

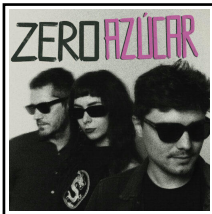
ZERO AZÚCAR – Zero Azúcar LP

I'll say it again. It's funny as hell to me that I got assigned records from ZERO AZÚCAR and NO SUGAR in the same month. It's gold. Unlike the NO SUGAR record, this one and I are getting off to a fantastic start. It's punk, but it's a little poppy. That said, I would not call it pop punk.

Mid-tempo and super catchy, it's got some sort of organ or synthesizer that they use enough that you notice it, but not so much that it's a distraction. It gives it a little bit of an early new wave feel. It's all in Spanish and I speak some Spanish, but not at the level that I understand much of this. But I can say that the vocals are strong and perfect for the music here. Really nicely put together. A complete package. At its core, this is punk rock.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos

Label: Absolute Contempt / Andalucía Über Alles / Inhumano / La Agonía De Vivir / Pifia / Producciones Tudancas / Distribuidora Soroll / Vox Populi



Scandicore act (it is to be noted that PARANOID is a prolific bunch), and in the realms of DIY hardcore, it is considered as a big step. This 7" was part of a series of five records with covers structured around a similar colour palette and template. "Possessed" / "Deserted Centuries" appears to be the only one of these with two mid-paced, old school metal songs and no fast bits, and while the Swedes are good at what they do, I have to admit I miss the faster hardcore punk moments. Still, a well-executed endeavour from people who have been doing this long enough to know what they are doing.

Reviewer: Romain Basset

Label: D-Takt & Råpunk / Paranoid Northern Discs

ZEVK – Zevk demo cassette

This might be my favorite demo tape of 2025. ZEVK out of Paris plays hardcore punk with a down-tuned bent that lends a dark, contentious flavor to their sound. The four-song demo opens with "Bomboş (All Empty)," a sub-two-minute opus that shifts in delivery with blindingly fast momentum. The closing track "Dykes Trans & Queers" is a treatise on the emotional struggle related to self-identification in a society that favors heteronormative homogenization and how that struggle influences one's opinions back towards their oppressors. All that is delivered in two minutes over thunderous rhythms and shredded guitars. If this is what ZEVK is capable of, then I'm eagerly waiting for more.



Reviewer: Seth McBurney

Label: A World Divided / Dirty Slap

偏執症者 (PARANOID) – Possessed / Deserted Centuries 7"

If there's one thing everyone has to acknowledge about PARANOID, it is that they are original and singular in a genre that strives on sameness and rules to survive. It's not like they included reggaeton or chanson into their music, but from a rather classic, distorted, noisy kang unit, they have turned into a FROST-loving metallic



THE COUNTERFORCE



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #508

SEPTEMBER 2025

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

This is an **unofficial** zine digest of MRR 508, first published September 2025. You can read it online at:

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E-mail MRR: mrr@maximumrocknroll.com

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This issue contains 84 reviews, contributed by:

Luke Henley	Gonza Perez
Seth McBurney	Jason Harding
Romain Basset	Emma Miller
Willis Schenk	Kenny Kaos
Matt Casteel	Rachel Courtney
Eric Anderson	Nick Odorizzi
Erika Elizabeth	Katy Otto
D. Gregory	
Biff Bifaro	
Mama Goblin	
Jeff Cost	
Daniel Z.	
Jake Joyce	
Tony Party	

THE COUNTERFORCE

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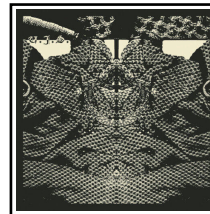
Print It Yourself.

U.I.S. – U.I.S. cassette

Are we entering a new age of Mysterious Guy Hardcore? Did it ever go away? There isn't much online about the shadowy figures behind this five-song EP, but it rips. Mining similar aural terrain (probably caves, maybe cat-acombs) as HOAX and CULT RITUAL, filthy shit-fi production reigns supreme here. Nasty, serrated guitar riffs and leads that hint at extracurricular studies in metal, coupled with ultra-raw vocals, create a gnarled full-aggro churn that demands repeated plays. Bleak and disquieting, I look forward to what comes next.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi

Label: Swimming Faith

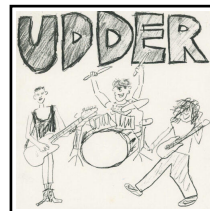


UDDER – Or I'll Kill You EP

Athens, Georgia's UDDER originally recorded the three tracks on this archival-sourced EP in 1991, but flamed out before actually releasing them (or anything else, as far as I can tell)—Athens obviously has a rich and storied history of fostering subversive, convention-dismantling post-punk groups, from the B-52'S to PYLON to OH-OK to LIMBO DISTRICT, although that chronology gets much blurrier in the pre-grunge years of the early '90s when UDDER was kicking out their feral, freewheeling post-no-wave noise with little to no proper documentation. With its steady but slightly asymmetrical beats and vocals that are somehow both deadpan and taunting, "Grandpa Volleyball" sits somewhere between the vacant-stare downtown drone of *Bad Moon Rising*-era SONIC YOUTH and the off-kilter genderfuck art-punk of GOD IS MY CO-PILOT, while the moody, slow-burn spoken word sprawl of "Or I'll Kill You" is especially Kim Gordon-coded, and the knotted and intense rhythmic crush of "Incubus" has all of the hallmarks of a band that would have been rearranging the furniture at Rocket House in the early '90s had they been from Louisville, basically plotting out the RODAN template a full year before RODAN managed to do so. A very cool time capsule, genuine freak shit here.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth

Label: Depose



V/A – Weird Scenes From Inside the Droll Mind EP

Four bands from Montreal who build off of each other to create a nice and loud EP. I felt quite enchanted with the vocals in the first track by GARDEN OF LOVE, and I loved the utter noise and chaos by G.I. JINX. I appreciate that this whole EP was live, I feel like it really added to each band's sound. Overall, a solid release.

Reviewer: Emma Miller

Label: Celluloid Lunch

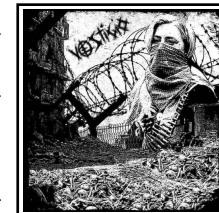


VESTIGIO – Vestigio LP

Full of rage and waging a sonic war against injustice, VESTIGIO uses punk as a vehicle to convey a sense of their experience as Latinos living in Canada. Gruff shouts punctuate the chainsaw buzz of wild guitars and *tupa-tupa* drums. The artwork portrays a scene of skeletons and razorwire that might lead one to chalk this up as a D-beat record, but this is a little different than your standard gasmask and bullet belt fare. VESTIGIO brings to mind APATIA NO and FALLAS DEL SISTIMA, passionate anarcho-punks committed to the struggle against oppression. A solid release from a band I'll be keeping an eye out for.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel

Label: Deskabezado / Negative Days / Niños De La Calle / Undocumented

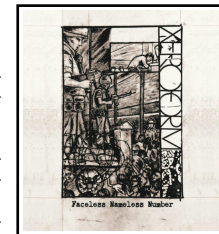


XEROFORM – Faceless Nameless Number cassette

Super catchy, energetic Oi! with a modern twist, as if BLITZ developed the same pop sensibilities the BUSINESS incorporated later on in their lifespan. The music itself sinks its hooks into you instantly and has a post-punk quality about it; a danceable rhythm section paired with manic dissonant chords and low-end upstrokes. The vocals here are the crown jewel of this album and really drives home that Oi! sound—deep and grunted, giving all these tracks that true working class quality. This is a very solid effort and well worth a play. It goes quickly though, ten songs that nary crack the ninety-second-long mark.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce

Label: Just Because



TIGER HELICIDE – The River Squid CD

This comes in swinging like the DIDJITS or something. The first song, “Alak-ABLAMA,” clocks in at just under four minutes and really takes the listener for a ride with all the tempo changes and odd-ball lyrics. The first listen to this TIGER HELICIDE CD had me plopping it into the trashcan. However, now on my third time through, I think I’m starting to get it. This is sloppy like a super drunk NOMEANSNO, SCHLONG, or LOVE SONGS, and retains the same charm throughout. I feel as though every member of TIGER HELICIDE loves a different style of punk, and together, with all of their personal elements brought in, they created this oddly perfect garbage fire. I say with one hundred percent certainty that TIGER HELICIDE is making the exact kind of music that they want to. If I have one critique, it would be that the vocals are a bit too loud and overpower the music a bit. I really like this though, and can’t wait to see what is next.

