



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #506

JULY 2025

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 97 reviews, contributed by:

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D. Gregory	Jake Joyce
Bill Chamberlain	Tim Janchar
Kenny Kaos	Daniel Z.
Robert Collins	Emma Miller
Erika Elizabeth	Ben Marshall
Mama Goblin	Willis Schenk
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THE COUNTERFORCE

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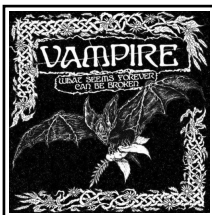
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band, milquetoast “street punk” going. It sounds like copyright-free library music. If this is the best the Midwest has to offer, then I’m joining the liberal coastal elite. Pass.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Rejected Youth

VAMPIRE – What Seems Forever Can Be Broken LP

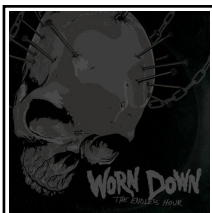
Since reviewing *Pomegranate Seeds: An International Benefit for Mutual Aid in Gaza*, the compilation put out by the DISSIDENTS, I’ve been hunting for more VAMPIRE material, so when I saw I was assigned this LP I became very excited. VAMPIRE is an Australian band that plays apocalyptic anarcho-punk. A sense of extreme urgency pervades VAMPIRE’s sound, and *What Seems Forever Can Be Broken* is ten songs that combine the demanding hardcore of CONFLICT, with a foundation of CRASS, and the rough-hewn delivery of raw punk. The resulting album is dark, hauntingly mesmeric, but also aggressive with a sense of communal voice. In other words, this is anarcho-punk that is of the moment, and articulates exactly what contemporary punk is about without being preachy or elitist. This is that eye-to-eye, in-the-trenches vocalization of criticism that comes off as eye-opening and perspective-altering. *What Seems Forever Can Be Broken* is by far my favorite release thus far in 2025, but also might be the best album I’ve heard in a really long time. Like, this is benchmark-level material, so definitely give this a listen.



Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Discos Enfermos / Phobia / Televised Suicide

WORN DOWN – The Endless Hour EP

Currently sitting in front of a modest pile of releases to review, and I’ve been treated to nothing but quality so far. However, I have not been treated to a zero-bullshit, full-throttle, tough-as-nails USHC release...until now. And I didn’t know I was missing that energy until I dropped the needle on *The Endless Hour* and started my mental mosh around the apartment. Pure power here—five doses of uncompromising and thoughtful hardcore energy. Breakdowns? Yeah. Circle pits? Please. But take a minute with “If You Could See Both Sides” and know that there is more here. The knuckles are never touching the ground even though the riffs think otherwise: I don’t regret shit, I’ve learned to live with it. I’ve learned to live with myself, I could give a fuck what everyone thinks. But I wish they knew the truth for my own mental health. The shit is supposed to be deep, y’all—and WORN DOWN are all that and more.

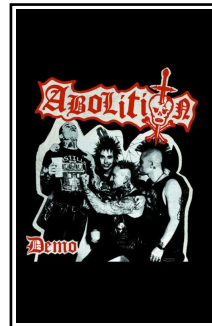


Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: The Record Label

ABOLITION – Abolition demo cassette

Gotta love it when a band clocks in with a demo that is a completely realized batch of tunes. That’s exactly what ABOLITION offers up for us here. Four-chord Parisian street punk that attacks like a psychotic mutant with lib-erty spikes. Striking the balance between hardcore punk and UK82 with catchy, gritty tunes they burst out of the gate as a well conditioned unit. Fans of SAVAGEHEADS should take note, along with anyone who sank their teeth into the INFRA full-length from earlier this year or the 2024 THATCHER’S SNATCH EP. So many groups that attempt this sound fall embarrassingly short, which makes it that much more exciting when a band like ABOLITION pops up. I’m excited to see where they’ll go from here. Yet another great release from the fine folks at Mendeku Diskak.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Mendeku Diskak



ADACTA – Tma LP reissue

Damn, this really is a blast from the past. I had not thought of ADACTA for ages, but reading the name instantly brought back memories of two decades past, back when trying to be TRAGEDY was still an acceptable thing and my hair was luxurious. Needless to say, I haven’t played this Bratislavan band since that illustrious epoch, and had no idea they were still around and kicking. What’s the deal, then? This LP is actually a reissue, as *Tma* was originally released in 2015. The initiative makes sense because, if you are into progressive, dark, metallic crusty hardcore (also known as “neocrust”), this album will undoubtedly delight you, as it is perfectly executed and ticks all the expected boxes. It has everything you’d expect from this genre and more—the thick, down-tuned heaviness, the dark, moody guitar leads, the epic changes of pace, the anguished, hoarse vocals, and a crow on the cover. ADACTA sounds like an unstoppable machine of sorrow and anger. The songwriting can be ambitious at times, but the band always manages to pull it out. I love that they decided to stick to their native language, as it confers some extra meanness. I am no longer in touch with the genre and rarely listen to it, but when it is that well done, I always enjoy it and it makes me want to dig out my records from ACURSED, SILENCE, or mid-’00s WOLFBRI-GADE, and maybe get some hair implants. A strong record in its own rights.

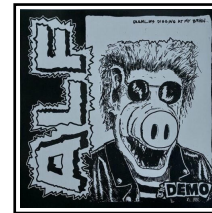
Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Papagájův Hlasatel



ALF – The Demo LP

Remember Alf? He’s back! In punk form. Back in 2023, these Perth punkers, whom you may know from acts like BIKINI COPS, GHOULIES, and PARANOIAS, dropped their demo cassette, a split release with Good-bye Boozy and what I would guess is their own label, Optimal Tapes and Records. What we have here is the limited vinyl pressing of that demo. For anyone familiar with PARANOIAS (and if you’re not, get on it—their EP from a couple years back was fantastic!), the guitar work across these eight tracks should sound familiar. It maybe lacks that act’s concrete slicing timbre, and the tempos here are closer to typical garage punk territory, but it still sounds like some Dangerhouse act picked up a DEAD KENNEDYS-esque pendant for twangy licks. The vocals are both buried in the mix and very loosely multi-tracked, so I have no idea what they’re on about. But it sort of sounds like Sean from the SPITS singing through BUCK BILOXI’s head. It’s all mushed together with the perfect slapdash production, but it also sounds super thin at times. But, hey, that’s a demo for you! Worth picking up if you come across a copy.

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Goodbye Boozy



ALIMENT – Sempre Res 12”

ALIMENT is a somewhat elusive entity. With releases tracing as far back as 2010, they have clearly been honing their craft for quite some time. The accomplishment of such longevity yields dividends that take the form of pulling off complex rhythms and harmonies with ease, sneaking nuance in through the side door, not to deny the effectiveness of the hooks and general catchiness at hand. That’s the beauty of *Sempre Res* (which translates to “always nothing”)—the pop sensibilities lure you in, but the ingenuity and angularity will keep you coming back. Stylistically, ALIMENT occupies the midpoint between PROTOMARTYR and the MARKED MEN. Not as dour as the former, nor as overtly melodic as the latter, they have a textured post-punk aesthetic that doesn’t get too gloomy or zapped of energy. Barcelona seems to consistently produce bands that twist the dial a bit to the left. ALIMENT is no exception. Provocative in exactly the right ways.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Flexidiscos



ARTIFICIAL GO – Musical Chairs LP

ARTIFICIAL GO returns with another offering of post-punk out of Cincinnati. On this go-around, you can easily hear the evolution in the band's sound, with lush production and more genre exploration. The warm production sounds great, specifically allowing the bass lines to evoke the sounds of the SLITS, DELTA 5, or fellow Feel It Records act SPREAD JOY. The genre exploration, on the other hand, seems to provide really mixed results. The breezy Flying Nun Records sound in tunes like "The World is My Runway" and "Late to the Party" provide really nice, dreamy grooves that seem to lock in and get the head bopping. When the no wave influence gets too hot though, things start to veer the other way. Tracks like closer "Sky Burial" just feel ephemeral, and low point "Red Convertible" tried my patience to the point of fighting not to just skip forward and end it. Argue that I simply don't get it, that's fine, but the highs and lows on this record are so discordant that it takes the head from bopping along to banging on a table and back in whiplash-like fashion.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Feel It



ASTIO – Tempio Inganno LP

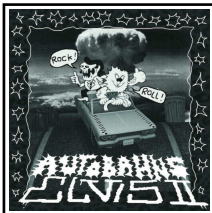
The way I would describe this is a combination of post-punk, anarcho-punk, goth, and dark-wave, but it sounds like they have carved out their own space within all of that. This sounds very well-recorded and the minimalist production is a change from how I imagine that they sound live. I appreciated the change of pace from the rest of what I was listening to. This is a very good record.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Agipunk



AUTOBAHNS / ELVIS II – split EP

More classic lo-fi bedroom egg-punk madness brought to us by our Italian friends over at Goodbye Boozy, one of the top five labels in existence at the moment. Both AUTOBAHNS and ELVIS II play a bittersweet, blown-out style of DEVO-inspired punk. AUTOBAHNS are a little more raw and actually have a bit of a chain punk edge, while ELVIS II is melodic and has catchy riffs for days. I actually picked this up the day it came out and was ecstatic to see it come across my review desk. Really solid work here. My only complaint is that it's all over too soon!

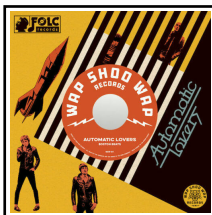


Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Goodbye Boozy

AUTOMATIC LOVERS – Boston Brats / Who Cares If Tomorrow Comes 7"

Punks from Madrid, singing about punks from Boston. Named after a VIBRATORS song, sounds like a DAMNED song. By this point, you probably already get the picture, but to spell it out anyway, these two tracks offer up classic UK punk sounds that are well-studied without sounding trite; AUTOMATIC LOVERS know what they like, but they don't have it by rote. Both tracks here are high-energy, with maximalism happy to creep in—the piano chords banging along on the chorus of "Boston Brats" want to hide in the background, but they make so much sense that you can almost feel them more than hear them—and the B-side is a fantastic cover of '80s punk band KIRK AND THE JERKS.

