



# MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #501

FEBRUARY 2025

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## MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 109 reviews, contributed by:

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Jake Joyce	Bill Chamberlain
João Seixas	Seth McBurney
Tim Janchar	Robert Collins
Gonza Perez	Matt Casteel
Nick Odorizzi	D. Gregory
Luke Henley	Mama Goblin
Eric Anderson	Rachel Courtney
Kenny Kaos	Fiona Rae
Biff Bifaro	Kayla Greet
Ben Marshall	Alex Howell
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## THE COUNTERFORCE

This zine digest was compiled and laid out by The Counterforce.

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### 1186 – Histeria 12"

Punk, post-punk, while also gothic and melodic at times. I loved the variety in guitar from kind of droning and screechy, to more classically distorted. The vocals in "Ataque Sistemático" reminded me a lot of early CHRISTIAN DEATH, but they felt more solid and were able to adapt to the different styles of songs. My favorite track is definitely "Encerrados," as it has growlier vocals and heavy, clear drums that really just stand out and slap you in the face before quickly increasing the tempo. Overall, I loved the kind of darker punk vibe these guys brought while maintaining some more classic punk elements.

*Reviewer: Emma Miller*  
*Label: Drunken Sailor*

### ACTION PARK – Bum Ticker LP

"Pressure Cooker" blasts right in with a definite nod to Rad Girlfriend and Dirtnap Records. I would plop this right in between the RAGING NATHANS and DOPAMINES, with a sprinkle of mid-period DAG NASTY and early DOWN BY LAW. The sequencing of this LP takes you on a white-knuckled ride, and then out of nowhere comes a perfect note-for-note cover of the BIG BOYS' unforgettable classic "Which Way to Go". The ten original songs are well-crafted and arranged perfectly together to make this a great listen. To me, one of the more charming aspects of this record is that it isn't overproduced and the songs take on a collaborative and holistic impression, giving way to a cohesive-sounding record. I get the feeling their practices are a hoot and they talk a lot of shit to each other. I am excited to see what is next.

*Reviewer: Tony Party*  
*Label: Mutineer*

### ALREADY DEAD – Something Like a War CD

The first track starts off musically similar to a SOCIAL DISTORTION tune, while vocally, it has a street punk Oi! vibe. This is fine USA-styled blue collar Oi! with a little HOT WATER MUSIC and most of the No Idea Records catalog in a blender. I hear some mid-period DWARVES and Dave Hause influence as well. They have been a band for five years and have consistently put out this working class flavor of driving street punk and singing on the downstrokes. The CD has fourteen songs, some are



shorter and some are longer. I think that if these folks were forced into a room for three days to write ten songs, throw all ten in the trash, and repeat this until they have written and garbage-binned thirty songs, that the next ten songs we hear could be the kind of record that inspires. That next record could be on a best of the decade(s) list, but this record, even with its memorable chunks, still has the feeling of a reporter talking about observable events, whereas they could be the stroke that makes the spectator take action, or whatever.

*Reviewer: Tony Party*  
*Label: Ardec*

### ANCIENT RAGE – Ancient Råge LP

Punk-adjacent heavy metal that barely even qualifies as the former. This is a straight-up NWOBHM tribute with a vocalist who sounds more like Damian Abraham than Rob Halford, giving it an ANTI-SEEN feel. There are quite a few riffs that sound identical to those heard from JUDAS PRIEST or SODOM, almost to the point where I wonder if they are indeed the same licks. Regardless, this is some really catchy shit here. Even if the guitarist is aping all the old fogies, they're playing the living hell out of their instrument. The aforementioned vocalist has the energy of a pissed-off troll, and if it weren't for them, I don't think this album would fare as well. I'd recommend this for all the fellow closeted metalheads out there in punk world.

*Reviewer: Jake Joyce*  
*Label: Dismantled*

### B.I.C. – 8 Song Demo cassette

Scorching-hot SoCal-styled snotty punk via L.A., presented by sole member Marvin Novola of CEMENTO and HOT LOAD. From the first chord, B.I.C. brings the California heat to your ears, mixing speed with melodic hooks whilst injecting new life into the genre. Catchy as hell, and a guaranteed fun time. We need more!

*Reviewer: João Seixas*  
*Label: No Solution Ltd.*



## BAD IDEA USA – Home cassette

A solidly pithy five-song cassette from this female-fronted three-piece hailing from Salem, Massachusetts. The vocals will bring to mind guitarist/singer Louise Post of VERUCA SALT or Kim Deal of the AMPS. The ethos of the release might bring to mind mid-'90s alternative rock in the same way the BIG EYES did, and I thought that before the album closed with a great fuzzed-up cover of R.E.M.'s "The One I Love"—but it's all punk at heart. The steady pound of the bass on the second track "Drive Slow" is reminiscent of Robbie Smartwood's style on the early OFF WITH THEIR HEADS releases, and this self-released collection of songs would be right at home on Don Giovanni Records.



Reviewer: Tim Janchar  
Label: self-released

## BARREN HELLSCAPE – Anti-Genocide demo cassette

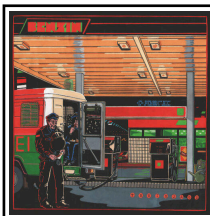
These New Zealanders' demo is ear-shredding to the fullest. Incessant, maddening, chaotic '90s-style noise crust that resembles Japanese and Swedish sounds in the genre. Donations for anti-genocide actions have been collected through this first glimpse of BARREN HELLSCAPE. Noise is there for sure, along with steady, fast crust cadences. Vocals are rough and angrier than usual in crust punk projects, putting this demo on a more extreme side of hardcore punk holding to metallic-driven guitar riffage and ever-ranting drum sections.



Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Razored Raw

## BENZIN – Treibjagd LP

Garage punk from Berlin that rips through twelve songs in about fifteen minutes, with solid gold surf-inspired riff after riff like TEE VEE RE-PAIRMAN with Klaus Flouride on guitar. These short tracks have everything you could ask for in this strain of punk: hardcore speeds, straightforward production, hooks aplenty, a fully developed sound, and inspired performances. A few tracks expand beyond the garage, like "Botschaften," which sounds like BAUHAUS played at like six times the speed, and the title track that features a slower tempo and vocal delivery recalling KLEENEX/LILIPUT. What

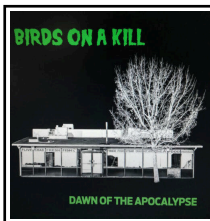


a great band and a great record (and a debut full-length at that!).

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: Static Age

## BIRDS ON A KILL – Dawn of the Apocalypse EP

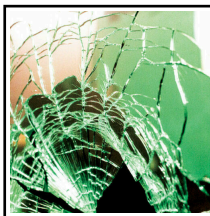
This Florida band describes their sound as "post-punk meets sludge metal," but I don't hear that at all. If anything, it's more like CIRCLE JERKS-inspired early West Coast hardcore with sarcastically delivered vocals, gang choruses, and trebly production. It sounds good, with punchy drums, prominent high-on-the-neck bass lines, and straightforward riffage. "Heavy Seas" expands on the sound some with atonal chords and an extended bridge that rides a bass-heavy groove until fadeout. Lyrically, the songs are either nondescript and personal or very topical. "Mosquito Truck" is about deadly pesticides, and "Cone of Uncertainty," with the lines, "Governor says I'm gonna die / The national guard's outside / Time to stand in line / Consume, don't ask why" and "Laugh as the Yankees flee / Florida man is finally free / Hoard all the D batteries / Prepare for uncertainty" is about, you guessed it, someone's hot take on the COVID pandemic. My wish for 2025 is that I don't have to hear another amateurish journal entry set to music (ironic or not) about how you had to wear a mask. Decent release otherwise.



Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: Ripping

## BOMBVEST – Erratic CD

Hardcore is a bit of a chimera at the moment, taking on many shapes and a sort of "I'll know it when I hear it" attitude. While Buffalo's BOMBVEST label themselves hardcore, the truth is a little more interesting. I hear a lot of '90s and '00s noise rock influence, especially along the lines of the mighty CRAW from back in the heyday of the genre. The opening bass line, punctuated by the drums on a syncopated beat, and the overall abandon with which the band explores melodic and rhythmic ideas reads as a multi-genre affair. That's what makes this EP interesting, the composition from song to song bobbing and weaving through influences and even peppering in some moments of pop hooks as well (I mean that as a compliment, fear not). What I'm less sold on is the metallic hardcore vocals. With everything else going on, I wanted something a little more out of the ordinary. The vocals are capable, but not breaking any new ground. They're also far ahead in the forefront, when I wish they would sit more in the mix. It's a shame, because I think



Bandcamp says it's already sold out, I somewhat doubt it.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: XTRO

## V/A – Speed! Lighting 500 LP

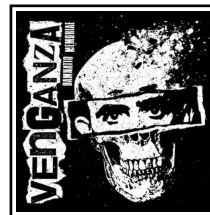
Car-themed compilation that I was certain came straight from the '90s. The label described this slab as ten bands who "sound nothing alike," and that got a chuckle out of me. I don't know about that. They all have the surfy rockabilly meets Steve Albini and David Pajo energy that all of the underground Gen X-ers loved 30 years ago. Don't get me wrong, it's a fun listen. I'm not even a car guy, and I am very partial to this theme. It's pure, classic Americana. You know, before Americana became synonymous with AI-generated Facebook posts, cryptocurrency, and white nationalism. All of the stuff mainstream Gen X-ers love now. Damn, Speed. You got me feeling all nostalgic. You win this race.



Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Speed Nebraska

## VENGANZA – Damnatio Memoriae LP

Another ripper from the always reliable Discos Enfermos, VENGANZA plays fiery, fist-pumping Spanish punk on their latest LP. Teodoro Hernández included this on his MRR 2024 Year-End list and notes that there is a touch of Burning Spirits influence, which is a more appropriate description than I could come up with. The soaring guitars, breakneck drumming, and rage-fueled vocals make for a collection of songs that sound as angry as they do hopeful. Notable tracks include "Heredex De La Empresa" and the killer RIP cover at the end of the record. A pure distillation of everything there is to love about punk music, highly recommended.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Discos Enfermos

## 偏執症者 (PARANOID) – The Great Reset / Cycle of Contention 7"

Swedish project that exceeds ten years of being together. Motörcharged, D-beat-cadenced punk in the classic two-track 7" format. A hellish formula filled with distorted epic bass lines, crunchy guitars, and a steady drum section. Vocals are dragging and achieved with confident execution. Recommended for Motörlovers.



Recommended for Motörlovers.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: D-Takt & Râpunk / Paranoid Northern Discs

establish their dominance throughout six songs. Vocals drowned in reverb make room for the crazy instrumentation of the songs by providing emphasis without trying to be too in-your-face. Drums are super crunchy and energetic, just the way I like 'em. Honestly, TITANIUM EXPOSE's *Disorders* sounds like the lovechild of the CONEHEADS and DIODE, and I'm totally here for it.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin  
Label: Goodbye Boozy / Grog / Knuckles on Stun

## TWO MINUTE MILE – K-Town, 3 AM CD

I love stuff that you can't easily figure out. TWO MINUTE MILE self-released this CD, and as soon as I started the first track ("Hangin' Around"), I was hit with some great NEW YORK DOLLS-meets-DICTATORS-style energetic punk'n'roll. This shit is fun. But then a few tracks later, I made it to "Taco Man," and I couldn't even make it through the whole song. This shit is not fun. A couple tracks later, and "Joyride" brought back fun, and I realized this is just dumb fun, in the best way. You don't have to contemplate what "Joyride" is about; it's about going on a joyride. And that holds for the rest of these tracks. Once you realize the simplicity, it's the best way to appreciate these tunes. Without knowing anything about the band, you could tell me these tracks were all written when the members were thirteen and that would make sense. Whatever the case, I'm happy to join in on the call-and-response of "Bad Abuela." Just don't make me have to listen to "Taco Man" again, okay?

Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: self-released



## ULTIMO GOBIERNO – Camino de 1984 LP

Formed in the year 1984 in Burgos, this angry hardcore punk group was active until 1994, got back to business in 2012, and has kept the ball rolling ever since. To put this band into context, their split with RUIDO DE RABIA came out in 1987 and was considered one of the first crust records to be released out of Spain. This is a band that has been around and knows their way. Their new LP *Camino de 1984* is both an Orwellian nod and a reference to their starting year. Seasoned hardcore punk with a middle finger poking at the all-seeing eye that spies on us all. Punk should be what this album portrays: a middle finger to the ruling order.

Reviewer: João Seixas  
Label: Potencial Hardcore



## URALT – Uralt cassette

Heavy psych and post-rock-influenced metal from Germany that evokes the sound of bands like

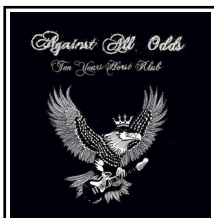
BARONESS and ENVY with some extended (ten-minute-plus) instrumental passages. Songs like "Mountains of Madness" have a groove metal, MASTODON-style feel to them with chugging riffs and hoarse vocals, while others like "Gnostic Times" drone with clean vocals and synth accompaniment. It's not bad at all, but it's definitely not the usual MRR fare. Artsy heshers take note.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: self-released

## V/A – Against All Odds: Ten Years Horst Klub 2xLP

Absolutely massive compilation celebrating the decade anniversary of Horst Klub in Switzerland. I couldn't dig up a whole lot of information (and the info I did find was in German), but according to Google Translate, this record highlights some of the venue's favorite hosted bands from the last ten years. There's a whole combo-platter of rock'n'roll madness here. Egg-punk, fuzzed-out sludge, goth dance rock, RAMONES-core, D-beat crust, dungeon synth, and even a little bit of European techno! This album is the perfect soundtrack for someone like me who loves it all. Horst Klub has led me to believe that it may be one of the best venues in Europe, if not the world. This is on par with one of those Alternative Tentacles comps like *Not So Quiet on the Western Front*. Fantastic work to everyone involved!

Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Horst Klub



## V/A – INTRO (Version 1): International Punk Rock Compilation cassette

A whopping 57-track compilation crammed onto a 90 minute cassette. Some real heavy-hitters on this. Pretty much every current lo-fi garage/egg-punk-infused band you could possibly care about (and a bunch you likely don't) all make an appearance—TELEGENIC PLEASURE, BZDET, SPRGRS, OK SATAN, ISMATIC GURU, GOBLIN DAYCARE, and so many more notable names. If you like any of these bands, or are familiar with the XTRO label, then you likely know what you're in for. If you aren't familiar, then get to work! Only downside, and I say this with most XTRO releases, is that their cassettes are always so incredibly limited that it makes tracking down physical media a bit of a bear, with most of their releases limited to a mere 25 copies. I would hope that a compilation like this would be made in much larger quantities, but seeing as how the label's



the building blocks here are really interesting and with a more varied and off-the-wall vocal approach I'd be wanting to revisit the material frequently.

Reviewer: Luke Henley  
Label: Bankrupt Studios

## BRAND NEW AGE – No More Rebels CD

Basic Oi! that starts and finishes completely limp. I wish there was something to praise here, but this thing stinks. Obviously trying to emulate bands like BUSINESS, COCKNEY REJECTS, and ANGELIC UPSTARTS, but never comes close. Lyrics range from cliché to completely tone-deaf, with the worst offense being the centrist drivel of "We Don't Care," which includes the line "Left wing, right wing / You're all the same!" Derivative, boring, and completely out of touch.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: self-released



## BUSY WEATHER – Look Up! LP

I get that this is never going to make it to mainstream "alternative" radio like it kind of wants to. It's fast. Then they slow it down. Then more fast. It's poppy and it's punk. It's pop punk. And it's got some gritty female vocals. This is well-played and all that, but for me, at least, something is missing. If you ever wondered about the difference between power pop and pop punk, this record could help in that regard. 100% pop punk. In the end, I just feel like they don't do enough to separate themselves from the pack.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Anxious & Angry / Dead Broke



## CAPTAIN PIGEON – Lo-Fi Stereo cassette

Four songs of kooky, spastic, fast-paced, synth-heavy egg-punk from Nashville, TN. The chosen guitar tone is a bit confusing to me. I know that a lot of egg-punk stuff really leans into the warbly chorus effect, but this is quite possibly the most underwater-sounding guitar tone I have ever heard. Songs are cool and danceable and written with a level of pop sensibility that I think helps bands of this ilk really stand out. While I do really dig the four songs on this second CAPTAIN PIGEON cassette, I think I would rather retire from music



than lean into a self-proclaimed genre such as "sil-lcore," as the band has chosen to do. Limited cassette edition of 25 copies, so get on it to complete your "sil-lcore" cassette collection.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Knuckles on Stun

## CERESIT 81 – Kraft Durch Bier EP

A nice peruse through the history books with this release, a collection of fast hardcore tunes from Berliners CERESIT 81. Not their most politically-charged release by all accounts, with two-thirds of the three songs shared here revolving around beer, but aside from the relatively plodding start to the first one, it takes off like the clappers and is a lot of pogo-worthy fun.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall  
Label: Power It Up



## CERESIT 81 – Werkschau 83/84 2xLP

An archival double LP shining the spotlight on some old school Euro-punk, *Werkschau 83/84* features 36 tracks from Berlin's CERESIT 81. With one record showcasing studio recordings and a live show from '83 on the other, these tunes are mainly fast and furious hardcore with some pronounced bass lines and unusual bits of synth peeking out from time to time. It's packaged with a color booklet of photos and liner notes, making it a thorough document for fans.

Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Power It Up



## CHAIN CIRCUITS – Chain Circuits demo cassette

Indonesia's wild punk tiger with D-beat cadences on e-drums, filthier and nastier than you would think. Hardcore punk rhythms with blunt, rusty chainsaw executioner guitars and vocal sections that resemble classic '80s USHC in performance and recording quality. Holding an interesting energy and raw punk vibes all around, it accomplishes catharsis and feels authentic, as it should be.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Invisible Audio / Menace / Richter Scale



## CHILTON – Chilton LP

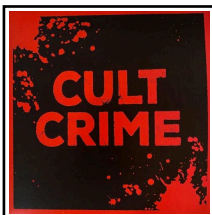
The self-titled sophomore album from Brooklyn-based CHILTON, a five-piece (super?) group, strikes a balance between honoring its members' pedigrees and carving its own space. Founded by Josh Carothers (I FARM, EARWORMS), this album sees a couple lineup changes since their debut, including Abe Brennan (DEAD PIONEERS, MY NAME) stepping in for Bill Stevenson (DESCENDENTS/ALL/BLACK FLAG) on guitar. The recording sounds great and the songs lean toward an ALL-inspired vibe, featuring some sharp musicianship with minimal wank. The tracks "Mouth to Ear" and "One More to Go" bring to mind NOMEANSNO, and that might be the highest praise I can imagine. Propulsive, fun, and recommended.



Reviewer: Jeff Cost  
Label: Dead Broke

## CULT CRIME – Gone Too Long / Stompin' on Your Flowers 7"

I'm glad to see that Simon at the trusted Ugly Pop label is still cranking 'em out. When he's not exposing the masses to some of the most delicious obscurities of yesteryear, he's showing love to classically-inspired modern bands like CULT CRIME. This

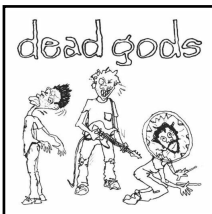


Toronto outfit plays snotty and rough rock that bridges the gap between cutting '70s punk and street sounds of the early '80s. "Gone Too Long" is a nasty number with an earworm hook, and "Stompin on Your Flowers" is 100% attitude. Recommended for appreciators of the REATARDS, SICK THOUGHTS, etc.

Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Ugly Pop

## DEAD GODS / MEGADOSAGE – split LP

Uhhhhh, someone wanna tell us all what rock this beast crawled out from under? My jaw hit the floor about two seconds after the needle hit the groove and DEAD GODS preached "Glory Without a Fight." Their side of this masterpiece is total VOID-level sonic



obliteration, a hardcore band playing way faster, way harder, and with far more intensity than their competency can match. Completely fukkn unhinged from start to finish—a finish that includes two FLIPPER-tinged drug dirges interrupted by a seven-minute radio "interview" that features several tracks from their demo. Featuring a pre-CANDY SNATCHERS Brian Diederich, it's hard

to imagine how (or why) this has remained under wraps for so long...and now I flip the record over for MEGADOSAGE. Appears to be a brilliantly amped-up version of the 1985 *Blacksburg Paradise* demo that I was today years old when I became cool enough to learn about. Once again, light-speed, manic USHC that should have been distributed to the masses and shamelessly aped a thousand times over by now. You get the sense that this is a band who could have turned to the dark (metal) side had they stayed in the game, but thankfully we're left with this bastard fusion, ADRENALIN OD/VOID hybrid that makes my hair stand on end. What's left of it. All hail My Weed for conjuring this into existence.

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: My Weed

## DEAD MOON – Maybe Baby / Out of Time 7"

Showcasing a live recording from the spring of 1988, this record has two cover songs from a young DEAD MOON on a big-hole 45. Recorded about a year into the band's storied twenty-plus year career, the A-side features Fred Cole's warbled croon taking on BUDDY HOLLY's "Maybe Baby," and the flipside is a stripped-down rendition of the ROLLING STONES' "Out of Time." Pressed on colored vinyl in a disheartening yellow-grey hue, this one is recommended for true MOON-heads only.



Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Green Noise / No Chance Berlin

## DEATH KILL OVERDRIVE – Juicin' LP

Sugary-sweet pop punk featuring members of LIPSTICK HOMICIDE. I would have never guessed that based on the name alone. Sounds pretty much how you'd expect if you're familiar with LIPSTICK HOMICIDE and the Iowa punk scene they come from, which includes bands like RATIONAL ANTHEM. It's like DIGGER for a modern age, while being reminiscent of all those pop punk bands that broke through into the mainstream in the late '90s like the ATARIS and FENIX TX. This band would be right at home on the *Dude, Where's My Car?* soundtrack. Catchy as all hell with some fantastic vocals and harmonies.



