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008: RALPH STEADMAN

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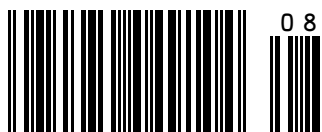
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This issue is dedicated to the Lashbrook family. Our prayers, thoughts, and service remain at your side.

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support and unending
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decency to put it in my
moms at least once.
A legend is born!

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SKYE MAYRING

is an international spy, posing as a UCLA student. She sneaks into Radiohead concerts and never mops her bathroom floor. At dusk, you may see her skating down Santa Monica Blvd on her hot pink longboard, "Pinky Brewster," or hear her trainwrecking a mix of drum n bass and classic soul on the wheels of steel. Beware, she'll make you eat your vegetables.



DIANA RICHARDSON

"I'm Diana. And the radio makes me want to shoot myself in the head."



TOMMY DIGITAL

Born in the utter ghettos of Appalachia, then rescued and mentored by the legendary Bootawachenga. Now I be driving fast cars, catnip in my glass jar. Tommy, the atomic bomb-droppin, appear in your atmosphere like the comet headin to the Western Hemisphere non-stoppin, strike in the belly of the sea and make it vomit. Chicken of the Seas get trapped in my neck, but I'm still sittin pretty and my loving is digi. Hit the ground you analog cats, you ain't got nothing for me. I be spreadin knowledge, keeping my third eye polished.



MIRANDA

recently graduated from RISD where she studied photography with a bunch of other nerds. Writing, photos and bicycles keep her healthy, even if the former occasionally forces her to talk about herself in the third person.



EMERICK TACKETT

loves music and art and other things. He currently lives in Topanga California and spends his days sleeping and his nights in the lab.



MATTHEW THOMAS

is a freelance writer based in Queens, NY. His work has been featured in *Outsider Ink*, *Word Riot*, and *In Music We Trust*. On acid rain days in the 'hood, Matt has been known to watch reruns of "Saved By The Bell" while in Transformers boxers and hold delightful tea parties with his pet rocks. You can read more of his rants and rambles at thevillagetothelleft.com.



PIERCE JACKSON

An NYC native (a rare phenomenon) and child of the 80s, Pierce Jackson grew up hustling racing games inside the arcades of Chinatown. Once he ran out of quarters Pierce took to the clubs to bring his DJ'ing skills to the people. Currently Pierce studies business at NYU and keeps himself busy as a DJ, music video producer (search www.youtube.com for BINBINHigh), photographer, and writer, all while also working with DJ J.Period.



MIKE RUDD & GRAPHIC CREATIVE

From the world of writing to the dank digital alleys of media, he's there, keeping it solid...making sense out of confusion, everyday, all his life. Look out for his projects Graphic Creative, Signified Youth, & il-lart.com

EDITOR'S NOTE

Wow! Not only did he give us the blessing to use one of his original pieces, but two. If I could count the times I sat pondering his images in unison with Hunter S. Thompson's words flowing through my cerebrum, I'd be a rich man... wait...what? That didn't make sense! But neither does the fact that we spent the last two weeks before print discussing which Ralph Steadman drawing we were going to use for the cover. How and when the hell did we get to this? Tell me this 5 years ago and I'd have laughed your head into a bottle of ether. But here we are. Enjoy it. We sure are. Jake...bless you!

And as if that wasn't exciting enough, keep a lookout on what's going on between us and GetUnderground.com : we recently eloped (for tax purposes of course...). Nah, seriously though, Kotori Magazine and GetUnderground.com are now officially brother and sister. You're going to be seeing a lot of each other from here on out, so if you're not subscribed to GetUnderground.com mailing list just yet, do eet. And if you don't know what GetUnderground.com is, well, we have ample reason to believe you've been asleep for the last 5 years (and yes, we're a bit jealous). Dig Deeper : Creative Resistance Designed for the Emancipation of the Human Spirit.

Last but certainly not least, here tiz : the Fall 006 issue of Kotori. As if Steadman wasn't enough, the issues goes from amazing to amazinger with Lyrics Born, Katt Williams, Thievery Corporation, Defari, CL Smooth (yup yup he's back!), Tool, Clear Channel exploitin' truths, Douglas Brinkley revealin' truths, Dr.Grinspoon gettin' everyone high, Mike The Poet goes graf, and...well...peep the Table of Contents...unless your dead, something's sure to catch your eyes and ears.

And for God's sakes... enough of this BS...let's take back our country...VOTE!

Happy Holidays to you and everything about you!

Til' 007...

Wasim Muklashy

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My Little Secret LLC is proud to announce The Talking Head Vibrator MP3 Series™. With 32 Megabytes of RAM and built-in USB Port, the rabbit-shaped Talking Head will stimulate both sexually and auditorily. Download fantasy lover voices, record audio fantasies and even

favorite songs. The days of coaxing a girl into bed with Luther Vandross CDs and scented candles are over! Now you can get her wet with Barry White and multiple speed frequencies. Get your Bzzzzzz on!

On October 6th we will all sing "HAPPY BIRTHDAY" to Kotori's own Violet Fewes. Violet will celebrate by stabbing the stork with a Sfork and speaking in tongues with a friendly bucket of ice.



The Gameologist Group LLC presents the board game BLING BLING 2002 The TAKEOVER Part I. Players are adventurers in an inner city setting trying to gather up

money and properties, but with a big twist- it's based on the popular dice game called C-LO. Visit www.HOODGOODIES.COM

In the summer issue of Kotori Magazine we reported that God had pushed back the street date for the Apocalypse. We are proud to announce that, in a press release, God has updated us on this important event. According to the release, the fault lines will start crumbling and the pestilence will sweep the globe some time around mid-June of 2066. God went on to say that, "Although I would like to get this project rolling as soon as possible, I must warn you, that is tentative." Reps from The Ministry for a More Truthful God stressed that the date will probably change, as God is focusing more on the release of his first box set entitled "Mega Deity Supernova Rocks You Like Hurricane Katrina: The Bitchin' Bedlam of 4.55 Billion Years."

Work sucks! Wanna gripe about it and actually be heard? The Annual California Workers' Comp Forum is the "must-attend conference for anyone involved in workers' compensation in the State of California." So get off your ass and get a job, ya lazy bum! Or if you already have one, then head over to Huntington Beach between October

18th and October 20th to catch over thirty panels presented by the *cawcforum's* fifty plus guests.

California, the California Alumni Association's premiere magazine, features a very special October cover story on the science and psychology of climate change. A must read for all of you Al Gore proponents who think that my huffing Nitrous Oxide today will cause the polar ice caps will melt tomorrow.



www.springfieldvt.com. It's sure to be a blast of cider and ingenuity.

The Deftones will release *Saturday Night Wrist*, their fifth studio album, on October 31st. Hopefully the album will move a lot of units so Chino Moreno can stop talking smack about poor Jonathan Davis and start feeling better about himself.



on the project, which is expected to carry a \$200 million price-tag. "I'm going to present this national slavery museum as a jewel that's missing in a crown," he says. www.USNationalSlaveryMuseum.org



new book, splattered with art by Mear One, at: www.iuniverse.com or opt for the book and CD package at: www.ksdmusic.com.

October will be particularly spooky this year, as three monster films come to DVD. *An American Haunting*, *Monster House* and James Gunn's *Slither* all reach video stores on the 24th. And in even bigger news rental facilities across the United States finally pull the last remaining VHS tapes from their ever diminishing selections and start calling themselves DVD Stores instead of video stores.

The rental experience becomes less confusing.

Just cuz you want to be environmentally friendly that doesn't mean you have to hug a tree and dump vegetable oil in your gas tank. Screw it! Go shopping! Visit: <http://www.metaefficient.com>, the Web's shopping guide to the most efficient things in the world.



DVD-pulling cult hero-turned-corporate quisling Seth MacFarlane must need to make payments on his latest Ferrari

because, apparently, the success of the Stewie Griffin DVD just wasn't enough. MacFarlane is now in the conceptualizing stages on an as-yet-unfinalized *Family Guy* theatrical motion picture. Prompting this Stewie fan to scream, "You smelly pirate hooker!"

Max Cavallera surprised everyone at the 10th Annual D-Low Tribute Concert in Tempe, AZ, on 8/17/06, inviting his brother Igor on stage to jam for the first time in 10 years, since Max parted ways with Sepultura. "It was really kind of out of nowhere," Max says. "It's cool that we're talking again, that we can be brothers again."



Metalocalypse is an animated comedy on Adult Swim, which follows the exploits of the half-American/half-Scandinavian death metal band Dethklok. They enjoy a popularity level unheard of in reality- people literally sign their lives away to watch Dethklok concerts. The music is so deliciously real and brutal that a lot of bands out there will feel the "Spinal Tap" effect. Special appearances by KING DIAMOND, Michael Amott, Warrel Dane, Jeff Loomis and Steve Smyth, James Hetfield and Kirk Hammett.

Apparently some Texans agree with my opinion of you after all. *God Thinks You're A Loser*, an HD independent film being produced by South Austin Pictures, starts filming on October 10th with a wrap date of November 5th. Crew resumes are currently being accepted. Email: rmaxwell@osfcorp.com or visit their site @ www.southaustinpictures.com.

Last March, The Smiley Group and Third World Press published *The Covenant with Black America*, a collection of essays by prominent black scholars and professionals edited by Travis Smiley. "The Covenant with Black America is a national plan of action to address the primary concerns of African Americans today -- from health to housing,



from crime to criminal justice, from education to economic parity." With the 06 elections right here and the 08 elections right around the corner, it's a perfect time to get more information at www.covenantwithblackamerica.com

After a wait of 1 ½ years and hundreds of hours of hard work, HipHopBattles.com v2.0 is finally online! Fresh features include new design, faster web server and the all-new *Graffiti Arena*. The "Arena" means that you can now pit your graphic art skills against those of other writers from around the world. Let's hope that Rabbit's mobile home has an Internet connection.

Drug trafficking, sexism, low-wage factory work and poverty set the stage for a daringly incisive and detail-oriented documentary, *On The Edge: The Femicide in Ciudad Juarez*. The film attempts to discover why hundreds of women from the region have been brutally killed for unknown reasons and delves deep into the socio-economic conundrums of the region and the American factories that have sprouted up there, paying workers \$1.90 a day.



Soul lovers can come out of their "Delirium" and snatch Owusu & Hannibal's debut LP *Living with Owusu & Hannibal*. The album by the Danish dynamos will street on October 10th, on Ubiquity Records.

Like a little necrophilia, eh? Get your jollies by picturing sexy chicks who get hot at the sight of

the dead? Well, *Girls & Corpses Magazine* is now on its 11th(!!!) issue and it's never looked better. Featured articles include "Anus Nice...Or Bleaching One's Fourth Eye" and Tiffany Shepis "getting her Yetti sweaty." *American Werewolf in London* director John Landis raves, "Girls and Corpses is the craziest thing..." Don't be repressed. Crack open a cold one! www.girlsandcorpses.com.

Carpetface's new LP *Have Mic Will Travel* is now available on iTunes. The album features legendary beatboxer Audible Porno whose My Space page tells more about this landmark release. <http://www.myspace.com/audiblepornomusic>.



They've trailblazed paths in punk music (there was this band called...

uh...i think it was...Nirvana?), and now they're trailblazing paths in environmentalism. With the move to purchase Green Tags, Sub Pop has become the first record label in the US to be 100% powered by green renewable energy. What that effectively means is that "we are paying the difference between the cost of renewable energy and that of fossil fuel-generated energy, and in doing that, helping to shift the overall energy mix toward more renewable resources." Only makes sense...if our government won't do it...we've always got the record labels!!

If buying a whole album's too much of a commitment for you, then you're in luck because Roman Beats has hooked up some custom *Real Tones*. The catch? You have to have a compatible phone to get these

ringtones. Compatible phones are available at: www.pocketfuzz.com where you will also find the ringtones themselves. If you're not album-shy pick up a copy of Roman's full-length *I'm The Beatboxer, They're The Rappers* featuring Swam Burger, DJ Nes, and Wisney.



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STRAIGHT OUTTA BROOKLYN: STIMULUS

BY: PIERCE JACKSON, PHOTO: PIERCE JACKSON

This October, Stimulus, known for his work in the live Hip-Hop group The Real Live Show walks on stage alone and drops his solo debut, *A Kings County Tale*. Though you might think you've never heard of him, the boy's been working hard. He's shared the stage with artists like De La Soul, Talib Kweli, Redman, Jungle Brothers, Dead Prez, Black Star, Brazilian Girls, Roy Hargrove, Digital Underground, and Wax Poetics among others. *A Kings County Tale* now gives Stimulus a platform to call his own.

The album brings together the diversity of sounds that infiltrate Brooklyn stereotypes from the immigrant communities that make up NYC's most populous borough. "I see the album as a layered narrative," he explains. "It's a representation of the people that inhabit Kings County, the album becomes as cosmopolitan as the city it comes from." Indeed, *A Kings County Tale* is the musicified representation of the word cosmopolitan. Add a kick here and a snare there to get that ole boom-bap, and you got yourself a grassroots city-born sound that's as gritty as the Concrete Jungle itself.

Feel safe to wil' out and have a good time, and simultaneously stay free and clear of the superficialities of the mainstream. Stim's flows paint vivid pictures and tell stories that cover topics like drug abuse, violence, and other issues pertinent to today's communities. As he puts it, "it's hunting season." The album is a product of two years of hard work and features appearances from Steele of Smif - N - Wessun and Boot Camp Clique as well as artists Spagga, Maya Azucena, Natty Bless, Kae Hoc, and Cali Bud.

Before heading to the pad and pen during high school, Stimulus was a DJ first. That's where he formed his first group, Partners in Rhyme, with childhood friends Malik and Nayquan. At Vassar University Stimulus hooked up with producer Mark Ronson and then Paul Nice before heading to Mini-Manhattan...San Francisco. Frisco gave way for Stim to release his first single, "The Master," produced by Nice. Once back in the real Manhattan, Stimulus reconnected with Malik, now Dionysos, and constructed The Real Live Show project. A project originally intended as a reality TV show that followed aspiring musicians later transformed into a weekly East Village party where musicians like Eric Rivas from Branford Marsalis' quintet took part in jam sessions with Stimulus and Dionysos on the mic. (e.g. Stetsasonic and the Roots). "It was a beautiful thing for me to be a part of a large musical and artistic community; it was crazy for me to see people like Damon Dash at my shows."

This fall, as Stimulus gets ready to release *A Kings County Tale*, he will share the stage with Chicago's Lupe Fiasco as well as others. He will also continue to perform with The Real Live Show.

If you still think you don't know who Stimulus is, don't worry; I'm sure he'll find you.

> stimulus-music.com
> myspace.com/stimdash



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**until**
THERE'S A CURE

HOW TO CAUSE A SCENE WITHOUT BEING A SCENESTER

BY: SUSAN HOLLAND

If you have never listened to pirate radio or skulked through a mile of warehouse parking lots in San Francisco to arrive at a garage full of sexy, sweaty dancers you may not know Qzen. Don't let those short bangs and wire-rimmed glasses fool you. Hip minus the "-ster," this woman is crossing scene boundaries and making clubbin' more than a thrift store chic fashion show.

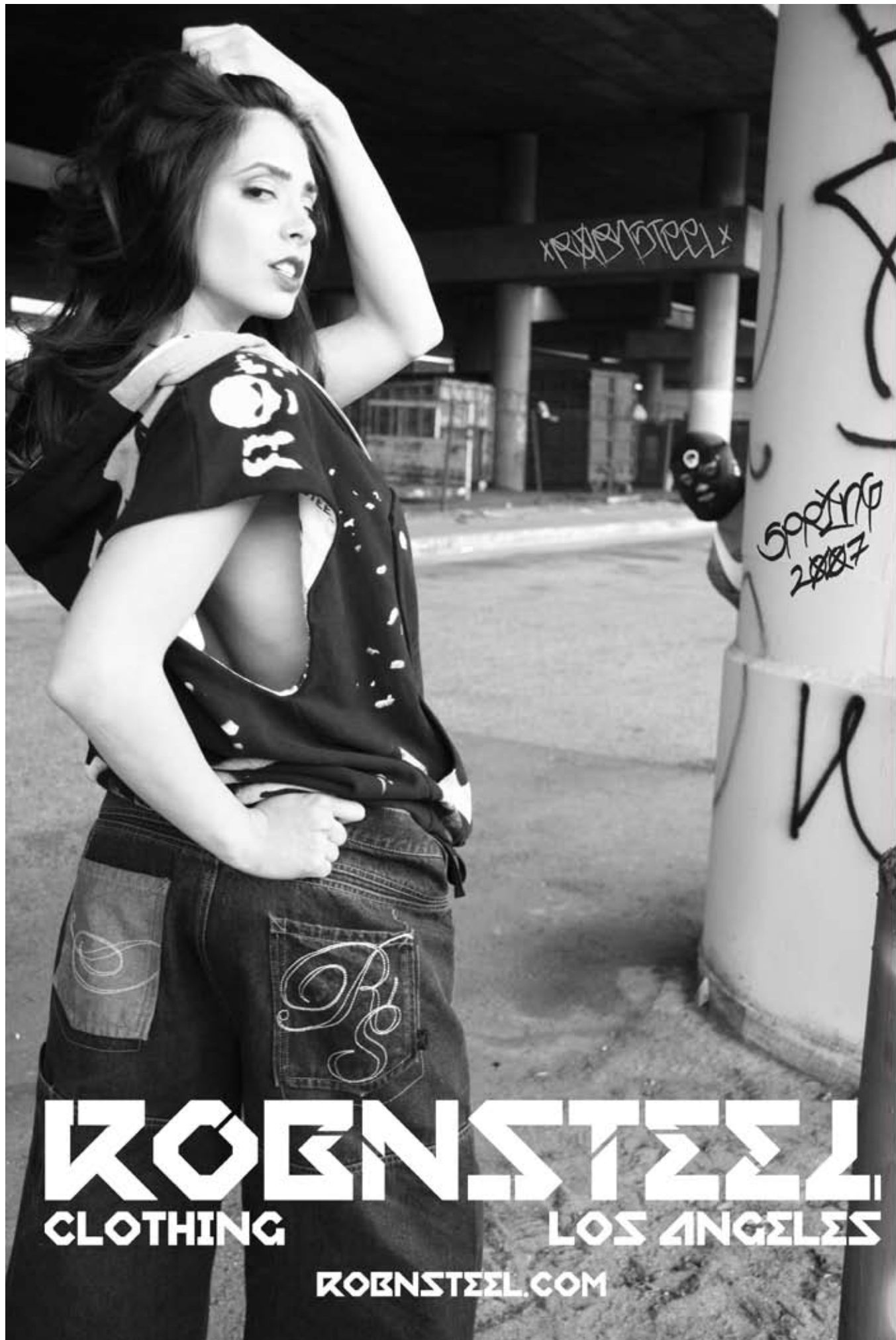
Sitting in her San Francisco apartment of such epic, hardwood proportions that it would make a New Yorker cry, Qzen talks about her newest project, Moxie Musik. Though her roots are in drum n bass, these days you'll find Qzen digging through electro and tech-house record bins and dropping vocals for producers John Tejada and Claude Von Stroke. All the while Moxie's parties are steering San Francisco's nightlife away from Seven jeans, watered-down vodka tonics, and elitism, right back to what started it all: music.

Moxie Musik's sounds are broad and spontaneous. Whether its Qzen or her partner Bryan James playing a new song on their radio show (<http://westaddradio.com> Sundays 9-11pm PST) or dropping a remix so hot it turns faux-hawks flat, Moxie is attempting to bring back the vibe from old rave days. Qzen remembers when "there were no lines between scenes. Everyone had their music but we all loved each other." She hopes that attitude can be resurrected in San Francisco, overcoming the dramatic, scenester element that is plaguing the city's music.

Being a female DJ can come with its own drama. Along with her aversion to a "scene," Qzen steers clear of being the next American Idol. "I'm just not one of *those girls*. I hate shopping for clothes. The only things I shop for regularly are groceries and records." She laughs recalling a local gig, "I was just in jeans and a sweater. I had my hair back and my glasses on. At the end of my set this woman comes up to me and says, 'me and my boyfriend have been watching you spin all night. You look like a schoolteacher but you are fucking killing it!'"

In San Francisco, a city so thick in scenes and genres people can't even eat in a taqueria without being labeled, Moxie Musik is bringing back hope to the nightlife. "It's about having fun," Qzen says. "Moxie attracts people from different scenes that are sick of the drama and just want to have a good time."

> www.moxiemusik.com
> www.qzen.dj



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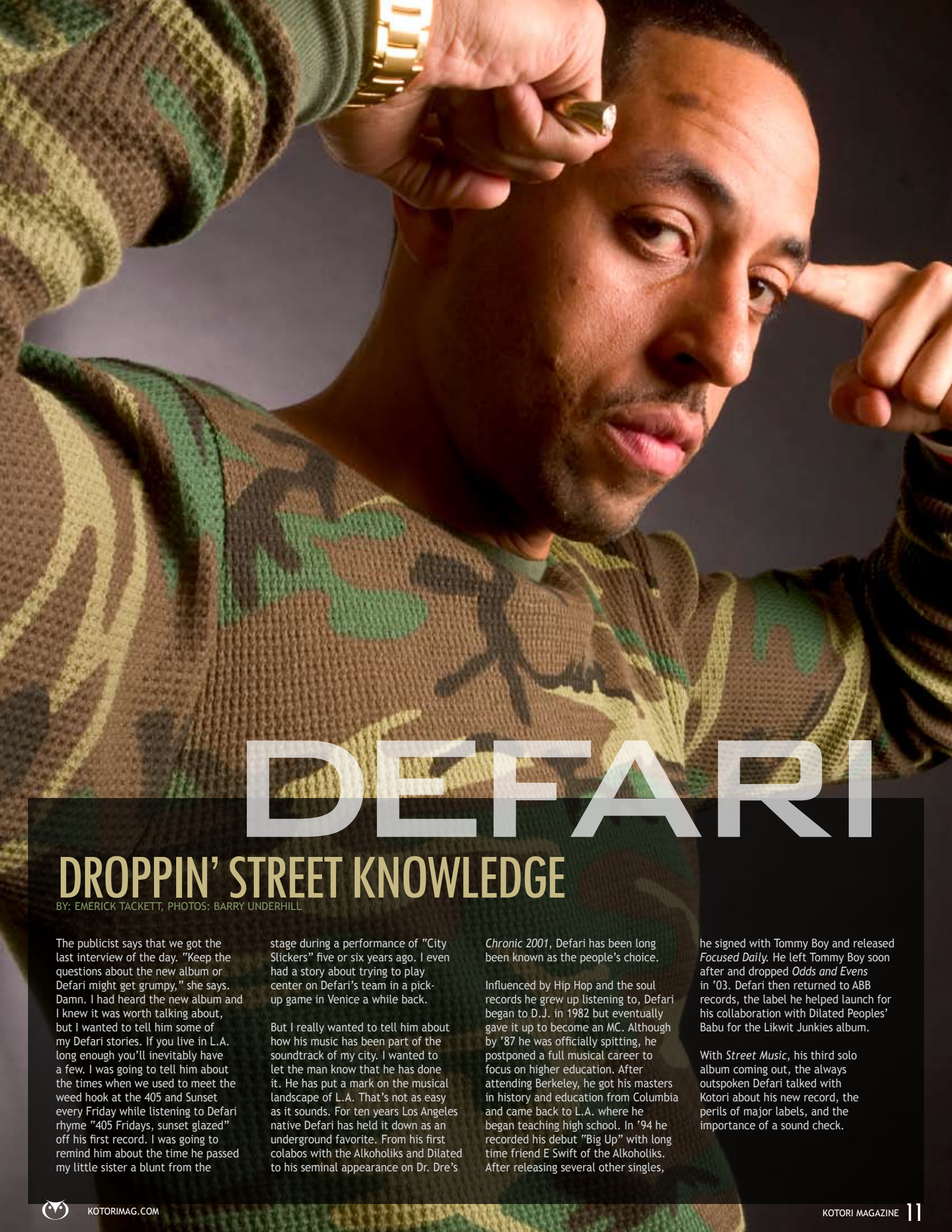
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DEFARI

DROPPIN' STREET KNOWLEDGE

BY: EMERICK TACKETT, PHOTOS: BARRY UNDERHILL

The publicist says that we got the last interview of the day. "Keep the questions about the new album or Defari might get grumpy," she says. Damn. I had heard the new album and I knew it was worth talking about, but I wanted to tell him some of my Defari stories. If you live in L.A. long enough you'll inevitably have a few. I was going to tell him about the times when we used to meet the weed hook at the 405 and Sunset every Friday while listening to Defari rhyme "405 Fridays, sunset glazed" off his first record. I was going to remind him about the time he passed my little sister a blunt from the

stage during a performance of "City Slickers" five or six years ago. I even had a story about trying to play center on Defari's team in a pick-up game in Venice a while back.

But I really wanted to tell him about how his music has been part of the soundtrack of my city. I wanted to let the man know that he has done it. He has put a mark on the musical landscape of L.A. That's not as easy as it sounds. For ten years Los Angeles native Defari has held it down as an underground favorite. From his first colabos with the Alkaholiks and Dilated to his seminal appearance on Dr. Dre's

Chronic 2001, Defari has been long been known as the people's choice.

Influenced by Hip Hop and the soul records he grew up listening to, Defari began to D.J. in 1982 but eventually gave it up to become an MC. Although by '87 he was officially spitting, he postponed a full musical career to focus on higher education. After attending Berkeley, he got his masters in history and education from Columbia and came back to L.A. where he began teaching high school. In '94 he recorded his debut "Big Up" with long time friend E Swift of the Alkaholiks. After releasing several other singles,

he signed with Tommy Boy and released *Focused Daily*. He left Tommy Boy soon after and dropped *Odds and Evens* in '03. Defari then returned to ABB records, the label he helped launch for his collaboration with Dilated Peoples' Babu for the Likwit Junkies album.

With *Street Music*, his third solo album coming out, the always outspoken Defari talked with Kotori about his new record, the perils of major labels, and the importance of a sound check.



“I come in peace and gangsta.”

HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE NEW ALBUM, *STREET MUSIC*, FOR SOMEONE WHO'S NEVER HEARD DEFARI DO HIS THING?

Defari: *Street Music*'s a great place to start cause they gonna hear premium quality Hip Hop at its most banging level. Crispy lyrics. Crispy sound. Some shit that's built for 15s and up. Steroid hop. THX, George Lucas, King Kong hop. Its super.

YOU GOT A SONG CALLED "PEACE AND GANGSTA" ON THE RECORD. WHAT'S THAT ABOUT?

D: There's a little bit of gangsta in everybody out here. I don't bang...but I ain't no punk neither. I come in peace and gangsta. I'll respect you but at the same time I'm a serious dude. It goes hand in hand with "Congratulations." Cause on "Congratulations" I'm saying check this out man, I congratulate you. So just let me live. I got no problem with you doing, so just let me live. "Peace and Gangsta" and "Congratulations" are like brothers on the album.

DOES THAT TIE IN TO THE SONG "CLOWNS?"

D: Look at you. See? See, you doing the knowledge! [Laughs] It all ties in,

man! I think all young artists should know this. You are not making an album for yourself. You're making an album for thousands and millions of people to validate you and your creativity. So you better give them a package that they can jump into and feel a part of. That's what *Street Music* is about.