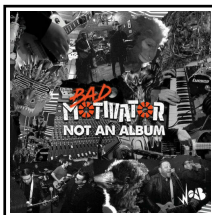
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: FOLC / Wap Shoo Wap



BAD MOTIVATOR – Not an Album LP

Swampy, fuzzy, KINKS-like rock'n'roll. Seems a little too produced to call it garage music. Tons of energy, for sure, but it seems sort of put-on to me. It's also got this herky-jerky thing going on that I almost always find annoying. Other than a nice cover of the GUN CLUB's "Sex Beat," this is mostly forgettable for me.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Wolf on a Bridge



BART AND THE BRATS / JACKET BURNER – Good Cop / Bad Cop split EP

If you weren't peeping the sleeve for guidance, it would be difficult to tell where one band ends and the other begins on this well-matched 45. Uniting two esteemed acts from France and New Mexico respectively, you get two down-home-style garage jammers from each band. Real rockin', Xerox aesthetic, ski masks, donuts—what else could you possibly ask for?

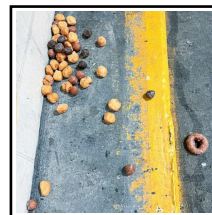
Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Goodbye Boozy



THOUGHT PARTNER – When Your Money Fails LP

Third release and first to vinyl from the Boston-based THOUGHT PARTNER. I hear the truncated, post-hardcore rhythms and shouted vocals of JESUS LIZARD, but with a synth that creeps in and bubbles around the turbulence. There's long sections of drone and pulse, sparse at first, then rising with manic vocal flourishes for a brain-rattling crescendo, on full display in "Backfilling." Right up my alley. While the aforementioned track clocks at over five minutes, they also have sub-two-minute tracks, speeding right by, making you long for those stretched-out moments. In general, the band plays effectively on the tension between odd rhythms, heavy four-on-the-floor beats, slower sections and chugging calamity. Dissonant, weaselly little guitar riffs mixed with a fat, heavy bass and splashy, find-every-possible-fill drums—all under the command of those vocals that sound like the singer is swinging on a pendulum past the mic, adjusting his volume as he draws nearer and further. After a few listens of this self-released record, I'm hooked.

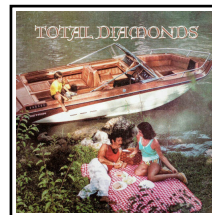
Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: self-released



TOTAL DIAMONDS – Negative Space EP

Mid-tempo and catchy with female vocals that kind of remind me of the RIVER CITY TANLINES. This isn't pop punk, this is punk rock. Punk'n'roll. It's raw with a garage quality to it. All four cuts are a fair bit different. Excellent record.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Post Party Depression



TOTÄLICKERS – Directo Luís Aragofest 2023 cassette

Active since 2006, TOTÄLICKERS have paid their dues to D-beat! Worshipers of DISCHARGE and MG 15, these seasoned punks from Barcelona don't fuck around. Surely, the best way to experience the intensity of punk is live. That's where bands make it or break it. Captured live in Madrid, TOTÄLICKERS' live album is a testament to their D-beat prowess. Blazing through eight tracks (that are actually eleven because some songs are stitched together), the band delivers breakneck riffs, angry rants, and pure



punk chaos. It's fast and it's furious; a must for hardcore purists.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Diy Kontraatak

V/A – Calgary Calling LP

I'm half-Canadian, like left ear to right ankle or something, so I'm really connecting with this comp right now. Local scene comps are my favorite because I feel they really take the time to give an accurate slice of a community. On the other hand, one of the biggest issues with local comps like this is that bands will sometimes give their throwaway tracks. I don't feel like this is at all the case here. Some of the standout bands for me start at the beginning, with the BREAK INS' opening shouts of "One, two, fuck you" energetically blending parts of the OBSERVERS and the BAGS. GALATICAS, JULIET'S GOT A GUN, and LETTERS TO NORMA continue on with punk, thrash, hardcore, and indie vibes, and I thought MEDUSAS' song "Block Him" was a hockey song, but upon further listen, it is a scathing review of dude that I think is harassing one of the people in the band. For the most part, the only job of a compilation is to give some new bands a try, and moreover, to provide something new to track down, and this does just that. *Calgary Calling* has everything from art-punk, punk, math-rock, SoCalL riffs, indie, '90s DC-core, riot grrrl, and hardcore, which means there is something on here you'll certainly be turned onto. REBEL GIRRLZ have a great BIKINI KILL-ish tune that completely knocked my socks off. Just when I thought I'd found my favorite song, TIPLESS comes in with "Emetophobia," which has a sound like SONIC YOUTH blended with chaotic hardcore. Look, if I was a non-dirty mayor, completely unlike the mayor that JULIET'S GOT A GUN talks about in their "Dirty Mayor" song, I would post this on Calgary's city website to attract tourist punks that might not stop into Calgary traveling through doing black bear and moose research. There are fifteen bands, and both the CD and LP come with a twelve-page booklet. There is something on *Calgary Calling* for almost everyone. I think you should consider grabbing this from wherever you grab things from.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Sketchy

V/A – No Coast: Punk Compilation CD

I'm not from the US, so a lot of your references are lost on me, one of which is "the Midwest." It's as vast and unknowable as the bottom of the ocean, or Narnia or Middle Earth or something to me, and so I can only assume that it causes the kind of psychic and cosmic damage that would result in some of the output on this record. Sixteen tracks of some of the most generic, garage



though a little formulaic, are honest and heartfelt. For example, in the song "Going Down to the Bar," I really believe that the guy wants to meet up with me and go down to the bar. Furthermore, in the song "Let's Go Pogo," I feel like the SPIKY TOPS want me to go pogo somewhere. This is a catchy, hands-in-the-air, chuggin' 40oz of beers or seltzers music, and when they sing "Party till your guts spill out" in the song "Party Till Your Guts Spill Out," I know that these folks would be laughing as they hold my hair back while my guts spilled out of my mouth.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Joe Pogo

THE STATES – Gimme Joy 12"

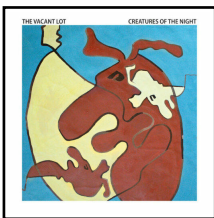
Oh, I like this right from the start. Catchy and melodic, it's got a real "full" sound, and fronted with female vocals that are catchy on their own. Pop punk? Not really. Power pop? Possibly? Rock'n'roll? Punk? Pop? Honestly, it's all of those things. Drums really keep things moving along nicely. Kind of reminds me of the BABYSHAKES with vocals that aren't quite so sugary. I'm bouncing and swaying my head and my shoulders. I love this.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Legless

THE VACANT LOT – Creatures of the Night EP

A change of pace for the mighty Iron Lung Label, this 7" resurrects material from Australian first-wavers the VACANT LOT. Citing the BUZZCOCKS, MAGAZINE, and WIRE as influences, their four-song *Living Underground* EP was the band's sole release from their initial late '70s run. Vocalist George Howson has rebuilt the band here with a strong new lineup including ALIEN NOSEJOB-er Jake Robertson in order to properly document some previously unrecorded songs from their original tenure. With poetic lyrics and an emboldened sound, the revamped LOT pairs an energetic earnestness with fluid angularity, like a cock-tail of the SWELL MAPS mixed with the SHAPES—an interesting and worthwhile post/punk spin.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Iron Lung



THE VIOLENT ISLES – Gang of Del Ray LP

Odd one, this. Listening to it after reading their influences (SHAM 69, the BUSINESS, the TEMPLARS, etc.), I had to ponder what exactly was it they took from these? Was it to make plodding, mid-tempo post-punk with vocals that sound like they were recorded next door? I suppose, if I am going to be charitable, I can sense some guitar tones that are not un-TEMPLARS-esque, but that would truly be taking a bit of a leap. Not sure who this is for, really.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Descanso Music Recordings

THE WITCHCRAFT MERIT BADGE – April Fools 2024 7"

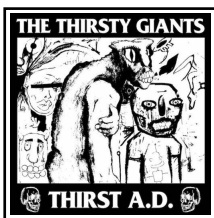
This is a fun two-song 7" that covers the PROMISE RING and DISCOUNT. The WITCHCRAFT MERIT BADGE pulls off what is usually impossible to do, which is to take a known song and make it their own. With both the PROMISE RING and DISCOUNT, WITCHCRAFT MERIT BADGE delivers a unique indie punk twist on these late '90s classics. I'm not sure if I understand the band and what they are trying to do, if anything at all, but I don't think I need to, either. This is enjoyable, and perhaps that is enough.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: self-released

THIRSTY GIANTS – Thirst A.D. CD

Your typical street punk, power chord affair here, sans their track "Drowned," which is more or less a power ballad that essentially comes out of nowhere midway through the EP. As someone with a sensitive, sentimental spirit, this really speaks to my soul. Once it's done, you're sent straight back to Oil-ville. The production is very strong, and everything has been leveled and mixed well, with the exception of the vocals which are oddly tucked away among everything else. Strange choice, because the singer is easily the strongest member of this band. Classic punk yelps with the "fuck you" attitude we've all come to love. I bet these guys rule live.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released



BIBIONE – Paprikatraumbrötchen 10"

The first two records from Czech trio BIBIONE pulled from spiky late '70s/early '80s Euro femme-punk and the stripped-down spark of '90s riot grrrl with plenty of rough-around-the-edges charm, and while this new six-song offering still largely reflects those influences, it also twists the kaleidoscope to bring more sharp lines and angles into focus. "No Friends Just Customers" is BIBIONE at their most locked-in, with clean, pointillist guitar and taut rhythms vaguely reminiscent of SHOPPING or TRASH KIT, with "Tired" throwing in some judicious cowbell clattering for extra art-punk asymmetry. "Steve Jobless" hits closer to the noisy/shouty UK wave of riot grrrl (more HUGGY BEAR than BIKINI KILL), the relatively sprawling (meaning barely over three minutes long) "Bambini di Traga" puts a modern post-punk spin on AUTOCLAVE's knotted, off-kilter pop abstraction, and "Jazz" and "Rats in the Attic" take things in a darker direction, with bone-dry beats, snaking bass, and skronking sax like some band that would have played with XMAL DEUTSCHLAND or MALARIA! in a decaying Berlin warehouse circa 1982, although the (English) lyrics for the latter track are decidedly less serious—something about Swiss cheese and holes?

