



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #503

APRIL 2025

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 98 reviews, contributed by:

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Tony Party	Jake Joyce
Jason Harding	Tim Janchar
Matt Casteel	Mama Goblin
Bill Chamberlain	Biff Bifaro
Willis Schenk	Emma Miller
Nick Odorizzi	Erika Elizabeth
Kenny Kaos	Fiona Rae
Eric Anderson	Luke Henley
João Seixas	Alex Howell
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THE COUNTERFORCE

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ΠΛΕΚΤΑΝΗ – Καλλιτεχνικές Ανησυχίες LP

We have some pretty raging hardcore punk from Athens, Greece here. It wouldn't have surprised me if they were from Sweden, because they play that style of hardcore. "Plektani" is how their name translates into something I can try and pronounce. Two-guitar



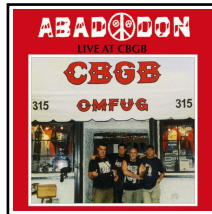
attack that makes it sound thick and full. Good production, good songwriting, excellent riffs, I couldn't ask for much more. I will listen to this again and again.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain

Label: Cháos & Antikomformismós

ABADDON – Live at CBGB LP

I shouldn't have to talk about ABADDON in the time of the internet, so I won't condescend to you when you can use search engines...but please know that they are fucking important. This is probably the only recording of their 2003 US mini-tour you will ever hear, and to say that it is worth your time would be a criminal understatement. Fierce and honest Polish hardcore originally active in the early '80s, this recording captures a reformed ABADDON at CBGB blasting through tracks from 2004's *Godzina Krzywd* instead of *Wet Za Wet* or the REJESTRACJA split (aside from opening with "Rewolucja"), and honestly, it's a really good move. The band was on absolute fire, and the gruff vocals get a little rougher as the set progresses, just like the guitar gets a little looser and...this is what you want from a live recording. Legendary band, amazing set, grateful it was immortalized. Wild that ABADDON, ARMIA, and DEZERTER all toured the US in 2003—it was like our own Jarocin, and we just didn't know it.



Reviewer: Robert Collins

Label: Refuse

ABOLITIONIST – The Long Slide cassette

Out of the dampness of Oregon comes ABOLITIONIST with a ten-song cassette full of synth-driven, melancholic, post-hardcore-inspired political punk. Between the blasting E-beats, you'll catch lyrics that tell a story pertaining to a potential future world. *The*



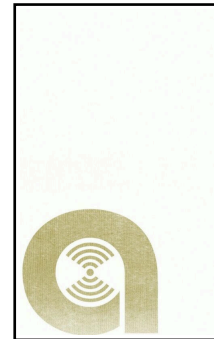
Long Slide is a bit of a concept album in that regard. *The Long Slide* is also a sonic departure from previous ABOLITIONIST recordings with its electronic-driven rhythms, droning synths, and distorted vocals. "Smoke" has a great post-punk-influenced intro, then rips into a snotty vocal delivery of lyrics critical of accelerationism. There's a Cold War-era vibe that permeates a lot *The Long Slide*, as it cites '80s new wave but without an ounce of respect. I really dig the lightning-fast energy of "Where the Bad Folks Go." All in all, *The Long Slide* reminds me of a late night dub session where PROPAGANDHI takes over the turntable with a collection of new wave singles and remixes them into some great punk rock.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney

Label: Death Culture

ABSCAM – Abscam cassette

Spasmodic and violent synth band from somewhere in Los Angeles, if I were to make an educated guess. Hard to put this one together on first listen—ABSCAM is composed of dueling keyboards, guitar, and live drums; the live energy encapsulated on the cassette is a good approximation of what performances I have seen of the band. GEZA X signed to Three One G would be my offering at a sound comparison. How can the songs take form beyond this first offering? I would like to know...

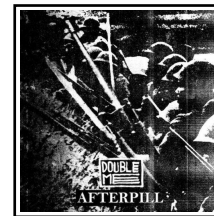


Reviewer: Johnny Leach

Label: Noise Merchant

AFTERPILL / DOUBLE ME – split EP

This AFTERPILL/DOUBLE ME split 7" is a quick and dirty snack of powerviolence done two ways. AFTERPILL, a bass-and-drums duo from Saguenay, Quebec, cranks out seven tracks of no-frills, meat-and-potatoes fast-core tunes that sometimes tended to blur together a little bit. It's solid, but don't expect a lot of variety. Then DOUBLE ME, a four-piece from Padua, Italy, crashes in with five tracks in just under two minutes, balancing screaming and Cookie Monster vocals over rapid-fire drumming. Despite an average song length of 22 seconds, each track somehow manages to sound distinct, and the recording quality delivers a serious punch. It's over before you can catch your breath, but if relentless, no-bullshit powerviolence is your thing, this split's got you covered. Check out the whole thing.



Reviewer: Jeff Cost

Label: Drinkin' Beer in Bandana / Grindhead / Here And Now / Loner Cult / Shagsters / S02 / Throne of Lies

ALPHA SUB – Alpha Sub CD

The start of this is frantic and catchy not unlike the DWARVES, and snotty like the VINDICTIVES. Some of the songs walk the line between charming, funny, and dumb. I really couldn't find any info on the band. I even tried to search what I imagine is their most famous local songs, "Two Handed Piss" and "Stepdad Goatee," but nothing came up. Their song titled "Fuck the Police" takes on a double meaning with lyrics about bad cops sung to the tune of "Every Breath You Take" by the POLICE.



This record is meat-and-potatoes punk that falls somewhere between reliable and consistent. There are eleven songs on this CD that are waiting for you to have a round.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Phameless

ANGEL FACE – Take Me Back / Night and Day 7"

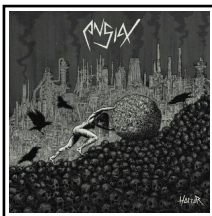
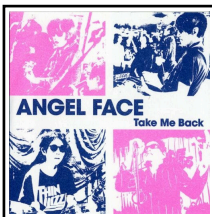
From Tokyo supergroup ANGEL FACE, "Take Me Back"/"Night and Day" is a classic one-two rock punch. With Fink (TEENGENERATE, RAY-DIOS) and Toyoza (FADE-AWAYS) handling the strings, the band's impressive pedigree sets expectations high, and this tight single rises to the occasion. The A-side is an awesome upbeat pop-punker with a sickly-sweet hook; the kind of tune that does that neat trick of making heartbreak seem kind of fun. On the B-side, "Night and Day" comes in sounding like it's about to be a cover of "Detroit Rock City" before breaking into a formidably infectious boogie complete with sing-along chorus. Flip it over and over and over and over.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Target Earth

ANSIAX / BAKOUNINE – split LP

ANISAX is crusty hardcore, some D-beat, some good riffs, even a song that reminds me a bit of the way D.R.I. plays. Most of the time, they are playing music influenced by a lot of classic crust bands. I like this, it reminds me of the 1990s. BAKOUNINE is a good match for this split. Similar in style, but a little more D-beat. Both bands give us some nice hooks that really make this a good listen.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Aback Distribution / Abnegat / Bourdoule / Creepozoid Productions / Crustatombe / Deviance / Emrenadur / Ruido Total Discos / Subversive Ways



APPARITION – Verbrauch cassette

APPARITION plays a form of hardcore that draws heavy inspiration from Italian hardcore bands like DECLINO or INDIGESTI, so think chaotic song structures. The *Verbrauch* cassette was released late in 2024 and features a raw, lo-fi production which lends a liveness to the six songs contained. Pure feedback harnessed as guitar solos, seemingly endless bass runs, and a thrashing whirlwind of drums are combined and support The German vocals have the feeling of a revolutionary with a bullhorn during a riot. The closing track "Leer Abgelassen" is a chugging, gloom-ridden opus and provides a succinct wrap on the spectacle. If you liked HELLSCAPE's release last year, then you'll definitely be into APPARITION.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Total Peace

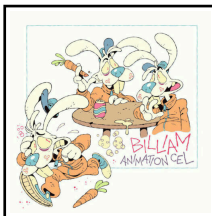
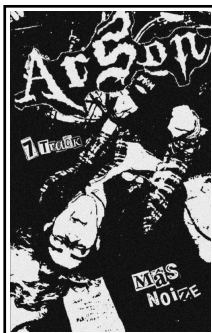
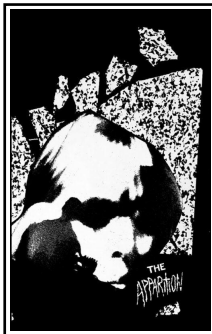
ARSON – Más Noize cassette

Brooklyn noise punk massively influenced by Japanese masters such as CONFUSE or KURO. Punishing layers of distortion, pressing down upon more layers of punishing distortion. Everything is mangled and destroyed, with the songs just emerging from the sonic wreckage. Agonizing vocals float above the mix, with wailing painful shouts reverberating through the deformed soundscape. Most of the selections are speedy, brief, treble-driven blasts, but the seventh cut, "Sabbath," takes a turn down a more plodding, blackened path before kicking the tempo back up mid-flight. A fine example of grotesque "music" guaranteed to frighten your strait-laced neighbors.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Roachleg

BILLIAM – Animation Cel LP

In a sea of singles, splits, and EPs, *Animation Cel* marks BILLIAM's second LP. This prolific bedroom musician (who has maybe outgrown that label?) does not disappoint fans, with sixteen tracks of buzz, synth-wobble, and screech. In large font, the inner sleeve reads "Autismcore / Billiamwave LP#2"—so if we were



who sounds like Richard Hell doing an impression of David Byrne. When they keep things crisp or punky, it's great. But when they veer into post-hardcore territory, it starts sounding like CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH. Worth a listen!

