

VIOLET RAY – This is Skate Rock! CD

Cleveland, OH quartet giving homage to classic new wave-y skate rock on this all-skateboard concept album, which happens to be their first full-length work. Chilling the tempo, marinating the crunchiness, and exuding new wave skate-board vibes in the early '80s punk rock vein, it's fresh and achieves the feeling of being in an era lost in time. Versing on many legendary skateboarders such as Jeff Phillips, mentioning skate-related injuries and spots, but also remembrances of Animal Chin, Dogtown and such, creating a great atmosphere. Reminded me of classic '80s skate rock bands with a soft spot for punk rock skating sessions from teenage years. Recommended for old school skate rock connoisseurs.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Bigspin



WHIPHOUSE – Sleep / Dementia 7"

Deathrock/gothic rock group from Atlanta. "Sleep" feels like walking through a cemetery with an old friend; haunting yet familiar. "Dementia" is slightly faster tempo, and feels more rock-oriented with a kind of kooky guitar riff during the verse. Really enjoyed these guys.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Die Slaughterhaus



WHY BOTHER? – You Are Part of the Experiment EP

A new batch of dystopian yet simultaneously somehow uplifting oxymoronic hits from America's heartland. WHY BOTHER?'s latest EP sees their unique take on synched-up punk continue to expand and refine (again, oxymoronically) with four fantastic worlds built from nothing and left in ruin two to three minutes at a time, plus a great cover of COCKSPARRER's "I Got Your Number" for the digital release version, to boot. WHY BOTHER? has been fairly prolific in churning out music since their Feel It Records debut in 2021, and Feel It clearly knew they had something special as they've put out over a half-dozen more WHY BOTHER? releases since, proving once again that the Midwest can be alright.

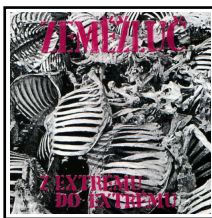
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Feel It



ZEMĚŽLUČ – Z Extrému Do Extrému LP reissue

This was one of the first Eastern European punk LPs I picked up—grabbed it on a whim in a bargain bin because it looked cool, and I didn't know fuck-all about Czech punk, so why not? The band started in 1986 and dropped their first full-length a few years later (also recommended). *Z Extrému Do Extrému* was the second full-length from ZEMĚŽLUČ, originally released in 1997; it's still a regular spin and I'm happy to see it get modern treatment and recognition from PHR. Stripped-down, hard-driving, no frills punk rock with gruff vocals and the unmistakable cold Eastern Euro punk energy even while they crank out anthem after anthem with an ear towards early UK punk.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Papagájův Hlasatel



偏執症者 (PARANOID) – Kill the Light / Dead Barren Wastes 7"

PARANOID gives us more of their signature sound. D-beat hardcore punk/crust with a bit of thrash. Great recording, fantastic-looking packaging. Most importantly, great-sounding songs. Thick production without anything being buried by anything else. To have this kind of quality all around on a 7" is amazing.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: D-Takt & Råpunk / Paranoid Northern Discs



THE COUNTERFORCE



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #504

MAY 2025

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

This is an **unofficial** zine digest of MRR 504, first published May 2025. You can read it online at:

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This issue contains 110 reviews, contributed by:

Tony Party	D. Gregory
Gonza Perez	Mama Goblin
Nick Odorizzi	Matt Casteel
Ben Marshall	Jeff Cost
Kenny Kaos	Luke Henley
Emma Miller	Willis Schenk
Eric Anderson	Biff Bifaro
Robert Collins	Jake Joyce
Bill Chamberlain	João Seixas
Seth McBurney	Tim Janchar
Romain Basset	
Fiona Rae	
Jason Harding	
Erika Elizabeth	

THE COUNTERFORCE

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

E-mail: the-counterforce@riseup.net

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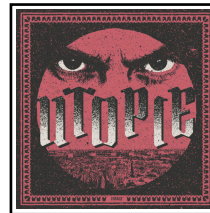
Print It Yourself.

UTOPIE – Virage LP

France has proved to be fertile ground for the kind of spartan, frigid post-Oil that UTOPIE deals in—bootboy vox and shouted gang refrains twinned with the kind of atmospheric bass lines and utilitarian riffs that one would associate with contemporaries like SYNDROME 81 or BRUX, perhaps. It certainly fits that bill, but it does leave me quite cold. It doesn't quite have the grit or tunes to grab me for a full LP's worth of music, unfortunately. Not bad, just not memorable in the slightest.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall

Label: Symphony of Destruction

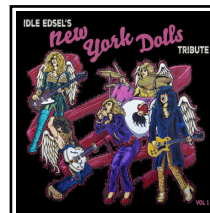


V/A – Idle Edsel's New York Dolls Tribute, Vol. 1 LP

A friend of mine in high school said that if your band covers another band, your version needs to either improve on the original, or add something that makes it your own, and that always stuck with me. Now I suppose a tribute album is something distinctly separate from just a bunch of covers, but I can't escape the musings of that high school kid while listening to this NEW YORK DOLLS tribute. Yes, these are for sure competent covers, and the bands involved presumably like-to-love the source material. But beyond curiosity, or perhaps a completist's mad desire, there's really nothing new or interesting to discover here. None of these songs are better than the originals (obviously), and none of them really do anything to make their version memorable. Again, these are perfectly serviceable versions of amazing songs, but ten out of ten times, I'm opting for the RUNDGREN-produced masterpiece.

Reviewer: D. Gregory

Label: Idle Edsel

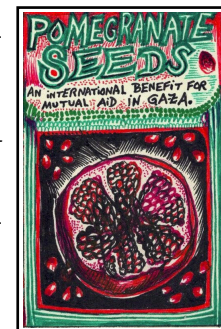


V/A – Pomegranate Seeds: An International Benefit for Mutual Aid in Gaza cassette

I love punk compilations that offer a huge variety of subgenre sounds, and *Pomegranate Seeds: An International Benefit for Mutual Aid in Gaza* does not disappoint. *Pomegranate Seeds* is, in fact, packed to overflow with some of the best tracks from bands like DISAFECT, WET SPECIMENS, SYNDROME 81, GUERRA FINAL, OMEGA TRIBE with D.O.V.E., and a bunch more. *Pomegranate Seeds* was created by Philadelphia's the DISSIDENTS, and is a fantastic assortment of punk rock that flows smoothly between hardcore to jangly garage and to everywhere else in between. I was pleasantly surprised by AMUSEMENT and "Standing on Top of the A Bomb" and VAMPIRE with "Evidence," and at the end of it all, that's what punk compilations are about—finding new bands that kick ass.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney

Label: self-released

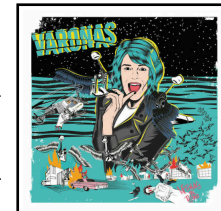


VARONAS – Víctimas del Ritmo LP

VARONAS' *Víctimas del Ritmo* (translated: "Victims of Rhythm") is the debut LP from this Madrid four-piece featuring vets from MALLORY KNOX, THEE GIRLFRIENDS, THEE SUCKIN' DICKS, and RADIO ZOO. The music meanders between garage rock, power pop, and straight-up '70s-style rock'n'roll, with dual vocals from guitarist Vanessa Herrero and bassist Gema Bañares that are intended to channel a B-52'S vibe. While the album has its moments, including a cover of "Love Shack," the vocals sometimes lack the strength that could have taken it to the next level. It's fun and really not bad at all, but it could've been a lot punchier. Check out "Es a Mí" if you want a taste.

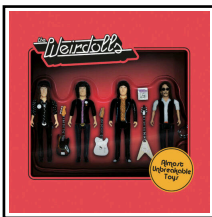
Reviewer: Jeff Cost

Label: Delia / FOLC



THE WEIRDOLLS – Almost Unbreakable Toys LP

As with a lot of power pop, here's a band that's not necessarily doing anything wrong, but there's just scenes missing that keep this from being a movie. Mining New York's ripe '70s era, these contemporary Italians are just a little too precious and clean-cut. The songwriting is solid, but there's little to no danger in the proceedings. New York was scary in the '70s, and that's something you heard in the music. I'm sure there's plenty in present-day Italy to write songs about, but this looking backward just fails to land on a human level. It feels like the image the album cover presents, which is a group of collectible figures left in the box and never played with.



Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Wanda

TIGER HELICIDE – The Last Album CD

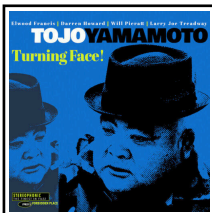
Fun album here; a nice mixture of a sinister energy with tongues firmly placed in cheeks. It has a dark RICHARD HELL AND THE VOIDOIDS vibe mixed with the gang vocals of some classic Ray Cappo project. The singer sometimes does this Jello Biafra whimper that sounds a lot more like Fred Schneider, which is much cooler in my opinion. I'd be remiss if I didn't shout out their track "Bad Street," which references some of the best beat-em-up video games of the past thirty years. Your typical local-punk-band affair, but you can tell these guys had a fun time recording this and it makes for a charming listen.



Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Murder Boy Music

TOJO YAMAMOTO – Turning Face! 12"

Kentucky noise-rock-influenced punk focused on pro wrestler Tojo Yamamoto (I know next to nothing about wrestling, but this guy was apparently a hated "heel" from the '60s through the '80s). For fans of CHERUBS or USA/MEXICO, the band plays heavy, feedback-drenched riffs with raspy, hollered vocals. On a few tracks, like "Loser Leave Town (A Cautionary Tale)" and "Work," the bass leads the way with a swaggering, blues-punk feel à la CLUTCH (minus the everyman mechanic shtick) by way of KILL-DOZER. The best part of the record is that the whole thing is filled with classic wrestling interview samples. Everyone joins the ring, from refs to someone's mom (her tough-guy son is just misunderstood) to



incredible promos of ridiculous threats, insults, and arguments. It makes for a very fun, heavy rock record with crisp production and infectious energy.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Forbidden Place

TOTAL CON – Who Needs the Peace Corps? EP

Highly anticipated vinyl debut from the UK's TOTAL CON, the brainchild of Bobby Cole of the ANNIHILATED and ANTAGONIZM amongst other things. To get directly to the point, *Who Needs the Peace Corps?* absolutely smokes and will certainly be remembered as one of the year's great releases. A breathlessly pure expression of hardcore aggression that is as authentic as a punk record can be in 2025, it acts as both an aggro diatribe against corporate and capitalist exploitation and a love letter to the genre's greats, following in the footsteps of bands like KORO, BATTALION OF SAINTS, and URBAN WASTE. Highlights include the breakdown on "You Don't Exist," the frantic guitar work on "Death to Capitalist Hardcore," and the million-mile-an-hour vocal delivery on "Repugnant Slime." Each song maintains a manic level of intensity that is wrapped in perfectly lo-fi production that makes it sound about 40 years old. While there isn't enough column space to dig much more into each of the nine tracks here, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention the band's take on the DOORS' "Riders on the Storm," a cover that has no right to work as well as it does. When put into the context of a hardcore punk song, the lyrics hit with a much higher intensity, giving the philosophical, romantic, and violent nature of Jim Morrison's admittedly overplayed hit a breath of fresh air. It's a surprising way to end and worth the price of admission alone. Very recommended and an album of the year contender, to be sure.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Static Shock / Unlawful Assembly

ULTRANOTHING – UltraNothing 10"

Not quite sure how to categorize these guys (punk, post-punk, HC, all of the above maybe), but they rocked regardless. Great use of building tension; loved when they got more noise/chaos-oriented, too. "Animosity" was one of my favorite tracks as it was at a much faster tempo and more classically punk, but their other tracks were each strong in their own way. I loved how they transitioned between a cleaner post-punk sound to a much more distorted and crazier hardcore vibe as well.



Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: This Charming Man

77 LIES – Love Songs, Vol. 1 CD

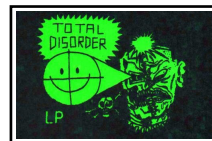
As they say in their Bandcamp bio, this is a "three-piece punk band from Charlotte, NC." Easily singable, straightforward, zero thrills, and on-point. Their messages are clear, from being scared of the United States in the opening track "United States of Fear," to getting wasted as lyrically illustrated in the song "Wasted." The third track "Fight" shows us where they got the name for the *Love Songs, Vol. 1* CD with the lyrics "Let's fight, let's fuck." All four songs clock in at under six-and-a-half minutes, so that's pretty cool. If you're a fan of the CASUALTIES, BLANKS 77, SWINGIN' UTTERS, or ANTI-FLAG and can take your punk milquetoast and uninspired, then I'd say you can't go wrong with this.



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Residents

ALAMBRE DE PÚAS – Total Disorder cassette

This Chilean two-member project plays chaotic, mid-tempo, beat-driven and frantically executed crusty raw hardcore punk, featuring distinctive vocals that take a continuous distorted, angry stance, plus rusty chain-saw guitars and *tupa-tupa* drums all the way with a tight, steady grip. Both sides together make for less than 23 minutes of purely distorted ranting, and it was recorded in the mythical TARANTULA studio in CDMX during their 2022 tour across México, with the goal to record all their songs in the moment, achieving a more aggressive sound and slightly faster cadences. This comes courtesy of Educación Cínica, and constitutes a key piece of raw punk highly recommended for those who crave beat-driven punk aggression.



Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Educacion Cínica

ALPHA HOPPER – Let Heaven and Nature Sing II LP

Heavy mix of noise punk, math rock, and fucking riffs on this third LP from Buffalo, NY's ALPHA HOPPER. Molten, head-nodding riffs often split apart into intricate intertwining guitar leads that rival DON CABALLERO at their most rockin', while still maintaining the chaos of ARAB ON RADAR. This would be a rad heavy alt/noise rock record if not for vocalist Irene, whose voice resembles Lucy from BIG CLOWN in timbre and rhythmic delivery. The high-pitched vocals steer the ship in a punk direction, and it sounds incredible. When the guitars started tangling on opener "She's Thunder," I

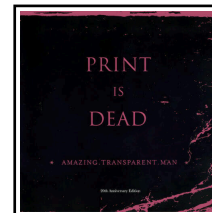


had the thought that ALPHA HOPPER is the only band who could make a YES cover sound cool. Tracks like "So Easy" and "Down in Flames" rip with noisy, interlocking leads and slow, chugging buildups. Short instrumental tracks "AH01," "AH02," and "AH03" provide blooming psych explorations that, while rare on a DIY punk record, add a grandiose weight to the album that totally works. Check this one out.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Swimming Faith

AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN – Print is Dead (20th Anniversary Edition) LP

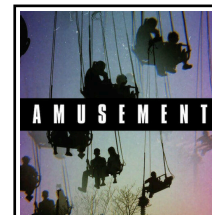
Recorded at Sonic Iguaña Studios, which is prolly best known for SCREECHING WEASEL, BOLLWEEVILS, SQUIRTGUN, and so on and on. This is the 20th anniversary edition of this LP, so it just goes to show that someone is still interested. This is a fine record in the vein of BLINK-182 and such. I read on the band's Bandcamp page that the original CD, released in 2005, was a "North Star for early 2000s pop punk" enthusiasts. I somehow missed it when it came out, but now we all have an opportunity to grab a piece of history or whatever. The CD cover looks like *The Catcher in the Rye*, whereas this LP (20th Anniversary Edition) doesn't so much.



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Fail Harmonic

AMUSEMENT – Holding On EP

With their third EP, AMUSEMENT continues to straddle the line between East and West Coast luminaries of the likes of SEA-WEED and MOVING TARGETS, while bringing in a level spoonful of aggression just under the tasty melody. It only makes sense that AMUSEMENT is what happens when you have a combined one-hundred-plus years of experience from folks that have played in DIY bands spanning all *Maximum Rockroll's* favorite genres. It's also impossible not to hear itty-bitty flavors of the thirty or so bands that these folks have been part of, or deny the dazzling RADON and ARRIVALS influences. Each of these three songs is melodic and contains an urgency and style individualized enough from each other to make this feel well-rounded. If it were 1991, I would be putting each of these songs on different themed comp tapes, like "Running From the Cops Jamz" or "Room Cleaning Jamz" or "Tyler's Basement When His Parents Aren't Home Jamz."

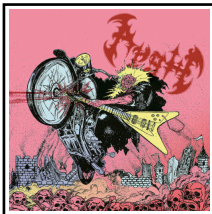


Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Dirt Cult

ARGH – Se Pudrio Todo... Adios LP

Some real evil Troglodyte hop for the real rockers in this release. The chaps from Chile have produced an addictive mix of hardcore and Oi! with rocker flourishes to genuinely dizzying effect. Genre-hopping even within songs, swinging between the sort of dark and dense Oi! of the modern French wave, chugging hardcore, and even guitar noodling, it's hard to put a precise pin on it, other than it is, quite simply, raging. It does come across in parts as a turbo-charged ES-KORBUTO too, which I consider a compliment.

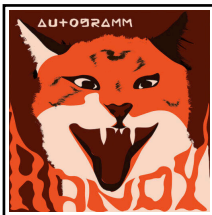
Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Discos Enfermos



AUTOGRAMM – Randy (Don't Screw Up) / Jenny's in a Sleep World 7"

Holy shit, Batman. I can't hide the fact that I love both new wave and power pop, and the two often travel in tandem. That's the case here, and this is fantastic. Super catchy and just loveable. Two cuts and one is a DIODES cover. Any band smart enough to cover the DIODES is already on my good side. The fact that they cover a little bit of a lesser-known cut and that it's super cool is honestly just gravy for me. This record is a must, and the band should be on your radar.

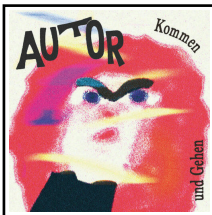
Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Dirt Cult



AUTOR – Kommen und Gehen LP

Post-punk-adjacent band from Vienna. Something that really stuck with me was how consistently strong their rhythm section was; the bass and drums were so solid and a heavy backbone to the music, which allowed for more variation for vocals and guitar. They also had great transitions, both within a song and from one song to another, like the feedback from the end of "Das" blending into the noise in the beginning of "Leere."

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Contergan Punk



BALLISTIX – Starin' Down the Barrel at... cassette

Six tracks of rough-around-the-edges hardcore punk from New Jersey's BALLISTIX. Featuring members of the poppier, RAMONES-indebted FREEZEHEADS, BALLISTIX opt instead for a tougher sound more akin to POISON IDEA. That said, they haven't lost their knack for writing catchy tunes, as evidenced by the excellent third track, "Takin Aim." Check this one out.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Crosshair



BAMBERDÖST – Songs About Your "Girlfriend" CD

Formerly the solo project for BAD WHOREMAOANS' vocalist Paul Maule, BAMBERDÖST presents here as a fully realized melodic punk trio. Thirteen heartfelt, love-laden laments with titles like "Tell Me You're Safe," "Favorite Creature," and "I'm Not Leaving Sleep Over You," to give you a little insight into your listening mission before you even embark. They're from New Jersey, but I hear NOVA MOB and D4 in these tracks, and I get distinct Midwest energy mingling with jangly almost-emo and hints of gloomy garage. Rare to see (hear) an outfit successfully make the move from solo acoustic act to full band, but BAMBERDÖST appears to be doing exactly that.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: self-released



BEAT PANIC – Vyvanse Macabre 10" flexi

Very classic post-punk band. My favorite track was "Anhedonia," with the nice clear bass line to start and catchy instrumentals in the chorus, along with fun dual-vocal shouting at the end (I almost wish there was more of it!). All their tracks seem so thought-out and well-rounded. With a more techno edge at times, like the electronic intro in "Götterdämmerung Capitalism," to more kinds of gothic rock elements throughout, you don't quite know what to expect.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: self-released



Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Painters Tapes

THE BLACK GLOVES – Five Cuts at 8,000 Ft CD

For me, this album really built itself up. Don't get me wrong, they had plenty of power and speed throughout, but I felt the last two tracks, "Kubrick Stare" and "X-ray," were the strongest of the album. The first two tracks sounded pretty similar to me, but "Kubrick Stare" had nice bass licks and was more all over the board sonically, which was fun. Then "X-ray" had a nice kind of breakdown in the middle with short stops and slowing down to almost half-tempo before exploding back to a faster more punk style. Overall, I enjoyed how in-your-face and straightforward punk these guys were.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: self-released



THE COURETTES – The Soul of... The Fabulous Courettes LP

The COURETTES serve up a polished, retro vibe on *The Soul of... The Fabulous Courettes*, blending '60s-inspired garage rock with a nod to that big, Phil Spector-style wall of sound. The album has a definite CRYSTALS feel, with La La Brooks herself popping up on "California" and "Run Run Runaway." While the band keeps it minimal as a two-piece live, the album is fleshed out with a full band and a carefully produced sound that doesn't overly rely on too many layers of reverb, giving them a bit more of a punch than some of the other retro acts out there, like the RAVEONETTES or DUM DUM GIRLS. It's fun and it has just enough modern sensibility to keep it from feeling completely stale, but when does homage stop honoring the past and start getting stuck in it?

