and a little more concrete.

—Miz E.

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Reissue, Repackage

The Smiths
Singles
Warner/Reprise

"So Nicole, what's the best song you've ever heard?" I asked Nicole, seated behind me in APLit and Comp.

"Whaddaya mean, Moll-oy?" she asked, peering at me through her Malcolm X specs. "Do you mean, like, the best song ever, or the best song ever that I've ever heard?" She was looking to narrow it down. It was, admittedly, kind of a big question — realistically, too big a question to ask any high school senior in an English class. Still, it was a nice diversion.

"Yeah, the best you've ever heard. Like, mine is probably 'Purple Rain,' but I'm pretty sure somewhere down the line someone wrote a better song and I just never heard it 'cos I'm a narrow-minded music-bigot type."

"Oh, OK. Then I'd have to say 'How Soon Is Now.'"

At the time, this really disappointed me. Yes, since that time, I've come to sort of empathize with the sentiment behind that part about going to the club to find someone who really loves you and you cry and you want to die and all that, and the way Morrissey phrases it is even sort of epic, but still, her choice seemed sort of ill-thought-out. I mean, sure, this was only limited to whatever songs we'd ever heard, but Nicole knew a fair amount of music. And she wasn't even a narrow-minded music bigot!

Sure, if you listen to it as you're going to sleep at night, the part where Morrissey first comes in with,



"I am the sonnnnn, and the—heirrrrr," he sounds absolutely ethereal. Sure. But what was with Nicole?

She dug her precious Smiths in a big way. She read up on them, she kept abreast of unfounded reunion rumors, she probably had posters on her walls.

She was just that weird sort. She had the army boots before anybody had the army boots, and she had green leggings in effect. She had maybe too many piercings, but not in a distasteful way, by any means.

In eighth grade, when she was just getting weird, when I was an ovo-lacto vegetarian but not an extreme one, when she first cut off her hair and dyed it really fake blond, when she wrote "Meat is Murder" on her books but didn't stop eating it, I worked myself up to ask her, "Do you think it's really murder? Veal is plenty bad, but...."

"It's a song," she said. "It's a Smiths album. *Meat*

Is Murder." I wasn't going to get my moral discussion. Not from Nicole. That wasn't Nicole. She wasn't the amusing-conversation-with-an-idiot type.

Nicole was wise. Wise about her Smiths. Clever about her Smiths. She called Morrissey "Moz" after his nickname in the British rags she would buy at 3rd Street Promenade newsracks. She schooled me to the difference between punks and mods. Moz, she explained, was a mod.

So maybe he isn't the sun or the air to me, but I sort of felt like I was getting a look around Nicole's land by buying *Singles*. All the songs are good, especially "How Soon Is Now," and "Heaven Knows I'm Miserable Now." If you're a Nicole, you already have these songs many times over on other Smiths records. If not, try to understand a Nicole.

One love, Kevin Carhart. Peace, mon frerons.

—Tim Molloy

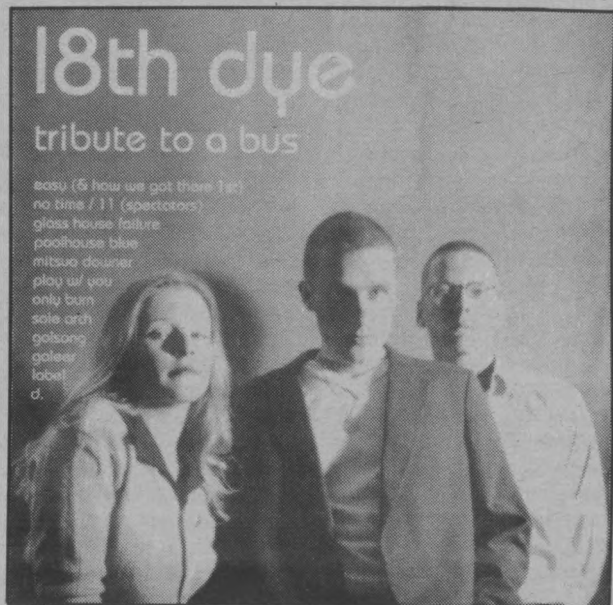


18th dye
tribute to a bus
Matador

The latest 18th dye album is pure elation — neon stripes the color of melon liqueur accenting deep cherry wood, bright brass rings through the noses of secretly smiling gargoyles, surgical precision disguised as intricately wrapped trinkets from Japan. What I am trying to say is that 18th dye has lost the odd combo of hesitancy and bluster, catchy tunes and nice manners seen on other efforts *Crayon* and *Done*. It has gone 21st century — the crispness and noisiness is courtesy of Steve Albini, but the superstructure, tough like the skeletons of skyscrapers, is courtesy of themselves.