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Splitter / U-Bac

V/A – The Absolute Fuckin' Worst of Backwoods Butcher Records: Demo Tape Collection CD

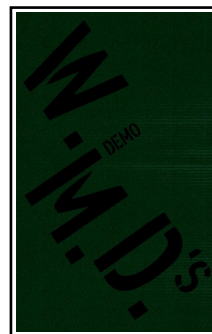
I bought my car about a decade ago, and the first sticker I threw on the thing was a Backwoods Butcher logo. I marked out quite a bit when this thing slid across my desk because this label can do no wrong, and that's especially true here with this collection of demo tapes aptly titled "the worst." That's a compliment depending on who you're talking to. Featuring a collection of previously released demos from SKITKATEDRAL, RANCOROUS SLOG, TELEKINETIC DECAPITATION, IGNORANT CORPSE, GAMMA-GERÄT, and CEMETERY FUNGUS, this compilation perfectly encapsulates what one should always expect from a Backwoods Butcher release: a little bit of grind, a little bit of Southern rock, a little tongue-in-cheek, and a lot of DIY. Really great stuff here, and recommended to anyone who likes to drink a warm beer on their rickety front porch.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Backwoods Butcher

W.M.D.'S – Front Toward Enemy demo cassette

Excellent fast hardcore from London inspired by the likes of RIPCORN and HERESY. Five tracks of manic drumming, barked vocals, and heavy riffing, similar in style to fellow Londoners STINGRAY, and released on Quality Control HQ (Free Olal). Extra points for the hard-as-fuck band name. If all of that's not enough to persuade you to check this one out, give "Bodies" a listen, you will be convinced. Highly recommended.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Quality Control HQ



WARCOLLAPSE – Deliberate Indoctrination LP

This is epic crust/D-beat hardcore punk. I am pretty sure that I've been listening to this band since their first record, and I think that they are just getting better. The music has many different textures to it. It ranges from their classic D-beat crust to something slower, slightly metallic, and dark-sounding, almost similar to 45 GRAVE mixed with ZYGOTE. When they switch back to their epic D-beat/crust sound, it is devastating. This is an intense record, and I am looking forward to their next one already.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Phobia

WAX STATIC – Beach EP

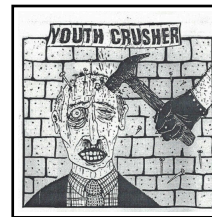
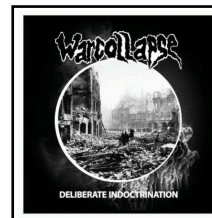
WAX STATIC's *Beach* EP contains three surf-inspired garage tracks from this duo in Middletown, Ohio—which is about ten hours from the ocean, but don't tell them that. The title track "Beach" opens the record with a mid-tempo, guitar-forward tune that sounds like it was recorded in the basement, setting the tone with lo-fi charm. "Hard Waves" follows as a 55-second instrumental bop—short, sweet, and the stand-out of the bunch. Closing track "I Wanna Go" continues the fuzzy momentum. The vocals are a bit buried, the music is simple, but it's kind of fun.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Blank Step

YOUTH CRUSHER – Youth Crusher LP

Excellent set of demos from Athens's YOUTH CRUSHER, one from 2018 on the A-side and one from 2017 on the B-side. YOUTH CRUSHER plays politically-charged hardcore punk inspired by early Greek punk bands like NAFTIA, XAOTIKO TELOS, and ADIEXODO. Both sides rip, but I prefer the A-side (2018) as it's a little more streamlined and concise than the rough and gruff B-side (2017). This is a cool way to be introduced to the band (who have been active for a decade now) and sees a neat evolution of their sound; I'd recommend starting with the earlier stuff and working your way towards the later. Regardless of which order you spin it, this one is highly recommended.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Nothing to Harvest



THE SPEEDWAYS – Triple Platinum LP

This collection of tracks from the SPEEDWAYS' first five years has everything you want in this style of power pop—hand-claps, catchy-as-hell choruses, key changes, you name it. A perfect rendition of early '80s power pop, when new wave sounds were starting to creep in but nothing was ruined by major label pariahs just yet. Even better, as this is a collection of mostly singles, you don't get any of the filler that was almost a gimme if you decided to snag a full-length by, say, FOTOMAKER, the SCRUFFS, or (to a lesser extent) 20/20. Some of these are re-recordings or remixed versions, and it adds to this collection of hits almost feeling more like a deliberate album. Forty-five years ago, the SPEEDWAYS would have been lapping their peers, and honestly, they still do today.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Beluga / Snap!!

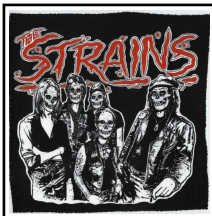
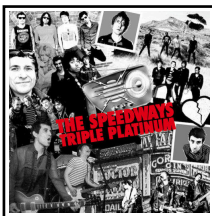
THE STRAINS – Running the Lines / Checkin' Out 7"

Solid little single here. Two great tracks that bring to mind FACE TO FACE meets LEATHERFACE meets BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, featuring all of the classic orgcore tropes that get the old fogies like me excited: Frankie Stubbs-esque vocals, soaring guitars, and catchy choruses that make you want to sing along. I just wish there was more of it! The kind of slab that's so good you'll keep flipping it until late in the night when your box of Old Style is empty and you force yourself to go to bed.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: I-94

THE THINGZ – From A to Z LP

I wasn't familiar with Chaputa! Records until I reviewed another of their releases last year. This THINGZ record being my second exposure to the label has me realizing that I need to be paying more attention, because I had the exact same initial reaction to this one—this music is fun. And that sounds far too simplistic, which it probably is, but it also just seems accurate. Sixties garage sounds with plenty of organ and keys, *From A to Z* is horror-tinged without being over-the-top, not too unlike a West Coast version of HUNCHBACK. This isn't a record that's for everyone, or even for most, but if this kind of music hits for you, then this should easily land in your rotation.



Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Chaputa!

THEE ROGUE TELSTARS – To the Moon / Do the T.E.L.S.T.A.R. 7"

Whenever a band opts for "Thee" over "The," the hope is for some proper garage rock, and THEE ROGUE TELSTARS provide exactly that with these two tracks. If THEE HEADCOATS went to space, it would sound something like this. Simultaneously frantic and tight, "To The Moon" bursts with energy from start to finish, while the B-side starts slow and retro, but quickly finds itself back at the same breakneck speed with a tasteful rockabilly sheen slapped on top. The perfect use of the medium, it's no surprise this hot slab of Canadian wax was put out by Toronto's Ugly Pop Records.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Ugly Pop

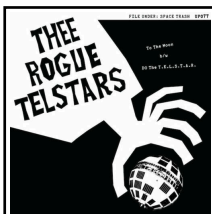
THIGHS – Total Dejection cassette

Sonic weirdos, check this one out. Boston art-damaged misfits take traditional rock, no wave, and sound collage and transform them into eleven short mini-skronk epics. Churning loops of baritone sax weave around spoken and shrieked tag-team vocals. My brain picks up signals from the CONTORTIONS, ERASE ERRATA, and MORPHINE mixed with a little Poly Styrene vocal spice. "City Incinerator" and "Humans" are warbly '50s rock throwbacks like jukebox 45s distorted from melting in the back seat of a hot car. More playful than, say, TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS, but just as confounding upon first listen. Great tape. Catch them live never because these rascals already broke up!

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

TORX – Torx cassette

With their crypto-exchange-ass band name and a visual aesthetic cribbed straight from some bottom-of-the-barrel egg-punk act, this Leipzig trio is just absolutely begging you to ignore their shit. Which is a shame, really, because this cassette is pretty alright! It's nine tracks of minimal, jazzy art-punk—imagine MINUTEMEN playing a mix of GANG OF FOUR and YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS, but fronted by a vocalist



lacking a genre handle, we now have two, straight from the horse's tongue-in-cheek mouth. I find some of my favorite moments in this album between bass and synth lines, with little guitar fills, like on "Protect the Emerald," or on the sparse choruses of "Matinee Show" and "My Metronome," the latter of which hosts a killer synth line: droning, dizzying, perfect. The whole album is inherently lo-fi, yet so many flourishes are packed into these short songs that they sound full, achieving a definitive economy. This album is fun, irreverent, in-your-face and by your side... it is also selling very fast, get yours now.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Budget Living / Erste Theke Tonträger / Spy Sola / Wild Wax

BLEAKNESS – Living Shadows LP

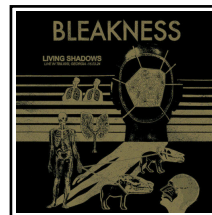
Excellent live record from this Paris band. Recorded on tour in Georgia (the country), BLEAKNESS plays anthemic deathrock-inspired post-punk, captured flawlessly on this two-track LP. I don't know if I have heard a better sounding live record, for real. For fans of POISON RUIN or ARCTIC FLOWERS, the songs feature heavy chorus on guitar, earnestly sung politically-themed vocals, and driving bass and drums. There isn't much information regarding song titles or lyrics (other than stage banter), but it kills. They are so tight, and the energy is palpable. It sounds like there were maybe fifteen people in the Tbilisi audience, and I wish I was there. Dark punk for the ages and highly recommended.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Kick Rock

BLIND ALLEY – Live Tuxedo 1982 LP

From the little I can gather, BLIND ALLEY was a "cult" mod/power pop band from Torino, Italy, active in the early '80s. I think the description works, but I'd say you could also throw ska into that mix. And while they may be from Italy, you could easily mistake them for being English. I'm not sure they were a cult band, but they were certainly very good. There's very much a JAM sound going on and, in fact, they do cover the JAM in this live set. And for a live recording from 1982, the quality here is very, very good. Good stuff.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Onde Italiana