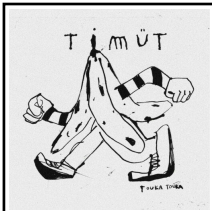
Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Murder Boy Music



TIMÜT – Touka Touka LP

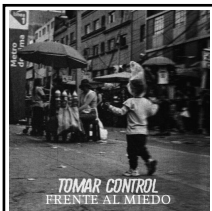
Minimal, funky post-punk from Metz, France, consisting of drums, clean guitar, and reverbed vocals that sound like they were recorded while being hollered from the next room. TIMÜT sounds like a tiny, noisy jazz combo at times (“KTM”) and a dubby, reggae-influenced jam group at others (“She Waze” and “Sick”). It’s a unique mix and excites with call-and-response vocals and never-ending syncopated rhythms. There is also a cover of NIRVANA’s “Tourette’s,” their most (only?) punk song. If you like the melodic minimalism of SACRED PAWS with a medium dose of no wave, check it out.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Plaisir d’Offrir



TOMAR CONTROL – Frente al Miedo LP

I absolutely loved this hardcore band from Lima, Peru. They start off the album with strength and power, and it never diminishes throughout the entire album. I loved the balance of faster, more punk songs with slower and more sludgy riffs. I found myself doing the classic metal stank face during many of the breakdowns. You can feel their passion and energy in every single track. Overall, I could not recommend a band more.



Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Refuse

TRITONIC – Bend the Arc! cassette

Do you remember the feeling when you were young and you became aware of something that you thought was so cool, be it the cover of a record or a toy or a movie poster or something? You spend your time obsessing over it. You do whatever needs to be done to be in a position of experiencing the coveted thing. Once it is finally acquired, you really take your time with it, trying to savor every minute of the experience. Then you receive the rude awakening of finding out that MOLLY HATCHET was nowhere near as cool as you tricked into thinking they were from Frank Frazetta’s artwork. You remember that feeling? Well, receiving this tape was like that experience with time sped up. The packaging of this cassette is so insanely cool. Gold cassettes in a black O-card adorned with splattered gold paint, all wrapped in tissue paper, inserted into a cardboard folding case which is hand-painted and stamped in multiple locations, then dipped in wax to seal it like a bottle of Maker’s Mark. This thing is an absolute work of art! Slowly, I took my time and opened and inspected every aspect of it. Preparing for the unknown, I pushed play. These are expert-level musicians playing every genre of music you can possibly imagine, changing drastically from song to song. It’s essentially the score to a musical. There’s the “CRADLE OF FILTH but it’s a slick hardcore band” song, there’s the “pirate sea shanty” drinking song, there’s the RADIOHEAD-inspired track, there’s some unlistenable garbled nü-metal that breaks into a Tibetan monk chant, there’s a three-minute-long free-jazz drum solo, there’s a laid-back elevator music jazz piano track. I could go on, but I think you get the idea. These are clearly very good musicians who are fans of every single musical genre, and this cassette shows that TRITONIC has chops across them all, but I just couldn’t possibly care less. If this sounds like it is up your alley, then I can’t believe you’re reading *Maximum Rockroll*...I mean, if this sounds like it’s up your alley, there is a dissertation on the TRITONIC Bandcamp that will explain to you why you can’t just check it out online. Normally I think that’s a cool move to only have stuff available on cassette tape, but for some reason, the manifesto seems a bit self-righteous and artsy to me. The tape looks truly awesome, though.

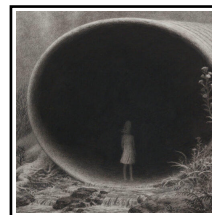
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: self-released



1 ST CLASS COLLAPSE / THE PRIM – split 12”

The split 12” from Germany’s 1 ST CLASS COLLAPSE and the PRIM is a chaotic little gem of powerviolence that doesn’t overstay its welcome. 1 ST CLASS COLLAPSE, hailing from Koblenz, delivers a chaotic and engaging set, marked by either traded-off vocals or one particularly unhinged singer, cycling through yells, screams, and deep, demonic croaks like a hardcore Swiss army knife. The PRIM, from various cities including Berlin, shifts gears with a more metallic hardcore approach—heavier riffs, longer songs, and raw, tortured vocals that cut through the murk. While the songs run longer than average for the genre—each clocking well over a minute—they’re tightly composed and never feel drawn-out. This split is a strong showing from both bands and ends almost as soon as it begins.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: BMX Outlaw / Drinkin’ Beer in Bandana / Fies Ins Gesicht / Loner Cult / Vulgar



80 BILLION ANIMALS – 80 Billion Animals cassette

80 BILLION ANIMALS play anarcho hardcore with desperately urgent vocals that range from spoken word to frenzied screams and articulate lyrics pertaining to animal liberation, police and state repression, the corporate war machine, the genocide in Gaza, and other topical issues. Instrumentally, 80 BILLION ANIMALS is an enjoyable rollercoaster with quick shifts, jacked-up riffs, and chugging bass. There are moments that remind me of BEHIND ENEMY LINES or some early R.A.M.B.O., albeit with more grime and finesse. This self-released cassette is opened and closed with poetic spoken word and is packed with edifying jams that are sure to keep you inspired during the present madness, so definitely check this out.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: self-released



AFTERMATH – The Cutting Begins LP

Damn, that is one strikingly grim cover, one that can be seen as a warning to the listener who therefore will no longer be able claim that they didn’t suspect that there’s proper dark music ahead. AFTERMATH makes no secret of their sonic intentions and unleashes their primitive brand of metallic crust from the outset of their first full album, *The Cutting Begins*. I discovered the band through their first record, the *Garbage Day 10*, and rather like their simple but effective gait on the well-trodden path of dark Swedish crust. AFTERMATH will sound familiar to most crusties, which is not a bad thing, and this second effort incorporates a more pronounced metallic stenchcore influence with the addition of mid-paced numbers (not far from CANCER SPREADING) to their groovy crust. The music has an early extreme metal vibe as well, and I am significantly reminded of LEGION 666 or early ANGUISH (especially in the vocals and some arrangements), although the sound is definitely embedded in the Swedish tradition. It is a solid follow-up that demonstrates the quality and the seriousness of the project (I have to admit the 10” left me wondering), and something of an improvement on the first one if you like more filthy metal in your crustcore.

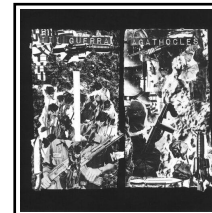
Reviewer: Romain Bassot
Label: Anomie / Halvfabrikat / Phobia



AGATHOCLES / III GUERRA – split EP

Mallorca’s III GUERRA opens this split with some no-frills hardcore punk that has the old school attitude with a relatively modern sound. Shouty vocals drenched in delay sit on top of guitars with perfectly dialed-in distortion and gnarly bass with a strict sense of duty, while the drums punch their way through the mix. This side sounds like getting hit in the face with a concrete block that is so perfectly cut that you don’t really get mad about it. But once you get to the minicore pioneers AGATHOCLES’s side, the sound definition degrades dramatically. It sounds as if the band recorded their side through a single AirPod’s shitty microphone, but decided to place it even closer to the hi-hat this time around. But hey, if you have any prior experience with this band, you should have seen it coming from a mile away. So, that’s kind of on you if you have any complaints. To be honest, I’m not well-versed in AGATHOCLES’ discography—I mean, who even has time for that??—but it sounds like they incorporated a tongue-in-cheek parody of Oil punk into their sound to celebrate their bajillionth split. Yay?

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Todo Roto



ALIEN NOSEJOB – Forced Communal Existence LP

With little introduction needed for the Aussie bedroom artist Jake Robertson, known as the formidable ALIEN NOSEJOB, Agitated and Anti-Fade have put together a compilation of previously released EPs and singles on this massive 23-track LP. Releases are displayed chronologically: 2017's *Panel Beat*, 2018's *Death of the Vinyl Boom* (featuring a cover of JACKSON ZUMDISH's "Flyblown"), the DEAD KENNEDYS cover "Government Flu" comes out to play in between, then 2020's *HC45*, 2021's *HC45-2*, 2022's *Cold Bare Facts*, and finally a cover of ED KRUEPPER's "S-O-S '75". Whew. I don't know, it felt important to credit the releases for some reason. This is one-stop shopping for some of the best ALIEN NOSEJOB on offer—it spans the progression, the off-kilter aggression, the fuzz, and the insanity of this tireless Australian gem. I needn't say more.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Agitated / Anti-Fade



ALTERED DEAD / EROSION – split cassette

Vancouver's underground at its heaviest—EROSION storms in with razor-edged crust riffs and D-beat urgency that recall MARTYRDÖD in their most feral moments. ALTERED DEAD counters with grotesque, suffocating death metal that grinds the air out of the room. Two sides of sonic punishment—one sprinting, the other crushing—that together feel like the walls closing in.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Mechanized Apparatus Revolt



BARREN SOIL – All Paths Lead to Darkness cassette

Pounding into your cranium like a frozen axe, BARREN SOIL drops three cuts of plodding, blackened crust on this self-released cassette. The stench is ripe with this one, in the vein of WAR-COLLAPSE or HELLSHOCK with fewer fast parts. The use of synth and soundscapes makes for an atmosphere of depressive frigidity. Holding an ice-laden mirror to society, this Vancouver-based three-piece demonstrates that all paths do indeed lead to darkness. This begs for a longer form to unfurl the group's full brutality.



Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: self-released

BEE BEE SEA – It's All About the Music EP

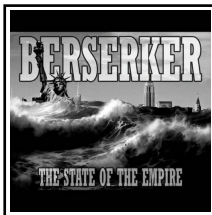
Celebrating a decade of making music together, this trio, that formed right out of high school, is here with their *It's All About the Music* EP. Coming from the small town of Castel Goffredo in Northern Italy, the band's motto is "When there's no good shit around you, better form a band!" which, as a small-town resident myself, I really appreciate. With a love for classic '60s rock, they started their career with covers of the WHO, the ROLLING STONES, and the BEATLES—even paying homage to the *Revolver* artwork on their highly-anticipated 2020 *Day Tripper* LP (not to mention the album title). But far from covers they have come—with four LPs in their pocket and a smattering of EPs and singles, this lot has made a sound of their own, blending that '60s rock with garage, classic punk, and pop punk, for a catchy as hell result. About this EP, the band writes "One garage rock anthem, three versions: The original. A sped-up punk reprise. A slow kraut intro. It's obsessive, overthought, over-driven, and absolutely intentional." Besides the "Kraut intro," these songs lean on the pop side, and are all fun, with snaking guitar riffs, fast and bouncy drums, rattling bass, and lightly distorted vocals. From the impressive words on their Bandcamp page, to a nice write-up in *Missing Piece* (praising the release of *Day Tripper*), I like the band's story as much as their music. Everything feels genuine, earnest, and truly bootstrapped from the beginning. Great concept EP, awesome band.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Wild Honey



BERSERKER – The State of the Empire LP

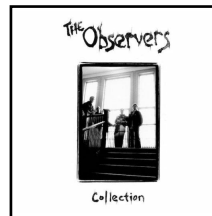
Hardcore is just one of those genres whose umbrella stretches so far that no two fans ever have the same taste. If your sweet-tooth for hardcore trembles for the more melodic strain, harkening back to the late '90s/early '00s especially in guitarist/singer Jon Vornbrock's convincing Dennis Lyxzén impression, you'll have plenty to like here. In fact, overall BERSERKER is specifically reminiscent of REFUSED. The riffs, the vocals, the earnest and unpoetic political lyrics; it's difficult to parse it from the influence of the Swedish icons of post-hardcore (read: when hardcore became appealing to indie rock kids). The blend of pit-savvy chugs and chiming open chords in particular dips its toe into noise rock, a cross-genre amalgam that isn't my cuppa but is competently written and performed. It's just hard to look past the lack of originality, especially when a track like "Suicide on 66" lifts



THE OBSERVERS – Collection LP

Released on the opening day of their summer European tour, the OBSERVERS are back on stage along with this commemorative *Collection* LP. Taken By Surprise has rounded up EPs and singles from the archive of the OBSERVERS, who were active from 2002 to 2005 in Portland, Oregon. These fourteen songs come from 2003's *Lead Pill*, 2005's *Walk Alone*, 2005's *Where I Stay*, and *Maximum Rockrolls* 2006 *Public Safety* compilation LP, with some previously unreleased tracks to boot. Colin Grigson's bass and Douglas Burns's guitar and vocals started this group, and if the latter sounds familiar, Burns went on to form RED DONS after the OBSERVERS stopped playing in 2005. I reviewed the RED DONS' *Generations 7"* a while back, and thought I was hearing something in common...this collection displays the band's straight-ahead, catchy power punk/garage song-writing, with mid-to-upper-tempo tracks largely in the sub-three minute range featuring clattering, cymbal-heavy drums, gangly bass, simple, crunchy guitar, and Burns's hallmark croon and exaggerated vocals. This particularly comes to light on "Walk Alone" from the EP of the same name, and has become my favorite of the album. It's a little darker than the rest, and the vocals really shine through. I also enjoy "Normally Normal," a tongue-in-cheek exploration of what it means to be normal, reminding me of something SUICIDAL TENDENCIES might do. Not-to-be-missed release of a staple in the Portland music canon.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Taken By Surprise



THE REMOTE CONTROLS – Too Tough CD

I fucking love this record. Pop punk done beyond right with RAMONES riffs as a foundation, building on top of it with Midwestern melody (think NAKED RAYGUN around *Jettison*), and topping things off with nods to the golden era of Lookout! Records pop punk (SCREECHING WEASEL/the QUEERS' best moments). Catchy as hell, great raspy vocals, with melodic and tempo changes to keep things interesting through the beefy runtime the fourteen tracks get up to. This is what guitar-driven melodic punk should be shooting for, killer release.

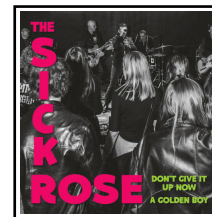
Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Fail Harmonic / Moms Basement



THE SICK ROSE – Don't Give Me Up Now / A Golden Boy 7"

Long-running Italian garage rock crew SICK ROSE released a two-song 7" with the A-side covering the LYRES' "Don't Give It Up Now," featuring guest vocals from Dom Mariani of Australia's the STEMS. This version is faithful to the original, but Mariani's delivery and the production give it extra punch. Flip it over and "A Golden Boy" channels a breezy mash of '60s/'70s rock, toe-tapping and driven by a guitar/organ attack straight out of *Sixteen Flights Up*-era CYNICS. They play the kind of throwback retro rock that frequently makes my eyes roll, but here it seems more substance than style and it works for me. Only 300 copies pressed, so grab one fast.

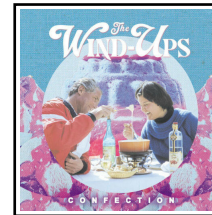
Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Onde Italiane



THE WIND-UPS – Confection LP

Third LP from Chico, CA's WIND-UPS. Started as Jake Sprecher's solo endeavor, the project has evolved to include many different credited musicians, most notably JONATHAN RICHMAN's electric guitar work on the outro "Little Boy Blue" (originally on the '23 *Jonathan Says* EP). Is there a steady lineup? Unclear, though there is a trio pictured on the Bandcamp page. Inside, we find a RAMONES-core, burnt-sugar kind of power pop that owes as much to the aforementioned greats as they do to the shamble and sweetness of pandemic-era bedroom projects. I kind of glazed over at first, but after a few listens getting through the powdered, confectionary "Fine Pink Mist" (great, punchy opener), I really enjoyed this. Some standouts of the album for me are "(That's Just My) Dream Girl" and "To Keep Away," both which really lean into the RAMONES sound. Kerra Jessen wrote and co-performed "Cheer Up," which may be the feel-good, don't-be-too-down-on-yourself song of the year, and features some shoegaze-y guitars during the chorus, in contrast to the otherwise light and sparse verse. And JONATHAN RICHMAN on "Little Boy Blue"?? That reference alone could speak for itself, but the song is actually one of my favorites, featuring a blown-out, melancholic energy that feels well-placed at the album's end. Is this sad birthday music? Is it the glistening, split-skinned cherry atop a cake no one asked for? Is it a bad haircut on a windy day? You decide.

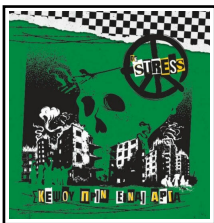
Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Dandy Boy



STRESS – Σκέψου Πριν Είναί Αργά 10"

From Athens, Greece, STRESS reimagines five of their '80s ska/punk/dub hits to give a better clarity of sound and message. Rooted heavily in ska and punk from the '80s and blending together perfectly, these songs will leave you wanting more. Their original LP from 1985 fetches hundreds, and even the 2013 repress seems to crack the \$100 mark from time to time. But look, grab this 10" and maybe just be happy that you've got something. Also, who would I check with to see if the LP is in the MRR archives? Is there a phone number for Tennessee punk record archives?

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: B-Otherside



STRUL – Fuck Strul LP

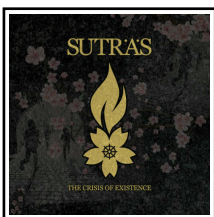
Just when we needed it most, STRUL has re-emerged to unleash a banger LP that eclipses the intensity of the Gothenburg group's ferocious 2019 *Punkrock Deluxe 7"*. These guys shred and pummel with a rocking, guitar-heavy edge, playing O.G. hardcore punk as if it were taught to them by the guys in TOTALITÄR. It's a top-shelf heavy-hitter in a classic way that brings Kansas City's TOTAL SHAM to mind, but let us not finger it all up unnecessarily—this rips completely, and STRUL is easily one of the best bands doing it in the worst era of modern history.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Adult Crash



SUTRAS – The Crisis of Existence cassette

SUTRAS have gained a new fan! Their new cassette *The Crisis of Existence* combines so many elements I love. With art that looks like a gorgeous cave relic with what I am hoping are cherry blossoms exploding joyfully, they've taken the DC spiritual punk vibe and woven in silvery guitar and vocals that sound like being on the verge of tears, ENVY-style. "Welcome, Kingdom Kids" is a perfect song—it makes me feel nineteen and like my friends and I can fight back to save the soul of a sick world. Their Bandcamp says SUTRAS understand suffering, and I believe it. With the meditative hum of LUNGFISH and the urgent cry of early '00s New Jersey screamo, they are a welcome salve in a world in which I truly feel the crisis of existence. They also remind me of a quote I heard recently that said something to the extent of if you are heartbroken and hopeless at the human suffering and injus-



tice around you, take solace in the fact that multi-trillion dollar industries had PR campaigns to try to make you not care—and they failed. This is a set of songs all ripe to put on a mixtape for the cute person you met at the protest, truly. I'm not kidding. Do it. And roll down the windows of the car when you are blasting "Being Nobody, Going Nowhere."