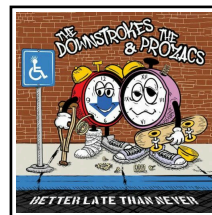
Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Dead Broke

even throw in a scrappy cover of the VELVET UNDERGROUND's "Rock & Roll" for good measure. Check out the song "We Are the Dogs" or don't—they don't give a fuck.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost  
Label: Mendeku Diskak

## THE DOWNSTROKES / THE PROZACS – Better Late Than Never split LP

More pop punk from two bands who heard the QUEERS three decades ago and thought "This is how I'll write music for the rest of my life." I guess that's the entire theme of this split. Arrested development and refusing to grow old and change your attitude.

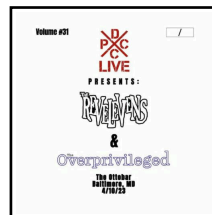


But Jesus Murphy, how many more times are we going to have to hear this tired, old trope? There is nothing that differentiates these two bands from the mounds of other bubblegum punk bands out there. This review ended up being more negative than I wanted it to be, so I'll leave you with this thought: I know that RAMONES-core in general has a very dedicated fan base, so if you're into all of that shit, then you will absolutely love this split.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Punkerton

## THE OVERPRIVILEGED / THE REV-ELEVENS – DCxPC Live Presents, Vol. 31 split LP

Pleased every time I see a new volume pop up, because the *DCxPC Live* series is the epitome of a labor of love. Nothing fancy, and the packaging is typically minimal—just live recordings of DIY punk bands who are often underknown and/or underappreciated.



Two turn-of-the-century Baltimore/DC area bands here who reunited a couple of years back at Otobar and played a ripper; the REVELEVENS are fast 'n wild with a cowpony tinge and ultra-upfront femme vocals. The OVERPRIVILEGED are harsher (maybe also drunker) but hopelessly catchy street punk, and their set is a wee bit looser (in a good way). Both bands deliver maximum intensity sets and were (according to the liner notes) integral to their respective scenes in their respective eras. And you see, this is why I'm pleased every time I see a new *DCxPC Live* volume pop up.

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: DCxPC

## THE SHITDELS – Where's Your Head? LP

The SHITDELS, huh? So, like "shit" plus "del," plural? And they're from Nashville? A city famous for catering to people whose favorite genre of music is "live," and whose cool-band exports have always felt like exceptions rather than any rule? Were this a band I came across organically, instead of something the *MRR* overlords were forcing me to listen to, my review would probably just be a mental image of the "yeah, that's gonna be a no from me, dawg" gif. And while I'd be justified in believing as much, I would have been dead wrong. This record fuckin' kills! The SHITDELS play '00s-style rough-and-ready garage punk, and this LP, which is actually their third full-length since releasing their debut cassette back in 2017, is twelve tracks that mash together *Back from the Grave* ravers, Vox Continental-driven party rockers, sentimental Brill Building pop, and even some glammed-up proto-punk. It's a little punker than SHANNON AND THE CLAMS or the YOLKS but poppier than LES SEXAREENOS. When done right, this is one of my favorite types of music, and these dudes—or I guess these delts made out of shit—they do it right. Scoop it up!



Reviewer: Alex Howell  
Label: Big Neck

## THE STUPIDS – Slow on the Uptake LP

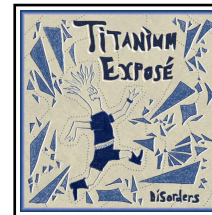
Despite this being their eighth album since forming in 1984 (and the first thing they've put out since 2009), Ipswich, UK's STUPIDS sound defiantly youthful and true to their original formula. They're still generally taking the piss out of everything and rocking pretty recklessly, but they can't help but show a little bit of musical maturity here and there. Right after a thoughtful and melodic number like "Walnut Pacific," they rip into the blistering "Wile in the Penile," as if to say, "just kidding, we're still complete bastards."



Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Violent Pest

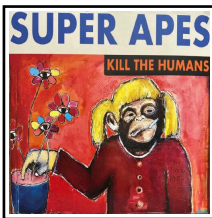
## TITANIUM EXPOSÉ – Disorders cassette

Hailing from the Netherlands, TITANIUM EXPOSÉ offers a high-voltage synth punk experience with their debut *Disorders*. Deranged garage riffs with moments of rockabilly lead the charge, but the star of the show is without a doubt the earworm synth lines that cut through every other instrument and



## SUPER APES – Kill the Humans LP

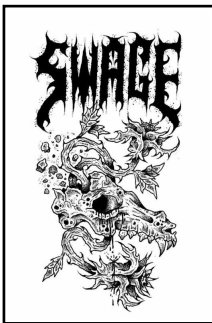
This record was a blast to listen to. It bounced genres in a playful way, with some tracks having that kind of guitar-driven '90's swagger from bands like GAS HUFFER or SUPERSUCKERS, and then would veer into early '00s surf punk like very early TOGETHER PANGAEA before they got polished and boring. The slightly uninged, uncouth playful delivery, along with the added sound clips, brings to mind some of HICKEY's tunes. Then they'll slow it down to some PAVEMENT-ish almost-ballads on the punker side of indie rock. I love music that can deliver heart-on-sleeve anthemic choruses without worrying too much about pretense. This album isn't streaming anywhere, and from what little is on the internet about the band, seems they're Bay Area-based is about all I can piece together. But the album is so insightfully well-executed I would assume they've been doing this for some time in other bands. Hopefully they'll be more to albums and shows to follow.



Reviewer: Tim Janchar  
Label: Mountain

## SWAGE – Swage cassette

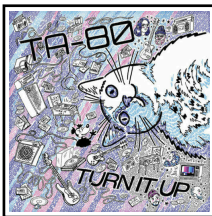
SWAGE is from Athens, Ohio, and they have the ability to switch back and forth between slow, heavy crust and some mid-paced and fast punk that is just downright catchy. This demo is also well-recorded, no lack of sound quality on this one. The production is nothing fancy, but it really lets the music shine through. My favorite song on this demo is also their longest, an epic two-minute-and-twenty-one-seconds song called "Our Means." I know I am going to be waiting and watching for this band to put out more music and tour. Great demo!



Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: self-released

## TA-80 – Turn it Up! cassette

This is straightforward, catchy punk rock. The guitar has a great sound, and the vocals are sort of infectious, with a focus on female vocals. And they don't seem to take themselves too seriously. I like that. In fact, they border on getting a little too goofy at times. These guys might not change the world, but they'll definitely make your day a little brighter.



Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Phat Phorty / Snubbed by Allegedly

## TAXI GIRLS – Rainy / The Lion's Share 7"

While the record sleeve is a little cheesy in my mind, the music is definitely not. This is catchy stuff delivered at a measured pace. If you're lucky enough to know STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE BOMB, you might draw some similarities here. I'd call it straightforward, grinding power punk'n'roll. And as tough as they might want to appear, the music really is kind of pretty. Let's hear it for Canada, eh?



Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Dirt Cult / Wild Honey

## TELEGENIC PLEASURE – Telegenic Pleasure cassette

Fantastic synth punk out of both Londons (Ontario, Canada and England). While the bulk of this cassette is filled with eggy, sugar rush synth spazzouts, there's an undercurrent of power pop here that really makes things feel huge. The first track, "Sealed Off," is perhaps the best example of this, with a melody that just soars from start to finish. That's not to say this is a power pop record by any stretch, but just to highlight that there is way more depth here than what may be conveyed if you just listen to one track. Some DEVO influence seems inevitable as you listen, but with each track you realize the better comparison is any variety of bands from the *We Are Not Devo (U.S. Synth Punk 79-84)* compilation, or another lost classic like "Trust in Technology" by ADAPTORS. Dive into the deep end with this one and enjoy.



Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: XTRO

## THE DOGS – Total Dogshit LP

The *Total Dogshit 12"* from the DOGS is a ten-song platter of raw Welsh street punk. The singer sounds like he's about to smash a bottle over your head, snarling and bellowing through tracks that will definitely scare your parents. A drum machine keeps the barely-constructed songs together while the recording quality teeters just above "unlistenable," but maybe that's part of the charm. Tracks like "Shut Up" and "Hate Chu" had me tapping my toe while wondering what I'd done to piss this guy off. They



## DINGUS – The Record That Made Them Huge LP

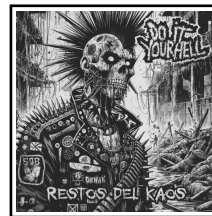
There is something refreshing about pop punk that isn't afraid of the first half of the genre. Writing pop hooks is no joke, and it takes a lot of knowledge and trial and error. DINGUS has put in the work, and while that may not be everybody's cuppa, I have to admire it. On a song like "Hell for Heaven," which echoes BEN FOLDS FIVE not just for its piano-led arrangement but in its melody and harmonies as well, the chops are on full display. Other tracks lie closer near the Fat Wreck Chords school of dual-harmony melodic punk, replete with punchy bass and everything in its place in the mix (this is a crispy-sounding record). Lyrically, I'm less invested. There's a sense of humor here that is sort of disarming in its quaintness, but not clever or cutting enough to elicit much of an emotional response. Lyrics in "Eczema" referencing "scratching like a meth addict," for example, just reach for the most nearby and attention-grabbing image. It doesn't carry a lot of weight, and the lyrical approach causes tracks like "Gringo" and album closer "Bye Bye Brady" to fall on their face. Otherwise, though, this is a band that has been popping punk for over two decades and sounds it. It's tight, confident, and has hooks for days.



Reviewer: Luke Henley  
Label: A.D.D.

## DO IT YOUR HELL – Restos Del Kaos EP

The cover features a punk zombie with S.O.B., CARCASS GRINDER, P.L.F., and DENAK patches on its decaying jacket. For any grindcore aficionado, these are some essential influences for a band to have. These dudes don't joke around! It sounds as brutal as a freight train going through a crowded mall. Vicious crust-infused grindcore from Madrid with members of a ton of great bands, but especially DENAK, a classic grindcore outfit that started in 1994. Extreme music for extreme people.



Reviewer: João Seixas  
Label: Global Help / Romantic Songs / Victim / Zaragoza Desorden

## DOG EAT DOG – Re-Deux LP

The three women of DOG EAT DOG were visual artists living and working in New York's East Village in the early '80s, and after watching many of their peers in the city's downtown scene form bands without much (or any) formal training in music, they decided to pick up drums, bass, and a sax in order to start their own project, learning as they went along. The loose and spacious funk-informed grooves that they landed on were the sort of thing that would have been a natural fit alongside LIQUID LIQUID and BUSH TETRAS on 99 Records, but DOG EAT DOG never actually managed to release anything during their short run—ten live tracks and a lone studio cut surfaced for the first time on a posthumous (and now very spendy) 2011 collection; *Re-Deux* makes all of that material available once again with the addition of two newly unearthed live recordings. The vocals are sparse and enigmatic, almost like playground chants, and they function more as a rhythmic element than any sort of narrative anchor, in tandem with equally minimalist, cyclical bass lines and rattling percussion (drum kit plus woodblock, cowbell, bongos, shakers, you name it). That stripped-down, rhythm-forward mentality makes ESG an easy parallel, or PULSALLAMA for a less obvious reference, except DOG EAT DOG's approach wasn't nearly as taut and urgent, leaning into playful, spirited amateurism in a very no wave-informed way that was closer to Y PANTS, if anything—the real femme-punk freak sound.



Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth  
Label: Bric-a-Brac

## DOMINACIÓN – Punks Ganan EP

Having witnessed this noisy and friendly bunch live a few months ago, I already knew what to expect from this first EP, *Punks Ganan*. What will punks actually win from Barcelona's DOMINACIÓN is open to question. Brand new hearing aids? A yearly subscription to *Crasher Hardcore for Dummies* magazine? A "design your own crust pants" kit for children? At least a very fine hardcore EP, that's for sure. In terms of songwriting, DOMINACIÓN certainly belongs to that current wave of raw, distorted D-beat hardcore influenced by Japanese bands like D-CLONE or FRAMTID. Bands like PHYSIQUE, SIEGE FIRE, K.O.S, BLACK DOG...you know what I mean, mainly fast-paced and relentless with crazy Osaka-inspired drumming style, shouted vocals, and the intention to grab the listener by the throat and not let go. However, they do not go for that typical blown-out production that most do (usually thanks to the infamous Noise Room studio) and rather keep the familiar raw punk sound that Barcelona bands are famous for, so that at first, I felt DOMINACIÓN



was not entirely sure about the direction to take. But on a second listen, I decided that, their intentions unbeknown to me, it was not a bad choice after all, as it allowed the band to occupy that unoccupied liminal space between raw hardcore punk *en Español* and crasher crust. I also think that this first EP should be seen as the first step toward a better, perhaps more focused and cohesive record, since the band has the potential to explore this space further. I allow myself to nitpick because I love this subgenre that has been getting busier lately, and *Punks Ganar* stands as a solid introduction to DOMINACION by the always reliable Discos Enfermos.

Reviewer: Romain Basset  
Label: Discos Enfermos

### DREAM WORLD – Dream World demo cassette

Five-song demo cassette from this new Richmond, VA band. DREAM WORLD plays stripped-down, no-nonsense, modern day anarcho-punk. No frills, no bullshit. I'm not gonna sit here and tell you that they sound like FLUX OF PINK INDIANS, but if you were to remove the particularly standout FLUX tracks from the equation, nix the accent, and ditch the poetry, a few of these guitar licks would fit right in. DREAM WORLD scratches the nostalgia itch without feeling at all like a carbon copy. Now make this dream a reality and give us more!

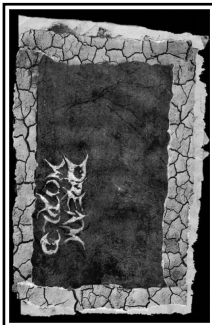
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Roachleg

### DUNSTAN BRUCE – Fucking Expensive / PIN Number 7"

I was not sure what a record by a former CHUMBAWAMBA member would be like; I had no idea what to expect. Well, I'm pretty happy to say that it sounds very much like his former band. Social commentary, some dance beats, some rocking.

Starting off with some nicely orchestrated strings before the beat picks up and the list of things that are "Fucking Expensive" begins, we learn everything is fucking expensive including democracy. The second song, "PIN Number," is a dance song that has one of the most infectious beats that I've heard in a while. This record was very enjoyable—I really like it and I really miss CHUMBAWAMBA.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: Heavy Medication



### ENDORA Y SUS VICIOS – Son Mis Normas LP

Post-punk feel with more intense, punky vocals. I loved how angry and fierce the vocals were throughout, which paired nicely with the more punchy and choppy guitar (like in "Guerra al Desencanto"); it really just comes at you and taunts you relentlessly.

They didn't lose intensity throughout the album though, like with "Vecino," where they upped the tempo to a more classically punk speed that really keeps you on your toes. They really know when certain parts are needed; they know when to have only vocals and drums versus everything together, they don't overdo anything.

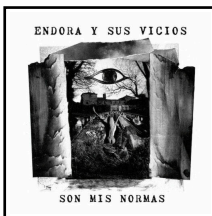
Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Corky's Music / El Lokal / Frontal Distribución / Irrintzi Diskak / Uterzine

### ENOUGH – Before My Eyes LP

This is gonna be a big one for folks who love those early albums from the DESCENDENTS or Rollins-era BLACK FLAG. The vocals are absolutely drenched in reverb, and while I know I've already said it, this guy sounds exactly like a Milo

Aukerman/Rollins amalgamation mixed with a little bit of Mike Patton. The lyrics are politically conscious but come off a little corny sometimes, especially in their track "Army of the Vain"—a song about self-centered and phony social media influencers. We're just beating three dead horses at this point. However, on the flipside, the song "Sunday Mass Graves" is absolutely fantastic and highlights the atrocities committed by state-sanctioned boarding schools against the Indigenous people of Canada. It actually changed my mind about this whole record. From there, this slab takes off and it's one hell of a ride all the way through. I'll say it again: if you're a fan of those chunky, power-chord-riffing albums from the early years of SST, then you'll love this one.

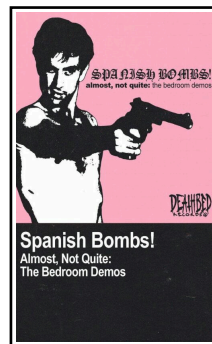
Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Alt-9042



### SPANISH BOMBS! – Almost, Not Quite: The Bedroom Demos CD

Something about this reminds me of BLUR. That said, they really sound nothing like BLUR. Maybe it's the cadence of the vocal delivery. What it does sound like is a lot of the very average pop punk that you hear on the radio. And will someone break into the band's practice space and steal the drummer's hi-hat? Thanks. At least the songs are short. There is a pretty decent JAWBREAKER cover.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Deathbed



### SPICY MEATBALL – Spicy Meatball demo cassette

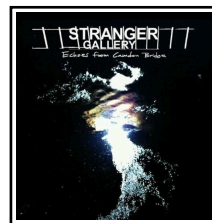
No luck finding much on SPICY MEATBALL on the internet, although now I know where to find some of the best Italian food in Richmond. Anyway, SPICY MEATBALL plays pretty straightforward hardcore punk without any frills or excess. Not much outside of the ordinary here, although the intro to track three ("Esteemed") has a sort of plodding '70s hard rock intro that really works in my opinion. A solid first offering.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: self-released



### STRANGER GALLERY – Echoes From Camden Bridge LP

Post-punk with shimmering guitars and synth washes that recalls bands like the CHAMELEONS and ECHO AND THE BUNNYMEN. The inclusion of violin and sampled industrial-light beats paints an atmosphere of beauty and tension where tracks like "Alter," with its syncopated, shadowy dancefloor beat, pairs perfectly with the earnest and nostalgic synth-pop of "Water Towers." The production is rich and full, which highlights the dynamics between the driving bass, trebly guitars and spoken/sung vocals. A strong first release enveloped in isolation, confusion, and love.



Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: Windlass

### STUDENT NURSE – Problem Attic LP

STUDENT NURSE delivers some great care with this art-rock-gone-interstellar LP. Resurrecting after a 38-year break, this Seattle-based band dropped an album most likely recorded in an alien spaceship, though they don't steal cows, just emit strange tunes.

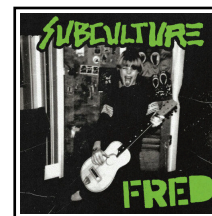
*Problem Attic* is filled with sci-fi atmospheric guitar, going on long tangents alongside eccentric upbeat drums. "Cash Machine" and "Garbage" offer great bass lines and jumpy energy. It seems the band is partial to having an '80s undertone to the album sound, "Discover Your Feet" holds the same shrill vintage sound reminiscent of BLONDIE. While I am not partial to the reverberated oddball vocal style, there is a unique harmony to the band which works well to dance between quick bursts of punk intention to laid-back songs. Working with fun synthesized effects and cute lyrics, this LP is worth its salt, yet not something I would put on repeat.

Reviewer: Fiona Rae  
Label: Wacky Dog

### SUBCULTURE – Fred 12"

Among SUBCULTURE's many claims to fame are having particularly sick drummer who went on the play in the SQUIRREL NUT ZIP-PERS, being the tour-mates of NOFX that christened Mike Burkett "Fat Mike," and recording this tight little EP, which was left unfinished and unreleased until now. Rescued by the good folks at Sorry State, this six-song record from the North Carolina group was named in tribute to their late guitarist Fred Hutchinson, who passed away in 2023. Recorded in 1986, it showcases an evolution from their full-length album *I Heard a Scream* that was released in the previous year. Where the LP was rooted in classic SoCal style, *Fred* captures the band as they were morphing into more of a speedy crossover sound—a common progression of that era. It's pummeling and punchy with a metal-y edge, but tunes like the goofy closer "KC's Coming to Town" remind you that they were still the fun-loving punks you knew and loved. It comes with a big-ass poster and lyric sheet, and proceeds from the album will go to Hutchinson's family.

Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Sorry State





seeing the progression makes me really anxious to hear whatever comes next—I can talk about how many elements remind me of other bands, songs, and records, but really I just keep coming back to how I've never really heard a record that sounds like this. Excellent.

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: Conteryan Punk

## ROWDY – Rowdy LP

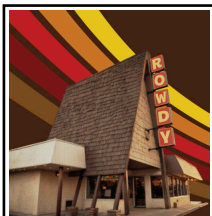
This is off to a great start with some jangly power pop guitar, matched perfectly with the catchy vocals which include both male and female components, but leaning female for sure. With members of HEX DISPENSERS featured here, the garage influences come as no surprise. But it's also got a power pop element that is reminiscent of BUSY SIGNALS. Mostly played with a peppy mid-tempo backbeat, they do slow it down here and there, but it never feels like they're taking their fee off the gas pedal. You wouldn't ever mistake this for RIVER CITY TANLINES, but it's got that same honest rock'n' roll quality. And at its core, this really is unapologetic rock'n' roll.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Drunken Sailor

## SAVAGE BEAT – The Singles: 2018–2022 LP

Solid, self-proclaimed “street boogie” out of Amsterdam. This is the kind of music you can make your mind up on within the first twenty seconds; if you like the first track you hear, you'll probably like the rest of them. That statement rings even more true here, as this is a collection of singles, so there's no attempt, or need really, for much dynamism from track to track. This is twelve tracks of high energy, guitar-licks-a-plenty, SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS-inspired rock. Sounds like there is a full-length on the way in 2025, and I'll be sure to see how they go about creating a cohesive album, but as these individual singles are apparently tough to come by, this gathering is a great holdover until then. Shout out to the great cover of “Paper Dolls,” too.

Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: Longshot / Wap Shoo Wap



## SECOND DEATH – Second Death 12”

SECOND DEATH from London plays a tight, airless brand of hardcore that feels claustrophobic. This nine-song, self-titled 12” explores a variety of personal and interpersonal issues in rapid succession, and with very little time wasted. Most songs are full-on walls of hardcore that open and close before there's time to catch your breath. Occasionally, I'm reminded of hardcore that came out of New Jersey about a decade ago: ALTERED BOYS, or HEAVY CHAINS. SECOND DEATH, however, seems to somehow tweak the hardcore formula and create even more succinct songs without missing anything.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

## SHELTER CAT – 66 Percent Strength LP

OFF WITH THEIR HEADS, LEATHER-FACE, and almost-Look-out! bands like ONE MAN RUNNING and M-BLANKET are bands I think of when I listen to this. It is hitting in all the right spots but, for me, I have a difficulty with their song “Toothlessness.” The song “Toothlessness” sounds remarkably similar to a THORNS OF LIFE (Daniel Sea, Blake Schwarzenbach, Aaron Cometbus) song called “New York is Giving Me the Creeps.” I get that there are only so many guitar chords, but this goes further than parallel thinking. The band seems to swipe the changes, the vocal cadence, and even lyrics from the song “New York is Giving Me the Creeps.” Maybe because THORNS OF LIFE didn't ever officially record anything, it seemed open to grab. But, come on, all three of the people in THORNS OF LIFE were in some of the most known Bay Area bands of the punk scene, ranging from G'RUPS, to CRIMP-SHRINE, to JAWBREAKER. Each person in the band has their own Wikipedia and IMDb page, for gosh sakes. This entire record feels a bit dishonest to me. I don't want to be cruel, but fuck it, something smells funny. I now question every song on this LP, and I can't un-smell it.

Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: Chumpire



## EXCREMENT OF WAR – What Glory in Death... LP

A very short-lived band from the '90s UK punk scene, with members ranging from DOOM to ZOUNDS. Even though they were short-lived, their material made an impact and the crater can still be seen today. Somewhere between EXTREME NOISE TERROR and STATE OF FEAR, this is a heavy-hitting crust machine. Phobia Records put together this great reissue, which consists of their demo from 1990 and another demo from 1992, with extra songs from a 1993 split with Japanese legends BEYOND DESCRIPTION. A staple in any crusty's collection!

Reviewer: João Seixas  
Label: Phobia

## FLORIDA MEN – Dive Bar CD

This band is from the Netherlands, and they spell it out as plainly as possible—RAMONES-core, heavily influenced by SCREECHING WEASEL, the QUEERS, CHIXDIGIT, TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET, et al. Let's be honest, by the bands I mentioned above, you already know if you want this or not. There is zero chance that you are on the fence with the FLORIDA MEN at this point. Here's the question, though: in twenty-plus years, will FLORIDA MEN be the kind of significant band that will be mentioned as an influence and peer to the list above? The answer is “I don't know.” The impact is for you to gauge. These twelve pop punk songs time out in just about twenty minutes. For me, the FLORIDA MEN's Dive Bar album is undoubtedly a faultless example of what they say they are, with entirely no surprises.

Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: Monster Zero



## FOGBANK – [Redacted] cassette

The band self-describes as “psychosis-induced hardcore,” and sometimes it's a good idea to listen to the artist's mission statement, ya dig? I hear tough hardcore breakdowns, I hear deranged Midwest basement punk, I hear modern squirmy punk, I hear wildly primitive sonic abuse. Taking jerky art-punk freakouts (“Fang”), tough guy mid-tempo stomps (“Mimic Chest”), and off-the-rails ‘core (“Wound,” “Parasite”) and making the whole thing sound cohesive and urgent and demanding is no small feat. These deranged Ohio mutants condense Neanderthal hardcore into balls of distorted USHC fury. This is dirty denim with shoelace belts. This is “lost your job because you forgot you were even supposed to go to work.” This is struggling to leave the fukk'n house because you just...can't.

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: self-released

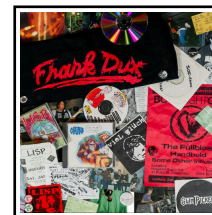
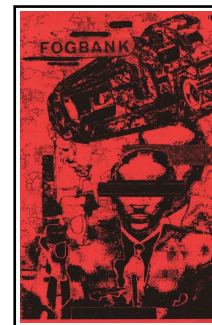
## FRANK DUX – Product of Our Youth CD

Cambridge, Ontario's FRANK DUX comes swinging with their debut full-length, Product of Our Youth. Named after the guy from Bloodsport, this four-piece has been at it since 2015, cranking out slick, fast-paced melodic pop punk with a singer who can actually sing. Despite their deceptively youthful sound, most of the themes in their lyrics are all grown-up, tackling grief, loss, and the uselessness of “thoughts and prayers.” If you're nostalgic for that '90s-era STRUNG OUT or LAGWAGON and love those emo-boy singers from bands like TAKING BACK SUNDAY or SAVES THE DAY, you'll want to give this a spin.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost  
Label: Pink Lemonade / Tarantula / Thousand Island

## FUN PEOPLE – Angustia No, No: 2 Songs Demo Outtakes flexi 7”

Easily the most niche release I've encountered in an extended minute, this flexi serves up an exceptionally brief yet fascinating entry point into the otherwise dense and eclectic catalog of this long-running Argentinian band. It takes less time to listen to these two songs than it does to read their Wikipedia page by a few minutes at least. Culled from what appear



to be practice tapes. *Angustia No, No* gives a vignette impression of frantic, rudimentary hardcore that would spawn six-plus albums from a group that would dabble in genres as varied as “reggae, pop, tango, thrash metal, and others,” per said Wikipedia article. These songs are quite cool and interesting but I didn’t have to go too far down the rabbit hole to determine that FUN PEOPLE aren’t for me. For a super-fan, this piece of floppy plastic could just be a prized possession.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Ugly

### FÉNWÄR – Fénwär LP

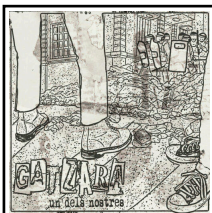
FÉNWÄR is a group of anarchists who reside at Réunion, which is a small island in the Indian Ocean, and they play toothsome, crusty anarcho hardcore. The *Fénwär* LP, the band’s first release, is eleven tracks of all-out blistering guitar, huge chugging bass lines, and intriguing rhythm shifts. The vocals range from spoken word, sung, and dual shouts, which keeps things really interesting, while most of the lyrics are in French. There’s also a DISCHARGE and a NAILBOMB cover, so you know from the jump what references FÉNWÄR is citing. “La Soucoupe et le Perroquet” is currently my preferred song, as it drifts into starting and builds stronger as it progresses into a ferocious pummeler. In all, don’t sleep on FÉNWÄR, as they’re top-shelf.



Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Blasting Dead / Bourre Pif / Deviance / DIY Koto / Keponteam / Lada / La Société Pue Prod / Mange Ton Maître / Shut Up and Play the Music / Zone Alternative

### GATZARA – Un Dels Nostres 12”

Right, first off, how many frigging record labels want to release this? Because truth be told, having given this a spin, the idea that there’d be this many scrambling to put it out is raising an eyebrow to say the very least. Some very average attempts at anthemic melodic street punk from Barcelona, but to its credit, it at least bowls along at a rate of knots and couldn’t be accused of being plodding. Just very boring, unfortunately.



Reviewer: Ben Marshall  
Label: Bullicia / Chivani / El Forat / Kremón / Mai Morirem / Mitternacht Platten / Victim / Zaragoza Desorden

### GLASS – Reflexo Transparente cassette

Have you ever wondered if punk might have ruined your life? I’ll admit that in moments of weakness the thought has crossed my mind. Well, here’s the antidote to such nonsense. When a release like this comes along, it just makes me fall in love with punk all over again. GLASS is primitive, savage, and unhinged. This cassette features seven songs and a spoken word intro and makes for an exceptional debut. Everything here is jagged and raw in all the right ways. The vocalist sounds convincingly angry, the guitars are fuzzed-out, and the drums are pounded out in a manner that makes it seem like the whole thing could implode at any moment. The story goes that none of the members of GLASS had ever picked up an instrument prior to starting the band, spending their time skating around Milan. Is that not the perfect origin for a killer band? They may not be the tightest in their playing, but it’s more than made up for by the group’s obvious passion and authenticity. Most of the cuts are straightforward hardcore punk tunes with D-beat drums, but they change it up on the last track “Perdido,” with a touch of darkwave influence. Brilliant. Punk rules, okay?

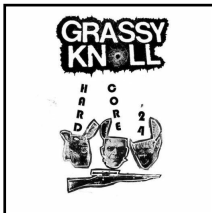
Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Sentiero Futuro Autoproduzioni



### GRASSY KNOLL – Hardcore ‘24 cassette

A wild collection of GERMS-worship with a sense of humor and a knack for the macabre. Songs are fast and reckless, with topics ranging from JFK’s murder, monsters, toxic waste, Charles Manson, zombies, dangerous cities, soldiers’ faces being eaten by rats, and so much more. When I hear this, I picture the punks from *Return of the Living Dead*, which naturally earns a recommendation.

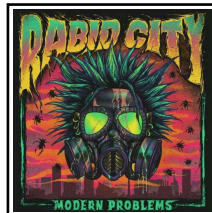
Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: self-released



### RABID CITY – Modern Problems LP

Rabid hardcore punks RABID CITY come at you with everything they’ve got. On their second full-length, this Baltimore outfit pulls all the cards out of their sleeves and rolls the dice with great luck, as the finished product is superb. Ten songs clocking in at fifteen minutes, short and sweet, like it was meant to be. They certainly sound as good as the classics from the ‘80s American hardcore scene. A great rendition of “Second Coming” by the iconic BATTALION OF SAINTS just ties everything together neatly.

Reviewer: João Seixas  
Label: Future Dryas



### RAD GNAR – Rad Gnar cassette

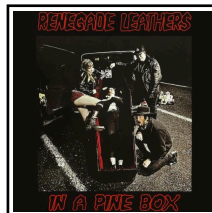
This tape brings to mind SIDEKICKS, the GET UP KIDS, SOMOS, JIMMY EAT WORLD, and SIGNALS MIDWEST, but with far less intensity and instantly forgettable. I researched this band and they have a covers LP, and by looking at their choice of covers (GUIDED BY VOICES, DINOSAUR JR, DEAD MOON, SEBADOH), I feel like they think they are something that they are not. This band is very musically competent, but overall, these songs sound compromised, which in this case has led to diluted songs being plopped along by bored people. I say this with the best of intentions; this band should break up and go start four new bands. I have been in bands like this before, and I know that half to three-quarters of the people in this band are bored and don’t want to compromise anymore, they want to make their own thing. I’m being 100% honest when I say that I will be the first Bandcamper to purchase whatever their new bands become, but this will be a thing I listen to once and then file with stylistically similar bands that don’t feel like their songs are muscle memory or gap-fillers. This cassette is ten regular songs of medio-core.

Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: self-released



### RENEGADE LEATHERS – In a Pine Box 12”

I feel like this was supposed to be a horror punk record, but one listen to *In a Pine Box* and I’m just confused. Portland’s RENEGADE LEATHERS hit like a(n almost) psychobilly/melodic gutterpunk hybrid—not swinging enough for the former and far too casual for the latter. There’s a spooky vibe throughout and the vocal trade-offs are



enough to keep this listener engaged, but my engagement is limited to wondering if they’re ever going to put their foot on the gas in this sonic hearse and launch us all off a cliff, or if they’re just content cruising casually in the slow lane. The opener “5625 (The Cemetery Song)” sets the bar at height of confusion, hitting like some kind of BELLRAYS buttrock experiment, and then the harmonica on the closer “Pretty River” clashes with the dark, ominous vocals and kinda kills what would otherwise be the best song on the record. There might be something here, but I’m still looking for it.