BRIX! – Fucked If I Know CD

Second release from Texan punks BRIX!, whose brand of hardcore has a definite rock'n'roll underbelly (as evidenced by the inclusion of the riff from "Back in Black" by AC/DC on their previous release). On *Fucked If I Know*, there aren't any classic rock covers to be heard, but on tracks like the excellent "Skunk," the band leans into some Motörpunk/late ANTI-CIMEX vibes that I hope they continue to incorporate.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: self-released

BRUTE FORCE TRAUMA / SOCIALSTYRELSEN – split LP

Swedish punk is a bit like crisps. You've got so many different flavours that you just cannot taste them all, unless the idea of kebab-flavoured crisps is your thing (in which case, you should probably talk to someone). What I mean is that I had never actually listened to

SOCIALSTYRELSEN (who have been going for a long time), and never even heard of BRUTE FORCE TRAUMA, although I like Swedish punk and crisps. It pains me to say, but this split LP leaves me a little cold. SOCIALSTYRELSEN is certainly a powerhouse and their side sounds absolutely relentless, but I had a hard time getting into their '00s modern dark crust style. I was reminded of AMBULANCE or SCHIFOSI, KONTROVERS at the best of times, but I am seldom in the mood for that sound these days. The band mastered the craft, undeniably, they are tight, ferocious, have the appropriate dark guitar leads and a great vocalist, but I am personally not won over (but I know a lot of people who would be). On the other side, the new band BRUTE FORCE TRAUMA is said to have former members of WOLFPACK and CRUDE SS, so that does make one curious. They go for a more direct and rocking heavy downtuned käng style, aiming for a late CIMEX/WOLFPACK vibe, but they fall a bit short as the recording lacks the threatening ferocity and intensity necessary to really pull it out, and I was left unconvinced by some of the vocals and guitar arrangements. Not a bad record, but not one I would rush to buy.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Global Help / Nothing to Harvest / Phobia / Romantic Songs



BURNING KROSS – II LP

BURNING KROSS is the venture of seasoned musicians from the very important Ghent scene, with members and ex-members of BLACK HAVEN, CHEAP DRUGS, and AMEN RA within their ranks. // is their fourth output, and they have managed to steadily progress their sound. Nearly fifteen minutes of floor-stomping hardcore punk delivered in a very USHC way, like a faster NEGATIVE APPROACH. // acts as a way to liberate the anger and frustration of the injustices felt throughout a dying world. They embody the rage one feels towards the ever-growing failures of the system that was meant to oppress us all along. If you want a better mental picture of what it sounds like, just look at the blood-curdling cover, an amazing depiction done by the talented Keith Caves. This is hardcore for the end times.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Autoreverse



CAR BOMB PARADE / RBNX – split LP

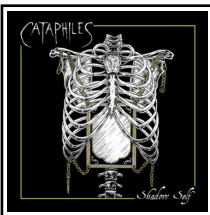
Hard-charging New York punk. RBNX is a little chunkier and has a slight metal tinge, while CAR BOMB PARADE is slicker and injects considerable grit into the mix (lyrically and musically). Both bands are well-polished, determined, and ready for action—aggressive and honest. Into both sides more the more times I listen.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: self-released



CATAPHILES – Shadow Self LP

Deathrockers CATAPHILES from Bremen, Germany recently released the *Shadow Self* LP, and it's pure bliss for those of us who enjoy exploring the darkness. Masc/femme dual vocals is the first thing you'll notice about CATAPHILES, and in this context they provide a sonic balance as well as an emotional unity. Lyrics provide both strong social criticisms and humor with a dark perspective, while sonically, it feeds upon familiar '80s goth. Occasional pop harmonies emerge from minor key compositions, while momentum seems to build as the album progresses. The ten songs on *Shadow Self* are individually strong enough to stand on their own, but as a collection, they make for an incredible listening experience. If you like TEMPLE, NOX NOVACULA, or CIERN you'll want to checkout CATAPHILES.

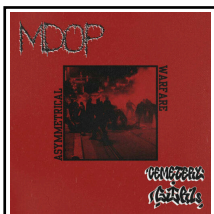


Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Sabotage

CEMETERY GIRL / MDOP – Asymmetrical Warfare split EP

Solid little slab of Michigan hardcore right here. MDOP plays classic heavy, mosh-oriented powerviolence with a hint of youth crew energy. Good stuff, but nothing you haven't heard before. CEMETERY GIRL, on the other hand, teeters more on the early '80s hardcore vibe and sounds a hell of a lot like a punk version of UPSIDE-DOWN CROSS. I absolutely adore the vocalist, combining screeching yelps with charismatic toasting, almost like a hardcore Flava Flav! How can you not love that? Really, what's important here is the messaging, as these are the anthems of our times. This is one of those records where the liner notes are just as crucial as the music.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Indolent



CHASM – Demo 2025 cassette

DISCHARGE-drenched D-beat aficionados CHASM come tearing onto the scene out of Seoul, Korea with this four-track ripper. CHASM is set apart from the general D-beat milieu due in part to the vocal delivery, which is very much of the studded leather-gauntlet-covered fist in the air type. From the opening squeal of feedback to the final drumbeat drop, this demo is brimming with noisy D-beat which never strays from the band presenting their brand, so sans any superfluous sounds, you get just straightforward CHASM. This short sampling is absolutely worth a quick listen, but leaves me hungry and wanting for more.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Secret4300



CRIPPLING DEBT – Depletion cassette

CRIPPLING DEBT from Fort Lauderdale, Florida plays old school grindcore/powerviolence, but with a decidedly more brutal approach, so sans electronics, samples, or bullshit. The *Depletion* cassette has nine songs, and each is well under the minute mark, with most clocking in at less than 30 seconds. FUCK ON THE BEACH,



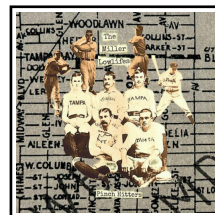
you've ever heard, the guitar and drums take supporting roles and dutifully hold everything together like Super Glue. But to me, the expressive vocals and tongue-in-cheek lyricism are what makes this album extremely addictive. Slice-of-life themes of the album include, but are not limited to: frustration with bureaucracy, the myth of "fixing it in the mix," wanting to marry Debbie Harry, and—though I have my doubts about this one—Andy Kaufman not being their dad. The whole thing is filled to the brim with childlike wonder, silly jokes, and hooks that are impossible not to sing along to. I'd argue that the HAHAS AND THE BLABLAS are the long-awaited spiritual successor to the B-52'S, but you wouldn't believe me. So be it. Go ahead, give it a spin and weep!

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Dushtu

THE MILLER LOWLIFES – Pinch Hitters LP

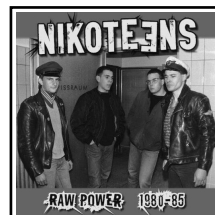
Who the, what the, when the, where the, are MILLER LOWLIFES? The singer reminds me of the DILLINGER FOUR songs that Erik sings, and the band BROCCOLI from Scotland. These songs all have a plucky spirit and a crisp, clean finish leaving you wanting more, and these ten tracks don't leave you bloated and feeling overindulgent. Anyone looking for that classic A.D.D. and No Idea Records feel will not be disappointed. MILLER LOWLIFES formula is as clean and simple as mixing barley, hops, and water, yielding a full-bodied aural experience. This isn't going to shatter your world, but it will 100% get you through a pleasant evening of porch-sitting and having sips with your best pals.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: A.D.D.



THE NIKOTEENS – Raw Power 1980–85 2xLP

A heavy slab of early German punk here. Formed in 1979, the NIKOTEENS' debut *Aloah-Oehh* LP was released in 1983, and this double record set includes that album in its entirety along with a slew of live cuts and rarities. The band played a style of hardcore that was equal parts playful and powerful, playing blistering kang-punk rhythms one moment and suddenly breaking into an Oi! anthem the next. With rabid vocals over ripping guitars and merciless pounding drums, the studio tracks of the first album are crazy, sometimes hitting eyebrow-raising levels of frantic intensity. The bonus material is all over the map, showcasing the band in all their eccentric glory as they slide through a diverse range of modes and tempos in the various collected recordings. Altogether there's over 78 minutes of music and it's an entertaining ride, packed complete with a booklet of liner notes and photos.