18th dye steers clear of the mini-genre trend of indie rock these days; they are not 'indie-country,' 'indie-lounge,' 'indie-blues' or 'indie-folk.' So what *do* they sound like? "sole arch" is a lovely ballad, with plenty of sentimental guitar and droll organ. The drummer has had too much coffee on "only burn" and "label." 18th dye sounds punk when they let loose their furious bursts of mayhem, an as-

Don't Miss the Bus



sault more painful because the production is so clean, you think you can hear every vibration of string and drum.

tribute to a bus sounds completely structured and not spontaneous — the work of some mad city planner with amazing multilinear thinking. At the same time, the "18th dye sound" can convince you that they are flying off the handle. The infighting between these dualities creates the energy to match the mood — or is it

the other way around? The lyrics are thoughtfully included, being mainly a mishmash of absurd statements, profanities sung without fanfare and a bit of German and French for good measure. All in all, 18th dye has not lost its manic attitude with this album. It has just dressed it up a bit to provide the proper superstar swagger to balance the music, bringing 18th dye one step closer to some utopian aesthetic indie-rock ideal.

—Rena Tom

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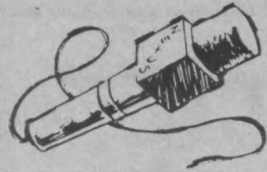
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An Interview with Poole By Noah Blumberg

In between performing at various sites in California in support of their new album *Alaska Days*, the singer/main songwriter/guitarist of the band Poole, Harry Evans, had occasion to talk to *Artsweek*. Poole, a group of craftsmen creating simple, sweet songs, is a treasured find for lovers of bright, buzzy guitar. The truly accessible music of Poole is an excellent addi-

evil.
AW: *On Alaska Days, some of the songs seem so sweet and so romantic that one might wonder if they are somewhat sarcastic. Are they?*

HE: Um, I don't know. I tend to be a pretty sarcastic person in my everyday life. I never really thought about it before. I guess it depends how you took what was being said. I think that anything can be taken sar-

castically if given the right frame. I don't think any of our stuff was written with sarcastic intent. It was all meant to be as pure and sweet as it seems. We're actually really nice guys.

AW: *The song "Supermerica" seems to have sexual references — is that intentional?*

HE: Wow! Hey, you're asking me questions I've never thought of before. [To other band members:] Are there sexual overtones in "Supermerica"? Which, the "do you like it when I lick you"?

AW: *"The ring around the rocketship..."*

HE: O-ho-ho-ho! Never thought about that one before.... No, that was actually taken from a kids' book. We had to come up with a third verse, and that was from a kids' book we had, and the first line of it was, "Let's make a ring around the rocketship." But there were no intentional sexual overtones there.... Wow! But I guess that's just the way my mind works subconsciously, for some reason.

AW: *The cover art of Alaska Days has a distinct look to it, with the skiers and the snowflakes and stuff. How does that, if at*

all, relate to the music?
HE: We just wanted something that was really fun, and we spent a long time on that artwork, and we really thought hard about it. It's the result of a lot of brainstorming and throwing ideas back and forth. That is absolutely the best artwork we can have for that album. I think it's great. We wanted to convey an air of fun and

emulate at all. Another band which is probably one of our favorites is The Beach Boys — without question one of my biggest personal influences. And The Descendants.