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: Criminal

### RIOT 111 – 1981! LP

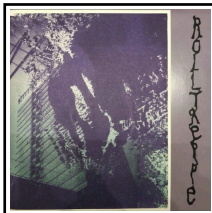
RIOT 111 formed in response to witnessing police violence in Wellington, NZ in the early ‘80s. After self-releasing two 45s and starting their own punk festival, this controversial group was banned from New Zealand television but gained notoriety that stretched into the US through various zines and compilation albums. Forty years later, one of the founding members pulled their master tapes out of the attic to properly document their recordings via this LP. A collection of protest songs with tribal rhythms and politically-charged spoken word lyrics, these DIY anarcho jams may appeal to fans of the Spiderleg Records catalog and other CRASS-adjacent relics. To quote the singer, “we’re not a band, we’re a terrorist organization!”

Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Leather Jacket



### ROLLTREPPE – Es Geht Bergab 12”

It’s possible that *Es Geht Bergab* sounds so completely original because it sounds so instantly familiar, and now I’m stuck wondering which it actually is (and knowing it’s both). You’re going to see terms like “post-punk” and “goth punk” thrown around a lot when people talk about this record (and this band), but that’s just folks not listening past the flanged bass and the spacial guitars—in reality, ROLLTREPPE is a damn punk band that takes advantage of those elements instead of leaning on them. From the opening track, I’m dragged back a decade. “Kranke Welt” feels like a mid-2010s RAKTA and WHITE LUNG collaboration (with the bass lick borrowed accidentally and/or blatantly from the former), while the general energy ROLLTREPPE projects is the stark, cold, dance frenzy that dominates ‘80s Eastern Bloc punk with all of the energy and intensity that comparison conjures and more. Rhythm-section-driven, high-energy punk with guitars taking their own trip and vocals that command full attention. I went back and checked out their 2020 release because I’m curious (and thorough), and

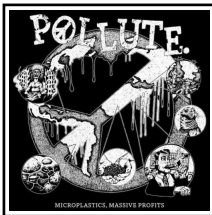


bass lines with both heavy slower guitar (like the explosion of noise in “Liar Liar,” wow) and more classically punk guitar. The way the vocals and instruments worked off of and balanced one another was so impressive because they weren’t separate at all but continued to create one cohesive musical space. The vocals also reminded me of Kat Moss of SCOWL at times, but with a more kinda whiny and unique quality. Absolutely loved these guys.

Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Noise Merchant

### POLLUTE – Microplastics, Massive Profits cassette

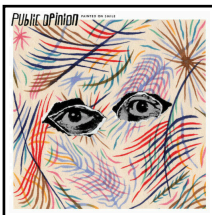
This album is absolutely crushing! D-beat hardcore punk/crust. The production is great for a record like this, it felt like I was in an earthquake. It’s not just heavy, there are massive hooks here too. This without a doubt one of my favorite releases so far this year. I would love to see this pressed on a record. I will be waiting for this band to tour.



Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: Culture Desert

### PUBLIC OPINION – Painted on Smile LP

Sometimes a debut just comes out self-assured and shit-hot, an introduction to a band that knows what it wants to do and does it with aplomb. That’s what we’ve got on our hands with this group who blends a lot of styles together to great effect.



We’ve got hard-driving, blue collar punk rock making nice with emo and pop punk that never loses its edge. These are musicians that have played together in other projects which makes sense—it sounds like a group of players who speak each other’s language, and it lends a lived-in depth to the overall sound. This album is doing its own thing, but it does sit alongside contemporaries like MILITARIE GUN who also don’t balk at bringing hardcore energy to dense melodicism. Each song is super-charged and filled to the brim with hooks, just like I like it. The playing is tight and the vocal performances veer from tender to anthemic throat-shredding, often in the same song. All in, this is a real treat and a confident-as-hell debut.

Reviewer: Luke Henley  
Label: Convulse

### PUDDY KNIFE – Flowers cassette

There are eight songs on this lo-fi, four-track, sweaty ’90s, “I know a basement in Kalamazoo we can play,” charming, “bring a change of clothes” cassette. I love this. The energy oozes. ASSFAC-TOR 4, ACTION PATROL, and UNION YOUNG AMERICA are bands that PUDDY KNIFE songs catapult me to stylistically, and not in mimicry. Like, these fuckers are invested; what I mean is, I bet they put on a killer show even if the room only has a couple teenagers making out and a hobo dancing in front of them. Imagine if DROPDEAD and BORN AGAINST did a pop punk band with ORDINATION OF AARON kinda thing. I have no idea what they are saying, but I feel like they mean it, whatever it is. I hope it’s a good pizza dough recipe or a song about a puppy on a turtle’s back. Look, whatever they are going on about is something they also feel deeply about. Maybe by song five out of eight, you want to read along so you can pump your fist and sing “Half-cup yeast / The fluffy pup licks the shell / Add the water / This island turtle delivers me to better smells” or something—again, I have no idea what they are mad at or happy about, but I really like all of these songs. I hope when PUDDY KNIFE reads this, they will send me lyrics or pizza dough recipes or pictures of their puppies riding their turtles.



Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: Two Two One Press

### PUNITIVE DAMAGE – Hate Training 12”

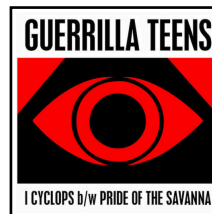
Vancouver’s PUNITIVE DAMAGE returns with another set of politically charged hardcore on their latest EP, *Hate Training*. Filled with cool tempo changes, wailing guitar solos, tough gang vocals, and I think a little tambourine(?), the band sounds sharp as hell while admirably speaking on the atrocities being committed in Gaza. If the current crop of modern hardcore bands and the rest of the Convulse roster are your thing, check this out.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Convulse

### GUERRILLA TEENS – I Cyclops / Pride of the Savanna 7”

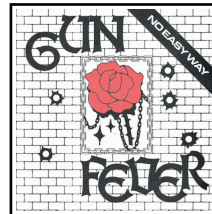
What if Glenn Danzig’s favorite movie as a kid was *Rocky Horror Picture Show*? And so his favorite music was the soundtrack to *Rocky Horror Picture Show*? Like, imagine young Danzig going to every midnight showing of the flick, knowing all the little audience participation parts and gags. Right, so this is what his first band probably would have sounded like. Campy horror punk? If I’ve conjured an exciting image in your head, that’s my bad. The actual product here is far from exciting. The A-side might have been saved by a good chorus since the instrumentation is pretty decent, but instead you just get the word “cyclops” shouted a bunch. I’ll just go back to picturing little Danzig in the theater, singing along with Tim Curry instead.



Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: Heavy Medication

### GUN FEVER – No Easy Way 12”

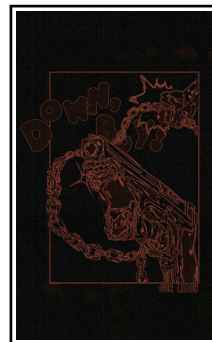
CHAIN CULT alum- nus joins forces with other Athenian punk rockers for a slightly glossy take on modern street punk. Undoubtedly the choruses have that sing-along-ability that is mandatory for this genre, and it has the kind of spartan, driving guitars that, legally I believe, I have to draw parallels with *Second Empire Justice*-era BLITZ. However, it’s a little too accomplished for my taste—if you like the kind of stadium skinhead rockin’ of LION’S LAW, you’ll have a lot to enjoy here, but it unfortunately fails to move me entirely.



Reviewer: Ben Marshall  
Label: Contra / Subculture for Life

### GUN LEASH – Down, Boy! cassette

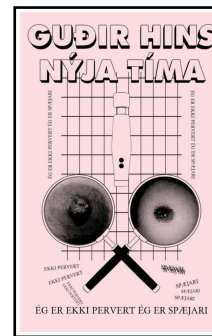
GUN LEASH’s *Down, Boy!* is a heavy boot to the face. Packed with slow/fast/slow parts, jagged riffs, and snarling vocals, the songs clock in at just one minute each, but so much happens in that time frame. Mosh parts drive this high-intensity EP that perfectly captures the raw power of GUN LEASH. Uncompromising punk like GAG or SPY—this band fits in well with the new wave of stompy hardcore bands.



Reviewer: João Seixas  
Label: For the Dancers

### GUÐIR HINS NÝJA TÍMA – Ég Er Ekki Pervert Ég Er Spæjari cassette

Two-piece Icelandic synth punk. GUÐIR HINS NÝJA TÍMA, or “GODS OF THE NEW AGE” if you prefer, put out their first demo in early 2021, and XTRO does us the kindness of releasing their brand new nine-song cassette in the US. Sometimes dancy, sometimes demented, with the occasional wildly unhinged theremin on top. As with all XTRO cassettes, this is limited to a mere 25 physical copies, and as with most XTRO releases, I can’t say enough good things about it.



Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Egisbraut / XTRO

### HARAA – Shide 紙垂 cassette

HARAA is a powerviolence band from Indonesia and has been playing together for a couple of years now. Their sound is heavily influenced by Japanese hardcore, but also incorporates harsh noise, ambient noise, and field recordings. *Shide* 紙垂 is a five-track recording that is over in about six minutes, so multiple replays are a prerequisite. However, the amount of sonic space HARAA traverses in this time is immense, so you’ll be needing to replay this cassette a few more times just to catch all the nuances hidden within the melee. In total, *Shide* 紙垂 carries with it an archaic power, like being crushed by the fist of an angry ancient god while at the same time being absolute raw punk gold and satisfying the “noise not music” sect in a single tidy package.



Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Black Konflikt

### HORDE / OUT OF PHASE – split LP

Split record from two East German purveyors of extreme heaviness. Grindcore band HORDE delivers everything I like about the genre: crisp, pummeling drums, bass-heavy, ultra-distorted guitar tones, and the filthiest vocals possible. Like INSECT WARFARE or NASUM, HORDE finds the fine line between hardcore and death metal and blasts it apart until their side is over. The snare work is crazy on all these songs, super-tight with incredible



transitions that move from blastbeats to D-beats with ease, and a pounding cadence on “Soziopathy” that has to result in occasional torn drum heads. This is grade A grind with a few sidesteps into brutal death metal, like on the sludgy, gurgling “Zentro.” Total ripper. That’s a tough act to follow, but OUT OF PHASE fucking kills it as well, albeit in a different manner. They bring HIS HERO IS GONE-influenced crust that crushes with a thick, fuzzed-out low end, insane drums (do these bands share a drummer? Seriously some of the best I have heard in a while on both sides), and call-and-response anguished, howling vocals. Tracks like “I” and “IV” have snaky guitar leads that add texture to the chaos and make the whole thing sound even more menacing. This rules; a split release where both sides deserve equal play.

*Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi*  
*Label: Abnegat / Body Blows / Coups de Couteau / Drlapidated / Ganamala Autoproduzioni / Pasidaryk Pats / Rejected Abused*

### HUMAN NEEDS – Concrete

HUMAN NEEDS are from Rome and play anarcho-punk à la ZOUNDS or the MOB, but with the addition of some contemporary darkened post-punk. For me, this is one of those albums that I want to dwell with or to put on and listen to with intent, not just press play and relinquish it to the background—a lyrical depth that causes one to pause and ponder while at the same time being a direct message. Interspersed with recordings of the natural world, *Concrete//Generic* also carries with it layers of cheeky sarcasm. Instrumentally, HUMAN NEEDS uses pretty classic anarcho-punk-styled riffs with relatively clean tones, which keeps things in a harmonic spectrum. The rhythm section is fantastic with speedy drum fills, primal tom hits, and a bass that keeps up at warp speed. This is an absolute must for fans of things like CHAIN CULT or DIAT, but also if you dig anthemic anarcho-punk.