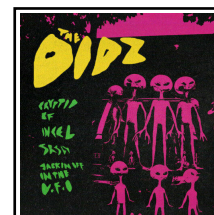


Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Power It Up

THE OIDZ – Cryptid BF EP

Fresh slice of warbly garage punk from PRISON AFFAIR's new label. The OIDZ, like PRISON AFFAIR, C.C.T.V., and BIG CLOWN, create catchy bozo punk that is as smart as it is dumb, chirpy as it is legitimately rocking. "Incel" is a satiric rant from a guy who has no friends and plays XBOX all day, but is confident enough to say, "I'm better than you / I'm better than you / I'm better than you!" Sounds like many a social media comment section. If you gather under the egg-punk umbrella, "Jackin Off in the UFO" is this season's anthem. It's almost like the song rips so hard to justify how stupid it is, and I love it. If I listen to it again, I know that it will take over all conscious thought for the next week. A crusty, B-movie, sci-fi rock'n'roll gem of a record from start to finish.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Prison



THE PALMETTES / SICK DOGS / TIGHT GENES / VICIOUS DREAMS – DCxPC Live and Swamp Cabbage Records Present, Vol. 29 split LP

A four-band compilation focused not just on Florida, but on Orlando—this live record really delivers. I have to admit that my expectations were low. Really low. There were just so many red flags. A live record featuring four bands from one city? Volume 29? VICIOUS DREAMS get things rolling right out of the gate with a super catchy and melodic version of power punk with pretty but sort of snotty female vocals, and they finish things with an excellent X-RAY SPEX cover. Next up, the PALMETTES slow things down with some doo-wop-inspired pop music, again featuring female vocals. While the musical style is quite different from the opening band, it too is super-catchy, and the band is remarkably tight. The B-side starts off strong with SICK DOGS delivering some high-energy, pounding punk rock with a street edge and throaty vocals. The guitar is part AC/DC and part ABRASIVE WHEELS. Great energy. We wrap things up with five cuts from TIGHT GENES. Wow. This is some impressive punk that has me thinking of the ADOLESCENTS, but maybe a little more frenzied. Like maybe add some FLIPPER. Honestly, a great record from start to finish. If you own a turntable, buy this. If you don't own a turntable, go buy one and then buy this.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: DCxPC / Swamp Cabbage



Think of it as something of a noise rock SLIPKNOT. Hell, some of the licks don't sound that far off from that comparison, from what I can recall. To me, this comes across like much more of a confusing art project than a punk band. I was excited when I saw that the singer also plays flute/piccolo in the band, but after three listens, I still can't find it. A shame. I don't think there's a song in existence that has a discernible flute on it that I don't find strangely beautiful.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Digital Hotdogs

SPLIT SYSTEM – On the Edge / On the Loose 7"

One of many incredible Australian acts to make a splash keeps their hot streak going with two mean, sneering cuts of street punk. While "On the Edge" has a confident strut anchored by a dripping meaty bass line, "On the Loose" picks up the pace with a neck-snapping number that showcases their dual-guitar lineup with an earnest, blazing guitar solo. Jackson Reid Briggs's throaty, booming holler is perfectly suited for this music, somewhat calling to mind the confidence of Chris Shaw (EX-CULT, MEMO PST). This band is operating at a high level with a sound that's outside of time, referential but fresh and hitting like a hammer. Motor City back-alley rock by way of Melbourne. This single is a perfect entry point to the group whose swaggering, garage-inflected punk already feels classic as it's being made in front of you.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Drunken Sailor / Legless

THE ANOMALYS – Down the Hole LP

With over two decades in existence, Amsterdam's ANOMALYS emerge further evolved on this latest LP, delivering a ragged and blackened garage punk sound with a warped 1960s lean. The frenetic freak-outs that filled much of their previous output are fewer and further between here, making way for heavier and moodier moments, but there's still plenty of electricity in the sound. Peaks on numbers like "Despair" and "Slaughterhouse," and the killer, decompressed instrumentals of the opening "Anxiety" and "Flat Top" round this outing nicely. Marvel at the calamity of their wailing, otherworldly racket—*Down the Hole* is the band's crowning achievement.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Slovenly

THE BROOD – For the Dark LP

Long-awaited LP from Philly punk stalwarts. I had this on my 2024 year-end top ten, as it was released right at the tail end of last year. It's just a monster of an album, a true behemoth. Absolutely crushing, take-no-prisoners punk that sweeps across a spectrum of influences while remaining cohesive and focused. Elements of Scandinavian hardcore, D-beat, and UK82 are present, but the amalgam is a beast unto itself. This band has an insane pedigree, featuring members of WITCH HUNT, MISCHIEF BREW, ENDLESS NIGHTMARE, and the PIST, just to name a few. Fine folks playing crushing hardcore punk. It just doesn't get much better. I can't recommend this enough.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Armageddon

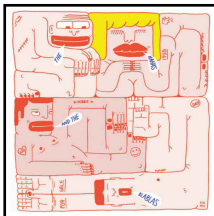
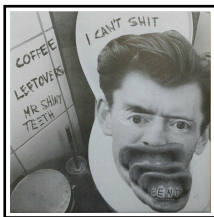
THE GENTS / KLINT – split EP

Goodbye Boozy is giving me consolation in the current garage punk landscape. I don't think there is a release by the Teranesian label where I am not finding the perfect balance of compelling and filthy. Case in point, this new split by Hamburg's the GENTS and Schleswig's KLINT. The former is a band of off-duty elementary school teachers ripping into four tracks of snotty, working-class (and I can't help but think a bit pent-up?) punk, made to be played in front of drunken friends at the pub. How could this not be good? Listen to "Leftovers" first. KLINT brings an open hydrant full of synth aggression that can only be summed up as savage. The band has a long discography of reliable, sonically assaulting releases, which this split continues in perfect step. I love "Toiled for Nothing," in particular.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Goodbye Boozy

THE HAHAS AND THE BLABLAS – The Hahas and The Blablas LP

Zagreb, Croatia's the HAHAS AND THE BLABLAS have been on my watch list ever since I came across the music video for their lead single on Tremendo Garaje. Even though it runs just under a minute, it was more than enough for me to fall in love with them. And now, about a year later, their self-titled LP is here to prove that they really are a force to be reckoned with. With bass taking the lead most of the time and toy-ish synthesizers playing the catchiest melodies



but a heavier CAPITALIST CASUALTIES with more metal and aggression. CRIPPLING DEBT also integrates a death metal vocal styling with guttural grunt work, so think something like CATTLE DECAPITATION or OCEANO. Perhaps the most general comparison I can make is imagine a raw punk version of INSECT WARFARE.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: To Live A Lie

CULT CRIME – Cult Crime LP

CULT CRIME's self-titled album—courtesy of the nothing-but-consistent Ugly Pop Records—is a fantastic crop of snotty, '80s-inspired rockin' punk. "Nervous Breakdown" came to mind by the time the fantastic track "Suburban Violence" came around, and that energy seems a more than apt comparison here. CULT CRIME is creating hard-hitting sounds that demand your attention, but you can also tell that they're probably having a great time doing it and aren't afraid to get a little tongue-in-cheek ("Nuke Hollywood"). Speaking of BLACK FLAG, are the punk sounds coming out of Vancouver and Toronto the modern equivalent of '80s L.A. and NYC? Is there a friendly rivalry between the Canadian coasts? Can PACK RAT ever miss? Do any of these people even work at a Häagen-Dazs? Anyway, this album rips.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Ugly Pop

CYCO – Cyco LP

This one hits fast and it hits hard. CYCO drags me back to the turn of the millennium, to that in-between era after ACME and ZORN blew the roof off of the concept of metalcore but before ZEROID (and later FALL OF EFRAFA) injected internal intensity and stadium crust rage into the mix. CYCO is all of those things as much as they are North American emotional hardcore. And these Germans...these modern Germans do the whole damn thing and still manage to sound like a raw assault and a '90s California screamo record at the same time. Check "Learn to Use" and then crank "Pulse" and it's like the past dragging you into the now. "Fiction to Come" is the choice cut, if only for the isolated bass intro and the D-beat > blast > emo sequencing, but literally every minute on this debut is compelling and engaging. Been a while since I have spent as much time with a new release as I have with this CYCO record, and I look forward to repeated listens.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Shove



DEATH CERTIFICATE – Death Certificate cassette

The self-titled cassette from Long Island powerviolence quartet DEATH CERTIFICATE rips through eleven tracks—most under a minute—with reckless speed. The recording quality is solid. The band is fucking locked in, and Matt Viel's vocals bring to mind a slightly less unhinged Andy Beattie from LACK OF INTEREST. These guys would've fit right in on the Slap-a-Ham roster in the '90s, which gets them a huge thumbs-up from me. Members have also played in C.R., DEADGUY, GOSPEL, HELEN OF TROY, KILL YOUR IDOLS, SHEER TERROR, and a hundred other bands. Viel runs the photo zine *Windows Down*, and all Bandcamp proceeds go to a charity that supports abortion access—putting their money where their rage is. It's fast, furious, and full of purpose.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Baby Chico / To Live A Lie

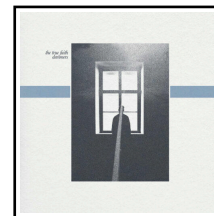
DEMMERS / THE TRUE FAITH – split 7"

Council Records in recent years has become a trusted name in underground music. Wherein, whether you like what they release or not, the underlying thread is one of quality craft and toned to a mature listener. TRUE FAITH's side is a perfect synth rock song akin to HOME FRONT, 1985–1990 CURE, TALK TALK's "It's My Life," FLOCK OF SEAGULLS' "Space Age Love Song," or those first few HUMAN LEAGUE LPs. The DEMMERS side is more of a 1981–1983 CURE vibe, starting from the first rhythmic bass through to the very last ringing guitar note. Both songs could easily slide into any mid-'80s mixtape that your art school friend recorded off their college radio station, and I say that in the best, most delightful way possible.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Council

DION LUNADON – Systems Edge LP

This record really is strong. It's raw, but it's catchy. It's brutal, but it's melodic and kind of pretty. It's got a grittiness and pounding beat that demands attention. You can't ignore it. There's also an uneasiness about it. That doesn't always work for me, but it definitely works here. And it doesn't really sound like the STOOGES, but that band does come to mind for some reason. Maybe it's the energy. Anyway, this is totally worth looking for.



Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: In The Red

DISCIPLE B.C. – Blood, Power, Sacrifice LP

Excellent executed doomsday crust punk filled with satanism and blasphemous whips. Featuring members of DOOM and AGNOSY, and led by an unholy reverend who merges Biafra with Vanian in the most literal way possible. Theatrical to the core in the vein of MERCYFUL FATE, but with a horror crust punk sound. Tight, strict-grip drums and ripper guitars. "If there is a Hell, we'll see you there!" Favorite track: "Pray."



Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Agipunk

DISHUMANITÄR – Dishumanitär LP

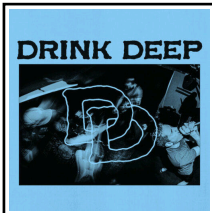
DISHUMANITÄR is a three-piece crustcore band from Karlstad, Sweden. This self-titled LP is their first proper release, and if you're into crust and stenchcore then you'll definitely want to find a copy of this album. The opening evokes immediate memories of NUX VOMICA, especially in the slower, dirge-like parts, and there are also very technical moments that are reminiscent of AGE OF COLLAPSE. Vocalist Hannah absolutely shreds their vocal chords with every lyrical delivery, which provides a blackened quality. Relatively clean production on this ten-song album really lets the powerful instrumentation deliver a full sonic spectrum with pummeling bass and soaring guitars (check out "For What?" if you need clarification). With songs ranging in length from under two minutes to almost six, the *Dishumanitär* LP really runs the gambit between face-melting burners and plodding metallic jams. My personal thoughts: DISHUMANITÄR, hell yeah!



Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Global Help / Loner Cult / Phobia

DRINK DEEP – DD EP

DRINK DEEP's 7" *DD* is a no-frills time warp straight into the heart of classic DC hardcore, ripping through eight tracks in just over seven-and-a-half minutes. Recorded live in-studio by a Berlin four-piece in 2023, this EP features members who've played in such far-flung bands as REMISSION, the FOG, and PRAISE. Formed just a few years ago, DRINK DEEP nails that classic '80s-style hardcore vibe with all the grit and



sweat you'd expect. Phillippe's vocals have an urgent, unpolished energy that brings to mind a young Ian Mackaye, and the lyrics feel sincere without slipping into preachiness. It's not out to change the game, but it's a solid hit of nostalgia for punks who still swear by the '80s sound. I liked it. Check out the track "Empathy."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Refuse

DUKKHA – Dukkha cassette

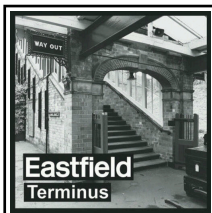
The term "dukkha" refers to discomfort, unease, or something that causes pain or sadness in Buddhism, probably a bit like MTV skacore or dad jokes in secular life. I had never heard of either this genuinely interesting concept, or of the band DUKKHA from Ohio, but I will try my best to remember both. This recording is the first offering of the young three-piece and stands as a very convincing effort. It just sounds effortlessly honest and genuine, and there's nothing flashy or fancy in DUKKHA's music. The production is raw and punky, almost organic, and fits well their primitive crustcore style. I am reminded of the classics of fast, gruff crust like early DISRUPT, BATTLE OF DISARM or EMBITTERED, with whom they share a taste for crunchy mid-paced moments. DUKKHA's recipe is also infused with a HELLHAMMER (if not VENOM) influence, which works with both the style and the textures, helps build a creepy but still angry atmosphere, and provides dark and heavy slower moments. I like this one a lot.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: self-released

EASTFIELD – Terminus 10"

EASTFIELD, so I'm told, have been "occupying the top slot in Rail Punk," given as they are named after a rail depot—which I would say is factually incorrect in a universe when HYGIENE is still a very going concern—but undoubtedly they do love their trains, and this release chugs along pleasantly. While this definitely does fit nicely into an "old bloke punk" bucket, the sort of mid-afternoon slot at Rebellion Fest in hiking boots and cargo trousers vibe, it's hard to slag it off entirely. It's got a certain HALF MAN HALF BISCUIT vibe in parts to the wordplay, and it's perfectly inoffensive. I'm sure EASTFIELD fans will be delighted by this, but it's more rail replacement service than anything.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Grow Your Own



SKULL CULT – Can You See What I Mean? EP

Let's get something out of the way real quick. We all agree that this is the best album cover on this godforsaken planet, right? Yes? Good. From the epicenter of egg-punk (or weird punk, if you're too cool for that), Indiana's SKULL CULT has proved again and again that they mean business, and has been a staple in my personal hall of fame ever since I first heard of them. This year's *Can You See What I Mean?* sounds like they've dialed down the weirdness a bit and leaned into the catchiness element. Don't get me wrong, all the things that made SKULL CULT great in the first place are present throughout the EP. Blown-out guitars, hyperactive drums, sick bass lines, nice synth melodies, and batshit insane vocals are still front and center, just a bit more modest. To me, *Can You See What I Mean?* signals a slightly new direction for the band, one that I'm curious to see where it leads.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Under the Gun

SLANDER TONGUE – Let it Snow / Rock & Roll Bed 7"

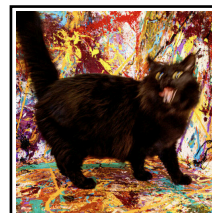
I'm not a fan of the band name, but I'll get over that. Mid-tempo and catchy, this is power pop/rock rooted in the late 1970s. I'm not a fan of lots of extracurricular guitar work. I just find it too much sometimes. These guys push that envelope, but they manage not to cross the line. I like the tempo, which is peppy, but not overly fast. Super catchy. Almost reminds me of the FORGOTTEN REBELS. High praise right there.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Alien Snatch

SLAUGHTERHOUSE – Sick and Tired 12"

I was hooked immediately with the repeated guitar riff that started out the album. Great punk. I loved the badass, distorted bass in "Sick and Tired," not to mention their great cover of "My War" by BLACK FLAG, that kept a fast punk tempo throughout which was unique. They were also able to branch out into more melodic, pop-punk-style songs as well. Lastly, I thought the font they used on their album cover was sick as hell. Check these guys out for sure.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Pirates Press



SLICKS – I Broke Player / Cherry Roll 7"

Hailing from Hakata, Japan, SLICKS have been at it since 1989, and this 7" is the latest fruit of their long-standing labors and the first new music they've released since their 1990s heyday. "I Broke Player" is a snotty number that wears its SEX PISTOLS influence on its sleeve, and "Cherry Roll" on the B-side is a groovier take on the same sound with a lot of thumpin' bass to bob along to. This triumphant return comes a couple of years after the General Speech and King's World labels conspired to bring us the *Total Filth Collection* compilation of the band's earlier recordings, and should be just as pleasing for budget rock bros and first-wave freaks alike.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Private Scandal

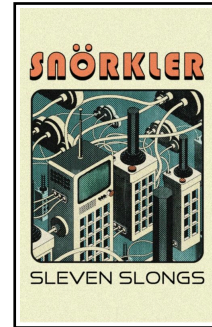
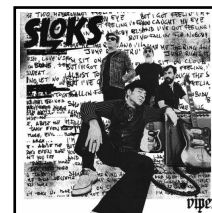
SLOKS – Viper LP

Some nasty garage work from Italy here on the new SLOKS LP. With distorted stomp and insidious groove, these veteran rockers cast quite a spell, swinging from hypnotic psych dirges to swampy voodoo jump as if compelled by Old Scratch himself. The gravel-throated carnival barker of a vocalist injects just the right dose of 1950s camp into the proceedings to make it suitable for inclusion on a John Waters film soundtrack, but it's too powerfully raw to be mistaken as dopey cosplay—this here is real rock'n'roll, a blackened kind of blues with a rugged punk soul, filtered through able hands and killer instincts. Recommended for those who are comfortable in the dark.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Goodbye Boozy

SNÖRKLER – Sleven Songs cassette

Disjointed, riff-less art-punk from Memphis, TN that's as angular as the cassette's isometric artwork. Each of the seven songs takes the listener on more of a wild ride than I would ever willingly sign up to be a passenger. I don't think I fully understand the intention of a band like this. Everyone is clearly good at their instruments, but between the showboating, the herky-jerky start/stops, and the quirky vocal growls into yelps, it almost feels as if each member is fighting for the spotlight. From what I can tell, SNÖRKLER is very novelty costume-heavy in their live performances.



the cadences, and it leads me to believe this is all ad libbed. You know something, though? I think I actually do love this album. It's just so off-the-wall and ridiculous. It would be a stretch to call these lyrics brilliant, but they definitely made me laugh, especially the final line in the song "Hendrix Clock": "I want to hear the sound of the robin! Get me one right now for Christmas!" Honestly, it's like if Jasper and Horace from *101 Dalmatians* started a rock'n'roll band. If you've got 30 minutes to kill, this is worth checking out.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released

S.Y.P.H. – S.Y.P.H. LP reissue

This 1980 debut LP from long-running German outfit S.Y.P.H. landed right at the crossroads where punk and post-punk diverged, with an A-side largely rooted in sub-two-minute stompers and a B-side that turns sharply toward with freeform freakouts and lengthy, Krautrock-inspired drones—an exercise in contrasts for sure, but it's also an illuminating one-band preview/overview of the many musical sub-factions evolving out of the late '70s/early '80s Deutschpunk underground. "Industrie-Mädchen" (later to earn a *Killed By Death* nod) and "Zurück zum Beton" employ a *Pink Flag*-like Brutalist economy with minimal chords slashing over charging drums, while the ABWÄRTS-ish "Lachleute & Nettmenschen" features an industrial factory beat so fixed and unchanging that S.Y.P.H. could have just as easily been the band to mutate into EINSTÜRZENDE NEUBAUTEN. The fuzzed-out, menacing "Chess Challenger" recalls fellow German art-fuck-ups 39 CLOCKS, "Partir" hits an early Zickzack nerve with its guitar-strangling no wave clang and clatter, and the seven-minute prog-damaged instrumental "Kisuheli" foreshadows the collaborations with CAN's Holger Czukay that S.Y.P.H. would forge on their next two LPs. Best of all (and a relative outlier in an already eclectic batch of tracks) is the danceable, proto-Neue Deutsche Welle bounce of "What Happens?," with Andrea Eichler and Stefanie De Jong taking over vocals for a faux-disco femme-punk banger totally of a piece with DOROTHY's killer "Softness" from that same year. Tapete is currently in the midst of an extensive S.Y.P.H. reissue run, and this first LP is as good a place to start as any if you're looking to fall down the rabbit hole.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Tapete



SACHET – The Seeing Machine cassette

An indie rock quartet hailing from Sydney, SA-CHET offers a delightful and angular perspective on progressive pop. Their newest album, *The Seeing Machine*, was released as part of a pair of cassettes promising mellow melodies, carried by the sweetness of the vocalist. Her light voice paired with the jangled instruments makes for a great carefree atmosphere, detailed by Nick Webb's wah pedal, Kate Wilson's bubbly drums, and saccharine lyrics. "Redecabbaged" and "The Lodger" capture the essence of airy post-punk imbued into the album, similar to the CARDIGANS in mood but distinctly alternative. A great addition to their discography, this third release, running short of fifteen minutes, unfurls a welcome mat to those looking for some good fun.