AW: *How do you guys feel about getting attention from being in a band?*

HE: It's excellent. It's excellent because it's what we've always wanted. Y'know, you always hear

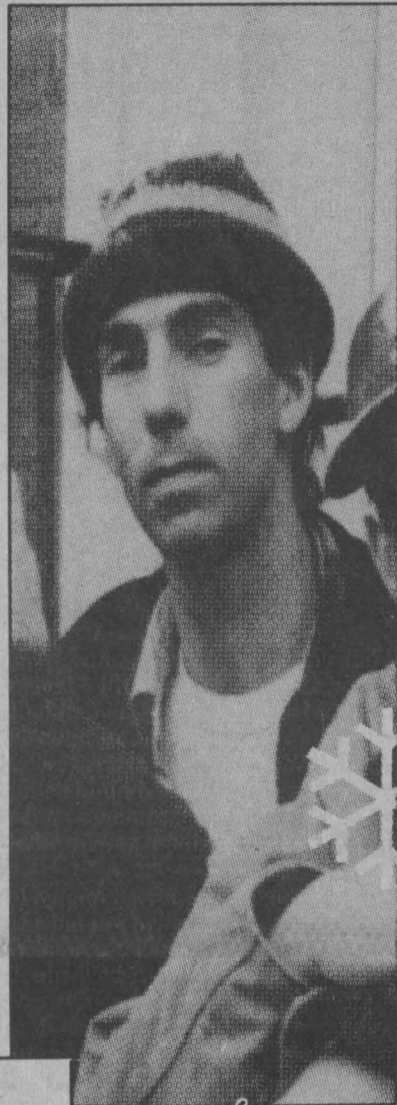
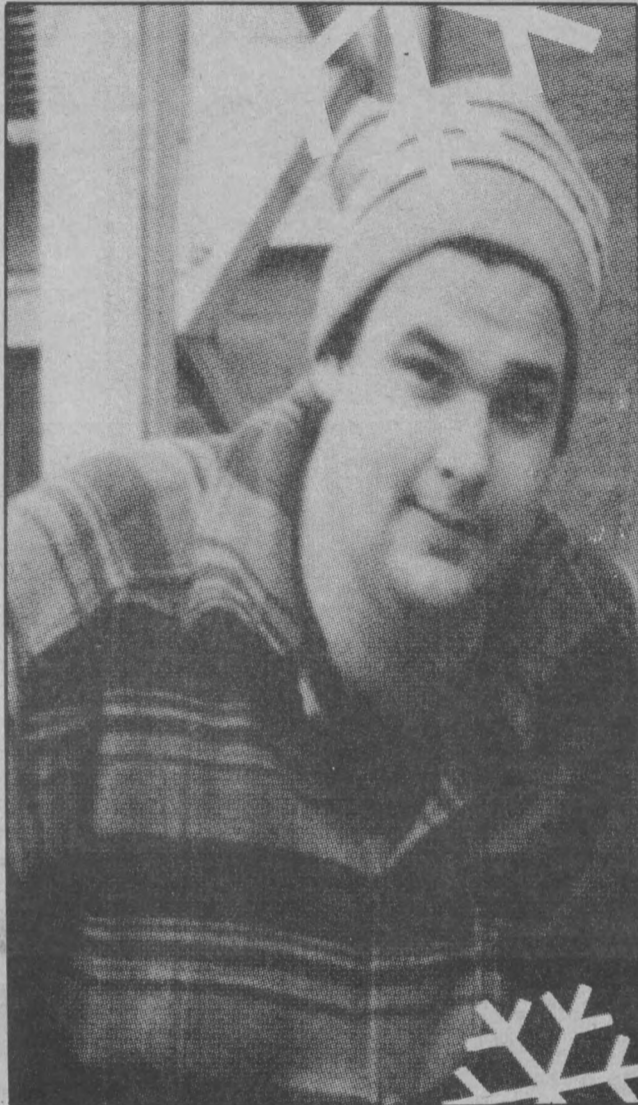
being on spinART records?

HE: Yes. They're great. This is our first record for them and they've just been really cool. They're giving us tour support when we're out on the road and they're pretty much give us complete control over what we want to do. They're just a fabulous label. Jeff, Joel and Katie [the people who run spinART] are great.

7-inches, 78s. I think vinyl's great. I still think that vinyl on a really good stereo sounds way better than a CD.

AW: *Does Poole just use standard guitar tunings?*

HE: So far, we've been tuning our guitars pretty standard, we tune to A 440. We've got one song that's got one string that's kinda out of tune, but I think that was mostly an



tion to any music collection. The following is *Artsweek's* discussion with Harry.

Artsweek: *So, what are some of Poole's favorite bands?*

Harry Evans: Hmmm, I would say the Housemartins, The Knack, The Bee Gees, Frank Sinatra, AC/DC, Ozzy Osbourne — just the first two solo records, though.