*Reviewer: Seth McBurney*  
*Label: Rope or Guillotine*

### IMPACT DRIVER – The Hustle and Muscle LP

This album was tough to make it through. Oi! is a genre that has to be well-executed to resonate with me. When it hits, it can be powerful, vital even. Bad Oi! can be downright terrible, not to mention the sketchy, hate-driven garbage. I appreciate the fact that IMPACT

DRIVER makes their anti-racist stance very clear, but when they sing about watching the country that they “love” go up in flames, they’ve lost me. Nationalism is lame. The music is oddly repellant, too. The playing is sloppy and the singer tries to



cram way too many words into the verses. Something about the production is off as well. I can’t tell if it’s mixed poorly or what, but the vocals are absurdly loud and the snare drum is barely audible. Maybe there is something here for diehard Oi! aficionados, but I cannot abide.

*Reviewer: Matt Casteel*  
*Label: Dismantled*

### INTERTERROR – Interterror LP reissue

A reissue of seminal Spanish punkers INTERTERROR’s 1985 LP; this release tacks on one additional track from the original recording session that was previously unreleased. With nine songs sung in their native tongue, the band tackles serious subjects like suicide and the Holocaust while maintaining an upbeat and melodic sound with sing-along choruses.

*Reviewer: Jason Harding*  
*Label: El Mascarat*



### INVICTUS – Invictus cassette

INVICTUS’ self-titled cassette has two sides, one an older recording and the other newer. While I liked them both, I preferred the second, newer one. For the first side, I loved the kind of strange melodic guitar layered on the classically distorted rhythm guitar in tracks like “O Medo Me Protege,” and I liked that all the tracks were short and straight to the point. I did find myself kind of wanting something more. Maybe the drums weren’t intense enough for me to match the rest of the vibes, though it could be a stylistic thing—it didn’t feel quite finished to me. However, as soon as the first track “A Blessing in Disguise” came on for the second side, it instantly felt much more powerful and complete already. The second side was a bit more rock-y and garage punk, ending with a bang with the track “Dissimulated.”

*Reviewer: Emma Miller*  
*Label: self-released*

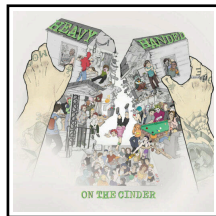


*Reviewer: Matt Casteel*  
*Label: XTRO*

### ON THE CINDER – Heavy Handed LP

Tucked under the surface between fast-shouting hardcore band parts and indulgent ‘90s pop emo sections lies a thoughtfully formed album. For easy comparisons, I’ll plop in STRIKE ANYWHERE, LAGWAGON, A WILHELM SCREAM, and I’m not sure why, but “Coffee Achievers” by 76% UNCERTAIN comes to mind. I’m certain that kids will drive around at night, scream some of these songs, and hit the steering wheel during their favorite parts. The LP’s cover is a home being torn in half during a party thus dumping the kids into the basement, and I think the sleeve completely captures the spirit of the record. The music is energetic, musky, damp, probably smells like cigarettes and stale beer, lots of friendly smiles bumping into each other, all with equal parts of hope and regret but in a familiar way.

*Reviewer: Tony Party*  
*Label: Flower House*



### ORTEGA – Fashionista LP

Self-described “DC hardcore art punk lo-fi sweethearts,” ORTEGA throws a lot of chaotic energy into *Fashionista*, and there are definitely some fun, aggressive moments throughout. However, whatever the band gets right is overshadowed by their singer’s relentless caterwauling. At times he sounds a bit like that guy from MĀNESKIN, but more often it sounds like he’s just yelling to be heard over the noise in the most grating way possible. I’m all for abrasive vocalists—raspy, screechy, ranty, whatever—but this feels less like an artistic choice and more like the rest of the band had to let him join in because his mom owns the practice space. This would be way better as an instrumental. Check out, “Flicker,” if you’re intrigued.

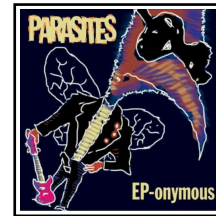
*Reviewer: Jeff Cost*  
*Label: self-released*



### PARASITES – EP–Onymous EP

If your girlfriend is in the market for some fast-paced pop punk themed with rockabilly romance, *EP-Onymous* is perfect for your sweetheart. Midwest punks know how to love; the PARASITES prove this with their passionate five-song EP. Serenading us with a sort of lived-in recording quality and boy band-ish charm, this release is a short burst of electricity bringing to mind the RAMONES as source material. Singing about a girl (or many), the catharsis of this EP stems from a mix of lyrics centered on heart-break and loving redemption, backtracked by repeating riffs and semi-muted drums. “I Love Her, But She Don’t Surf” is a classic, and the incorporated tambourine in “Love Me Too” is always appreciated (other bands, take notes). The type of album you find buried in a former punk’s garage sale, *EP-Onymous* is just, well, good: not overly pleasing nor underwhelming, a precious staple in the Chicago scene.

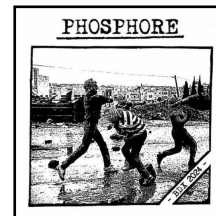
*Reviewer: Fiona Rae*  
*Label: Otitis Media*



### PHOSPHORE – BDX 2024 flexi EP

PHOSPHORE from Bordeaux, France released this three-song flexi as a summary of 2024, and it rips. If you’re unfamiliar with PHOSPHORE, then check out their 2023 self-titled full-length, or imagine hardcore D-beat with a Scandi bent sung in French. Blown-out vocals barking over noisy, loud, punk rock. The *BDX 2024* flexi seems even noisier and louder, which only further highlights the themes contained within the songs and the disc’s packaging. With each track being just over the minute mark, these songs were destined for many subsequent repeats. If you like full-speed, cacophonous punk, then you better take a trip with PHOSPHORE.

*Reviewer: Seth McBurney*  
*Label: Symphony of Destruction*



### PIGMALE BRAINS – Sanity? Okay! cassette

Weird, punky band from Indianapolis. I thought these guys were so fun to listen to, they were so different and weird that I was immediately hooked. My absolute favorite track was “Big Struttin,” where the guitar and vocals mimic one another tauntingly, then morphs into this just absolutely heavy metal scream that was so distant yet guttural, I was blown away. I also loved the variety of kinda funky



into their music...which may not be a total coincidence, considering that said building was apparently Edvard Munch's childhood home. There's a lot to digest with this release and it won't strike a chord with everyone, but if you've ever felt like PRISON AFFAIR or RESEARCH REACTOR CORP, just aren't weird enough, then you're in the right place.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Erste Theke Tonträger

### MOSKWA – Jarocin '84 LP

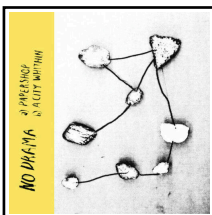
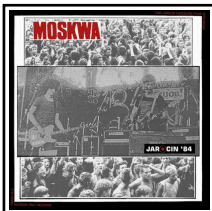
MOSKWA is from Poland and I believe that they still play once in a while, or at least they did until the pandemic happened. They started in 1983 and I hear some similarities between them and G.B.H., although MOSKWA tends to go faster and faster while having the same kind of song structure and 1-2-1-2 drum beats. MOSKWA seems to like to push their music to the edge where it feels like everything is just going to fall apart, but everytime it gets to that point, it's like whiplash and they're back to a solid verse or chorus. I like bands that play with reckless abandon, and that describes this record. It's wild hardcore punk. I'm happy to have this.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: Warsaw Pact

### NO DRAMA – Papershop / A City Within 7"

This band from Toulouse really leans into labeling themselves as '90s retro, and I mean, yeah. The A-side especially recalls shimmery indie pop that could have been released on Simple Machines or Teenbeat in the mid-'90s, and their previous EP is kinda *grungy*. What saves this from being a trite reread is excellent songwriting and performance/production that sounds scrappy and not too slick. I was really not expecting to get anarcho vibes from the B-side, but here we are! It reminds me of the random mellow song that sticks out on a *Bullshit Detector* comp or some other early '80s UK comp to benefit a bail fund for hunt saboteurs. It kind of sounds like a really chill MOB or BLYTH POWER song, or later OMEGA TRIBE, in that it's poppy, for sure, and chill and even pretty, but has a stinky punk soul deep inside.

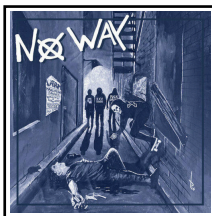
Reviewer: Rachel Courtney  
Label: Anything Bagel / Araki / Brainwasher / Bus Stop Press / Hidden Bay / Seitan Hell Bike Punx / Stonehenge / Wood of Heart



### NO WAY – Make a Difference EP

Hailing from the Netherlands, NO WAY plays straightedge youth crew-style hardcore. The band members are all fifteen or sixteen years old, and I've gotta say, there's something to be said about younger people playing this music. The intensity of their playing as well as their lyrics feels authentic, a quality frequently lacking in modern bands playing this style. I'm neither a youth nor straightedge, but I can get down with this shit. Worth checking out; for fans of JUDGE, CHAIN OF STRENGTH, and YOUTH OF TODAY.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Refuse



### NOCNE SZCZURY – Jarocin '80 EP

Documenting a 1980 performance by one of Poland's first punk bands, this 7" was lovingly prepared, packaged with a booklet of photos and liner notes telling the story of the band in both Polish and English languages. Featuring three poppy tunes with lyrics about being among the few punks to exist in Poland at the time, the musical aptitude here is eighth grade talent show-level, but I'm sure these are fond memories for those who were there.

Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Warsaw Pact



### NOV LT – Recesses cassette

The use of certain descriptors can feel very reductive. Being in a band ain't all it's cracked up to be, and having the time and energy spent on writing, rehearsing, and recording songs boiled down to a couple words seems kinda lazy and (over) easy. So I ain't gonna do it! On to the matter at hand...NOV LT (pronounced like "novel tea," I presume) plays ultra lo-fi, new wave-y punk, served up hot and runny, right off the breakfast plate. The snot-nosed vocals and modulated guitars remind me a lot of SKULL CULT, but more damaged. Fuck art, this is nerd-damaged. The opening track is called "Daniel Johnston on Love Island," for chrissakes. Not a chain in sight. If you're familiar with XTRO's catalog, then you know precisely what I mean. If I have any complaints here, it's that for a band named NOV LT, I expected them to bring something new to the table. But hey, these lads are quite good at what they do and there's nothing new under the sun. After all, you can't make an omelette without breaking a few...ahhh, forget it.



### ISMATIC GURU – An Incredible Amount of Overwhelming Information LP

Buffalo's ISMATIC GURU is truly a unique duo. Yes, they're regarded as egg-punk and yes, egg-punk itself is a diverse genre where two bands rarely resemble each other. But even in this ocean of bizarre sounds, they manage to stand out. Covering all their previous work plus five brand new songs, their latest release *An Incredible Amount of Overwhelming Information* is the full package and the ultimate testimony to their eccentricity. With guitars alternating between rhythmic stabs and demented single-note lines, bass laying down jittery grooves, drums providing a steady backbone, organs adding another layer of manic melodic content while the vocals ramble on and on with such dynamic delivery, the overall sound is an even further abstraction of post-punk and full of nods to the iconic sounds of both no wave and new wave. I really appreciate their minimal, almost fully DI-sounding signature production style that makes the duo's immense songwriting skills shine further. There is nothing quite like ISMATIC GURU, and there is no better way to immerse yourself in their work than *An Incredible Amount of Overwhelming Information*.