Reviewer: Fiona Rae
Label: Tenth Court



SHIT MISSILE – Shit Missile cassette

Bluesy German band with an underlying scatological presentation and theme. Feeling this one for sure; it is zero-fi rock'n'roll done with no bullshit trap-pings, just youthful abandon. If you like the HEADCOATEES, *Sympathy Sessions*-era OBLIVIONS, or GORIES, buy this now.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: River Trash



SIYAHKAL – روزای دود و خاکستر / Days of Smoke and Ash 12"

This is some intense hardcore punk. The songs sound like marches. The beat is one-two-one-two-one-two-one-two and so on. This is very tough-sounding, in a good way. Fist-pounding, head-banging, foot-stomping hardcore. This is exactly the kind of punk I want to listen to when everything seems to be going wrong for me. It seems empowering.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Static Shock



ELIMINATORS – B.A.S.E. cassette

Convulse continues on its path of destruction with San Francisco's ELIMINATORS, whose first release *B.A.S.E.* showcases three tracks of tough-as-nails straightedge hardcore. The vocals are great, the guitars are crunchy, and there's an Oi! spirit throughout that ties everything together very nicely, drawing obvious comparisons to early AGNOSTIC FRONT. Highly recommended for fans of angrily stomping around.

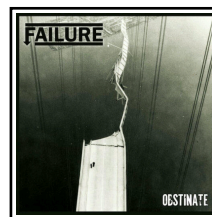
Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Convulse



FAILURE – Obstinate 12"

This savage Italian powerviolence trio is back after five years. FAILURE returns with ten songs in seven minutes, a textbook powerviolence move, as is the usage of samples and microbursts of aggressive energy punching you left and right. INFEST (I know, I know; INFEST isn't powerviolence, but surely they are a reference for this band) meets MAGRUDERGRIND, with the latter being more evident in the more metallic, groovy breakdowns. Fastcore? Powerviolence? Who cares! It's fighting music.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: No Time



FARCE – Sights of War EP

Brutal Finnish D-beat trio that sounds exhausted with anger, pummeling hate, and pain, giving us vibes of total raw crust punk devastation. Antimilitarism merges with incessant noise, harsh-as-nailbombs drums, and caustic strings. Aggressive, exhaustion-driven, and with a geopolitically-minded stance, ranting against war and the miserable existence on this deadly planet, the eight tracks pass through you as a much-known ghost. Raw, violent, and dissonant, like reality.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Sistema Mortal



FEAR OF EXTINCTION / WARCOLLAPSE – split EP

This split EP is a perfect example of punk lexical fields. With the bands' names being made up of words like "fear," "extinction," "war," and "collapse," one can easily guess that they are not going to deliver retro '90s ska-punk, which, to be honest, is a relief for humankind by and large. I missed out on this even though I follow Phobia Records closely in its divine mission to convert the masses to Swedish hardcore, so I was fairly curious. WARCOLLAPSE has been a favourite of mine forever and their brand of gruff Scandicrust effortlessly exemplified the classic crustcore sound, and they have kept producing solid works until today. I sadly have to confess that I could not get into their latest album, but the two songs on the EP are more in line with what I expect from the traditional WARCOLLAPSE sound. The first number is a heavy and metallic mid-paced old school crust number, while the following adheres to the typical fast and dark Swedish crustcore blueprint. On the other side you will be faced with two songs from the long-running FEAR OF EXTINCTION, the most Swedish-sounding band of Czechia. I would lie if I claimed to be conversant with all their discography, but this is excellent. This merry bunch worships at the altar of late ANTI-CIMEX and WOLFPACK, and they do so with the utmost devotion. Punishing, intense, and proper angry. You can tell they know what they want to achieve and how they plan to go there. Whether you want to embark on the journey is completely up to you, but at least neither of the bands lies about the destination.

Reviewer: Romain Bassot
Label: Phobia



GAOLED – Bestial Hardcore LP

Split-label release from these exponents of violent music, this time with a pummeling LP from GAOLED—chaotic mayhem and outbursts of bedlam and hatred, mixing powerviolence, hardcore punk, and non-musical movements. The speed and audacity reminds me of a pack of wolves ready to strike in a lightning-filled night. Metallic punk forms are rejoicing on this one, with matters of an intricate nature regarding violence and discomfort, versing on intrusive thoughts and maniacal expressions, and making noise like a barrier of fists straight to the core. Solid first LP, and it has something to offer to the current wave of punk sounds, with chaos-driven synth on some of the tracks. Vital and violent.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Iron Lung / Televised Suicide



GO! – Impact LP

What if late '80s NYHC had been heartfelt and honest and without pretension? What if '80s NYHC had been made by nerds and emo kids (before emo kids were even a thing)? What if '80s NYHC had had a sense of humor (BORN AGAINST notwithstanding, of course)? If those things had been so, then '80s NYHC would have sounded like GO!, but fortunately there was GO! so the answer is yes, this is what (late) '80s NYHC sounded like. They were but a blip, but somehow managed to crank out a half-dozen (or more?) records between '89–'91, and their approach to hardcore might sound even more refreshing now than it did then. Mike's vocals are almost lazy, but it feels like he's just confidently spitting facts to a backing track of no-bullshit USHC punk...because that's what is happening. *Impact* compiles the two EPs (*Reactive* and *What We Build Together*) from a reformed GO! that were released in the mid-'00s with a ripping live WFMU set from 2006, and this is the anecdote to oppressive toxic hardcore. "Your power means nothing at all."

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Grabaciones Viscerales

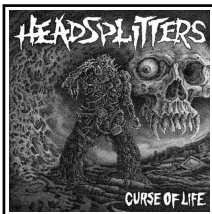
GRIT – Perfect Storm EP

GRIT plays melodic hardcore punk and it reminds me a little of bands like NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS. These are really well-written songs that have an Oil-type of beat like the stomping of boots that also gives the songs a certain toughness. Whether I can hear the lyrics clearly or not, the tone of the songs is evoking emotion from me. This is the kind of record that reaffirms my love of punk. I love this record, and it saddens me to read that this will be their last record.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: A.U. Vinyles

HEADSPLITTERS – Curse of Life LP

I can't get enough of D-beat. There is just something very appealing and hypnotic about hearing the same beat over and over again. If you are anything like me, you'll get excited for the new HEADSPLITTERS. Ten bone-crushing tunes from New York's deadliest punks. There is a very metallic quality to their songs, most likely due to some BROKEN BONES and ENGLISH DOGS influences. I never minded a little metal in my punk!



Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Toxic State

HEDGE – Better Days LP

Straight out of the gates, HEDGE starts kicking you in the chest with a catchy tune that builds on all the better melodic bands from the late '80s and '90s. Imagine the first time you heard MOVING TARGETS, RADON, the LEMONHEADS (*Hate Your Friends to Lick*, none of that solo Dando crud), TILTWHEEL, middle-period HÜSKER DÜ, and even JR. JUGGERNAUT. This record has a comfortable and familiar sound while retaining its newness, entwined in well-crafted and memorable songs.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Bloated Kat

HORSE – Patéalos en el Krisbow cassette

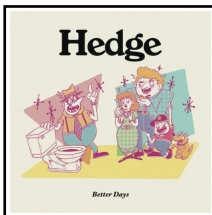
Here's a dose of blistering hardcore punk from Indonesia with space-y vocals and mosh-worthy breakdowns. The three core tunes are sandwiched between an instrumental intro and an unsettling outro. The resultant slab of meat is dense enough to provide sustenance, not dissimilar to the leanness of BIB. Cool artwork graces the cover of this tape, appearing to depict a deranged clown holding a bound and hooded cop at gunpoint. Rad!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Richter Scale

HOT EARTH – II Hot II Furious cassette

HOT EARTH is from ATLANTA (previously Hattiesburg?) and is composed of members of a buncha bands—the promo bills them a "supergroup"—with the one standout of the list being JUDY AND THE JERKS. Well there you go, let's listen. This is HOT EARTH's second release and clocks in around five minutes of near-perfect, crusty punk set at a blindingly fast cadence. This small offering is worth everyone's immediate attention.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Rope Bridge



RAINSWEPT – Demo '25 cassette

RAINSWEPT's name might sound poetic, but don't let that fool you—this four-piece out of Rome, boasting members of STRENGTH APPROACH, FIRST BLOOD, and BLVD OF DEATH, is clearly chugging from the same bottle as 1990s NYHC bands like MADBALL and BIOHAZARD. Groove is the name of the game here, and there's plenty to mosh to if metallic hardcore is your thing. But the first song, "137 Anthem," is a seemingly pointless instrumental that eats up about a quarter of the whole release. Bold move, guys. This isn't really up my alley, but if any of the bands mentioned above do it for you, check 'em out.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Crusade