AND "DEAD OR IN JAIL?"

D: It's satire. It's a sort of funny critique and editorial of the state of the black man and the state of the black community, you know, and at the same time with a serious message and what it's saying is, they're saying we're gonna end up this statistic but we're greater than that, you feel me? We're much greater than that...but it ain't all pretty, you feel me? It's how niggas would be talking out in the street and it's perfect for the record.

AS SOMEONE WHO'S MADE SOME CLASSIC L.A. ANTHEMS, WHAT IS IT ABOUT THAT CITY THAT INSPIRES YOU AND MORE SPECIFICALLY THIS ALBUM?

D: First off I made those songs because that's Hip Hop. If you're not proud of where you from and you don't get your city behind you, then nobody elsewhere's gonna ride for you. Hip Hop is a unique music like that. Second off I love L.A. I love

everything about it. No matter where I been in the world, I always want to come back home. So with my fervor for the town I always feel that I got a lot to talk about it and I want people to know about it. That's my drive.

WHAT DEFINES WEST COAST HIP HOP IN 2006?

D: Dre [laughs], as the Quincy Jones of rap. And super knocking beats that are crispy clear. Defari took that and kept it still Hip Hop though. I'm not all G-funked out which is how we all pegged. And respect and hats off to The Game because on his album he wasn't on G-funk beats. He was opening up people's mind to L.A. is not all G-funk. You can be successful just doing solid banging music. Look at Alchemist and Evidence. These are homegrown dudes. Born and raised, but people will always coin them as East Coast, but it's not even like that. They doing what they do because of what they like. So I think we're opening up people's minds and I'm happy to be a part of that. And I'm even stepping out from my traditional Likwit stuff on this *Street Music* because the sound of the album has its grimy areas, yeah, but it's got the polish. I took it back to (1999's) *Focused Daily*, turned up the burners and I came out the gate on *Street Music* to give

my fans what they been asking for.

WHAT'S IT LIKE PLAYING LIVE IN L.A.?

Is there a Hometown advantage?
D: It always feels the best to play for the town cause they just show me, blind love you know? With this record *Street Music* and with ten years in the game they're starting to give me legendary status.

AFTER TEN YEARS IN THE GAME YOU'VE SEEN A LOT OF PEOPLE COME AND GO. HOW DO YOU AVOID FALLING OFF?

D: Artists who were brought into a major label situation and that's all they ever know, nine times out of ten, when they are dropped, they will fall off the face of the earth. You will not hear from them again because they do not have the baby sitting mechanisms they were used to. The cushions and the support system they were used to. The steady amount of money paying the rent every month coming in.

Artists who came into the game independently like myself, and had an opportunity to be on a major, when they're not on a major anymore, they fall back to what they know best. The independent hustle. And they're able to last in it. The only thing that would drive an indie artist out the game is if

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they just not making no money, man.

In order to be a Professional... that's what we talking about. A professional MC. What does "pro" mean? Pro means you're getting paid for it. Pro means your craft is respected by thousands and millions of people as a legitimate profession. So when the money stops, you know, do you go back to the drawing board? Well, a lot of cats try that but a lot of cats have families, responsibilities. It's kind of difficult to

go back to the drawing board for them.

Lastly, it's your surrounding network of peers, who is around you in this business. I'm good with Cypress Hill, I'm good with Dilated Peoples Crew, I'm good with Likwit Crew. I'm good with Snoopy. I'm good with Dr. Dre. I'm good with the young niggas coming up in the street like Bishop Lamont and The Game. So a lot of their energy keeps me going, and the fact that I can always do shows and people are looking

for my shit is what keeps me going.

If it weren't for my immediate family, Dilated Crew and Likwit Crew, Defari might not still be in the game.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR DEFARI?

D: Working the *Street Music* till the wheel fall off, brother. And we got Likwit Junkies, the next album. We ain't got the title yet but we just started working on that one.

And we got Evidence solo album, *The Weather Man*, coming. I'm on Planet Asia, *The Medicine*, album. Strong Arm Steady, Phil the Agony, Krondon, Mitchie Slick solo album. We got a lot of stuff coming out of the town that I'm real happy about.

> www.defari.net

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Every

Future

Generation



LYRICS BORN

BY: JT TAYLOR

To many, Lyrics born is considered to be the perfect representation of the musical diversity and crossover potential in the ever-changing world of hip-hop. With the success and grounding of Quannum Projects, over ten years of rockin' crowds worldwide, and soon to be four solo releases under his belt, LB isn't showing any sign of slowing down. To prove this, he hits us with his new joint **Overnight Encore: Lyrics born LIVE!**, as he spits; "...it takes everything you got in your heart, it takes everything you got in your soul...." which just happens to be the foremost ingredient for a TRUE artist.

"It's sort of a re-interpretation of my music in a live format. It was recorded from a couple of live shows in Australia and it's the band and I just tryin' to have a good time," he explains. As he raises the bar and pushes the genre to new funk-filled heights, a LB live album was only a matter of time. "All the artists I grew up loving made live albums... everybody from James Brown

to Curtis Mayfield to Bob Marley to The Roots...everybody. I want people twenty years from now or even now, that when they listen to my records, they get a full, well-rounded impression of what I do and that my artistry isn't just limited to the studio."

This cat is as cool as ice, offering a comfortable and relaxed demeanor during conversation while demanding respect in his rhyme. LB has established himself as a precision lyricist and not just an MC but a vocalist which he exhibits time and time again with his melodic verse and flawless breath control that he has developed over the years. When asked about where his left brain is headed in terms of his music, he tells us, "I want to take it to the outer reaches and I think that I'm finally on to something...I've finally hit my stride...I just love doing what I do."

As we come to a close, I ask LB for his final words, and like the chivalrous MC that he is, he responds with "There

are never final words between us."

Phew!

In the meantime, here's some of the intermediary ones:

K: SO THE STATE OF HIP HOP TODAY. WHAT'S GOOD?

LB: What I like about it is that anything goes right now. There was a time when we first started making records and people used to tell us "man, this shit isn't even hip hop, what is this shit?" and all the people on the east coast would be "oh this is west coast shit" and all the people on the west coast would be "aw this is east coast shit", and now, none of that shit even matters. The thing I love is that now, anybody has just as good of a chance of "making it" as anybody else. You ask 10 people what Hip Hop is now and you'll get 10 different answers. It's all very different from each other, so I try to be eclectic and tie so much shit in.

I'm really excited about how Hip Hop is right now, it's really encouraging. But, the other exciting part about it is that you're not dependant on just the radio anymore. With Myspace, the internet and internet radio, Youtube, and satellite radio...I mean it's getting to the point that no single medium is going to control music. It's geared towards the quick spread of ideas and information and that's great for emerging artists who were once so dependant on commercial radio and major distribution. I just wish that mainstream and the radio would reflect that diversity a little bit more.

K: TRUE. NOW GIVE ME THE DIRTY.

LB: The result is that a lot of record stores are suffering but you can get more music than ever. It's kinda sad and I don't like to see it but record stores have a limited amount of space, they can only stock so many records. I love the Ma and Pop record stores and I like certain chains but I think





that the brick and mortar records shops are becoming less and less necessary everyday. I don't want to see anyone go out of business but in the world today you just gotta be flexible, you gotta be able to move.

K: WITH YOUR ROOTS BEING IN THE UNDERGROUND HIP HOP SCENE AND AS YOUR MUSIC IS CURRENTLY GAINING MORE AND MORE NOTORIETY, ARE YOU SCARED OF YOUR SOUND BECOMING "MAINSTREAM"?

LB: Not at all. Quite honestly, I think it's just a matter of time. I've brushed with, and flirted with mainstream

success in the past, you know "Callin' Out" was the number one song here on commercial/alternative radio and has been in commercials and major movies, T.V. shows and so forth. I always new that my music could hold it's own with any of the stuff out here, mainstream or otherwise, the only thing was that you don't always get those opportunities. Artists just want to connect with as many people as they can. I'm not worried about what the rest of the market place is doin', when I make records I take a step back, take a look at the landscape and whatever's missing, that's where I insert myself.

K: HANDS DOWN, YOU HAVE ONE OF THE SMOOTHEST VOICES IN HIP HOP WHICH IS FURTHER EMPHASIZED BY YOUR PRECISION BREATH CONTROL. HOW DO YOU DO WHAT YOU DO HOW YOU DO IT?

LB: I liken it to being like a guitar player or a saxophonist, you just learn how to play your instrument. You learn how to play your way with your own voice to develop your own style. My voice didn't really change till I was like 22, so as my voice changed I adjusted my style to work with it. It was kinda like picking up a new instrument.

K: ARE THERE ANY UPCOMING QUANNUM PROJECTS THAT YOU WANT TO GIVE US A HEADS UP ABOUT?

LB: Well, besides the Pigeon John album that was released in September, my album which is coming out in October, Jole Volarde's solo album, which I'm producing, is coming out early 2007.

> www.lyricsborn.com
> www.quannum.com



THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ART IN OUR SCHOOLS.

NO WONDER PEOPLE SAY
"GESUNDHEIT" WHEN YOU SAY
"TCHAIKOVSKY."

If one were to make a quick list of the world's favorite composers, despite his relatively recent vintage Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky would be on it. After all, he did compose *Swan Lake*, which is perhaps the

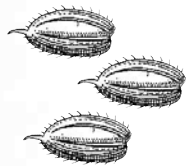


Fig. 1 Pollen

Causes watery eyes. Much like Tchaikovsky's composition "Romeo and Juliet."

most famous ballet of all time. And there can't be more than just a handful of

ballet companies that don't perform *The Nutcracker* every Christmas.

Indeed, this great Romantic composer should be so immortalized. As a young man, he pursued a career in music at enormous personal risk and against his own father's advice. His mild temperament combined with his tendency to work too hard left him with insomnia, debilitating headaches and hallucinations. On top of that, Tchaikovsky's composition teacher never liked his work,



Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky endured many setbacks, not the least of which was a blind barber.

even after he became world-famous.

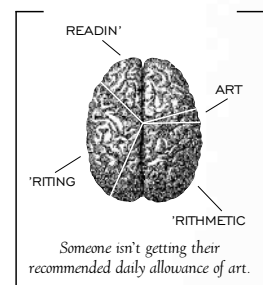
Setbacks like these could have finished a lesser man. Instead, they informed his work, which remains some of the best loved in history. Yet some kids will still confuse Tchaikovsky with a nasal spasm.

Why? Because the arts are slowly but surely being eliminated from today's schools, even though a

majority of the parents believe music and drama and dance and art make their children better students and better people.

To help reverse this disturbing trend, or for more information

about all the many benefits of arts education, visit us at AmericansForTheArts.org. Or else Tchaikovsky could seem like just another casualty of allergy season.

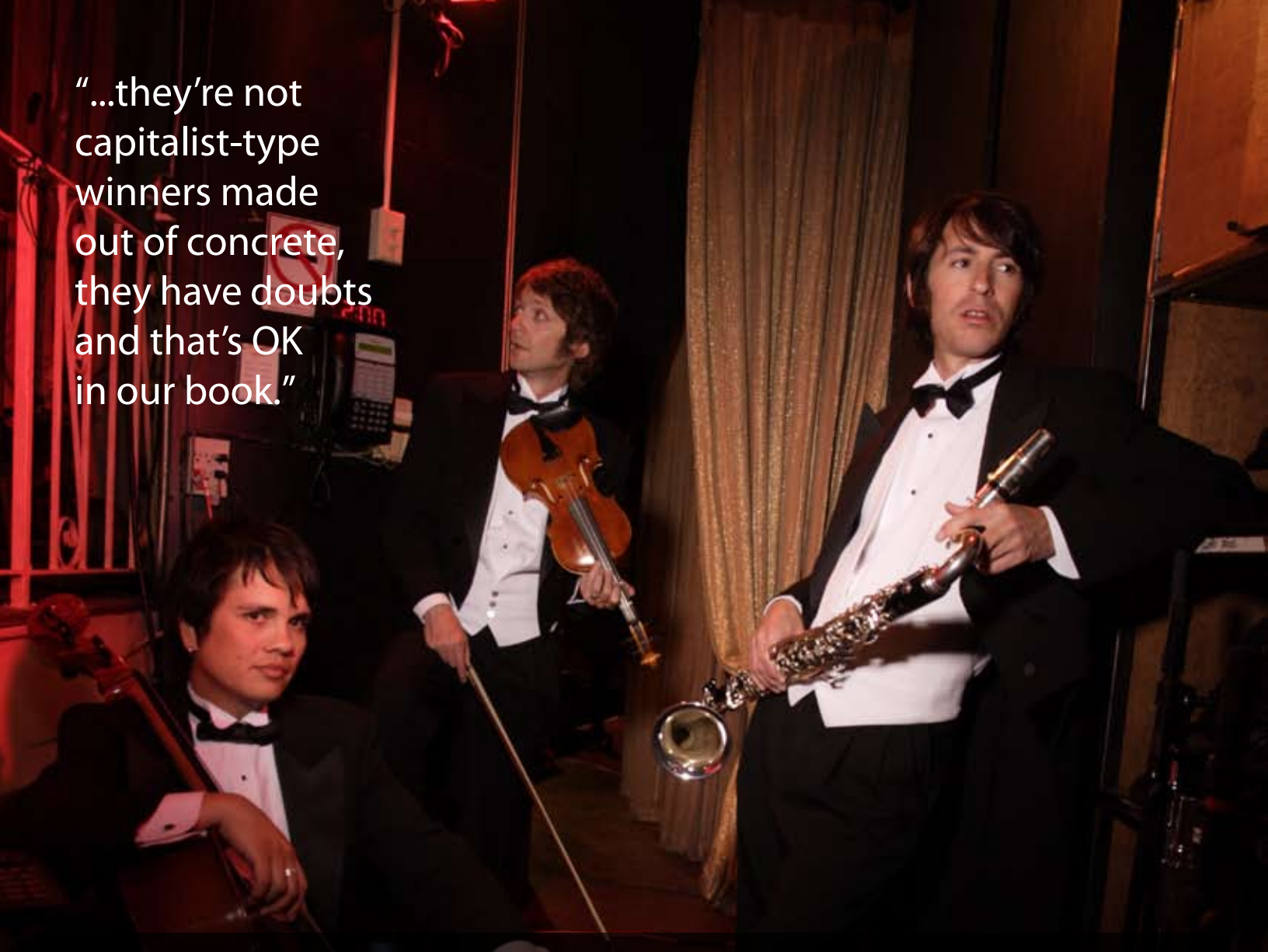


ART. ASK FOR MORE.



For more information about the importance of arts education, contact www.AmericansForTheArts.org.

"...they're not capitalist-type winners made out of concrete, they have doubts and that's OK in our book."



PURE HONEYCUT SOULFOOD

BY: AVNER ISAAC & MIRANDA BURCH

Fronted by the feathery vocals of Bart Davenport, MPC guru Tony Sevens, and French-born keyboardist/sampler Herve "RV" Salters (formerly of General Elektriks), Honeycut are sure to be the new darlings of the electro-symphonic-soul world. The fact that Quannum Projects put out their debut full-length, *The Day I Turned to Glass*, certainly won't hurt their chances. Pleasantly arranged with an array of diverse sounds and layers of energy-laden subtleties, the 'impossible to classify' record employs methods that warrant a healthy wave of interpretation.

As the first track, and inevitable single, "The Day I Turned to Glass" begins its orchestral determination, Davenport's airy pipes, through thick drums, assert "just cause you got a broken toe / don't mean you can't stand up tall." The song's dark strength in violin and hard beats conflict with the brittle implication of the lyrics: "One day I might break." At once accusatory and self-reflexive, the title

track's character demonstrates what RV describes as a quality shared by all personalities the band explores: "the characters in our lyrics are not afraid to expose their fragile sides, they're not capitalist-type winners made out of concrete, they have doubts and that's OK in our book."

"There is a certain cinematic feel to the album," he continues, "so we liked the idea of giving it a title that could also read as a movie title, like a psychological thriller." No cut on the album harkens this cinematic imagery quite like "Aluminum City," which could easily double as the creepy opener for a film portraying circus clowns cavorting in post-apocalyptic New York City with videogame-faced robotic bunnies. Huh? Uh...nevermind.

Seriously tho, Honeycut's distinct sound descends as much from instrumental savvy as from dedicated collaboration between the three musicians. Salter's

esteem for his band mates is evidenced in his description of Tony Sevens, who manages to share "the fluidity of live drumming and the solidity of hip hop programming. [He] also takes that duality to the stage...he plays all the songs on his MPC live, with his fingers...like a drum kit. His beats sound very organic."

Certain tracks, like the jazzy funk cut "Crowded Avenue," showcase Davenport's determined voice, as it flicks back and forth aside the lyrical tenderness of "The Day I turned to Glass," making soulful songwriting no longer a bygone fragile illusion, but rather a matter of "telling it like it is." This fusion fully compels the listener. It's a real soul first experimental soul pop collection. What? That's right!

While Honeycut's catchy, twisted beats and convoluted sonic manipulation defies categorization, Salters revels in the ambiguity: "I'm proud of the fact that

people have a hard time describing it but still seem to be able to latch onto it easily." The album's granite texture merges with a plateau of perfectly timed melodic keyboards that build up and down throughout each composition, in a blink navigating from one aural plane to the next. Declaring an ever-changing array of inner self and expressive essence, Honeycut's meditative inspiration is warmly summed up by Salters: "Anything inspires me...a ray of sun coming through the window, a movie, a sensation, other artists," he explains.

"It's about grabbing the instants when you feel elated and rolling with them."

> myspace.com/honeycutmusic
> quannum.com
> and selected soundbites at kotorimag.com

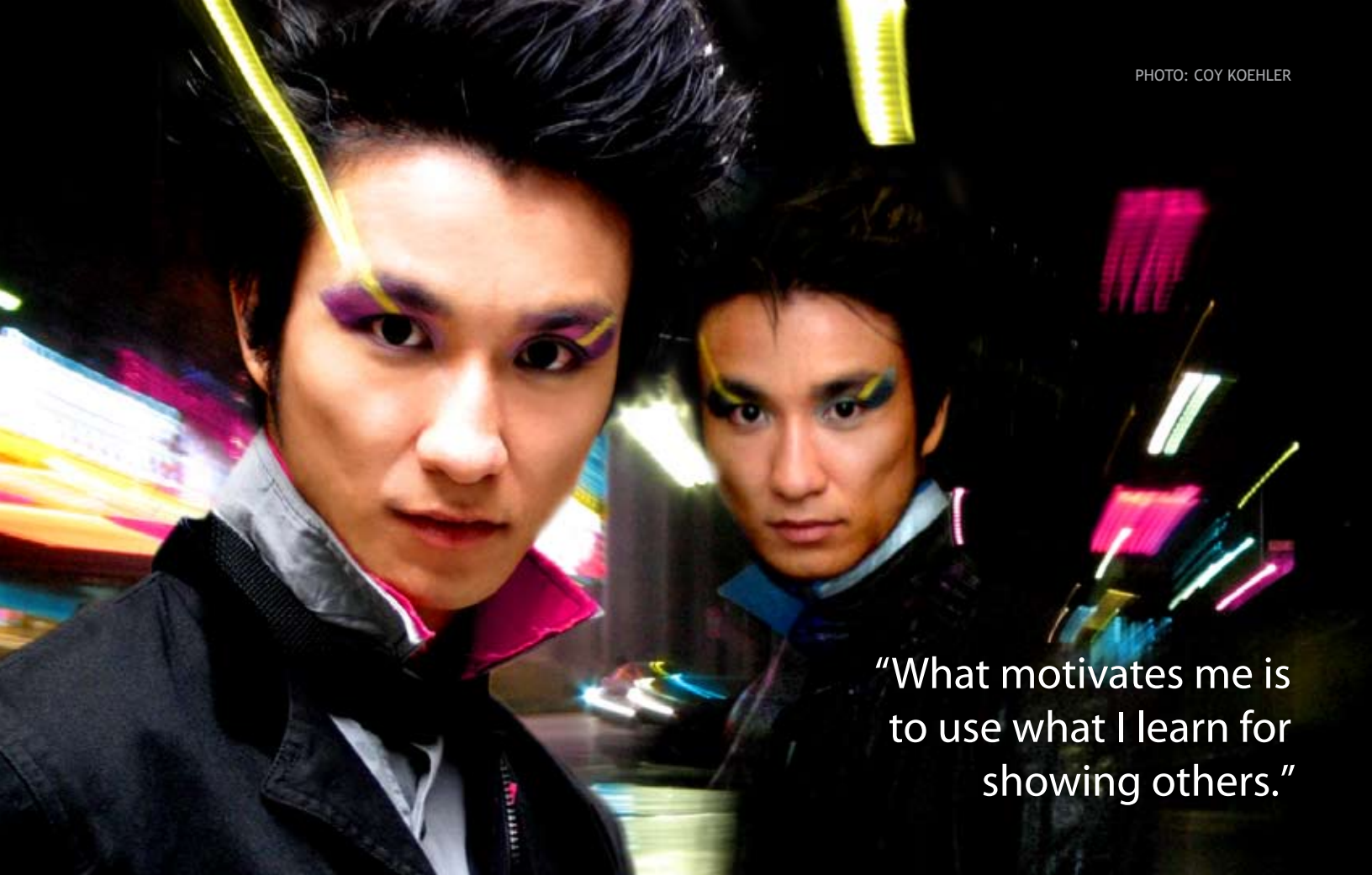
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“What motivates me is to use what I learn for showing others.”

MING & PING

SHOW US HOW THINGS ARE SO BEAUTY

BY: COLE WILLIAMS

When I found out this interview would be going down AIM chat-room style I was disappointed. I love exploring the nuances and subtleties of live inflection and body language; I enjoy the intimacy in it.

However, when it comes to Ming and Ping a chat-room is a lovely approach. Considering that most fans can't stop dancing to catchy, sugar-synth-pop long enough to decide if they are annoyed at the apparent lack of depth and meaning, something as nebulous and stark as the Internet is the perfect compliment to smart laptop new-wave and hip new-millennium robo-chic.

As it turned out, they were human after all. These twin brothers from Hong Kong and San Fran surprised me with warm, lighthearted, thoughtful vibes, flowing beneath a disarming patchwork of English that made me feel a little like I was conversing with intelligent children from a utopian future era.

“What motivates me is to use what I learn for showing others,” types Ping, distinguishable from Ming only

by font. “I mean to tell my friends, don't worry - things are so beauty!”

This might sound naive to the disaffected, but they support these sentiments with inspiring savvy. “I think there is a lot of serious [in our music],” Ming assures me earnestly, “but I also think we embrace things not so seriously like a lot of artists because we really love that ‘bad’ and ‘good’ and ‘serious’ and ‘funny’ is all going to change. Like, we try to show that everything is going to change a lot, so we write down a seriously thing, but we look at it like it is only one thing within one millions beautiful things.”

I like the Ming and Ping sound. I dig retro dance-synth, with the saw-wave, undulating bass-lines and sparkling, hyperactive arpeggios. Those understated, honest vocals over old-school, open/closed-gate beats seem to be saying: Hey, we are just two Asian-American guys who love city-life and electronic music; stop analyzing us and dance already!

And they only get better. Speaking

of their sophomore effort *MP2* Ming says “We really able this time to write better our feelings. I think our first album we are still trying to capture a style...”

“...And on *MP2* we already very comfortable with our style,” Ping puts in. “This make it easier to concentrate on our inside.”

The boys shot me a new, unreleased track - “Let go” - and it is certifiably hot clean fun. “Kind of serious lyrics,” Ming adds. Yeah, and with an energetic melody and absolutely dreamy chorus, it is easily their best and most mature song yet. “We focus on the dance parts of our older songs and use them more this time,” Ming says of the new music. “We actually try to make sounds that have the feeling of our old favorites.”

“This time we look into old records like *New Order Power*, *Corruption & Lies* and *Depeche Mode Speak and Spell*, but we also use influence from like new Madonna CD and new Pet Shop Boys CD. They have the best parties!”

“I think we searching for Asian-American dream!” Ping quips playfully. “One of our favorite artists is Isamu Noguchi, and I think we searching for a little bit of the same thing, which is to do great things and capture many influences, but not lose our culture deep inside.”

Despite the seemingly impassable barrier of electronic disassociation, these brothers come across friendly and engaging, constantly laughing and unexpectedly finding beauty and philosophy in the simplest moments. Their music is fun, reflective, and human.

“We not really rock-star mate!” Ping easily admits. “We make some songs and some arts, and I think when we have some fans it become like a friendship!”

> mingping.com



HOW TO CREATE YOUR OWN DEMO

BY: MIKE AUSTIN OF X-SITE MEDIA LOS ANGELES / X-SITE RADIO

So you and some friends started a band and now is the time to let the world hear it, here's what you need to do.



step one.

Location is key.

Choosing a location to record might not be as easy as calling a studio and booking some time. If your band is low on funds, you will need to take over your parents house or the neighbors that went to vegas. Just ask to feed their pets while they're away. When setting up to record, keep in mind that big rooms are great for drums, and small rooms for everything else.

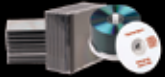


step two.

Equipment is vital.



The better your gear, the better your recording will turn out. If your trying to pull-off a radio-ready recording with a 4 track and Radio Shack® mics, I wish you good luck. If you can obtain some brand-name mics and a way to digitally record your music, your better off. It is better to have someone else not in the band to handle the recording. Some important things to know, when recording using your computer's built-in audio card, your audio recording is limited to 44.1k which is redbook standard for audio cd's, however, when you record at a higher rating such as 48k, your overall recording will have more detail and depth and sound like you spend a lot of money on it. After you have finished the tedious task of recording, it's time for mixing, basically making everything sound even. Followed by mastering. You can use Software or hardware to accomplish this, a Finalizer or Sonic Maximizer will sweeten your audio. Once you have done all you can with your 3-6 tracks of solid gold, its time to burn it to a cdr. At this point, you have 2 options, duplicate a bunch of cdr's and black and sharpie your info on it, or send it to a production house and usually for about \$1000 you can get your cd professionally pressed and ready for distribution, but wait, *you don't have any album artwork.* Let's Make Some. You may download CD Templates from <http://howto.xm.la>.



step three.

Packaging.

When its time to design your demo cover art, you can use stock-photography images or grab your mom's camera and start snappin. Next bring it to a computer and import your photos, logos, and cut-off bat heads. If you don't have a computer, go to Fedex-Kinkos. If your lucky enough to know a designer, the final product will ultimately look sik, but attempting it yourself has its benefits. Make sure that when you create your artwork, your file resolution is 300 dpi or greater with the document color set to CMYK. If you want to post your album cover on MySpace, you will need to convert the image into a 72 dpi, RGB, jpeg file and you will need to convert your audio files to 128 bit mp3's to upload to your website, profile, and xsiteradio.com.

Wallah! - You just created your demo, now get out there and promote the hell out of it.

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CHASING THE BIG STORMS: NORTH COAST UNDERGROUND

BY: JIMMY PARGAS, BOB FREVILLE, WILLIAM VERGIL BROFEE

Life is different for North Coast Underground and as any pimp, pirate or proud Brokebacker will tell you, different is usually better than not different. Port Arena, California, is a magical place, sometimes referred to as Lost Coast or The Emerald Triangle. N.C.U. call it home.