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Damaged Goods



THE RABIES – Dumb It Down LP

When you land on this page, you can't help but think of the RAMONES. The fact that they're from NYC, their cover art... but they are definitely not just a RAMONES copycat band. They are a serious band, but you can tell that they don't take themselves too seriously. That's a healthy combination. These guys are a softer, poppier brand of new wave. The vocals range from being pretty to



almost LOU REED-like spoken word. These guys are just a little goofy and they seem totally okay with that. Or maybe they're just brutally honest. Nice work.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Presidential

THE REAL LOSERS – Time to Lose LP reissue

The REAL LOSERS, a garage punk three-piece from Leeds, UK, don't lose their raw and raucous energy in this remixed reissue of their 2003 album *Time to Lose*, out now on the Portland-based Total Punk label. If you've ever blasted TEENGENERATE or the MUMMIES and wished it sounded even more fried, this no-fi wrecking ball might be for you—vocals splatter like static from a busted radio, giving this the feel of a bootleg of the greatest rock show you never saw. This remixed version boosts the low end and gives the instruments more punch; it's a significant improvement overall, but I think I might actually prefer the original's shitty charm. The reissue includes the fifteen original tracks plus two bonus cuts, "Tell Me Something" and "Johnny's Got The Action." It's primitive, overdriven garage punk that never lets up—a snotty, swaggering mess in all the right ways.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Total Punk



THE SKREWUPS – Dial 9... cassette

This EP kicks off with a really fantastic instrumental surf track in the same vein as a sinister MAN... OR ASTRO-MAN? but quickly evolves into your run-of-the-mill MISFITS-worship, going as far as to cover "Hollywood Babylon." The band is obviously quite talented, but do we really need more horror punk in the 21st century? It almost hurts to say this, as the vocalist has great range and sustainability, but I was more excited for the opening song than anything else on this slab.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Tennessee Cold Cuts



Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Crypt of the Wizard

STUDENT NURSE – Safety Last LP

From the bedrock of the Seattle punk scene, making their first music from '79–'84, STUDENT NURSE reemerges some 38 years later with fresh energy and new music—this ain't no reissue! Revived from the long view allowed by the pandemic, Helena Rogers's vocals and guitar still front the band. She writes lyrics that young punks haven't yet earned, like "Look at us, we're not the ones to blame" from "Aurora." The band works hard to produce an album that weaves between off-kilter rhythms and on-the-four convergence that will undoubtedly get you nodding. Bass riffs wander effortlessly all over the fretboard, rarely ceasing, while guitars scratch out bittersweet riffs and skronky upstrokes. The drums order this chaos, catching everybody's irregular grooves, bringing back to center this electric orchestra for verses where Helena and David's vocals tell it solemnly. This clearly isn't a cash grab to capture old fans, given their short and fractured stint so many years ago. Instead, we are lucky enough to witness a group of artists who have put out some truly special music. Each of these eight tracks are over four minutes long, and none of them drag. For a good taste, try out "What Happened to Me?"—I think it encapsulates the spirit of the band, their tenure in the scene, and their ability to somehow, 38 years later, not miss a beat.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Wacky Dog

SUBURBAN RESISTANCE – Time Flies: The Best of Suburban Resistance Vol. 1 LP

Self-proclaimed "melodic punk rock"—this must be what we're calling pop punk these days? Reminds me of George Carlin's bit about using different, gentler words to describe situations that make us uncomfortable. Anyways, the first half of this slab is the aforementioned straight-up pop punk akin to bands like BOWLING FOR SOUP and GOB. The second half has this derivative MISFITS/AFI quality. It does a great disservice pairing these tracks with the bubblegum punk from the earlier history of the band, because the sudden jump in subject matter and tone comes off as a tad hokey. I will give the singer their due, though. Assuming this album is in chronological order, you can hear their progression and growth as a vocalist. They're really killing it on the last couple of tracks.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: I/M



SUICIDAS – Éxitos y Fracasos LP

Punk, but more melodic because the singer can actually sing. I loved the dual vocals sprinkled throughout, which ranged from more angry screaming in "Cuerda Floja" to more catchy pop or rock-oriented in "Vértigo" or "La Ventana De Atrás." I feel like they were able to have fun being playful, with nice bass grooves/movement, while still maintaining energy and emotion.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Metadona

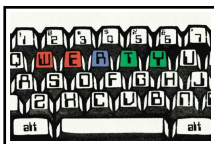
SUPERSONIC DEUCES – Deuce on the Loose CD

I really had no idea what to expect here with a band named SUPERSONIC DEUCES. Actually, no. That's not true. I fully expected this to be some sort of filthy grind-core act. Instead, SUPERSONIC DEUCES is a self-proclaimed "action rock" band, which is just another way to say garage rock for old Gen X-ers. Hot rod imagery paired with a ton of wah-pedal action. Like, seriously way too much wah-wah for me to handle. The kind of band Bam Margera would have been rep'ing in the early '00s like TURBONEGRO, except this sounds more like some AEROSMITH B-sides with a grittier vocalist. The band is clearly very talented, it's just something we've all heard a million times before.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Screaming Crow

TY – WE R TY cassette

Are your shoes all torn up? Is there a constant feel of grit beneath your feet? Between your teeth? Did your bike chain fall off? This may be the soundtrack of your week. From the same label that brought us FREAK ACTIVITY, who I recently reviewed, as well as EASERS who have made quite a splash, Detroit's Painters Tapes hashes out another lo-fi release, this time from TY (pronounced T-Y). With a bit of mucus in the back of their throats, TY presents this debut, compiling previous demos onto this cassette that would make DEVO and ALIEN NOSEJOB fans alike reach for their boombox volume knobs. From eggy tracks like "Nematode" that jitter and shout, to rock'n'roll reachers like "Hot Rod Baby" that prove out MC5's legacy (or gives it a slanty jab?), there's plenty of fun to be had! Only two tracks push past the two-minute mark, still leaving room for rock-driven solos, bass-grumbling rests, and catchy hooks like "Be what you want to be / What you say is who I'll be" from "Oh No." Great debut.



BLISS – Pure Bliss LP

You tell me something is glam/punk and you'd better deliver. This band was active from 1976 to 1979, and all of these unreleased cuts were recorded beginning in 1978. In the cover photo, they look very wholesome, almost BAY CITY ROLLERS-like. And while there's definitely a pop vibe to go with the glam, it's definitely got some edge to it. More than glam or punk, I feel like I'd call this power pop. That said, "Mirror Mirror" has a definite GENERATION X sound going on. Some of the songs have some very curious inclusions in them, like they just fade off into space. Overall, I'd say it's worth a check-out.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Reminder

BLOWERS / S.U.G.A.R. – split 10"

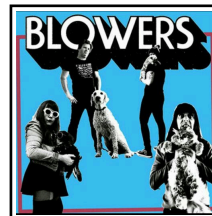
Long-haired punks posing with their pets makes a fitting cover image for this beastly little split. Berlin's S.U.G.A.R. provides two straightforward rockers that, though delivered with an inherent maturity, are still loaded with freewheelin' spirit of the cut-off sleeves variety, including a classic cover that they're known to use as an encore. The BLOWERS side is unabashed attitude, with three tracks of bratty, lo-fi, RAMONES-y garage capped off by the acoustic tearjerker "Fuckwit in a Band." It's a tasty platter suitable for all species.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Alien Snatch

BOMBARDEMENT – Dans La Fournaise LP

When I put this on, I was expecting some very good D-beat punk and I got that, but there is so much more to this than just another D-beat record. It would have been fine with me if it had been that, because this band does it so well. This started off with an almost New Wave of British Heavy Metal intro. After that, it has an absolutely ripping D-beat song. Over the course of the album, I also get a POISON IDEA vibe, as well as BROKEN BONES and all the current best of the D-beat scene. They throw in some nice thrash parts as well. This is a great record, and it has the longest pick slide I have ever heard—enough said.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Symphony of Destruction



BOSONOGO DJETINJSTVO – Diskografija cassette

BOSONOGO DJETINJSTVO was a Croatian anarcho-hardcore band which only existed for a couple of years, but in the short time between 2013 and 2016, they recorded some killer tunes. However, the band broke up and those songs were shelved for nearly a decade. Now, thanks to Doomtown Records, we have the Diskografija cassette, a twelve-song collection of mostly unreleased material by BOSONOGO DJETINJSTVO. Blasts of surging hardcore mingle with extended riff-heavy jams to create a sound that is simultaneously diverse but also familiar. If you like REFUSED or maybe ZEGOTA, then BOSONOGO DJETINJSTVO should absolutely be in your scheduled listening.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Doomtown

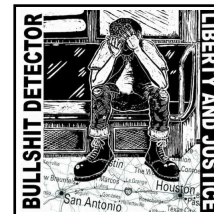
BULLSHIT DETECTOR / LIBERTY AND JUSTICE – split EP

Everything's bigger in Texas (or so I'm told), and as splits go, this is pretty big. Both BULLSHIT DETECTOR and LIBERTY AND JUSTICE are some heavy-hitters when it comes to modern street punk, and this release is a lot of fun. BULLSHIT DETECTOR is up first, with an original which doesn't quite do it for me, but their entirely surprising cover of a BOB SEGER(!) tune completely took me out—it is straight up rockin' and makes me want to drink one hundred beers. LIBERTY AND JUSTICE follows and continues their purple patch with another genre-agnostic heater, with a ska-punk lilt which feels like a middle finger in the correct direction. A fun live CIRCLE JERKS cover follows with FAT TONY on guest duties, too.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Crossbar

BURNING CHROME – Running to Escape EP

When one wants to relax on Sundays, there are as many options as there are personalities. Some people do gardening, others do Sailor Moon cosplay, some even do both, at the same time. The people in BURNING CHROME from Minneapolis play triumphant traditional Burning Spirits Japanese hardcore with gusto and an



obvious love for the subgenre. For all I know, they also do gardening and cosplay, but I cannot tell just by this record. What I find particularly enjoyable with this EP is how urgent and unpolished it sounds, hardly surprising seeing that it was recorded on an eight-track. What you get is experienced punks (the resumes are well abundant) having a glorious go (you can tell they love what they do here) at the classic recipe invented by DEATH SIDE or LIP CREAM, but with a trashier vibe not unlike DOG SOLDIER or BURIAL. You've got the epic guitar leads, the fast riffs, and a singer that, while relying on the gruff vocal style inherent to Japanese hardcore, sounds like he's vomiting on you, which, as an ENT fan, is (just) fine by me, but might deter some listeners. A fun record.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Desolate