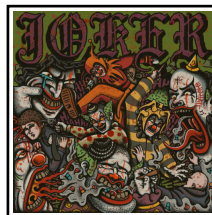
Reviewer: Mama Goblin  
Label: Swimming Faith / Swish Swash



### JOKER – The EP 12"

Never has a label had a name more apt than Quality Control (Free Ola), as very few labels are such an obvious stamp of approval than their co-sign. JOKER is no different, and this EP joins that pantheon. A groove-laden metallic hardcore heater, treading that perfect line between riffs for days and bass lines to make even ya granny buss a two-step. It'll no doubt shock you to learn they take influences from MERAUDER, BULLDOZE, and LIFE OF AGONY, and their tunes reflect this in the best possible way. Couldn't be recommended more.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall  
Label: Quality Control HQ



### JUDY AND THE JERKS / SHITTY LIFE – split LP

Good HC/punk split record. JUDY AND THE JERKS open insanely strong with a unique start to "Something On Your Mind?"—super-fast guitar, then a break for a quick bass lick. Their songs manage to somehow get faster and faster, to the point where I audibly said "goddamn," out loud. Sheer speed and madness, loved it. SHITTY LIFE brings the same energy in a different way. While they're less fast, the clean guitar mixed with loud and slightly distorted vocals creates a fun combination. More of a power punk band, they're punk but with more character. "Your Life, Their Choice" is a powerful track to end the album with.

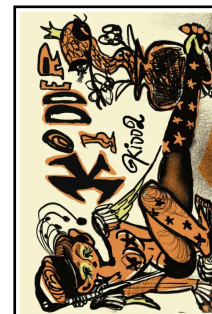
Reviewer: Emma Müller  
Label: Refuse



### KIDDER – Ki002 cassette

Second cassette release by Japanese post-punk band KIDDER. The band's first cassette came out in early 2024, and eight months later, they are back with eight more songs of meandering, angular, somewhat tuneless garage-infused post-punk. The songs go on a wee bit long for as repetitive as they tend to get, but all in all, you mostly get a pretty straightforward garage punk rhythm section and noodly indie rock guitar leads.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Like a Fool



### KLONNS – Heaven LP

I had read some good reviews of this LP by Tokyo's KLONNS, and since I loved their *Volgar* EP on Black Konflikt (they covered ABRAHAM CROSS and I'm an easy crowd to please) and enjoyed their Paris gig last year, I was rather looking forward to enthusiastically reviewing *Heaven*. And it may indeed have to do with rather high personal expectations, but this LP does not do it for me, unfortunately. It is certainly not lacking in terms of intensity and determination, and they do have moments when they hit the high-energy and triumphant traditional Japanese hardcore sound right, but they mostly sound too much like a lot of current US hardcore bands to me, with too many of those modern mosh parts and serpentine riffs. Not a bad LP



in itself and by no means a bad band, but not what I am looking for in hardcore punk right now.

Reviewer: Romain Basset  
Label: Iron Lung

### KORUPEHE – Näin on Hyvä EP

Defly dancing between melodic pop punk and something with a slightly harder edge, this is an impressive little sampling from these punks from Helsinki. The production loses me a bit; it's somewhat sterile with each element in its own sonic space rather than truly melding together for something holistically special. The songwriting and the playing is all there, though. While I often prefer shorter songs, my favorite tunes here actually take their time to spread out and explore their ideas. The finest example of what this band does right is on the harmony-rich "Rainbow Islands." I'm less convinced by the attempts at faster and harder punk, which the band delves into as well. For me, the pop punk is right in the pocket, while the rest just doesn't have the teeth or the riffs to sell me.

Reviewer: Luke Henley  
Label: Foxhole Productions

### LA OTRA GENTE / OJO DE AJO – split cassette

LA OTRA GENTE and OJO DE AJO really build off of each other to create a great punk cassette. The artwork for this cassette greatly reminded me of *Sister* by SONIC YOUTH, but more whimsical. I loved the loud, yelling punk vocals of LA OTRA GENTE, and how they kept a great variety of tempos throughout that didn't disappoint. With touches of power punk in "Jirafa Ardiendo" and a heavier and slower guitar riff in "Cemento," they're able to cover lots of ground. Similarly, OJO DE AJO also had a variety of musical styles in their half of the cassette. They start off with a cool spoken word style in a sludgier track of "Mentiras de Verdad" but transition to a more grunge-y style as well as a kind of heavier shoegaze and then back to classic punk. Wow. They ended with a bang with super heavy guitar that feels like it's sweeping the ground like a dense fog, combined with great layered screams. Overall, would recommend this to anyone who wants a taste of good modern punk.

Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Declino



### LEAVE IT BEHIND – The Time Flies EP

I originally didn't like this EP. It pairs mid-'90s pop punk with a vocalist better suited for cave-man hardcore. It was jarring during my first listen through, but now that I've spun this dang ol' thing a few more times, I've become partial to it. A modern update to what I consider the "your favorite local band" sound. Sloppy at times, but still very catchy. The guitarist feels like they're on another level, holding each track together with a couple of blistering solos here and there. Drums are recorded in full stereo and sound great. Fun stuff for old dudes like me who still like to spin DUTCH OVEN albums from nearly 30 years ago.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: The Danger Room

### LOS PEPES – For Everyone LP reissue

This was originally released on Wanda back in 2014. I'm not certain it really needed to get re-released, but I'm a big fan. If you're into super-catchy power pop, if you prefer that power pop to be mid-tempo, and if you like pretty vocals, this is also for you. It somehow reminds me of the late '70s and also the BUSY SIGNALS. Good stuff.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Wanda

### LOW CARD DE LA MORTE / SUMMER OF DEATH / YUPPIE GORE FILTH – Gusanos, Rencor, Barbarico split CD

Here's a three-way split from Japan featuring three thrashing but dissimilar bands. This veers from the respectable, if a bit clean, mince from LOW CARD DE LA MORTE to the party thrash punk of SUMMER OF DEATH. The most lo-fi of the bunch, and by extension my favorite, is the filling of the sandwich: YUPPIE GORE FILTH. They bring a sort of misanthropic NO TREND energy, or even first wave black metal (when bands veered closer to thrash with an evil edge). What you're basically getting with this comp is a lot of songs done in varying styles of thrashing punk to varying degrees of competency. It's not much more complicated than that, and it doesn't have to be.

Reviewer: Luke Henley  
Label: Hardcore Kitchen



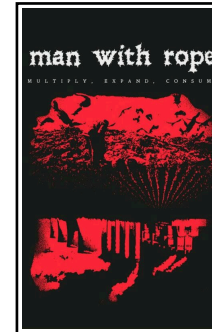
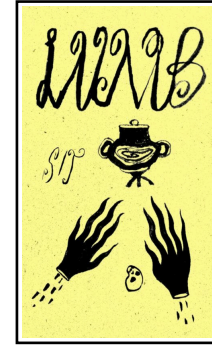
### LUMB – Lumb cassette

This was my first introduction to the solo project known as LUMB, and it is a lot to take in at fourteen songs and forty minutes in length. The standard problem that I feel many solo projects have of there not being enough ideas is not even remotely applicable in this case. If anything, I would suggest that the brain-child behind LUMB seems to have far too many ideas. Almost every track on this cassette sounds wildly different from the one before it, but not necessarily in an interesting songwriting kind of way. It sounds more like someone trying to play cover-all on their bingo card of all the different musical genres they wanted to touch upon. From country to new wave, from DILLINGER FOUR-inspired pop punk vocals to DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN herky-jerkiness, from experimental art to rockabilly guitar leads and back again. There are the occasional moments where I am intrigued, but the cool parts just tend to get drowned out by the confusion that inevitably and immediately follows.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Splitter

### MAN WITH ROPE – Multiply. Expand. Consume. cassette

With a name like that, you're probably not going to sport the band's shirt at your nan's birthday, unless of course she's well into dark '00s-flavoured crustcore, in which case she could already be into MAN WITH ROPE and might actually nick your shirt (it's her big day, after all), so maybe bring another non-crust top to be safe. This lot are from St. Louis and *Multiply. Expand. Consume.* is their first oeuvre, with five songs of heavy and anguished crust that should have been released in 2005 and can be said to fall under the "neocrust" umbrella. I hardly ever listen to that subcategory these days, and I realize it has become something of a derogatory term in some quarters as many do not look back too kindly on the '00s. But when the genre is that well done and the passion and energy are there, I'd rather listen to this tape than the fancy post-punk act of the day. MAN WITH ROPE is not one of those total TRAGEDY copycats that I do, truthfully, tend to avoid because they often dick around too much with melodies and forget to hit hard. MAN WITH ROPE does not. There are elements of HIS HERO IS GONE of course, but I am hearing a lot of ACURSED and mid-'00s SKITSYSTEM too, the Swedish school basically,



and Madeline's vocals sound incredible here, vehement and quite extreme inviting AMBULANCE or SCHIFOSI to the table of despair. Not a style I would blast daily, but an enjoyable and a little nostalgic moment nonetheless.

Reviewer: Romain Basset  
Label: Noise Merchant

### MIDDLE-AGED QUEERS / THE RAGING NATHANS – DCxPC Live Presents, Vol. 20 split LP

It's such a bummer to me when bands choose to talk shit about sobriety. At the end of the RAGING NATHANS' set, they talk about how one of the band members quit drinking six to seven years ago and hasn't had any fun since. The RAGING NATHANS, even in jest, are perpetuating a stereotype that people who don't drink are incapable of having fun. I just hate that even our punk subculture succumbs to promoting mainstream culture of pressuring people to drink. Support your friends in recovery and generally don't be a dick. Anyways, the rest of it is decent, though the recording is a bit muddy. The flip-side is pretty different. I love how in-your-face, authentic, and self-aware MIDDLE-AGED QUEERS are. During their live set, they use their platform to engage the audience in a chant for their theme song: "We are the queers / The MIDDLE-AGED QUEERS / We are the queers / Go fuck yourself." Overall, I'm glad it exists, but I like one side much more than the other. These bands are similar musically, but pretty different when it comes to their lyrics.

Reviewer: Kayla Greet  
Label: DCxPC / Wax Mage

### MOLBO – Molbo LP

I read somewhere recently that egg-punk is dead. Well, look out, because whatever zombified undead poultry has risen from that wretched grave may be headed to a MOLBO gig. Electric and eclectic, to call MOLBO quirky would be the understatement of the year. This debut footlong is completely deranged! Twelve songs of over-before-you-know-it punk with guitars that sound like synths and synths that sound like they've been strapped to a torture rack; these freaky Norweigans have made an album that takes the listener on a trek through the bowels of madness. The tunes are oddly catchy. Some are quite fast. Every single one is off-kilter and strange, pulling your attention in multiple directions at once. Don't be surprised to hear screams from a battlefield or the whinnying of a horse. Birthed from the basement of the famed Blitz squat in Oslo, MOLBO has injected the essence of Expressionism