"It's the furthest point west in the Continental United States," the band tells us. "Population 400. 420. Literally, on both counts."

The hub of the herb culture, Port Arena is a place inhabited by artists, growers and environmentally-conscious individualists. "The revolt against genetically-modified farming was founded up here," NCU reports. "And the bio-diesel movement is strong as well. There's a lot of ways to go about life. Openness to race, sexuality, ethnicities and life in general...People are exceptionally

understanding and accepting."

This is perfect for the boys of NCU, as their favorite fun time activities include Moto-crossing through the mountains, chasing the biggest storms through the Sierra-Nevadas, making music, fishing and diving. Not necessarily in that order.

Their sound reflects the climate they spend their time in. "It's organic...live instruments fused with present-day sequencing and sampling. Hip hop, reggae, drum & bass and soul are heavily rooted in our music. We like and listen to it all. It's what has allowed us to get respect from artists as diverse as Long Beach Dub All-Stars, Planet Asia,

Wes Style (formerly of Hed PE), DJ Starscream...and Michael Franti..."

North Coast Underground stress the fact that they are not just a band but a movement. "Music is...our vehicle to bring the message to the people. Bands, DJs, conscious people in general are making a difference everyday..."

NCU regularly play benefit concerts in their hometown and in the Los Angeles area. Their major efforts focus on the youth of Northern California. "The youth is where the change is at and where the biggest difference is going to come from... There's not a public swimming pool for 100 miles up here and we are currently putting some benefits together to build a youth center, to keep kids off drugs,

methamphetamine in particular...Even in Pt. Arena the meth problem is real."

NCU also played a recent Burton Snowboards fundraiser for Chill, their inner-City program for kids at risk. They take 150 kids to the mountains to snowboard every year. It is their uniqueness, both as a band and as concerned and compassionate individuals that make them such a force among the underground circuit, but what really rocks about the North Coast Underground is their choice in fantasy automobiles.

Check out bites of their new album *Cadillac Dreams* at:
> www.kotorimag.com
> www.northcoastunderground.com

**"The youth
is where the
change is at."**



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Pimpin' Life with Katt Williams

BY: BOB FREVILLE

"A pimp is really a whore who has reversed the game on whores."—Iceberg Slim

Katt Williams, the self-styled actor/comedian/rapper of MTV's *Wild N Out*, is much like the pimps of Yesteryear. He is fast-talking, super fly and very sure of himself. He also shares another trait with the street pimps from back in the day—a tendency to only show up when he's collecting money or smacking someone down (if only in the verbal sense).

Williams is not the modern black comedy man folks have come to expect. Much of this has to do with the fact that he does not conform to either the black side or the white side. His *Wild N Out* mohawk, a much-ridiculed feature of certain episodes, and his otherwise perpetual perm, make him a far cry from the less flamboyant gangsta image propagated by latter-day Hip Hop. On the other hand, he is not about to be no Ajax Negro, unlike his *Norbit* co-star Eddie Murphy who has fast become the Colin Powell of actors ever since he learned, with *Dr. Doolittle*, that the real money wasn't in being Raw but being ostensible.

Katt doesn't pander, at least not to anything other than Pimpdom which, while being a lucrative modern trend, is hardly something new in the black world or any other world.

A veteran of the improv scene and a self-made entrepreneur, Katt Micah Williams embodies the success end of the pimp definition. But that's where it stops. "In today's society," he says, "Pimpin' is not about putting women on the street. Pimpin' is about having a mentality that allows you to get paid off of things that are not necessary from the sweat of your own brow. If your manager at your job does less work than you and makes more money than you, that's pimpin'.

"I pimp situations and scenarios, not

women. Everyone should pimp life...that's how people make it in this society."

This makes sense, especially considering that Katt has achieved all of the luxuries of a pimp and none of their flaws. "A pimp was a guy that you always saw dressed nice; he always had a car, he always had money, he always had women. He didn't work a 9 to 5 and, yet, he was successful." This described Katt to the T. Or, in his case, the double-T.

Williams earned his pimp cane with his portrayal of the sawed-off proprietor of *Pimps N Ho's* in the Ice Cube flick *Friday After Next*. But the thing that kept this smooth cat's pimp-hand strong was the surprise popularity of his pimpin' ringtones.

As Katt recalls, "God just blessed me. Urban World Wireless™ had an idea it might work and I was game for it. 896,000 ringtones later, at \$1.99 a piece, and we all look pretty smart!"

In addition to his ever-prolific work in front of the camera and on stage (Katt Williams: Live on HBO), Katt is also busy stretching the limits of

comedy and rap music with a hot new album from Diplomat Records coming out later this year.

Where the "moral" majority of American conservatives ignorantly view pimps as uneducated house niggers that got too big for their britches, Katt Williams is anything but. A devout book reader with a massive I.Q., Katt is witty, astute and well-versed in business. He is dedicated to his craft and says that, "As a comedian, you are a journalist. You see the world and translate it into funny. To listen to the radio, watch the news networks and read the newspaper...that's your job."

When asked if he thinks his father's background as a member of the Black Panther Party had any

influence over his intellectual growth, Katt gave it some serious thought and weighed in. "Not really. I mean, I feel like that power is in my veins, but you have to understand, I was older when I found out and my father was already a prominent member of the Jehovah's Witness Organization. That's what I remember."

It ain't all about slingin' digs, telling jokes or making the scene in Gators for this cat. He is also a doting father. Having a child hasn't aged the energetic comedian any, but it has certainly made him think twice about the consequences of his actions. "As a parent," he explains, "you realize your babies suffer with you and that responsibility changes you."

He takes the opportunity to thank his son Micah for the inspiration he provides. "All I wanted was for him to be cool and the grind made that possible. So I'm eternally grateful to him for making my work ethic what it is today."

Ever pimpin' and never slippin' Katt will be throwing down as "Lord Have Mercy" opposite Eddie Griffin's "Pope Sweet Jesus" in *Norbit*. But in the meantime, in between time, we can all check out his website for the multitudinous invective of his song "Palm Pilot," recorded shortly after hearing half-pint rap group Young Gunz bashing Money Mike.

"Maybe they shouldn't call a comic out next time," Katt says. "I love a battle!"

> kattwilliams.com





THIEVERY CORPORATION

celebrates the turn of a Century

BY: SKYE MAYRING

Look, mom! Up in sky!
Musicians?
Producers?
Revolutionaries?
No, it's Thievery Corporation!!

D.C.'s dynamic duo of world music aficionados, Rob Garza and Eric Hilton, are hardly mortals. Sure, if you caught a glimpse of them roaming the streets of their home base in the nation's capital, you'd dismiss them in their nearly all black attire as a pair of thirty-something Neo-Beatniks. At a glance, you wouldn't figure them owners of their own label, ESL (Eighteenth Street Lounge), which is cranking out their 100th release this month.

They'd probably never tell you about their successful summer tour, including a sold out performance at the Hollywood Bowl, sharing the bill with The Flaming Lips and Os Mutantes. You'd definitely have to conduct your own thorough research to reveal Thievery Corporation's superpowers: fusing the roles of musicians, business men, DJs, friends, collaborators, producers, songwriters, and philosophers. Their arsenal of attributes seems uncanny, but it's their modesty

that makes them superhuman.

"We really don't think about being famous. Music is just about doing what you love and being in the studio," said Garza. "Here in Washington, people are low-key and interested more in politics than music, which keeps us humble."

In 1995, a night of philosophizing and discussing music over cocktails at Hilton's popular bar, 18th Street Lounge, converted two strangers into the team responsible for the declassification of the downbeat genre. Mixing bossa nova, dub, East Indian, and Jazz records, among others, Thievery Corporation envisaged the distribution of their music to be as unrestrained and sophisticated as the music itself. Exactly ten years ago this month, they launched their independent record label, ESL. Despite the increasing workload for Thievery, Garza hopes to celebrate with a massive party for all the label's artists.

Coincidentally, the anniversary of ESL aligns with the label's 100th release, *ESL Remixed*. This compilation showcases tracks composed by various ESL artists

which they or their respected contemporaries rework. Highlights of the compilation include Connie Price's instrumental soul jam rendition of Blue State's "Golden Touch," and Beat Fanatic's delicate layering of swanky house grooves, maracas, and hand drumming on a remix of Karminsky Experience's "Belly Disco." Surprisingly, the less triumphant remixes on the album include those by Mardeski, Martin, and Wood and Louie Vega.

This new release follows Thievery's trend of evolution through collaboration. The success of their 2005 release, *Cosmic Game*, proves partly attributed to the vocals of music industry dignitaries such as Perry Ferrell, Wayne Coyne, and David Byrne.

"Working with different artists who have inspired us, was monumental in our career. I think we've grown more confident with our own skills since *Cosmic Game* because of all the studio time we put in."

With song titles like "Holographic Universe," "Doors of Perception," and "Marching the Hate Machines (Into the Sun)," you can imagine that listening to *Cosmic Game* is

like being trapped in the passenger seat of a beat-up Cadillac, piloted by Hunter S. Thompson, on a psychedelic road trip to the most frightening parts of America. Despite its cross-examining lyrics and entrancing beats, "we weren't experimenting with psychedelics while working on *Cosmic Game*," Garza maintains. "But when I was younger I used to experiment with it a lot more. I think as you get older taking acid and not being able to come down for 8 hours doesn't sound as fun as when I was in my early 20s."

Sans LSD, Hilton and Garza gained inspiration for the album by reading books about the "secret history" of the United States by authors like Jim Marrs, Zachariah Sitchin, and David Icke, in addition to researching such theorists on the internet.

"There's the line [from the song, 'Amerimacka'] that the American Dream is like 'licking honey off a knife.' The American Dream is like honey, but there is a very dark edge to all of it."

Thievery intends to open the minds and ears of their listeners through socially conscious lyrics and varying



styles of music, but Garza has found it increasingly difficult to reach out. He admits to being discouraged over what's happening and doesn't feel that he's as focused on politics, an understandable position especially considering the responsibilities attached to balancing their married lives with the ever mutable demands of their multiple roles in the music industry, while coping with the recent death of their vocalist, Pam Bricker. A respected D.C. jazz vocalist since the early 1980's, Bricker hung herself, at age 50, in February 2005. Thievery showcases her talent on the albums *Riches Man in Babylon* and *Mirror Conspiracy*, the latter of which also features the *Garden State* soundtrack hit, "Lebanese Blonde."

"She is always going to be missed on the tour bus and in the studio. She was an amazingly beautiful and talented person who will live on in our memory. When we play music, we think about her all the time."

Garza's strategy for keeping himself together mentally and professionally is remaining passionate about Thievery and ESL's music. By remaining inspired, Hilton and Garza helped launch the careers of Ursula 1000, Joe Bataan and Ocote Soul Sounds, and Thunderball by means of the ESL label.

One of their most successful acts, Thunderball, is responsible for the guitar and sitar grooves intertwining

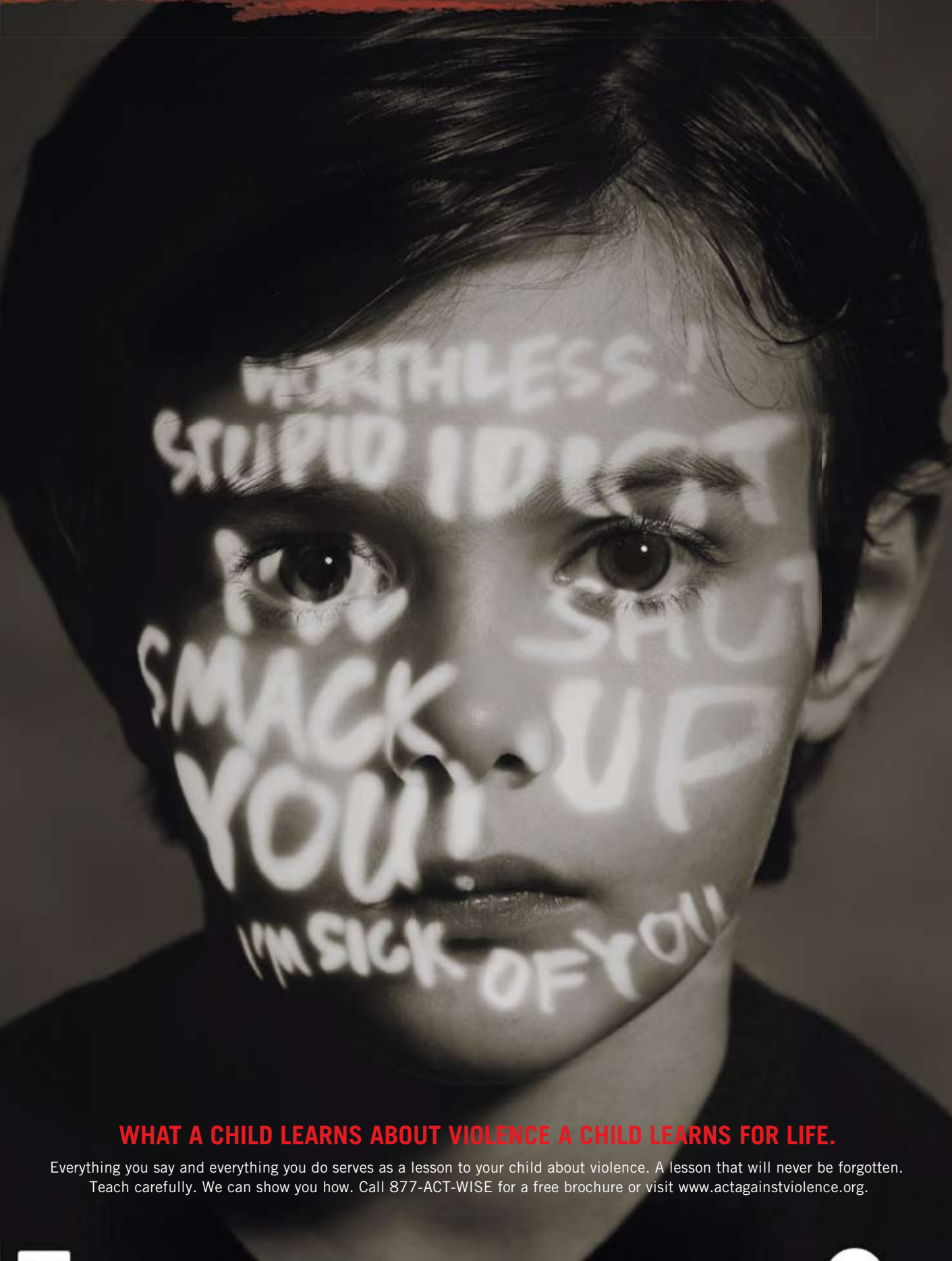
with Bricker's vocals on "Lebanese Blonde." Releasing their 3rd full length album on November 7, this trio of cosmopolitan producers, formed somewhat serendipitously. Before creating the group, Steve Raskin played in an indie rock band and worked in graphic design - his introduction to ESL came when designing the first Thievery album cover.

"We heard the music Steve was working on and liked it so much that we put out a first compilation called *Dubbed out in DC*. We licensed a couple of his tracks and realized that he had a lot of other great material. Thunderball's upcoming release is long overdue. Those guys are top producers and always work with a wide variety of music."

This wide variety of music on the ESL label accounts for its sprawling fan base. People tell Garza that their babies enjoy falling asleep by listening to Thievery Corporation. He even attests to seeing fans in their 70's come to shows.

"I don't think we really try to target anyone in particular. We just try to make music...and music finds its own audience."

> www.thieverycorporation.com
> www.eslmusic.com



WORTHLESS!
STUPID IDIOT
SMACK UP
YOU!
I'M SICK OF YOU

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LET ME REMINISCE OVER YOU - MY GOD!

CL's Still Smooth

BY: PIERCE JACKSON, PHOTO: PIERCE JACKSON

Hold up! Stop reminiscing! He's back. Who's back? CL Smooth. My God!

For ten years we've been left in the dark by one question. With little sense of direction and no one to lead us out of our entrapment we've asked, "where'd CL Smooth go?" Well he's here and he's going to show us the way out with his new album titled *American Me*, an album that focuses on that decade that we're all wondering about and brings to light issues in our own communities much like his records from the past. With the same name implied, smooth cadence, and tricky lyricism, CL delivers the realness like we were back in '92 - Did I mention, he's still got it!

I met with CL up on 134th street in Harlem, New York at the perimeter of St. Nicholas Park to see if I could get a sense of how the Mecca Don has come along during his time away from the rap game. To set the stage or better yet, the street, NYC was sweltering, caught in the middle of a heat wave straight out of a Spike Lee Joint. For an hour we sat, talked, and downed bottles of water to ward off dehydration.

"The album is here to set the record straight," explains CL. "I wanted to right any misconceptions -- any stereotypes that people had about me." And it does. *American Me* comes through like a steam roller. The album begins with a voice introducing C.L. Smooth as our imagined president immediately taking down anyone that might cast doubt on his abilities or choice to come out solo. He straightens it out letting you know that "this the type of heat that makes Pete (Rock) squirm."

"There's so much concentration, so much dedication put into this project. We really didn't stop to smell the roses. It was about let's grind let's really get into this so that after the

smoke clears we can enjoy ourselves and reap the fruits of our labor," says CL. "My process is simple, it's about 500 pushups, and getting myself motivated and spiritually inclined to really go against the odds. Back in '92 we were just happy to be doing what we were doing, getting in the studio and working it out. It's different now we've been here and we're here to really move it out"

For those that don't know, CL Smooth is known for dropping one of the greatest songs known to Hip Hop,

"They Reminisce Over You (T.R.O.Y.)." And not by my opinion alone; "Reminisce" continually makes it onto "best of" Hip Hop charts. The song busted out in 1992, devastating the scene with a sort of Hip Hop nostalgia, and it hasn't

stopped since with its jazzy tones set in place by the other half of the now disbanded "dynamic duo" known as Pete Rock and CL Smooth. If you take a look at the message board on CLSmooth.com you'll find contributors talking about the day they cried when the CL and Pete split.

"I took a lot of time off to reestablish myself to do what I wanted to do outside the music," CL says. "But what made me want to take a break was really the disbandment of my group. At the time I felt like I needed some off time to really get my mind right. To reevaluate what I wanted to do and how I wanted to do it to make sure that when I came back I could really put my all into it."

Between 1992 and 1994 Pete Rock and

CL Smooth had two major releases, *Mecca and the Soul Brother* and *The Main Ingredient*. Before that in 1991 they'd released the *All Souled Out* EP. These contributions wielded tracks like the previously mentioned "Reminisce," "Straighten it Out," "Wig Out," "Take You There," "I Got a Love," "All the Places," and "The Creator" and were eaten up by the growing Hip Hop community.

"What inspired me in the past was the idea of a greater conquest. I saw my music as being a greater platform of success. Since then I've been working hard, enjoying life. Making sure my family's straight making sure the music's good. I'm arranging my life so when I retire I can continue to live the lifestyle I've built."

After the duo split CL made appearances on Rock's solo albums and on tracks by Leela James,

Emanon and others. In 2003 a rumor spread that Pete Rock and CL were joining up for a reunion album but in the end nothing came from that corner. CL did not move on any of his own projects until recently.

"I think people just telling me, 'we need you, we need you, we need you' made me want to get back in the game. And then after a while you got to say, 'well hey man I got to get back in there somehow.' But I want to go through artist development first and go through the stages of writing again and listening to music on an artistic level and just reestablish myself that way."

CL Smooth has returned in full force for 2006. He's performed in shows all over the East Coast, released a

video for the acclaimed street single "Smoke in the Air" directed by the esteemed production firm BinBinHigh, and in January 2006 teamed up with mix-tape king J.Period to put together a compilation of Freestyles called *Man On Fire*. *American Me* succeeded these and took only 90 days to finish. "I don't follow the same methods that I did before because I'm dealing with a much wiser, more mature mind," says C.L. in response to how quickly the album was recorded. "Things are a lot more calculated in my approach, in the formatting in the delivery. Back then ('92) sometimes it would take me a whole day to do one verse. Now I can write at least one song per day. I've been able to turn my process of writing into a science, I've learned how to tap directly into that source. And that only comes from working hard to perfect it."

"Inspirations for this album came from the deaths in my family. The tragedy of my grandfather was a great artistic and personal inspiration. Losing my uncle Doc (the greatest), my mother's brother. All those losses had an effect on me and I needed to put it into the music." When you listen to this album you can really hear the effects of time on someone in a positive way. CL follows the same recipe when it comes to writing; he mixes his life and politics with world play. You can sit and relax to his flow and absorb more than you realize. "I'm covering an inside look on the ten years that I was off. A song like 'Call On Me' off the album show people how you grew up, and all the things you lost in life. Topics like the way people can lead you down a path to destruction. Things I learned all through life, I put it in and I live all my music."

> www.clsmooth.com



reasons to like

BY: THE FORTRESS OF AWESOME (HOD)

tool

...an interview with justin chancellor

They're a prog-metal band that's not missing the point. They don't try to make a song fit a plan. It's not a task. It's not equations. It's not a miracle of symmetry.

"Sometimes you do tend to start at one point and end up somewhere completely different. And sometimes you end up completely scrapping that, and go back. I find when we go back and try from the same point each time, it almost has the same consequences, if it doesn't work it doesn't work. I think it's more the case that we keep going until we end up in this completely different place. Then you don't even need to go look back. It's almost obligatory that you have to be completely selfless about it. And allow everyone else to take your idea and tear it apart. And experiment with that, and the end result is normally you do end up with something you never thought existed. But your idea that you were so precious about actually became something better than you could hope."

They understand how important contrast is, in their albums, in their songs, and in their life. Justin sails. Adam animates. Danny loves basketball. Maynard grows grapes, shows up in dumb comedies, and is in a pop band. You wouldn't catch any other prog singers dead in a pop band.

"Once we finished our last tour, we went our separate ways. Obviously getting out of each other's hair for a year. We did other things. Played with other people, travel. I learned how to sail, went on a few trips. The personal interactions with everything you do is probably the most influential thing in your music."

They write albums, not songs.

"You know, we'd like you to download the entire album and the artwork, and somehow make that work so that somehow you are presenting what you want to present in the right way, instead of kids picking and choosing bits of the album and missing the point of why it's all been put together. We'll have to deal with that content, but we aren't just going to dive in and do it the way everyone else is doing it, we want it to be right for us, then it will be worthwhile doing."



They're like the Rumplestiltskin of Badass. They weave prog-metal nonsense into badassity.

They spend a long time writing their songs, just like every other prog band in their class, but for different reasons. They take themselves to an emotional place, and take you there with them. They take exactly what you feel, and make poetry out of it. And it's not just the lyrics. The musical parts are like a symphony. Even if you don't know what he's singing, and don't have the musical ear to distinguish between the four completely different pieces of music they're playing at the same time, it still hits you like your life just changed.

"So it started out that way, it was really complicated, it got really complicated, we spent months like, turn again try here, get the old blackboard out. You know trying to figure it out; we got stuck, to be honest in the middle of it. We put it aside and working on something else, then one day someone had a clue and we tried it and it worked and we found we were nearly at the end of it. It was a pretty, that was a hard one to pull off, but it came out really good."

> www.toolband.com

They don't care if you get it. You can't talk someone into liking tool. You can only listen them into it. It's like a test: if they're a cool enough person, they will like tool.

They have a sense of humor. For example: who would win in a fight to the death between a silverback gorilla and a kodiak grizzly bear?

"Silverback gorilla. Yeah."

They have amazing lyrics. Most songs you hear on the radio, you dread to learn the lyrics. You spend your whole life being disappointed by lyrics. In tool, the lyrics make the songs better.

"We start adapting, once we start to hear the lyrics as well, there'll be little highlights in little areas, whether you change what you're doing just to accent what he's added to it. This album is, the writing is, much more involved with all four of us there most of the time. *Lateralus* is more the case that we did a bunch of music then Maynard came in and added his thing on top of that. This one is a little more integrated this time. It sounds better to me. It sounds like everything communicating with each other."

DOUGLAS BRINKLEY:

"You Just Gotta Believe in People"

BY: JAKE MCGEE

In 2004, things got real ugly in Ohio. Considered a powerful "swing state" in the presidential election, Ohio's electoral process was guided by Secretary of State Ken Blackwell. As Chief Elections Officer, he was the overseer of the rules that guided the elections that year in the Buckeye State, and it were up to him to ensure that the election was carried out fairly.

Funny thing was, he was also the co-chair of the Committee to Re-Elect George Bush in Ohio.

In the months leading up to the election, Blackwell set forth a mess of rules governing the voting, from insisting that only registration cards on some archaic, 80-lb stock would suffice, to throwing all kinds of stipulations on provisional ballots, going so far as to say that if you were new to a town, and voted in the correct room of the right building in the right city, but had been guided to the wrong table, your vote wouldn't count.

Clearly his tactics were meant to confuse and ultimately disenfranchise voters from turning up at all, particularly those who had to

already go to extra lengths to cast their ballots. And not many people seemed surprised that when Ohio was one of the deciding factors to the ultimate election results, it went to everyone's favorite bitch, G.W. Bush.

It was corruption at the highest levels, and it worked in spite of public outcries. Now that Blackwell is running for Governor of this muggy state, it really seems pointless to even bother voting, as many people here feel that, despite the polls saying he's behind, this "election" has already been bought and paid for by the Powers That Insist on Being.

However, historian Douglas Brinkley doesn't see it that way, and points out all elections aren't just for the President. "Most elections take place on a local level," Brinkley reminds us, "and most of those are undisputed, meaning there's clarity, a clear victor. It's the minority of elections that have potential illegality attached to them."

If anyone would have a lucid view on the basic functions of the United States, it would be Douglas Brinkley. Considered in many circles as the

nation's top historian, he's made a reputation for himself of knowing the Real about how this country operates, so much that he serves as director of the Theodore Roosevelt Center for American Civilization (and Professor of History) at Tulane University. Several of his books have ended up on the *New York Times*' best-seller list, with titles like *Tour of Duty: John Kerry and the Vietnam War* and, more recently, *The Great Deluge* causing beautiful stirs.

"We're nothing of a country if we don't guarantee that our electoral process is on the up-and-up," he notes. "There's nothing that will corrode our civic spirit more than people feeling that things are rigged. It's been one of the problems of the last two presidential elections, in Florida in 2000 and Ohio in 2004. And we haven't been able to demonstrate in a clear, scientific, unambiguous fashion that polling was done properly, and that the vote tally was accurate. And that's a devastating syndrome for any democracy, when people start questioning whether their vote matters.

"So, the more consciousness you can bring to these issues, the more safeguard measures, the more security measures... The problem is, like in Ohio, where the Secretary of State determines where polling places are, people can be disenfranchised just by not opening enough polling places. We've gotta find a way to have a national standard, and have enough voting booths per capita, so large urban areas where it's harder for transportation for people to get around, you don't have to go half-way across the city grid just to cast a vote.

"Anything that we can do to keep the media on it, trying to keep it honest, and punish people that we feel are cheating the process, is essential for our future."

So when it comes to Blackwell, Brinkley says, "I think it's gonna be fair; I don't think he's won this election yet. The problem is, people are so busy, it's hard for them to micro-follow everything going on in politics, so it's about local accountability. The Ohio media needs to have people who understand what the situation is.