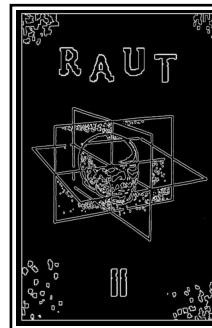
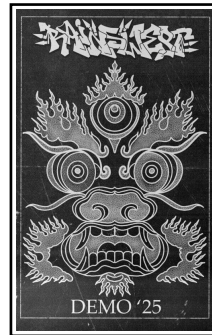
RAPID DYE – Rapid Dye LP

Totally unhinged hardcore from Sydney's RAPID DYE, a band who have been around the block and whose reputation for good live shows proceeds them. Fortunately, their first LP achieves the rare feat of living up to that hype, featuring nine songs in about ten minutes that do a good job capturing the loud and sweaty experience of a punk show, much like the one featured on the cover. Lo-fi vocals, distorted-to-oblivion guitars, and an unhinged rhythm section barrel forward with the energy of a hurricane and draw comparisons to the blunt force of early NYHC. If you can't catch RAPID DYE live, you could do worse than listening to this.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: 11 PM / Cool Death

RAUT – II cassette

Eight brief tracks from this Warsaw duo who bang out coldwave-meets-egg-punk cuts that sound like Ian Curtis fronting the CONEHEADS. Lo-fi, reverbed garage punk guitar pushes up against crispy drum machine beats with production that sounds like the band is playing down in the sewer as you are walking on the street above. Vocalist Pawel has a baritone voice that drapes a feeling of darkness over upbeat rhythms, and it balances nicely between catchy and tough. It's like a cartoon



character with a knife in his pocket; forget Garfield, this is Heathcliff music.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Syf

REMEDY FEELIN' – Back to the City CD

REMEDY FEELIN' is reminiscent of the HICK-IDS with the VINDICTIVES' singer singing. This has a very particular boot-stomping honky-tonk twang to it. From "Gas Station Blues" to "Fast Fast Woman," REMEDY FEELIN' lets you know exactly who they are. I did a little digging and found out they are from the Bay Area, so I wonder if they will be playing 924 Gilman any time soon. Keep a lookout. I wonder if they roll their own cigs and chew tobacco. I want to be clear; I bet this is a lot of fun live. There was a great band in Michigan doing this style around the late '80s through early '90s called GOOBER & THE PEAS, so if you are into this type of thing, please look them up, too.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: self-released

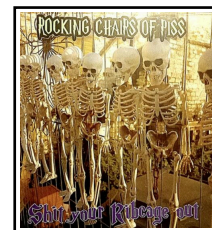
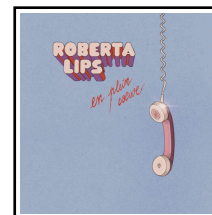
ROBERTA LIPS – En Plein Coeur EP

Super fun poppy rock band. These guys are so upbeat and peppy, their songs gave me feelings of summer, specifically songs you'd play at a picnic with your close friends. I loved their combination of keyboard with guitar, both distorted and cleaner, to create a unique energy entirely their own. I think one of my favorite aspects of these songs was the backup vocals, specifically in the track "9 Meses," it definitely felt very '60s. Already added their songs to my spring playlist.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Flexidiscos

ROCKING CHAIRS OF PISS – Shit Your Ribcage Out CD

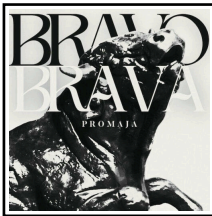
This band and album name had a lot to live up to. I wanted to love this record. Instead, I was bemused and baffled. The music is your typical punk affair, but the vocals are absolutely unhinged. It sounds like they recorded the singers to an isolated track and then laid them over the music later on, as if they took a spoken word album and spliced it with some of the most generic punk backing tracks you can find. There's just no rhyme or reason to any of



PROMAJA – Bravo Brava LP

Ethereal post-punk band PROMAJA has achieved a very complete, well-rounded, and full sound. They're melodic and lyrical, with sort of distant-sounding vocals that wrap around you like a swirling mist. Each song flows from the next in a subtle but lovely way. I really enjoyed the track "Cinematic TV Static," as it started with a faster drum beat, which was a bit different, but then built to their classic, powerful post-punk sound.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Symphony of Destruction



PUNTER – Australienation LP

High-quality production on this one. It's not that often I hear something recorded as well as this. They sound like they travel in the same circles as AMYL AND THE SNIF-FERS, although I like this band more. The playing on this is great as well. At their best moments, they remind me of LEATHERFACE a little bit. If you're a fan of melodic hardcore, there is a lot to like here.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Drunken Sailor / Televised Suicide



PUSH BACK – Demo 1 cassette

Debut seven-song demo of metal-infused hardcore punk from Massachusetts. A very professional-sounding, discernible, slick-recorded demo, which would be high-quality enough for most bands' official releases. With tempos ranging from plodding dirges to blastbeats, often within the course of the same song, PUSH BACK brings us palpable anger at any speed. Politically-driven songs seemingly mostly about greed, corruption, police, and gender. In my opinion, the regurgitation of OPERATION IVY lyrics as a spoken word part in the first song to get such a point across was a bit of a jarring choice. The band self-identifies as "heavy metal and black metal-infected HC punk." While there are some noodly guitar leads and some double-kick rumble, I don't really hear any aspect of black metal, and would say the band's metal connection is more closely related to the early 2000s phenomenon of describing any sort of fast hardcore punk band as being "thrash."

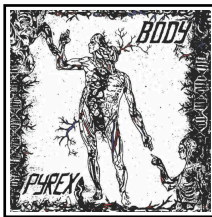


Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: self-released

PYREX – Body LP

Killer release following a series of likewise killer releases from this prolific group. *Body* creates an atmosphere of dread and paranoia in a tight eight-song parcel. Overdriven vocals suck the listener into an unsettling void and taunt with an unrivaled perversity of damaging tunes. Creeping elements of post-punk claw through the wreckage, but it's all too snotty and punk-forward to fit too neatly into that box. Noisy, effects-laden instruments are in service of the overall sound, propping it up rather than masking deficiencies. Energetic one-two beats burst out of motorik grooves, and riffs twist in unusual ways. SCHEDULE 1 and NAG are stomping on similar terrain, but PYREX wields a more wrathful blade. They're a great live band to boot. Exceptional.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Total Punk



RADIOACTIVE TOYS – There's Enough for Everyone LP

Really solid record here that spans a handful of different punk styles without sounding too contrived. RADIOACTIVE TOYS utilize the dark ska vibe of HOT STOVE JIMMY, the heavy rock'n'roll styling of ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT, and the unmatched energy of early AGAINST ME! mixed with the Ian MacKaye side of FUGAZI. From soaring choruses to choppy upstrokes, there's enough here to make everyone happy. Half of the songs are sung in German, but the songs in English have great lyrics—primarily the titular track "There's Enough For Everyone." A perfect anthem for the slimy, greedy shit we've all had to deal with on a daily basis as of late. Really powerful album here, and well worth a spin.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Rookie



KARŌSHI – The End of the Illusion of Freedom LP

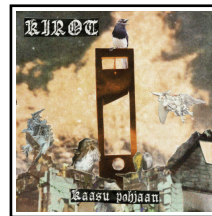
Not being totally encyclopedic with Japanese culture, I had no idea what "karōshi" meant before listening to this humble and overlooked record. It can be translated roughly as "overwork death," so basically a poor soul who dies from working too much (which is pretty fucking horrible, indeed). Who said punk couldn't be educational? You can thank KARŌSHI for this trivia-worthy piece of wisdom. They are a studio project with Brian from DISAFFECT and SCATHA, as well as two members of the legendary ULTIMO GOBIERNO from Spain, a fairly unlikely collaboration. I have to admit I was a little suspicious and not particularly optimistic, but this is really good and quite unique in its own way. KARŌSHI plays somber hardcore punk with a metal influence, but they rely more on anarcho-punk angst and anger rather than the brute force, perms, and punishing heaviness you would commonly associate with metal punk. This is punk rock first and foremost. I like the political nature of the lyrics and how melancholy the album sounds at times. The stronger point of *The End of the Illusion of Freedom* lies in the groovy, epic, mid-paced metal punk numbers reminiscent of AMEBIX or AX-GRINDER in the writing, but using the more progressive, psychedelic "post-crust" mood and tones of bands like BAD INFLUENCE or ZYGOTE. The faster, '90s-flavoured anarcho-thrash songs are pretty basic, classically executed; DISAFFECT or NAYTIAΣ come to mind. Overall, you could argue the production is lacking in intensity and impact, that there are some slip-ups here and there, and it could all sound better, especially in the light of modern production, but then I think the LP has a charm and a *je ne sais quoi* that makes me come back to it and that most bands are unable to create. The guitar work is brilliant here, there is always a catchy melody, a hook that makes the song stick with the listener. It pushes all the right buttons and I did not expect to like it that much.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Absurda Existencia / Compañeros De Tumba / DIY Koto / Hecatombe / Little Jan's Hammer / Nun-chakupunk / Tormenta de Ideas / Up the Punx / Urinal Vinyl / Victim