AW: *Are you serious?*
HE: Yeah, and the Randy Rhodes' *Tribute* album. We've been listening to Wham's *Make It Big* and Scorpions' *Worldwide Live*. Listening to the Scorpions live makes for an exciting rock moment.

AW: *What do you guys think about signing to a major label?*

HE: I think that'd be awesome. Definitely. We're all totally into it. We all really want to make music a career. I think that major labels can be as beneficial as they can be dangerous. It all depends on what kind of deal you get and if you go into it with your eyes open. There's independent labels that screw bands really hard. Just the nature of being a big machine doesn't make something

accident. We just sorta left it because it sounded cool. I'm not a good enough guitar player to start playing with alternate guitar tunings. I need to master one tuning before I move on to a new one. Our drums are alternately tuned, though.

AW: *Yeah, sure. I could hear that.*

HE: Yeah, you could hear the alternate pitches jump across the drum set.

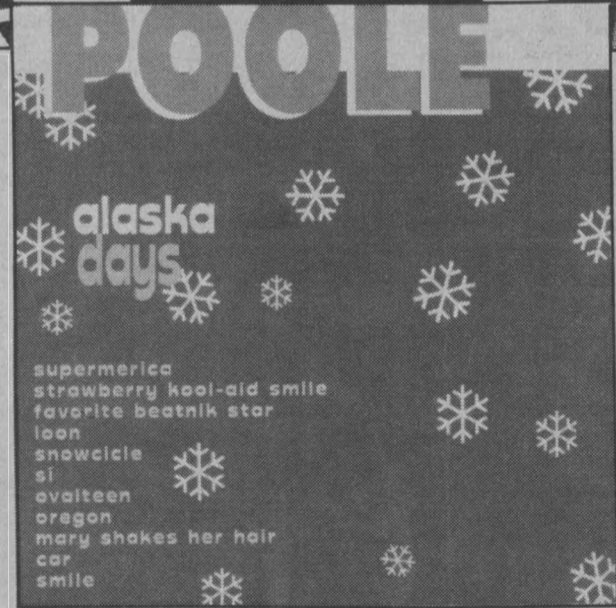
AW: *That's all I have. Is there anything that you just want to say in general?*

HE: Um ... people should go see live music more often.

AW: *Have the crowds been scarce for Poole?*

HE: No, the crowds have actually been really good. I just think that people don't go see live music that much anymore. A lot of people would just rather go to dance clubs or just to a bar or whatever. There's so many great bands to go and see. Especially, people should go support their local music scene. You're in Santa Barbara. There's probably a lot of good Santa Barbara bands that your readers should go and see.

AW: *Uhhh ... well, there's some.*



lightness. We had about eight or 10 people trying to put it all together. We finally got what we wanted so I'm glad that it turned out the way it did.

AW: *Have you guys ever been compared to other bands?*

HE: Actually, I just heard two great comparisons today. We were compared to The Archies, but with buzzy guitars, and to the Monkees with better singers. I guess we've been compared to R.E.M. and Teenage Fanclub and early — what's that icky English band that I hate — Primal Scream. None of that stuff is what we're trying to

about bands that make a record and get all this attention, and then they're shocked. They go, "Oh my God, I never wanted any of this!" I don't buy into that. Why did they start a band in the first place? You have to have a super-egotistical side to want to be in a band and to do the whole rock thing, because it's all about attention. It's part of what you do, it's part of the game that you have to play. So, I think all the attention and all the stuff that goes along with it is great. That's what I've always wanted.

AW: *Do you guys enjoy*

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AW: *Uhhh ... well, there's some.*

HE: Oh, absolutely. In fact we like vinyl so much that we had spinART press our album up on vinyl. It's gonna be available probably in the next month or so. We all still collect records. We buy vinyl — 45s,

"We're actually really nice guys." E-mail: mrpoole@aol.com



The Poppy Field 7-inch Single Roundup

By Kevin Carhart

What's the state of vinyl, of records as a music format in 1995? The answer might seem obvious, but it also seems that some maverick spokesperson is proclaiming *vinyl's not dead* almost as often as someone says it is. On the one hand, some inept, shortsighted radio stations don't even have turntables, trusting their selection to whatever's new or reissued. On the other hand, even Pearl Jam — music doesn't get much more tedious or commercial — has its heart in the right place, releasing a limited edition of the vinyl version of a recent album before the other formats.