"But if you mention his name right now, I don't think it has a positive connotation nationally. The guy's big problem is- he's got so much going for him, in the sense of an African-American in the Republican

Party, and obviously an articulate and shrewd guy- but he has the taint of scandal around him, and that's gonna turn a lot of people off in this election. Some of these guys are big stars of the Republican Party, they overreach, and they burn themselves. He's right on that cusp right now.

"Most normal people don't like the concept of our electoral politics being rigged. And you just gotta believe in people."

The hope, it seems, is that people will dismiss notions of unstoppable abuse of power, take the time to find out what's going on in their communities, and cast their votes. Maybe if enough people do that, we can manage to get vermin like Blackwell out of power, not just in Ohio, but all throughout this fine country. Who knows? Maybe eventually, we'll even have the option to vote for candidates representing some genuine, progressive points of view.

"I think we're controlled by two parties," adds Brinkley, "and it gets harder and harder for third party candidates to have a voice in this country, and to me it's a disturbing trend. We're in a crisis where our two political parties are giants, and they'll squash any third party effort.

"But there's clearly a public appetite for a third party. We've seen when there's a strong third party candidate, and the race between Republicans and Democrats nationally is 50/50, an independent candidate can turn the election. Meaning, if the Republicans nominate McCain, it's very plausible that an extreme conservative, pro-life candidate can come and take 5% of the vote and turn the election to the Democratic candidate. We saw what Ralph Nader's done from the Left.

"So there's still power in those candidates. On one hand, the laws make it very hard for a third party to gain traction. On the other hand, when one does with a 50/50 split between the Democrats and the Republicans, you can't say they're not having an impact."

Which goes back to local elections, and why they are so important. Change the laws, the rules of play, and then we can change who's in control. Or at least try to.

> www.thegreatdeluge.net



“Most normal people don’t like the concept of our electoral politics being rigged..”



RALPH STEADMAN



PHOTO: ANNA STEADMAN

“A Morbid Curiosity to Create one Sonofabitch
Drawing that Explains the Meaning of Life”

BY: JAKE MCGEE



"I remember the waiter bearing down on our table and Hunter on his feet; a black tube and a fine hissing sound. My eyes began to sting violently and I stumbled up, grabbing my sketchpad. I remember eyes staring from all directions, from dark corners of the restaurant, as we made for the door to the street. The fresh air hit me and eased the pain in my eyes and on my skin." [Ralph Steadman, from *The Joke's Over*]

And so began the legendary collaboration between Ralph Steadman and Hunter S. Thompson, the spawn of what's become known as "Gonzo Journalism," as Steadman reflects from May, 1970. It was his first time in the United States, and a magazine called *Scanlan's* had sent him to meet Thompson in Kentucky, where they'd cover the Kentucky Derby.

From the onset, it was never meant to be a normal gig; Thompson had just published *Hell's Angels*, and now was looking to go back to his hometown, to write about the depravity of the locals who gathered every year for the Derby. But he needed art for it, something that would capture the true humanity of the scene at its

ugliest and most frighteningly raw.

Up to that point, Steadman had been doing cartoons - generally political satire - for a handful of British publications, namely the London *Times* and *Private Eye*. A book of his collected drawings had recently gone to print, *Still Life with Raspberry*, which is what grabbed the attention of the editors at *Scanlan's* to begin with.

Of course, Steadman claims that his "gonzo" efforts started long before he met with Thompson on that fateful day, he was just looking for the right time and setting to unleash all the strangeness of being he had in his Welsh head. "I have located the tenuous hint of gonzoic frenzy I was looking for inside the stylistic variations of my work," he notes in *Gonzo the Art*. "I have uncovered the print of a drawing, the footprint of my future, my nemesis. It bears the flaw of immature work, the bloodline. The figure of a woman shop assistant demonstrates the schizophrenic tendencies present in my drawings of the early sixties when I worked for *Private Eye*. I am expressing the state of my subconscious. My apparent desire to conform was the trick. This

drawing is the birth of GONZO in my work - a dispassionate statement of fact intended to elicit uncomfortable laughter - its ruthless portrayal a gentle assassination of the subject in a spat of ink...I am a kind person but outwardly I project a volatile disposition, a lonely soul at peace with the forces of huridomidomatonomic slavery..."

Wherever this "gonzo" spirit generated, the drawings he produced of Derby fans in wretched, chaotic debauchery broke mad ground, and tore open the farce behind which hid the rotten underbelly of the American Dream. "The Kentucky Derby is Decadent & Depraved" is tight with brutal prose dripping with blood, telling of a vile scene which has since been taken as a metaphor for mainstream American culture. Equally so, the art that makes the piece stand out is wild and grueling, but there is a genuine, almost naïve yet poignant sense of humanity beneath it all, like something has been lost with a lust for money.

It was the start of a legacy, a great partnership that defined not only a new form of journalism, but a viciously righteous form of expression. Throughout the following 35 years,

Steadman and Thompson produced a plethora of monumental works. Many began as magazine articles, most strikingly "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas," the infamous story which initially graced the pages of *Rolling Stone*, was then published in book form (and eventually considered one of the most important pieces of literature from the 20th Century), and ultimately became the classic film.

Steadman may be best known in the U.S. for his ink-splattered illustrations - sorry, *drawings* - that go along with Thompson's work, but he is so much more than that. Indeed, it could be argued that Thompson fed off of Steadman just as much as Hunter accused his ole' chum otherwise. Behind all the fighting earwigs, one-legged politicians, remarkable gluttons, emaciated marathon runners and rabid mongrels, there is an inveterate sense of life screaming from within, whether it be nice or mean.

When I managed to catch up with Sir Ralph, he asserted, "I hate violence, but I love trying to encapsulate it in a drawing. Nobody gets hurt but they know who they are!"

HUNTER THOMPSON (BACK TO CAMERA), WITH STEADMAN ON THE ROAD TO DEATH VALLEY, DURING THE SHOOT OF *FEAR AND LOATHING ON THE ROAD TO HOLLYWOOD*. CIRCA 1977





Avaricious tyranny gets no break as far as Steadman's concerned. "I see no reason to be fair to a bastard." As for the money-hungry curs of the corporate world trying to squeeze the life out of art, he says, "they always did and they always will. You are referring to the living dead who only have one priority and goal in life. If nature didn't remind them they wouldn't even take a shit. They are full of it anyway and right now corporations are manipulating the Bush administration."

"There is every point," he adds, "in continuing to exercise the democratic process in spite of those who would abuse the system. It will not always be so, even though this present incumbent has taken us to an all-time level of dishonesty, stupidity and greed."

In between gigs with Thompson, Steadman established himself as a premier artist, arguably the greatest alive. His images of humanity lost and

a world in turmoil invoke stunning ripples through the beholder, and his work has become widely demanded. Not only has he done countless pieces for the likes of *Rolling Stone* and *Vanity Fair*, he was also tapped to illustrate several influential books, such as Ambrose Bierce's *The Devil's Dictionary*, and the 50th Anniversary Edition of George Orwell's *Animal Farm*.

He is an artist in the purest sense. When talking about Thompson's cat Jones in *The Joke's Over*, he says, "I needed to capture something of him [Jones], and the best way I know how is with a few direct lines, straight from the eye through the mind to the hand. The result on paper can be fiendishly perceptive or hopelessly inaccurate, but it is always an intriguing and playful possibility."

Animals can be used to deliver a commanding image, especially when Steadman is at the pen. In 2004,

he donated a piece to PETA, which displayed a tortured lamb on a cross, and it is an urgently painful thing to look at. The point was to protest inhumane conditions that sheep are subjected to in the procuring of their wool, and the point slams home like a kick in the bullocks.

The recurring theme of humanity in his work also shows up in his passion for other socially relevant causes. In 1994, he illustrated the front and back covers of Amnesty International's *Drawing Blood*, and in 1998 he did a series of drawings for the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, celebrating its 50th anniversary of passing. They even had him write the introduction, wherein he stated:

"I have the right to hold an opinion, express it, celebrate it, broadcast it, live by it, and travel with it anywhere I so desire and what's more convince others, by peaceful means, that

they should hold that opinion too."

"That in essence is Article 19 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and entombed within it is the right of any artist of any faith, impulse or inclination to express him/herself with unbridled passion and conviction sufficient to bestow upon the world a Pandora's Box of riches or curses we could probably live without..."

He continues, "Article 19 is obviously a dangerous one amongst twenty nine other equally important human agreements, but it is probably the one article which keeps well hidden within its carefully unbiased structure the undeniable fact that its content releases the power of the individual to be both artist and maniac. The 1948 United Nations Assembly had unwittingly created a monster, an embarrassing loophole, a well-meaning but desperate humanitarian gesture. In their earnest intention to neutralize

any future tyranny in the shadow of the recent Holocaust freedom of communication was paramount."

On a somewhat lighter note, he also illustrates labels for various wines, and most prominently, for all the Flying Dog beers. "Hunter was asked to write a slogan for George Stranahan's brewery Flying Dog," Steadman says. "He came up with 'Good people drink good beer.' Then I was asked to supply the label.

"The beer was called Road Dog Ale. A Road Dog is a prison cell mate. So I added another slogan which suited the rough nature of the image- 'Good Beer. No shit!' They used it and it was taken through the Colorado courts to get it removed. However, they won the right for it to remain. They had started to declare 'Good Beer. No censorship.' With the reprieve they re-instated the 'Good Beer. No shit.'

In addition to being a sensational artist, he is a profound writer. His books cover sundry topics, from wines of the world, to Leonardo da Vinci, Sigmund Freud, and even God. "My book The Big I Am," he tells us, "is my version of God and why he is so vindictive. It's a long story of course but it does explain a lot of things. It would be nice to think that this nice guy was looking after each of us personally, but I think that is our egos talking. But in nature there are so many mind-boggling clues like the persistent perfect numbers of proportion that give us the golden section which the Greeks relied on in their Architecture. You can read about that in Dan Brown's The Da Vinci Code, but you would be much better off with mine!"

An outspoken critic of environmental abuse, he also wrote "Plague and the Moonflower," a play about the struggle for environmental survival in the current climate of greed-spawned pollution, and the overall apathy of the general public. It was adapted into a live performance, and earned rave reviews wherever it touched down.

He approaches writing like any other art, and it runs just as well as the rest of his work. So, when Dr. Thompson shot himself on February 20, 2005, it was pretty much a given that Steadman would deliver a memoir of his relationship with Hunter. Who best to write about Thompson than the man who worked intimately with him throughout his illustrious career?

"For nearly thirty-five years," he writes of Thompson in The Joke's Over, "I have endured, after unwittingly agreeing to meet him on his home turf, one of the most wanton, rebellious, dangerous and perfect creative collaborators I could have teamed up with, and a God-awful lot more he should have answered for. Instead, the cunning bastard checked out before he had to, leaving behind a battlefield of unexploded land mines, unused ammunition, guns,

powders, slaves, several bottles of the cheapest whiskies a self-proclaimed connoisseur would ever want to be seen dead with, uppers, downers, loofahs, quaaludes, a treasure trove of hilarious prose...but he left it to others to clear up the glorious mess."

I asked him about Hunter - actually, I asked about his thoughts on suicide, which he apparently took to mean in relation to Hunter - to which he answered, "Hunter did what he had to according to his philosophy of life - Buy the ticket. Take the ride. He

many mad bastards in the world but Hunter was not one of them. He loved the idea of law-abiding citizens and fought for their right to live so. I criticized him when I think he deserved it and applauded every goddamn good thing he did in his life. Criticism is an act of love and concern far more than it is a grudge."

The Joke's Over is, indeed, an incredible and insightful book. It's tender yet blunt, pulling no punches as Steadman details his life with a true American visionary. It works as a

tale with claims that their genius far surpassed the subject's. Steadman does neither, and while he does occasionally gripe about things like lost money and recognition, it's done in a loving and generally humble manner, making The Joke's Over the most touching and astute account of Thompson thus far in print. And, of course, it's chock-full of glorious art from Steadman, detailing in his best way what it was like to work and hang with the Good Doctor.

Steadman is now at a point in his life and career where his mark is already made deep in the Path of Human History, a living legend whose work is on par with the likes of Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dali, and Vincent van Gogh. Through the years, art has grown "more personal and far more interesting," he says, "because I can do absolutely what I want even if it is not half as good." What drives him to keep it up is "a morbid curiosity to create one sonofabitch drawing that explains the meaning of life."

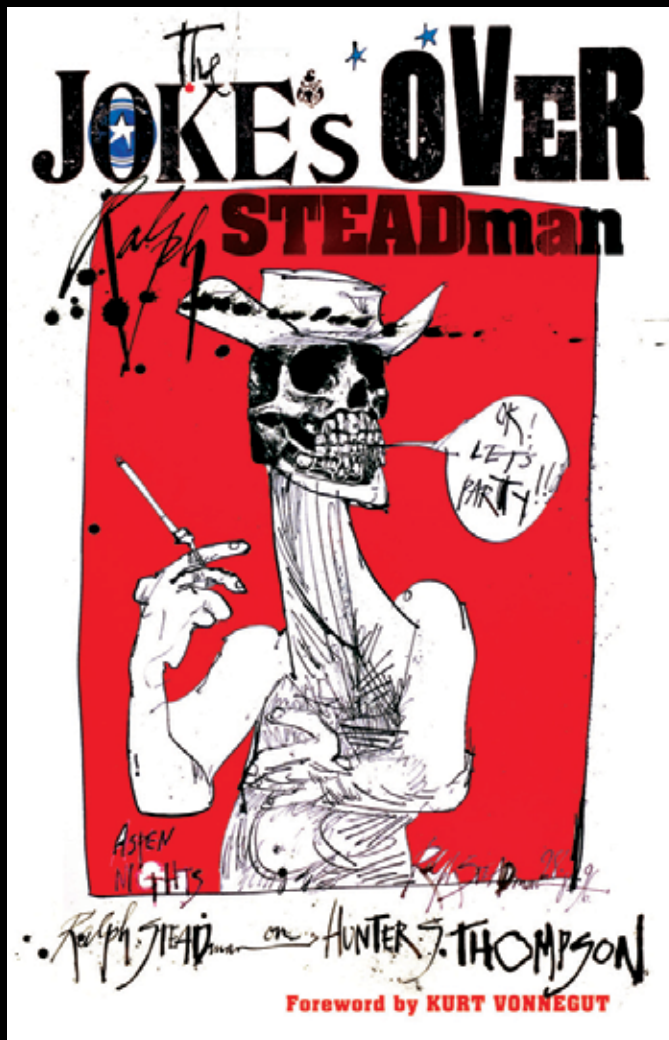
In The Joke's Over, he writes, "...beware of privilege. It stinks of rotten fish-heads..." Now that he's known around the world as one of humanity's most brilliant creations, he could surely be considered a man of privilege - so I naturally asked him to therefore describe how he smells. "If I took myself seriously," he responds, "then I would be in danger of smelling putrid. But I don't so I just smell like a leery ole man and only really smell when I fart."

Even in spite of what some see as the destruction of creative expression by popular culture - with all its phoniness and shallow entertainment - Steadman is quick to demand that we "have more faith in young people. Their unflappable enthusiasm for change will occasionally throw up some wonderful manifestation of something equally as wonderful and inspiring as went before."

Steadman has no desire of bouncing into the ether anytime soon, and he will continue to produce some of the most thought-provoking, creative, and downright honest art this world has ever seen. "It would be a shame to stop now just when I am beginning to enjoy myself."

How does this prestigious artist avoid burning out, like so many others? "I wet myself," he declares.

> The Joke's Over: Ralph Steadman on Hunter S. Thompson is now available.
> www.ralphsteadman.com



had decided on his own terms that he had reached the point where he could confidently say that it was the death of fun. And that in spite of the fact that he had a beautiful young wife Anita, a sober son Juan who had a good wife Jennifer and a great grandson Will who Hunter insisted must refer to Hunter as ACE! Maybe things were just too good around him and he felt strangely excluded."

When asked about the book itself, he responded, "Christ! I really don't want to write it out all over again. I surprised myself and I found that I can write better than Hunter would ever give me credit for. There are

general timeline, beginning with their original Kentucky encounter, streaming through the Watergate era of the mid 70's, the weirdness of the 80's and 90's, and the "downward spiral of dumbness," Hunter's reference to American society in this new Millennium. It flows seamlessly from hysterical (like his account of covering the America's Cup, which was also Steadman's first and only experience with powerful hallucinogens), to utterly tear-jerking, when he talks about the loss of his dear friend.

When most folks put out this kind of book, the author either kisses the subject's ass, or they override the



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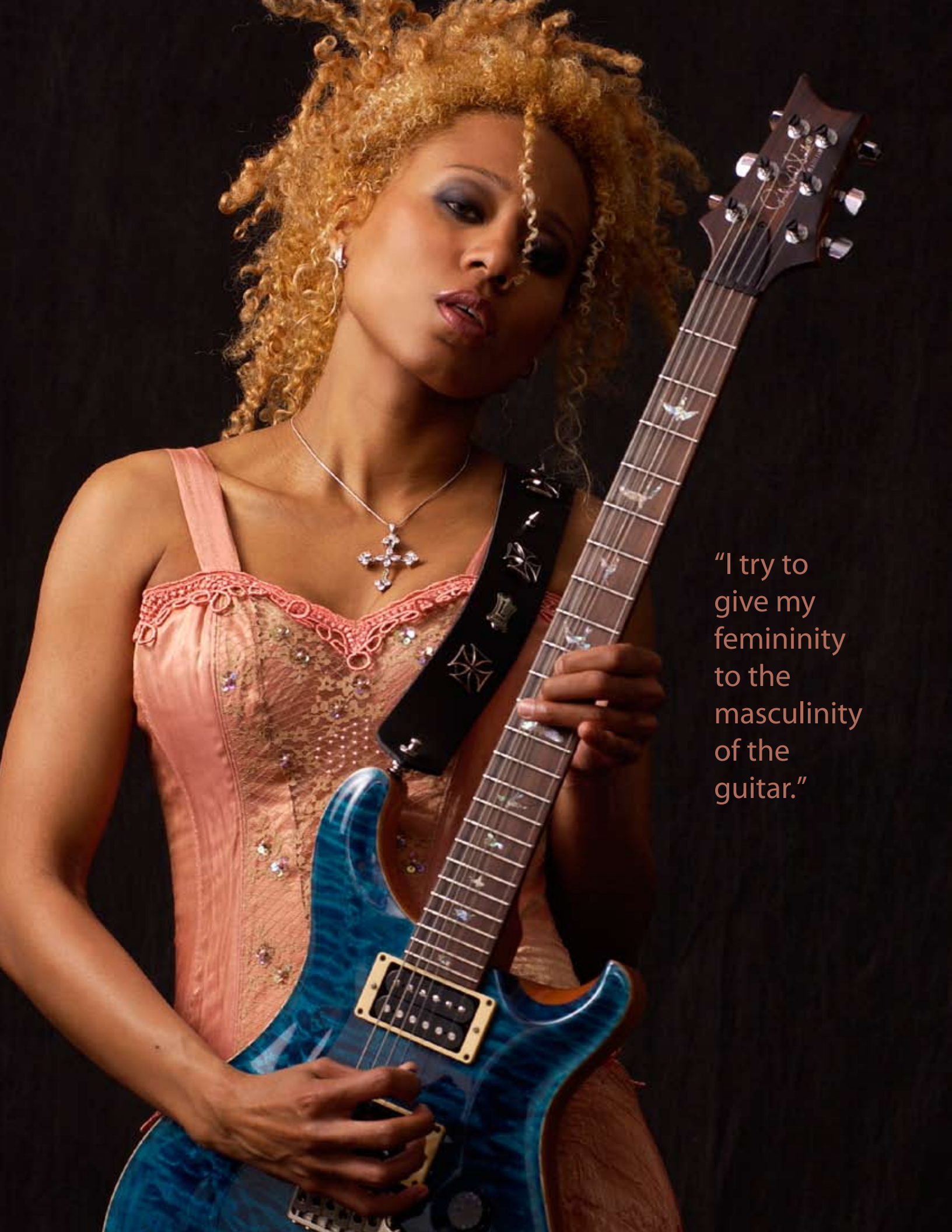
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"I try to
give my
femininity
to the
masculinity
of the
guitar."

V

A

J

A

BY: WASIM MUKLASHY, PHOTOS: STAN KARCZMARZ

"I'm telling you right now, Metallica changed my life."

Now, before you look back and forth and wonder if we placed the wrong text with the accompanying pictures (get a hold of yourself boys), consider this: some of her biggest sponsors include Mesa Boogie and Paul Reed Smith Guitars, who also happen to sponsor some cat who calls himself Carlos Santana. Not bad company eh? Oh yah, she's also represented by one of the top modeling and commercial agencies in the country and her ego is the size of...the size of...uh...woah...wait...*what* ego?

Born in Tacoma, Washington, and spending much of her youth in Carmel, Indiana, Vaja has been exposed to music every step of the way. "My father is a singer, my brother plays classical guitar, and my mother used to take me to a whole bunch of concerts," she tells me. "That just inspired me so much. My parents told me the first things that came out of my mouth were songs from the radio...they were

freaking out because I wasn't even saying 'mommy' or 'daddy' yet."

All the pieces were in place, destiny just needed a catalyst, and it wasn't long before Vaja recognized it. It was when she was 12 years old that "my mother took me to the Faith No More / Guns n' Roses / Metallica concert...I was like, 'I want to be just like them!' Ever since then, I started playing guitar."

Soon after, she moved to Orlando, Florida to pursue her musical calling. But even after performing two years in a row in front of over 50,000 heads at Miami's Ultra Music Festival, the apex of the city's annual Winter Music Conference, there was still something missing. "I had DJs and a live drummer," she remembers, "but I didn't have the rock band that I dreamed of." And that, of course, prompted her move to La La Land.

"I made a list of my goals. It was: move to L.A., find place, find rock band, rehearse rehearse rehearse, make CD,

get a record deal, tour the world, be the biggest selling rock band in the world." And after a single year, she's already recorded and played with Adrian Young (No Doubt) and got her face plastered across Guitar Center Hollywood's Rock Walk holding the latest addition to her Paul Reed Smith collection. "My picture's been going up at all 150 stores next to big guitar icons like Zack Wild, and Dimebag Darrell, and I don't even have a record deal!" she exclaims. "Do you see the angels that are falling around me? I'm checking off everything that is in my goals," she says, "and it feels great!"

While her imminent success beckons her name and her look, the game does not come without its skeptics. "When people find out that I'm a musician, they're like 'oh ok, you do R&B? Hip-Hop?' They automatically stereotype," she muses with a grin before reassuring, "But I'm a rock girl!" And that she is! All you'd have to do is lay eyes on the couture collection of outfits she dons on stage. "I think it's the inner metal queen in me that

comes out. I try to give my femininity to the masculinity of the guitar."

If there's one thing that struck me about Vaja, it was her unwavering genuine dedication - an almost *naive* persistence - a refreshing quality that will undoubtedly continue to play to her advantage. "I'm a very firm believer that God has given me this gift and I would never give that up for anything no matter what. I will work hard until I make my dreams come true and I'm not going to let anyone take that away from me," she states with great conviction.

"If it's not worth dying for... then it's not worth living for."

While she's paying her dues, we'll be paying attention.

Check 'er out at:
 > www.vajamusic.com
 > www.kotorimag.com
 and for God's sake...someone sign this woman!



ROLLING WITH LESTER GRINSPOON

PART 1

Legalize the medicine...
... doctor's orders...

BY: BOB FREVILLE, ART: AMY STAATS



"Dr. Grinspoon, you Dirty Harvard Jew! You only did it for the money." This is a letter that came in shortly after the publication of *Marijuana: Reconsidered*, the seminal book on cannabis and its many properties. "I know the two sentences by heart," the Doctor tells me. "Signed with a first name only."

He chuckles asthmatically. "I was stunned. I was so naïve to think that there wouldn't be people like that. But now I rarely get negative emails."

Indeed Dr. Lester Grinspoon, M.D., has come a long way since his first flirtation with "The Devil Plant." After attacks on his career and his moral character, after working with NORML, after traveling to Malaysia to save a disabled computer science lecturer named Kerry Wiley from being hanged for possession of 500 grams, after testifying for John Lennon and even after achieving grandfatherhood, Lester is still kicking. And smoking. Just not for the past few months.

"I smoked marijuana for thirty-three years," Lester says. "With this recent push to establish it as an addicting drug—something I think has been proven to be an incorrect proposition—I decided that I oughtta stop using it, just to assure myself."

"As someone who has been doing it for so long, if it was addictive I'd expect some withdrawal symptoms. Except for some change in my dream life I have not been able to find any."

"It doesn't mean I'm giving it up forever," he says, laughing warmly again in between bouts of clearing his throat. "I want to be sure about that."

Although he seems jovial things haven't always been laughter and smiles for Lester. He recalls one occasion, early in his career, when The Partnership for a Drug Free America attempted to strip him of his license to practice medicine. "A magazine published part of a lecture," he says, "where I discussed my own use, something I had never hidden. I talked about the way it was useful to me."

When they got wind of his comments, they wrote to the Massachusetts Board of Registration. Their plea for him to lose his license listed six reasons why, one of which stated, "It is well-established that anybody who uses



marijuana is not competent.”

The Board wrote to Grinspoon, informing him that action was beginning to be taken against him. “The first thing they told me I had to do was answer the six questions posed. I wrote back saying, ‘No way am I going to answer these questions. They’re absurd.’”

In the meantime a Professor at Harvard Law became interested in the case and, in conjunction with his students, formed a committee. The Board got wind that a prominent Harvard Law Professor and his Evidence Class students were writing documents and ready to go to the mat.

This bold move resulted in a letter from the Board saying, “Well, we’ve decided not to do anything about this...BUT IF YOU DO IT AGAIN!”

Grinspoon understands why the fight continues to be fought. “The more people learn about the medical usefulness of cannabis, the more people are going to smoke it, regardless of what the law is.”

But Grinspoon also acknowledges the stigma that continues to be cast upon it. “Now the DEA has just come out to say that one of the reasons you shouldn’t be using any illicit drug is because it helps terrorism...The facts that the government have been promoting for so long are fiction, they’re mythological.”

Lester’s work in the field of medicine has conquered these myths in more ways than any single marijuana supporter in history. One such story concerns a Harvard colleague whose mother-in-law was stricken with Pancreatic Cancer. She was suffering from nausea something awful and the conventional drugs wouldn’t take. He asked Lester about Dronabinol, the THC-based pill that was on the market.

“It might work,” I said. “But it’s not as good as whole-smoked marijuana.” He asked his colleague if she would try smoking weed, to which his colleague replied, “Oh, no, no! She’d be quite upset.”

Lester advised him to use Dronabinol with the stipulation that if it didn’t work she should give him a call. After

some time the drug hadn’t helped and she called on him to see if she should increase her dosage. Lester asked if she had a grandchild who could, perhaps, teach her how to roll a joint.

“I have a granddaughter who is dying to have me smoke marijuana,” she replied.

He told her to take a puff on it, *just one puff*. “Virgin marijuana smokers are more vulnerable to anxiety because they don’t know how to titrate. So I told her to take a puff, the joint will go out, light it again, take another puff and wait a couple minutes. Do that until two things happen: You get relief of the nausea or you get anxious. Then stop.”