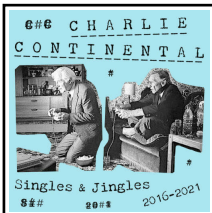
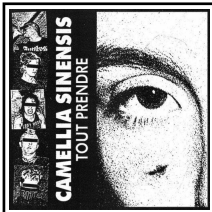
CAMELLIA SINENSIS – Tout Prendre EP

Straight up, the four-second reggaeton beat in the breakdown of the title track might be the single best hardcore thing you're going to hear this month. I went back and listened (repeatedly) because it simply doesn't make sense...until it does. And when it does, you're fukkd. It's not just the opening cut though, Lille rippers CAMELLIA SINENSIS are masters of the breakdown, and there's something about the way the snare cracks when they slow it down that makes those breakdowns...extra. The guitar lead in the "Chute" breakdown, literally every damn riff on the record, the S.H.I.T. vibes in the closer "Mesure"—start to finish, this record is an absolute killer, and a massive leap from their already excellent demo from a couple of years ago. Highly recommended.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Lada / Une Vie Pour Rien Vinyls

CHARLIE CONTINENTAL – Singles & Jingles 2016–2021 cassette

Singles & Jingles is exactly what it promises to be, an anthology of remastered songs released on CHARLIE CONTINENTAL's small, self-sufficient label (Snappy Little Numbers). As a solo project of his, this cassette is charming with its disjointed mosaic of sounds over years of recording. Certainly not a cohesive release, songs like "Be Much Better" goes the *SUBLIME* pop punk route, while "Monotony of Care" orbits around acoustic guitar and keyboard. Incorporating quick, thrashing drums into each track, CONTINENTAL's underlying musical style is present but largely at the whim of each song. "Come Howl With Us" features some fun howling backing vocals, though the Colorado-based soloist sounds strained for much of his own singing parts throughout the album. As a wide-ranging release, there is something for every uproar-



ious garage rock and punk fan, though nothing too standout. If you're inclined to some amusing taborine and sardonic lyrics, CHARLIE has got you covered.

Reviewer: Fiona Rae
Label: Snappy Little Numbers

CHEAP ENTERTAINMENT – Le Dernier Mistral 12"

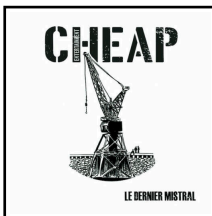
A clean and unique hybrid of styles coming out of France's CHEAP ENTERTAINMENT. This eight-song record, the band's debut, is decidedly post-punk in spirit, but no-frills in delivery, and there's also an undercurrent of spirited pop-punking lurking here. It seems to be informed by both the more anthemic side of the '90s and the moody Oi! movement of recent years. Is "working class emo" a thing? Because this is kind of like that.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Crapoulet / Flamingo / L'Intermédiaire / Malamore / Relax-O-Matic Vibrator

CLASS TOURISTS – Humanity Eats Itself cassette

CLASS TOURISTS are from England, and this is a really pleasant surprise of a tape. Not knowing anything about them and listening to this band for the first time was a real head-turner. Powerful hardcore, lyrically powerful as well. They seem to have taken something from many of the bands that started the first wave of punk and hardcore all the way up to today. They have other influences as well, including second wave ska. I know that can be a dirty word to a lot of people who lived through the third wave of ska, but this has little to do with that kind of vibe, and it's brief. To me, it makes this a more interesting listen and a break from some pummeling hardcore. Great stuff.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Noise Merchant



SMACKBEAT – Little Letters LP

This LP starts this with a high school soundtrack-type tune ("1999") about life and growing up and stuff. I can see this as a summertime record that plays loudly from cars with windows rolled down, arms flailing, and everyone inside shouting the lyrics. Perfect mid-tempo GIN BLOSSOMS, with elements of POLITICAL ASYLUM, STATE DRUGS, and the OFFSPRING sorta, with a general Fat Wreck Chords feel. Personally, I'm on the fence with this one, because I know that this will be the favorite 2025 release for some people. However, for me there's just not quite enough for me to sink my teeth into. Take this for what it is: I was playing SMACKBEAT loudly in an effort to really dig into it, and my ladyfriend popped her head in and asked if I was listening to Christian rock, so there's that.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Monasteria



SMEAR CAMPAIGN – I See You cassette

Two-bass, no guitar powerviolence assault that sounds a lot like (you guessed it) MAN IS THE BASTARD. You won't hear any complaints from me on that! SMEAR CAMPAIGN belts out twenty-four tracks in seventeen minutes that will have you sweatin' to the oldies like the spastic freak your school guidance counselor was worried you would become. Unlike MITB, they don't wade into any protracted sludge parts or noise interludes. They do incorporate samples between songs to break things up a bit. The NEGATIVE APPROACH clip had me rolling! SMEAR CAMPAIGN aren't taking themselves too seriously and appear to have a lot to share about their home state of Colorado. Blastbeats and tempo changes abound. Good stuff.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Convulse



SOFOCADA – Ultra demo cassette

SOFOCADA does not fuck around! Ultra-primitive punk with a muffled claustrophobic sound. I guess the band's name ("suffocated" in Spanish) reflects both how they feel and how the music sounds. Very nihilistic and very emotionally heavy, especially because it is a rehearsal recording, so every detail is a product of spontaneity. This Chilean three-piece features members of GUINA. There is a YouTube video clip for the whole demo that vividly paints the picture the music is trying to show. Highly recommended.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Comidillo



SPAM CALLER – Bad Connection LP

SPAM CALLER. The name hits you like a cold dial tone in the middle of the night. Ever wonder what BLACK FLAG (if Henry Rollins spent his nights in a call center, slowly losing his mind) would sound like if they were ever part of the Youth Attack catalog? Well, this might just be it. During the seventeen minutes of *Bad Connection*, SPAM CALLER goes as hard as possible, and the result also comes close to what HOAX did so well, an assault to the senses. The tension felt in the songs is put into visuals by Mark McCoy's art, and for the ones that have been following his work, they already know what this record is going to sound like. SPAM CALLER will keep ringing, whether you pick up or not.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Phage



STERÖID – Chainmail Commandos LP

This is absolutely phenomenal. As if the NEW YORK DOLLS, DIO, and PAT BENATAR started writing music inspired by the *Street Fighter II* soundtrack and ran their vocals through an *Alvin and the Chipmunks* filter. It's like the Garbage Pail Kids joined an egg-punk band and recruited K.K. Downing to play guitar. Some bands make you want to party, and some bands make you want to burn everything down. This makes me want to crack open a box of Lucky Charms and play with my old He-Man toys. This is very much an early contender for my album of the year. Of course this is from Australia, the current capital of great rock'n'roll.



ground of songs and in between tracks. The aforementioned "Pogo Pope" is such a killer raw melodic punk song that it isn't immediately apparent that the lyrics consist of only the title repeated ad nauseum. If you can make it through the running time, I think you're in for life, baptized through punk hymns and decrees from the outsider pope himself. This lovingly prepared reissue gets my highest recommendation (I have had my copy for months), and I encourage you to pick up a physical copy if you can due to the incredible artwork, sixteen-page booklet, and layout.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Sealed

RUSKO – Holiday in the Russia LP

Collecting tracks from Russian three-piece RUSKO, this album showcases twenty cleaned-up live recordings from 1992. There's some youthful innovation to these rough and expressive tunes, and you can tell that these kids were pushing for a bit more complexity than typical for teenage punk. Bashing and brooding with high-pitched nasal vocal wailing, their style was considerably unconventional, even if a bit grating.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Emergency / Matus

S.H.I.T. – Live at Idrima 2.14 LP

Idrima 2.14, founded in 2014 in Athens, is a legendary venue that hosts independent concerts for both local and international bands, a space for DIY events that furthers the union that is so important in punk music. If there is a band that embodies this spirit, it is Toronto-based powerhouse S.H.I.T., a band that needs no introduction, steadily paying their dues in the international hardcore scene and channeling the essence of the '80s. Recorded just before the pandemic locked everything down, this live album feels like the last cry for a world that was still alive and kicking, but on the edge of collapse. Tracks like the closer "Feeding Time" come out swinging with an intensity that makes you feel like you're right there in the pit, choking on the sweat of bodies in motion. It shows a band at the top of their game ripping through a feverish set. This isn't the sanitized, overproduced punk that's become more corporate than countercultural, this is raw, straight-up hardcore, just like it should be. It's ugly, it's messy, and I can't help but love it.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Body Blows / Nothing to Harvest

SCRAPS – On the Edge of the Abyss LP

This French anarcho hardcore band is still going at it, nearly a half-century in. That's certainly no small feat, and yet with their latest slab of tunes, the energy is still there but the ideas aren't particularly novel. But fuck, who am I to sit and judge, as someone who's never kept a band together longer than five years? This is old school, with plenty of piss left in the tank, and that's something to be celebrated. Still plenty to shout about in this day and age, and it's good to see the old guard hasn't chilled out at all. Besides, the dextrous bass is high in the mix, absolutely killing it while the whole band chimes in on the choruses. That's what you want and that's what you get.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Refuse

SELF PRISON – Self Prison cassette

Deep in the Caucasus region of Eastern Europe, Tbilisi sits as the cultural and population center for the country of Georgia. The culturally rich city of Tbilisi is also where SELF PRISON calls home. SELF PRISON is a four-piece raw hardcore band whose five-song self titled cassette is full of anguish-laden vocals and fascinating instrumental runs. If you're not hooked on SELF PRISON by the gritty guitar riff on the intro track, then I give up trying to convince you.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Brainwasher

SHATTER – Deny the Future EP

SHATTER has become known for their hybrid style of hardcore street punk and Japanese-influenced D-beat; the twinning of anthemic and technical. *Deny the Future* is a four-song EP recently released through Desolate Records, and each song is a speedy rip of SHATTER's hallmark style. Breakneck tempos fused with nearly impossibly tight riffs lay the foundation for urgent and crucial lyrics. I also really appreciate the graphic style and presentation SHATTER employs and *Deny the Future* provides. If you're a punk, then you should probably already own this one.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Desolate