Purely based on the music found on a sampling of 7-inch singles, vinyl is as vital a format as it ever was. The single is a pure, pared-down medium. When there are only a couple of songs on a given record, all the attention is focused on those rather than spread out over 10 or 15, so you're less likely to find filler or throwaways. You also find tons of groups who have only written a couple of songs. It might be years before they'll make an LP, but their first single might still be brilliant.

So, don't ditch your turntable! Much as I enjoy finding such a selection of (trendily abandoned) music being sold for 25 or 50 cents at Goodwill, I'd rather the word got out about what you won't find except on 7-inch singles, music like the following:

Thee Headcoatees

**Santa Claus
Damaged Goods**

Another mark in favor of records is the presentation. This single by Thee Headcoatees is satisfyingly heavy, and the two-sided picture disc is better than what you'd find painted on a comparable CD.

Thee Headcoatees are the female counterparts of Thee Headcoats, a group run by batty, prolific garage deity Billy Childish. They keep their songs raw and simple as a point of honor. "Santa Claus" is a seasonal stomp, and the B-side, "Evil Thing," carries on the tradition of '60s punk.

Red Number Nine

**Mary
Farmhouse**

Speaking of simple, the charming Red Number Nine is unassuming as a punk-rock principle. At the Living Room early in the fall, the attention was on the music rather than themselves. They live up to the perch they take when they sing the critical "Fashion Punk," about superficial, hypocritical scenesters.

The guitar playing and drumming is fast, but with plenty of melodies and nicely-sung vocals. This is a group that will appeal both to a punk audience and pop cravers like me.



Wall of Orchids

**Life Goes On
Pop Look and Listen**

Pop fans will find plenty to be happy about on 7-inch singles. A label with "pop" in the title is usually a good sign, like Pop Llama (home of a Zombies tribute album,) or Pop Narcotic or this one. Ever since I heard "Life Goes On," I've been crazy about it. Wall of Orchids is actually one-man band Lane Steinberg, who has turned up on the power-pop compilations *Yellow Pills*. He has a real knack for mixing a poignant little tale with irresistible melody.

The story opens on a wife, pacing the kitchen and soothing the baby. The husband is off at war, following in the footsteps of a general-father who expected "that his son would lead a life that carried on a legacy she never felt was fair or right." It's uncertain whether he'll ever be back. And the chorus, with swooping ahhs and background vocals: "Life must go on, life goes on." I don't know when I've heard timing and pacing so fresh and effective.

Telling the story in declarative statements works better than it would with word play. I don't usually go in for general truths, but there's something about the punchy, sad situation and inevitability of life going on — and the fact that Steinberg included doubts about the military — that's really beautiful.



Hula Hoop

**Butterfingered
Silver Girl**

Silver Girl Records is run by Keith York, once of KCSB! Well, ALL RIGHT! The band is actually from Kentucky. Once it starts spinning, the group washes over you with guitar wah and energy. The Moog is mixed very low, but I'm sure it's in there somewhere. The illustrious Noah Blumberg adds his two cents: *Hula Hoop* sounds a lot like a sweeter version of Ian Mackaye's old band *Embrace*. One might even call them a poppier Fugazi with their clever and melodic use of harmonics and aggressive vocals. Back to you, Keuster.



The Four One & Only's

**Double Hit
Roman Cabbage Vinyl**

Some of the releases by this Dutch band are actually kind of unlistenable, but I've fallen in love with a little number called "Let's Emigrate." The song contains a sound somewhere between an accordion and a car horn, which drives elfin vocals. It's a little eccentric, but it makes for a great hook, and combined with marching-band drums, the song is a hit. Both songs are on one side of the record. The other side is smooth and blank.



The Merricks

**Der schönste Tag im Jahr!
Roman Cabbage Vinyl**

This Roman Cabbage Vinyl is a funny label. I came in expecting pure whimsy from the Merricks' pooh-bear cover art and song titles like "Cheer Up (You're on Holidays)," but the title track is actually the poppiest. The first B-side, "Der Loge," is downright scary, a minor-key waltz that sounds like a declaration of evil from *Sweeney Todd* or something.