Lester didn’t hear from the woman again, but at a meeting at the Associate Dean’s office, his colleague asked him to stay in the room once the meeting ended. “Lester,” he said. “I can’t tell you how indebted our whole family is to you.” He went on to explain that his mother-in-law *did* learn how to smoke and it helped enormously. Several months later, while attending their Christmas party,

the man’s wife explained that they had three successful sons—a doctor, a lawyer and so forth—and they would sit together and smoke a joint with Granny and have a really nice old time.

Granny’s final days were made better by the gift of the green.

“We have an awful lot of data about how safe it is,” Grinspoon says, as if Granny’s tale was not proof enough.

It always pleases Lester and Kotori to see marijuana getting its just recognition. As a one-time Chairman of NORML, he thinks it’s just a shame that organizations of their ilk do not get the financial support that they need. But you can be sure that his check is in the mail. Why? Because...

“Marijuana is truly a miracle drug.”

Dr. Grinspoon is currently espousing any initiatives that move toward the defeat of this insane Prohibition.

Keep a bloodshot eye peeled for more Grinspoon in *Kotori*’s Winter Edition.

> www.marijuana-uses.com



TOP 10 WAYS TO TELL IF YOUR HOME HAS AN ENERGY HOG:

10. Family wastes so much energy, you're on your energy company's Christmas card list.
9. Your air-conditioner usage has altered penguin migration patterns.
8. So many lights on, your home can be seen from outer space.
7. Fireplace flue is just like a 7-Eleven® store; it never closes.
6. Space under front door is wide enough to admit small pets.
5. Windows were last caulked during the Roosevelt administration.
4. Your family thinks insulation is something for diabetics.
3. Your idea of energy conservation is a Saturday afternoon nap.
2. Local history museum has called dibs on your refrigerator.
1. Monthly energy bill larger than U.S. deficit.

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ROCK THE BELLS

BY: MIKE RUDD & RACHELLE GOUDY
PHOTOS: MIKE RUDD & ILYA FELDMAN
LAYOUT: GRAPHIC CREATIVE & KOTORI

Thanks to Guerilla Union's relentless pursuit of the genre's finest talent and moments, hip-hop history was made Saturday, August 5th, 2006. Though the 4th annual Rock The Bells festival dropped in the hot California San Bernardino desert, that didn't stop the droves of hip-hop fans from braving the scorching sun in anticipation of, well, let's see...De La Soul, Talib Kweli, Mos Def, Aesop Rock, Living Legends, Visionaries, and the Wu Tang Clan.

The show started at high noon, went into the wee early morning hours, and there were more highlights than a Sportscenter reel. The day began with a blistering set from New York emcee Immortal Technique, who sprayed the crowd with his rapid AK47 style, bringing with him a heightened sense of politically charged, empowering subject matter. The stage was then turned over to one of the best performances ever produced by Southern Cali's *almost* famous Living Legends.

Rakaa, Evidence, and DJ Babu of the Dilated Peoples were up next, and in convincing fashion, proved themselves as worthy representatives of LA's continuously burgeoning hip-hop scene. Fresh off their recent split with Capitol records, the reinvigorated trio performed hits from their latest album, *20/20*, and took the crowd way back with old school hits like "Worst Comes To Worst." Not a bad way to segway into De La Soul, who lit up the night sky with one bangin' track after

another. He even brought Dres from Black Sheep to rock the crowd with "This or That."

And speaking of surprises and reunions, never enough can be said about what happened during Talib Kweli's set. Mos Def, fresh off the plane, shed his jacket and backpack before shaking the ground with the announcement of the reuniting of Black Star. Not enough surprises for you yet? How bout this one: Lauren Hill, unannounced, took to the stage to drop "Doo Wop" and "Everything is Everything" before it was formally announced that Supernatural broke the world record by completing 9.5 hours of continuous freestyling.

And all this was just a lead up to the final hours of the evening in which the EMT teams were pumping people out of the front rows as Rock The Bells fans went absolutely insane, shouting in unison... 'WU-TANG WU-TANG WU-TANG!' From the first cut, "Enter the 36 Chambers," all the way through their set of classic track after track, The Wu Tang Clan dropped like a bomb, complete with everything from special performances from ODB's family to Jackass Steve-O doing a backflip completely naked in memory of Ol' Dirty himself. This didn't bode well with many of the Clan, but as the audience didn't seem to mind, it only helped raise the intensity that we know and love and expect from everyone's favorite Clan.

I mean, really...what more could you want from a hip-hop festival? Unforgettable.

> www.rockthebells.net
> www.guerillaunion.com



PHOTO OF METHOD MAN: MIKE RUDD 8.05.06 1AM

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GARTH TRINIDAD CAN'T STOP CELEBRATING! PHEW...

BY: MIKE RUDD, PHOTO: MIKE RUDD

Garth Trinidad continues to celebrate his 10th year on KCRW in tireless summer fashion. This past summer, Kotori had the pleasure of taking part in Garth Trinidad's Anniversary party at the Temple Bar in Santa Monica, CA. Garth, a mainstay of the Los Angeles hip hop culture and scene celebrates a decade of "Chocolate City," his popular Saturday radio show on world famous KCRW. "My ears have just grown up. I have gotten more and more sharp, but I never lost sight and feel of the original sound, the sound that I loved when it all started," he tells us. "The only difference in the first year and the 10th is different material. Also, I started in my twenties and now I'm in my early thirties so for all the people that introduced me to things, I've incorporated that into an idea."

With a live performance by Bilal and Trinidad himself spinnin' records, the packed house of his closest friends couldn't stop groovin' as bar after bar of ill beats were relentlessly dropped upon them. Garth, here's to 10 more!

> www.garthtrinidad.biz
> www.kcrw.com



AGENDA

BY: KIZZY O'NEAL

As the enormous stretch limousine rounds the corner of 1st Street in Downtown San Diego I can feel the effects of last nights dancing and drinking till dawn. I look up as the door of the limo opens and out pours a group of young urbanites, complete with tattoos, noserings, and a couple of surfer dudes sporting their latest boardshorts and industry T's. After a long weekend of events in San Diego, from the release of Mischief Films, Ro Sham Bo, to the Rider's Poll Awards, to dancing the night away to Flogging Molly, I had had enough! I was exhausted!! No more parties, drinks, bro-bras, chicks dressed in bikinis passing out energy drinks. I was ready to call it a weekend.

Just before leaving I was in the neighborhood and decided to stop by the Agenda Trade Show. As I walked through the entrance, something felt different. Welcomed by two beautiful "respectable" ladies, I received my wristband and went in. Agenda was a breath of fresh air. Everyone was laid back, super mellow, and had damn good style. I stood for a moment and listened as the DJ spun melodic tunes and the bartender served up free drinks. Walking around to the different booths I was greeted with eager artists ready to show off their newest creations. The vibe was pleasant and the innovation unique. With every turn came a new design, a brother and his sibling showcasing their latest t-shirt design, and Arbor, a green company specializing in Hawaiian Koa snowboards and skateboards and bamboo apparel. Everyone from Five Four to Fresh Jive to Obey, Upper Playground, Sullen, and Royal Elastics. Did I mention Kid Robot with their eclectic toy design and special edition sweatshirts?

A collaboration of artists, designers, innovators, fashionistas, and musicians, Agenda was the icing on the cake. Rather than kid sister to ASR, Agenda is the younger, free spirited, kid down the street.

> www.agendashow.com







Miri Ben-Ari:

VARIATIONS ON A THEME OF PEACE AND TOLERANCE

BY: COLE WILLIAMS

"Every genocide is a disgusting racism story."

Miri Ben-Ari is no session violinist, not even in a joke. "That's what I work for and what I strive for in my career: not to be a session player, but to be an artist," she contends without a flicker of self-doubt. "When people hear my violin, I want them to inquire if it's me."

As well they should. "I don't use [the violin] in a classical way," she explains, "I use it as a groove instrument, and I use it to play music that has soul; not like classical soul, I'm talking R&B soul. And I do it because that's me - it's part of me - it's what's coming out of me."

So far, what is 'coming out' of Miri has earned her mountains of praise and the respect of classical musicians and hip-hop artists alike. However, her inspired work on such critical successes as Kanye West's "The College Dropout" (for which she received a Grammy) only set the stage for creating new music that penetrates even deeper into the heart of hip-hop and the social conscious that hip-hop so courageously explores.

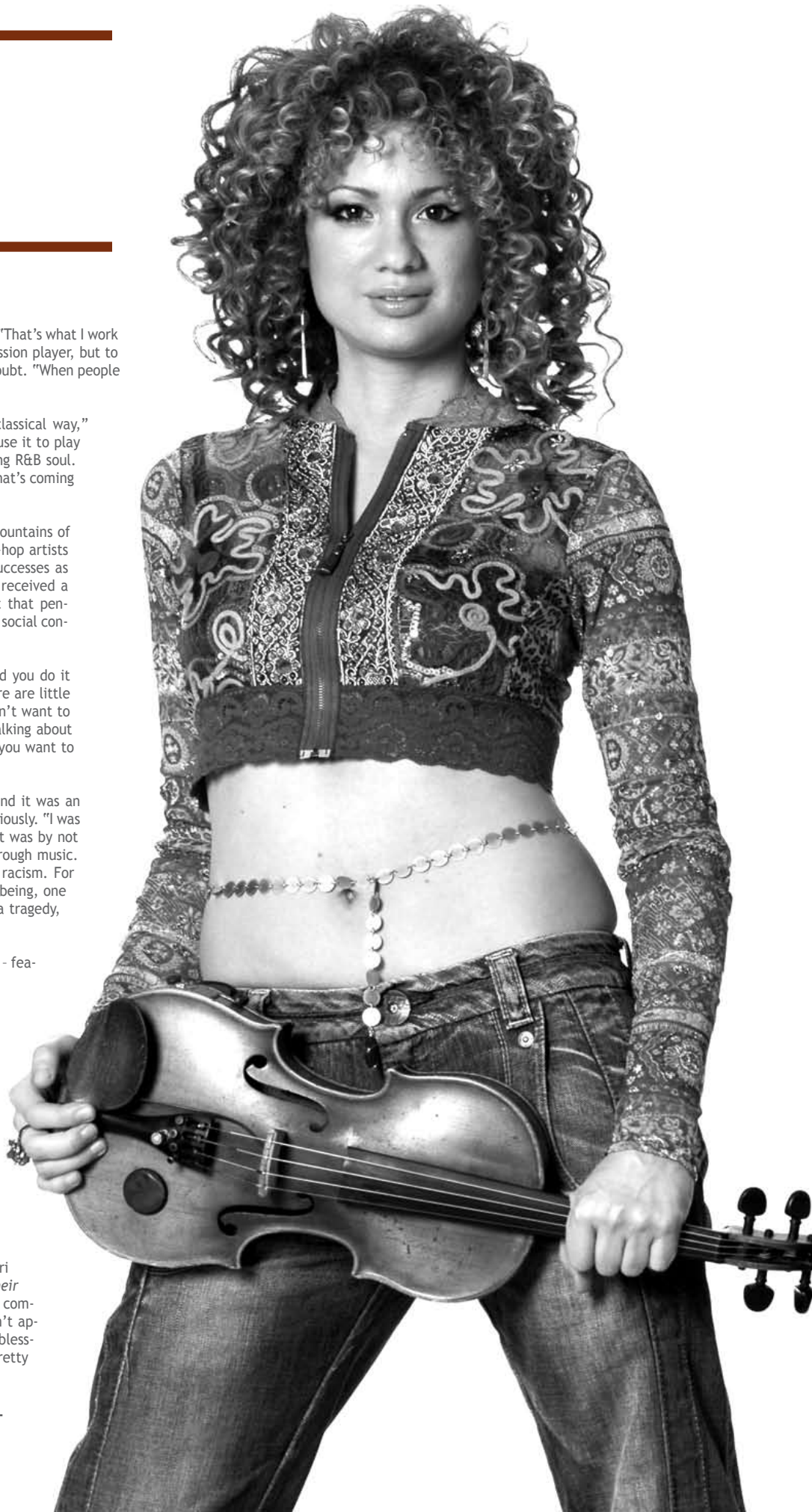
"It's so naïve and beautiful, to see that you play and you do it for the love of music and you put music out, and there are little kids out there that want to do what you do. They don't want to become another gangster or drug dealer, someone talking about the bling and the bitches. If you want to play violin you want to play real music. And that blows my mind!"

"I'm a daughter to a family of Holocaust survivors and it was an issue that I could never deal with," she begins very seriously. "I was so traumatized the only way for me to deal with that was by not dealing with it. And then I started to deal with it through music. My new single I have dedicated to the fight against racism. For me, the Holocaust is a racism tragedy of the human being, one of the biggest tragedies. But then all genocides are a tragedy, and unfortunately, it was not the only genocide."

The single she speaks of - "Symphony of Brotherhood" - features excerpts from Martin Luther King Jr.'s famous "I Have a Dream" speech. It has graced the Billboard R&B/Hip-Hop top ten for over eight weeks.

"The other composition I'm going to put out is a direct song about the Jewish Holocaust, and I'm going to put it out in Israel first. I actually shot the music video, and it's going to be the first music video ever, in the history of Jewish people in Israel, about the Holocaust. And we're actually *dealing* with it, we're digging. The song is one of my favorites that I've ever done. And that's hip-hop for me."

"In order to have peace you have to deal with people who want peace just as much as you do," Miri continues. "You have to deal with people who *love their children more than they hate us*. It's very hard to comprehend that there are people in this world who don't appreciate the gift of life and peace and the very basic blessings that we are born with and given to us by God. Pretty amazing..."



Bodies

BY: ANDREW OCTOPUS

Word on the street is Jenny has some new setup where her e-mail is sent directly to her body. One of her boyfriends did the surgery, because she got fed up with having to find public library computers or scrounge up change for internet access at coffee shops. There's only a faint blip, a microsecond disconnect from her surroundings, whenever she gets a new message. She twitches just for a minute, like an addict about to pop a pill. The data occurs to her like a spontaneous idea, though she realizes its external origin. The software installed in her mind is still a little buggy; a bulletproof spam filter is critical to protect her synapses. Now she worries that she is really a computer. She realizes that satellites have barely mediated access to her neuroself. But the operation is still ad hoc and experimental--no one knows if they can undo it safely.

Jenny is a runaway, a squatter, a frayed magician, fifteen years old and walking the line between transcendence and extermination. She plays the game at its soft peripheries and electrified angles; she will either win by a large margin or be put out of it very soon. Everyone knows her and no one knows her. People see her as what they want her to be: a laboratory guinea pig, an inexorable criminal, a desirable freak. She knows things no one else knows and misses things everyone else sees. This is a long-shot play but the only one she has; she was too smart for school, too pretty to be a prostitute, too honest to pass for an adult, too ragged to go without drugs, too self-aware to get addicted.

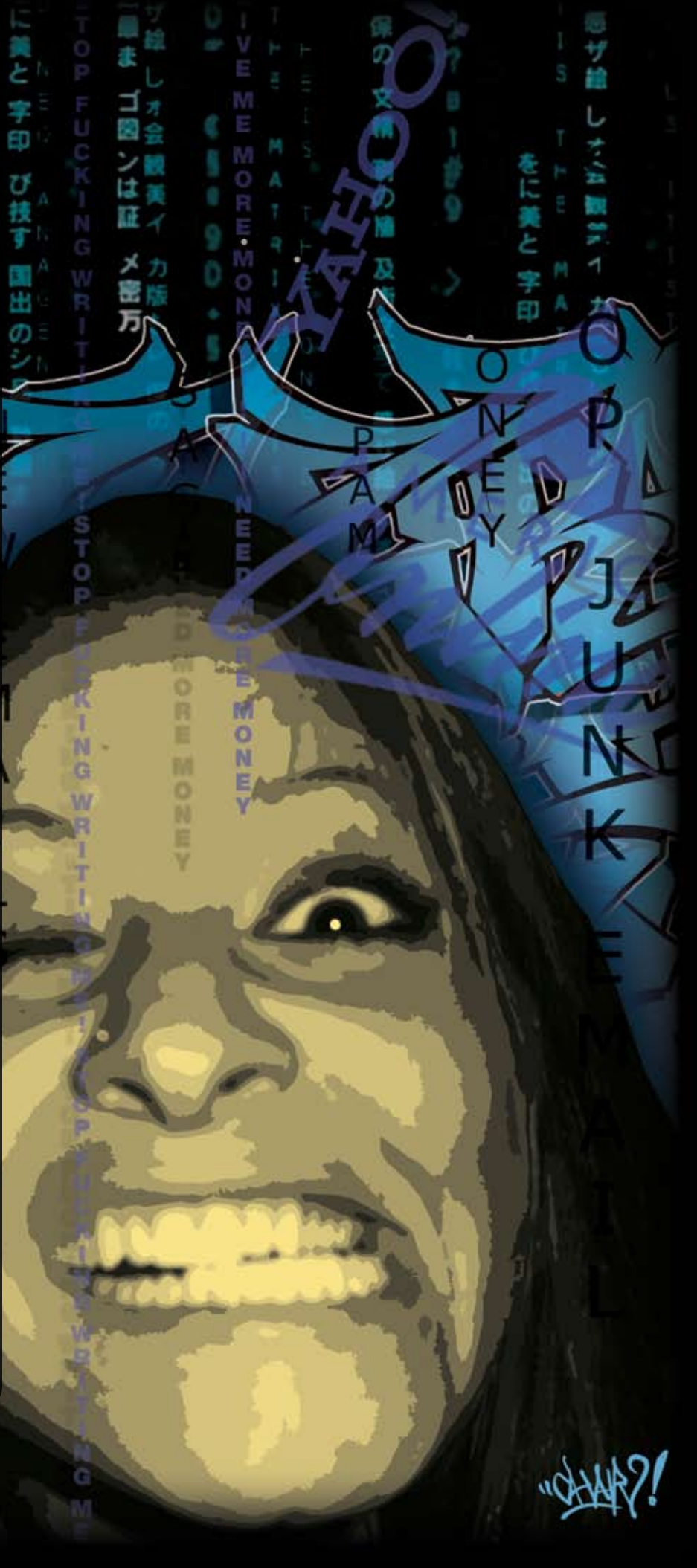
The Mad Hatter is the only person who can make her smile. He comes around lately, trying to set up another Tea Party, panhandling and gambling for the money to do so. He even pimps sometimes, but his heart isn't in it. His razor-sharp eyes are lost in a haze; he barely even checks for cops or priests anymore. They found the March Hare's body in a field of flowers. Popular opinion is split as to whether or not the two MH's were lovers, whether Hatter had Hare killed for some reason, did you hear it might have been an overdose? Anyway, the Mad Hatter goes around in his rumpled coat and a decayingly glamorous hat.

The main business here used to be information. Now it is experience. Unmediated, beyond intellectualization, sick of being betrayed by their own brains, the heads here know less and do more. Those who still know walk around illuminated like Coptic saints, elongated and untouchable, set apart from everyone else. Touch is subject to inflation, rapidly proliferating and increasingly worthless. Last year the main medium of exchange was books; now it's pills.

Some time ago, Jenny moved from the edges of the real world to the edges of the underground. From the outside of the inside they look suspiciously similar. In her other life she's a middle-aged housewife, married to a successful insurance salesman, with two kids. She built this avatar pixel by picture, appropriating images and ideas, dr. frankensteining them together inch by agonizing minute. It was cheaper and deeper than having an affair. The face she has here is a variation on the theme of her own daughter's. That life is crushing but not time-consuming. Every minute she can be, she is here, dancing with the drug dealers and carton characters and elves and scientists and graffiti-writing apostles and astronauts and experimental DJs. Not even knowing where here is, but wanting every second to find out more. Voraciously lookin from behind her geeky glasses. (Jenny is not as pretty as the other self most people think of her as. She gives away her curves and blonde hair at the doorway to here. She likes this better. In this city the eyes of the voyeurs are as ersatz as her identity.)

She keeps getting the e-mails, whether she wants them or not. She has money coming in from online banks every couple of weeks and doesn't know why, and even though in theory it makes her rich, sometimes she feels sick of the constant inflow. But most of the time she desperately wants them. Any excuse to be Jenny again, to walk into this world; no price is too high for a moment away from her other life.

So feel free to drop her a line in her skull. The address is:



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**GEORGE W. BUSH
OUR LEADER**



**NATIONAL
VANGUARD
IS
WHITE
FAMILIES**

**BUSH
NUMBER
ONE**



STOP IMMIGRATION

Join The National Alliance

**ONE NATION
UNDER GOD**





CORRUPTION UP HIGH

BY: JAKE MCGEE, ART: NICK TAYLOR

The United Food and Commercial Workers Union were quite distraught when their plan for a billboard was shot down in April, 2005. Clear Channel Outdoor refused to adorn one of their signs with the image of a Godzilla-style monster next to the dreadful warning, "The Wal-Monster will destroy Staten Island business and devastate our quality of life," citing their policy to "reject creative content that is misleading, sexually explicit, overly suggestive, or in any way reflects upon the character, integrity, or standing of any organization or individual."

Nothing wrong with that...but just two months prior, Clear Channel had no qualms with approving and designing a sign for white supremacy group Nation Alliance (aka National Vanguard), which read, "Stop Immigration - Join the National Alliance." Hooray! They even put this sign up high on a billboard smack in the center of one of Las Vegas' Latino communities, to emphasize the point.

Clear Channel Outdoor (and, of course, the rest of the Clear Channel organization) has sided with fascism since even before they were CCO. The billboard company started as Floster & Keller in 1901, and quickly became the founders of the outdoor advertising industry by sucking up to the Powers That Be.

Back then, though, nobody argued about supporting war. Indeed, the first two World Wars are considered righteous and just by most of our society even to this day. So it was natural that, in 1917, F&K artists assisted in forming camouflage units for military and civilian projects. The same year, the company started mobilizing its facilities for war service recruiting, among other things to help with the war effort.

Two years later, President Wilson and the US War Department publicly thanked F&K for their outstanding service during WWI. From then on, the company worked

hand in hand with the US Government. In 1942, they created the largest camouflage project ever completed in the history of war, with their protective concealment of a Boeing aircraft plant in Seattle.

As the industry boomed, so did their working hand-in-hand with politicians. If a politician succeeded in pushing the limits for more billboards, the billboard company would then promote the politician, often calling such a "public service message."

When Clear Channel Communications bought the company (at the time called Eller Media Company) in 1997, this trend exploded. In addition to business and entertainment advertisements, CCO gives their billboard space to political initiatives, not based on community merit, but rather on how much leverage it will give them with the respective politician.

It's no secret that Clear Channel has long-standing ties with corrupt politicians, above and beyond the Bush family. But it should also be taken into account that groups like Clear Channel are often the ones who initiate the corruption in the first place. "Loosen the billboard regulations, and we'll 'independently' support your next campaign," would be what the agreement amounts to.

In 2001, Clear Channel Outdoor ran their own campaign in support of Rocky Delgadillo's bid for Los Angeles Attorney, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars on an indirect (and therefore hard to prohibit) contribution to the candidate. Maybe it was because he was that good

of a man (in April, 2005, the Associated Press reported that Delgadillo worked out a deal which let about 50 crooked cops off the hook for gross abuse of power, at the tax payers' expense). Or maybe it was because Delgadillo supported more flexibility with billboards, whereas Delgadillo's opponent, Mike Feuer, supported tougher regulations.

In 2002, CCO was accused of donating more than \$10,000 in free billboard space to Reno City Council candidate Dwight Dortch, who had voted to increase the number of billboards in the city. In 2005, CCO worked on promoting Ignacio De La Fuente in his bid for Mayor of Oakland, against Nancy Nadel, a frequent billboard critic. According to the *East Bay Express*, in 2002-2004, CCO spent \$374,445 on "billboards that urged voters to support a specific candidate or cause." And that was just in Oakland, CA.

Doing this on such a scale seems wildly against the rules of fair play, but Clear Channel executives are masters at bending the rules, by either attributing sponsorship of the billboards to other entities, or just calling them "public service announcements."

From time to time they get busted for it, like in 2005 when the Los Angeles Ethics Commission fined them for the Delgadillo incident, saying, "Failing to fully disclose its sponsorship of the political advertisements...had the potential to mislead large numbers of voters about whether candidate-controlled committees rather than [Clear Channel] paid for the billboards."

It's a small price to pay for political clout, especially when it stretches all the way up to the White House.

Clear Channel is in deep cahoots with the Bush administration. In 1995, when G.W. was Governor of Texas, he appointed investment bulldog Tom Hicks (former Vice Chairman of Clear Channel Communications) head of the University of Texas Investment Management Co., also known as Utimco. Lowry Mays (founder of Clear Channel Communications) was even on the board. Under Hicks, Utimco directed much of the University's public endowment to the management of companies connected to the Republican Party, and with companies directly tied in with Bush himself. The Carlyle Group - then run by the likes of George Bush Sr. - was one of the organizations who reaped in on this cash cow.

Then there's the Texas Rangers, who Hicks bought from G.W. and a group of investors in 1998, netting Bush a cool \$14.9 million. Since Bush took office in 2000, Hicks has been part of the elite "Bush Pioneers," which is kind of like the Cool Club for people who give Bush \$100,000 or more in contributions.

It makes sense, then, for Clear Channel to maintain good standing with the head honchos of this country, even tossing them goodies from time to time. Two of the more in famous examples of this were in 2004, with two marvelous billboard crusades. One series was in Arizona, where the sign read, "One Nation Under God - A Reminder From Clear Channel Outdoor." The other popped up around spots in Florida, and next to a picture of G.W. proclaimed, "George W. Bush - Our Leader." Sure, it resembles the images of numerous foreign countries, where pictures of dictators are splattered across billboards - it invokes totalitarian undertones - and it should. But beneath the message, there was a disclaimer, "Not authorized by any

candidate or candidate's committee. A public service message brought to you by Clear Channel Outdoor."

Maybe I'm a pessimist, but this is one of those dilemmas where there seems to be no diplomatic or congenial solution. Even when community leaders and regular citizens try to work with Clear Channel Outdoor on things, they get slapped in the face. In 2004, Seattle-based artist Linda Thomas worked out a deal with CCO, that gave her billboard space for one of her projects. It was a blown-up charcoal drawing of a sleepy baby cradled in an adult's hand, and every day a new piece was put up, until the billboard was complete. The work "represents the passage of time," Thomas told *The Stranger*, and it stood on its own, with no title or explanation.

Then she found out that on the other side of the billboard, CCO had plastered up another shot of a baby, but this one has a message: "Cherish Life! It begins at conception." It was an ad attributed to Pro-Life America, which is fine and all, but to put it on the back of Thomas's work was completely avaricious, if not demeaning. They eventually took down the anti-abortion ad, replacing it with some other business promotion, but their point was made.

And of course, let's not forget that awesome "Stop Immigration" sign. When it assuredly pissed off the residents, executives at CCO said the company did not know what the National Alliance stood for. Which is funny, because if you look up the website listed on the front of the billboard, one of the first things you see is, "National Vanguard is White Families," and then it talks about how someday the Mexicans are going to outnumber the humans in this country, and things of that nature.

THE ART & SOUL OF COMIC-CON

BY: MOLLY HAHN

This year's annual Comic-Con was by far one of the most inspiring experiences that I have had as a young artist. As a staffer at the "Animation Show" booth, I had the chance to hang out with world re-known animator Bill Plympton, shared some drinks and rockabilly music with Shannon Wheeler, and discovered the amazing Jason Felix. Below are the juicy details of my encounters with these standout artists.