Reviewer: Katy Otto
Label: Tomb Tree

TA-80 – Open Late cassette

Punk rock that you can circle-pit to with a smile on your face. This is pop punk in the non-pejorative sense, meaning it is loaded with massive hooks and anthemic sing-alongs with enough melody to infiltrate even the most resistant ear. The overall feel of the album is late-night hangouts after a show, possibly in a parking lot, just enjoying being a punk and hanging out with other punks. Lyrically, that feeling is enforced with mostly celebrations of being part of the community, politically and socially. Think of MIXTAPES at their most upbeat or the JETTY BOYS at their most catchy, add a healthy dose of beer and Midwest, and that will take you most of the way to where this record plants its flag. Gotta respect the balls to try yet another cover of TOTO's "Africa," but honestly the band does well by themselves on it. A fun summer record if I ever heard one, meant for hangouts with good people.

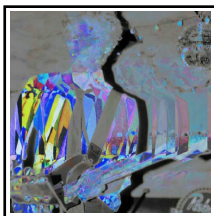
Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Allegedly



THE OBLIQUES – St. Petersburg / Cigarettes 7"

Delivering a drizzle of thought-provoking outsider sounds, this Durham, NC group is comprised of three uniquely inspired teenagers who appear to be based beyond their age. The sound is dreary, ponderous art-rock that seems to exist under the constant threat of collapse, very reminiscent of Montana's singular MORDECAI. It's strange to hear such youngins express in such a distinctly creative and mature way, like encountering an infant with a palate for dry-aged Kobe beef. How have they amassed such vibrant wishfulness in less than two decades? Maybe it's best not to question it, but to digest this brief and intriguing record thoroughly and quietly add the OBLIQUES somewhere near the top of the list of up-and-comers to watch.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: HoZac



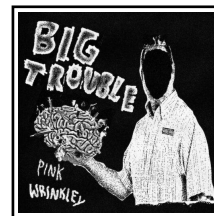
a riff directly from "Summerholidays Vs. Punkroutine" from *The Shape of Punk to Come*. And look, I'm not against wearing your influences on your sleeve. I just prefer when it's not so easy to trace back to a singular source.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Moments Fest

BIG TROUBLE – Pink Wrinkley LP

A wild and dense LP that I'd classify as "mutant hardcore" from Athens-based BIG TROUBLE. The vocals are definitely the standout component, going full-on feral rasp, including a moment at the end of sixth track "Church" that is so over-the-top that I audibly laughed when I heard it. Solid stuff overall; the riffs are huge and the drumming is wild, going into powerviolence territory on occasion. I recommend this one, and I also award the band points for having the funniest album title of 2025.

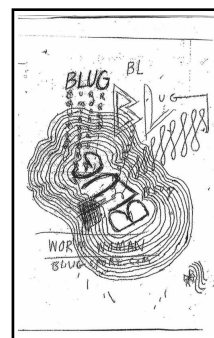
Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: self-released



BLUG – Turnip Nation cassette

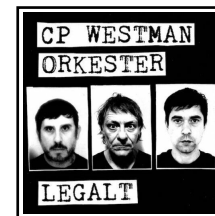
Liberated now wave, as brought to you by three of this century's foremost freaks—you might (and should) know Grace Ambrose, Marissa Magic, and Max Nordile from their time spent warping minds in projects like PREENING, DEBT RAG, MOZART, NEON, and GIRLSPERM (that's just the short list), and together, they are BLUG. *Turnip Nation* was written and recorded over the course of just a few hours this summer, a frenetic and agitated first thought/best thought scrawl of clanging percussion, loping, eternal return bass lines, and gnarled, punctuated shocks of treble-heavy guitar in six minute-long (give or take) parts. Intuitive instant music as a document of friendship and collaboration, art-punk at its most wild and free, can you take it?

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Music for People



CP WESTMAN ORKESTER – Legalt / Boris är en Spindel 7"

CP WESTMAN ORKESTER pulls together garage vets from Sweden and France (members of BIG KIZZ, LADY BANANA, TUNDRA FUCKS, DESTINATION LONELY, JERRY SPIDER GANG, BART AND THE BRATS, TEENAGE HEARTS, and SKEPTICS) for their



debut two-song 7". Side A, "Legalt," is a straight-up rock'n'roll pounder—big guitar/keys/drum stomp, with lyrics pushing for drug legalization, delivered with the kind of energy that makes the argument feel celebratory. Flip it and you get "Boris är en Spindel," a Swedish spin on the WHO's "Boris the Spider." Here, Entwistle's kiddy-creepy original gets stripped of the cartoon voices and blasted out like it was recorded in a hangar, with feedback and grunge bleeding everywhere. Pontus Westman did a cleaner version in 2024, but here the mess feels truer. It's ragged and absolutely unpolished—I could see these guys playing on a DEAD MOON bill—and that's exactly the charm. Looking forward to seeing what they do next.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Ken Rock

CELEBRITY HANDSHAKE – Counterfeit Head LP

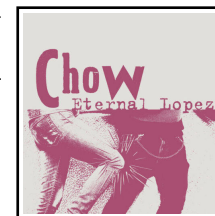
You know that one guy in town who's always shouting conspiracy theories for the world to hear but they're actually not speaking to anyone in particular at all? Well, what if that guy fronted the BUTTHOLE SURFERS? This is like a combat-shocked D. Boon fronting SONIC YOUTH. The fact that I have to make up these weird scenarios to try and explain CELEBRITY HANDSHAKE is honestly a testament to the originality at play here. This is pleasantly unpleasant, or unpleasantly pleasant; it just depends on who's listening. And honestly? That's awesome.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Eastern Prawn



CHOW – Eternal Lopez 12"

This is a bouncy, garage-flavored, danceable rock album from Bologna, Italy with a workmanlike approach to songwriting and performance. There's something a little stiff here at first, a lack of flexibility and hooks that leaves me a bit cold even at its most anthemic. My ears do perk up, however, as the band starts to resemble HÜSKER DÜ at the midpoint of the record. While this outing might be frontloaded with weaker material, it starts



to feel more lived-in and frayed, slowly revealing a band that is confident and does have an ear for melody. I'm a sucker for a band that mines the '80s boom of Midwest college rock for ideas and presents them in a contemporary landscape. On a track like "Remember the Valentines," you can hear a distinct John Reis influence both in the guitar and vocals, and I'll always go to bat for that. I'm not as sold on the dreamier, spaced-out "Calling on the Altar Boys," and think overall this 12" is a mixed bag, but there are high bright points to be sure.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Venti3

CLACKER – Clacker cassette

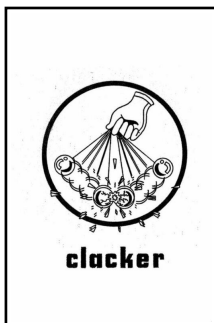
Mid-tempo hardcore punk from Medford, Massachusetts. CLACKER brings us six songs of intelligently crafted lyrics delivered by one of the gruffest sounding punk vocalists I have heard in a while. Reading along with the novel's worth of lyrics, I was surprised how natural it sounds hearing the singer fit so many words into each of these songs. There's not a single sing-along part on this tape, which kind of comes with the territory of extensive lyrics. The band breaks out of their wheelhouse a bit through the course of the cassette, revving up from mid-tempo into the faster hardcore realm, and even ripping a couple wild rock'n'roll guitar solos. Both are cool changes and help to keep your attention, but I think the band really shines when leaning into their mid-tempo comfort zone.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: self-released

CLASS TOURISTS – Blunt-Forced Trauma cassette

A fiery tape from CLASS TOURISTS, who play fast and catchy hardcore punk with cool vocals. I hadn't heard CLASS TOURISTS before this review, but read that they previously used a drum machine, something I'd be interested in hearing. Anyway, on this tape things are pretty straightforward, although there's definitely a sort of rock'n'roll vibe throughout. This really comes through in the guitar leads on "Thorn" and "Time," two tracks that make this one worth checking out.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Noise Merchant



COLEGIATA – Colegiata 12"

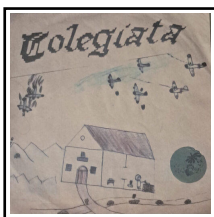
Barcelona's COLEGIATA dusts off the old synths and drum machines that were left in the attic and puts them to good use in their new 12" record. It's pretty bare-bones with modest synth layers and a minimalistic approach to songwriting, yet it manages to captivate and immerse you in its gloomy universe. Though it's mostly mid-tempo, there are some sudden tempo changes that very quickly shift the mood. If you've ever sunk hours into those Soviet post-punk playlists on YouTube, or listened to a couple coldwave tracks and thought "Oh boy, this is quite nice, I wish it was a bit less depressing though," then this record might be what you're looking for.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Flexidiscos