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Day After

BLACK IRON PRISON – Black Iron Prison LP

Here we have a fringe case of subtraction leading to something truly unique and impressive. Toronto's BLACK IRON PRISON genuinely took me aback with their abstractive and deconstructive approach to power violence. But to be fair, I'm feeling bad for even trying to put this thing in a box. Is it even possible to call it power violence at this point? It is too constructed to call noise, but too deranged to categorize as any conventional genre. Even Iron Lung, the legendary label that constantly releases the most out-of-left-field music ever made, refrains from describing it in a literal sense. But for the sake of giving you a vague idea of what to expect, I'd say it sounds like FOOT VILLAGE and the BODY had a fucked up abomination of a baby—or rather, a featureless, hollow mold of a "baby"—and then fed it nothing but dull razor wires and dry ice. And if you want me to be slightly more descriptive, the whole LP consists only of claustrophobic, pummeling, yet weirdly ritualistic drums, and hysteric vocals of someone who is trying to rip out of their body with utmost urgency. There is occasionally some miscellaneous noise sprinkled on top as well, but that's pretty much it. Sorry folks, no guitar, bass, or riffs today! But come on, who needs those when the whole record sounds like a bouquet of shining, sterilized, ice-cold surgical knives?



It's perfect as is, and I'm willing to fight anyone who thinks otherwise.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Iron Lung

BRAIN TOURNIQUET / DELIRIANT NERVE – split LP

If you're familiar with Washington, DC demolition crews BRAIN TOURNIQUET and DELIRIANT NERVE, you could easily assume that this split is an instant classic without even listening to it—and you'd be totally right. It really is. Both bands are in top form to wreak havoc and fill their sides with the nastiest tracks you could ever imagine. While BRAIN TOURNIQUET masterfully switches from thrash-fast to sludge-slow in a heartbeat as the power violence formula requires, DELIRIANT NERVE sticks to death-metal-infused breed of full-throttle grindcore that rarely stops for anything. What I especially love about this split is that it demonstrates the grind spectrum perfectly—from "more hardcore, less metal" to "less hardcore, more metal," in order of appearance. Imagine if CROSSED OUT and INSECT WARFARE had a split. It's probably the closest thing we'll ever get to that. Yeah, it's that good.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Iron Lung / Regurgitated Semen

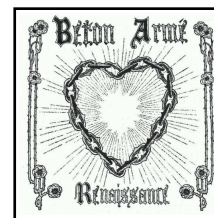
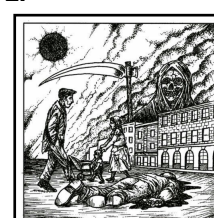
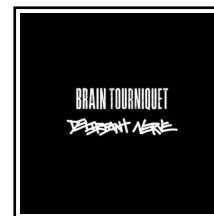
BURNING KROSS – III EP

BURNING KROSS has elements of Swedish hardcore similar to bands like WOFLPACK/WOLF-BRIGADE. They also have a bit of UK hardcore punk thrown in, like the VARUKERS, DISASTER, etc., and lyrics that are similar to the anarcho scene. Beyond that, this is a really well-recorded EP that allows the power of the music to shine while the vocals are clear and defined. A very good record.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain
Label: Discos Enfermos / Plastic Wound

BÉTON ARMÉ – Renaissance LP

This band can't still be a secret, so now reviewers (and fans) are saddled with the unenviable but inevitable task of compartmentalizing their sound—a sound that feels dangerously close to fully-realized on *Renaissance*. Catchy as ever, and they are still as much an anthemic Oi! band as ever, but after a batch of killer



EPs and constant gigs, BETÓN ARMÉ sounds truly like themselves on this first full-length. The backing vocals cannot go unmentioned—the “ohhhhh ohhhh”s are a focal point in nearly every song on the record (as are the backing vocals in general), though the lead vox are really what gives BETÓN ARMÉ a distinct character. Sharp and biting, skipping the typical gruff skinhead vocals that would be totally appropriate (and expected, and typical). The influence of European skin bands is still front and center (think CAMERA SILENS and NABAT and you have the general foundation), but there are disco beats here, and a sonic sensibility on the level of ADOLESCENTS' blue album. *Renaissance* is just a perfect, timeless, essential punk record.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

CPC GANGBANGS – Roadhouse EP

Canadian purveyors of down-and-dirty garage CPC GANGBANGS are back, this time with a couple of smashing covers sandwiching the title track of this smokin' little EP. First up, their version of CRIME's "Rock and Roll Enemy No. 1" foregoes the original's scuzzy wobble in favor of a revved-up rock'n'roll that hits a satisfying pitch. Next, the only original song here, "Roadhouse" is a quick, harmonica-strewn groove that surely has put a grin on BO DIDDLEY'S ghost. Finally, the jumping R&B of BOBBY JAMES's "Going Back To Philly" gets the GANGBANG treatment, ending the record on an upbeat note. This will be a hot little treat for ears of a certain ilk.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Slovenly

CATHEXIS – Cathexis demo cassette

In the ever-mutating world of heavy music, few bands are as bold and inventive as CATHEXIS, a sci-fi-inspired metalpunk solo effort by Neuromancer that fuses dystopian storytelling with a knuckle-dragging sonic assault on the senses. Like a thematic spiritual successor to the boundary-pushing work of VOIVOD, CATHEXIS sounds like a raw mixture of G.I.S.M., BATHORY and ONSLAUGHT, just to name a few. Themes delve into the realm of works such as *Simulacra* and *Simulation* and provide a sense of hopelessness as we step towards a technocratic world. Future metalpunk has landed!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Roachleg

CHUMHUFFER – Slaughterhouse Five EP

I'm often reluctant to hear anything that comes out of NYC these days, because all too often the band is reaching for the lowest rung or overextending themselves for their art. However, CHUMHUFFER is bustin' out of the gates with a perfectly crafted and accessible five-tune EP. I did a little research on CHUMHUFFER, and found to my delight that the band stole a copy of Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse Five* novel from a huge chain store and remarkably used the themes of the book as the architecture for this EP. In other words, CHUMHUFFER, like Vonnegut, is plain spoken and incendiary with their self-reflection and observations on current affairs. This EP has East Coast AVAIL/SILENT MAJORITY elements while adding a little bit of the NYC oddball phrasing. Overall, I think this is a great EP that combines enough melody and hardcore to be much more than a one-time spinner.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: DWY

COFFEE STAIN – Good Bad Taste EP

After releasing last year's excellent ARMOR LP, 11 PM is back with more Floridian heat, this time from Jacksonville's COFFEE STAIN and their new EP, the aptly-titled *Good Bad Taste*. Featuring five cuts of bone-crunching hardcore punk with rabid vocals and a predilection for John Waters, COFFEE STAIN rips through these tracks with a caustic sense of urgency. The only time things slow down is when the band drops in sound bites from Waters' films like *Female Trouble* and *Pink Flamingos*. A fine EP, highly recommended for lovers of hardcore and lowbrow trash.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: 11PM

COLD SUMMER – Altlasten EP

Feedback-drenched and frost-covered, COLD SUMMER from Leipzig combines post-punk and hardcore into a ferocious and icy presentation on the *Altlasten* EP. Moments of otherworldly, atmospheric sounds intersperse the hardcore that is of the variety that gives you goosebumps but also makes you want to dead-eye motherfuckers with cool confidence. The vocals push the limits of vocal cord strain as they scream with passionate but melancholic precision and deliver the lyrics in German. The final song on this four-



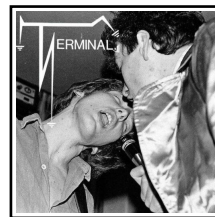
TERMINAL – Am I Doing It Right / Hold On 7"

Do yourself a favor. Cue up the A-side here, turn up the volume, throw your phone into another room, and allow yourself to take a ride for the next four-and-a-half minutes. This absolutely crucial single from an early '80s group from North Wales is required listening. It is anthemic, grandiose stuff by kids—and for kids—who were/are too big for whatever town that was chosen for them. There is a SPRINGSTEEN-like desperation at play here. This is what JOHNNY COUGAR's "I Need a Lover" might have sounded like if he stayed on Gulcher Records, but he was destined for something bigger, just like TERMINAL could have been/should have been/must have been. This reissue represents the A-sides of both of their only two singles, from 1980 and 1982. While "Am I Doing It Right" conveys a beautiful, sophomoric desperation, interestingly enough, the flipside "Hold On" offers up a more mature, darker edge, and more than holds its own at that. The folks over at Fish & Cheap have done the masses a favor digging up these songs once again.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Fish & Cheap

THE GAMITS – Endorsed by You LP reissue

I have a group of pals, and once a year we meet somewhere for five days and we make an album of songs. In May 2010, we went to a Denver, CO recording studio and two things happened: I have never written a better song than I did on that trip (the song is called "God Killed My Grandma"), and secondly, the guy that was recording us said he was in a band called GAMBITS that I might enjoy. I went home to look for the GAMBITS and I never found anything about the band or even a band with that name, so after spending something like eleven hours a week on the internet for nearly fifteen years searching for the GAMBITS, I gave up and I stopped looking. Until today! As I was doing research on the band the GAMITS, I realized that fifteen years ago, I heard a "B" in the name of the guy's band (and there is no "B")! I've been chasing a shadow, and now I get to check out his band as though it was May 2010, only ten years after it originally came out rather than twenty-five years after it was initially released. From the first track "15 Minutes," this record sets a high-energy pace with tight, heavy guitars while still leaving room for the bass and drums to come through very nicely. This could easily fit in with the ERGS, DOC HOPPER, HOUSE BOAT, DIRT BIKE ANNIE, the HUNTINGTONS, and folks of that ilk. The lyrics are smart, clever, and biting from time to time. If any of the above bands I mentioned tickle you, then you shouldn't sleep on this twenty-five year anniversary edition. I am over the moon that I can fi-



nally bring this GAMITS ship to port. The fifteen-year search is over. Full circle, brother. Full circle.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Snappy Little Numbers