COLD MEAT – Cake & Arse Party EP

Perth's COLD MEAT has been at it for ten years now, but truth be told, this new EP (their first release since 2020's *Hot and Flustered* LP) is where everything finally clicked for me. The string of singles that they dropped in the back half of the 2010s mostly struck me as solid attempts to force pegs into recently made GOOD THROB-shaped holes; a reductionist thought if not an entirely inaccurate one. In hindsight, it's easier to acknowledge the many similarities between the two bands as a shared collective consciousness, one informed by snarling and shambolic KBD primitivism, speedy, razor-edged hooks in the Dangerhouse tradition, the fiery anarcho-feminist rhetoric of Eve Libertine-fronted CRASS, etc., rather than any sort of intentional coattail-riding. *Cake & Arse Party* is a concise, immediate five-song statement of intent, taking aim at the multitudes of damaging modern world bullshit which have only proliferated in the last decade—"Machine" blazes with one of the most furious, slow-build accelerating rhythms this side of the BAGS' "Survive," with vocalist Ash breathlessly shrieking about hustle culture reducing human value to the output of one's productivity, as the bratty garage bash of "Prick at the Pub" tears down male energy vampires like a switchblade-carrying Slapmt Records act, and Ash's taunting shout of "I cannot remember how it feels to be myself" over the harsh, blown-out feedback squeal in "Artificial Energy" hit a nerve deep within my antidepressant-fogged brain. A perfect encapsulation of the supremacy of the 7" as a punk art form, absolutely vicious.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Helta Skelta / Static Shock

CUCUY – People Talking cassette

Great six-song tape from this Chicago band that blends the jazzy aspects of the MINUTEMEN with the unhinged, off-kilter vocal approach of MYSTIC INANE. Not all great punk bands need to be technically proficient, but this one is, jumping from complex top-of-the-neck guitar leads with bouncing bass and skittery, roll-heavy drums to straight-ahead hardcore with ease. "Speed of Smell" (best title I have heard this year) has a catchy tapped-guitar hook that manages to rage like mutant garage punk. Closing track "You Want a Picture" moves from exasperated hardcore shouting and hits a noise-punk groove that jams for about a minute until the end. Like a high-speed rally race, CUCUY is equally precise and out of control. Check it out—it rules.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Earth Girl

DEATHFIEND – Dark Rising LP

Doomy, psychedelic death metal merged with sludgier sounds on this one. Relentless and progressive second release from this Birmingham outfit, pulsing with old school death metal and applying pinches of doom, black metal, sludge and hardcore with maddening, trance-like outer space sounds. Darkened final doomsday vibes with a fulminating string section and vocals that reach for a beat more all record long. Intense and cathartic.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Phobia

DEMONATTACK – Demonattack cassette

Solid if slightly average punk from Stockholm, with some deathrock and Oi! flourishes and a slightly out-of-place three-minute synth track closing things out. I wasn't blown away on first listen, but it grew on me a bit during the second. Not a bad tape overall, but if they made this a 7" with their strongest tracks "Demonattack" and "Ditt Nya Världlösa Liv" on the A-side and that moody synth track on the B-side, I'd be more likely to snag a copy.

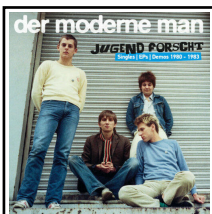
Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: self-released

DER MODERNE MAN – 80 Tage auf See LP reissue

Considered one of the first German punk albums, Tapete gives us a reissue of this incomparable LP by DER MODERNE MAN. If you're not already familiar, congrats on getting to hear this one for the first time. This is Neue Deutsche Welle before there was a word to even describe what you were hearing. Absolutely brilliant post-punk mixed with some electronic sounds, the energy here is tense, taught, turbulent, yet fully in control. The simmering build of "Haarschnitt" into the controlled mania of WIRE-esque standout "Dauerlauf" is a perfect one-two punch. The variety in these twelve tracks is a testament to the group's expansive sonic palette, having traveled to New York and London to dig into those scenes before creating this album—you can hear RAMONES, you can hear CLASH, you can even hear MAGMA (were they hanging in Paris?), but you'd never mistake DER MODERNE MAN for anything but themselves, pioneers in sound. Put this in your ears.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Tapete

DER MODERNE MAN – Jugend Forscht (Singles, EPs & Demos 1980–1983) 2xLP



Excellent collection of singles and stray tracks from this Hannover, Germany band. Post-punk energy that vibrates with wiry guitar lines and the bounciest bass ever collides into catchy anthems that recall GANG OF FOUR at times. The band crosses genres into melodic new wave ("Der Sandman" evokes U2 with the echoey guitar strum) and even incorporates two-tone ska rhythms on "Baggersee." It looks like they still occasionally play live, so here's hoping DER MODERNE MAN records again someday, because this is grade-A material.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Tapete

DRASTIKA – Warmongers 12"



I had no idea this band even existed until their generous attribution to yours truly. I am a bit torn about this one. On the one hand, I really want to love *Warmongers*, not just because this Swedish project has members of COUNTERBLAST and WARCOLLAPSE, but above all because they offer something different and, dare I say it, bring some originality to a crust buffet where you always find the same dishes. Is this album an absolute success? Well, I feel a little traitorous for saying it, but not completely. DRASTIKA's plan is rather ambitious, although it cannot be said to be completely new, either. The band plays some sort of dark and heavy, old school doomy industrial crust ("post-crust"? "stenchgrunge"?) that does bring to mind songs from the two aforementioned bands but also SPINE WRENCH, the almighty DEPRESSOR, or even the oft-overlooked SONIC VIOLENCE. I bloody love the idea, and the songwriting itself often hits the mark (I am a sucker for the synth part), but I feel the recording is lacking in heaviness and the production does not really highlight the band's very real strengths (but then it can't be easy to make the drum machine sound right). Not as solid as it deserves to be, even though fans of mid-paced apocalyptic crust should check it out.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Not Enough

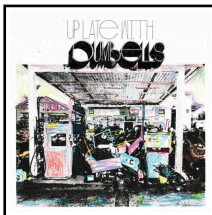
DRY ERASE – Decay Model LP



DRY ERASE blends slinky post-punk, lo-fi electronics, non-sequitur lyrics, and hip hop phrasings to create a fascinating full-length. "Go Out Quick" starts the record with nods to MASSIVE ATTACK in a slow-motion trip-hop exercise with close-to-the-mic smooth rapped vocals and carefully controlled guitar feedback. Tracks like "Claude is Cold" and "Deposed" build patterns of sun-faded synths to support a BOARDS OF CANADA meets coldwave meets early BECK feel. "Blue Light" sounds like the backing music was created by the Starship Enterprise: all theremin and chirping Moog octaves bouncing through space dust. Check it out for a unique, beat-driven approach several evolutionary stages away from traditional post-punk.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Phantom

DUMBELLS – Up Late With LP



Leaving the sparse promise of their brief 2021 demo behind, DUMBELLS' debut LP is endowed with an immersive, full sound that lends itself to the flood of dreamy tunes therein. Comprised of personnel from various notable acts of recent vintage, these Aussie upstarts fuse elements of 1960s sparkle, 1990s fuzz, and many moods in between into their sharp, imaginative, and organic indie flavor, and it's easy to get lost in the album's kaleidoscopic arrangements. Lavishly textured, the songs are simultaneously vibrant and deep, each one propelled by a charming poetic simplicity. There are many memorable moments, like the triumphant and vaguely medieval lead riff of "Automaton," the unbearable catchiness of "Hammer," the weighty romance of "Sweetest Reminder," and the percolating spaghetti western climax of "Bubbles," to cite just a few, but the record is most impressive when digested as a complete ride. It's an obscenely good first album that plays like a greatest hits compilation, and when the fluid and hopeful harmony of the psychedelic "Doorbell" fades out, it feels more like a "to be continued" than a proper "the end."

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Total Punk

PSYCHOACTIVE – Don't Wanna Wait / Seditionaries 7"



Sometimes, a two-track record is all you need to hear—whether it be because you love it from the jump or think it's total trash immediately. This is not the case with the new offering from PSYCHOACTIVE. The A-side got off to a pretty solid start, especially when the dynamic vocals of the chorus hit, reminding me a bit of MARKED MEN. The B-side, however, stayed more kind of one-note the whole time and didn't really go anywhere; it was kind of un-compelling, despite the guitar solo trying to change my mind. So if the A-side is more representative of the PSYCHOACTIVE sound, I'd be interested in hearing more for sure.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Psychoactive

REALM OF TERROR – Beneath the Soil demo cassette



Now this is one I am really happy to write about. As the self-appointed head of the international crust conspiracy (to be fair, our goals are vague, but we do want to prohibit soap) and "a bit of a nerd," as my mum would say, I actually already own a REALM OF TERROR EP. Needless to say, they haven't turned into an indie rock band since *Accelerated Extinction*, and still play pure, old school cavemen crust armed with a primitive production and a singer that probably feeds on tires and dead opossums. *Beneath the Soil* will delight the most loyal fans of filthy crust whose vision of perfect music would be a blend of early DOOM and HIA-TUS, ABRAHAM CROSS and ASOCIAL TERROR FABRICATION. Not the coolest kids in class. This humble but passionate and aptly-executed take on a very specific retro sound is released on Guttural Warfare from Michigan, and there are only 55(!) copies, so you know what to do or not to do.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Guttural Warfare / Rival Mist Distro

ROTTEN HEADS – Historias Para No Dormir LP

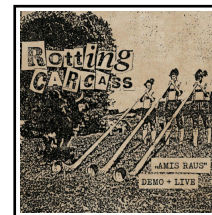


Blasting its way to the present from the past, this LP captures the output of ROTTEN HEADS, a '90s political punk outfit from Spain (not to be confused with the Mexican death metal band from a decade later). This collection exhibits the band's extremely tight overall sound, with bouncing rhythms, intricate guitar leads,

and passionately shouted male/female vocals via a spitfire delivery. *Historias Para No Dormir* brings to mind a favorite from the same era, HOMOMILITIA. If you have a soft spot for '90s crust, this will be one you won't want to miss.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Andalucia Über Alles / Collector's Series DIY / Crust as Fuck / El Forat / Entes Anomicos / Victim Entes Anomicos

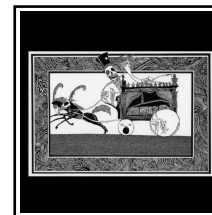
ROTTING CARCASS – Amis Raus Demo + Live LP



ROTTING CARCASS is German hardcore's best-kept secret! With a band named ROTTING CARCASS, one might think that they played grindcore, but soon one realizes that it is far from that. Not that far actually, as they were very ahead of their time and delivered some ferocious hardcore that leans more towards the faster style that was pivotal for the creation of the aforementioned genre. They seem to have disappeared after this recording, and what a shame it took so long for this demo to be dug out of its grave. The *Amis Raus* demo, originally released on tape, finally gets a vinyl edition on the A-side of this LP, while on the B-side there is a live recording from 1985. Visibly catchy hardcore punk that never loses focus or direction.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Power It Up

RUDIMENTARY PENI – Pope Adrian 37th Psychristiatric LP reissue



As I write this, the pope has died and a papal conclave is sequestered while Catholics the world over wait with bated breath for the result. In 1992, a similar transition of power occurred, although on a much more personal level. Nick Blinko, guitarist, vocalist, and visual artist for RUDIMENTARY PENI (joined by the immensely talented Grant Matthews on bass and Jon Greville on drums), experienced severe delusions to the point that he was detained in a psychiatric hospital after revealing he was ordained Pope Adrian the 37th. This experience led to a singular piece of essential punk art that is finally seeing a crucial reissue. There are two ways to absorb this record. You can drop the needle and enjoy a ripping anarcho-punk band delivering off-kilter anthems (check out the nasally vocal hook on "Il Papa Puss" and the instant earworm of "Pogo Pope"). Or you can tentatively step into the world Blinko expresses through the audio and visual translations of his delusions and appreciate a wholly formed, intensely complex piece of outsider art. Repetition is used to great effect, punctuated by an unceasing chant of "Papas Adrianus" that plays on a loop through the whole record, like even in the back-

tracks with the sufficient amount of riffage and ambience-switching to keep you hearing. Greatly surprised by this UK project, eager to hear more from them. Recommended. Favorite track: "Time Bomb."