CONTRACHARGE / DROGATO – Today's Empire is Tomorrow's Ashes split cassette

Midwestern anarcho-crust meets New York speed chaos. CONTRACHARGE deals in sharp, politically-charged D-beat with the precision of early AUS-ROTTEN, while DELGADO pushes the BPM to its limits with drug-fueled, basement-born hardcore. Ten tracks that don't just play fast, they burn.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Hey Fuck You



DANSE MACABRE – Danse Macabre LP

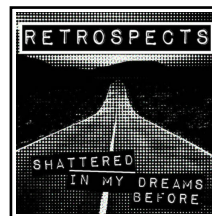
Mining another absolute fucking gem, General Speech brings us a remastered collection of fabled group DANSE MACABRE, the post-ZOUO brainchild of Katsunori "Cherry" Nishida. This footlong slab cobbles together the band's earliest material, ten tracks total with alternate versions of three songs and a STEP-PENWOLF cover for good (great?) measure. While this is an entirely separate beast from *The Final Agony*, the spirit of evil lurks here as well. Oozing charisma, DANSE MACABRE conjure moribund hard punk with a tinge of MOTÖRHEAD-esque sensibilities. The label description references Danzig's post-MISFITS evolution. That's an apt analogy for Cherry's trajectory from ZOUO to DANSE MACABRE, which is certainly informed by punk but has a rocker appeal, leaning more towards proto-metal. No reason to belabor the point, this LP puts some crucial cult rock classics at your fingertips and you don't even have to



RETROSPECTS – Shattered / In My Dreams Before 7"

Hey, who is this singer? It's the dude from the WHITE WIRES. I'm certain of it. Wait, isn't "Shattered" even one of their songs? It has to be. This sounds so familiar. This is more new wave than it is power pop, so it's similar, but definitely not the same. And it's not just the drum machine. Anyway, if you're a fan of the WHITE WIRES and think you might like to hear a more new wave version of that band, you should give this a shot. I've always been a huge fan, so it makes sense to me that I like it.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Fish & Cheap



S.C.U.M. – DCxPC Live Presents, Vol. 36 LP

S.C.U.M., or SOCIETY FOR CUTTING UP MISOGYNISTS, attacks with brute force and sheer passion. I couldn't quite understand the vocals (long, drawn-out screaming) and I absolutely loved it; that's why I really appreciate that they made this album live and kept the raw energy that they bring to all their songs. I loved how they messed around with tempo changes throughout, slowing down right after picking up the speed—you really don't know what to expect next. They aren't afraid to be a little goofy at times, while simultaneously having strong, pointed lyrics. Loved this album.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: DCxPC



SISTEMA DE MUERTE – Sistema De Muerte cassette

Impossibly good punk from Montreal—SISTEMA DE MUERTE may be my new favorite band. Top down, this tape is absolutely smoking; the leads are fire, the riffs are big and brawny, the Spanish lyrics are spat with venom, and the drums are working overtime. I hear a few influences throughout, but later-period ANTI-CIMEX comes to mind more than any other for me. I know lower-fi production can be preferred when it comes to this sort of thing, but SISTEMA DE MUERTE benefits from sounding bright and clean, not too dissimilar from contemporaries SISTEMA OBSOLETO. I'd pick a favorite song but I can't, they're all too



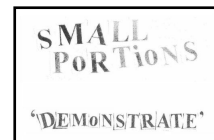
good. A total ripper and very highly recommended; hopefully someday it'll get a release on wax.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: A World Divided

SMALL PORTIONS – Demonstrate cassette

Holy hell, this rips! SMALL PORTIONS is a solo project from the UK, and these are three songs of blistering, spastic, treble-heavy lo-fi punk. The guitar is so delightfully twangy and has absolutely no sustain whatsoever. My only gripe? Too small a portion. Apparently the creator, Goo Stafford, felt similarly as there's a disclaimer that there "would have been more songs, but I fractured my clavicle, sorry." Well, here's hoping you heal up soon and can get back to work on the others, because I am left horrifically unsated and just gotta have seconds!

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Noise Merchant



SMITH GRIND – Curb Appeal LP

This band has members of FALL SILENT, who did the capital-H/'90s hardcore thing pretty hard, mixed with crossover/thrash elements. Here, thrash is the main ingredient (definitely of the thrash revival variety), with some intermittent forays into capital-H hardcore. A pretty solid effort, but some of the songs are a bit long for my taste (four of the ten tracks go beyond two-and-a-half minutes, with one track going over four), and they kinda lose me when they add breakdowns after what feels like a perfectly fine end for the songs. Not great, not terrible, might be worth your time if modern hardcore mixed with revival thrash sounds like your bag.

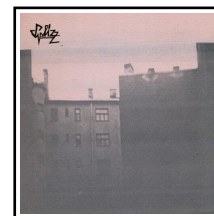
Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: 0'07"



SPLIZZ – Splizz LP

As soon as the first track begins, you're immediately immersed in another world. The layering of guitars and far-away vocals make you feel like you've been transported to a gloomy forest on a quest or sitting in nature watching the rain fall. I love how atmospheric and classically post-punk these guys are; amazing.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Phantom



out among its peers, like OUT COLD put in a blender with weirdo Midwest HC vibes.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Earth Girl

PRISON AFFAIR – Demo IV EP

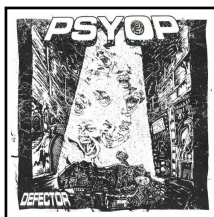
Out with their fourth demo, Barcelona's egg-punk trio PRISON AFFAIR brings more guitar squabbling, drum-kit-as-drum-machine precision, picked-apart bass, and heavily distorted vocals to our crumb-laden, sticky table. The whole thing sounds like a mouth harp run through a ratty amp: elastic, frenetic, completely hairbrained. The guitar tone/effects are wild, sounding more synth than six-string with riffs that rarely quit and that stay in the sweet spot on the neck, maybe between the seventh and fourteenth fret—like a fucked-up MINUTEMEN jam. And I must say, I'm glad the penis-nosed band mascot is shadowed-out and behind bars. I'm sorry, the cartoon penis and asshole imagery from earlier releases just puts me off. I guess that's the point? Watching their Audiotree live recording did give me a better impression of the band, as cartoon genitalia floated from my mind, to witness three grown men in full mission stance, sincere in their effort to bring us whatever this music may be. Will we get something that's not a demo soon? Or is the joke on us? All said, they've won me over.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Under the Gun

PSYOP – Defector cassette

With their first release dating back to 2021 and the follow-up dropping in 2023, Washington, DC's PSYOP continues their biennial release schedule with their 2025 release *Defector*, featuring four songs of fast and heavy hardcore punk with strong political subject matter. PSYOP is pissed at the system, the government, big business, as well as many other things which they are much more eloquent at expressing than I am, and truly, who could blame them? Fast, relentless palm-muted riffs, driving drums, and barked vocals, with political sound clips between the tracks. Of the three recordings the band has dropped, this is far and away their best output so far. That is, until their next release, which I'm assuming based on their set pattern is scheduled to drop sometime in 2027.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Kill Yellow Fever



PURE TERROR – Ehteram | احترام EP

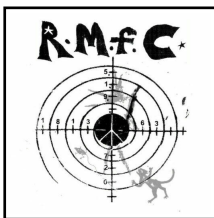
PURE TERROR, New York City's pan-Arab hardcore band, is back with the *Ehteram | احترام* EP. This four-song record is filled with raw NYC punk, but with a distinct flavor. If you didn't catch the PURE TERROR cassette that was released a couple years ago, then now is your chance to check this band out. I'm currently obsessed with the third track entitled "No Compromise" and its shifting guitar riffs over whirlwind tempos. PURE TERROR features Nader of HARAM and a crew of gifted musicians who have managed to create some of the most abrasive (and thereby loveable) punk to exist.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Toxic State

R.M.F.C. – Ecstatic Strife / Golden Trick 7"

Buz Clatworthy may have changed the meaning of his acronym and broadened the scope of his home-recording vision, but he hasn't lost the electric charge of the early recordings that made so many of us take notice to begin with. With merely one full-length in his oeuvre, he continues to push himself creatively through singles, which feels like the smart play. He is allowed the freedom to experiment and express without really having to harken back to any trace of his beginnings of automaton-inflected, fast-paced wormy punk from his youth (okay, he's still young, but still). "Ecstatic Strife" dips its mug into the punch bowl of what's best about New Zealand's '80s jangle pop scene, with Clatworthy's assured drumming keeping it on edge. "Golden Trick" is just that, a magical stunner that delves into something more meditative. Honestly, I'd take a whole album of something born of this strain of meditative and mature exploration. It's gorgeous and lush and hopefully a promise of more to come.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Anti-Fade



barter your soul to Lucifer for the price of admission. Hail Satan and praise General Speech!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: General Speech