THE MATTHEW TEARDROP ORCHESTRA – The Matthew Teardrop Orchestra cassette

Six songs, and five of the six are over four minutes long. Jesus, this is going to be tortuous. Cut number one, "I Always Think About Dying," is a slow, depressing tale, as one might expect. It's almost a parody of itself. Ballad-like. Three minutes in and I get the message. Why do we need the last two minutes? Kidding aside, I do think that MATTHEW has a way of sharing his pain in a very personal way. Just hearing him sing is sort of depressing, but it's backed by rather catchy and occasionally upbeat guitar, bass, and drums (and harmonica). Interesting combo. In the end, I actually really do like it, in a BAUHAUS kind of way. I'd also say that my favorite cut is the only one that was under three minutes.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: self-released



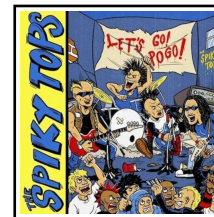
THE SPACKLES – Clamaro CD

Interesting album here. Very psych-heavy, as if LED ZEPPELIN and the ALLMAN BROTHERS decided they wanted to start sounding like MINUTEMEN with Hutch Harris of the THERMALS on vocals. This is essentially the reincarnated spirit of FRANK ZAPPA and THE MOTHERS OF INVENTION, which is always a huge plus for me. If I'm being honest, it took me a minute to start vibing with this album. But the more I understood their direction, the more I started to love it. Not your typical MRR affair, but if you dig garage rock that thinks outside of the box, you'll want to give this a couple spins.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Rum Bar

THE SPIKY TOPS – Let's Go! Pogo! EP

I mean, look at the cover. You already know. The songs are snotty and beer-fueled BLANKS 77, the CASUALTIES, the PIST, and the QUEERS-flavored punk rock. Sometimes in their photos, they have spiked-up hair, so I wonder if the name SPIKY TOPS comes from that. The songs are brimming with energy. The lyrics, al-



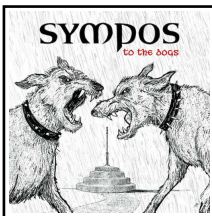
SYMPOS – To the Dogs LP

I have to agree with fellow MRR reviewer Ben Marshall on SYMPOS: they were a joy to discover, have very strong first wave UK '77 influence, and at times sound distinctly un-Oil! for an Oil! band. There's no self-serious tough guy posturing to be found on

To the Dogs, a refreshing change of pace indeed. The tracks are high-energy, catchy as hell, and at times remind me of ANTI-PASTI, UK SUBS, and ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE. I love this album, and highly recommend it regardless of whether you have a mohawk or no hair at all. Check out the title track, "To the Dogs."

Reviewer: Eric Anderson

Label: Distroy / Mister Face / Primator Crew / Tough Ain't Enough

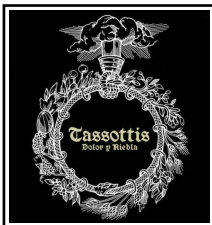


TASSOTTIS – Dolor y Niebla EP

A solid serving of workmanlike Euro Oil Gang vocal "whoa"s? We've got 'em. Slightly too polished guitar tone? Buck-etloads. Slightly bizarre saxophone solo? Just a bit, mate. This is very much one of those If You Like This Sort of Thing releases—absolutely nothing bad here, don't get me wrong, but there are tens of releases that do exactly this, and perhaps I am after something a bit less meat-and-potatoes.

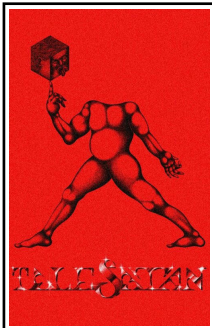
Reviewer: Ben Marshall

Label: Tough Ain't Enough



TELESATAN – Telesatan cassette

Cassette version of the four-song 7" out on Phantom Records. This is the third release by Germany's TELESATAN, returning after a three-year gap from their previous cassette also on Phantom Records. Mid-tempo spooky punk with sassy vocals barked on top. TELESATAN never really makes their way out of the mid-tempo range, with the bass and drums locking in on the repetitive grooves while the guitar meanders around. Vocally, I hear similarities to long-running Buffalo, NY noise rock act ALPHA HOPPER. Both vocalists have a similar chirp, as well as regularly utilizing a vocal upscoop. Professional-sounding recording given the Will Killingsworth mastering treatment, so you know a bit of what you're in for with the sound quality.



Reviewer: Biff Bifaro

Label: Noise Merchant

TENTÁCULO – Va A Pasar Algo LP

From Seville, Spain, TENTÁCULO releases their second LP and their first release in five years. Fairly straightforward melodic punk sound, with a little post-punk guitar riffing, ever-present throughout the songs. A really great mix—I can hear everyone clearly and evenly. While not the most exciting praise, I find it worth noting, as it's often not the case. Listening brings to mind the kind of passion and aggression similar to Portland, OR's ABOLITIONIST, though these lyrics aren't presented, so I can't say what they're actually conveying. Anyway, they play on a heavy sound mixed with the melodic, hardcore-style "aaaah" backing vocals, mimicking guitar riffs, in the choruses that often bring a melancholic energy. I really appreciate the craft on display here; everything is tight, precise, and very honed-in. They formed in 2012, so it's no wonder they're completely bonded by their sound.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk

Label: Andalucía Über Alles / Colilla / Malditos Vinilos / Mutant / Nunca Nada



TEO WISE – Fermo o Sparo! LP

There's an Italian concept called "sprezzatura," which refers to the art of making something difficult look effortless. While it's mainly used referring to one's visual style, it's the perfect encapsulation of all aspects of this TEO WISE record. This collection of Italian punk, with a spaghetti Western veneer and power pop sensibilities, is the freshest thing you will hear all year. From the instrumental title track into the brilliant early high-light "Confusionale," to the glammy pop of "Mama non M'ama" (which is wonderfully reminiscent of the stellar '70s Italian nugget "Shy Wa Wa" by SHY WA WA), to the eggy attitude of "Non Importa," this record feels so nonchalant while also sounding so singular and masterfully crafted. A continuous barrage of adjectives and praise could be added here, along with pondering the parallels this record evokes in the listener compared to hearing ADRIANO CELENTANO's "Prisencolinensinaiainciolsol" for the first time, but truly one just needs to hear this to get it. If anything cooler this year comes along, I would be stunned.

Reviewer: D. Gregory

Label: Turbo



song disc is entitled "Keiner ist Mehr Da," and with its pumping bass, drifting lead guitar, and innovative tempo changes, it comes off as refreshing and invigorating. Sporadically and for only the briefest of moments, I catch a combination of sounds that recalls post-hardcore from a couple decades ago, so there is a sense of familiarity within *Altlasten*. All in all, I'd recommend everyone give this one a try.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney

Label: It's Eleven

CONTRA LA CONTRA – Ни Слова О Политике LP reissue

This is a reissue of an album that has been out of print for around twenty years. Dual vocals that remind me of what was going on in the US in the 1990s. Anarcho-punk with a little melody to go along with the heartfelt lyrics and the hardcore punk music. Originally released 2002, this new reissue in 2025 brings back a lot of memories. If you like AUS-ROTTEN, MANKIND?, ANTI-PRODUCT, or the like, then this is a record for you. I love this.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain

Label: Emiground / Издательство Сияние



CULT MIND – Infected LP

Rowdy and rabid punk from San Jose's CULT MIND. Rumbling bass and thrashy guitars accompany vocals that certainly call to mind Jerry A. I can't think of better comparisons than the one's on CULT MIND's Bandcamp, which include WASTED YOUTH, STRUNG UP, and SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, the latter of which definitely comes through in spirit. There's nothing remarkably innovative going on here, but that wouldn't stop this from being an enjoyable listen while ripping a bowl.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson

Label: Transylvanian Recordings



DART – Speed Days LP

Hyper-speed, crust-drenched metallic thrash-core from Finland's DART, bringing a relentless charge with production sharp enough to slice your ear canals. *Speed Days* lives up to its name—sprinting through '80s European hardcore and thrash influences with a touch of early USHC chaos and classic heavy metal. Screamed vocals, buzzsaw riffs, and minimal breath-



ing room create an atmosphere of urgency and mayhem. Sounds from another era. Recommended, as like anything released by SPHC, this is a total shredder.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez

Label: Agipunk / SPHC

DETÉSTO – Horrendous Reality of War EP

I have seen the name of this Brazilian band floating around the internet for a while but never actually bothered giving them a proper chance, so this review feels a little karmic. This EP is called *Horrendous Reality of War*, the band did a cover of DISCHANGE in the past, and it is DETÉSTO's second collaboration with the noise-loving label SPHC, all clear indications that the listener will be dealing with some impactful dis-punk material here, a pleasing perspective that I am always ready to embrace. To be honest, I did not expect the record to be that good. If I hadn't known they were from Brazil, I would have thought they were from some dark corner of Sweden. This band is an incarnation of heavy and gruff direct Scandicore done well. They remind me of the mighty SVAVELDIOXID, as they share the same sort of thick, aggressive production that makes the music sound like an angry mammoth on a rampage. The songwriting looks lovingly and religiously toward Distortion Records-era hardcore, and if you are looking for old school SKIT-SYSTEM or late WOLFPACK or just like to be shouted at gratuitously, DETÉSTO's EP will do the trick. There may be a little too much effect on the vocals for me, a common element in contemporary hardcore, but otherwise it is top-shelf.

