



# MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #505

JUNE 2025

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## MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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<https://www.maximumrocknroll.com/review/issues/mrr-505/>

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This issue contains 117 reviews, contributed by:

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Seth McBurney	Nick Odorizzi
Mama Goblin	João Seixas
Bill Chamberlain	Ben Marshall
Gonza Perez	Tim Janchar
Robert Collins	Kenny Kaos
D. Gregory	Jeff Cost
Luke Henley	Alex Howell
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## THE COUNTERFORCE

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

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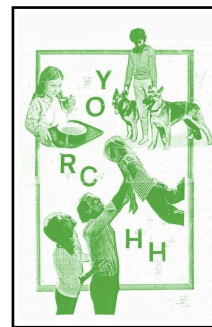
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## YORCHH – Sólo Me Falta Un Plan casette

I should probably be paying more attention to this Valencia-based label and the surrounding scene they're documenting. I've enjoyed the handful of Flexidiscos releases that I've come across, but that handful only represents something like 5% of their entire back catalog. Then in looking into this project, I find that the dude behind it, Néstor Sevillano Barja, is in a ton of other bands I've never heard of: BRIGADA, COREA, LA CULPA, FUTURO TERROR, MORENAS. So, yeah, it seems like I've only scratched the surface of quite the fertile scene! Anyway, YORCHH is Néstor's solo project, and *Sólo Me Falta Un Plan*, the act's fifth or sixth cassette, is composed of nine one-minute-ish sketches (plus two demos) that touch on minimal post-punk, gothy synth-pop, and clanky industrial punk. The arrangements are lo-fi and austere, generally made up of nothing more than a cheap synth melody, minimal bass guitar (or sometimes the bass will provide the melody against a synthewash backdrop), a skeletal electronic beat (maybe just a keyboard preset, even), and Néstor's earnest voice, which he often strains to keep in tune, reminding me a bit of Ian MacKaye at his gentlest. It's all quite charming, and he's able to wrench a lot out of very little, which is exactly what you'd want out of a project like this. I really loved it. Further evidence that cool shit is happening in the southeast of Spain!

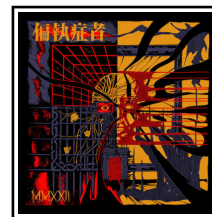
Reviewer: Alex Howell  
Label: Flexidiscos



## 偏執症者 (PARANOID) – MMXXII LP

偏執症者 (or PARANOID) is the definitive Swedish hardcore punk band for our contemporary ears. With the owner/operator of D-Takt & Råpunk Records, Joakim Staaf-Sylsjo, as their leader, 偏執症者 creates blistering guitar leads, full-speed D-beat blasts, and heavy chug sessions. *MMXXII* was first released a few years ago as a digital album, but now thanks to Beach Impediment Records out of Richmond, Virginia, physical copies can easily be had. Complete with artwork by Joe BB on the cover and an exceptional fold-out poster, this issuance of *MMXXII* is definitely something special.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Beach Impediment

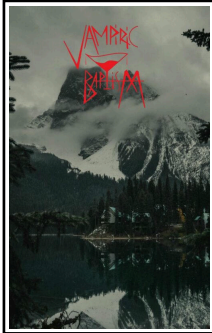


What's all that feedback, shouting, and random guitar soloing in the last thirty seconds? All that aside, this is a decent little EP with some humor attached in the laborious description of the plastic and paper that were sourced for the cassette, as well as the "Limited (500,000) Cassette" line on the Bandcamp page. For a taste of something way left of the dial, try out VAGUE FUGUE.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk  
Label: Lavish Deathstyle

## VAMPIRIC BAPTISM – Vampiric Baptism cassette

One-man black metal action out of Tennessee. Really solid stuff, and very impressive that this is just one dude, sans the operatic vocals on "War Garden." That's only just a guess, though. It could potentially be the same guy! This is your standard black metal affair, but there are a couple tracks that reach outside of the genre, such as "Blood Sucker" which sounds like it came straight from the *Matrix* soundtrack. Great, bloodcurdling vocals; raw and natural without any additional effects, minus reverb. The album closes on a really lovely acoustic rendition of "War Garden." Highly recommended for all fans of the grim and frostbitten



Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Tennessee Cold Cuts

## WEATHERWISE – Demos cassette

The vocals remind me of one of the singers from the band ALL, and a different singer reminds me of one of the singers from the ARRIVALS. Musically, I feel like there is way too much going on in these songs for it to be interesting. Maybe I have to be driving in the wee hours of the morn blasting this for the two-hundredth time, knowing all the changes in the music and the yell parts and such. This is a complicated demo to talk about because it pulls from all the great punk, indie, emo, mosh, and metal things that are loved, but hovers an atom's width under delivering something memorable. Maybe like a PLANES MISTAKEN FOR STARS kinda thing. I'm not familiar with this style of emo-pop, change-heavy, almost-exciting style. "Sticks & Stones May Break My Bones (But My Actions Will Haunt Me Forever)" is my favorite song on here, with the straightforward structure ringing in an AGAINST ME! and THIS BIKE IS A PIPE BOMB vibe. I'm interested to see how this band evolves.

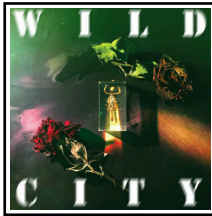


Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: Tennessee Cold Cuts

## WILD CITY – Alchemist Junkyard LP

You know the phenomenon in nature where an animal uses bright coloration or other means to advertise that it's best not to fuck with them—think a poison dart frog or blue-ringed octopus? I had to look it up; it's apparently called aposematism. But, in retrospect, it's something I should have kept in mind as I picked up this LP. Its garish sleeve, the awful album title, the generic-ass band name, its unironic billing as a "rock'n'roll" record, the fact that the band has been around since 2018 and this is the first I'm hearing of them—it all screamed, "Dude, don't, it's gonna be a bad time!" Yet, I heeded none of these warnings. Instead, I focused on the fact that the act was out of Melbourne, a city which has given the world countless incredible bands, and just assumed it was all going to be fine. And initially it was. The first couple of tracks maybe feature some not great lyrics, but they otherwise kind of sound like the BLACK LIPS at their GUN CLUB-iest, which is cool enough. But then there's "Silver to Gold," which is more of a hard-rockin' number, something like a blander take on what GOLDEN PELICANS were doing a decade ago, with lyrics that sort of invert the themes of the Girl Scouts' "Make New Friends" via one of the clunkiest hooks I've ever heard (seriously, you'll have to go listen to it because it's too wordy to write out here). But as bad as all that is, it's not what sinks this record for me. At about two-and-a-half minutes into the song, the band slows things down to a crawl, and the singer says "Alright motherfuckers, let's turn this shit up!" then bites his lower lip (I assume!) while the band launches into an instrumental breakdown that's so farty that it sounds tailor-made to score a Toyota Tundra commercial circa 2005. It's maybe one of the worst moments I've had to sit through in all my time reviewing records for *MRR*. To be honest, the rest of the record wasn't terrible...at least from what I can remember. But it's all a blur after the sting of track three. It might have sounded like a bar band covering the SCIENTISTS' "Blood Red River." I don't know. I should have known to stay away!

Reviewer: Alex Howell  
Label: self-released



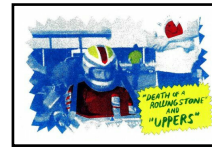
## ADDED DIMENSIONS / ALMOND – Up-pers / Death of a Rolling Stone split cassette

This is a split released between two Philly, PA and Richmond, VA-related bands—ADDED DIMENSIONS is the Richmond-based project of Sarah Everton and Rob Garcia, previously of Philadelphia bands like BLOWDRYER, TELEPATHIC, and READING RAINBOW. ALMOND is from Philly and features Armen Knox of local darlings HONEY RADAR (who used to live in Richmond!), but has flown entirely under my radar (LOL) until now despite putting out a bunch of digital releases and spending a lot of time retweeting RINGO STARR. ALMOND's side is an eighteen-minute live set of what I can only assume is a conceptual "suite" about the death of either Brian Jones or Charlie Watts. Honestly, I couldn't understand the words, but the sound is very fuzzy, droning, and blown-out garage-y rock'n'roll-y, with a psychedelic feel. It reminds me of bands like the GRIFTERS and GLORIUM and, frankly, HONEY RADAR. ADDED DIMENSIONS sound a little more lo-fi than on their previous releases (but not as lo-fi as ALMOND), and there's a Farisa on the absolute banger "Repetition." But other than that, it's more of the same trebly, anxious '90s post-punk revival/C86 sound with blasé, almost chanted vocals that sometimes edge into something a little more intense. Lyrics are focused on the push and pull between internal and external expectations we have for ourselves and others. Everton is a killer songwriter and every track on here is a catchy gem, with simple sounds but complex ideas. And the tape benefits the Transgender Law Center—the Trump administration has made trans people into one of its main out-groups to be demonized, with absolutely no pushback from anyone in national politics. I can think of few causes that are more important right now than protecting trans people from legal attacks on their very existence as their authentic selves in society. Just a couple of weeks ago, Marcy Rheintgen, a trans woman, was arraigned in Florida on charges that could result in eleven months in prison for washing her hands in a public bathroom. This shit is real, and props to these bands for trying to do something about it.

Reviewer: Rachel Courtney  
Label: self-released

## AGEN 53 – Spätgeburten LP

Killer grip of newly unearthed mid-'80s punk from Verden, Germany's AGEN 53. The first eleven cuts are studio recordings captured toward the tail end of the band's existence in 1985, followed by some live performances and a handful of demo tracks. Stylistically scattershot, the tunes range from bouncy '77-inspired punk with a smattering of post-punk elements throughout. Some songs are jangly and melodic, but they'll also whip around to a tougher,



proto-hardcore approach that exhibits a penchant for aggression and fury. A little something for everyone, this collection makes for a solid introduction to a proficiently eclectic band.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Power It Up

## ALDI OST – Lost in Cyberspace EP

Punk/HC band from Bremen, Germany. I liked how they balance faster-tempo and more classically punk songs like "Overload" with more unique, kinda funky riffs in "Boss =/ Friend." While "Overload" wasn't as captivating to me stylistically, I did enjoy the build that they had in other tracks like "State of the Reunion." My favorite track though was "Rug," as it was just an explosion of frantic energy. I also loved how unleashed the vocalist for that track is, and I hope they can do more vocals in the future.

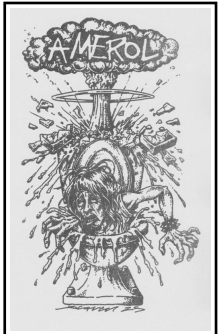
Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Sabotage



## AMEROL – Amerol demo cassette

This world is shit, and AMEROL is the cure. Side effects may include: inability to control bodily movements, tinnitus, and profuse sweating. AMEROL, from Perth, plays '80s-inspired hardcore punk and reminds me of SOOKS, but with a bit more ferocity and grime. The demo includes six tracks that are nasty, dirty, and packed with quick, intricate twists.

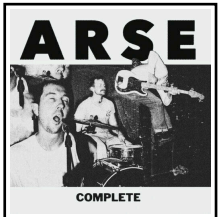
Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Helta Skelta



## ARSE – Complete Arse LP

Australian punk/dark punk band. Absolutely loved these guys. They had powerful fast tempo tracks like "Prick in The Franger," a bit more of a post-punk vibe in tracks like "Infinite Sedative," and a kind of in-between with fun bridges in tracks like "Who Comes Next." With great distorted bass lines, varying fun guitar, and angry, intense vocals, you're in for a treat. Even the slower tempo songs are filled with intensity and power.

Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Erste Theke Tonträger





### AUFRUHR ZUR LIEBE – 3 x 3 = Nein LP

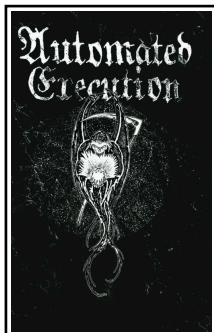
According to the label's bio—which is the source of everything I know about this release— AUFRUHR ZUR LIEBE was only active from 1983 to 1986 in East Germany, and none of these recordings had been issued on vinyl or CD before. So, it'd be fair to say that listening to 3 x 3 = *Nein* feels like opening up a time capsule from an ancient, isolated civilization. Upon hearing the hypnotizing, shamanistic atmosphere of the first two tracks, I was ready to buckle up for an hour of dissociating in minimal synth soundscapes. But all of a sudden, it threw me a solid curveball with a shift to a more guitar-heavy post-punk sound. Then another with abrasive, cathartic no wave with the help of some saxophones, then another with more conventional rock'n'roll...but I don't think the lack of coherence in sound is a big deal, considering the fact that the label stayed true to the original track lists on this compilation album. If anything, it's a very unique and intimate experience to listen to a band lost in time, experimenting to find its voice in a different era, in a different place.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin  
Label: Aufnahme + Wiedergabe

### AUTOMATED EXECUTION – Automated Execution cassette

AUTOMATED EXECUTION from Austin, Texas brings us some raw D-beat hardcore punk with growling vocals, guitar that is on the attack, and drums and bass that really hammer the point home. Most of the songs hit you hard and are over in one to one-and-a-half minutes. This is a really good demo tape. The band is fully formed and plays as a cohesive unit. Raw hardcore sounds better to me than overproduced slick punk played by people trying to make it big; this is real punk.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: self-released



### AXEFEAR – Prophetic End 12"

Seattle's AXEFEAR churn out a bleak and pummeling 12" that mixes the brutality of death metal with the apocalyptic howl of crust punk. Think early DEVIATED INSTINCT meeting MEMENTO MORI-era doom metal, but with a tighter modern production. Tracks like "Doomed Species" and "Genocide Pulse" hit like war anthems from a scorched earth, and while it's heavy on tropes, the execution is precise and ruthless. Powerful blend of apocalyptic hardcore with classic Scandinavian D-beat undercurrents. Guttural vocals, buzzsaw guitars, and lyrics drenched in end-times paranoia. A brutal, well-produced slab of war noise.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Archaic

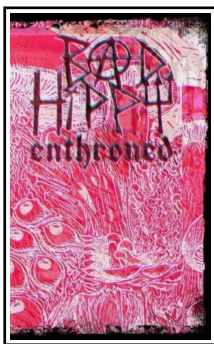
### BAD HIPPIY – Enthroned cassette

Fukkkk, this thing sounds ugly. Disgusting sonic filth from Tennessee, BAD HIPPIY sounds like those four high school classmates who started a band because they were the only four mutants in town and they bonded. One liked primitive black metal, another grooved to DOWN or some shit like that, one fucked with CRAZY SPIRIT, and the singer was the little brother of one of the guys in ASSCHAPEL...or maybe his kid. They had a buddy with a Tascam four-track, they traded the session for a twelver of Busch they paid some bum \$5 to steal for them, and the result was *Enthroned*. That's my fukkn story and please don't prove me wrong. The sound? Fucking raw-as-shit, demonic, low-end sinister sludge crust stoner punk churns—this is to some kid in 2025 Tennessee what BUZZOV-EN's *Wound* was to me in 1992 (at least I hope it is).

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: Tennessee Cold Cuts

### BARREN? – Once Upon a Death... Our National Industry LP

BARREN? is a Parisian anarcho-punk band that has been playing and recording together for nearly a decade. Recently, the band released the full-length *Once Upon a Death... Our National Industry*—if you like things like the MOB circa *No Doves Fly Here*, you'll definitely dig BARREN? Much of the album contains the band's signature mid-paced style which allows



### TIGER HELICIDE – Species of Concern CD

Twisted hardcore that rouses punk'n'roll and even some sounds from BLACK FLAG's darker progressive eras, right from the paranoid corners of the mind. TIGER HELICIDE builds songs like home-made noise bombs—ugly, shaky, and ready to explode. Filtered vocals, caveman drums, and riffs that dissolve in acid. Punk from a broken lab. Six tracks, endless threat.

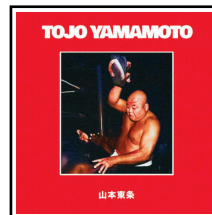
Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Murder Boy Music



### TOJO YAMAMOTO – 山本東条 10"

Named after a legendary wrestler, Kentucky's TOJO YAMAMOTO welcomes you to a world of body slams, headlocks, and, uh...karate chops? Okay, you got me. I don't know shit about wrestling. But if it's as fun and engaging as this record is, I'm more than willing to give it a try. Because this whole thing sounds like a demolition derby of speaker-blowing guitars, earth-shattering bass, and slamming drums. And on top of all that wreckage, a super-energetic singer—who sounds like he might explode at any moment—is doing his victory pose for the bloodthirsty masses. If you're a fan of gnarly riffs, synth Velcro fuzz, and controlled chaos, the self-titled 10" from TOJO YAMAMOTO is the perfect way to spend fifteen minutes.

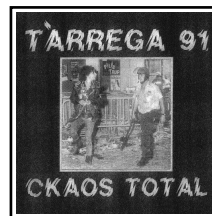
Reviewer: Mama Goblin  
Label: Forbidden Place



### TÀRREGA 91' – Ckaos Total 12"

This is an absolute bulldozer of a record! D-beat, but this isn't just another D-beat band. They sound like there is a lot of passion behind the songs. Passion and anger. At times, they remind me of early era ANTI-CIMEX, MOB 47, and many of the 1980s hardcore punk bands from Scandinavia, but with better production than many of them. The last song is a total D-beat rocker that DISCHARGE would have been proud to have written. What a way to end this album. It hasn't been far from my turntable since the day I got it.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus



### ULTIMATE DISASTER – For Progress... 12"

This is an impressive record. It makes me wonder what it would sound like if DROPDEAD put out a D-beat album. I bet it would sound something like this. Fast, well-played hardcore with some very big hooks. I'm looking forward to catching them live at Skull Fest this August. Great sound, well-played and attention-grabbing. This is a record I will listen to quite a bit.

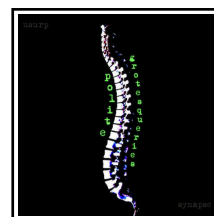
Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: Grave Mistake / Kick Rock



### USURP SYNAPSE – Polite Grotesqueries 10"

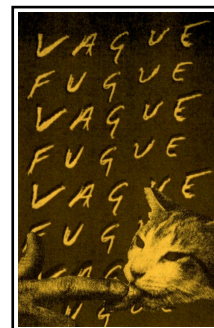
Legendary Indiana-based screamo outfit USURP SYNAPSE resurfaces with *Polite Grotesqueries*, a vinyl reissue of their Ass//Ass cassette originally released on Zegema Beach. Criminally overlooked compared to their early-'00s peers, the band delivers technical, aggressive, and unpretentious art-noise that calls to mind early DAUGHTERS, RACEBANNON, or a less perfect the LOCUST. Cramming a handful of minute-long panic attacks between a couple of two-minute epics, this EP may come off slightly more restrained than some of the scorched-earth chaos from their heyday (collected on the excellent 2003 compilation *Disinformation Fix*), but I don't think they've ever sounded this good on record. Whatever they've been doing during their extended vanishing act, I'm not about to question it when the results slap this hard. Welcome back, you beautiful chaos demons.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost  
Label: Council



### VAGUE FUGUE – Vague Fugue cassette

Solo project of Nathan Loud from Portland, Oregon. Scuzzy guitars, slappy drums, distorted vocals, and phone-call-quality samples; a lo-fi dirge born in the basement, destined for the crappy cassette player in yours. The music finds a tension between droning guitar lines paired with largely unrecognizable lyrics (thank you for providing printed lyrics) and faster sections of psych-drenched hardcore. "Make Them" comes out as the gem for me, with a catchier chorus than the rest and solid riffing—but then end the fucking song!



## THE NERVE – Self Autopsy LP

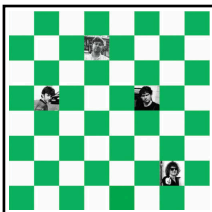
Dug up and delivered by trusty rescuers of fringe sounds Supreme Echo, this record collects six tracks with warped 1970s hard rock sensibilities from the NERVE, who are touted here as Edmonton, Alberta's "first punk band." Led by the heavy, guitar-noodled instrumental title track, the first couple of songs run together in an eccentric proto-punk swirl before landing on the chugging new-wavery of "Penchant," the A-side from the band's sole 7" release from 1978. Next up is the standout "Preludes," whose airy strum and vocal cadence evoke a subtle and pleasant prog/yacht rock vibe. "Tie Me Up" and "\$20 Whore" are the feistiest numbers, the former recalling the toughest tunes of the EAGLES and the latter a bizarre power pop synthesis of the NEW YORK DOLLS and the GIZMOS. Of the many adjectives you could reasonably slap on this thing, "boring" or "predictable" are not among them. It's far out, man.



Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Supreme Echo

## THE NUMBER ONES – Sorry / Blind Spot 7"

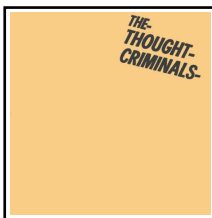
Here's your song(s) of the summer. After around seven years, the mighty NUMBER ONES have returned with two tracks that show you exactly how power pop should be done. Given the time since their last release, it reasons that this may be many people's first foray into the band. So for the uninitiated, think of the classic slabs from Good Vibrations, your favorite BUZZCOCKS singles, or falling in love with the girl on a certain Manchester Megastore checkout desk. Side A is two minutes of pop perfection. The word "sorry" has surely been used an uncountable number of times by an uncountable number of bands, but these Dubliners make it sound like a newly discovered feeling. Side B is no slouch either, providing another earworm that you're happy to play host to for as long as it decides to stay in your brain. Well worth the wait, and still true to their name, this is a scorching hot two-sider.



Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: Static Shock

## THE THOUGHT CRIMINALS – Hilton Bomber EP reissue

One of the most clearly UK-indebted acts of Australia's early punk wave, Sydney's THOUGHT CRIMINALS took the DESPERATE BICYCLES' "it was easy, it was cheap, go and do it" rallying cry to heart, starting the Doublethink label to self-release their own ramshackle, slightly art-leaning proto-Bloodstains/Messthetics racket (and eventually that of OZ DIY peers like TACTICS and SEEMS TWICE), with the Hilton Bomber EP serving as the introduction to both ventures. I would wager that the BUZZCOCKS' *Spiral Scratch* EP was also a foundational THOUGHT CRIMINALS text—Howard Devoto gets a shout-out in the original insert for this single, a few lines down from the aforementioned DESPERATE BICYCLES—which is most evident in the revved-up and hooky "Fun," not to mention its snarky, tongue-in-cheek lyrics that were *already* mocking punk clichés in 1978 ("I want to go out in a garbage bag / I want to come home all covered in rags"). "Hilton Bomber" careens with the frantic efficiency of WIRE circa *Pink Flag* (wait for that abrupt, punctuated ending shout!), albeit with an added layer of blaring, Nuggets-damaged organ, and "O Bleak TV" and the Virgin Records-dissing "I Won't Pay" ("...for punk records") are more classically snotty stompers for the KBD fiends of the future. If you pay for punk records, this one's worth forking over some cash.



Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth  
Label: Breakout / Doublethink

## THE VANCOOTHES – Hello World LP

From the Netherlands (now Belgium), this female-fronted power pop band sounds like it could have been released by the Subway Organization record label that gave us bands like the FLATMATES and the SHOP ASSISTANTS. This has those same soft and pretty voices featured by those bands. The songs are upbeat and to the point, meaning they're not too long. Fucking great record, even when they find the synthesizer.



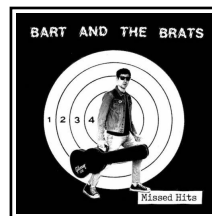
Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Certified PR

for additional elements of expression and denser compositions. An embrace of the darker elements of anarcho-punk means BARREN? also uses elements of goth and post-punk, and this is on full display in tracks like "Take Them By Storm" and "Our Brains Are a Warzone." Frequent use of harmony and gang vocals also gives many of the songs an anthemic quality which tempers the melancholic elements. In all, *Once Upon a Death... Our National Industry* is an exceptional release from an excellent band.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Les Choeurs De l'Ennui / Symphony of Destruction

## BART AND THE BRATS – Missed Hits LP

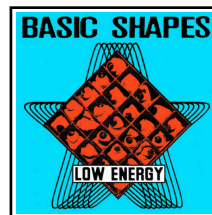
Solid, solid, solid garage punk out of France, delivered by the Nashville, TN-based Sweet Time Records. Bringing to mind some of the best-energy QUEERS records, *Missed Hits* delivers eleven snotty tracks, most of them around two-and-a-half minutes or less, as it should be. There are some great sing-alongs to be found throughout the track list, with standout "Fascist Cops" being a particular earworm. But for me, BART and his amis are at the top of their game on the lone French track, "Mauvais Polar," where the energy feels even more urgent, and the guitars sound even more like buzzsaws. It's a long journey from La Rochelle to Nashville, but it's great that these tunes travel so well.



Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: Sweet Time

## BASIC SHAPES – Low Energy LP

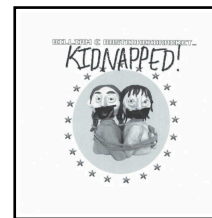
What a bait and switch. This album kicks off with a noise rock groove, setting my expectations for something that mines the '90s for dark, syrupy riffs, before yanking away the rug and showcasing a pretty snappy hook-laden grip of garage punk cuts. This hits nicely on the ear, keeping it tight where it counts and then blooming riffs into big hooks with plenty of abandon. The French act veers into some nice and pointy post-punk structures à la GANG OF FOUR, but always drives it back to a melodic soaring spirit. In some ways, this record reminds me of the heyday of the HIVES, but with a DIY heart beating in its chest. I'm all for that, and would be pogoing my dumb ass off at one of their shows.



Reviewer: Luke Henley  
Label: Crapoulet / Teenage Hate

## BILLIAM / BUSTED HEAD RACKET – Kid-napped! EP

I loved how these guys pushed the limits of electronic-y, punky sound. "Have A Panic Attack With BBHR" is witty, fast, and punky, but quickly devolves into utter chaos and explosion. I loved it. Throughout the EP, the lyrics were sharp and matched the uptempo energy of electronic, distorted chaos. I felt on edge the whole time, so good.



Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Goodbye Boozy

## BLAMMO / RIBOFLAVIN – split LP

Excellent split record from two Atlanta bands with shared members and similar slacker indie meets Swiss punk influences. The track listing volleys back and forth between bands, but the laid-back art-punk vibes remain the same, with BLAMMO more on the LILIPUT and CHIN CHIN influence side, while RIBOFLAVIN evokes a slightly atonal, shambolic PAVEMENT via K Records feel. It's a great lo-fi indie punk record that flows perfectly and manages to capture an uplifting and timeless nostalgic mood without feeling contrived or corny. Not an easy feat, and both bands do it really well.



Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: State Laughter

## BLANKET OF M – Finger Forest CD

Solid garage rock out of East Texas; this is what I would consider true-to-heart RAMONES-core. It doesn't come off as gimmicky nor sticky-sweet the way other players of the genre are wont to be. Instead this is some raw, downstroking, honest-to-God rock'n'roll. For a trio, this band sounds huge. Your standard power chord affair, it's the vocals that really do it for me—heavily layered, a little off-key, but nonetheless catchy. My only complaint is that this slab is over too soon! No joke. I was disappointed when I hit the end, as I was promptly returned to our bleak reality.



Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Hey Fuck You



## BLOCKAGE – I Owe You Everything CD

charming while congruently being heartbreaking. For me, I sometimes forget about the RAMONES and the impact they had on me, and the shape of their impact on everything I like about myself and the people I love and value. RAMONES songs, with their simplicity, helped the left-of-center folks find others like us. BLOCKAGE does not back away from their RAMONES love, but there are also elements of the early-to-mid-period MR. T EXPERIENCE when Jon Von brought in those garage guitar riffs and solos. The second tune, still with the RAMONES feel, seems to also bring a couple grams of ALL songs, after Dave Smalley left. "Filthy," the last track on this CD, is very upbeat musically, and lyrically starts in the morning sun but quickly trots down of mineshaft lit only by a candle in one hand with a mirror in the other so that as you plunge into darkness, you only see your own stupid face in front of you. This band was born in L.A. and now is in NYC, so there ya go.

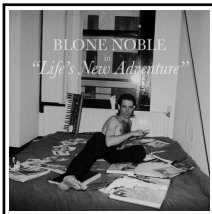
Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: self-released



## BLONE NOBLE – Life's New Adventure LP

Debut LP from Los Angeles-based BLONE NOBLE, the brainchild of Pat Salway, pictured on the album cover. I imagine this is going to be something you love or hate—the featuring of this release in MRR may have inner critics and readers alike wondering if this falls into the “punk-adjacent” category at all. Prefaces aside, *Life's New Adventure* is a dark, moody, synth-driven self-exploration on vinyl. Describing his genre as “doomsday disco,” referenced from the *Post-punk.com* article on the band, makes for an on-point description. I hear similarities to fellow L.A.-ers COBRA MAN (following the disco thread), with the vocal saturation and broodiness of ORVILLE PECK. I also hear shades of JONATHAN RICHMAN on “Cosmic Ghetto,” with spoken word verses and shouted choruses. In addition to the spiky, haunting synth, a drum kit and drum machine keep a simple, slow beat while bass lines slap, bounce, and give way to that disco groove, with guitar lines taking a backseat in the mix. For me, genre squabbling aside, I really like this. It's both moody and driving and somehow...fun? Sure, it's a throwback to '70s and '80s disco, glam, synth—especially watching the VHS-quality music video for “Weapon of Love” from a previous release—but what isn't some homage or amalgamation of sounds these days? Try it out and you decide.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk  
Label: Industry Standards



## BOOMSTICK – Adorable Party Monster CD

Shout out to the *Army of Darkness* reference. Slightly tongue-in-cheek, slightly political punk with a thrash edge, as if one of the early Fat Wreck bands like GOOBER PATROL started playing through a Metal Zone. I'm partial to the vocalist, as they really tie everything together—very charismatic, sounding like a combination of Greg Graffin of BAD RELIGION and Richard Butler of PSYCHEDELIC FURS fame. Catchy stuff; I had their song “Throw Rocks at Nazis” stuck in my head all day. My only complaint: I don't know how many more times I can handle hearing the Jeff Daniels *Newsroom* monologue sampled on a punk record. You know the one I'm talking about. It's been done to death, and it's way too long. Otherwise, this deserves a couple spins.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: self-released



## BROKEN BARCODES / FERAL HOUSECATS – Runnin' Wild in the Streets of Columbus split 10"

BROKEN BARCODES has nothing groundbreaking here, but oh my golly, is this catchy! I'm certain that their shows are a bunch of pals jumping around and singing along. All the catchiness of the EGRS, STEINWAYS, HOUSEBOAT, DIRT BIKE ANNIE, and LOST LOCKER COMBO. I get the feeling that these guys are best friends and their kids or dogs or cats proly have play dates together while they play behind a warehouse or at the bass player's aunt's retirement party. This is the best way to do pop punk as an adult, wherein you abandon all the songs about crushes (because it gets creepy when you're no longer under twenty) and dive headfirst into the silly, fun, everyday stuffs. FERAL HOUSECATS, with their terrifying band name, hit just as hard, but they pull their silliness from late '70s and early '80s Ohio à la DEVO-esque B-sides, RUBBER CITY REBELS, PAGANS, or BALONEY HEADS. FERAL HOUSECATS, still a very terrifying name, continue to impress with a charming, inept quality that is almost hypnotic and always on the cusp of falling apart. Both of these bands complement each other very well, and I wish there was a way I could make them my friends and make them want to drive to Northern Michigan and play in a forest near me for the squirrels and deers and me and such.

Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: Ordinary Morning



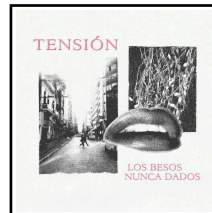
bopping, oompa-oompa cowpunk. T.A.C.K. finally follows up their debut five-song cassette with something more substantial, a whopping eleven tracks, each as trashy as the next. I find every song on this cassette incredibly catchy, and as a live band, T.A.C.K. is wildly commanding and entertaining.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Knuckles on Stun

## TENSIÓN – Los Besos Nunca Dados 7"

With a slew of releases over the past decade, TENSIÓN, of Rosaria, Argentina, keeps after it with a new single. Well-dialed post-punk on offer here, with soaring vocals that aren't overly sentimental in feel, but are powerful and draped in reverb. Drums and bass stay busy, really pumping tracks along, while guitars play sweeping chords and quick notes that sustain over verse lines, the whole lot finding full momentum at the end of the opener “Hacia el Oeste” which is one big crescendo. B-side “Un Llamado a tu Bonadad” has a bouncier gait, with plodding, chunky guitars, and vocals that are lighter and more carefree than the first track. From the album artwork, overall aesthetic (looking back at previous releases), and a locked-in post-punk handbook sound, they've got me sold.

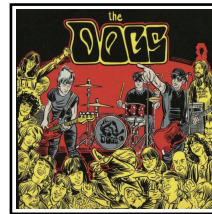
Reviewer: Willis Schenk  
Label: Discos Asalto



## THE DOGS – Inside Out / Nothin' to Do in Detroit 7"

Famous for their much-covered, half-of-fame single “Slash Your Face,” the DOGS from Detroit (not to be confused with DOGS from France or the DOGS from Iowa) are still out here rocking more than 40 years later, being badasses, playing shows, and putting out this old school, big-hole 45. On the A-side, “Inside Out” is a STOOGES-esque punk rock'n'roll stomper, and on the flip, “Nothin' to Do in Detroit” is more in the vein of the MC5. The sound is big, the production is clean and lean, and the Motor City style remains intact.

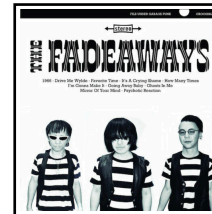
Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: I-94



## THE FADEAWAYS – The Fadeaways LP

The FADEAWAYS have been serving up garage rock right for two decades, and really have never needed to tweak the formula too much. Their latest is formalistic and somewhat orderly, but with enough sneer and grit to send it home. The drums are lovingly blown-out, as are the vocals, and the fuzz is there but not so shaggy as to get in the way of tightly-arranged tracks that get to the core of what's still satisfying about rock'n'roll all these decades in. The FADEAWAYS aren't running out of steam any time soon, so neither should you.

Reviewer: Luke Henley  
Label: Groovie



## THE HELL – Cut the Cord EP

Snarling like a puzzled panther, the HELL lurches through five slices of driving hardcore punk hostility. Harkening back to Cleveland classic (spin age) blasters like ELEC-TRIC EELS or the PAGANS, this is just the kind of seething punk I wanna hear. When nothing else in the world makes sense, snotty, nihilistic hardcore does. Razor-sharp guitars cut through to the front of the mix with riffs that would make Pat Smear blush. Four concise rippers occupy the topside of this platter, with a longer-form number on the B-side that unexpectedly breaks the five-minute mark. A brilliant follow-up to their full-length from a couple years back, the HELL is on an absolute tear.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Drunken Sailor / Sorry State



## THE LATIN DOGS – Warning! EP reissue

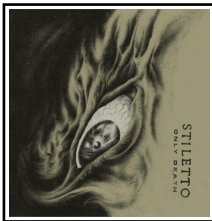
A time capsule of raw punk from Michigan—this reissued EP follows a once unreleased LP recorded straight to boombox in '82. Grim hardcore from the era of cheap beer and cement basements. Total DIY ethos, somewhere between BATTALION OF SAINTS and early NECROS. It's lo-fi, blown-out, and essential for anyone who lives for the sound of Midwestern punk being born in real time. The fidelity is trashy and perfect. An archeological artifact for everything-punk freaks—warts, hiss, and all.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Artifix



## STILETTO – Only Death EP

Singapore's STILETTO blasts out eight tracks of caustic, high-speed hardcore that recalls the raw urgency of early GAUZE or KORO, with modern aggression, absolutely zero gloss, and no-frills hardcore detonation. Short, relentless, and stripped to the bone, each song bleeds distortion and fury while the production keeps the chaos tight and biting. Recorded at Dungeon 416 and mastered by Will Killingsworth, this is pure unfiltered rage with no room to breathe and no interest in melody or groove—just raw impact. Southeast Asian chaos. STILETTO keeps it short, fast, and ugly, exactly how it should be.



Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: 4490

## STRAW MAN ARMY – Earthworks LP

From the New York City duo of Owen Deutsch and Sean Fentress comes the third album in the trilogy STRAW MAN ARMY set out to complete. *Earthworks* is here...but you've probably had a listen by this point. From mentions on NPR, to a *Washington Post* article, to making more than a few year-end top tens here at *MRR*, this is the type of acclaim that is the exception, not the rule, around the confines of this publication. Focusing on the fragile nature of our human condition—from past to present—STRAW MAN ARMY plays peace punk/anarcho-punk that is punctuated by post-hardcore rhythms and jazzy interludes. Guitar riffs move in ceaseless unison, wandering in and out of parallel movement, mirroring dual vocals that pan left to right, emphasizing introspective lyrics like "Is this all that's left for us these days? / Apathy or rage?" from "Spiral." I find this whole album deeply soothing, from jittery leads, quiet instrumentals, and "what the fuck are we doing here?" lyrics that make even my most self-demoralizing tendencies quiet. Try finding that antidote elsewhere. After achieving this trilogy, first with *Age of Exile* in 2020, then *SOS* in 2022, and finally with *Earthworks* in 2024, what, if anything, is next? Will they keep writing? Form a full band for a live debut? For some reason, I trust they won't disappoint. For now, keep these masterpieces of records spinning.