BILL PLYMPTON

As a world-renowned and award-winning animator that has been churning out highly successful short and feature films intended for adult audiences since the 1980's, Bill Plympton continues to chart new territory in animation all while self-financing his projects.

His latest feature film, *Hair High*, a gothic '50s high-school murder comedy about a love-triangle that goes terribly bad, employs the voice talent of the likes of Keith and David Carradine, Beverly D'Angelo, Sarah Silverman, Ed Begley Jr., Matt Groening, Craig Bierko, Don Hertzfeldt, and Martha Plimpton. The film, completed in January 2004, will just now be making its theatrical release around the world this fall.

Plympton grew up in Portland, Oregon where the moist surroundings helped keep him indoors to cultivate his drawing skills. It wasn't until he was studying graphic design at Portland State University that he joined a film society and started experimenting with animation. After college, Plympton landed in the Big Apple where he formally launched career, getting his work published in *The New York Times*, *Vogue*, *The Village Voice*, and *Vanity Fair* among others.

Even though by 1981, his political comic strip "Plympton" was syndicated in over twenty newspapers by the Universal Press, he really only thought of it as a temporary gig. "I always felt that I should be an animator. But when I got out of art school, which was in the early '70s, animation was really dead...so doing the cartoons and the characters and the illustrations was a stopgap. Sort of a way to make money until my animation was able to take off" (*Wild Violet* Vol. III Issue 3, Spring/Summer 2004).

The independent filmmaking rebirth in the 1980's enabled Plympton to switch gears and dive straight into making animated films. He churned out several successful shorts that appeared on MTV, and The Spike and Mike Animation Festival, including 25 *Ways to Quit Smoking*, *Plymptoons*, and Oscar nominated *Your Face*.

Plympton's shorts were so successful that he was able to fund his first feature length film, *The Tune*, in which he personally drew and colored over 30,000 cels (a full year's worth).

Bill's latest short, *GUIDE DOG*, a sequel to *GUARD DOG*, which brought Plympton his second Oscar nomination in 2005, has already made successful waves at this years festival circuit, winning several awards including First Place in Animation at the USA Film Festival and best animation at both the ASIFA-East and New Jersey Film Festivals.

In between film screenings, Plympton is hard at work on his next feature length film, "Idiots and Angels" which he describes to be a darker film. He is also broadcasting the production on his "ani-cam" at <http://www.plymptoons.com> where you can find all things Plympton.

SHANNON WHEELER

Shannon Wheeler's comic strip "Too Much Coffee Man" has officially become part of my breakfast routine.

And I'm totally addicted.

Wheeler's inventive storytelling is steaming with brechtian flare. The narration shifts from *Too Much Coffee Man* (TMCN), a neurotic and stoical anti-hero that wears a huge coffee mug on his head and a red cotton super-suit, to Espresso Guy, to the occasional omniscient observer. The inventive and dynamic comic touches on the increasingly complicated and absurd state of modern society and philosophical conundrums.

Wheeler started drawing comics while studying architecture at UC Berkeley. "I was one of the first cartoonists to put my stuff on the web (the net - as we used to call it). And I did it for free too - unheard of."

As a recipient of the esteemed Hatch and Eisner award, his work has appeared internationally in newspapers, magazines, and comic books. Additionally, Dark Horse Comics published four graphic novels showcasing his work, and now, he's turned TMCN into an *OPERA*, believed to be the first opera inspired by a comic book. Cowritten with Damian Wilcox, an award-nominated independent comic creator (creator of the popular *Dorkboy* comic), the story is a tragic conflict that arises when Too Much Coffee Man and Espresso Guy go for the same Barista. The opera premiered September 22, 2006 at Portland's Brunish Hall.

Wheeler has several other projects in store, "I still feel like I've only just started with this whole comic thing. I'm still trying to decide what to do next. I have about 8 projects that I'd really like to get off the ground. The problem with life is that it's filled with so many details."

Think it over "TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN" at <http://www.tmcn.com>

JASON FELIX

Jason Felix's art is *smashingly delicious*.

Gifted with the curiosity of a child and the work ethic of a mighty beaver, the established and self-taught artist has dabbled in everything from traditional illustrations, concept art, animation, character design, creature design, and graphic design to comic book art, production art, publishing, film animation, and video game development - working on such titles as "StarCraft," "Prince of Persia," and "Hellgate."

Hailing from Green Bay, Wisconsin, Felix has been drawing incessantly since his youth - publishing his

own comic book at age 17 through Diamond Distribution. He quickly received recognition and published his first official piece in *Dragon Magazine* when he was 19.

The child inside Jason continues to resonate in his current project. While working as a concept artist at Flagship Studios (Hellgate) and freelancing for Lucas Films by day, night time gives way to "The Field Guide to Midwest Monsters." Page for page the reader is presented with zany and lovingly disgusting beasts such as *Melvin the Puss Head - Acneus Whiteheadus* and *The Supreme Udder - Grandus Mammilla Aureolas*. The short descriptions that accompany each monstrosity will take you even further into their delightfully playful and imaginative world.

If you peruse Felix's website, you will find that his fine art greatly contrasts these cute beasts. The gallery collection entitled "Obsolete" is a world where man and machine unite, but the repercussions are harmful. "Today's new gadget is tomorrow's forgot about landfill," he explains. The images are strikingly morbid - with nude subjects in anguished poses adorning wires, ventilators, and other types of hardware.

"My fascination has to do with how crazy technology is and how fast it's advancing," Felix shares. "Seems like nobody questions each advancement. What shocks me is how everything is disposable and nobody thinks twice of where it goes or what resources we are using in order to create."

"I'm fearful of tomorrow's world...I can only envision an eco-crisis where the earth will be toxic because of the waste we carelessly dispense...I will be the first to call myself a 'Modern Day Hippie' simply because I love nature & the world. I hate war, politics, vain people, and greed. I dislike alpha males, crime that is committed to another person, and mayhem. I love the idea of living peacefully, recycling and making use out of everything."

"My work, in essence, is me taking pictures of discarded items and reusing them. Fusing items with the body we all know & love. Why the body? I do believe that we are one with everything. Very Zen, I know. But it's true."

"Lastly, my work can be defined as an 'Environmental Statement'. What statement? Please, for the love of the earth and its future... recycle and reuse. You may not see that in the work, but look.... it's there."

Say hello to Jason at www.jasonfelix.com

> www.comic-con.org

SHANNON WHEELER

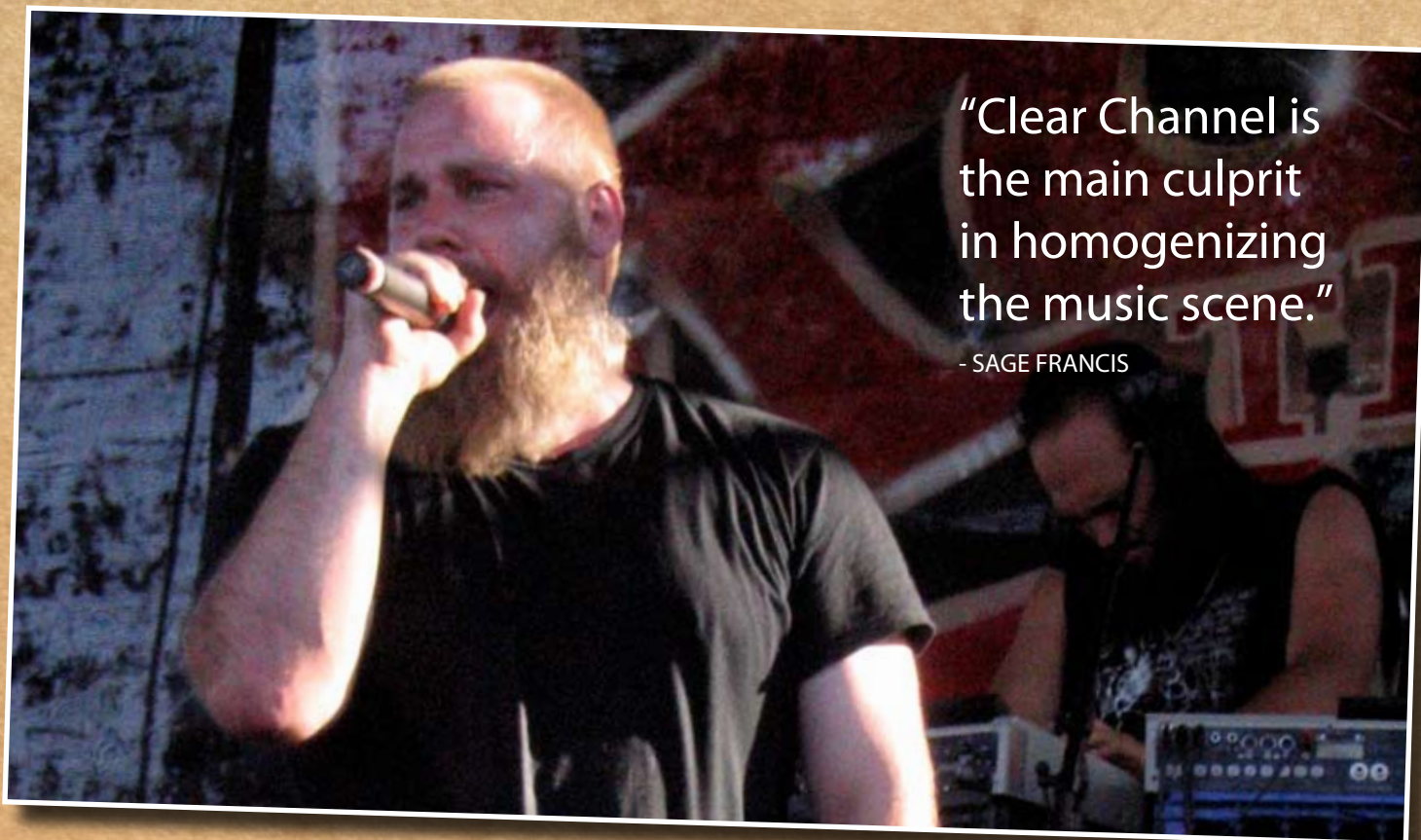


BILL PLYMPTON, MIKE JUDGE, DON HERTZFELDT



BILL PLYMPTON'S "HART HIGH"





"Clear Channel is the main culprit in homogenizing the music scene."

- SAGE FRANCIS

THE DEATH AND REBIRTH OF POLITICAL MUSIC

BY: MATT THOMAS

On Sunday, August 25, 2005 the *MTV Video Music Awards* aired from Miami, Florida to the wide-eyed delight of teenagers everywhere. Blinged out hip-hop superstars and long legged celebrities walked the red carpet in an effort to expand, or showcase, their status. Ironically, music, and its cultural significance, were the last things on anyone's mind. Those who hate MTV because it promotes a form of "hip-shit bling-hop" probably ignored the show, believing that it only contributed to the disintegration of relevant music. Others, however, who were able to stomach P. Diddy's drab one-liners and vomit-provoking sketches, had to take notice of the fact that many of the radio/TRL friendly artists— who win more acclaim for their fashion sense than musical prowess— weren't taking home that many Moonmen.

It was an old, seemingly washed-up, rock band that walked away with the most awards. With a simple smile and outstretched arm, Green Day front man Billie-Joe Armstrong said, "It's nice to know that rock music still has a place with MTV." Green Day was awarded seven Moonmen that night for their politically-tinged *American Idiot*. Although many critics say that this particular concept album loses most of its political fervor after the title track, no one can deny that

Armstrong's simple words, on his band's biggest night, implied something far greater: it seems that music is finally in danger of becoming relevant again. But where did political-music go? Why did it disappear? And why does America so desperately need this genre to return to center stage?

It's obvious to say that popular music has become a formulaic business, producing one hit wonders with the efficiency of an assembly line. The less obvious thing to point out, however, is the fact that the rise of this corporate-centered genre has nearly destroyed the genus of political music. The success of this music is based on the safety of sameness. Don't write an original song with a thought provoking lyric since that could be offensive or "too complex;" instead, copy the things that others before you have done. Rising bands and solo artists are encouraged, almost forced, to adhere to the formula.

However, now, more than ever, it is important to note and recognize the artists out there who are attempting to drag the political genre from the fringes of the underground and into the mainstream. A couple ideal examples would be rapper Sage Francis and punk rockers Strike Anywhere. Both have taken serious steps to integrate their

music with lyrics that seek to question, and therefore challenge, the status quo. Francis, for instance, is a rising star who is signed to a major label that allows him to produce songs that are extremely critical of the American government and challenge the influence corporations have on popular culture (Sage was a featured performer on the "Fuck Clear-Channel Tour").

The rapper took a moment to describe the reasons for the rise in politically impotent music: "Major labels are calculative in their approach to art. Since when is it OK that suits at a business meeting dictate what kind of picture the artists should paint? Artists who find themselves in such a situation aren't artists. They are desperate finger puppets. And the suits have smelly fingers."

By encouraging artists to exclude personal opinions from their music, labels increase their chances of reaching a wider audience since no one is alienated, which leads to greater profits. As a result, many artists find themselves as unlikely stars of *MTV Cribs*, forfeiting their ability to impact society in a positive way in favor of the Kristal in the fridge. To be different is to be ostracized from mainstream culture.

Says Francis, "Clear Channel (or Live Nation) is the main culprit in homogenizing the music scene. The stranglehold that they put on radio, venues and booking agencies is astounding. People will turn on their radio on their way to work and try to catch some news about what is happening in the world....if everything that is on the radio mirrors the messages on the billboards and that coincides with what is being shown on the TV and this is reaffirmed in the newspapers and this is what they hear being talked about around the water cooler...and they don't know that most of this info is all coming from the same source, then damn..... that's some effective conspiracy shit. We are left with a sorely limited scope, thanks to the media monopoly."

The danger presented here is that it has become not only tolerable but preferable to accept things the way they are. Many Americans have lost their ability to question the status quo, which finds origin in the rise of corporate influence. Some, such as classical music critic Kyle Gann, have gone so far as to argue that the listener naturally rejects complex music since the song becomes too hard to access and understand. "Since the mainstream audience is bombarded with overly simplistic music," says

Francis, "they feel too challenged when presented with something that actually makes them think for a second. It's a challenge to the facade they've been presented with on all other fronts. This makes it easy for them to ignore and reject. A.D.D. is the new cool. Underground is the new communism."

According to Francis, hope for popular music, and therefore the mainstream audience as well, is lost. "It's a barren wasteland for desert heads," says Francis. "What else can be said? The fuck do I care?"

Recent releases, however, contradict Francis's final, and relevant, statement. For instance, Bruce Springsteen was recently featured on CNN. During the interview, newscaster Soledad O'Brien questioned if an artist should express political critiques when they are, in fact, just artists. Springsteen directly challenged the credibility of Time Warner's talking heads by saying, "Well, if you turn [the TV] on [and watch], present company included, the idiots rambling on cable television on any given night of the week, and you're saying that musicians shouldn't speak up? It's insane. It's funny." The Boss went on to criticize the likes of Anne Coulter while expressing a look of comical disgust at O'Brien's notion that popular musicians lack the intelligence and knowledge to express political commentary. Throughout his 30 year career, Springsteen has laced his lyrics with questioning thoughts and his voice has reached millions.

Other artists such as Pink (with her song "Dear Mr. President," which is extremely critical of President George W. Bush) and Neil Young (whose most recent album *Living With War* berates the administration's efforts to maintain an expensive and demoralizing conflict) have taken queues from politically-aware artists. Knowing this, it's hard to see the future of popular music as "barren" when popular artists, old and new, are making a clear effort to raise awareness.

"The only way people can retain innocence is to detach themselves from mainstream media."

- THOMAS BARNETT (STRIKE ANYWHERE)

Strike Anywhere is a hardcore punk band who attempt to remain cognizant of the fact that music can be an optimal catalyst for change only when it is made accessible to the mainstream. In order for political music to be accepted by a popular audience, argues frontman Thomas Barnett, a politically fueled song must be accessible/catchy so a sense of catharsis can be transferred to the listener. "You can't keep an art form bottled up in a sophisticated form in order to protect it," says Barnett. "...protected people have to take

risks in order to explore truth."

Barnett described his band's approach to reaching a larger audience, saying, "part of it is not to be too academic in your approach. You have to talk about politics in a biographical way because if you don't, you will lose people." Strike Anywhere's philosophy is to mix political music with biographical lyrics so the listener is able to create a personal relationship with the artist. The band's song "Sedition," for instance, is a piece that describes the

role Barnett's grandfather played in the Manhattan Project. It's as much an anti-war song as it is a painfully gripping memoir, making it as engaging as it is informative.

By creating musical narratives from personal accounts, Strike Anywhere hopes to infuse new life into the realm of pop music. "People are into the spectacle," says Barnett. "It has destroyed American culture. [An artist] needs to project vulnerabilities in order to take [counter culture] out of its box. . . pop music lacks vitality and innocence. The only way people can retain innocence is to detach themselves from mainstream media. [Artists] have to tell true stories in order to give people a chance to connect."

Artists like Strike Anywhere and Sage Francis connect to listeners in a profound way. Fans are asked to challenge their own notions of right and wrong while remaining engaged by the accessibility of the beats, riffs, and lyrics. The political genre is once again impacting many instead of a simple few by reaching the ears of larger artists, like Green Day. Even though *American Idiot* is more radio friendly than it is politically radical, it's a step in the right direction that has encouraged other popular artists to experiment with the political genre.

Although, as the genre begins to leave the confines of the underground in hopes of reaching a larger audience—where there is greater possibility for social and political change—one must be wary that this resurgent brand of music could be commodified, and controlled by homogenizing entities like Clear Channel.

American culture has reached a tipping point, in which the public must decide whether they wish to be dominated by proselytizing forces or if they will guide the future of their society. From the looks of things, it appears as though the public is finally listening to those artists that are attempting to reject the corporate mold that once defined them. Maybe the landscape of popular music isn't so barren. . . maybe it's just starting to sprout buds after being scorched by a corporate-fueled blaze.



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BY SCOTT SHAPIRO



Oh, Crikey!

The Edyptian Crocodile God Sobek spearheads welcoming committee for Steve Irwin at the Pearly Gates

BY SCOTT SHAPIRO

After being killed by a stingray, happy-go-lucky, world-renkowned crocodile hunter and wildlife warrior, Steve Irwin embarked on his greatest journey yet. But as he reached the final frontier, his trademark smile quickly faded as he found himself staring down three dozen crocodiles blocking his entrance into the Pearly Gates.

As Irwin fled, looking for another entrance into Heaven, the Egyptian Crocodile God Sobek expounded on the animosity focussed at a man who many believed was a champion of crocodile rights on Earth. "Look, we've gotten a bad rap since early Egyptian times," he started. "Hell, I've been accused of having viscous passions, being deceitful, hypocritical, base, malignant, treacherous and even evil-hearted, but we all dealt with the stereotypes as best we could. Y'all made us out to be beasts, so we figure, okay, we're beasts, leave us alone and

it'll all be good. But noooo! Steve Irwin just had to come in and emasculate us in front of a worldwide audience. So there we were... not only are we foul beasts, but we're pussies as well. Think about the toll that takes on a species."

But that was just the tip of iceberg as Sobek continued to air his grievances with Irwin. "To add insult to injury, this Aussie ships us off to prisons... or what you call zoos, where people poke and prod us all day long in order to entertain some six year old with one finger shoved up their nose and the other shoved up their ass. All this in the name of 'conservationism'." Then, snarling he continued, "The only thing that man conserved was the money he made off us that he shoved in his pocket."

As the conversation turned to Irwin's somewhat shocking death at the hands of a stingray, Sobek merely chuckled at the notion, stating "I heard all that nonsense about it being a one-in-a-million occurrence. It was one in a million all right. That stingray was just one in a million of the animal planet that wanted that sucker dead! You keep messing with us and eventually, we're gonna mess with you back!"

Sobek's eyes would light up moments later as two of his minions could be seen in the distance, dragging a battered and bloodied body towards

him. However, as they got closer, the delight in his eyes would give way to fury as he snapped, "You fools! That's not the Crocodile Hunter! That's Crocodile Dundee!" As the crocodiles recoiled in shame, a confused Sobek apologized to awoozy Paul Hogan, wondering, "Mr. Hogan, what are you even doing up here? You're not dead," to which Hogan replied, "Tell that to my agent."

As Hogan hobbled away, Sobek still wasn't worried about Irwin, boasting, "We'll get him... or at least some species will. The guy's got more enemies than you could even believe. Seals, whales... and don't even get me started on the penguins. Those mother-(expletive) got next!" Sobek snorted, referring to perceived grievances held by the penguins after Irwin came too close to and disturbed some wildlife whilst filming a documentary, *Ice Breaker*, in Antarctica in June 2004. On Earth, the matter was closed without charges being filed, but up here, Sobek says it's a whole new ball-game. "God can't do nothing about what goes on in the world of man, but up here, it's every species for themselves. You can run Steve, but you can't hide!"

A month later, Irwin's soul's whereabouts are still unknown and it appears that in a cruel twist of cosmic fate, the hunter is now the hunted.

E Coli Conspiracy?

Democrats implore husbands to toss wives' salads

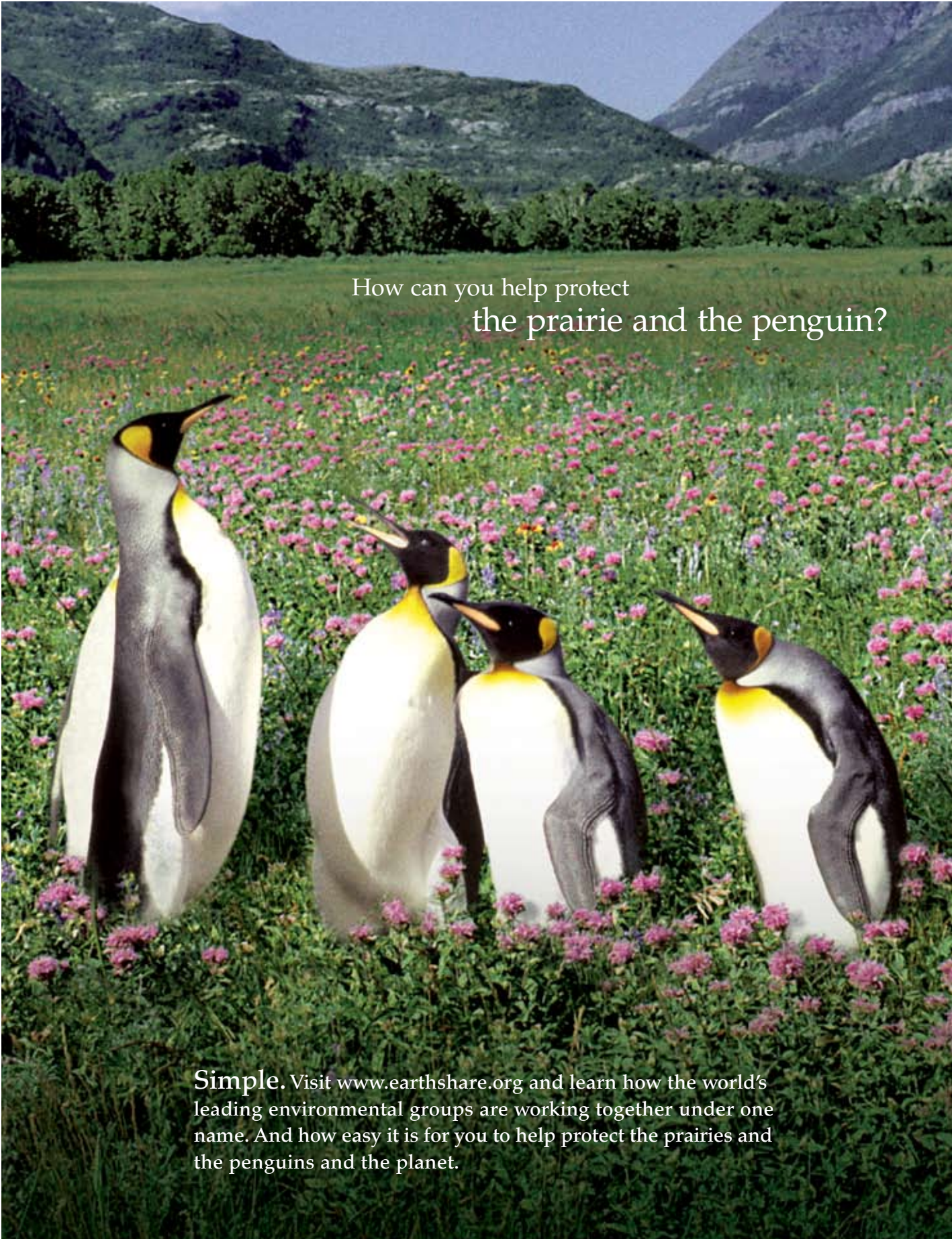
BY CHICKENSTAX CALHOUN

As U.S. and California health officials continue to scour Salina Valley spinach fields for the source of a massive outbreak of E. coli contamination, the Democrats believe the FDA would have better luck investigating a little further east.

"Anyone check Karl Rove's office lately?", Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer asked today, standing on the steps of the Capitol Building. When questioned what Karl Rove would stand to gain from a diaherrea-stricken American public Hoyer replied, "Come on now. Take a step back and look at the facts. One, women eat a lot of salad. Two, 75% of Americans who have been stricken with sickness are women, practically being handcuffed to their toilets. Three, historically, women tend to lean democratic in politics. Now you throw those three factors on top of the fact that the nation is gearing up for a crucial mid-term election where voter turnout is going to be key and well... you can do the math."

So what now? Hoyer suggests that husbands in Democratic leaning families get rid of any and all greens in the house until election day, pro-offering a meat and potatoes diet which Democrats believe will keep their voting base healthy. "Just remember this phrase: If it's green, it's not clean! Trust me, when she's in the voting booth rather than sitting on the toilet, your wife will be more than happy you were shoving sausage down her throat after you tossed her salad," Hoyer said as he concluded his remarks.

In response to Hoyer's remarks, the National League of Women replied
(continued on page 112)



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IF IT'S A BREAK, DON'T FIX IT!

BY: NORMAN MAYERS

There is nothing in the world like a breakbeat. That thick 808 bass with a snare that makes your ass pop and your neck snap is one of electronic music's simple pleasures. Despite some mainstream successes by the likes of The Chemical Brothers and The Crystal Method, the genre as a whole has never had the profile of trance or house. But things are changing. All around the globe, breaks are gaining momentum and it seems things are just getting started.

Breaks as a genre has its roots in hip-hop and soul. While the foundation was laid down by James Brown and his fellow funk pioneers, it was when Afrikaa Bambaataa's seminal "Planet Rock" gave birth to electro that things became even more interesting. Dynamix II pushed the breakbeat further with their classic "Give the DJ A Break," rooting the sound in cut and paste montages and signature scratching. As raves began to take hold in the 90s, various regions began to interpret this emerging

genre in bold new directions. Their untiring dedication has led to the popularity the genre enjoys today.

FLORIDA

The state of Florida will always be regarded as the home of funky breaks. Orlando's DJ Icey is often credited with creating the style by combining elements of classic funk, early hip-hop, Miami Bass, and the emerging dance/rave culture. This inventive sound caught on quick and today Florida has more artists than any other state that exclusively represent the Breakbeat and Electro sound, a sound punctuated by heavy bass, rapid edits, chopped-up vocals and samples, and slithering synths.