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Quality Control HQ / Triple B

PET MOSQUITO – Village Idiot LP

Let me start by saying PET MOSQUITO is possibly one of the best band names I've seen so far. The vocals in the opening track "Village Idiot" greatly reminded me of Steve Albini in BIG BLACK, and I was immediately hooked. They've got a very funky vibe at times with a horn, but also some very classically punk moments. "Is There a Man Around?" brings a more witty and sassy edge, while "2 Flies" is short and sweet. Unique garage punk band definitely worth checking out.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: What's For Breakfast?



PISSE – Dubai LP

If you are unfamiliar with PISSE, well, here's a quick rundown. Out of Wittenau, Germany, PISSE started as Germany's darlings of garage punk over a decade ago. Time, side projects, and collaborations have mutated their sound into some of the best punk to exist in our current time, with their *Dubai* LP bringing in elements of art-punk, world music, no wave, and an absolutely unhinged aesthetic. Within the first three songs of this ten-track album, you'll be treated to samba-like rhythms, bouncing synth punk, and demented circus melodies. All that is just the beginning, as I'm pretty sure there are ping pong balls and silverware used as percussion instruments. The lyrics are all in German but are rich with various forms of humor, while the vocals range from punk shouts to something resembling Vincent Price at karaoke. This is absolutely punk for those that embrace the weird within punk, so if you like things like CRAZY SPIRIT, ALLUSION, the COLTRANES, or A FRAMES, then this is for you. Personally, I can't get enough of this one.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Phantom



PRESSURE PACT – Visions of Terror EP

Another banger from Mendeku Diskak, who seem to be battling a thousand these days. PRESSURE PACT from the Netherlands plows through five tracks of tough-as-nails hardcore. Inspired by the likes of NEGATIVE APPROACH and SSD (rest in peace, Al Barile), *Visions of Terror* sees PRESSURE PACT employ dizzying guitars ("Big City Stinks"), whiplash tempo changes ("Visions of Terror"), and very gnarly drumming (the whole damn EP). Killer stuff.

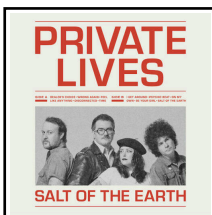
Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Mendeku Diskak



PRIVATE LIVES – Salt of the Earth LP

Another winner. This is just pure, driven, female-fronted power pop. Actually, not just power pop, also pure pop. It's also sort of plodding at times. Whatever you want to call it, it's super-catchy and the vocals (and the lyrics) are both pretty and strong. It even gets a little garage-y at times. I'm really enjoying this. The catchiest songs ("Dealer's Choice," "I Get Around") almost have you swinging your head around—not bouncing it around, but throwing it around.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Feel It



PROPAD – Žrtve Modernega Časa EP

Oozing with DESPISE YOU influence in both sound and artwork, PROPAD's second release *Žrtve Modernega Časa* goes to show that powerviolence is alive and well and living in Slovenia. It starts off with a sound collage of Oppenheimer's iconic "I am become death" speech and news snippets on the Gaza genocide and Russia-Ukraine war layered over slow, sludgy riffs. Then, it's all crushing guitars, hammering drums, and throat-ripping vocals attacking you from all sides, as you should expect. The last and longest song on the EP begins with the same relentless fury as the majority of songs, but it takes a sharp turn into their dark and gloomy side that you got a taste of at the very start. I must admit, the fact that they chose to end the record with Ulysses' final message from *Fallout: New Vegas* convinced me that I am their exact target audience. Well, I am. Sign me up.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Rope or Guillotine



EKGs – EKGs cassette

Damn, these guys are pissed. Like, really pissed. I'll tread carefully with this review, because I wouldn't want to make enemies with Pittsburgh's EKGs. Neither should you. Their 2025 self-titled cassette is an explosive display of uncontrollable rage condensed into twelve minutes of hearing damage. Relentless drums that are hell-bent on drawing blood, nasty guitar riffs drenched in ear-piercing feedback, growling bass with enough horsepower to back everything up, and one of my absolute favorite vocal performances in recent memory...this album truly has everything I want out of a hardcore release. But you know what it lacks? Anger-management. Nope, not a smidge of it to be found. This tape managed to amaze and intimidate me the way CHARLES BRONSON's *Youth Attack!* did, inarguably changing the trajectory of my taste for pissed-off music. What else could I ever want?

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Kill Enemy



EEL MEN – Stop It! Do Something. LP

Having clear influences in your sound while also sounding fresh and unique seems like a bar most bands wish to reach, yet it's often way harder to clear than it seems, even though, again, it's kind of what every band sets out to do. With *Stop It! Do Something.*, EEL MEN walk this tightrope with ease, aplomb even. This record calls to mind the JAM, SQUEEZE, early PARQUET COURTS, sure, but it simultaneously sounds uniquely itself. The guitars are punchy and angular, the vocal harmonies are effortlessly cool without coming across too slacker-y, and the drums propel these ten tracks forward with endless energy. This is all killer, no filler, but tracks like "Archetype" are a great example of all these little descriptors synchronizing like some Voltron of good taste. Perhaps the release perfectly coincides with springtime starting to bloom, but this is an easy and early candidate for one of this year's best.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Big Neck



FALSE NEGATIVE / LOST LEGION – Midwest Mouthbreathers split EP

Two cuts from LOST LEGION and three from FALSE NEGATIVE, both of whom hail from the great state of Illinois. LOST LEGION kicks things off with a speedy hardcore number that exhibits some tastefully flashy guitar work. The second song switches up the formula with a '77-style anthem with a gruff but melodic verse that almost sounds like STIFF LITTLE FINGERS. FALSE NEGATIVE seem like the real mouthbreathers here, smashing through their three selections with reckless disregard for harmony or nuance. Halfway between NEGATIVE FX and NEGATIVE APPROACH, you get FALSE NEGATIVE. Their track "Salt the Earth" is my favorite of the bunch with its shout-along chorus. Altogether, a solid outing on both accounts, living up to the rad cover art of a fire-breathing skinhead decimating a cornfield.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Plebeian / Rock 'N' Roll Disgrace



FERIDA ABERTA – Resultado da Guerra cassette

When someone mentions traditional Brazilian hardcore thrash, you instantly think of contagious energy, of punk-as-fuck aggression with super angry vocals, and of bandanas. FERIDA ABERTA seems to be a new band from São Paulo, as *Resultado da Guerra* is a tape reissue of their first LP from 2024 and their songs from the split tape with ESCORIA from the year before that. The name actually comes from a song from the legendary LOBOTOMIA, and unsurprisingly, this hardcore punk unit doesn't dick around and does rather well what it is supposed to. I am reminded of more experienced bands like ESCALPO or ODIO SOCIAL, although FERIDA ABERTA are more raw and perhaps more primitive with some crunchy tempo changes. I hadn't really listened carefully to that type of sound for a while and I have to say I quite enjoyed it, even if it does feel a little long at times. Just good, dynamic, honest metallic hardcore punk that must be very entertaining live.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Fort Evil Fruit



FIRECAMP / TYPEWRITER – split cassette

Two bands sharing a split who are two unique sides of the same coin: hardcore punk. TYPEWRITER from San Luis Obispo, California opens up the pit with their vicious, old school hardcore-influenced tunes, in the same vein as CIRCLE JERKS with a bit of a GERMS snarl thrown in there. On FIRECAMP's turn, they go for a gloomier approach to their hardcore, following the wobbly footsteps of RUDIMENTARY PENI, almost getting into deathrock territory. A great showcase of two bands with a promising future ahead of them.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Tenant



FIRST IN LINE – Connect the Dots LP

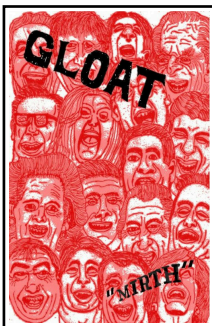
Sweden's FIRST IN LINE (F.I.L.) originally formed in the late '80s, playing in the vein of early DC hardcore before taking a break in 1999. In 2008, they picked back up where they left off and have since released two records and now their third, *Connect the Dots*. Style-wise, they haven't changed much, playing straightforward punk with obvious nods to MINOR THREAT. Overall, it's well-produced and well-played, although about halfway through, I lost interest. The album feels overly long, with songs blending together if listened to in one sitting. Not a bad album, but one I would take in small doses.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Lövely



GLOAT – Mirth cassette

This is a totally ripping introduction for this band. RAW and immediate, GLOAT reminds me of LAFFING GAS or FRIED EGG. Hard nods to Midwest USHC refracted through a modern lens. Fast and aggressive parts whiplash into catchy downshifts to mid-tempo with hooks! The vocals are delivered in a manner that has me questioning the emotional stability of the singer. Savage guitar tone, machine-tight drums, what's not to love? Proceeds go to the Lajee Center, a community-based grassroots cultural center that supports Palestinians in



their ongoing struggle for justice. Don't be a dummy, get this tape!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Richter Scale

GOLDEN SHITTERS – Brutal Planet LP

Hamilton, Ontario's GOLDEN SHITTERS deliver twelve tracks of snotty, '77-style punk that's fast, infectious, and just dirty enough to keep it fun. If you're into the MARKED MEN, you'll dig this—riff-driven, high-energy, and catchy as hell. The vocals get a little snotty at times, throwing off some SCREECHING WEASEL or QUEERS vibes, but it's the guitars that really drive the thing home. Most songs barely hit the two-minute mark, and even though tracks like "Everything Sucks" and "I Don't Wanna Live" lyrically aren't exactly sunshine and rainbows, the band's energy will put some boogie in your butt. If you like your tunes with a little attitude and a lot of energy, this band is worth your time.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Ugly Pop



GRISTLE – Maximum Power CD

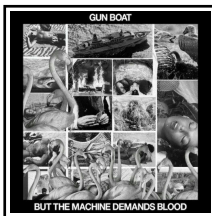
GRISTLE is a brand new band that, to me, sounds like East Coast-style late '80s/early '90s hardcore. Fast, clear vocals akin to RAW DEAL, BREAKDOWN, a little SLAPSHOT, UPPERCUT, DEADGUY, PITTBULL and the like. There are five songs on this CD that leave me wanting an LP. Look, I'm in my mid-50s and I grew up on this sound, and hearing this style again is a memory flood that is transporative in all the right ways. I don't know if this would make a top ten list, but it will certainly be something you pull out when you want to yell out and put your fist up.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Gadgie / Ill Omen



GUN BOAT – But the Machine Demands Blood LP

In a mean world, making meaner music can be a loving act. This leans into the most metallic early days of grunge while turning a corner into near-industrial rhythmic cruelty, all with echoing chaotic vocal delivery. It's an impressive package to couch one's hate for a world gone wrong for a very long time, and cathartic as hell. The riffs, bolstered by excellent production, are thick as bloody steaks and often catchy, too.