Reviewer: Willis Schenk  
Label: D4MT Labs / La Vida Es Un Mus

## SYMPATHY FLOWERS – Sympathy Flowers cassette

SYMPATHY FLOWERS are from Oakland, California, and they bring us some dark post-punk. Like all of my favorite post-punk, this band always has a driving bass line. To me, it sounds like they are influenced by bands like KILLING JOKE, RUDIMENTARY PENI, the AU PAIRS, and early JOY DIVISION. In the end, they manage to take their influences and make their own sound. Dark, hard-driving post-punk with vocals that provide an on-the-edge tension to the music. The drumming is perfect for this music, whether it is a rock-steady beat or playing sparsely and filling the in-between spaces while the guitar gives us some tension. This is a very good release, and I would recommend it to anyone who likes dark-sounding music.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: Harshara

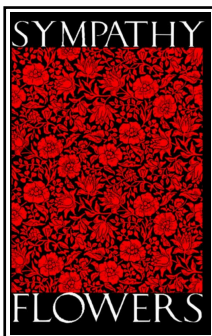
## SÖT – Crema-ho Tot LP

I loved the energy that these guys bring. I would say they're generally post-punk, but they really put the "punk" in "post-punk" at times. I loved how upbeat some of the tracks were, while maintaining a more melodic approach to other tracks (like "Volver a Ser," which also had great backup vocals). Each track is new and unique; a super fun band.

Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Flexidiscos

## T.A.C.K. – Tackle cassette

If you're one for numerology, keep both your eyes on the number two here. *Tackle* is the second cassette release by T.A.C.K., who are a two-piece band from New Orleans. The band is comprised of drummer Stella, and guitarist Roach, both of whom share vocal duties. Their first cassette came out in April of 2023, marking almost exactly two years between releases. I played a show with T.A.C.K. in their hometown roughly two years ago and the power went out twice during the course of their set, due to a massive rain storm. What's ironic is that for all the times it has come up, the number two in numerology is often associated with harmony, and that is one word I would absolutely not use to describe T.A.C.K.'s lo-fi, twangy,



## CAFARD – Demo '24 cassette

Pure power in the form of five face-rippers from France's CAFARD. Noise-punk cardboard box drums with layers of sky-clutching leads and walls upon walls of sound on top of what sounds like a raw four-track recording. It's not, though—it's a ruse. And it works. CAFARD is fukkn fast, we're talking RIGOR MORTIS reimagining *Victim in Pain*-level "what the fuck" kind of shit here. Take this and the PISUAR tape and ask yourself what you're doing with your life.

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: Dirty Slap

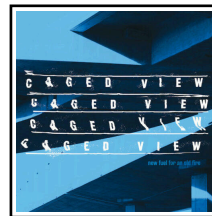
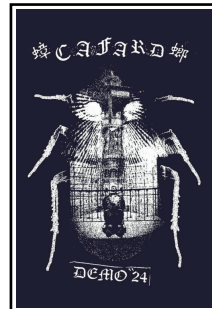
## CAGED VIEW – New Fuel for an Old Fire EP

Great, new post-hardcore that sounds like great, old post-hardcore. QUICKSAND, SNAPCASE, HELMET, HUM, and others are cited as references, but if you listen to one minute of the record, that all becomes abundantly clear. The sound and production choices are spot-on for the '90s sounds that influenced this killer EP. Almost every track here feels like a standout, with "Survival Pending" feeling like a true centerpiece. Most of the songs also clock in at under two minutes, so even the mid-tempo offerings here don't feel like they're dragging through the mud. One of the best records/bands so far this year that I had zero previous exposure to prior to hitting play. Well done.

Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: GGT

## CASUAL HEX – Zig Zag Lady Illusion II LP

CASUAL HEX just might be the last band standing from Seattle's mid-to-late 2010s DIY post-punk boom, where, alongside similarly-minded outfits like NAIL POLISH and VATS, they pushed back against the city's rapid gentrification and tech hellscapes wealth disparity (instigated by Amazon, Microsoft, et al.) with an appropriately sharp and panicked sound. It's been seven years since their last record (2018's *Zig Zag Lady Illusion* LP), and they're not exactly a Seattle band anymore (guitarist/vocalist Erica Miller is now based in Portland), but the more things change, the more they stay the same—the trio's recurring lyrical themes of devalued labor, mindless consumption, social engineering, and the corrupting effects of



power are all still firmly in check here (and as relevant as ever), with an instrumental backing that's just as scathing. Opener "The System" cuts right to the chase, with exacting stop/start beats, needing six-string scree, and Miller's perfectly-in-control deadpan giving voice to the sorts of internal monologues that should be shared by anyone actually living in reality ("The system, we feed / Has no belief"). The frigid clang of "Letters & Numbers" picks up the screwdriver baton passed on from *Confusion is Sex*-era SONIC YOUTH, and the sparse, spring-loaded bass bounce launching the standout "Like a Product" signals toward 99 Records-style no wave danceability, while the ensuing claustrophobic crush of piercing guitar pulls from the most caustic side of genre—think Glenn Branca-helmed projects like the STATIC and THEORETICAL GIRLS, or the art-noise melt-downs of INTERFERENCE. No illusion, this is frighteningly real.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth  
Label: Youth Riot

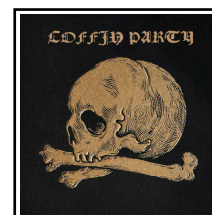
## CHRISTOPHER ALAN DURHAM & THE PEACETIME CONSUMERS – Play Atlantis LP

Cool rock out of Michigan exploring lots of different sounds, with a layer of art splashed across them all. Lots of sax, lots of tempo changes, lots of changes in general. Sometimes this results in killer tracks like "Seeing Double," while at other times, the songs can feel like exercises that weren't fully fleshed out or just ended too soon. But while their name denotes a desire to keep things civil, their music prefers to challenge; these tracks actually aren't here to resolve how you want, or make you feel at ease. A summer read, this album ain't, and that's clearly how they want it. This isn't music for your book club, unless your book club is full of freaks and weirdos who prefer ZAPPA anyhow.

Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: Dot Dash Sounds

## COFFIN PARTY – Coffin Party cassette

Dense, metal-tinged hardcore that has more texture than one might expect from a two-piece. Lots of feedback all over this sucker. I'm not typically one to shy away from noise. There's so much going on in these songs that the tortured squeals and screeches blanket some of the otherwise nuanced instrumentation. There are some true flashes of brilliance and there's no denying the competency at hand. The more is more approach ends up padding the impact, while the underlying songs have real bite. When the songs aren't fighting against themselves, COFFIN PARTY packs a serious punch.





Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Ghetto Blaster / Smiling Is Not A Crime

### COLUMBA TRISTE – Columba Triste 12"

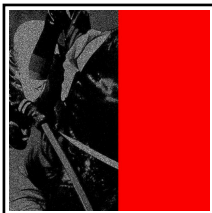
Tastefully-played French Oil from Lille's COLUMBA TRISTE. While there are countless bands currently playing this style, I'll always be a sucker for melodic and moody Oil, and COLUMBA TRISTE does it well. They sound very smooth and refined, with vocals that remind me of contemporaries SYNDROME 81. There aren't really any misses on this 12", but the final track "Dans La Vase" stands out. Good stuff.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Une Vie Pour Rien Vinyls

### CORREDOR – Corredor cassette

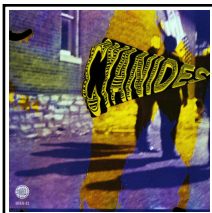
New post-punk group on the Valencia, Spain-based Flexidiscos label. All five songs are catchy and driving, best exemplified on "Una Daga" that starts with a bubbly bass riff, followed by a straight rock'n'roll solo that evolves into a more post-punk riff, way up on the fretboard. They also play around with a death howl/everything at half-speed playback kind of thing halfway through the song—an interesting contrast to the otherwise mid-to-high-end vocal range on display. The drums on the closer "VBES" are awesome, with busy-as-can-be hi-hat flourishes that are countered with a floor-tom-pummeling bridge. While I haven't been able to find much of anything on the band, I assume this is their debut release? Great cassette.



Reviewer: Willis Schenk  
Label: Flexidiscos

### CYANIDES – Black Bricks EP

Debut EP out of St. Louis, giving us a grip of out-of-this-world, synth-garage-psych-rock multi-hyphenated tunes that do a great job of establishing who they are and what they're here to do. The combination of sounds here is the kind of thing that would be soundtracking Frankie's Tiki Room in Vegas—by that I mean a genuinely cool-without-trying oasis that provides respite from an otherwise crushing nightmare (in this case, the strip). Digression aside, these four songs are for fans of DEVO, RESEARCH REACTOR CORP, maybe even ROTARY CLUB, or anyone who likes a coating of sci-fi in their garage tunes. Will be keepings tabs on future releases for sure.



Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: Sinkhole

### DEAD SEA LORDS – Dead Sea Lords LP

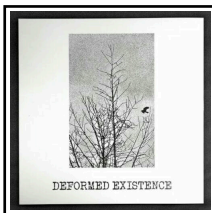
Gainesville band with the classic Gainesville sound. Whoddathunk? This actually has sort of a Midwest twinge to it, as if DRIVE LIKE JEHU started playing twinkly parts like CAP'N JAZZ while still maintaining that darkened Rick Froberg edge. Of course, there's still that Northern Florida energy that pokes through their brooded facade, channeling No Idea Records honeys like HOT WATER MUSIC and LEATHERFACE. Shit, there's even a MINUTEMEN cover reimagined in DEAD SEA LORDS' own image, and it doesn't suck! Really solid album here. I'd go as far as saying this is a must-listen if you're fan of what's been unfortunately termed as "orgcore."



Reviewer: Jake Joyce  
Label: Belladonna

### DEFORMED EXISTENCE / VITRIOLIC RESPONSE – split EP

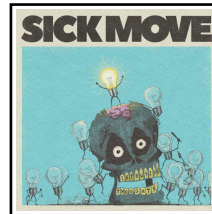
Attention all followers of crustcore: the DEFORMED EXISTENCE / VITRIOLIC RESPONSE 7" split is truly something special. DEFORMED EXISTENCE from Japan and VITRIOLIC RESPONSE from the UK both play a style of crust, but when presented in a split format, their unique spin on the subgenre is evident. DEFORMED EXISTENCE plays two songs on their side of the disc, with both tracks bringing deep bass rumble and a full-throttle delivery. VITRIOLIC RESPONSE recorded three songs for the split, with their style carrying a more frenetic, streetwise D-beat sound into the crust. Both bands serve noisy, breakneck metallic punk in a way that harkens back to an earlier time, while the lyrics deliver current and crucial messages. This split is presented in cooperation by a host of international punk labels, and with its double-sided, fold-out sleeve, it really is a complete living artifact of global punk expression.



Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Acclaim Collective / Death Trap / 45 cpm / Rejected Abused / Urinal Vinyl / Wild Mutation

### SICK MOVE – Intrusive Thoughts LP

DIY from Baltimore that could fit on any Fat Wreck Chords or Epitaph comp or even be on one of those two labels. The LP is orange-ish or brownish in color and has a lyric sheet to follow along to all words, or to karaoke along if you'd like. Vocals are on the gruffer side of things, but the hooks are very hooky and completed by "ohhhhh's and group choruses. It's fast and tight like NOFX, BAD RELIGION, AMERICAN STEEL, BRACKET, GOOD RIDDANCE, and PENNYWISE. I think I expected something a little more challenging or more Baltimore from a Baltimore band. This record is great but, for me, it sounds a bit formulaic from such an iconoclastic city.



Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: self-released

### SINIESTRO TOTAL – Acto Fundacional LP

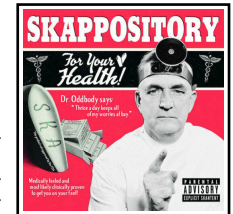
SINIESTRO TOTAL is one of Spain's most famous classic punk acts, and this LP showcases the band's first-ever live performance from 1981 before they became the polished unit that would go on to release twenty-plus albums. Their early sound on this seventeen-song set shifts between bouncing along and falling apart. Charmingly out-of-tune at times and frothing with youthful enthusiasm, it has a minor league GERMS-meets-the PLUGZ kind of feel. Tunes featured here including "Las Tetras Di Mi Novia" ("My Girlfriend's Tits") and "Hoy Voy A Asesinate" ("Today I'm Going to Murder You") ended up on the band's debut LP, but a handful of these songs never made it to record. While many bands would reasonably want any evidence of their very first live show erased from existence, ashamed of their fledgling incompetence, the fact that SINIESTRO TOTAL's is being celebrated in this manner is a testament to their confidence as veteran rockers, like looking at baby pictures. You know, if their baby pictures included images of them singing a song called "Aunque Este En El Frenopatico) Te Tirare Del Atico" (or "Even If I'm in the Mental Hospital) I'll Throw You Out of the Attic.")



Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Munster

### SKAPPOSITORY – For Your Health! CD

If anyone at any time in the last 30 years would have bet me that I'd find a ska band in 2025 that I like, I would have taken that bet and ended up broke. SKAPPOSITORY, with charm and humor, applies the classic sounds of the SPECIALS, BAD MANNERS, and MADNESS, as well as a more modern feel from the likes of MUSTARD PLUG and the SLACKERS. I know that typically in a review of ska that folks would throw around OPERATION IVY for points, but this ain't that. I think SKAPPOSITORY has a more refined sound and a tuneful maturity that OPERATION IVY didn't have. If I haven't sold you yet on SKAPPOSITORY, how about the fact one of the folks in this band plays a keytar? Yeah, I said it. Go click into your favorite online search engine and look at pictures of them from basements to clubs and you'll see a fella with a keytar strapped onto his body. I think it's pretty bold to be a ska band these days, but SKAPPOSITORY pulls it off well.



Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: Stubborn

### SPARES – Spares 12"

Portland's SPARES, formed in 2022 and featuring Mike Vera and Ryan Shanahan of Deep Elm Records band LOCK AND KEY, say their influences lie in early DC emo, '90s Amphetamine Reptile, and San Diego's post-hardcore scene, and it seems like the ingredients are all there. It's well-recorded (bassist Matt Vera did the tracking and mixing) and there are moments of genuine tension and grime—"Grease Stains" being a standout to my ears—but too often, things drift into safe mid-tempo zones or suddenly get all melodic like someone slipped a WEEZER record into the wrong sleeve ("Din," I'm looking at you). Vocalist Gabriel Matthews does a great job switching between singing and half-singing, but he sounds best when he's screaming out those vocal chords. Look, if you're name-dropping AmRep, I want to hear some HAMMERHEAD, not careful mood-building. There's real potential here, but next time, less vibe, more violence. Or, you know, just play the music you love and ignore the randos who offer unsolicited advice.



Reviewer: Jeff Cost  
Label: Better Days Will Haunt You



knownst-to-them poet. The only music on the cassette is the very first song they played that night on July 11, 1985, fill-in drummer and all. Oh, and it is only on the A-side of the cassette. In my opinion, the same test-tone that was included on the B-side of their LP should have been recorded onto the back of these cassettes, but that might be taking the absurdity of that story told within the included zine a bit too far. Did I mention the cassette also comes with a huge zine? It is filled with classic SxMxDx flyers, newspaper clippings about the band, bad reviews from this and other classic punk publications, as well as existential autobiographical memoirs of the singer of the band, Jim Hayes. This was an absolute delight to read, and I must have listened to the cassette four times before seeking out other recordings by SxMxDx to have in the background while I fully digested the zine. I truly and thoroughly enjoyed this and recommend it highly. Am I really singing the praises of a three-minute, one-song cassette with a twenty-plus-page, full-size sheet of paper zine, double-spaced like a high school essay and limited to a total of twenty-three copies? You better believe I am! It is one of my favorite things about punk, that every single aspect of a release can be arguably shitty, yet the beauty of the project can shine through regardless. *Reviewer: Biff Bifaro*  
*Label: Gravelvoice*

## SELF ABUSE – Life in War EP

An old school unit originally formed in 1982 Las Vegas, SELF ABUSE played amongst the greats of the era but never cut a record. You may recognize their logo from many jackets captured in pics of the early '80s. After reforming in 2016, these guys that once shared the stage with SOCIAL DISTORTION, T.S.O.L., MAD PARADE, and many others finally committed a few of their original songs to wax via this 7". Issued on canned pink vinyl, this thing looks good enough to eat, but you should probably just spin it for a taste of classic punk action instead.

*Reviewer: Jason Harding*  
*Label: Gutterwall*

## SELF IMPROVEMENT – Syndrome LP

From Long Beach, California, SELF IMPROVEMENT is out with their second LP. Compared to 2022's *Visible Damage*, this release dives further into the no wave realm, with slower tempos, sparser arrangements, and fewer heavy moments. If you like the slower parts of the CONTORTIONS, maybe mixed with a little ESG, then you'll like SELF IMPROVEMENT's sound, which, in the end, doesn't need comparison. Guitar riffs snake around beneath Jett Witchall's rich and compelling vocals, while bass and drums are lockstep throughout with an effective propulsion. The band also fea-

tures a synth and drum machine, but they're blended so well I can hardly tell, besides the obvious click track or one-off synth eccentricity. The overall feeling here is a skewed pleasantness, like a shaky and out-of-center photo of someone smiling. Witchall's vocals create this tension on a dime, coming in smoothly, then changing over a sour chord or drum clatter, as she sends the band into a diagonal spiral wherein you may cock your head to one side, intent to hear whatever's coming next. Unique sound for the languid and perturbed.

*Reviewer: Willis Schenk*  
*Label: Feel It*

## SHARK NOISES – Beautiful LP

DCxPC Live has been doing a great job with their live recording series, and this is definitely a worthy addition to that library. High-energy punk that brings to mind IDLES mixed with APOCALYPSE HOBOKEN. Production is great, and the band is tight and charismatic as all hell. Honestly, I wouldn't even know this was a live album unless you told me. Sounds good enough to be of studio quality. The older I get, the more I default to live recordings over studio, and this is one of those records I'll continue to spin over and over again. Really sharp slab here; for fans of the mid-'90s punk sound.

*Reviewer: Jake Joyce*  
*Label: DCxPC*

## SHORT LEASH – MK Ultra'd EP

This EP is some damn fine, burly-as-hell, mostly fast hardcore. The recording sounds fantastic as does the music, and the vocals sound tough as hell. This record left me wanting to hear more. This band has a pedigree as well, featuring members of NO TIME, KILL YOUR IDOLS, SHARK ATTACK, and VIOLENT MINDS. This record sounds like a mix of NEGATIVE APPROACH and ANTI-CIMEX, what's better than that?

*Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain*  
*Label: Chronic Death*

## DES VEINES – Démo 2024 cassette

I really enjoyed the balance these guys struck with a bit heavier and more distorted guitar in more classically punk tracks like "Torrent," with a more melodic rock style to tracks like "Nous." The vocals are charged with emotion, without being over-the-top or super angry like a lot of punk; they were refreshing. That being said, some of the tracks felt a bit long to me, as it sometimes felt like they said what they needed to a bit earlier in the song. However, each track brings something new to the table, so I would definitely keep listening.

*Reviewer: Emma Miller*  
*Label: Dirty Slap*

## DEZ DARE – Cheryll Your Love Shines Down Like a Supernova's Death CD

Wow, has it been so long since 2009 that we're starting to get nostalgic for unnecessarily long album names? Interesting record here: synth-rock that sounds a bit like the SHOUT OUT LOUDS if they had the same set up as ATOM AND HIS PACK-AGE. One of those slabs I wanted to like, but nothing really sticks out or grabs me. It's a tad dry, which is unfortunate because the composition is interesting. They clearly took a lot of time with the instrumentation, and did a good job weaving the synth leads with the guitar riffs. It never sounds too crowded. The vocals, however, are very drab. This might have been intentional, but the lack of any energy is glaring. I do need to give DEZ DARE a shoutout for using a Casio EP-10 drum machine on "Light Touch of the Man Spreader." Easily the best preset of all time. If you were big into that Brit dance-pop wave in the mid-to-late '00s, you might dig this.

*Reviewer: Jake Joyce*  
*Label: God Unknown*

## DISOLUCIÓN SOCIAL – Nuestra Imagen Actual LP

Seminal cult Mexican punk recording available on wax for the first time, and...it was worth the wait. After a few self-released cassettes and one stellar EP, DISOLUCIÓN SOCIAL released their sole full-length on cassette in 1993, and it sounded like nothing else ever (and it still sounds like nothing else). From their chaotic shit-

fi origins in the 1980s, they grew into a band able to inject bizarro proto-prog and melodic punk into off-the-rails Mexican hardcore with almost-Biafra vocals, and I can only imagine what would have happened had they continued after its release in 1993. A rare find in this modern era—a record that truly sounds like no other punk record you've (n)ever heard, beautifully packaged with a massive booklet. Reissues of "essential" releases are everywhere, but this one deserves your attention.

*Reviewer: Robert Collins*  
*Label: Esos Malditos Punks*

## DOGS MILES – Dogsmiles demo cassette

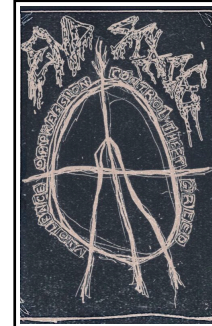
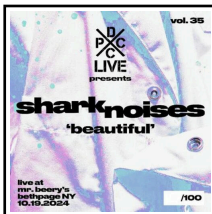
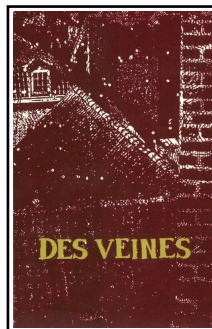
Self-proclaimed "poly-jamorous freaks" from Jacksonville, Florida with their debut five-song demo cassette. Well, it's more like four songs and a track of spoken word poetry with repeating sound clips between every track. I don't necessarily know how to describe this with a quick, quippy genre. It is a true mish-mash. There are a couple songs that sound like cutesy, early 2000s Casio-keyboard-heavy lo-fi indie rock surrounding a few songs shooting for a heavier, more abrasive noisy art-punk sound, all entangled with the aforementioned spoken word track. The tie-in with all of them is that they're all written from a modern queer activist type of mindset. If you liked early lo-fi Plan-It-X records stuff, I would imagine this would potentially be up your alley.

*Reviewer: Biff Bifaro*  
*Label: Godless America*

## END STATE – Their System Won't Be Fixed cassette

Perfectly executed crust outta NYC. END STATE's first cassette is a raw, noisy, excellent snapshot of the style that would sit nicely on the Peace of Mind Records roster. Recorded at the illustrious D4MT Labs, the guitars are wicked, the drums are relentless, and the vocals are abrasive as hell. I definitely hear some FRAMTID influence here, which should tell you what you need to know about this tape. I wish there were more than three songs, but it's a nice taste while we wait for more material. Highly recommended.

*Reviewer: Eric Anderson*  
*Label: self-released*

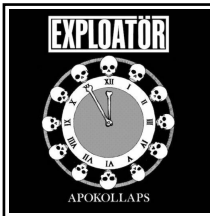




## EXPLOATÖR – Apokollaps LP

I've been looking forward to this record, and I am not disappointed. EXPLOATÖR has an impressive pedigree, as the band members are like a who's-who of Swedish hardcore. Their lineage features too many bands to list. This is a great record with a sound that leans heavily on their roots in TOTALITÄR. They bring the D-beat and some very catchy riffs to songs that seem to fly by as quickly as they started. If you like Swedish hardcore, D-beat, etc., you will enjoy this album.

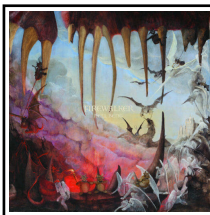
Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: Phobia



## FIREWALKER – Hell Bent LP

All blades and metallic distortion, FIREWALKER returns with another record that sounds like BASTARD running a tank factory. Relentless crusty hardcore from Boston—fast, corrosive, and executed with surgical precision while staying completely unhinged. Ripping guitars, pummeling drums, and vocals sharp enough to cut bone. They're not reinventing the wheel, just burning it down with militant chaos and total urgency.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Triple B



## FLÈCHES – Flèches cassette

Solid debut tape here from France's Flèches out of Brittany. Slathered in sharp production, these nine thoughtfully-composed tracks range from tough and upbeat punk rock to post-hardcore in the vein of later DAG NASTY, sometimes boldly veering into anthemic territory. It's a smart, slick sound with plenty of brawn baked in; a modern take on prevailing 1990s sensibilities. These guys have, like, feelings and stuff.

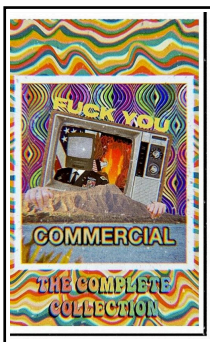
Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Dirty Slap



## FUCK YOU COMMERCIAL – The Complete Collection cassette

Compilation of four cassette releases from this Hawaii-based project. Each volume plays like a chaotic mix-tape teetering back and forth between vintage radio and TV commercials from Hawaii and speedy, blistering hardcore. Chipper voices and Muzak jingles from the past try to sell you cars and vacation packages one second, while gruff-voiced, anti-consumerist hardcore screeds blast the plastic packaging apart the next. Even better is when the two components overlap and create a sound collage of superficial consumer culture overtaken by menacing punk. Musically, there are cues from classic West Coast USHC in the vocals and straight-up bruising instrumentation, but also nods to sample-heavy power violence of the Slap-a-Ham blastbeat flavor. Operators are standing by to take your order! (Or you can stream for free on Bandcamp).