DECADE / WOLFCHARGE – split LP

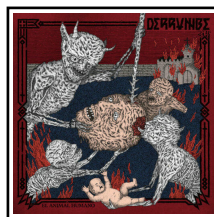
DECADE and WOLFCHARGE combined to bring a fourteen-track split 12" full of high-grade D-beat. DECADE plays an exceptionally raw and noisy breed with a strong focus on ANTI-CIMEX inspirations, while WOLFCHARGE plays a brute force DISCHARGE blend. If you're a D-beat aficionado, then you probably own one (or several copies). My honest impression, I love the music, but kind of hate the album cover.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Phobia

DERRUMBE – El Animal Humano LP

Solid twenty-minute-ish slab of D-beat/mid-tempo hardcore punk, with really clean production on the guitars and a bit of reverb on the vocals and drums. What stands out to me the most about this record is that it works so well as an album/release; it has an aural cohesion that tells a story from despair to outrage/hope. The first half feels a little clenched tight and it gives way to more flourishes (maybe even a little melody) and hopeful-feeling moments. The vocals took a couple listens to click for me (I have a weird relationship with reverbed vocals), but when they did, it really worked with the music. Lyrically, there is a poetry to it that you don't usually see with this kind of punk expression, which was quite impressive—at least in the Spanish language songs, but I guess the song in Basque is probably along the same lines. Really impressed with the use of song structure here to benefit the feel/effect of the songs, well worth a listen.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Diy Kontraatak



DESOLACION – Desolacion 12"

Now, this is a record I had been waiting for, and I am quite pleased to have been graced with the opportunity to review it, which can be read as yet another sign that I might be becoming the official in-house crust anarchist here (a noble position I'd humbly take, of course). DESOLACION is from Buenos Aires, Argentina, and is made up of members of the excellent RUINAS and the lesser-known CLAUSTROPHOBIA. Expectedly, DESOLACION plays dirty stenchcore for the true believers of the genre, those who gave up on soap a long time ago and embraced a life of devotion to filthy crust, a bit monastic in essence but with more booze and better-looking jackets. The music is downtuned, dark, and offers a good balance of fast, thrashing, gruff crust and slower, brutal metal-crust. The sound of RUINAS clearly informs this first LP that must be seen as an heir of the meaningful '00s stenchcore revival, in line with the more BOLT THROWER-influenced school. STORMCROW or FEMACOFFIN are not far away sometimes, while CANCER SPREADING and FATUM definitely got good seats to the gig as well. The production is fairly raw at times, and this unprocessed authenticity gives the album a genuine punk vibe that feels fresh—well, in a fetid fashion—and primeval. This is for the crust lifers.

Reviewer: Romain Bassot
Label: Disastro Sonoro / Nothing to Harvest / Tvm-balavalla / Up the Punx

DISCREET CHARMS – Delivery Model Stateholder Meeting LP

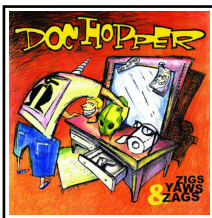
More art/dance punk out of Brooklyn that sounds exactly how you think it does. Fuzzy guitars paired with a tight rhythm section featuring a bass player who does most of the heavy lifting. The music itself is actually quite good, sounding like a slower-tempo GANG OF FOUR or a more refined DEAD MILKMEN. It's the vocals that make this a bit of a slog to get through. The singer is low-energy, sounding more like an indie music parody or a bad Richard Butler impression. Additionally, the vocals are layered in a tinny reverb that makes it stand too far out from the rest of the music. A better mixing job with less effects may have made it all a little more tolerable. If you can look past all of that, this is a pretty decent record—solid song construction and catchy.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Dot Dash Sounds



DOC HOPPER – Zigs, Yaws & Zags LP reissue

Originally released in 1999 on Go Kart Records as a CD only, and to be honest, until this reissue, I didn't even know it had come out. I've loved everything I've ever heard them do, from their *Sweetums 7"* through their *Reservoir* and *Ringing Ear* releases. I just assumed that the band split up in '95 to go be in the hundreds of other bands they ended up in. This LP continues the high-energy DESCENDENTS/CHEMICAL PEOPLE style while keeping true to their East Coast charm. Also, Chris Pierce is the most consistent member of this band, and his punk lineage stretches back to the A.G.'s who had a couple Mystic Records releases, up through SINKHOLE who were on Lookout! and Dr. Strange, on through hundreds of other bands and recording up through SCHOOL DRUGS currently, perhaps. Don't sleep on this DOC HOPPER's *Zigs, Yaws & Zags* LP as I had.



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Dead Broke

ELVIS II – Thank You Very Much 12"

A one-man recording project that achieves a rare degree of rockin' comprehension, ELVIS II is the brainchild of Australia's mysterious Mitch Casino. With a procession of beefy and electrified tunes, this album presents an energetic and astute take on the "budget rock" mentality, fusing classic style with the DIY power of the modern age. Cool melodies colored by soulful licks and mired in thick digital distortion make for a combination that's as timelessly tasty as fried peanut butter and bananas. Fans of THIN LIZZY and TOKYO ELECTRON can enthusiastically shake hands over this one. All hail the new king.



Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Under the Gun

EYE BALL – Gull Songs cassette

At long last, the full-length is here! Over a year ago, EYE BALL released a cassette EP with promises of the songs appearing on their forthcoming full-length. Well, here it is, and holy hell, was it worth the wait. EYE BALL is from Toronto, and I have seen it referred to as being a solo project, a two-piece, a guy and his dog, and even seen photos of a full band. I'm assuming this began as a solo project and has grown into a full band, which would make a lot of sense given the stylistic offerings of EYE BALL. This is egg-punk at its absolute

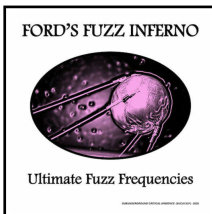


poppiest and catchiest, a band of similar ilk to that of NANCY. There's more pop punk elements here, however. Picture if DILLINGER FOUR was a twangy egg-punk band. Twelve almost addictingly catchy songs, many of which clock in at under a minute long. Both labels releasing this cassette do incredibly limited runs, so act quick if you're looking to track down a physical copy.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Knuckles on Stun / Noise Merchant

FORD'S FUZZ INFERNO – Ultimate Fuzz Frequencies LP

Garage rock/punk. The first couple tracks didn't grab me—they sounded a bit like general garage punk; there wasn't anything super unique to them. However, "Frantic Fuzz Rush" set a shift where all of the following tracks felt like they had more of a grab or an *umph* to them. With a more droning, noise-focused guitar in "Why Are We Here and Who Are You?" to an explosive start to "Conquerors," I feel like these guys really started to pick up the pace.



Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Subunderground Critical Ambience

FORTY TWO – Beeblebrox CD

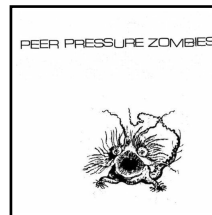
I love the cover of this, as it reminds me of an AVAIL record. But that is it. Only the cover reminds me of AVAIL. I don't want anyone picking this up and thinking it is anything like AVAIL. Musically, oh man, this is fine. I appreciate the effort, but it falls into mediocre sonically. There are six songs on here, and I think they should have tossed these out and maybe recorded their thirty through thirty-sixth songs. I just can't get a feel of what the band is about. They are hitting all the notes, the lyrics are clear, some of the songs are driving, with gang vocals, and through all that, I'm just not convinced that they even know what they want. Regionally, I bet they shows pack the house. Maybe FORTY TWO should break up, or maybe switch instruments clockwise one band member. Listen to the link and you decide.



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: River Monster

PEER PRESSURE ZOMBIES – Screen on the Green LP

Drum machine post-punk with psychedelic flourishes from this Cleveland band. Monotone vocals with repetitive, chant-like lyrics hang over moody synth textures like a mix of PLEASURE LEFTISTS and fellow Clevelanders KNOWSO. They are best on slower tracks like "Zip Code" and "Circular Psychiatry," bass-heavy jams that evoke Calvin Johnson fronting BAUHAUS, but it's all great. Weird, abrasive enough to fit under the punk umbrella, and danceable—it's a win.



Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released

PESTS – Call of the Void EP

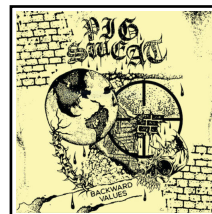
Dark, mournful four-chord crust from Toronto. PESTS have a powerful presence, tightly wound and well-formed, if not entirely realized. *Call of the Void* channels fury with six driving tracks propelled by thick, sinewy guitars, thunderous drums, and haunting vocals. The raw production bolsters the edifice, drawing the listener into the distorted vortex. Sadly, the style surpasses the substance. Though everything sounds great on paper, the riffs lack the imaginative execution needed to make them truly memorable. Similarly, the vocals are cool and evil, but the monosyllabic delivery washes them out and waters them down. The track "On Your Own" stands out because it breaks up the tempo common to nearly every other song. I have a feeling that PESTS would be killer live. Nothing about this EP is shitty or even bad, it's just missing the secret sauce that could've made it great.



Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Negative Days / Undocumented

PIG SWEAT – Backward Values LP

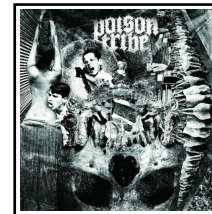
Razor-sharp Swiss hardcore that sounds like S.H.I.T., which may be considered insulting out of context but in this instance, it's high praise. *Backward Values* is stuffed to the brim with contemporary D-beat goodness and killer riffs that rock in a WARTHOG kind of way, especially on standouts "Death Dealer" and "Bullet." I'm a fan, check this one out.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Agipunk

POISON TRIBE – False Narrative EP

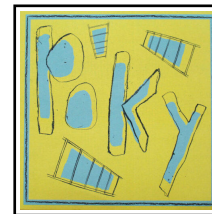
POISON TRIBE out of Denver has released a couple of cassette recordings over the past few years, but this summer, they decided to release their first proper vinyl 7" entitled *False Narrative*. On this five-song EP, we find POISON TRIBE offering a refined version of their signature crusty hardcore sound. Instrumentally, somewhere between DISFEAR and NASUM—POISON TRIBE uses a call-and-response, dual-vocal approach which creates a dynamic lyrical presentation. If you dig grindy guitars, shredded vocals, and a terminal velocity rhythm section, then you must absolutely check this out.



Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Power Slop

POKY – III LP

Third release from Leipzig, Germany's POKY. Songs stay on the shorter side, and have a bedroom-meets-basement energy with some psych-rock guitar elements thrown in, best heard on "Cerberus." Songs bounce around and stay light-hearted, even eggy, like the track "Im in a Band" which gets more comical with every key change and oddball shriek. Vocals are sassy, even a little whiny, but never in a melancholic way, more like Joe Jack Talcum. With no credited musicians and very little information on Flenner's or their own Bandcamp page, it's hard to give any context to the group. But no matter, have the friends over for this one, all fun within.



Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Flenner

PRIMAL BRAIN – Is It All a Game? cassette

Third release for this Oklahoma City unit. The main inspiration here is '80s American hardcore with pedal-to-the-floor intensity and some noisy elements, especially around the vocals. There's some moments of wild speed, but what stands out for me is the mix/production for the guitar: the whole mix is centered on it, and the distortion flirts with being clean-ish in a very Midwestern HC way. This is decidedly not hardcore worship or rehash; every song on here goes hard, regardless of tempo, with plenty of interesting twists and turns. Great fucking hardcore punk that stands



NICE SMILE / PISSED OFF ZOMBIES – split 7"

Seattle songsmith Rob Vasquez put out singles under various monikers in the 1990s, leaving his greasy garage prints on exalted labels like Estrus, Sub Pop, and In The Red, among others. Cementing his legacy a little further, this one-two punch on Total Punk drags two of his previously unreleased tracks into the modern era. It's a raggedy, primitive, blues-infected affair, like a totally shit-faced Billy Childish let loose on four-track, and rumor has it that there's more of this to come (fingers crossed).



Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Total Punk

NIGHTFREAK – Mindfuck cassette

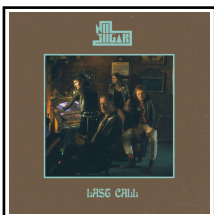
Hardcore hanging on the metal side of the spectrum, sounding a bit like SUICIDE FILE with all of their twangy, noodly guitar leads. Very strong vocalist who has the power of one thousand burning suns. Guitar and bass are in lockstep and play off each other very well. Super fast and energetic as all hell. Very fun EP if you like this kind of thing.



Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: What's For Breakfast?

NO SUGAR – Last Call LP

How do I get assigned a record from NO SUGAR and a record from ZERO AZÚCAR in the same month? That's some funny shit. Onward. Hmm. This one may take some time to grow on me. We're not hitting it off right away. It's female-fronted punk'n'roll that's heavier on the rock'n'roll than it is on the punk. Still, this should be up my alley. I think it's just a little too slick for me. Too much guitar work. It's catchy enough and all that, just a little polished for my taste. It's even got a little stadium rock feel to it. At its best, it kinda sorta reminds me of the DONNAS. It's not you, it's me...



Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Sabotage

PASSION KILLERS – They Kill Our Passion With Their Hate and Wars LP reissue

I was thrilled when this weird little piece of CHUMBAWAMBA history came out as an LP on Demo Tapes fifteen years ago, and it's really nice to see it reissued on Sealed now. PASSION KILLERS were a group of teens from a small town near Leeds who had a song (their Big Hit "Start Again") on Crass Records' *Bullshit Detector 2*. CHUMBAWAMBA was also on the comp, and wrote to all the other bands saying "Hey, let's keep the momentum going, let's start a movement based on this serendipitous collection of bands!"—PASSION KILLERS were the one band that responded. Long story short, the two bands released a split demo and played together constantly, and two of the members, Harry Hamer and Mave Dillon, moved in with CHUMBAWAMBA (with parental permission, kinda), recorded the material found on this LP in 1983 with Boff of CHUMBAWAMBA joining in, and then got kind of absorbed into CHUMBAWAMBA, with PASSION KILLERS playing their last show in 1984. They reformed to release a 7" of covers protesting the first Gulf War in 1991, but otherwise have not done anything until a series of reunion shows this year (I'm assuming this reissue was done to coincide with those shows). The backstory is cute and all, but happily the music is also fantastic, almost shockingly good for something that has remained so obscure. Dare I say, it's better than the early CHUMBAWAMBA demos. You can tell that very young teens wrote a lot of this, and I don't mean that in a bad way. There's a really charming naïvete throughout that is kind of refreshing in this day and age. The lyrics are political and largely idealistic, and the music is decidedly punk (more '77 punk than anarcho-punk), very simple but very pop-informed and super catchy with sometimes off-key three-part harmonies. It brings to mind a lot of their contemporaries, bands like ANARKA AND POPPY, the MOB, and HAGAR THE WOMB that were straddling the line between punks and (gasp) hippies. It's very easy to hear what the members brought to CHUMBAWAMBA, and it's frankly magical. The record comes with a booklet with a detailed history of the band and all kinds of ephemera, and is all-around packaged beautifully with respect for the band's ultra-DIY roots.



Reviewer: Rachel Courtney
Label: Sealed

FUCKIN' LOVERS – Crucifixion of the Masses EP

Brain-rattling noise from Philly's FUCKIN' LOVERS, whose namesake (a song by noise-punk legends CONFUSE) tells you what you need to know about their sound on *Crucifixion of the Masses*. Snotty, hectic, and with a touch of psychedelia thrown in, it's a heady brew and burrows deeper into your skull with each listen. The dual vocals, nasty guitar and bass, and crashing drums peak on the raw blast of standout "Arrogance." Also of note is final track "The End," an effects-laden, out-there instrumental that sounds like four walls of noise slowly closing in on you. Yes, it's as good as it sounds. Great band, great EP, highly recommended.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Discos Enfermos / General Speech

GAGU – Gagu demo cassette

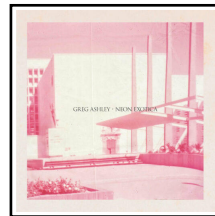
If this was a little noisier, I could see this being a regular release on Iron Lung Records. It's the kind of intentionally ugly hardcore you'd see on the label, but maybe a little too clean-sounding for them. This is fucking outstanding, stompy at times, with vocals reverbed just right to elevate the bile and urgency of their delivery. The more I listened to this, the more that different bands came to mind...a more raw punk BOSTON STRANGLER, a more hardcore WHITE GUILT, an intensely focused HOAX...but the fact that every turn had me thinking of other great bands just highlighted that this band is doing their own thing. Even caught some powerviolence vibes here and there, which is a feature not a bug in my book. Ten out of ten, no fucking notes—if you like hardcore punk, go find this.



Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Dirtbag Distro / Richter Scale

GREG ASHLEY – Neon Exotica LP

Following his tenures in the GRIS GRIS and the MIRRORS, musician and producer Greg Ashley has settled into the unique and subtly psychedelic folk stylings showcased on this LP. With a matured creativity and confidence, songs like "Sandra on the Tropic of Capricorn" and the dreamy duet of "One Thin Herione" tap into a vein that evades the timestamps of any particular era. Thoughtfully composed and punctuated by oscillating sonic interludes, this is a potent record doc-



umenting ASHLEY's proficiency as a singer/songwriter, even as it exists on (dangles off?) the edge of what is appropriate for MRR coverage.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Almost Ready

GRIP BITE / MINDROTT / RADICAL FUN TIME / SELF ABUSE – Four Way Split, Vol. 2 split CD

Fun little split between four bands that sound different enough to keep things interesting. I'm sure that what I'm about to say sounds like the "Country/Western" bit from *Blues Brothers*, but there's something here for anyone who likes punk-adjacent music. GRIP BITE plays the classic "your favorite local band" brand of street punk, MINDROTT has a late-era PANTERA/HATEBREED vibe going on, RADICAL FUN TIME plays lo-fi crust, and SELF ABUSE rounds it out with their flavor of crossover thrash punk. Really solid disc here; I had it on while I was doing yard work and it helped me forget I'm an old man now. This is well worth a spin.



Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Hey Fuck You / Rejected Youth

GUZOO – Compilado cassette

The moment I heard the drum intro on the very first track, I knew I would be obsessing over this tape for the foreseeable future. And folks, I'm not ashamed to admit it, by the end of it, I was down on my knees worshipping this Chilean band GUZOO that I've never heard before. Yes, it's that good. And yes, I know I'm gushing over it. But what can I say, I adore everything about this cassette: a guitar sound that would make you piss yourself, a distorted-beyond-belief bass, drums that would easily beat a Gatling gun any given day, and absolutely, disgustingly filthy vocals...all packed in a brutally and delightfully shit-fi recording. I don't speak the language or have any idea what the lyrics are about, but thanks to the samples in between tracks, I sense that there is some SPAZZ-style tomfoolery going on. I wouldn't be surprised, though—the record has West Coast powerviolence written all over it (I mean, duh, it literally ends with a NO COMMENT cover). While there is no doubt that GUZOO follows that path, they seem to have masterfully tailored their own unique sound. The label says it's a compilation of their current work, but I'm not sure if it is the entirety of their discography. If not, all I can say is "For the love of everything unholy, give me every single song they've ever recorded, including the bedroom demos. Please and thank you."



Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Junko

HARRY CHINASKI – Ciudad de Ratas Muertas cassette

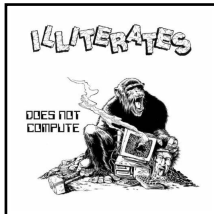
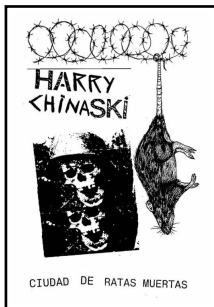
Buenos Aires hardcore skate punkers keep pushing, and HARRY CHINASKI is at the front. *Ciudad de Ratas Muertas* is taut, furious, and socially wired—short songs, sharp feedback, and venomous vocals. They don't waste a second: from the title track's creeping dread to "Algoritmo" and "Caras," there's a political pulse, a sense of community anger, a reflection of decay, but also hope in the raw urgency, in their uncompromised underground ethics. Sounds like the streets are screaming and someone turned the volume all the way up. Vividly active in the underground Argentinian scene, their live gigs are on fire, clinging to a sense of emergency and an outburst of hate and despair.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Rock SVB

ILLITERATES – Does Not Compute LP

Another cracker from the fine folks at Sorry State, ILLITERATES' *Does Not Compute* chalks up another win for the "dumbest band in hardcore" (their words, not mine). Following their excellent 2023 12", this LP sees the band maintain the blunt force of their previous output while refining the production, giving the proceedings a real pop. Each instrument sounds huge, particularly the bass which really rumbles. ILLITERATES' greatest strength though is their vocalist who fully leads the charge. He kind of reminds me of a particularly irate Ray Cappo, yelling about social issues as well as some very well-written introspection. "Remember When" and the title track are particularly effective in their songwriting, the former grieving over the lost passage of time and the latter lamenting the overload of modern technology frying our individual and collective brains. *Does Not Compute* is a great LP that crushes and has something important to say. Maybe ILLITERATES shouldn't be so hard on themselves, there's nothing dumb about them.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Sorry State



KARL FROG – Yes, Music LP

Atypical sounds for round these parts, but worth your time. KARL FROG is a Swedish musician whose music does not come with power chords or blast-beats; no breakdowns, no shredding up or down the fretboard. What FROG does offer is fantastic and beautiful artsy pop. JOHN CALE's "Barracuda" has been a long-time favorite song, and as soon as the opener "Colonial Hearts" kicked in, I knew I was in line for something wonderful. Playing this type of music often requires good balance, as the tightrope you have to walk to not quickly fall into Wes Anderson soundtrack-fodder can be extremely tricky. FROG walks the line with ease, offering up eleven smart, poppy songs that feel like good DESTROYER B-sides or early BRIAN ENO with a bit less production. Sometimes your mind can use a distortion break. The next time that happens for you, I implore you to see what FROG is cooking up.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Spoilsport

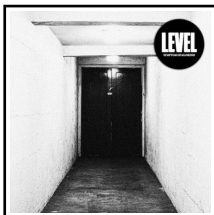
(LA'S) PEOPLE TALK – About Things LP

This on-and-off-and-on-again group features a conglomeration of incredible players who between them have put in time with ALICE BAG, SHUDDER TO THINK, REDD KROSS, JAWBOX, the SHAKES, and more. Having shelved these sessions back in 2012, tracking was finally completed on this full-length, and the results are top-notch. Organ groove and sax fills out the sound, backing catchy-as-hell, hook-laden rock'n'roll that sounds fresh and metropolitan even as it captures a sort of timeless swing. Tracks like "Obsessed Obsessive," which is replete with a sing-along chorus, are impossible not to flail around to. It's a joy to hear this record fully realized after nearly being lost, but this is no archivist's niche passion project. This is vital music from the wellspring of Los Angeles's long storied history, and it's perfect.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Recess

LEVEL – Symptom of Mankind LP

Hailing from Chico, California, LEVEL delivers a relentless and masterfully done record with *Symptom of Mankind*. The usual suspects of any punk band are all there, but with the intensity turned all the way up to eleven. While gnarly, crushing guitar riffs attack from all sides, the drums pummel away with maximum velocity and



bloodthirst. On top of that, tough-as-nails vocals perfectly tear through the full spectrum wall of sound the band blasts towards your general direction. Something that I particularly like about this record is that deep gut-punch of bass. Although a harsh and tinny sound never goes out of style in the world of hardcore, I do appreciate the extra dimension that a full low-end adds to the band's heaviness. All in all, LEVEL's *Symptom of Mankind* is a really solid record that deserves recognition from powerviolence aficionados around the world.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: 625 Thrashcore / Coxinha / Thrash Tapes

LÙLÙ – Lùlù LP

I don't speak any real French or Italian, but I sure wish I did at this moment. That said, I do know catchy when I hear it. Both musically and vocally, this is infectiously catchy. Mid-tempo pop'n'roll, this will have you tapping and swaying along from the get-go. This is my kind of pop music. A couple of the tracks miss the mark for me, but overall I like it a lot. More cowbell.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Taken By Surprise

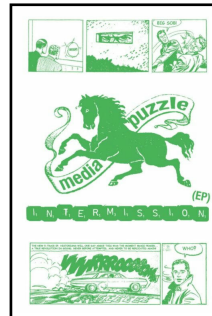
MEDIA PUZZLE – Intermission cassette

Garage punk with swagger from Lismore, Australia. These tracks are snappy, gritty, and full of hook-laden riffs that harken to youth rebellion and burnt-out nights. "The Scene" and "Bundy Vision" cut through fuzz with attitude. "How Do You Feel?" strips everything back to raw vocals and guitar, letting the emotional grit shine. This cassette feels intimate like hanging in practice spaces, like something made by friends.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Knuckles on Stun

METDOG – One for the Kids LP

If you've read my other reviews in the past, then you'll know that I'm a big champion of the Australian rock'n'roll scene. However, there comes a time in a person's life where they reach a breaking point and begin to reassess some prior convictions. Now don't get me wrong, I still love egg-punk and I still believe



that Australia has been the epicenter of some of the purest rock'n'roll over the last five years, but these DEVO/CONEHEADS-esque bands are starting to hit the proverbial glass ceiling and produce diminishing returns. METDOG probably sounds exactly how you're imagining it at this point. Noodly, twangy guitars in lockstep with bass over a danceable four-on-the-floor drum beat. Oh, and of course the nerdy vocals. This is a good record, but it's like every other Goodbye Boozy release you've heard this last half-decade. I will say, they do have a creative use of the synth, utilizing more modern patches over the typical Casio/electric organ options, but there's still a lot of that, too. Might be worth a spin for the most diehard of the hard-boiled dorks like myself.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Swish Swash

MORON'S MORONS – Live in Kyoto cassette

Live in Japan, it's the jet-fueled rock'n'roll of MORON'S MORONS! These Polish punks have been at it for a while now, but they're still playing loose and nasty, as demonstrated by this solid eleven-track live tape. If you dig the CANDY SNATCHERS or the HUMBERS, this will slide nicely right up your alley.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: River Trash

MOVING TARGETS – Red Eyes LP

Boston vets MOVING TARGETS are back with *Red Eyes*, the third studio album since their 2018 comeback *Wires*. They still tag themselves "melodic punk," but this release lands closer to the GOO GOO DOLLS than BAD RELIGION. It's ten songs recorded by J Robbins, produced tight and clean, but definitely too clean for my taste—it sounds to me more like a band that would underscore some WB drama instead of inspiring kids to fuck the system. Maybe that's the goal because we're all grown-ups now, but I found 2023's *Live at Kling Klang*, with all of the rough edges on full display, to be so much more compelling. If you're a die-hard, or if your shelves already have space for SOUL ASYLUM next to your punk section, you might find something to like. For me, it's more background noise than a burner.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Boss Tuneage / Dead Broke