With high profile events during Miami's Winter Music Conference, a national tour, a mix compilation, and a partnership with Los Angeles based Insomniac, Florida promoters The Future Sound of Breaks (FSOB) are

representing a level of professionalism and production that hopes to elevate the entire breaks community. Glyn Morgan, the mind behind the Future Sound of Breaks says, "The FSOB crew has brought back life to the promotional end of the Breaks and Electro market stateside. While a lot of producers across the pond are consistently promoting themselves with creative marketing, the US market needed some life pumped into it. Our approach was to give the genre some credibility."

While Icey is one of the rare American breaks DJs to experience international success, as a result of the community's efforts, a brand new crop of DJs and producers are following in his illustrious footsteps, including Trevor Rockwell, Hydraulix, J-Break, and Ghosts in the Machine. "There are some great new Electro Bass outfits," Icey says. "Ghosts in the Machine, A.T.F., and Hydraulix out of South Florida are all set to rock it."

The true spirit of the movement is expressed through South Florida veteran DJ Storm who maintains, "We want to bring musical enlightenment to all audiences that haven't been exposed previously to the vibe or the sound. We want to keep this sound alive and known."

THE UNITED KINGDOM

Although Florida might be credited with the creation of the genre, the UK sound is the most dominant force on the international scene. As the birthplace of the dark and gritty sounds of drum and bass and trip hop, the UK interpreted breaks through its own unique prism. By incorporating newer production techniques pioneered by drum and bass producers, artists such as Rennie Pilgrem and Adam Freeland created a new scene that pushed breaks into the new century. The futuristic themes expressed by Nu Skool and UK breaks relate the forward-thinking philosophy



evident in most electronic music.

Pilgrim's London based label TCR is acknowledged as the label that started it all, creating the Nu Skool Breaks scene. The label was established in 1993 with a mostly house output, but interestingly enough after Pilgrim took a trip to Florida in 1994 he was enchanted by the breaks culture flourishing there. Since then, breaks have been the backbone of the label and the 1995 release "A Place Called Acid" became their first bonafide underground hit selling 15,000 units.

The UK's innovative style of breaks has spread across the globe thanks mostly to the relentless touring of international DJs and acts such as Pilgrim, Freeland, DJ Hyper, Hybrid, Plump DJs and Lee Coombs. The UK scene also boasts a tremendous number of excellent labels that consistently pump out high quality productions including Distinct'ive Breaks, Marine Parade, Bedrock Breaks and Ministry of Sound. The number of events, Internet

radio shows and websites coming out of the UK has also propelled their sound to the forefront representing a level of professionalism and promotion that has gone unmatched.

CALIFORNIA

Out of the legendary desert parties and the growing rave scene in the mid-90s emerged influential artists such as Simply Jeff, John Kelley, Uberzone, and the Crystal Method. Currently the Los Angeles scene is supported by the work of artists like Robtronik whose successful events Speed and Compression showcase the best in both breaks and electro. Long-standing promoters Insomniac, the minds behind such memorable and iconic events as Electric Daisy Carnival and Nocturnal Wonderland, also incorporate impressive breaks lineups into all their major events, supporting both homegrown and international talent.

"I think Cali breaks have always

embodied the freedom of the urban west coast lifestyle," says California desert party legend John Kelley. "It's both easygoing and intense at the same time."

San Francisco's eclectic urban sensibilities have also nurtured the breaks community in recent years. San Fran's DJ Aaron Jae contends that, "There's been a couple of new breaks dedicated promoters and they've been bringing out a lot more breaks headliners. Also, some of the more established promoters in the city have also begun to book breaks headliners."

WORKING TOGETHER

"Increased communication between DJs and promoters from different regions can only serve to benefit everyone involved," says Stuart Fingerhut, founder of influential breaks culture website Bijoubreaks.com. In order to raise awareness of the genre as a whole, partnerships are being forged

across regions and even oceans. Events such as the Winter Music Conference and Burning Man as well as high profile festivals such as Ultra Music Festival and Nocturnal Wonderland are allowing the international breaks community to redefine itself and create a diverse soundscape that is linked by a common goal. "There are talks of more creative concepts in the works from The Future Sounds of Breaks and Insomniac," promises Glynn Morgan of FSOB. "So rest assured, we are making efforts to take this coast to coast and worldwide in the days to come."

As the breaks community begins to grow, the sound is emerging in cities and countries around the globe. New York is on the rise, Berlin is holding down the electro vibe and Russia is making a name for itself (www.nubreaks.net). It's been a long time coming but it looks like the time for breaks has truly arrived.



PIECE

BY: MIKE THE POET

Kotori readers, We are the movement! Look beyond Hollywood, MTV & U.S. Weekly. The new beautiful is in your own backyard. It's not on the newsstands. The real superstars are the underground artists. In urban cities around the world dedicated artists are making their statements in technicolor. Technology has leveled the playing field. We are entering a creative renaissance. Visionaries around the world are hosting wicked art parties with vivid paintings, live music & explosive elements... Here's the WORD from Los Angeles, Las Vegas, San Francisco & New York City ...

CreWEST

7 blocks along Main & Spring in Downtown Los Angeles' historic core has been dubbed Gallery Row. 22 Art galleries have emerged in the area over the last 3 years. A favorite among the bunch is CREWEST. Founded 4 years ago by renowned artist Man One in Alhambra, he relocated in early 2006 to Downtown Los Angeles. Located on Main & Winston, Crewest is giving Gallery Row the raw street art it lacked. Man One puts it like this.... "We promote only the most talented underground artists, known and unknown, from the West Coast and beyond. From graffiti to digital art, from paint to sculpture, our art exhibits are focused on what's current, relevant, and happening now. Our purpose is to promote gifted artists who's work may be too edgy and non-conventional for other elitist venues. We cater to art that speaks to the heart and soul as well as the mind. We believe in bringing raw and powerful artwork to the people of Los Angeles." www.crewest.com

Cannibal Flower

The monthly art party Cannibal Flower was started by a group of friends to showcase art and music without having to deal with the politics of the conventional gallery. After close to 7 great years, the party has become world famous. Featuring art, music, dance, film, projections, magic and fashion shows, the consistent exceptional art & carnival vibe make the night quite a ride. The people are as wild as the art. Mear One, Lola, Nathan Spoor, Emi M. & dozens of others. Great music is always played from both live acts & deejays. Empresario, curator & mixmaster L.C. aka L. Crosky aka DJ Mr Number1derful is a bad man. His approach with Cannibal Flower is brilliant. He has given dozens of young artists their first break. His philosophy is, "If there's an artist that's truly passionate and dedicated to what they do, they deserve a chance to show it." The only people that hear "No" are the cocky ones. LC runs an art show with a soul. The formula of up-and-coming art stars along with more established artists make the line-up always dynamic. Add in some out there art bands & you got a serious art party. Cannibal Flower has even succeeded in getting shy LA Westsiders to come east to downtown to see what the buzz is all about. It's about art. Great paintings, cutting edge live music & a swinging dance floor to close out the night. www.cannibalflower.com

The Arts Factory

The Arts Factory in Las Vegas hosts equally swinging art party on the First Fridays of every month. The Arts Factory is a converted warehouse housing artists, architects, photographers & graphic designers. The space houses 5 galleries, a restaurant & a residence upstairs. Five Finger Miscount is Iceberg Slick's Gallery in the space & he's the one responsible for bringing in the crowds.. Iceberg Slick is an animator, curator & host extraordinaire. He's shown famous artists like MEAR ONE, Blaine Fontana, Alayna Magnan, Jason Rudolph Pena, RETNA, Amy Sol, RIB ONE & YEM. The art show on First Fridays in Vegas gets flooded with over 2,000 people. Who'd thought there would be an audience for art in Sin City? The Arts Factory's motto is "What happens in Vegas has nothing to do with us." www.theartsfactory.com

Sick & Loaded

Whether it be the Black Panthers, Jack London, E-40 or the Beat Generation, the Bay Area has always been a place for creative inspiration. San Francisco's "Muse Cru Collective" has been making a lot of noise with a monthly art party called SICK & LOADED. Sick and Loaded brings artists from around the world together, to connect one another, and to create community. Crystal Davis, Jenn Porreca, and Mike Boo started Sick and Loaded to unite the best in emerging visual artists, film, photography, and independent hip hop and turntablism. What started less than 2 years ago @ the Mission District's Hush Hush Lounge has now spread to Los Angeles, New York, London, and more. The Muse Cru today is a collective with dozens of musicians and artists. "We are art, we are film, we are music & we are photography. Our goal is to create a safe space for artists to connect with one another." www.jennporreca.com

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CREWEST & CANNIBAL FLOWER...



... LOS ANGELES, CA



The Girl in a Pinch

BY: BOB FREVILLE INSPIRED BY THE VIOLET FEWES ILLUSTRATION

I am not an early riser, but then again, I had never gone to sleep the night before. Which is probably why I felt the need to be there in the first place. Get that first drunk on before bugging off for another twenty-four hour run. I hadn't slept in awhile because I was under deadline at my day job and moonlighting for a magazine that was also facing crunch time. It was one of those breakneck periods that just doesn't let up until you do. And sometimes not even then.

She must have been sitting next to me the whole time. Like she materialized, but my eyes were half shut and I had missed it. Her mouth was agape and her big, disturbed eyes were off at some angle that didn't make a whole heap of sense. For a moment, I thought she had seen Jesus ascending from the Heavens or a spider monkey dangling from the rafters with a bottle of Captain Morgan's in his paws. But no, there was nothing up there.

So her eyes continued to wander, darting around like balls of amber overheating on a stove. She laid a slender finger down on the bar as if to point to the exact mark where her drink should be. The bartender was at the other end of the bar, chatting up some college concubines, so I slid my drink over to her.

She didn't notice it at first as she was busy counting aloud and chattering something incoherent.

"You look like a chick that received too much information in one blast," I said. "That's Bacardi, by the way."

She grabbed the glass up in her long and wild hands and knocked the thing back in one shot without breaking her feverish concentration. Perspiration began to collect on her oval face as she continued to mumble at a speed commensurate to those old Micro-Machines voice-overs.

"I'd give you a hanky for that sweat," I said. "Except you haven't even given me any acknowledgment."

"Yeah, yeah," she managed. "It's all coming apart. Might as well have a drink with a lady when the lady's already done for."

She spoke so fast and breathless that I almost slid off my barstool out of sheer upheaval. This crazy waif was undermining my composure. A drunk man cannot handle overload and I was beginning to feel like she was passing her inundation off on me. She was so screwed, so pressed for time and so goddamned vulnerable as to literally combust and now I was feeling it in my own chest.

In an effort to change the subject, I asked her what she did for a living. She laughed like a parrot and said something about an evil miser. "He's a shark," she said. "And he's just sharpened his teeth."

He had clearly done something to her, but her pained expressions and despair seemed to suggest that she had also done something to *herself*. Perhaps in simply allowing herself to become the prey to some vicious, low-rent creep with a willingness to kill or cripple for money he felt was owed to him.

She continued to ramble about how quick she needed to move on. She wouldn't say what it was that she had to perform to complete her tasks for the enigmatic Mr. Nameless boss man, but her wonky eyes swimming around in her hyper-nervous skull hinted that it wasn't going to be pretty.

But of course! All of us were there at eight thirty in the morning on those grounds. We were in the business of Ugly. And we needed a depressant, something to stifle the whirlpool, because the next step was all sorts of gruesome. Work is, after all, grotesque and self-inflicted, as a rule.

After I had taken one last look at her pale stems and handsome gown, I slammed my new glass down on the bar and nodded my head at her.

"Sorry," I exclaimed. "But I really don't have time for this. I gotta be off."

I flailed through the tiny crowd of morning slumps and hopped out into the blinding hatred of another day, leaving the harried girl and the melting clock in my wake. As I strolled away, I was overcome by a strange sense that she would be chasing me and, maybe, I'd be chasing her.





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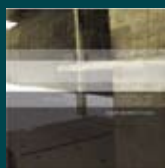


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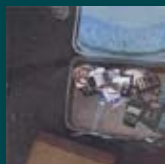


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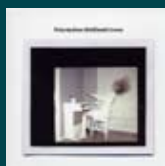
Ryuichi Sakamoto
Bricolages
(KAB America)

Ryuichi Sakamoto is the winner of Academy and Grammy awards as a composer of motion picture soundtracks, most notably Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Last Emperor*. Although finding favorable ranks with his film scores, his prolific creations have lead him to fusing over-simplified canons of music - acoustic, electronic, classical and non-classical- into beautiful landscapes of an imagined cinema. Cornelius, Fennesz, Alva Noto and ten other artists reshape, remodel, remix the seemingly endless possibilities of Sakamoto's prior album *Chasm* (2005) into simplicity and minimal design. The sounds are like open fields with patches of flora designating all the variety of genres the album mixes. One of the best releases so far this year. [Steezo]



The Jonbenét
ugly/heartless
(Pluto Records)

It's brilliant sometimes when the name is the claim to fame. The timing couldn't be more right for playing on everyone's fevered curiosity. However, this four-member band from Houston gives you almost exactly what you might expect: scary rock n' roll. You can also be sure their live shows are what it's all about. Screaming, heavy riffs, and punk rock menace... They're in that school of Blood Brothers and Dillinger Escape Plan and even got some Rage Against the Machine. Expect to see them soon on the roster of the big traveling festivals. Definitely be on tabs with this band. [Dr. Ghil]



Frida Hyvönen
Until Death Comes
(Secretly Canadian)

A Swedish girl and a keyboard. Like it so far? Pretty voice and pretty melodies. How about now? Dark lyrics and deep folk. So far so good? Don't expect it to be that Tori Amos crap though. Even I am rather fond of this album, and I'm not really into the girl and piano thing usually. Maybe I am and I haven't heard enough of the combo but I like this one. She's finally peeking out of her native Sweden where she is apparently loved. Can't explain it but she's got that cute and dark thing. If you're into death metal don't pick this one up, it's gonna disappoint you, but if you're into Pippi Longstocking and Anne Sexton-esque poetry you'll love it. [Dr. Steve]



00100
Taiga
(Thrill Jockey Records)

Without a doubt this is possibly one of the greatest finds in an independent label's releases. From the first moment of the album to the last you will be lifted from the ground and taken straight

into an abyss of sound so deep you will literally drown. This from four Japanese girls throwin' down the tribal beats while screaming and chanting to wailing guitars and noise. It's a call to nature with bangin' rock tones and abstract loveliness. It's psychedelia and soda pop. Primitive and futuristic. [Big Bad Bass]



Nina Simone
Remixed and Reimagined
(Legacy/RCA)

It's easy to see just by the line up of contributing remixers on this album how Nina Simone's influence spreads far and wide among contemporary musicians. What are considered to be Simone's 13 definitive tracks are given the velocity of soulful dance, grooves and breaks by such producers as François K, Coldcut, Groovefinder, DJ Logic, and others. Definitely unclassifiable, these remixes realize Simone's unending potential in all the realms of recent genres and those still to come. If you had never heard of Nina Simone (really unlikely), you would think she would be on tour this year with this release. [The Asian Dude]



Me First & The Gimme Gimmes
Love Their Country
(Fat Wreck Chords)

The concept is novel enough to inspire raucous laughter: legendary modern punk super-group applying their obnoxious & undeniable sense of humor/style to country-western classics. But like everything else Me First & The Gimme Gimmes have done under the auspices of Fat Wreck, *Love Their Country* doesn't limit itself to the gimmick or the cheap laugh. They mix straight punk with gifted musical arrangement and loving tributes.

The opening track gets 'em rolling immediately with its polished orchestration and impressive harmonies. And the transition into its speedier portion is seamless. "On The Road Again" is performed in such a way that it seems like it was written for punk breakbeats and shredding guitar. And that's no small feat when held up against the untouchable Willie Nelson original. [Bob Freville]



TM Juke
Forward
(Ubiquity Records)

Forward opens in a vacuum of auditory currents, then bursts across a universe of buzzing constellations and tribal stimulations that eventually collapse in on a listless drumbeat. And just when you think the show has already sputtered out before it got started the peddle kicks up the steady and we are launched into "Damn," the single-worthy lament of TM and guest vocalist Kinny.

This is how he grinds the listener's preconceived notions into slop. Because you neglected to consider the groove that is going to lunge out and snatch you up before you get a chance to walk away disappointed with the build up.

Standouts include the delectably nostalgic wet bar formula of "Come Away" and "Life, Rain, Fall," which swells with an electric life that is beautifully gutter. And we all know what Oscar Wilde said about being in the gutter. [Michael Spring]



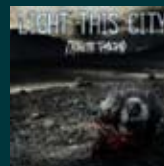
Ensemble
Ensemble
(Fat Cat Records)

After five long years, Olivier Hardy's ensemble makes its release with a slew of guest performers including Cat Power, Lou Barlow, Adam Pierce...laid back, melancholy with that real low feel...distant sounds of landscapes where there the wind softly blows pussy willows in the dark while fireflies leave fleeting glowing trails of lights that resemble musical notes. Most of these are songs for the empty road, an in-between path between the feeling of yearning and the anxious reach of desire only an inch away...beautiful songs, beautiful voices... a beautiful dive into deep blue contemplation. [Steve Ghil]



Four Tet
Remixes
(Motormouth Media)

This first disc of this 2 CD release combines the past six years of Kieren Hebden's various remixes. Each track is handpicked by Hebden bringing the listener his interpretations and playful musings of such artists as Radiohead, Aphex Twin, Madvillain and beyond. Don't expect to recognize any of these tracks in their original context as each is stripped down and given the minimalist folktronic sounds. Percussions scatter like marbles spilt on a linoleum floor and melodies are imbued with warm hues. The second disc collects every remix ever produced of Four Tet's own work, some tracks having been previously unavailable. This release is not just for fans, but will bring in new listeners to regard remixing as much an art as buttpaste, because buttpaste is beautiful... [Konichiwa Bitches]



Light This City
Facing The Thousand
(Prosthetic Records)

Female fronted hard rock bands have become a growing trend in the typically male-dominated spectrum. From bands like Lacuna Coil to Flyleaf, women have been making tremendous advances in this type of music and have been succeeding well.

Then we have Laura Nichol, a pioneering front lady in the world of death metal. Her voice, both lyrically and vocally, adds a new dynamic to this genre where few women have even endeavored, let alone succeeded. All of the songs have been written by Nichol and feature fantastic twin guitars of Brian Forbes and Steve Hoffman. The album opens with the thundering double bass work of Ben Murray on the title track. Stand outs on the album include "Fear of Heights" (featuring



Trevor Strnad of The Black Dahlia Murder), "The Unwelcome Savior," and "Tracks of Decay." [Joseph Russo]



Rub-n-Tug
Fabric 30
(Fabric)

Fabric compilation releases are always worth a listen, if not worth playing all the way through in a club scenario. This latest is no exception. Nothing too heady in here...just 13 tracks to keep you dancing or at least bobbing your head while watching the skimpy clad girls shake their assets till morning come. Rub-n-Tug is known in the circuits, ok infamous, for their nostalgic disco parties inviting that seductive milieu of glistening sweat and glittering lights. Get the picture? A definitive party soundtrack from high school keggers to polish weddings to videotaping yourself dancing violently and letting the world see it on YouTube. It covers it all. [Steezo]



Black Sheep
8WM/Novakane
(BumRushRec)

Few musicians can hold their relevancy for 10+ years, let alone go more than that between albums and stay as potent. A lot of times, they end up sounding like a "comeback," with reflections on life that get lost on the listener. But Black Sheep has pulled it off. Sure, there is a softer side to this album as opposed to their last LP, but even the silky tracks have insightful lyrics, hinting that Black Sheep has not grown lame with age. If anything, they're as strong and germane as they ever were.

And they still rock the badass nasty pimp shit, all the while promoting safe sex like good role models. [Tommy Digital]



The Duke Spirit
Cuts Across The Land
(IOOg Records)

Not since the days of Babes in Toyland, Patti Smith and L7 has a female lead in a punk outlet come off as so genuinely afflicted. Songs like "Stubborn Stitches" may sound somewhat familiar, even generic in their construction, but the troubadour at their command emotes with an affected range that hits you like a belly flop into an empty pool.

Drugs may have some hand in this ("A dragon's tongue lashing out...I'm a nightmare"), or maybe it's a mainline dose of PJ Harvey that's responsible; cause is moot. The Duke Spirit has spirit in spades and songs like "Bottom of the Sea" will hoist you onto that Wave of Mutilation you've been wet for. [Bob Freville]



30 Seconds to Mars
A Beautiful Lie
(Virgin)

This album moved units because Jared Leto is the lead singer, he makes young girls—and, probably, many M.I.L.F.s—wet...and their first single was Emo at its most simple and most infectious.

The same could be said of the titular track, if only there wasn't that off-putting and anachronistic arcade effect in the intro. Then there's "From Yesterday" which hooks you with its U2-esque opening before sputtering out. Am I getting wretchedly old or is this boy screaming for absolutely no reason?

A powerful LP if you can get past the plastic and pretend you're sixteen. [Frob Beville]



Chris Thile
How To Grow A Woman From The Ground
(Sugar Hill Records)

The *Cold Mountain* boys would weep over the dexterously-orchestrated compositions on Thile's LP. And the opening track, a multi-textured banjo bacchanalia, would cause Frank Zappa's musical mojo to shrivel like celery left in the sun.

Thile's cover of Jack White's "Dead Leaves & the Dirty Ground" is sharp and fluid, bringing an organic and nostalgic beauty to the song that runs circles around some of White's greatest material.

The mandolin-driven hymns and dirges that comprise these 14 tracks club you in the eustachian tubes and cry, "Where the fuck has bluegrass been all this time?!" It has been on the lips and in the fingertips of the mad German named Chris Thile. [Bob Freville]



Die Princess Die
Lions Eat Lions
(Gold Standard Laboratories)

If Black Flag and Ministry and The Melvins had never existed and, furthermore, if it suddenly became attractive to make plangent, impossibly repetitive music with virtually incomprehensible lyrics/vocals, then (and only then) would Die Princess Die be embraced by the punk zeitgeist as brilliant or tolerable.

But if you can skip through their initial freakouts and make it to the grinding orgasm of "The Racer" and similar whirling punkcore epics, then you will find that *Lions Eat Lions* is not all that different from the groundbreaking punk classics you devoured in the early-80's when it was far less trendy to whine, wail, spit and convulse than it is today. The glittery bestiality-tinged cover art is a nice bonus as well. [Michael Spring]



Pepper
No Shame
(Atlantic Recordings)

It may feature some of the cheesiest lyrics to date ("And when you try and measure my respect, girl, you can't use a ruler anyway"), but Pepper's packin' something exciting with their latest LP. Picking up where Sublime and Jimmy's Chicken Shack left off, they take their island-influenced ska-rock to impressive heights.

When they sing, "The money's always gone," it comes across less as a failed attempt at slumming it up and more as a groovy indictment of Capitalism gone wrong. The flow on songs like "No Control" are miraculous and as good

as anything in the annals of Ska history.

There's even a power ballad about the unexpressive girl and the inability to impress the unrequited ("Your Face") that rocks. Sublime tricks by a magical group that are a grade above any cover band. [Bob Freville]



Spanky Wilson & The Quantic Soul Orchestra
I'm Thankful
(Ubiquity Records)

This stuff makes me smile. Really makes me crack the Laced facade and just smile. As if The Quantic Soul Orchestra wasn't enough, they had to go and bring in one of the most legendary blues and jazz vocalists of our 'good ol' day to grace the 10 cuts with her presence: Spanky Wilson. Her chilling wails and warranted accusatory admissions on "A Woman Like Me" contrasts comfortably with her longing sensuality in "Waiting For Your Touch."

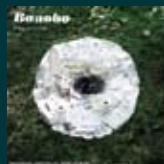
All of this soulful rhythm and blues lipservice coming from such a seasoned veteran plays damn testament to the fact that the legacies of the real talents of yesteryear will continue to be carried on by those fortunate enough to absorb their priceless value. At this moment, one of those entities that are giving their due props are the Quantic Soul Orchestra, who throw Wilson right in the midst of a soulful blues-exploding swing and speed-jazz fusion...and they all come out victorious. Ubiquity's on fire this year... [WAM]



The Vulcan Freedom Fighters
Stardate Unknown

Considering I couldn't even tell you what that contraption that lets you disintegrate and appear elsewhere is called, I can hardly be considered a 'trekkie.' But I must say, if this is the shit they're dropping in the clubs up on that planet (which I can't name either), then by goddamn call me an earth-expatriat.

Everything from live drumming with a jungle rhythm, heavy metal riffs reminiscent of AC/DC and Rage Against the Machine, and crazy old skool sampled vocal haunts (I'm assuming mostly from Star Trek commodore?) intertwined with sonic landscapes encompassing old City of Angels acid-disco-house bumps as well as jazzy downbeats and wild west harmonica-in-the-distance melodies creeping in and out from right tweeter to left. And after the first track, there's still 21 more. [WAM]



Bonobo
Days to Come
(Ninja Tune Records)

Organic electronics. Earthy industrialization. Gritty fluidity. Simon Green, aka Bonobo, drops his third album, and the fine tuning of his craft couldn't be better displayed than in the 11 tracks that make up *Days to Come*. It certainly doesn't hurt to employ the vocal gift that is Bajka on four of those tracks, the strongest being the title track, in which the rough edge of her matter-of-fact seductive street smarts melt naturally into the sweet and smooth underbelly of Green's minimalist complexity. Fans of Roysopp will appreciate

the fantasy-inducing atmosphere and spiritual enticement just as much as fans of Erykah Badu will fall helplessly into the vacuum of danceable beats and transcendent beauty of the productions. [WAM]



American Watercolor Movement
It Takes Fifteen Minutes to Tango in my Book, What Book Do You Read?

From the sound of it, American Watercolor Movement could turn a paintbrush into a musical instrument. There is such a mixture of sounds, they are nothing short of musical scientists. The lyrics are as intriguing and frustrating as the music itself feels. Like any good book or movie, you have to listen to this album more than once to find your groove within it. I found mine within the transition of "It Takes Fifteen to Tango" and "Flowers for "Catalan." [KellieAnn Armitage]



Morrow Choral Orchestra
The Designed Disorder

They're takin' a chance, but I'll be damned if it's not for nothing. Morrow Choral Orchestra drop some minimal

future techno that touches on everything from the atmospherical circuit-board downbeat crackle to the broken rhythm of an industrial complex ambushed by semi-conductors on acid. Tracks like Ben Milstein's "Neglnvfac W/ Logreybeam" and RD's "Ribbon" play like the soundtrack to a haunting lonely post-apocalyptic global journey. A journey in search of any remaining signs of organic life in the midst of a fizzled diode rich world. Meanwhile, just when you had lost just about all hope, Machine Drum's "GCel" leads you out from the dark and introspective and thrusts your soul into a glorious rendezvous with an eternal sunshine in cuts like "Southern Belle." You can't make moving music with electronics? Whosaidthat???? [WAM]



The Curtains
Calamity
[Asthmatic Kitty]

It's not the worst album I've heard, but it's nowhere by any means the best. While

the guitars had a certain 60's quality (definitely a bonus), the songs on a whole seemed to be trying to hard to be original and unique sound, but not trying hard enough to be very good. This is The Curtains' fourth album since they got together in 2001, so they certainly have something going for them, but perhaps next time they'll try harder to just let themselves be themselves and give me an album I can get with. [Sue G.]