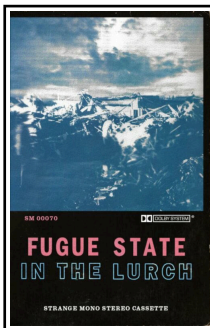
Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: self-released



## FUGUE STATE – In the Lurch cassette

I got very excited when I opened my review cassettes and saw this release. I was sent the debut FUGUE STATE cassette for review when it was released and I absolutely loved it. This project was originally a solo project which was presumably birthed out of necessity thru height of COVID isolation times. The sophomore FUGUE STATE cassette, which is also available on vinyl in limited quantity, is a full-band recording, and it sounds absolutely awesome. This is some fuzzed-out, garage punk psychedelic shit. Hell, there's a note-for-note FLOWER TRAVELLIN' BAND guitar lick on "I'll Keep It in Mind," straight off the first track on *Satori*. Nice nod. I was a bit apprehensive when I noticed that five of the six songs from the first FUGUE STATE demo were on this subsequent cassette. It was a relief to hear that they are all full-band recordings, not a re-releasing of the original demo tracks again. I could go on and on, I really dig this. I am truly happy to see that FUGUE STATE has morphed into a full live band and I hope to find a way to see them play live in the near future. Now, where's that damn link to buy a vinyl copy of this, because I absolutely need one.

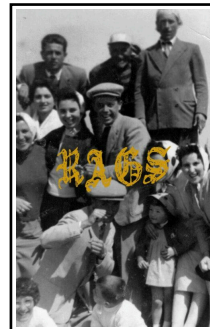
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Strange Mono



## RAGS – Rags cassette

Screamy hardcore with tempo changes that you kinda know are coming. The uptempo parts have a '00s crust vibe that gets subverted by metalcore mosh breakdowns. RAGS keep things moving along with eight songs in under ten minutes. Going in, I was hoping for some unhinged fastcore madness. They stab in that direction, but don't quite draw blood.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Noise Merchant



## RARE SPAM – Double Pleasure cassette

Montreal art-punks RARE SPAM's *Double Pleasure* was a breath of fresh air for me. Why? Because it's not your average "guitar album"—it's an album in which all instruments are beautifully woven together to create a surreal tapestry. Yes, jangly and seasick guitars play a crucial role in setting the mood, but it is never to a degree that they dominate everything. The bass delivers incredibly catchy, laidback bass lines and gets bonus points from me for its mastery in the lost art of experimenting with effects on the old four-string. The drums are definitely a big part of the sound as well. Sometimes layered with drum machines, sometimes oozing with dry vintage mojo, but always, always unbelievably groovy while being minimal and modest. To top off all that, the vocals are effortlessly cool in their delivery of memorable hooks and nonchalant lyrics. Some might call it psychedelic with the way they incorporate effects, fluid tempos, and interesting soundscapes, but to assume it's your stereotypical, run-of-the-mill psych rock would be a huge mistake.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin  
Label: Mangel



## REASON WHY – Cut You Loose EP

The gang over at Mendeku Diskak have done it, quite simply, once again. This release from REASON WHY is a lot of fun, emulating the classic Riot City or No Future sound to great effect. It's not going to win any originality awards any time soon, but you can shove yer innovation where the sun don't shine when it's this much of a laugh. Fun sing-along at last orders UK82 by way of Istanbul.



Reviewer: Ben Marshall  
Label: Mendeku Diskak

## RUFINOOS – JF.FJ. EP

I'm going to like this one. Four songs in less than six minutes. Now we're talking. Yes, female-fronted, super catchy pop punk. Pretty and mid-tempo, maybe even a little speedy, this is not at all super sticky sweet. Jesus, just amazingly catchy. Short and to-the-point. In Spanish, if that matters to you. I really like this.

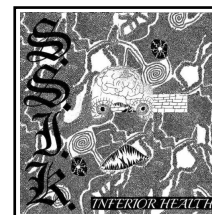
Reviewer: Kenny Kaos  
Label: Family Spree



## SSIK – Inferior Health EP

Out of Vancouver, SSIK (are they aiming to be the antithesis of Gene Simmons & co.?) pulls OG spirit into the modern age. Opening with the apocalyptic hoedown of "Joy," this seven-song hardcore assault is loaded with an explosive sound, distorted vocals, and just a touch of good old-fashioned rockin'. Recommended for fans of bands like ILLITERATES, S.H.I.T., and ELEC-TRIC CHAIR.

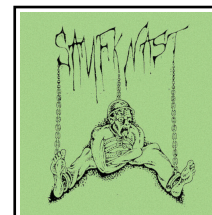
Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Neon Taste



## SAUFKNAST – Saufk Nast LP

Classic punk band that's not afraid to get in your face. I loved the fast tempo throughout, and the taunting, dare I say antagonizing, guitar. They didn't slow down or stop for one second. My absolute favorite part was the breakdown in "Gold-junge." I was headbanging with that puckered-up metal face, as they quickly transitioned into a slick guitar solo. Great way to end a great album.

Reviewer: Emma Miller  
Label: Erste Theke Tonträger



## SCREAMING MAILBOXES OF DESTINY – Morgantown, WV 7/11/85 cassette

Live cassette of a single track, recorded just a few weeks shy of forty years ago. The SCREAMING MAILBOXES OF DESTINY were a short-lived hardcore punk band from Pittsburgh, PA spanning from 1984 to 1985. They posthumously released a ten-song, one-sided "12" in 1986. This tape, however, features a live show where the band is introduced by an unbe-



the earliest BEASTIE BOYS efforts before leading into an absurdly intricate guitar solo of epic proportions. The B-side "Living Killers" is a groovier tune, saddled with the same shouted vocals and once again, some unnecessarily crafty guitar work. More obscure and amusing grist for the ever-churning KBD mill.

Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Blitzkrieg

## POWERPLANT – Crashing Cars / Never Smile 7"

New single from the prolific London-based POWERPLANT. With a slew of singles, EPs, and a couple LPs since 2018, this band has been busy. Formerly a solo project of Ukrainian Theo Zhykharyev, POWERPLANT is now a fully-membered band with Theo on guitar and vocals, supported by bass, drum, and synth (didn't see any credits on this particular release to name them, however). Check out the band's KEXP performance from September 2024, it feels like everyone is absolutely red-lining—the drummer is in a full sweat on the first song, the bassist is ping-ponging up and down the fretboard, the synth player is operating more keys, buttons, switches, and knobs than two hands allow, and Theo sells it hard into the mic, screaming, crooning, death-hollowing, and beating his guitar lifeless. If listening back to that performance and previous recordings in juxtaposition to "Crashing Cars"/"Never Smile" taught me anything, it is that this group plays a wide range of sounds, from moody dungeon synth, to black metal, to synth-driven post punk, to spurts of hardcore, often all in one song. On display here is something a little more catchy and driving. "Crashing Cars" has Zhykharyev crooning in a way that reminds me of FRANZ FERDINAND or the STROKES—the kind of alt/indie rock that was hard to avoid growing up—but I mean this in a positive way, if you can believe me! The even, smooth vocals sound really great in contrast to the jittery band, and makes for a perfectly tragic love song. "Never Smile" offers even deeper, richer vocals, maybe more like the haunting qualities of NICK CAVE, but still has a fast, driving beat, synth pushed way to the front of the mix. I admit that this is my introduction to POWERPLANT, but better late than never, as this group fucking rips.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk  
Label: Arcane Dynamics



## PUBLIC TOYS – Public Toys cassette

Sleazy, garage-infused rock'n'roll punk from France. Debut cassette with four beer-soaked, leather-clad tracks. You can almost taste the dingy sweat permeating the air as the tape deck spools wind this cassette. Memorable tracks, solid recording, and an artist's rendering of the band looking cool and performing within a pinball machine. What's not to love?

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: self-released



## PUÑAL – Buscando La Muerte LP

A mere seven years after their demo, PUÑAL is back with a total ripper of a record for their vinyl debut. A kind of classic UK82 take on a classic Spanish sound, coming across like ESKORBUTO taking a trip to Stoke-on-Trent in 1983 for a scrap and a pint. Bass lines are infectious and propel the whole thing along at a fair whack, with the drummer holding on for dear life at points, as the vocals sound almost cartoonishly evil at points. Truly terrific stuff.

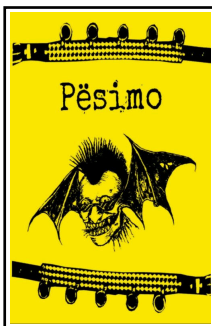
Reviewer: Ben Marshall  
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus



## PÉSIMO – EP 2024 cassette

Anguished and raw hardcore punk from Chile, one-person band PÉSIMO's debut is a ripper. Each track is a flurry of feed-back-ridden guitars and galloping drums with lo-fi production that is just clear enough to not sound muddy. What's most striking about this tape are the desperately shouted vocals and pessimistic lyrics that cut through the noise and become the focal point of the EP. By the time you reach the excellent final track "Frio Morturio," you can really feel what PÉSIMO is feeling. A solid debut and recommended.

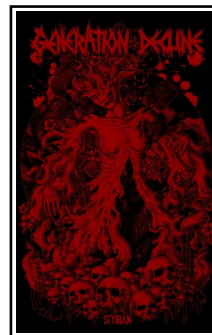
Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Junko



## GENERATION DECLINE – Stygian cassette

Nice and crusty hardcore from Bremerton's GENERATION DECLINE. There's a lot of good stuff going on on Stygian: thrashy riffs, chugging metal riffs, some soaring stadium leads, blast-beats, D-beats, and hardcore breakdowns. All said, it's a busy but coherent listen, thanks largely to the solid vocals tying everything together. If you're into ANTI SECT, AXEFEAR, AVSKUM, and NIGHTFEEDER (all bands they've shared bills with), you'll be into this.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Noise Merchant



## GIGLINGER – Shrapnel EP

Hailing from Helsinki, Finland, GIGLINGER makes the kind of hardcore punk that isn't conservative when it comes to incorporating influences from outside the genre. Their four-song EP *Shrapnel* displays that very clearly. With vocals that sound like they're coming out of a megaphone, a strong rhythm section, ear-candy guitar layers, and sudden changes in song structure, you can tell that they have a unique vision to create their own sound. My only complaint—and I can't believe I'm the one saying this—is that this EP is too short. Like, annoyingly short. Don't get me wrong, it's really good and it left me wanting more, but all this pent-up frustration is killing me. Maybe that's just me, though. If you're on the run and the original versions of those two songs are way too long for your personal taste, you're in luck—the band kindly included shorter versions on the B-side. You know, some people (like a band I know called GIGLINGER) are busy making cool music and don't have the time to listen to a four-minute single.

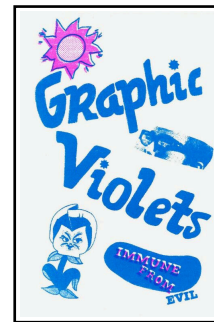
Reviewer: Mama Goblin  
Label: self-released



## GRAPHIC VIOLETS – Immune From Evil cassette

Six tracks written, performed, and recorded by Rob Garcia out of Richmond, VA. Perhaps it's the singular vision, or just impeccable taste, or some mysterious third option, but the end result here is simply fantastic. Citing the Flying Nun catalog, along with TELEVISION PERSONALITIES, SWELL MAPS, and more, *Immune From Evil* is here to pull the listener out of the winter doldrums and leave them feeling sunny and optimistic, even in the face of, well, everything else in the world. Each of these six tracks have a multitude of aspects that will catch your ear and get your head bopping along. Not sure if this is just a bedroom project, or a foundation laid to build upon going forward, but here's hoping for even more in the future, because sometimes it's just nice to have nice things.