KCSB TOP 30 KCSB TOP 30 KCSB TOP 30 KCSB TOP 30 KCSB TOP 30

- | | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Grand Puba | 7. R.A.F.R. <small>comp</small> | 13. Nonce | 19. Drugstore | 25. Free to Fight <small>comp</small> |
| 2. Teenage Zit Rock <small>comp</small> | 8. Vandals | 14. Sincola | 20. Apples in Stereo | 26. Special ED |
| 3. Hector Zazou | 9. Mobb Deep | 15. Amateur sndtrk. | 21. 6ths | 27. Bracket |
| 4. Masta Ace Inc | 10. Screeching Weasel | 16. Blacktop | 22. D&D Project | 28. Clutch |
| 5. Pooh Sticks | 11. Foetus | 17. Alkaholiks | 23. Godheadsilo | 29. Slant 6 |
| 6. Red Ants | 12. [sleeper] | 18. Archers of Loaf | 24. Muffs | 30. All |

Combining tremendous explosions, international intrigue and bad guys getting cut in half with cable wire, *Die Hard With a Vengeance* is this season's action adventure movie with the perfect mix of summer escapism and intelligent storytelling.

Bruce Willis returns as Lt. John McClane, an everyman sort of New York cop with a nasty habit of getting mixed up with international terrorists with bad German accents. McClane's adversary and the film's main villain (aside from a female mute psycho and a posse of Aryan-looking henchmen) is Simon, a nefarious intellectual played masterfully by Jeremy Irons.

After blowing up a department store during the opening credits, Simon forces McClane and Harlem shop owner/inadvertent sidekick Zeus Carver (played by Samuel L. Jackson) into a twisted game of Simon Says. The dynamic duo is sent on high-speed chases throughout the city, forced to answer archaic riddles and generally required to look like idiots in front of large groups of people, or else Simon will detonate various targets, including an elementary school and a crowded subway train.

Die Hard director John

McTiernan returns for the third installment of the series and delivers fast-paced, over-the-top action, keeping the story moving and the explosions rocking with little time to stop and smell the flowers. The stunts and special effects are truly awesome and the danger is real enough to keep the suspense alive.

With a Vengeance also excels at the other traditional motifs of the action genre. McClane and Zeus fill the dead time between explosions with hilarious cop/sidekick banter, and the hero/villain telephone interaction between Willis and Irons is effective despite its overuse in films like *In the Line of Fire* and *Speed*.

Although the movie is little more than a formula flick and the plot is largely predictable, the story does exhibit many of the features that made the original *Die Hard* a classic of the genre. Simon is smarter and sneakier than the common action movie villain and his plans and motivations are not those of a simple megalomaniacal psychopath.

McTiernan has clearly poured a great deal of effort into the shaping of *With a Vengeance* and it shows in the movie's details and little added extras. Everything from Simon's explosive devices to



McClane's escape from an elevator packed with four former East German henchmen demonstrates a great deal of imagination.

Although *With a Vengeance* is almost a textbook example of how to make a great action movie, the picture is clearly not

Pyrotechnical Perfection

perfect or without faults. The movie features an unnecessary "let's bring the races together" subplot that should have either been handled seriously or cut entirely, and McClane starts the movie estranged from his wife *again* and in a condition too closely re-

sembling that of Willis' character in *The Last Boy Scout*.

Despite its minor imperfections, *Die Hard With a Vengeance* offers two hours of nonstop comedy, suspense and action without playing down or insulting the intelligence of


its viewers. Sit back, relax and enjoy the ride.


These reviewers enthusiastically give *Die Hard With a Vengeance* two buenos!

—Michael Ball and Jeff Brax




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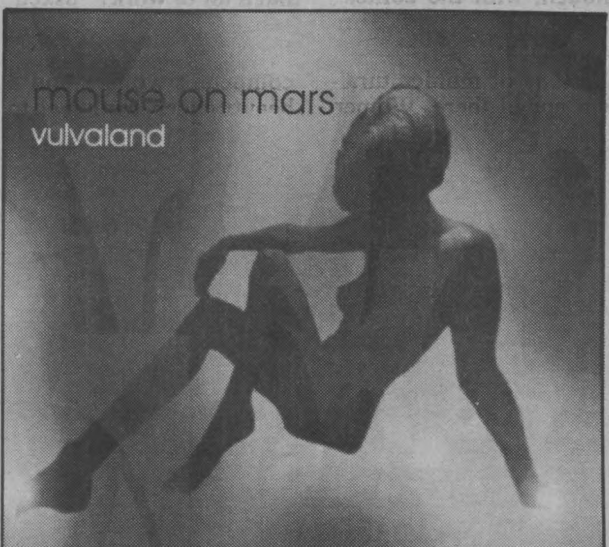


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 **TechnoSqueak**

Mouse on Mars
Vulvaland
Too Pure/American



Honestly, when Kevin asked me to review this record, I was like "OK, I've never heard of this group, but I'll give 'em a shot." I didn't think I'd have anything interesting to write about them, though. Since that time, I have listened to the record in its entirety and found out some slightly interesting things about them courtesy of nu-school indie rock deity Erik Fields. I also realized that I wouldn't really need to say much interesting about the recording. The music speaks for itself.