Reviewer: Romain Basset

Label: SPHC



DIRTY WOMBS / SLUDGE – split EP

Both bands rock pretty hard. DIRTY WOMBS have a blazing guitar solo to start this off. The production is thick like a POLSON IDEA record. That's not a terrible comparison, either. SLUDGE is from Japan, they also have good production and their songs benefit from it. I put this on and I immediately knew this band was from Japan. The phrasing is very distinct-sounding to me. If you are into hard rock with a little hardcore thrown in, this might be of interest to you.

Reviewer: Bill Chamberlain

Label: SPHC



DOLENT – Dolent cassette

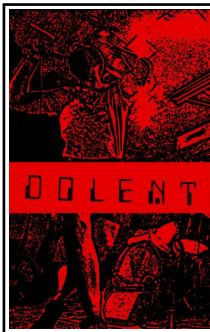
DOLENT is a newly formed Valencian punk band that is producing blistering, grimy, and toothsome throwback hardcore. No information could be found on my end as to previous bands or projects from the current members, which adds to the ambushed effect that this body of tracks hurls. Ten songs total, and it's a no-skip situation through the whole bleedin' thing, with "Avail Els Murs" ("Avail the Walls"), "De Tendencia" ("Trendy Punks"), and the operatically-laced "Noves Glories" ("New Glories") being my darlings of the pack. It is also worth noting that this cassette is from the brilliant minds at Flexidiscos, whose roster is a perpetually enriching discovery for me... *thank you!*

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Flexidiscos

ELECTRIC CHAIR / PHYSIQUE – split LP

For the uninitiated, it is helpful to begin this review with a bit of lore. ELECTRIC CHAIR and PHYSIQUE share a similar origin story, having begun at roughly the same time and both in the city of Olympia. They've shared members, lived together, played together, partied together, and in general terms, are besties. To cement their long-term friendship, they conceived this split LP, which honestly is perhaps the best punk split to ever exist. Each band plays five songs on their respective side, with ELECTRIC CHAIR bringing their JERRY'S KIDS/POISON IDEA-styled hardcore punk and PHYSIQUE offering up their FRAMTID/GLOOM-infused noisecore. The whole thing is packaged and presented by Iron Lung Records and mastered by Shige Noise Room, so the LP is deliciously noisy and absolutely glorious when consumed at maximum volume. You may end up having a favorite side, but for me, this split delivers a complete package from end to end, with both bands presenting their best material and in turn creating a landmark recording of contemporary punk. It's honestly that fucking good.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Iron Lung



EN LOVE / RABBIT – split EP

EN LOVE continues their hardcore-forward approach, tearing through two tracks of mosh-worthy mayhem. Capturing the energy of their powerful live presence, these songs are a step forward from their demo, which was quite good. Brutal but not evil. RABBIT is brutal and evil. To the untrained ear, their two songs sound like run-of-the-mill metalcore...and I do have an untrained ear in this case. They're tight, heavy, and scary-sounding, but it rings somewhat hollow to me, talent notwithstanding. Perhaps it's stylistic preference, but EN LOVE burns brighter in this pairing.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Delayed Gratification

EX PARENTS – Failure EP

Rooted in '90s basement shifts, with a modern ferocity that will straighten you up in mere seconds. Check "Reaper" and hear past decades meeting modern one-two-one-two stomps, and then there are the guitar melodies just kinda floating over the whole thing...repeat listens reveal additional layers. On the one hand, EX PARENTS are no frills, no bullshit, and the listener seems welcome to leave it there should they choose to do so. There's a lot more though, and deep listening is recommended. This four-song EP sounds absolutely fuckin' timeless to these ancient ears, and Council Records continues to be a standard bearer in modern DIY hardcore with foundation in the...well, in the foundation of US DIY hardcore.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Council

FOOD FIGHT – Bercow Bell / It's Cold Outside 7"

Post-punk with the right amount of power pop at heart, in the vein of the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES and L.A. DRUGZ. There's a touch of the FALL-like angularity to set it apart from imitators. The originality and off-beat insights of PLASTIC BERTRAND come out as well, making this a solid 7" for the next after-hours party.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Renegat



SICK OF TALK – Live at CBGB + First 7" Demos cassette

Look, the whole damn tape is worth it to hear Alex growl "let's fucking go!" during "In Your Place," but if you'd like to listen to the rest of that damn thing, I wouldn't blame you. It's the first track, and I'd hate to have you waste your money, you know? I remember when the self-titled EP came out in the mid-'00s, and I admit that I dismissed it based on the cover art (sorry). I was wrong, the shit rips hard... but these versions of those songs are another animal entirely. Holy *fukk*, this shit sounds mean. So yeah—demo versions of the tracks from that EP, plus a face-melting 2005 set at CBGB. If you like North American hardcore, you need this. For fans of NEGATIVE APPROACH, SPAZZ, ABUSED, SIEGE...you get the drill, right? In a just world, these two recordings would be slapped on a 12" and it would be on everyone's best of 2025 lists. Mandatory hardcore listening.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Chronic Death

SIDE CHANNEL – Side Channel demo cassette

This is apparently a new band from Los Angeles, a town that has never been in short supply when it comes to hardcore bands. I haven't been able to find much intel about them, but I would say that SIDE CHANNEL is not the first music endeavour of its members. There are elements I really like on this demo tape, like the vocals that sound angry but are discernible, and the moments when the band goes for a more traditional dis-oriented, raw punk beat rather than the trendier *tupa-tupa*. The spoken word part in the introduction points in the direction of the classic Californian peacopunk (of RESIST AND EXIST, ANOTHER DESTRUCTIVE SYSTEM, HOLOKAUST, and so on), although the production has both feet in the modern world of hardcore. Could SIDE CHANNEL become the American SUBDUED? The synthesis of modern angry political hardcore and old school peacopunk? Now, that's a challenge. A short and sweet recording, and a band I will keep an eye on.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: self-released



SISTEMA OBSOLETO – Esmagado Pela Engrenagem Capitalista EP

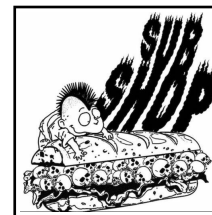
SISTEMA OBSOLETO is a D-beat band from Macedonia, whose lyrics are in Portuguese, and their sound is inspired by ANTI-CIMEX. On the five-track *Esmagado Pela Engrenagem Capitalista* EP, SISTEMA OBSOLETO blasts through with impossibly swift rhythm shifts while buzzsaw guitars and rage-filled vocals conspire to create a whirlwind of hardcore punk. "Alucinação Consensual" picks up at the midpoint of this 7" and is an absolute specimen of D-beat with screaming guitars, pummeling drums, and chugging bass. The closer "Ideias Venenosas" is a bit more mid-paced with its slight Motör-swap, but the vocals and harsh instrumentation drive it into an anguish-ridden, blackened opus that clocks in at over three minutes and is the longest song on the EP. The whole disc is only around eight minutes in length, so you'll definitely be replaying it, and is available through Neon Taste Records.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Neon Taste

SUB/SHOP – Democatessen cassette

Off the bat, the quality and quantity of music on this release makes me think this can't possibly qualify as a demo, even though it has an excellent name for one. Hailing from Richmond, VA, the band is composed of veterans of a slew of bands in and around Richmond, and the level of experience certainly shows. What we have here is post-hardcore, but not in the ethereal, spacy, heavy realm that the label has been pulled towards in the last decade or so. The band harkens back to where the genre was in the '90s, specifically where bands like STATE OF THE NATION and SENSE FIELD were crafting rock-centered, punk-feeling intelligent music. There is a clear foundation here with DINOSAUR JR.-type angularity, but just like post-hardcore itself, it's more complex to nail down a direct comparison among the many places their inspiration and influences probably came from. A record like this will certainly yield different things with each listen, and personally, I'm most of the way to being 100% on board with this band's brand of extremely well-thought-out rock music. The songwriting is mature and avoids falling into musical tropes, getting surprisingly clever to put hooks into your brain with the more melodic moments (album closer "Negative Discourse" could easily be a lost TEXAS IS THE REASON track), but also letting you down in just the right way when going into some really off-the-beaten-path passages. Post-hardcore/punk for when you want to engage and not just listen to something.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: self-released



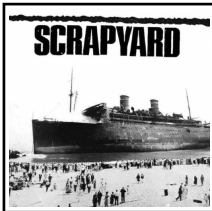
Tripp), if I had to recommend specific tracks, I'd go with the one-two punch of "Puzzle Hoax" and "Lesser Species" on the backside of the record. Don't sleep on this one.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Swimming Faith

SCRAPYARD – Demo 2024 cassette

From the basements of New Jersey comes SCRAPYARD, a straightforward hardcore outfit swinging with all the urgency of classic punk. Pure punk energy with no filler! While the original tracks showcase the band's blend of USHC with Oil, the standout cover of "Return" is a tribute to the classic UK punk band ONE WAY SYSTEM, showing respect for tradition with their own twist. SCRAPYARD's *Demo 2024* is a brief but potent debut. A perfect teaser of what's to come from this energetic crew.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: self-released



SEX SCENES – Everything Makes Me Sick LP

What made the songs for me was the lyricism. The true punk anger and wit of lyrics like "It only gets harder / The harder I try," in combination with the fast-tempo distorted guitar, really makes a classically punk sound (you can't go wrong). They touch on a bit of a more HC nature in some breakdowns with some slower tempos, but overall, they just make you want to get up and jump around like an animal.