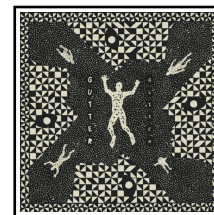
Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: self-released



## GUTTER – Glitch LP

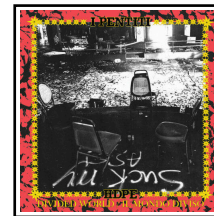
At a glance, everything about *Glitch* by GUTTER made me think I was in for some classic Oi!: the album cover, the horn solo intro, the fact that these guys are from Lille, France. Boy, was I wrong! Instead of CAMERA SILENS-worship, I was delighted to hear sharply produced hardcore punk that really hits. This album is so cohesive and tight, each song leaner and meaner than the next. Their vocals have the same brutish force as Boston's the MASSACRED, and while GUTTER doesn't always exhibit the same UK82 stomp, they do have the same level of intensity. Check this one out.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Symphony of Destruction



## HDPE / I PENTITI – Divided World / II Mondo Diviso split EP

Split 7" from CCP Records, a Sydney-based collective focused on international collaboration. Milan's I PENTITI plays a groaning, gothy deathrock meets blackened hardcore on their two tracks, evoking haunted house vibes through lurching riffs, shrieked vocals, and evil spirit hardcore. Imagine members of RAW POWER, BONE AWL, and CHRISTIAN DEATH stuck in a falling elevator together. Whether or not you want to be in



that elevator is a different question, but it does rip for the right listener. Side Two comes from Sydney's HDPE, in the form of two noisy basement "anti-hardcore" jams full of delayed vocals, pounding drum cadences, and freaky hooks that emerge through the haze. "A Vision" contains the chant, "Luigi has a vision / Luigi has a vision." No idea what that could be about. Perhaps they are big *Super Mario Bros.* fans. Although the two bands are sonically different, there is a dark, grimy feel to both in energy and execution that makes for a great pairing.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: CCP

## HALF BUILT HOMES – Dreams CD

HALF BUILT HOMES has been a band for a while, with a good chunk of releases going back at least five years. Simply put, this is the only way that an Oi! punk band from the petri dish of Northern Indiana, contaminated by Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois, is supposed to sound. They have just enough musicianship to keep it interesting, but then fuck it up the exact perfect way that the Middle West does every time. It has all the Oi! and sing-along punk stuff, but with Eeyore cloudy days that only Lake Michigan can bring in. Perfect NAKED RAYGUN bits, KRABS parts, tied up in a nicely sorrowful upbeat-tempo kinda way. I live in Michigan and I consider these people to be neighbors of sorts, and by the end of the seventh song on the CD, gosh, are we really this fucked-up here? I mean, I still swim as often as I can, have my laughs with pals, and although I've been through a fair amount of stuff, this HALF BUILT HOMES cloud cover is bumming me out. OFF WITH THEIR HEADS plops into this category of melancholy, singable tunes, and although this is a great record, I'm tired of hearing hopeless Midwest songs about maybe trying to be better. This album bends you around a couple corners, as it starts out as a boot-stomper then becoming sad about old friends passing away, the sunrise/sunset thing. The last track reminded me of a pal that died, and although I told him that I loved him every time I saw him, the song reminded me that maybe I don't say it often enough or to more people or something. In the best and worst ways, this *Dreams* CD by HALF BUILT HOMES is wonderfully Midwest pop punk/Oi! punk.

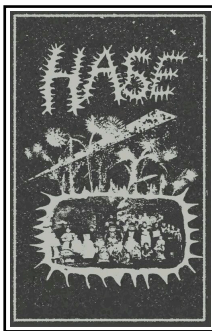
Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: self-released



## HASE – 14 Songs cassette

Austria's HASE is a three-piece hardcore punk band with all members sharing vocal duties. This is an absolute barrage of pummeling, powerviolence-inspired fastcore. Fourteen songs in a total of eight-and-a-half minutes, all culminating in a punch-in-the-face CROSSED OUT cover. To make that even cooler for the PV devotees out there, the bassist's vocals sound similar to the backing vocalist from the classic DESPISE YOU recordings, and that's who takes the lead on the cover song. Truly battering. The packaging of this tape looks awesome, too. In all my years, I have never seen a cassette with an internal O-card slip, which is glued together around just the thinner portion of the cassette with band info and a thanks list covering both sides. Very slick. I can't say enough good things about this release. I absolutely love it.

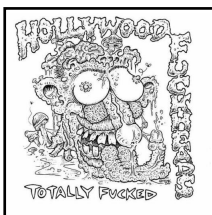
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Phantom



## HOLLYWOOD FUCKHEADS – Totally Fucked EP

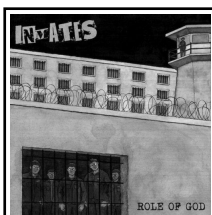
Opening with the hideously distorted rock'n'roll of "I'm Not Afraid of You," these UK budget rockers come in sounding like the SPACESHITS if they were relegated to playing out back by the dumpsters instead of inside the dance hall. "Do You Like Still Life?" drags this sonic muck into a different dimension, twisting it into a crude impression of the SWELL MAPS "H.S. Art." "Shit Blows Up" is a classic lo-fi stabber in the vein of the RIP-OFFS or the INFECTIONS, and the last couple of tunes most closely resemble the work of New Zealand's the CAVEMEN. It's a depraved funhouse of an EP for acolytes of especially chaotic garage.

Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Big Neck



## INMATES – Role of God LP

INMATES from Cleveland need no introduction; they've been at it on and off since 1994 and continue to this day with their original lineup. You can hear the cohesion they have as a group on their new LP *Role of God*, an intensely angry record that has a slew of influences ranging from NYHC venom to soaring Burning Spirit's instrumentation. Lead vocalist Paulito's delivery



## PEACEMAKER – Internal Revolution CD

Polish band PEACEMAKER serves up metallic hardcore driven by sharp riffs and militant conviction, merging mid-'90s Eurocore with a socially conscious edge. Think EARTH CRISIS attitude filtered through a cold Eastern Bloc lens. Tracks like "From Nowhere" and "Stay Human" punch with purpose and style, and a guest vocal from Brasi of BLOODSTAINED strengthens the crossover appeal. While nothing groundbreaking sonically, the heart and rage are real, and the message cuts through. If you're into STRAIGHT OPPOSITION or later VITAMIN X, this'll scratch that itch. Not revolutionary, but definitely resistant.

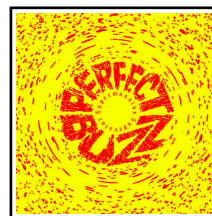
Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Grindwar



## PERFECT BUZZ – Supermassive Superstar CD

Patrick "Petey" Foss has been a stalwart of the Portland punk and garage scene for over a decade now. He fronted PURE COUNTRY GOLD in the early '00s as they'd tear up the local dive bars with their twangy, country-tinged punk blasts. Foss's vocals now actually sound like his voice is getting younger as time rolls on. His current band, PERFECT BUZZ, has put out five new blistering tracks that they self-released, but they would have been at home on Estrus Records in their heyday. The opening track "Supermassive" has the swagger of MONO MEN or early MUDHONEY. "Wordsmithing" pulls from '60s garage pop OBLIVIONS-style, and the closer "Superstar" is a fuzzed-out, lovelorn psych tune. Let's hope we see a full-length from them soon.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar  
Label: self-released



## PERVERTS AGAIN – The New Man LP

With their latest LP, Ohio's PERVERTS AGAIN carry the torch of URANIUM CLUB's charismatic humor and SKULL CULT's contagious quirkiness. Sizzling, fuzzy guitars and gnarly, overdriven bass come together around solid drum grooves to make up a hypnotizingly repetitive, lovably playful and delightfully lo-fi record. With the memorable hooks, mischievous backing vocals, and fun lyricism that *The New Man* offers, I can guarantee that you'll have a hard time getting this album out of your head. Well, don't quote me on that, though—maybe you don't like fun as much as PERVERTS AGAIN do.



Reviewer: Mama Goblin  
Label: Saalepower 2

## PHOBOPHLYPTIX – Phobophlyptix LP

Holy shit, PHOBOPHLYPTIX fucking rips! The Los Angeles-based thrash metal crossover band also uses an equal amount of grindcore influence, and the entire package comes out sounding brutal, vile, and captivating. Old school sent through the modern meat grinder renders a ten-song, single-sided 12" that is over before you know it, and rocks so hard that you'll be replaying it for the entirety of a day.

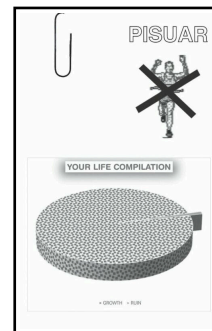
Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Radical Documents



## PISUAR – Your Life Compilation cassette

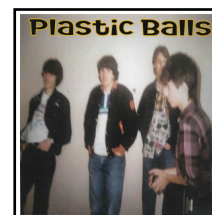
Seven bursts of shit-fi raw punk without a hint of D-beat or black-clad pretension? Now yr fukkn talking, punk. Warsaw's PISUAR released two demos last year, and the folks at Brainwasher saw fit to combine them this year—I couldn't be happier. CUNTROACHES-level not giving a fuck meets pure, unadulterated hardcore punk noise explosion in the form of nihilistic stomps, with vocals acting as another instrument of noise and an overall presentation that makes me (or you, dear reader and future listener) feel like a voyeur in a way I can't describe. It's like...old punks like me don't really get to experience punk like this, you know? It's not for me, and I respect that. I appreciate it. I'm just going to stand over here and stay out of your way, because you kids (PISUAR specifically, punks in general) clearly don't need my help. But am I grateful? Oh fukk yes, I am. Hands down, best release I have heard this month.

Reviewer: Robert Collins  
Label: Brainwasher



## PLASTIC BALLS – Planet Earth / Living Killers 7"

A teenage punk relic from Monument, Colorado, this 45 features two previously unreleased tracks recorded in 1985. Formed by three members of the Lewis-Palmer High School Jazz Band, PLASTIC BALLS managed to record a couple songs during their brief existence, and here they are. "Planet Earth" starts off sounding a bit like





ject per se, but with five credited members, I think it's safe to say that I'm at least correct about the drum machine. It's anyone's guess just who the titular MR. PISS is, though. The three longer tracks, ranging between three-and-a-half to five-and-a-half minutes, are a bit hard to get through, and the out-of-tune dissonance of "Stretching Leather" has a real nails-on-the-chalkboard aspect to it, but thankfully they followed it up with what is easily my favorite song on the tape, "Knife Fight" an easy-to-digest, short and sweet, revved-up bop compared to the droniness of much of the rest of the tape.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: self-released

## NAPE NECK – Nape Neck LP

You can skip reading this review and just buy the record. NAPE NECK is the realest shit, and I have already bookmarked this for end-of-year top ten season. Outstanding collection of post-punk meets no wave squall that sounds like a GANG OF FOUR, TEENAGE JESUS AND THE JERKS, and ERASE ERRATA tag team against your brain. There is a forward propulsion to these tracks that is effortlessly compelling and enormously fresh. Syncopated drums lock in with heavy bass grooves, while guitar lines tangle in and out and transform into a percussive element of rhythmic palm muted strumming. All three members sing, usually at the same time, their voices weaving an urgent tapestry of sound that comes together in ecstatic, unified chants on tracks like "Demonstrations" and "A Worm." This LP compiles two previously released cassettes, and is bewildering in how fully formed the band emerged from the beginning. Essential urgent punk for right now.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: Dot Dash Sounds / OCCii / Red Wig

## NO DREAMS – All Bent Out of Shape CD

For fans of that style of '00s songs by twenty-somethings talking about crushes, heart-break, everyday pleasures, work and stuff, maybe parents, too. I like the sound of it, but I'm also instantly bored. It's the movie soundtrack songs that you skip over to get to the song you bought the movie soundtrack for. I'm thinking the lesser JIMMY EAT WORLD, SIGNALS MIDWEST, PROMISE RING, TEXAS IS THE REASON, or SENSE FIELD songs, and on and on. This is completely adequate, but I think if you're going to hit this style nowadays, ya gotta go for more than regular. Maybe they could consider switching instruments clockwise and see what happens. It could be genius or it could be horrible, but it won't be medio-core.



Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: Snappy Little Numbers

## NONE SHALL SLEEP – A Slow Steady Decline / Hope Dies at Dawn LP

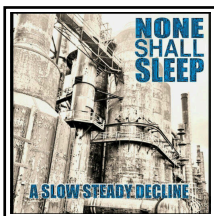
NONE SHALL SLEEP has captured elements of MISFITS, the FIENDZ, GASLIGHT ANTHEM, and BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, blended them into their very own sound, and put out a perfectly New Jersey brooding and catchy record. This isn't a beer-soaked bar-stomper, although it does have those pieces, but it is more driving late at night through the little NJ towns scattered around from the shore to the mountains and falling lyrically into lost hope and melancholy choruses. There is a lot of introspection in these songs, and a maturity giving me the feeling that these gentlemen have been around the sun a few times and seen some shit. It's hard to write from a point of view centered around your disappointment and not have the songs sound whiny after a while, but they do it and keep it interesting. A couple of the longer songs bring in EFFIGIES and parts of NAKED RAYGUN to round out the entire batch of tunes. I'm not entirely sure where this would fit in my record collection, but I know it definitely fits in there somewhere. Also, the song "Is This My Uniform?" has the Bill Murray speech from the movie *Rushmore*, so that's worth it right there.