Mouse on Mars are Andi Toma and Jan St. Werner. They're from Germany. And their album *Vulvaland* was originally released last year on the UK indie label Too Pure. It has been re-released this year in the USA by Rick Rubin as part of an agreement in which Rubin's label American will distribute and promote Too Pure releases here in the states.

I think this is the wisest decision Mr. Rubin has made in a long time, because *Vulvaland* is a good record. Beware though, if you're expecting rock music here, forget it. The best way to describe the music of Mouse on Mars would be by recommending that you sit back in a quiet room and listen to this record uninterrupted from beginning to end. Thoughts and phrases that will come to mind include "electronic," "ambient house," "interesting soundscapes of swirling noise and texture" and "different." This CD is all of those things and more. There's even a secret song embedded at the end of the record! A pleasant surprise. Recommended.

—Monty Luke

THE END IS NEAR!

The last issues of Spring Quarter are:

Issue of:	5/30	5/31	6/1	6/2	6/8	6/12
DEADLINE:	5/25	5/26	5/30	5/31	5/31	6/2

Beauty and the Bob

I have never really had a problem with beauty pageants, aside from the uncontrollable urge I get to vastly overpluck my eyebrows after watching one. Exploitative or not, I always figured the women were there of their own free will and someone was going to walk away with a new car, a cash prize or scholarship from Vibrance shampoo, plus the chance

thought of herself as a girl or a woman — what bearing this has on her qualifications to be Miss Universe, I do not know — and when she answered, "A woman," Bob said — directly to her breasts — "Well, yes, I can see that."

During the personal interview portion of the contest, Bob ignored the interpreters who were provided and insisted on asking his

ding up the scores for us home viewers. Apparently, Bob is not very good at math.

The pageant went downhill from there, an exercise in bad taste highlighted by a performance from Jon Secada, in which all the contestants donned white evening gowns and vogued around him while he crooned. There was no talent competition and the



to be a role model and perhaps say something worthwhile. And besides, you have to admit, the "talent" competitions are usually good for a laugh.

But this year's Miss Universe Pageant, aired on May 12, was nothing short of offensive. The broadcast began festively enough, with the contestants parading around in "native" costumes, but any illusions of multiculturalism ended there. Women from all nations, who on the whole embodied the American Barbie beauty standard, introduced themselves in largely phonetic English. Then the Distinguished Judges eliminated everyone with more than 2 percent body fat or an A cup. I know, I know, I should have just turned it off. But by then the host, Bob, best known for his groundbreaking work on "Entertainment Tonight" and for his large, unmoving hair, had made at least one sexist remark and I was morbidly fascinated in much the same way many people are with the O.J. Simpson trial.

Throughout the evening, Bob stuck his foot further and further in his mouth until I began to wonder if it would have to be surgically removed. At one point, he asked an 18-year-old young lovely from the Ukraine if she

questions to the non-English-speaking contestants in that loud, slow manner usually reserved for the partially deaf and totally senile. But perhaps his most stellar faux pas occurred after it was revealed that Miss India was finishing up her master's degree. A master's! "Isn't that a lot of work?" asked Bob. Miss India, with all the grace and poise of a competent woman and a beauty queen, explained to him that a master's was just one step above a bachelor's, in case Bob was unfamiliar with the sequence of higher education. "Yes," Bob said candidly, "but that's a lot of work!" He then insinuated that she must not have any spare time.

Instead of replying, as I was hoping, that *Bob's penis seemed so small! He must not have satisfied very many women!* Miss India just smiled and assured him that she had lots of spare time and proceeded to list her numerous extracurricular activities.