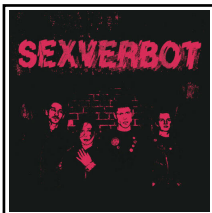
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Big Neck



SEXVERBOT – Sexverbot cassette

SEXVERBOT reminds me of the SEX PISTOLS, but with less obsessive anger and more wit. They know how to nail a classically punk sound, but perhaps too much so at times where some of the songs start to blend together, as one in the same sonically. My favorite track was "Der Antagonist," with a slightly different guitar style and more spoken vocals that add up to a nice and loud eruption of a chorus. I wasn't necessarily wowed, but I didn't dislike them either.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Mangel



SHRAPNEL – Sedan Crater LP

Garage-tinged psych-pop from Sydney's SHRAPNEL, with a dense, maximalist vision (there's seventeen songs on this thing!) that's articulated with an aura of in-the-red, blown-out fuzz still signifying "lo-fi" in spite of how full and sharp the production actually is. Opener "Catch You Out" immediately brings to mind the swirling, lysergic kaleidoscope world of the OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL, if only they'd been more obsessed with the SOFT BOYS than the BEACH BOYS, as the soaring, roughed-up British Invasion hooks in "Fountains of Ute" and "Taking Hold" likewise cast straight back to '90s-era home-recorded wall-of-sound eccentrics from GUIDED BY VOICES to the MOLES to the APPLES IN STEREO. There's so much other ground covered here, though—"Ice Cream," "Pickup Sticks," and "Miller's Daughter" have a more contemporary OZ DIY sensibility, recalling the arch, jangly, and sarcastically named 2010s dolewave micro-scene centered around bands like DICK DIVER, CHOOK RACE, TWERPS, etc., while the synth-laced, shimmering power pop of "Turning the Knife" suggests Ork Records-era CHRIS STAMEY fronting GAME THEORY, and might just be the best song on the whole LP. If any of the (admittedly not standard MRR) references in this review push even one of your buttons, give this a go.

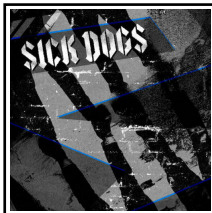
Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Tenth Court



SICK DOGS – Sick Dogs LP

As if the lovechild of AC/DC and the NEW YORK DOLLS released an album on BYO Records in the mid-'90s. I'm absolutely blown away by the fact that this is a duo. I know with this being a studio recording that things can be layered, tracked, and such and such, but the energy is palpable and very high-level for this being just two dudes. And speaking of, the production on this is incredible. Fantastic mastering work here, with everything sounding huge. The LP is topped off with an OPERATION IVY cover done in their own styling, and it wraps things up nicely. Would love to see how these guys sound live. In the meantime, I'll keep this album spinning.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released



FUNERAL DAMAGE – Muerte LP

Berlin's FUNERAL DAMAGE returns with an absolutely punishing slab of noisy, nihilistic hardcore. *Muerte* is soaked in dread, feedback, and reverb-heavy vocals that echo from the underground. Think DEFORMITY meets DESTINO FINAL with an added layer of Eastern European menace. The lyrics hit hard even when screamed in Spanish, the riffs are dense and gritty, and the whole LP feels like getting buried alive under bricks of drumming. Raw and essential.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: DIY Kolo / Diy Kontraatak / Svab / Up the Punx / Wild Wild East



GLOWING BRAIN – Memory Distortion LP

Oakland trio thriving in the grey zone between sludge punk and the most abrasive corners of noise rock. The distortion is so cranked you'll wonder if the band is just pushing amps down a stairwell. Think UNSANE in a fistfight with early HELMET at a gas station. Sick grooves, constant feedback, and desperate screams—perfect for solo walks through industrial zones in the rain.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: TGIC



GREAT BRITISH HEROES – Eric Miller / Don't Give a Damn 7" reissue

The other GBH who came before G.B.H. made a quick appearance on one of the *Bored Teenagers* comps and then faded into the background...except for the true freaks who sought after the Lightning Records 45 that was pressed and pulled and never released. Early UK punk businessmen and managers all scrambling for the money-grab were truly motherfuckers, and the band slogged about for years without a proper release even though they started gigging in 1977. There was a boot a few years ago, and now a new generation of rockers can drop the needle on some first wave punk by way of proto-pub rock gold. "Don't Give a Damn" is a burner featuring guitars that land like an amateurish *On Through the Night* outtake, and the A-side is...well, there's a reason it was bootlegged, and there's a reason the *Bored Teenagers* curator pulled it out of mountains of underappreciated English punk singles. I'm sure this one will disappear fast, but I'm just as sure that someone else is going to give



it (another) rebirth in a decade or so. As they should, of course.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Breakout

HACKED APART – Hacked Apart LP

Grindcore is a bit like Marmite, innit? You either love it, own 100 AGATH-OCLES split EPs, know the medical terms of a lot of disgusting diseases, and are able to decipher the messiest and hairiest band fonts, or you absolutely hate it and leave the venue as soon as you hear the first blastbeats. I am somewhere in the middle (for Marmite as well). I can really enjoy some old school primitive grindcore (the punkiest side of the spectrum) if the time is right, but I cannot stand technical grindcore (which I associate with metalheads). You guessed it, HACKED APART is a grindcore band, from Canada, and this is their first LP. The artwork says it all, I suppose—this is filthy extreme music, and thanks fuck for that. We are deep in primitive and raw grindcore territory here and it is bloody brilliant. Thrashing riffs, all sorts of fast beats, hoarse bear-like vocals, and a production overall highlighting the Neanderthal brutality of the music. This is the old school of WARSORE or ROT. They remind me of MASSGRAVE because they have that manic crust vibe at times. A full album of grindcore can sound a bit long, but this is quality.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Mechanized Apparatus Revolt / Regurgitated Semen



HASTY – Hasty cassette

I've been a huge fan of Michelle Shirelle since her days in the STEINWAYS, and on her latest output, fronting a three-piece band out of NYC, she delivers the goods yet again. Michelle did excellent work on the debut LP from SCRAPPED PLANS last year, a sort of pop punk supergroup with members of the MURDER-BURGERS and the ERGSI, but where that leaned into guitar-driven modern punk, here she takes it down a notch and injects a very indie pop vibe into the proceedings (think CUB or GO SAILOR). Four tracks of bouncy pop punk with very catchy melodies tossed between sardonic and sweet-sounding vocals, the whole tape flies by and leaves you wanting more. There's a note from Michelle in the insert accompanying the tape talking about how when this was recorded, she was dealing with her cat having a pretty stressful health emergency, but you wouldn't be able to tell from listening to this—it just puts you in a good mood and makes you tap your foot. This kind of stuff can come across as disposable or forgettable, but the band does a great job of making this



stand out and be worth your time. Get it if you're out there fiending for melody.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Bloated Kat

HEKÁTĒ – Μαύρη Τρύπα LP

HEKÁTĒ out of Athens, Greece recently released their second full-length album, entitled *Μαύρη Τρύπα*. Dark-tinged instrumentals support vocals that occasionally remind me of KLEENEX/LILIPUT. Synth work drives this album, with the tones ranging from traditional organs to unhinged vintage futurism. However, HEKÁTĒ came to rock, and with tracks like "Tears of Blood" and "Riccochet," HEKÁTĒ uses a heavy dose of bass in their rhythm section to get the toes tapping. Lyrically, HEKÁTĒ pulls no punches and delivers social criticism through an anarcho-punk lens, with about fifty percent of the lyrics being in English and the rest in Greek. In all, *Μαύρη Τρύπα* is stacked with punk bangers and contains enough "off-the-beaten-path" experimentation to make it something really special.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Mascara Rocks

ILLVILJA – Döden LP

Cold, haunting D-beat from Sweden's ILLVILJA. *Döden* ("Death") is an oppressive LP that captures the bleakness of modern crust without abandoning melody. Reminiscent of TRAGEDY's brooding atmosphere but filtered through Swedish hardcore lineage—heavy on the riffs, the emotion, and the political edge. The drums pound with precision, the bass growls, and the guitar work is full of gloomy textures. Another strong release from Phobia Records, perfect for dark days.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Phobia

INSULT TO INJURY – Realm of Indifference LP

I thought the band name rang a bell, so I took a quick peek at the internet before I started listening. First thing I saw was the cover for the split with 10-96, and it was like someone flipped on all of the lights at once. I was curious (how has the sound aged?), I was eager (I remember this shit being tough as nails), I was anx-

ious, even...but mostly I was fucking ready. Except I wasn't. Not for this. INSULT TO INJURY existed completely outside of my realm when I was in the Midwest—thuggish mosh metal I associated with people who affiliated themselves with "crews" was completely not my thing then (and still isn't). You know what they say about books and covers and preconceptions though, right? If beatdown hardcore sounded like this, then I might need to do some re-evaluating, because 2002's *Realm of Indifference* is an absolute beast. Period. The trappings of a generic hardcore release are all there, but INSULT TO INJURY avoids literally all of them and this release sounds fresh and devastating more than two decades later. There are elements of the bare-bones fastcore that dominated the DIY scene at the time, but delivered with tough, full-throated metallic hardcore brutality. There are skinhead tracks ("Crazy Streak," most notably) that sound like something from another world. The beatdown parts are one thing (and a powerful thing), but throw a blaster like "Vise Grip" in the mix and you've got yourself a fucking problem. I am sure this will (still) get lumped into a "scene," but this outsider is extremely grateful for the reissue—I'm glad these sounds didn't stay in the past, there are new minds ready to be blown.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Noise Grade Standard

IRON GAZE – Exordium 12"

A thick, cursed debut EP from Malaysia chewing through doom, crust, and black metal like tearing off a festering bandage. IRON GAZE sounds terminal—dragging riffs, cavernous production, and vocals rising from a pit. *Exordium* is bleak and atmospheric metallic hardcore, with enough nihilistic weight to turn your speakers into ash.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Bollocks

KALEIDOSCOPE – Cities of Fear LP

Building on an impressive catalog of top-tier releases, KALEIDOSCOPE is back with their most savage offering to date. From the drop, they plunge into a wellspring of anarcho-punk influences, with "Burning Alive" sounding like a forgotten CRUCIFIX classic. Far beyond mere mimicry, KALEIDOSCOPE alchemizes a confluence of foundational influences, yielding an album that rewards repeated listens. Not dissimilar to companion bands STRAW MAN ARMY and TOWER 7, they springboard from the familiar into an uncharted territory that few bands are brave enough to consider exploring. Out of this willingness to experiment emerges a mutated creature that spews venomous punk into the face of a dying society. *Cities of Fear* is an ob-

great little moments deserving of their time. Ground doesn't necessarily have to be broken for an album to bend your knees a little bit. Sometimes you just want something you can crank way up, and drown everything else out.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Slovenly