Reviewer: Tony Party  
Label: self-released

## O-D-EX – My Pleasure / Save : Buy 7"

A melodic yet cacophonous layer cake of digital synths and drum loops propel the two newest tracks from Mark Ryan of MARKED MEN/MIND SPIEDERS and Micah Why (KIT-BASHES, MISSION GIANT). The A-side sounds like the soundtrack to escaping a corporate office building in a dystopian future, while the B-side sounds like the event that may have caused the future to turn dystopian to begin with. While the music won't make you think of MARKED MEN on the surface at all, the underlying ethos definitely shares a kinship. These tunes hit hard, get right to the point, and leave before you've gotten too comfortable.

Reviewer: D. Gregory  
Label: Dirtnap



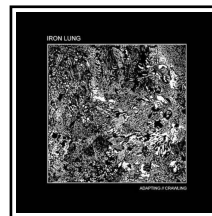
sometimes slithers and sometimes stomps but always hates—I've never felt so accosted by a recording in my life. Tracks like "Role of God" and standout "Fuck Your Fucking Skull" go straight for the jugular lyrically while the band powerfully flexes their metallic side. "Funsucka" and follow-up "I Never Questioned" in particular boast searing guitar work and killer riffs that really take these songs beyond usual hardcore fare. I should add there is precisely one softer moment to be heard here: the song "Doin Time" is a surprisingly tender ode to a friend who has passed, and adds a certain amount of charm to the otherwise caustic proceedings. All said, this is top-tier hardcore for those with particularly thick skin. Highly recommended.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Iron Lung

## IRON LUNG – Adapting

From the always surgically noisy Iron Lung catalog comes IRON LUNG, a band that slices with a scalpel instead of strumming. Hardcore that's angular, rhythmically unstable, and constantly rearranging itself. Imagine NEON BLONDE, DAZZLING KILLMEN, or maybe RAKTA on steroids. Bizarre post-hardcore with a lab coat and clenched fists. Demands attention, but it's worth every anxious pulse.

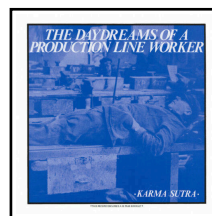
Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Iron Lung



## KARMA SUTRA – The Daydreams of a Production Line Worker LP reissue

For the uninitiated, KARMA SUTRA was an anarcho-punk band from the Crass Records era, and they released a limited amount of original recordings. However, due to the cult of CRASS, KARMA SUTRA has had a few reissues of their material through the years, and for good reason. KARMA SUTRA emerges from the anarcho-punk scene with a sound that is reminiscent at times of KILLING JOKE, but also demonstrates the pop-infused post-punk of bands like THATCHER ON ACID and NED'S ATOMIC DUSTBIN. In other words, you have aggressive, dark punk blending with world music, primitive synth and drum machine work, radio field recordings, and lengthy melodic excursions. *The Daydreams of a Production Line Worker* is absolutely one of those albums you have to put on and sit with, as it is a constantly shifting sonic adventure.

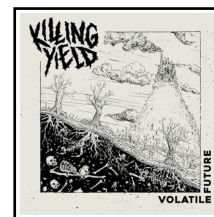
Reviewer: Seth McBurney  
Label: Sealed



## KILLING YIELD – Volatile Future cassette

Full-throttle raw punk blasting out of Zagreb, Croatia. Tasty riffs stacked on top of more tasty riffs, backed by a tight-as-fuck rhythm section. Sitting atop it all, the vocalist tears into the delicate membrane of your sorry eardrum with a scathing critique of the militarism, consumerism, and greed that plagues our dying planet. Scratches a similar itch for me as AVSKUM, which I'll happily bleed to any day. Play at maximum amplitude!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: self-released



## KÜRØISHI – Egocide of the Warmad LP

Excellent executed crust punk from Finland with an epic scope and an anti-militarist pulse. KÜRØISHI drops a concept LP that sounds like DISFEAR filtered through AMEBIX and a global sabotage manifesto. Galloping drums, dramatic epic riffs, and the kind of political urgency with a dragged soul that steps you into the fire. Not just apocalyptic in sound—it lives it. Recommended.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez  
Label: Fight / SPHC



## KÄRTĚL – Ningun Ser Humano es Ilegal cassette

Wow, this is a powerful release, starting off with the quality of the recording—this is perfect for the band. Thick and precise, I can hear every instrument. The songs remind me of some Japanese bands mixed with a lot of other influences. I think I listened to this five times in a row when I first got it. The vocals sound powerful and impassioned. This is so good I am writing it down for my year-end top ten already. Unfortunately, it seems to be sold out already. This definitely needs to have another pressing, whether tape or vinyl. Top-notch hardcore punk.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain  
Label: Noise Merchant



## LIFE – Violence, Peace, and Peace Research cassette reissue

Originally released in 2013, this album punches you in the gut like a pro boxer. With Scandinavian-influenced hardcore riffs à la MOB 47 layered under rumbling bass and thunderous drums reminiscent of the Japanese classics like ACID, LIFE always finds a metallic edge that keeps every track brutal and relentless. There is room for all sorts of vibes and speeds here: the title track opens with a fast-paced banger, while mid-album tracks like "Dead Silent Spring" and "The Way of Human Existence..." deliver epic mid-tempo tunes amid the chaos. There is also a nod to genre forebears in the form of "Conquest," a DISCLOSE cover. *Violence, Peace and Peace Research* is a ferocious assault of angry, political, and intense punk. If you crave raw power with an ideological bite, this reissue is essential.



Reviewer: João Seixas  
Label: Red Truth

## LOS BANGERS – Demo '25 cassette

The blown-out garage flair of Temuco's LOS BANGERS lands somewhere between early HUMBERS and TEEN-GENERATE, keeping the glorious '70s-born sleaze alive and kicking. From the syrupy "Teenage Kicks" meets-JOHNNY THUNDERS-core of "Explode Heart," to the screaming piano of the DOLLS-esque "Electric," and on to the DEAD BOYS-style rough rocking of "Sweet Sweet," this one is coming in hot. Don't be surprised when you find yourself reaching for the volume knob to crank it up.



Reviewer: Jason Harding  
Label: Junko

## LOWER MINDS – World is Collapsing cassette

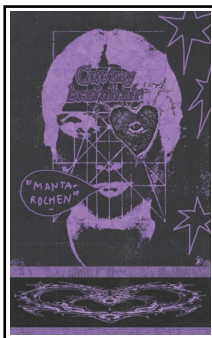
Extremely rockin' release from Tbilisi which reminds me of NO TIME and ARMS RACE in places. Real primal, pissed-off hardcore which will grab you by the lapels and give you a dry slap for your troubles. Get it listened to.



Reviewer: Ben Marshall  
Label: Noise Merchant

## MANTAROCHEN – Cut My Brainhair cassette

From Leipzig, Germany, MANTAROCHEN releases their second full-length album on cassette. The band plays an icy post-punk/coldwave kind of thing, with really haunting, low-end female vocals hanging over ever-present synth, sparse drums, and gangly guitar riffs. I really enjoy the instrumental opener "Delta (Intro)," as it sets the mood for the brooding tracks that follow. Some songs move with a little urgency, like but mostly we get a mid-tempo pace, leaving plenty of space for these dark reveries. That said, none of the songs linger on: they're all in the economy of sub-three-minutes. "Pull Me" may be my favorite of the album, with an unnerving synth trill and a single note-bend on the guitar—it's angular, almost a little sci-fi, and perfectly droning. Clean production, but not overly polished. If this type of genre is at all up your alley, you will like this.

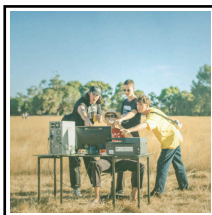


"Shac

Reviewer: Willis Schenk  
Label: It's Eleven

## METDOG – Questions and Answers Regarding Computers and Screens LP

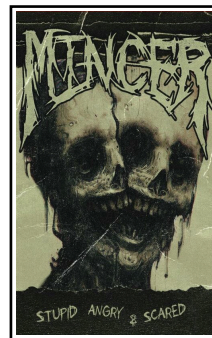
Do you remember the scene in *Napoleon Dynamite* where Kip sings "I love technology" over a Casio beat at his wedding? Imagine that with backing by ERIK NERVOUS and you have Melbourne band METDOG's new record. A concept album of sorts, these thirteen songs are, as the title suggests, all about computers and screens. Opener "First and Last Day of My Life" is about the day Dad brought home a PC and changed the course of the singer's personal history. The track list gives away the lyrical content for the rest: "What My Computer's For," "Screen Time," "Computer Talk," "Computer Games," etc. You get the idea. Musically, the band buzzes with scruffy pop that intertwines guitar leads with bubbling synth washes and will resonate with fans of GEE TEE, RESEARCH REACTOR CORP., and, of course, DEVO. There are quite a few nice surprises, like when "Hey Siri" moves from garage punk to a pounding NEW ORDER-style club beat, and the synth take on "Misery" on "Surfing the Web" that probably has DICK DALE posthumously pissed. It's a fun, low-stakes time for very online egos. There is a vinyl pressing, but I think this one is better suited for digital download.



Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi  
Label: Critter

## MINCER – Stupid, Angry & Scared cassette

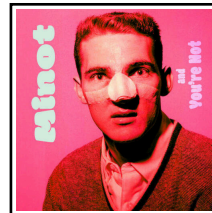
Grind-influenced hardcore that swerves in and out of punk and metal in a whiplash-inducing way. In the punker moments, they have a rabid, unhinged vibe that brings to mind DECREPIT and SHITLIST. Then they career into something more akin to SIEGE or AS-SÜCK, with blastbeats and breakdowns. I don't hear a bass if there is one, which leaves the production feeling a little thin, exacerbated by an over-tightened snare tone. Not to quibble, but these are the things that prevent this release from reaching the echelons of brutality attained by the aforementioned bands. Lots of potential on display that with some honing could produce a viscous blade, to be sure.



Reviewer: Matt Casteel  
Label: Noise Merchant

## MINOT – And You're Not cassette

Debut release by a three-piece band from Missoula, Montana, although this cassette plays as if it's two releases spooled into one. The A-side is five songs of catchy and driving garage pop/psych, not unlike something you would find on In The Red Records. Very fun and I dig it. The B-side, however, has only three songs. Each of them are longer, with none of them clocking in under three minutes. All three of them are slower, more mature/less catchy, and considerably more artsy than the previous side. I was in the midst of jotting things down for the review during the first listen and had to rework it all because the difference in sides felt so jarring. It's a bit funny when you start to notice how much your personal musical tastes and exposures can make you interpret things differently from others. For example, my initial inclination was to talk about how clean, slick, and professional the songs on this cassette are, but everywhere I look, the band seems to have "lo-fi" as a descriptive term for their band as often as they can affix it. Either way, I like MINOT (A-side MINOT, anyways), but this is definitely one of the cleaner cassette recordings I have reviewed in a while.



Reviewer: Biff Bifaro  
Label: Crush Grove

## MOTHER NATURE – Loving, Joyful and Free 12"

More often than not the term "Mother Nature" is associated with the more nurturing side of the natural world; flowers, butterflies, sunshine, all that. It's easy to forget that Mother Nature also includes the brutality of natural disasters like wildfires, hurricanes, and tornadoes. After hearing their pleasantly-titled *Loving, Joyful, and Free* I think it's safe to say that the Leeds hardcore unit MOTHER NATURE represents the violent, pissed-off side. The band cranks out six tracks of bone-crunching hardcore with a twist, utilizing discordant, phased guitars that leave you disoriented while the John Brannon-style vocals knock you flat on your ass. Featuring members of the FLEX, MOB RULES, and WHIPPING POST, the brute force on display should come as no surprise. Highly recommended.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson  
Label: Static Shock

## MOTO – On the Run CD

First off, this is not the Paul Caporino-fronted band M.O.T.O., and the almost unsearchable name and album title keeps this CD a bit of a mystery. The rough recording production and bar-band garage rock leanings actually do align musically with Caporino's similarly named project, or something akin to the GIZMOS—the difference being that all the songs here are over four minutes, while the "band with the periods" rarely breaks the two-minute mark. Some of the tracks like "Dandelions and Butterflies" have a psych bend like early COMPULSIVE GAMBLERS or late the KNOW-BODY ELSE.



Reviewer: Tim Janchar  
Label: self-released

## MR. PISS – Mr. Piss cassette

Ten-song mono cassette written, recorded, mastered, and produced in Raleigh, NC by MR. PISS. All ten songs are mid-tempo, repetitive riff noise rock tracks with a mixture of barked vocals, sometimes sleepy and off-time, and just full-on rapping. There is a drummer credited, Dick Gunn, amidst four other queer-sounding, homoerotic pseudonyms for the other players on the recording, but I would be absolutely baffled if this were not a drum-machine-driven solo project. Actually, there is a photo included which features four people in it, so maybe it's not a solo project.