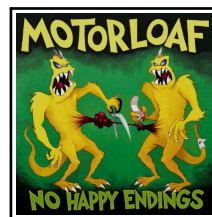


Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Destructure / Phantom

MOTOLOAF – No Happy Endings LP

This could 100% be an early No Idea Records release, and in fact, I thought it was. Like for real, though. The cover art alone looks striking like a No Idea release. The sound has all the RADON, HOT WATER MUSIC, CLAIEMEL, TILT-WHEEL, GUNMOLL, DON'S EX-GIRLFRIEND, FLUF, etc. similarities, not because it sounds like any of those bands but it vibes in that orbit. What this does have in common is great players and insightful, sarcastic, poignant lyrics, e.g. "We are a race of assholes / We deserve to be erased." I love the cover art with the lose/lose situation these two beasts find themselves in, and neither is backing down from their mutual destruction. I've listened to this all the way through three times, and not only is this on split-colored vinyl, but it also has a lyric sheet to follow along. This is the whole package in one whole package. Oh, they are from Atlanta, GA, so there's that.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Anything But Radio



NASTY – Black My Heart 12"

Boston's NASTY returns with a crushing metal-core release steeped in mid-2000s breakdowns and ultra-serious vocals, channeling early TERROR, ON BROKEN WINGS, and maybe a touch of 100 DEMONS. It's heavy, angry, and tailored for spinning in parking lots, with production that emphasizes every drop and chug. Nothing subtle here—just beatdown anthems and hate-fueled energy. Still swinging hard.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Triple B



NIGHTFEEDER – Live in Saint Etienne LP

Seattle's NIGHTFEEDER is a beast live, and this French set proves it. Captured in Saint-Étienne, it's a perfect mix of tight performance and gritty ambiance. Ferocious D-beat punk with venomous vocals, executed like it's 1986 and 2025 at the same time. For a live set, it sounds full and punchy. It's the kind of live recording that makes you wish you were there, beer in hand and earplugs forgotten. If you're into DISCHARGE, POISON IDEA, and the energy of sweaty basements, you'll want this.

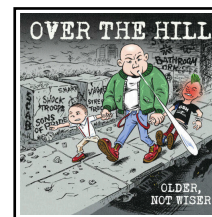


Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Kick Rock

OVER THE HILL – Older Not Wiser LP

As charming as they are self-deprecating, the cleverly-named OVER THE HILL features veterans of the scene playing straightforward Oi! with lyrics sung in French and English. Musically, this is standard fare, with few exceptions outside of the closing track "Young Again," which features some glam-y piano bits that makes the song boogie. The real entertainment value comes from the lyrics, most notably on tracks like "Can't Run," which features the gem "Next thing you know we're on the run / Bad knee kicks in and I get caught / Geriatric skins on the pavement." I'd be lying if I said some of these songs aren't a bit clunky and at times so earnest it hurts, but overall I appreciate the honesty. Also, "Conformist Pawn" calls out right-wingers, misogynists, transphobes, and racists, and for that they get my support.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Une Vie Pour Rien Vinyls



PANTANO – Es Difícil Escapar El Culto EP

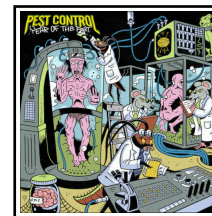
I find a specific kind of joy in listening to music that has punk in its roots but doesn't necessarily sound like punk. Mexico City's PANTANO surely falls into this category. It has punk in its DNA, but it's definitely not where it starts or ends. Chanting vocals, simple but captivating synths, and playful rhythms loosely remind me of the industrial milestone *20 Jazz Funk Greats*—minus the eerie, noisy elements—but along with that, there is a freezing coldwave atmosphere that is present throughout the record. *Es Difícil Escapar El Culto* was an interesting EP, and I'm definitely keen to hear how far they will evolve their unique sound.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: CV



PEST CONTROL – Year of the Pest 12"

Yorkshire, UK thrashcore project that's been active for at least a lustum. A solid pinch of classic '80s thrash metal in the vein of the New Wave of British Heavy Metal, but also taking a much more aggressively raw and incisive approach with the blunt force of hardcore punk during breakdowns, impasses, and in its wall of sound. A resolutely swift, blunt, and great listen; four



LEOPARDO – Side A / Side B LP

This album starts off with a beautiful, bizarre warble of a song that could have been a lost track from SWELL MAPS' 1979 opus *A Trip to Marineville*. The album takes off from there with experimental looping tape sounds, off-kilter timing, mesmerizing Dean Wareham-esque vocals, and plinky melodies reminiscent of the VASELINES. Hints of TELEVISION PERSONALITIES and PERE UBU pop in and out. I'm sure the band could and probably has drawn VELVET UNDERGROUND comparisons, but in a more focused sense, it's the vision and spirit of JOHN CALE that shines out from this unique body of work.



Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Chrüsümisi / Dot Dash Sounds

LOUD NIGHT / TAIFUN – split EP

Transatlantic head-splitting metal punk mania. LOUD NIGHT (Virginia) is full-throttle, bombastic, fist-banging metallic D-beat. Think INEPSY tinged with demonic '80s metal, dueling guitar leads, and pure power from start to finish. TAIFUN (Germany) presents as a slightly more stripped-down and "punk" animal on this release, but their modern Euro interpretation of Burning Spirits-style Japanese hardcore is still untouchable. The mid-tempo stomp "Destroyah" might be my summer anthem, even though I'm going to be banging all four of these tracks on repeat. Both bands execute flawlessly and they complement each other perfectly.



Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: No Norms / Phobia

MAGIC OF THE MARKETPLACE – Jealous Moon CD

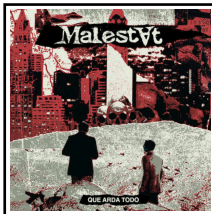
Four great songs that are fine in both execution and melody. I think this band would be okay with me drawing a LEATHERFACE comparison, and if you're good with a LEATHERFACE similarity, and a likeness to LEATHERFACE inasmuch as that songs contain emotive personal songs as do LEATHERFACE, and wherein personal journey through LEATHERFACE-styled songs are those in which you find your soul being pulled, then this is a near-perfect four-song EP that is akin to the better mid-tempo LEATHERFACE songs. You could grab it right now if you'd like to.



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Engineer / Just Say No To Government Music

MALESTAT – Que Arda Todo LP

MALESTAT wants to see everything burn! *Que Arda Todo* is the debut from this punk'n'roll band from Maresme, Spain. The riffs come at you like a freight train, very rock'n'roll-driven, almost as if channeling THIN LIZZY, and the vocals scream with pure disgust, making for a frantic but somehow catchy concoction, like a collision you can't look away from. Twenty-four minutes of energetic racket and lifted middle fingers, but always very slick and fun. Reminds me of a more raw version of ANNIHILATION TIME. If you like your punk sprinkled with some rock'n'roll attitude, then MALESTAT is the band for you.



Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: 83 Records / Aback Distribution / Broca / Carabrecol / Cruzade / DIY Koto / Diy Kontraatak / Hombre Montaña / Kinki / Kremón / Pau Gasoil

MALINFORMANTS – Central Location cassette

Politically-driven punk rock from somewhere in California. The range of song topics on this seven-song cassette seems to all be about rising rent, gentrification, poverty, and issues within the American political system. Those are undeniably things that suck. Musically, this sounds kind of like a street punk band whose vocalist has a similar barking vocal style to that of UNIFORM CHOICE, but with about half the range. There are notes of other sub-genres peppered in within the course of this cassette, including somewhat predictable modern hardcore and melodic pop punk; the latter is especially noticeable when the backing vocalist joins in the chants. A very clean, discernible, slick recording which you wouldn't necessarily expect from a band's debut tape.



Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: New Knee

MEAT SHIRT – Acid Dove 12"

There is a sort of psychedelic sheen to this sun-kissed, driving punk, with its chorus-dripping guitars and expansive sound all anchored to a full-charge beat and vocals with capital "C" conviction. This band means it while still having fun, as evidenced on tracks like the brief but outstretching anthem "War Against War," which features a glut of ideas in under two minutes. There's an artfulness to this approach to punk, but rather than bogging things down, it's also a blast to listen to from start to finish. Pretty damn impressive.



But catchy doesn't temper the anger on display here. This is righteously pissed-off, inspiringly so. A singular mission of anger that comforts an unquiet heart in the maelstrom. It even has some heady space out moments that contribute beautifully to the overall rhythm and flow, especially on the throbbing track "Cut Your Hand and I'll Cut Mine," which nearly goes full HAWKWIND. Overall, an eye-opener that satisfies right down to the teeth.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Melt City

HEAVEN'S GATE – Tales From a Blistering Paradise LP

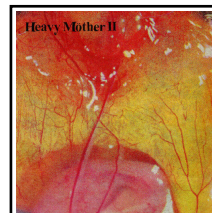
Look, if you have a proclivity for crossover thrash, extreme metal, or blistering hardcore, then you're already all over this most likely. I can't really call HEAVEN'S GATE anything other than a supergroup, which always sounds lame, but these dudes have been in bands that even your wannabe cool-guy boss has probably heard of. Like CANNIBAL CORPSE, MUNICIPAL WASTE, and WARTHOG, for fuck's sake. And, get this—they're from Florida. Somehow that makes perfect sense, 'cause this album is about as scorching as the impending nuclear summer. Do you like CRYPTIC SLAUGHTER, the ACCUSED, or any of the other bands these maniacs are in? Don't deprive yourself, ya freakin' masochist!



Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Beach Impediment

HEAVY MÖTHER II – Heavy Möther II LP

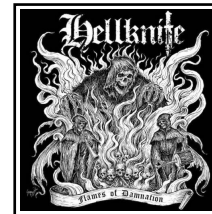
Members of the GIZMOS, RETAIL SIMPS, ROCKET FROM THE TOMBS, and more combine to, well, combine their love of countless underground rock sounds. The choice of cover tunes included in the album perfectly illustrates the oeuvre this crew tapped into—TROGGS, RANDY NEWMAN, VELVET UNDERGROUND—with their rendition of "Foggy Notion" representing both a physical centerpiece and a metaphysical one. All this is not meant to detract from the original tunes offered here, which do fit in perfectly along the others. Songs like "Window in the Door," "Couchlock," and "Red Blue Green" incorporate even more subterranean sounds of the '60s and '70s. This record is a celebration of effortless cool done effortlessly well.



Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Total Punk

HELLKNIFE – Flames of Damnation LP

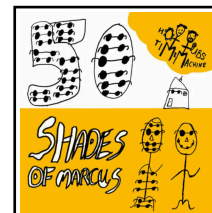
Have you ever seen the charge of a rhino? Even if the idea of first-world tourists being trampled by what is basically a living tank on a safari is not without its charm, it remains a scary sight, and the epitome of brute force and uns subtlety in the animal kingdom. HELLKNIFE is to punk what the charging rhino is to nature. The band goes straight for the throat and leaves no time to hide. The Germans have been going for a while now, and they bulldoze their way through with a heavy and aggressive blend of beefy Scandinavian hardcore and guttural death metal. I am reminded of WOLF-BRIGADE or GUIDED CRADLE going through their collection of Swedish death metal. This hits supremely hard, so much at times that it tends to exhaust the listener (my neighbours couldn't last more than two songs). *Flames of Damnation* is not for the faint-hearted, but rather for those dark days when you just feel like you hate everything and need to listen to something that reflects this and makes you believe that you are a charging rhino, too. Really good for what it sets out to do.



Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Phobia

HOT TUBS TIME MACHINE – Fifty Shades of Marcus / No Thanks, Google Maps 7"

The Melbourne/Naarm duo of Daniel and Marcus (also of LUXURY TAX) makes up HOT TUBS TIME MACHINE, and they dropped this 7" showcasing "Fifty Shades of Marcus" along with "No Thanks, Google Maps," already released on their 2021 self-titled debut cassette. These two songs follow suit with the band's lo-fi sound: vocals, synth, drum machine, and bass. The style is slow and spacious, with screwball, stream-of-consciousness lyrics that are forefront in the mix. The bass does some grooving, but otherwise this isn't music you'd move to—the synth matches the angular spirit of the spoken word vocalist, and the percussion is rarely more than a kick drum and a hand-clap. I really like the comedy aspect of this project, particularly the *Live at the Pinnacle* recording I listened to, but I feel like the studio recording leaves a little to be desired: too sparse and not enough of the personality comes through. That said, I'm not writing these guys off. Daniel and Marcus released "a treasure trove of scattered recordings from 2020 to present" on their 2024 *Food & Ruins* cassette, which has much more of a full band vibe, building on their synth-y spoken word origins. Check 'em out and you decide!



Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Spoilsport

HUMAN – Stopping Power cassette

Cassette version of an LP out on Deep Six Records. HUMAN is a powerviolence supergroup of sorts based in both California and Australia, featuring members of LACK OF INTEREST, EXTORTION, and others. Twenty-one tracks, and the tape is over in what feels like an instant. There's not a ton else to say about this. It's really solid, aggressive powerviolence. Do you like powerviolence? Well then, like me, you're sure to like this. Personally, I always think that bands of this style thrive when the recording is less polished and more scary. This recording sounds like an Ennio Morricone symphony compared to the trashcan recording of a band of similar ilk like CROSSED OUT. Maybe everyone has just gotten too good at recording aggressive music in the modern day?

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Hey Fuck You



HYPERDOG – Frog Mountain cassette

Debut full-length from HYPERDOG of Linz, Austria. The opener, “Enter The Mountain,” starts with the original PlayStation boot-up sound (can't forget that noise), followed by a sort of lovely, moody synth track, completely disorienting you from the garage-y, distorted-vocal hardcore that follows. Looking at the psychedelic album art, I thought I was going to get some southern US doomer band, but obviously looks deceive. Is that a theme here? The eleven tracks within are fast, short, and tight. Some songs yell at you, like “Cop,” while others have a playfulness, like “House on the Hill,” featuring carefree, shimmering guitars. This is the US release, with the same release available on vinyl from Swish Swash Records in Europe (slightly different album art, same vibe). Fun debut that keeps you guessing!

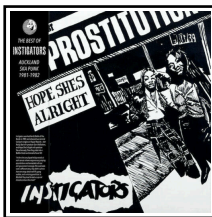
Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: XTRO



INSTIGATORS – The Best of Instigators: Auckland Ska Punk 1981–1982 LP

Compiling two classic 45s and rare live recordings, this collection from seminal 1980s New Zealand ska-punkers the INSTIGATORS paints a thorough picture of that particular place and time. Fronted by fiery nightingale Sonya Waters, this Auckland outfit was one of the hottest live acts of their era, and tracks like “Hope She's Alright” have a surprisingly fresh sound for something recorded over 40 years ago. With upbeat, synth-laden ska jams peppered with cool dub meditations, it's fully steeped in fun, old school style. Fans of the SELECTER, MADNESS, or the BODYSNATCHERS probably won't mind this a bit.

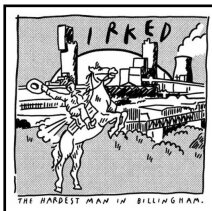
Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Leather Jacket



IRKED – The Hardest Man in Billingham EP

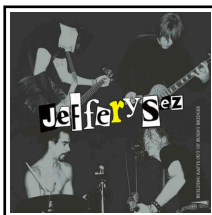
New EP from Newcastle Upon Tyne, UK group IRKED. A-side is the title track, and it starts off with a snotty guitar, the rest of the band ripping in a few bars later—kind of a AMYL & THE SNIF-FERS vibe—with dissident tones and snarly get-the-fuck-outta-my-way vocals. The B-side features two covers: first up is DAN SARTAIN's “Fuck Friday,” which they really ace, fitting perfectly into the IRKED style. The 7” concludes with SUPERCHARGER's “Sooopriize Package for Mr. Mineo,” also a well-executed, off-the-beaten-path cover that, without liner notes, I would have assumed was theirs. The band claims a debut album is on the horizon, so be on the lookout!

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Wrong Speed



JEFFERY SEZ – Building Rafts Out of Burnt Bridges LP

Another one of those albums I threw on without doing any research, so I'll let you know that my first thought was “Wow, the kids really have the '90s throwback down pat.” Turns out that—surprise—this recording is nearly 30 years old. This is like if Mark Lanegan of SCREAMING TREES sang with a little more enthusiasm and got Chad Price-era ALL to be his backing band. I'm a sucker for these Eddie Vedder baritone vocals, but I was a lot more impressed when I thought it was a bunch of people trying something “different” in the year of our lord 2025. Regardless, this is still a



solid record if you're nostalgic for the grunge era and the Clinton years.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Supreme Echo

KAPTAIN KAIZEN – Für 3 Minuten 11 LP

On their third album *Für 3 Minuten 11*, Mannheim, Germany's KAPTAIN KAIZEN rip through ten tracks of melodic punk rock with emo and indie influences, all played with a fired-up intensity that keeps the whole thing moving forward. The title tips its hat to the pop song attention span, and most of these tunes land right in that neighborhood. The musicianship and vocals are solid, though they mostly ride in the same lane the whole time. The songs feel fun, urgent, and sincere—sometimes like a less aggressive, later-period LA QUIETE. I don't speak German, but the album's Bandcamp page says they're singing about political fakery, media spin, and colonial messes, which gives the whole thing some real weight under all that catchy energy.

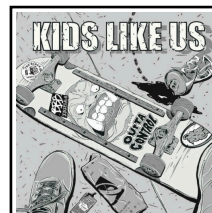
Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: This Charming Man



KIDS LIKE US – Outta Control LP

KIDS LIKE US from North Florida formed in 2003 after the demise of XONE FIFTHX, releasing three full-length albums and two splits, and touring alongside bands like DOWN TO NOTHING. They've been around! Originally released in 2005, *Outta Control* is a twenty-minute straightedge spin-kick to the head that sees a long-awaited reissue. Not my cup of tea, but it will appease all the X'ed-up mosh maniacs out there. Get in the pit or get out of the way.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Triple B



KILLER COUTURE – Everything is Normal CD

Sacramento rivetheads KILLER COUTURE answer the question “What if Mick Gordon played guitar for SKINNY PUPPY?” with their 2024 album *Everything is Normal*. Extra down-tuned guitars, heavily processed vocals, harsh drum machine beats, cold synths, and a good amount of miscellaneous noise—from what I assume is a filthy garage full of rusty power tools—show that they've been carefully studying the works



of their influences from various eras of industrial music. Although it's modern in the way that it's all put together, it feels like the sum of *Hot Wired Monstertrux*, with its stylistic nods to the giants of the genre. Al Jourgensen would be proud.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: self-released

KILLING FROST – Years in Permafrost: Recordings 2021–2024 LP

From what must be the most frigid Finnish wasteland emerges KILLING FROST, delivering a thrash metal/hardcore mash-up that feels like a frozen hammer smack to the dome. *Years in Permafrost* cobbles together their demo, EP, and some extra gems onto a convenient 12” slab. Expansive and epic forays with soaring solos, melodic backing vocals, and synth are juxtaposed with driving metal punk with Scandinavian-inspired riffs. CELTIC FROST bears an undeniable influence, but there is an obvious love for DISCHARGE as a counterweight. If you like metal in your hardcore, this is certainly worth a look. I'm hoping this is a prelude to a proper full-length.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Mendeku Diskak



LAST BIAS – The Sea Hates a Coward LP

Dang, dude! *The Sea Hates a Coward* is a time machine of sound and character that has transported me back to the mid-1990s, in a good way. From the first song “I'm Not Down,” I was back in a basement, sweating through the fabric of a double extra-large T-shirt (because everyone wore clothes too big for their spongy body back then). Think of CARBOMB, ASS-FACTOR 4, MOHINDER, MUKILTEO FAIRIES, the YAH MOS, and so on when the needle drops. These songs blend melody and disorder in equal parts while still making this musically fresh and relevant. I couldn't be happier for this release, and you should not be happier, too.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Twistworthy