QIIK – QiiK II cassette

Second demo by Honolulu punks QIIK. And quick they are! Short bursts of intensity, with each song dripping with anger and frustration, propelled by snotty, in-your-face vocals. There's a sense of urgency in every second, making it clear that QIIK isn't here to make friends. Fast-paced, no-frills punk in the tradition of the USHC originators that doesn't pull any punches, this new demo hits the mark perfectly.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Kanak Attack

QUALMS – Drowning in Obedience cassette

Pretty heavy hardcore from Portland, Maine's QUALMS. Featuring members of the punkier MISERY WHIP, the band is self-described as "Maine Spiritual Violence," which I presume is a reference to the power violence influence throughout. I like the chugging riffs and the breakdowns, but the vocals aren't my thing, and by the lumbering final track "Seed," *Drowning in Obedience* was a little lost on me.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Noise Merchant

RATONERA HUMANA – 3 Temas cassette

Some straightforward punk out of L.A. here with a simple and sinister sound. With a name that translates to "Human Mouse-trap" (and a bizarre depiction of this concept on the cover), this cool unit delivers a buzzing guitar chug and venom-laced vocals sung in Spanish on this three-song cassette. Sounds like they're just getting started, but on the right track.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Polze De La Mort

RITUAL CROSS – Ritual Cross cassette

This tape absolutely smokes. I've been jamming this sucker non-stop since it appeared in my review stack. Off-kilter weirdo punk that will keep you guessing, but doesn't stab too far out and lose the thread. Something about this band feels unsettling and dangerous like VOID, but a little more angular and studious. The fourth cut, "Simulations," takes a brief melodic turn that reminds me of *Give Thanks*-era ARTICLES OF FAITH, but don't let these references to the classics trick you into thinking RITUAL CROSS is on some kind of a nostalgia trip. To me, this picks up where the CICADA EP from last year left off. An explosive debut from a band to keep an eye out for.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: self-released

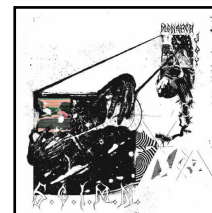
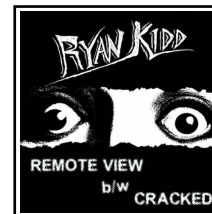
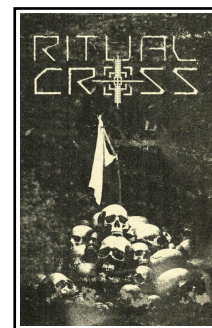
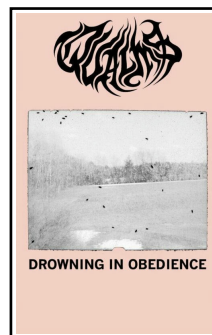
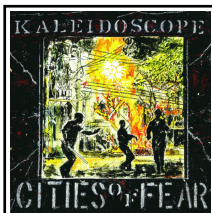
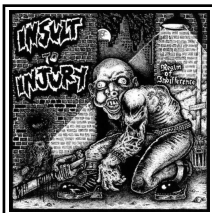
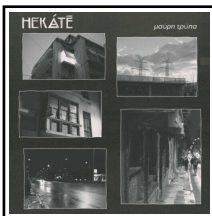
RYAN KIDD – Remote View / Cracked 7"

The A-side of Tennessee's RYAN KIDD's latest single, "Remote View," is an extremely catchy, power-pop-infused modern punk anthem. Gnarly riffs, fat bass, and supporting synths lay the foundation for charismatic and powerful vocals that remind me of the great Pete Shelley. Sprinkled guitar noises and Velcro licks supply a good amount of ear candy and liven up the sound considerably. For the B-side, he does a great job covering the TIGHTS' classic "Cracked" and collects all the bonus points.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Human B-Side

SCIENCE MAN – Monarch Joy LP

Another home run for John Toohill and co. on SCIENCE MAN's latest LP, *Monarch Joy*, a collection of nine well-crafted and slightly offbeat hardcore tracks. Never so far out musically as to lose a casual listener but just quirked-up enough lyrically to stand out from the multitude of hardcore bands currently on the circuit, the album is incredibly dense and moves at a breakneck pace. While best ingested in one sitting (preferably alongside its video companion piece put together by Toohill and visual collaborator Lindsay



POOCHED – Pooched / Tercel LP

The A-side is the *Pooched* LP and the B-side is the *Tercel* LP, so two LPs on one LP which is an LP/LP, I guess. First, I'm a sucker for a dog on a record cover, and this dog looks like he's into being pet upon, and also aloof a little bit, and fine to do its own thing. I bet this pooch twitches and squeaks a lot when it is dreaming about an open field or jumping at butterflies or whatever. Musically, this falls in line with all of the New York and New Jersey pop punk greats like UNLOVABLES, SHORT ATTENTION, the MEASURE, the ERGSI, and so on. These songs that span four years of the band's existence are all crafted wonderfully and are masterfully unforgettable in a memorable and hummable way. You'll have these tunes in your brain for days, similar to all of the best FASTBACKS songs.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Bloated Kat

POOR IMPULSE CONTROL – Tourist Trap EP

Solid hardcore effort from this quartet of skinheads. These folks fancy themselves as an Oi! act, but it comes off a bit more youth crew to me —sounds a lot more like GORILLA BISCUITS and YOUTH OF TODAY than it does ANGELIC UPSTARTS and the like. Very heavy, powerful gang vocals laden throughout. The singer, while unique, has a RAY CAPPO edge to him as well, especially during the spoken word parts where their Northeastern US accent is in full effect. This one flies by; I was shocked when it was finished, but was all too happy to start it up again.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Audio Epidemic / Contra

PROBLEM ADDICT – Tick cassette

Debut five-song cassette from Pennsylvania. I am going to assume Philadelphia, as that's where the label is from, but I cannot be sure about that. PROBLEM ADDICT mostly plays spooky, mid-tempo grunge-tinged garage punk. There are elements of other different punk subgenres sprinkled in on this recording, like the weird, short synth interlude and repetitive instrumental industrial outro track, but grunge and garage are what feels prevalent to me. The thing most confusing to me about PROBLEM ADDICT is the seeming lack of self-aware-



ness. For example, I would have assumed this was a self-titled cassette until I did some online searching. While there is a drawing of a tick making obscene hand gestures on the cover, only on the internet is it referred to as the *Tick* EP. Stylistically, it can be hard to describe yourself or your own projects, but attaching a self-proclaimed "egg-punk" tag to this feels confusing as hell to me. That is a genre almost exclusively synonymous with recordings being lo-fi, and I would describe this recording as anything but that. This tape feels very produced and slick. "It's a Joke" is a pretty killer garage punk track that stands out, however.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Dummett

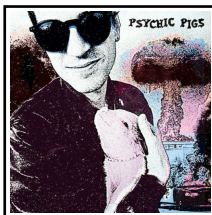
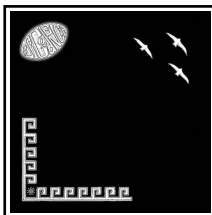
PSICODENCIA – Cahui EP reissue

Originally released in 1990, *Cahui* is the sole document of Mexico's PSICODENCIA aside from a scattering of comp tracks. Going in, I was expecting blistering hardcore in the vein of ATOXXICO, but that isn't quite the case. While there is some overlap in tone, PSICODENCIA is far more eclectic, incorporating elements of new wave and even reggae to novel effect. That description may sound nightmarish on paper, but in practice it equates to an approximate blend of ARTICLES OF FAITH, NOMEANSNO, and the EFFIGIES. There is a level of raw talent exhibited on these five songs that stands up to the intervening thirty-five years without sounding dated like so many other releases from the era. The label's description refers to this as a classic of Mexican punk, and I don't think that's mere hyperbole. *Cahui* is quirky, to be sure, but the execution is flawless and the sound quality is superb, avoiding the production pitfalls that one might expect. From the needle drop to the dead wax, this is killer without filler.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Esos Malditos Punks / Exabrupto

PSYCHIC PIGS – Psychic Pigs LP

From the jump, this slab was produced by Jonah Falco, so you already know it sounds fantastic. From there, you take in the music and find yourself treated to ten tracks of high-energy, garage-y rock in the lineage of BAD SPORTS or MEAN JEANS. These tracks come at you fast, and while it may take a couple listens for them to start to leave an impression, it's definitely advised to flip the wax back to Side A and let these tracks start to take root in your head. With most tracks lasting around two minutes, it can be easy to miss a lot of good stuff happening here—the slick guitar lead on the title track that keeps ripping even when the chorus comes back in, the layers of pummeling drum fills throughout "Stranded in Bullshit City," and the appropriately organ-like guitar lead-in on "Love Bite" are all



vious contender for album of the year for me, and I suspect many others. Crucial and recommended in the most forceful of terms.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

KYLMÄ KRYPTA – Kylmä Krypta cassette

Finnish/German band KYLMÄ KRYPTA calls Hamburg home, but is inspired heavily by the icy northern country of boreal forests and saunas. Finnish lyrics are delivered over song structures that are similar to an over-driven MUSTA PARAATI, and the whole production comes out sounding punk as fuck. Not the heavy-handed, metallic-toned crust that is currently rounding the circle pit, but a breed of punk that is more apocalyptic while maintaining a sound built out of more traditional rock'n'roll. It's kind of like EASTERN SYNDROME out of Berlin, who put out a bomb-blast of a cassette EP two years ago. If you don't understand what I'm yapping about, then imagine VICE SQUAD teamed up with 45 GRAVE, ditch the surf rock, and you'll be almost to the concept of KYLMÄ KRYPTA.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Brainwasher

LEATHERMAN – Turn You On LP

Fantastic pure rock'n'roll here, folks. I don't think LEATHERMAN would be opposed to me comparing them to THIN LIZZY because it almost sounds like they're aping them on purpose, but if you're gonna ape, you gotta ape from the best. That's not to say the whole slab sounds this way. A hefty portion of this album reminds me of if LITA FORD partnered with SUGAR STEMS, which pairs as well as Vegemite and cheese. These are Australians we're talking about here, after all. Bittersweet vocal melodies paired with the most scorching of guitar melodies. This checks all my boxes.