DJ Soul Slinger
Classics, Part 1
(Bohemian Productions)

As the seductive female chanted, "I remember...when jungle had a soul..." the funk

guitar and smooth and calculated ascension before dropping into the dusty blip and bleep and hypnotizing sample tinged garage drum and bass arrangements that DJ Soul Slinger, the founder of 'rave emporium' Liquid Sky and of mega-music festival ECOSYSTEM

(along with Greenpeace), has been known for throughout his career. If you're a jungle fan, you've heard these tracks before, but perhaps in that day and age, due to certain understandable conditions and circumstances, you were in no condition to remember. This is a damn good way to have it all back in one unforgettable place. This record is nothing fancy, nothing new, nothing particularly groundbreaking, but then again, its not meant to be, for that would only dilute the true intentions behind *Classics, Part 1*...to remind us of the days of jungle's soul. [WAM]



Max Richter
Songs From Before
(Fat Cat Records)

This is what classical compositions sound like in a day and age netted in the

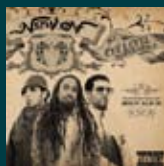
destruction of human convergence. If real artists' works are truly influenced by the atmosphere and surroundings they find themselves in, then Max Richter does not promise to be the ball of positive bubbly energy that the world so desperately needs, but he certainly paints a magnificent and masterful aural collage of what life might sound like if we didn't pay attention and fix some shit frickin' asap! Not many classical composers can count credits that cross such extreme genres, but as a founding member of Piano Circus, Richter's work has been showcased in one way or another by everyone from Roni Size to The Future Sound of London. His atmospheric readiness to jump genres further ensures his place in our generation's musical history...that is, of course, if anyone survives to remember it... [WAM]



Michael Viner's The Incredible Bongo Band
Bongo Rock
(Mr. Bongo Records)

A percussive blast to the senses. A drum jolt to the

heart. An electro funkified soul slapper that'll make you swear you've felt this shit in your bone marrow before...and by golly, you sure have!! Tracks like their cover of The Shadow's "Apache," which has been sampled by Kool Herc, Grandmaster Flash, Goldie, Moby, Run-DMC, The Beastie Boys, Massive Attack (do you really need more?) alongside needle droppers like "Dueling Bongos," "Bongo Rock," and "Okey Dokey," this is a must-own collection of classic tracks by a legendary group originally sanctioned to score a 1972 B film. Funny how the movie is forgotten, but the beats will forever be a mainstay in any and all music since and after. Is this one available on vinyl??? Bring it! [WAM]



Now On
Eye Level
(Kajmere Sound Recordings)

At 40 oz. Sound recording studios out in Ann Arbor, Michigan, the Now On

emcees- IX Lives, Jackson Perry and DJ Haircut-teamed up with The Lab Technicians' production team to show that there's a rebirth of the dying art form of original music production, lyrics and recording that's traditional to Detroit soul and the original hip-hop culture. These funky futuristic "sky children" use the composition of the melody's and rhythms together with scratches from DJ Haircut of

American Mic League (AML), and additional lyrics from Speech (Arrested Development), and the Mack Open after school program kids to take you to another place, where only hip-hops' elite dwell. Put this in and you'll be listening to it, from Now On. [Drumacide]



War of Ages
Pride Of The Wicked
(Facedown Records)

So, I got this CD and popped it in. Every song has amaaaazing intros!! In this

10 song blessing from Facedown Records there's: group chants ala Suicidal Tendencies, traditional hardcore double-bass stomping, cymbal bashing, ya know- a throat-curdling yelling, growling, speed-llick fest! Thar be no sangin' here! I almost missed it at first, but then I was like "Now waaaaaaait a minute, what tha? THERE'S NO SATAN IN THIS MUSIC!!" OOOOh, it's like, spiritual "hardcore." They want you to be positive, and be down with The [PPC] (yes, with brackets) which is their Positively Positive Crew. Well, have fun with it guys! [Drumacide]



Common Market
Common Market
[SCIONtific Records]

This album is a must hear! It had me from hello...I mean the first track is a little bit

jazzy, little bit R&B, little bit hip-hop. With a soft sound it's a highly enjoyable album to listen to! Very Kanye West! And this is music with a message, not your normal "bitches and hoes" lyrical message. The horns they have going on in the background give their music a nice break-up to any kind of monotonous beat. It's not just the same old sound. The track called "Love One" was inspiring giving tribute to his family. Something that isn't sung about often enough! [Sue G.]



Count Bass D
Act Your Waist Size
(Fat Beats Records)

With the smooth voice and delivery of Common and the rare ability to play his own

musical instruments like Alicia Keys times ten, Count Bass D is truly a diamond in the rough. Working with the likes of Victor Wooten, Van Hunt, Prefuse 73, the Beastie Boys and MF Doom, Count Bass D already has the respect of his fellow musicians. The album, *Act Your Waist Size*, will prove to expand hip-hop's already rising horizon. With his signature boom-bap and instrumental tracks, Count Bass D steps it up and sings a self-written ballad. This is definitely a big contribution to the hip-hop world. [Diana Richardson]



Asphalt Jungle
Junglization
(Bohemian Productions)

What would Halie Selassie thought of this? Asphalt Jungle's pleasantly orchestral

drum and bass take on Bob Marley's "Mr.Brown" is ample evidence to the Emmy award-winning production team's commendable playful talents. Anyone that can throw down orchestral string lines

and rough almost death metal-esque single chord power riffs ("Athena") 10 minutes before moving into transcendental emotion-inducing eastern chants and wails splattered with jazzy sax lines and horns ("Karma Sutra") and back again into Guns N' Roses reminiscent axe solos and riffs ("Wicked Jack") is goddamn worth listening...and sure as hell dancing...to. *Asphalt Jungle* is at the top of their game, and *Junglization* is at the top of the scoreboard. Drop a needle on deezzz beatzzzz. [WAM]



DJ Wally & DJ Willie Ross
Mrs. Miller's House
(The Agriculture)

For the hip-hop heads out there looking for a Halloween treat, then *Mrs.*

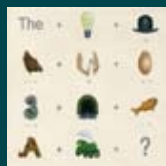
Miller's House is worth checking out. DJ Wally and DJ Willie Ross weave a horror story through wicked beats and the occasional drop of scary sounds. This mix screams of diversity with Trip-Hop, jungle, beats and down tempo influences. With a combination of hip-hop instrumentals and old school soundtracks that will leave your little trick-or-treaters grooving from your door to the street; *Mrs. Miller's House* will not disappoint the true beat loving, Halloween crazy peeps. [Diana Richardson]



Califone
Roots and Crowns
(Thrill Jockey Records)

Savvy and imaginative... that's one way to describe Califone. An awe-inspiring

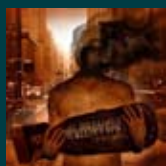
display of diversity and experience. Truly masters of their own domain. The talent just oozes out the speakers..... An esoteric loneliness only achieved through times near and far. A mysterious blend of comfort and confusion. "A Chinese Actor" blends together an array of sounds and distortions... with more of an upbeat, free-based modulation. "Pink and Sour" has more of the native drums as a beat.. Like you should be dancing around a fire on the beach while dressed in a grass skirt.... Well skirt is optional.... Either way you can't go wrong with this album. Well worth the investment for a cd you will be listening to for a long time coming... [Dirty Jerz]



Whitey
The Light At The End Of The Tunnel Is A Train
(Dim Mak Records)

Gotta love the guy named Whitey who sulks in the dark

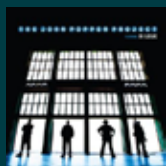
corners of our minds. An amphetamine induced dementia.....so to speak. Makes you feel like your doing something sinister...but in a good way!!!! The U.K.'s traffickers of electro-rock. N.J. WHITEY and his dark dealers of delerium..... An audio trip in and out of the subconscious.... A talented bunch with range and depth....I'm thinking special k, anyone?!? "Leave Them All Behind" exploits the chemically enhanced state of euphoria invoked in the memories spared through out the mesmerizing drums and sequencers as they progress through audio rapture..... "The Light at the End of the Tunnel is a Train" is an inventive engagement of style and sound. A powerful flounce into the mellow, 60's type feel with a dark cloud above. [Dirty Jerz]



Bloodlined Calligraphy
Ypsilanti
(Facedown Records)

Bloodlined Calligraphy's Ally French should certainly take a bow as one of metalcore's

female pioneers. The band's sophomore album is a brutal mix of style and range, bringing in sounds reminiscent of Himsa and old-school Metallica. This band infuses both of these styles and knocks down walls to create their own, unique vision of dark rock with a positive twist. The best song on the album, "It Can't Rain All The Time," blends their aggressive style with refrains of soulful vocals. Standouts on the album include "From Here on Out," "Ashes to Ashes," and the title that brought a smile to my face, "If Heaven Is A Lot Like Ypsi, I Don't Want To Go." [Joseph Russo]



The John Popper Project
Featuring DJ Logic
(Relix Records)

Like the Dave Mathews Band, but really good!! The funky blues sounds grab

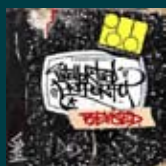
you right from the get go. Jamming guitars with DJ Logic cutting it up as a back drop. Creative and well developed....a hybrid of talented individuals from various musical backgrounds, all just jamming together in a harmonious, synchronous, melodic, funky collaboration. "Morning Light" is harmonica heavy... with Logic dropping jazz infused beats, Popper's powerful vocals...like a painter and his brush, as are these guys and their instruments. "Lapdance" has a funkified seventies feel.... An interwoven blend of funk, jazz blues and rock. Thankfully for music fans there are still musicians out there looking to broaden their musical scopes and join forces and talents to produce a one of a kind sound and experience. [Dirty Jerz]



Bobby Bare Jr.'s Young Criminals Starvation League
The Longest Meow
(Bloodshot Records)

The band of merry music makers lead by their enigmatic

leader have rewarded the fans with yet another installment of the ever-evolving sounds of Bobby Bare Jr.'s Young Criminals Starvation League. This blues-rock kinship out of Nashville Tennessee has a sound as rare as is the talent which comprises the core elements of this musical progression. While ranging in style and sound, the eccentric, almost beatnik vibe stays true through out. "Borrow Your Cape" is a track fitting for the troubled times we as humans find ourselves stuck in. "Demon Valley" is a playful melody; it projects a sense of happiness...almost enough to overlook the weighty lyrics...With the lack of musical talent that has been making it's way to my mailbox, it's refreshing to find an album that you can just press play and be done with. [Dirty Jerz]



Intellekt & Dirty Digits
Intellektual Property
(ATF Records)

The up and coming white boys from the east coast!! South East to be specific.

These cats are good. Reinforcing what hip-hop is

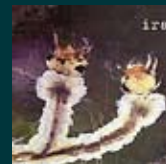
all about. Pure and clean, just 2 guys having a good time, really enjoying what they do. Feel good and frolicsome. Intellekt flows smooth, bustin down lyricism that has been missing from the scene for a minute...a breath of fresh air for the hip-hop community. On top of that, Dirty Digits cuts it up on the decks. Scratching masterfully with skill and precision....it's almost like he can make them speak. "On My Day Off" is a care free rhyme about getting high, then gives way to DD burning up the vinyl. "Phenom.Mental" is probably the most talked about track on the album. A well crafted track to say the least. It puts a spotlight on why this talented duo is branding the hip-hop world with its name. [Dirty Jerz]



The Low Frequency In Stereo
The Last Temptation Of...
(Gigantic Music)

Lo-Fi rockers from Norway. Unconventional for this side

of the pond. Nonetheless, a style unique and unparalleled. It's psychedelic rock meets surfer rock, something that belongs in a *Pulp Fiction* movie. Mellow & velvety in sound, a smoothness that just creates a fluid, intoxicating musical experience. A good cross section of instruments and sounds...blended together with the master wand of the magical wizard. "Bahamas" is reminiscent of sitting in my bedroom tripping on acid while listening to The Doors in my head phones. "The Challenger" is more upbeat, yet still keeps the same richness and fluidity. Although there are only 8 tracks on the album, the quality of the tracks make up for it. Now who knows the capital of Norway? [Dirty Jerz]



Ira
The Body and the Soil
(Go-Kart Records)

The Body and the Soil is all there and has the potential to be much more. Pros: Their

melodic sound resembles a modern marriage between Coldplay and Tool, if you can imagine that. Their solo guitarist obviously has golden fingers and it shows. Another plus are the lyrics, poetic without being too sappy. Cons: Songs are too long or not long enough. Transition music is great for moving from one song to the next, but not so much in this case. Many of the songs' beginnings sound like they should be the prior song's end, which makes for a bad shuffle CD. The album, only being nine tracks, needs to have some separation, I say give each track its own personality and find a happy medium with the length. In any case, Ira has the potential to be a great musical experience; I hope to hear more from them. [Mia Vega]



Nocturnal Ron
Beat Lovers Vol 2
(Cold Medina Recordings)

Native Los Angeles producer, Nocturnal Ron's newest musical conquest *Beat Lovers*

Vol. 2 seamlessly fuses together this extensive 34 track instrumental album. Ron leaves nothing untouched here. *Beat Lovers* hits on a truly wide array of musical sounds, styles and genres that range from cool blues beats to searing funky rhythms. He even threads in a few movie sound effects and famous one liners from the likes of Tom Cruise. Nocturnal Ron's grasp on musical diversity within this

album makes his tracks fresh, inventive and three dimensional. *Beat Lovers* scores big with tracks like "4:38 am" and "Habibi Snuck a Gun In The Disco." [Morgan Tharp]



Tussle
Telescope Mind
(Smalltown Supersounds)

It just grooves...and that's really all it was meant to do, and let me tell you...

in this case, there's certainly nothing wrong with that. Tussle's *Telescope Mind* is completely devoid of a single lyric, a single word, a single vocal utterance, and that vacuum is filled with a sound palate comprising 12 seriously hypnotic jams. With hints of the White Stripes vs. Galactic, Parliament vs. Farina, Chili Peppers vs. the Dead, the organic percussions, tribal rhythms, consistently captivating basslines, and the repetitive rock guitars a'wailin, these cats seem like gettin' warmed up to throw down some righteous shit! Burning Man anyone? [WAM]



Richard Dorfmeister vs. Madrid De Los Austrias
Grand Slam
(G-Stone Recordings)

These are trademark Dorfmeister diddies. Team

him up with Viennese duo Madrid De Los Austrias and we get smooth, sunny, and silky house beats cruisin' by at a tempo comfortable enough for the outdoor terrace, the beach, the pool, the dance-floor, the bbq, the car, the headphones, work, play, just about anywhere. While comprised mostly of material originating from the trio, *Grand Slam* also features a few noteworthy remixes including those of Zero 7's "In The Waiting Line" and Groove Armada's "My Friend." If you're looking for the perfect chillingaxing downtempo beatz...this one's a *Grand Slam*. [Carlos Herrera]



Visionaries
We Are the Ones (We've Been Waiting For)
(Up Above Records)

Straight up GANGSTA beats! Slammin' like the

way bass was meant to be tweaked, like they're thumping out of worn-out 6x9's in a 1991 Lumina. Badass tunes on this, *Visionaries'* 4th release, mixed and produced by a wicked horde of cats: DJ Khali, KeyKool, Dilated People's Rakka Riscience, Brand Nubian's Sadat X, X-Clan's Brother J, and DJ Rhettmatic are but a few on the roster here, bringing back sounds circa NWA, but with a New Millennium flair. Mark my words: we will be hearing jams from this record in the background of many kick-ass movies in the next few years, as testament to this moment in time. This is hip-hop now. [Tommy Digital]



Sol.I.Laqui's of Sound
As If We Existed
(Anti / Epitaph)

If Sage Francis is the man that helped introduce these cats to a home on Epitaph, then by golly, we had better listen. Gettin' down with DiViNCI's beats, MC Swamburger's righteous

flows and Tonya Combs and Alexandrah Sarton's deeply spiritual harmonic melodies is no difficult task. While *As If We Existed* ponders our seemingly questionable impact on the forces that be, opening track "Pledge of Resonance" is quick to poetically point out that as we navigate our way through the maze of active vibrations that define sound, no one can take action away from us. Then it drops into some dusty drum and bass and hip-hop. Fuckin' sick! *As If We Existed* is the strongest and most meaningful debut record by any group I've heard in quite some time. Definitely tough to ignore their existence. [WAM]



Hybrid
I Choose Noise
(Distinctive)

The prolific and gifted electronic eruption of Hybrid comes to us on disc

in the form of "I Choose Noise," an animatronic, ultra-sonic digital ejaculation that mixes up their trademark batter with the fluid vocal lathering of Perry Farrell and other top notch guests (including Judy Tzuke and the near omnipresent John Graham).

One would think that Harry Gregson Williams—who sharpened his teeth scoring movies like *Shrek* and *Chronicles of Narnia*—would be making music under the Hybrid imprimatur that would find him in a musically distant place from his theatrical work. On the contrary, "I Choose Noise" reaches cinematic heights seldom achieved in realms beyond the movie theater. The crescendos are sweet and the beats pulsate with a sexual determination.

"Hooligan Spirit" confirms the inflammation, "Until Tomorrow" rebuilds the scorched power strip. And every song in between brings the noise we want to hear. [Michael Spring]



Thunderball
Cinescope
(ESL Records)

It's not hard to see why Thievery Corporation's Eighteenth Street Lounge

Records picked up this gem. From the opening track, "The Road To Benares" the familiar crisp clear worldly sounds, rhythms, and patterns infect one ear while the other is preoccupied with discerning the sexy groovetacular bass-lines and well-cultured strings and percussion. Everything from touches of Tosca ("ChicaChiquita") to hints of Groove Armada ("Get Up With The Get Down") to the jazzy fun-guy of Mark Farina ("Lost Vagueness") is evident in this sucka, and they do it with masterful precision. *Cinescope* will continue convincing a lot of swingin' hips to keep sweatin'. [Carlos Herrera]



ESL
ESL Remixed: The 100th Release of ESL Music
(Eighteenth Street Lounge Music)

Masterful re-workings of ESL classics new and old is the theme of this gem, which just so appropriately happens to be the 100th release on the label owned by Eric Hilton and Rob Garza of Thievery Corporation. With appearances from some of the illest international beat-pirates around

including Medeski, Martin & Wood, Beatfanatic, Calexico, Boca 45, Fort Knox Five, Shawn Lee and more, this is truly the ultimate anytime, anywhere compilation. Eighth Street Lounge has becoming the premier go-to label for all things funky and will no doubt continue to deliver. There's a reason they've managed to stick around for 10 years, and ESL Remixed is just a small, but satisfying, taste of that reason. DO NOT SLEEP on this one! [J Tizzle]

BOOKS



Tattooed Walls
Photographs by:
Peter Rosenstein
Words by: Isabel Bau Madden
(The University Press of Mississippi)

Look at all the purty colors! I fuckin' love this shit! No over-extended interpretations and quasi-intellectual gibberish. Just straight up pieces! Keepin' it to real graffiti. Large pictures and minimal captions. And Bau Madden and Rosenstein go well beyond just writing or tagging, they get into the expressive culture that so vibrantly permeates throughout the streets of New York. The facts alone that this could easily double as a coffee-table book and that I've been to at least 3 art gallery openings in the past two months alone showcasing graffiti art can't help but nurture excited thoughts that...wow...it's about time...the world is actually and finally paying attention. You want real art, fuck the wine and cheese and the small time Sophie's, hit the biggest art galleries in the world...the streets (or pick up *Tattooed Walls*). [WAM]

LIVINGROOM JOHNSTON



I Don't Want To Think About It Right Now
Livingroom Johnston
(Magic Propaganda Mill Books)

Born in the Bronx as Jamal Simmons, the writer known as Livingroom Johnston is an emerging literary giant. His new book, *I Don't Want To Think About It Right Now*, is fierce. At 120 pages the

prose rips a la Fante, Bukowski or Himes. It's that autobiographic fiction done so well by Henry Miller & a few gifted others. Johnston has the same golden touch of minimalism. He tells the story in as few words as possible, but he tells it ever so well.

Set in modern New York City, the book follows the life of Harlem Farfromsquare, a simple man on a comical journey hustling for jobs, chasing women & everyday living.

Johnston's writing makes you feel like you're in the room taking shots with him & Harlem. [Mike The Poet]



The Southlander, Vol. 2
www.thesouthlander.com

This second edition of the scholarly/literary journal is an awesome collection of prose, poetry and essays celebrating life in Long Beach, CA. There are several articles that focus in strong detail not only problems and suffering of those in poverty,

but also how to solve poverty in Long Beach. Contributors include a wide pot of minds, such as Mike the poet, Tyler Reeb, Alan Rifkin, Sarah Cruse, (Visionarie's) LMNO, and DJ Waldie. From fleshed-out reports to ground-breaking poetry to articles on the likes of Saul Williams, this book is proof that Long Beach is alive and well, bursting with flava. [Tommy Digital]

VIDEOS



Rising Son, The Legend of Skateboarder Christian Hosoi
Directed by Cesario 'Block' Montano
Produced by Jared Freedman
(QD3 Entertainment & Quicksilver)

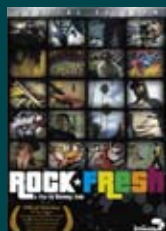
The unabashed story of Christian Hosoi, one of the skateboarding world's greatest talents, is finally told the way it should be...by his peers, and with respect.

They've got everyone in this thing from Tony Hawk to Tony Alva to Lance Mountain to Hosoi himself, both singing his praises and pointing out his shortcomings. Produced in part by Quicksilver, narrated by Venice mainstay Dennis Hopper, and coupled with a soundtrack that includes System of a Down, Queens of the Stone Age, Gnarl Barkley, and Fishbone...well...uh...this flick rips!

They've managed to churn out an expertly produced take on Hosoi's life and career. Layered with old footage of Hosoi as weeee toddler, *Rising Son* takes us from *Thrasher Magazine's* claim that Hosoi, the kid that dropped out of school and dedicated his life to skating, was one of the main personalities to bring back skateboarding after the fall of interest in the early 80s, to the loyalty and inseparableness between Hosoi and his father Ivan, to his exploits with Tony Alva in redesigning the board (remember that hammerhead?), through his legendary rivalry with Tony Hawk, and eventually...to the incident that landed him a 10 year sentence in the slammer...his destructive addiction to crystal meth which led him to attempt to traffic a pound of the shit from Hawaii. A particularly disturbing moment is when Hosoi's father admits to smoking crystal with him.

Luckily, his father didn't follow him into jail, because that's where Hosoi found himself with a Bible for the first time in his life. He speaks quite candidly about being attached to it from the very first week behind bars. It was his only solace in his world gone wrong...superstardom to incarceration. The support of his girlfriend turned wife, several years of efforts and support from his friends and the global skating community ultimately freed Hosoi in 2004.

Rising Son is a very tactical look and retrospect of Christian Hosoi's quick rise and even quicker fall...and finally...his ultimate inspirational resurrection. A fuckin' plus! [WAM]



Rock Fresh
Directed by Danny Lee
(MVD Visual)

A solid and captivating story of the evolution of graffiti and street art into the, dare I say it...marketable...art that it is today. *Rock Fresh* follows some of the most 'commercially' successful writers through their struggles and inventive methods of staying true to the art while simultaneously being able to sustain themselves from it. At the same time, the film reveals many of the tricks of the trade, including methods at concocting various effects, patterns, style, and colors that help make each artist stand out from the others. From graffiti battles to gallery shows to bombing and partying, *Rock Fresh* navigates your way from the underground to the mainstream. While a large focus is on the Los Angeles scene, its implications are worldwide, for street art is truly a shared cross-culture.

[WAM]

DIK DJ PROMO KIT WWW.DJPMOKIT.COM

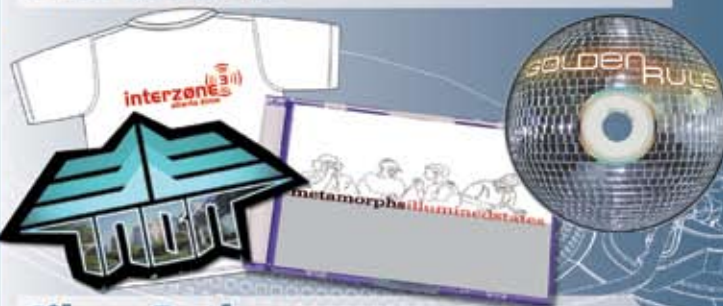
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TAKE THE KOTORI QUIZ

How much do you know about the wise and spirited owl? Take the test!

1. a) What is the name of the novel Philip K. Dick was working on at the time of his death?

b) What does that title signify?

2. What is the name of Gerald Durrell's pet owl? (Hint: Showed up often in the authors' novels)

3. Which Greek Goddess is said to have often assumed the form of an owl?

4. In the video game series Sly Cooper, what is the name of Sly's mechanical owl arch-enemy?

5. What is the name of the only college mascot named for a Supreme Court Justice?

6. Which eccentric Twin Peaks character first made us suspicious of the owls?

7. What are the names of the magical mail carrier owls in J.K Rowling's Harry Potter series?

8. a) Who played the owl-ish Felix opposite Barbara Streisand's "Pussycat" in 1970's The Owl & The Pussycat?

b) Who penned the famous nonsensical poem from which the movie borrowed its title?

9. What's the official name for Rice University's unconventional game band dubbed the M.O.B.?

KOTORI presents CRYPT O' QUOTES

How to Play: Simply replace the given letters with the letters they represent to decode the secret messages.

Our Letters:

J F R B N S T C X A O U L M

The Letters They Represent:

A D E G H L M N O R S T W Y

Decode The Following:

U N R X L S O J A R C X U L N J U U N R M
O R R T

U N R S X B S J F M

FUN TIME



KOTORI™

M A G A Z I N E

"Q & A"



Quiz Answers: 1 a) The Owl in Daylight b) To not understand 2. Ulysses 3. Athena 4. Clockwork 5. Ollie the Owl (Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr.) 6. Margaret Lanterman 7. Errol & Hedwig 8 a) George Segal b) Edward Lear 9. Marching Owl Band. Crypt O' Quote Results: "The Owls Are Not What They Seem"—The Log Lady (Twin Peaks)



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3" x 4"	\$240	\$280
4" x 4"	\$320	\$360
2" x 8"	\$320	\$360
3" x 10"	\$600	\$640

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Example Size	1,000 stickers	1,000 w/die cut
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3" round	N/A	\$243
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OUR GENERATION RULES ELECTIONS

This is what the electoral map would have looked like if the election were up to people ages 18-29.



YOU CAN'T FIX A LANDSLIDE.

Young voters have the numbers to move every election this fall.

- 666** NUMBER OF VOTES BUSH WON NEW MEXICO BY IN 2000.
- 400** CAPACITY OF THE SUNSHINE THEATER IN ALBUQUERQUE.
- 163** NUMBER OF VOTES THAT DECIDED WASHINGTON STATE GOVERNOR IN 2004.
- 500** CAPACITY OF THE CROCODILE IN SEATTLE.
- 126MILLION** TOTAL NUMBER OF VOTES CAST IN 2004.
- 65MILLION** NUMBER OF 18-29 YR-OLDS WHO WILL BE ELIGIBLE TO VOTE IN 2008.

MOST ELECTIONS ARE CLOSER THAN YOU THINK.
ONE CONCERT CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE.



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