Bob's amazement at Miss India's accomplishments was understood when I took into consideration that his co-host, Daisy Fuentes, whose sole job appeared to be to change her outfit at every commercial break, had been put in charge of ad-

entertainment had to be derived from viewing the wide selection of footwear provided by Payless Shoe Source. There were no great moments at the end of the evening, either. Bob was not pelted with soft, ripe fruit, the women in the audience did not walk out en masse, chanting, "We (still?) believe you, Anita!" and not even the small victory of crowning Miss India was won. She lost out to Miss USA, who bears a striking resemblance to Janet Jackson (post-surgery). She feels that women have already come so far in this great country and if we just keep smiling, we can accomplish anything.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to go and pluck my eyebrows.

—Sybil Kelly

Crumby Comics

There's a tangible relief at the end of *Crumb*, the new documentary about the cartoonist R. (Robert) Crumb. Not that the film isn't fascinating and well made — it is, it's just that the subject is kind of depressing, if deeply honest. Like Crumb and his two brothers — shown at length in the film — it's sensitive and intelligent, and like them, it shows you the edge of neurosis.

Under the influence of a domineering psychopathic father, Crumb's family grew up introverted and bizarre — I mean, you might think your family is strange, but you'd consider it normal after seeing this.

into self-indulgence), explore the deep and dank dungeons of the male mind that most of us keep safely locked up in public for the sake of politeness. Personally, I can flick through this kind of stuff for a few minutes, and then I start looking around. He has remarkable drawing ability and free-ranging imagination, but his cartoons seem to have never left the adolescence he finds so painful and compelling.

To the film's credit, it does not descend into the unthinking hero worship that it could have, and Crumb himself has a healthy disrespect for fame and "success." There are dissenters who point out that



LEXI COFFEE & CHRISTIAN FAGERLUND/Daily Nexus

Crumb, in fact, despite his manic grin and awkward, insect-like body, seems to have come off better than his brothers, both of whom are virtual basket cases. (One committed suicide after the film was made.)

As one of the few escapes from the frightening world of their teens, the boys became immersed in drawing — all three are accomplished artists. But it was Robert who had the stability to persevere and succeed at it. His cartoons from the late '60s and early '70s seem to have become well known, though, to people other than myself.

His pictures, up front with their sexual obsession (sometimes going over the edge

though the cartoons are good at puncturing the bland pretenses and pathetic uniformity that constitute "normality," they don't offer anything coherent to replace it — just jagged fragments of nihilism. They're the antidote to the values he grew up with in the '50s, but what if those values have no threat or relevance for you in the first place?

An hour-and-a-half documentary just about Robert Crumb would be hard to justify, and harder to sit through, but with the colorful cast of characters around him (his family and ex-girlfriends among others), it certainly holds the interest — you'll get a weird enjoyment out of it.

—Martin Knight

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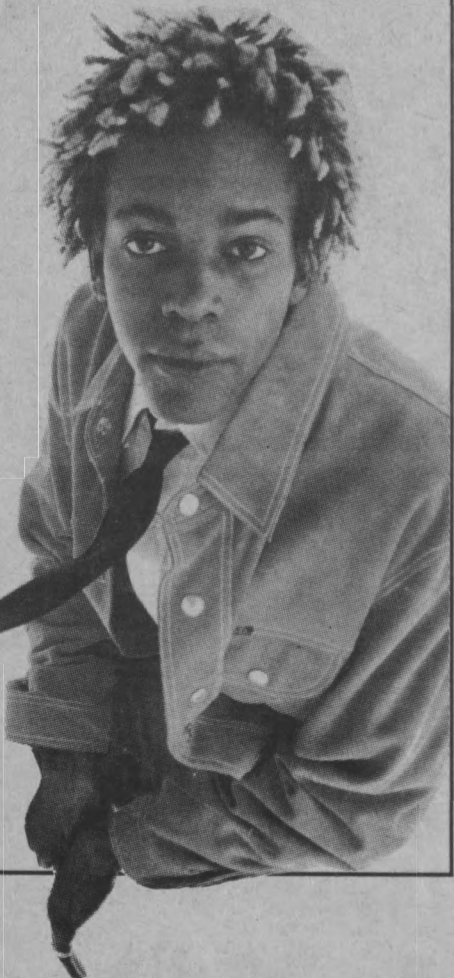
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Kevin's self-indulgent end-of-the-year moment: Thank you to everyone who has made Artsweek what it is over the past two years. It has been fun.

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