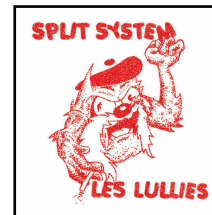
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Legless



LES LULLIES / SPLIT SYSTEM – split 7"

With a rather hilarious acknowledgment of its international camaraderie on the cover, this hot little split carries strong tracks on both sides. First up is Melbourne favorites SPLIT SYSTEM with "Chemicals," a steamrollin', raggedy-edged rocker that sounds like it could be a cover of an outtake from CIRCLE JERKS' V/ LP. On the flip, Montpellier's LES LULLIES deliver some florid pop garagery in the form of "A L'Etroit," whose tough groove and bright refrain brings the SAFETY PINS "Just in Fun" to mind. Nice.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Drunken Sailor



LOS REVOLUCIONAROS / SAME RIVER TWICE – split LP

A pairing of two neocrust acts from separate continents. Czechia's SAME RIVER TWICE kick things off with a scathing batch of tunes that oscillate between anguished D-beat with harmonizing guitars and a style formerly known as emotional hardcore. Trade-off screamed vocals, clean guitar interludes, and tempo changes reign across four longer-form tracks that remind me of ENVY in the more epic moments. Mexico's LOS REVOLUCIONAROS are a good pairing, pushing further into post-hardcore, nay, screamo terrain. The raw production gives an added bite that makes their cuts more intense. The guitar work here is reminiscent of EKKALIA, brutal with a shimmering beauty. A potent unification of fury and melancholia on both accounts.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Papagájuv Hlasatel

LOS SEX SEX SEX – Control EP

After a killer debut 7" back in 2014, Mexican rockers LOS SEX SEX SEX return to vinyl, leveled-up and with four new tunes to prove it. With punky garage grooves that live spiritually somewhere between the slick pop of the STITCHES, the old school roll of GINO AND THE GOONS, and the Latino flair of the PLUGZ, this EP showcases the maturity that comes with the band's decade-plus of experience. While the polished production is a departure from their original rough appeal, the sharp songsmithing that made their first record such a natural ripper remains intact. The tracks here become increasingly danceable before wrapping up with the psychobilly sci-fi party of "Mu-



tant Fields,” and it’s one of those records that feels like a full meal even though it’s just a quickie.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Slovenly

LUNG – The Swankeeper CD

“Everlasting Nothingness” starts off the album with a bang. It’s melodic and slightly off-putting, with some heavy guitar to back it up; I was immediately hooked. And let me tell you, these guys know how to do a proper breakdown. Listen to “Sunshine’s Over” or “Self Help Journey” if you don’t believe me, but the utter chaos and noise of the distorted guitars with the operatic choir-esque vocals creates the perfect explosion. Can’t stop listening to this album.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Feel It

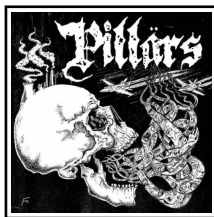
M.U.X. – Demo ’24 cassette

A demo from newly-formed band M.U.X., hailing from the tropics of Punkalpinang in the Bangka Islands of Indonesia. This demo is packed with so much complete destruction of the human vocal chords it’s impossible not to want to hear more. The cassette’s total of four songs make way with a ton of vocal reverb (is this a prerequisite in this era?), and an almost swampy surf-toned guitar brings a framework to the assault of “Crush Your Head” and another favorite, “Dystopian Bliss.” Bring us more music.

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Richter Scale

MERKED – Oakland / Cleveland split EP

Oakland’s sludge-infused wrecking crew MERKED joins forces with Cleveland’s crust-drenched hardcore unit PILLARS for a pure sonic devastation split. *Oakland/Cleveland* is a collision of scenes. MERKED tags their style sludge violence, and it’s a spot-on descriptor for their grim sound. The opener starts with eerie sound clips before erupting into pummeling powerviolence infused with super heavy sludge. The trio mixes punishing riffs with unpredictable tempo shifts, creating a brutal ride within just four minutes. PILLARS jump in with “Occupation,” a four-minute dose of metallic crust reminiscent of TRAGEDY and INTEGRITY. Then comes “Piss Off,” a concise and savage 44-second-long killing spree.



This split is a dynamic showcase of the potential of the current underground scene.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Goat Power Recreation

MONK – Dark Side of the Mind LP

L.A.’s MONK take the concept of “Positive Mental Attitude” and go wild with it on their debut LP, *Dark Side of the Mind*. Citing influences like 86 MENTALITY and BIB, MONK plays a non-stop stomp that features a slew of breakdowns and gang vocals that sound hard as hell. Lyrically, MONK lives up to their name, mostly touching on introspection and spiritual teachings. They even conclude the album with a twelve-minute, spa-like meditation, an unnecessary but interesting inclusion. Overall, on paper this could all be very corny, but thanks to the strength of the music and the conviction of the performances, MONK pulls it off. I think if you played this record backwards for a yoga class, you could really freak out some yogis.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Dine Alone

NOLLKOMPETENZ – 1 LP

Strange old one, this. A band who seemingly have zero interest in any kind of online presence to the point of obscurantism issue a self-released album that’s only streaming on YouTube, and yet... it’s not total shit? It’s quite good, actually? A mix of Oil aggro, with the kind of rollicking speed we associate with hardcore, and a sprinkling of guitar showing off for a laugh. Despite all signs and efforts pointing to this being annoying and for wankers, it’s actually definitely worth your time. Check it out.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: self-released



NINE-ELEVEN – Fuck You Bomb Me cassette

Unlike fentanyl, drum and bass duos—not to be confused with drum’n’bass—never go out of style. With their unapologetically angry and straightforward breed of powerviolence, NINE ELEVEN sneaks up on you in a dark alley and beats the shit out of you to prove a point: it is possible to convey ungodly aggression with such a compact lineup. All six songs on this six-minute EP are structured around a freight train of a bass that crushes everything in its path, and ruthless drums that repeatedly slam you on the head with the pingiest snare ever. But it’s the pissed-off dual vocals and the occasional mindless goregrind gutturals that seals the deal for me. *Fuck You Bomb Me* is a great debut that I was listening to daily way before it ended up in my review bin, and it looks like it will stay that way in the foreseeable future.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Noise Merchant

NISEMONO 偽者 – Nisemono 偽者 LP

Flesh-peeling and salting duo NISEMONO returns with their first foray into the LP format; this is good news. This band previously brought attention with their 2022 demo, and from the cross-pollination from members of NYC’s DOLLOHOUSE and the almighty WARTHOG. Since then, I haven’t heard anything from the band... until now!! This record is prime listening, the band’s pedigree is sky-high, and they are swimming in deep, stormy kang/D-beat waters in each song. There is CONFUSE with AVSKUM, there is DISFEAR with ANTI-CIMEX, there is also a fucking amazing video to watch for “酷い思い出 / Hidoi Omoide” (“Terrible Memories”) which features exploding heads. Be the first of your friends to buy this fucking thing!

Reviewer: Johnny Leach
Label: Toxic State

NORM DOGS – Norm Dogs cassette

Little four-track cassette from NORM DOGS—a band I can’t find much about. They’ve played at Angry Cat Shows out of Copenhagen, so I assume that’s their locale? This lo-fi tape sounded like absolute shit on my truck speakers (which sound like absolute shit anyway), but after a listen on my home stereo, I began to enjoy the DIY recording and playfulness that I missed on my first listen. NORM DOGS play a garage-y sound and have as many similarities to the jangle of the BATS as they do with the esoteric spoofs of the DEAD MILK MEN. A rattling guitar, a bass that ceaselessly marches upfront in the mix, simple percus-



sion, and fun, yet earnest vocals. While I kind of wrote off the cassette, with its cartoon logo, a picture of the band, and no more text than the song titles, before I gave it a chance, I enjoy proving myself wrong. Let all the shining production of sound and style rest, and just listen to the band! The fact that they have no online presence, recorded and produced this album themselves, and that it made it through numerous hands to my little desk, just proves this whole thing—MRR’s reach, the punk hive-mind writ large—is working. So, if you can find them, go out and listen to NORM DOGS! Big ups to these dudes. Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: self-released

ON THE BLOCK – Ride or Die cassette

Sophomore cassette release out of Asheville, NC. Three songs of bare-bones, stripped-down punk rock. In a day and age where every rock’n’roll-infused punk band is flying the Oil banner, ON THE BLOCK is actually a lot closer to sounding like an authentic band of that style. Simplistic riffs, catchy guitar licks played over top, repetitive choruses. I stand by my assessment of “closer,” as ON THE BLOCK is still sonically a very modern band. I have yet to see a contemporary self-proclaimed Oil band really lean into shitty-sounding recordings and bordering on novelty music, let alone fully stomping one big boot over that line into parody territory, but I will keep waiting for the day!

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Distress Signal

PERSONALITY CULT – Dilated LP

That lean, angular, almost too perfect punk we’ve come to expect from Dirt Cult Records is delivered here in spades. Fast songs, dark lyrics, and non-stop hooks that stick around for days. This is their second album on said label, with the first one having been recorded by Mark Burke of MARKED MEN and RADIOACTIVITY, and you can feel the inspiration and influence. Ben Carr’s vocals have the right amount of snot and nasal range to keep it unique, and they play as another instrument in the mix.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Dirtnap