KIROT – Kaasu Pohjaan cassette

Think '90s dual-vocal anarcho-crust along the lines of Scandi-neighbors OPERATION and PRO-TESTERA, delivered in the classic raw Finnish tradition. The strongest material on *Kaasu Pohjaan* is on the second half, maybe because the vocals settle in a bit, or perhaps because I haven't spent time with aggressive Finn-core in way too long. The riffs are sheer brutality in their simplicity, and the vocals are as overwhelm-



ing as they are overpowering—it's a harsh listen, and that's exactly how KIROT intended it to be.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Electric Alaska / Foxhole Productions

KOURISTUS – Mielen Ja Maaillman Rap-pio CD

Fierce, ripping Finnish fastcore/grind. Seriously, five words, and you know you're either going to love this or you aren't, because KOURISTUS do the damn thing and they do it brilliantly. You aren't looking for fastcore/grind? Look elsewhere. You're looking for fastcore/grind or possible grinding fastcore? Well, guess what, young punks?!?! These fucks have got you covered. Harsh, throaty vocals with high-end support, blasts that will peel paint off of your face, and a massive production that sacrifices none of the band's ferocity. One song out of fifteen kisses the two-minute mark...but if you know what you like, then you've probably already started listening before you read that sentence.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Visceral Circuitry



KRYSTIAN QUINT & THE QUITTERS – Something Like That cassette

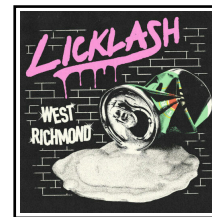
I like this. A lot. It's super lo-fi, but also super catchy (those two can go hand in hand, for sure). It's fuzzy, but jangly at the same time. It's got a somberness to it, but it's not a downer. In terms of the sound, I guess I'd call it "indie," if that's okay with you. The production is perfect for the sound. This is pretty outstanding for a debut effort. Great guitar sound. These guys are from Detroit, so you know they're tough. The mood they create reminds me a bit of the DANDY WARHOLS. Really great shit here.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Quality Time



LICKLASH / SCUD – split 7"

Great 7" of two Australian bands. LICKLASH's "West Richmond" is upbeat, peppy, and catchy, following a medium-ish tempo for most of the song. The higher guitar parts added some more pop melodic elements that made this song feel youthful and playful. SCUD builds off of LICKLASH, but with a faster tempo and a bit angrier vocals. The guitars in the chorus of "Snake



in a Hole" seem to taunt and build off one another in a unique way.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Roolette

LIDSKE ZDROJE – Pedalling Through (... Part 1) LP

Dang, duder! Anyone that knows me can attest to the fact I hold my "dang, duder(s)" for only the most outstanding things. From the cover alone, I could tell this band was into physical fitness, and that dedication to self-help and preservation will always be paramount to a successful band. Musically, you are pulled into a lo-fi garage, which is where I imagine their home gym is located, with instantly hummable and toe tapping tunes not unlike SO COW, or HEAD. I could see this on Goner, Dirtnap, and Rad Girlfriend. Some of the tunes have a charming BUZZCOCKS feel, and others have a charming early BLACK FLAG feel. As the record moves on, it gets a bit more refined and loses some of the rustic feel, but still a very solid record that I will be spinning frequently.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Papagájův Hlasatel

LOS BLUFFS – Give Me Time EP

LOS BLUFFS offer up guitar-centric garage power pop that's really nicely done. That's not to suggest that the drums and the bass aren't well-integrated, just that I feel like the guitar is the focus. I'm also a fan of the understated vocals that are pleasant, but not overbearing. You just kind of find yourself bouncing along with all three cuts, including an excellent JOY DIVISION cover. Really nicely done.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Ghost Highway / KOTJ / Snap!

MENTALLY PARASITES – ...To Live LP

There isn't that much information on the obscure Slovakian grindcore band MENTALLY PARASITES, other than that they formed in 1989, released the obligatory split with AGATHOCLES, and a couple of other records. Upon digging a bit deeper, in 1997 they recorded a dozen songs for their planned debut album ...To Live. However, the official release never happened, as the band broke up shortly after. Fast-forward to 2025, when Papagájův Hlasatel discovered this lost album



and decided to finally give it a proper release. "The Last Nation" begins with an unexpected, thunderous tribal pounding of drums that erupts into mid-era NAPALM DEATH groovy grindcore, with some semblance of what SEPULTURA was doing on Chaos A.D. and even Roots (with all the tribal elements). The punk elements in this record come mostly in the form of lyrical content that focuses on ecology, animal rights, anti-racism, and all those important topics. For fans of groovier grindcore and even death metal acts like OBITUARY.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Papagájův Hlasatel

MOTORBIKE – Kick It Over LP

This album starts off with a revved-up punk rocker called "Scrap Heap." The album then becomes a variety of different takes on punk and garage rock, even at times sounding a bit like some '90s bands like TURBONEGRO, ELECTRIC FRANKENSTEIN, or the HIVES. They then return to high-octane punk rock'n'roll. The songs are well-written, and I couldn't help but tap my feet and try to sing along with them.

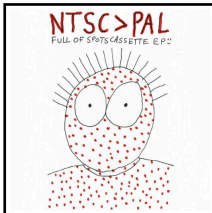
Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Feel It



NTSC PAL – Full of Spots cassette

Sometimes you don't really need much to make kickass music. You don't need intricate songwriting, a full band of virtuosos, crystal clear production, or lyrics that give Shakespeare a run for his money. I mean, wasn't this the whole premise of punk rock in its early days? You just need the attitude, style and intent. It really can be as simple as "Here are three chords, go start a band," and you don't even need to start a band nowadays. Melbourne's egg-punk powerhouse BILLIAM knows this by heart and proves it once again in his new no-strings solo affair, NTSC PAL's first EP *Full of Spots*. It's very stripped-down: just synths, drums and vocals, à la the SCREAMERS (duh). Even though we all know that BILLIAM is more than capable of coming up with billiams of sick guitar riffs in a heartbeat, he makes the conscious decision not to by leaving out guitars all together and focusing on simple earworm synth melodies this time around. I don't know about you, but I think there's something magical in something so simple and barebones. Though technically not a BILLIAM release, NTSC PAL's *Full of Spots* is my favorite entry to the BILLIAM-verse to date.

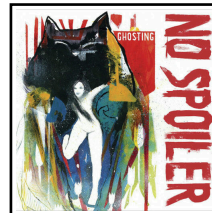
Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Popular Affliction



NO SPOILER – Ghosting LP

A snarling buzzsaw of an album from Italy that has equal parts '77 punk, '80s power pop, and '90s grunge. There's an UN-DERTONES-inspired track with "When It's Over" and a BUZZCOCKS-sounding song with "Aubrey Plaza." "Straight from the Heart" sounds like it could have come from the OUTCASTS singles collection. The album sounds strongly cohesive, and every one of the ten tracks is solid.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Take the City



OUST – Rather Be a Fuck Up 12"

A geographically multi-located project that erupts with bizarrely cathartic and urgent D-beat-driven hardcore punk, dispossessed and filled with a particularly darkened fury that also deals with metallic forms of punk, brought to us by the maniacs of Discos Enfermos. Frantic hatred merging ever-ranting, expressive drums and maddening vocals. Filled with raw angst, and recommended for contemporary hardcore seekers.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Discos Enfermos



PAL – Under Your Radar cassette

I'm a bit ashamed to say that I wasn't familiar with the music of the Cleveland, Ohio four-piece PAL prior to *Under Your Radar*. But oh boy, I absolutely adore everything about this release. Throughout the EP, crunchy drums and tasteful bass lines lay down a very danceable foundation, while highly modulated guitar melodies and minimal synth licks keep a tight call-and-response dynamic that sounds like you're listening to a playful yet heated argument. To top it all off, the lyricism and delivery of the vocals perfectly encapsulate the manic nature of the band's very unique and quirky sound. *Under Your Radar* reminds me of C.C.T.V. and SPLIT with its sonic palette, mannerisms, and upside-down approach to songwriting. Seems like PAL released this cassette directly to my 2025 year-end top ten. Just perfect—no notes.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: self-released



PLASTIC TONES – We're All in This Together 10"

A tragically beautiful female-fronted EP from this Finnish group. Sounding like a less disparate RAINCOATS or SLITS, the band skirts between art school punk, power pop, and new wave seamlessly. The album continues a tradition of great Scandinavian indie pop similar to Sweden's MAKTHAVERSKAN or WESTKUS.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Vox Populi



POSITIVE THINKING – The Power of Positive Thinking cassette

Given this band's name and the artwork for this release, I couldn't help but be a bit concerned when dropping this cassette into my tape deck. The modern trend of hip hardcore bands claiming to be "psychedelic" and repurposing '60s-style art gave me pause. Add in the through-the-roof cheesiness factor of straight-up naming a band POSITIVE THINKING, and I was doubly on guard. As a straightedge punk with a love for '60s psychedelic rock, surely one can understand my apprehension at this point. Lo and behold, my concerns were completely unwarranted. POSITIVE THINKING absolutely rips! A timeless approach to hardcore punk. There are moments that sound just like second-tier '80s hardcore acts like 76% UNCERTAIN. Occasionally, the overly positive aspect present in eyeroll-worthy youth crew lyrics comes through a bit, but those moments are short-lived, and the band just as quickly moves on to topics of self-deprecation, disdain for society, gripes on the health care system, etc. I will say, if you are interested in getting a copy of *The Power of Positive Thinking* on cassette (which you should be), be sure to do so through the label that released this, as the band is charging a whopping \$12 plus \$6 shipping for a cassette online, with it being \$10 for the digital recording only. Yikes! I absolutely recognize that everything is wildly expensive in the modern day and that I probably still way undercharge for releases on my labels, but \$12 just feels offensively expensive for a cassette, especially when the label is charging \$7 (debatably still too much).

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Color and Time Tonight

