



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #510

NOVEMBER 2025

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 115 reviews, contributed by:

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

THE COUNTERFORCE

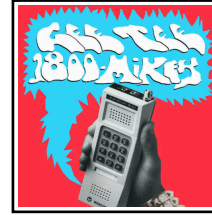
This zine digest was compiled and laid out by The Counterforce.

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Print It Yourself.

1-800-MIKEY / GEE TEE – split EP

Split release pairing Sydney's 1-800 MIKEY and GEE TEE. 1-800 MIKEY is a project from Michael Barker, who also plays in GEE TEE. His tracks are lo-fi, innocent, and achingly whimsical, similar to fellow Sydneysiders TEE VEE REPAIRMAN and Portland's CHEERY CHEEKS. GEE TEE has been referred to as the Australian SPITS, but on their track, they slow it down with a tune that sounds beautifully crafted like NOBUNNY covering DANIEL JOHNSTON in a bedroom on a four-track.



Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Prison

ADDED DIMENSIONS – Jane From Pre-occupied America LP

Richmond, Virginia consistently churns out great bands of all stripes, and ADDED DIMENSIONS are certainly no exception. Discordant garage with danceable grooves and unexpected harmonic layers. Art-tarnished if not fully damaged, the SWELL MAPS reference is fitting. They don't sound much like GRASS WIDOW or VIVIAN GIRLS, though both of those bands spring to mind. Catchy and streamlined without being simplistic or saccharine. Out of the fertile bed of minimalism flowers a vine yielding complex fruit. Citric, sweet, with a touch of bitterness...remarkable and delectable. I dig it more with each listen.



Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Domestic Departure

AGGRAVATE – Black Glass cassette

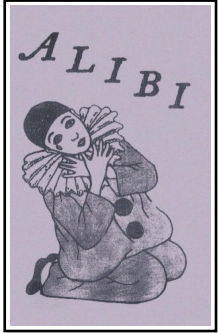
Solid first offering from San Diego's AGGRAVATE. The band has one foot firmly planted in traditional USHC thanks to the straightforward vocals, but otherwise the proceedings are more atmospheric and heavier than your usual fare, almost approaching stadium crust. Overall not bad; I'll be curious to see what direction they go from here.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Human Future

ALIBI – Alibi cassette

Yet another contemporary German throwback to the Neue Deutsche Welle, and I'm not mad about it. Opener "Irgendwas Ist Immer" builds plenty of tension and drama over three-and-a-half minutes, and there's a sharp, Zickzack'd angularity cutting through in the staccato guitar stabs and rigid rhythms of "Attitüde" and "Zustände," but on a whole, Kiel's ALIBI are far less shrouded and goth-influenced than the Berlin-based contingent of modern XMAL DEUTSCHLAND disciples like AUS, DIE SCHIEFE BAHN, and MISERE, landing somewhere closer to the second HANS-A-PLAST LP that bridged their late '70s speedy punk spark with an expanded early '80s post-punk palette. Impressively tight and locked-in for what's essentially a first demo, and if whatever comes next plays up even more of the latent art-damage that I'm picking up on here, it could be genuinely savage.



Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Flennen

AN SLUA – Sure Look It LP

It's time to face an uncomfortable truth—a lot of modern Oi! is complete and utter shite. It's either hardcore lite made by people in big shorts, or it's pop punk about the pub made by people in flat caps they bought off Amazon. It's bland, over-produced, insipid bollocks. So when I get the chance to listen to something truly good, not just "genre good" but actually good, it's a real treat. AN SLUA is that treat. The Sligo skins have released a modern classic in their debut. Joining luminaries like OI POLLO! and the OPPRESSED in being fiercely political and not being afraid to nail their (correct) colours to the mast at a time when cowards are happy to be fencesitters, they also know their way around a tune. Catchy as fuck, lyrically whip-smart, and choruses that beg to be shouted on the terraces. This is, quite simply, class. Any time you don't bother listening to this is time wasted.



Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Destroy / Longshot

ÁRESI – Aurrera Beti 12"

I'll be the first to admit that my knowledge of the Basque language leaves much to be desired, which is an enormous shame since Mendeku Diskak has been instrumental in spotlighting what continues to be a verdant and fertile scene of top-notch punk. ÁRESI is no different, having already impressed with a few potted releases, and now a full(er)-length 12". A potent mix of rock'n'roll which has a nod to BLITZ and some of the more rockin' CROWN COURT tunes to boot(boy). It really is impressive to write such compelling sing-alongs in a language I can't speak, let alone shout along to. And yet I do.

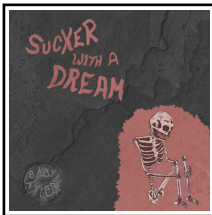
Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Mendeku Diskak



BABY TYLER – Sucker With a Dream LP

BABY TYLER is back and better than ever. I'll admit it, on the first listen I wasn't impressed. It was exactly what I expected, hardcore-tinged garage punk rippers. Nothing more, nothing less. The first two tracks didn't do much for me at first, but the third track caught my attention with the lyric "And if you give it nothing / What do you expect in return?" This stuck out to me, and days later it was still in my head. Tracks six through eight expand on the sound of the first few songs and have some of my favorite moments on the LP. The horn breakdown on "Rinse Repeat" is a great example, as is the menacing vocal on "Good Motivator". The bass and drums really stand out and work together seamlessly to move the songs forward, while the guitar takes a back seat and adds subtle flavor where needed. Elsewhere, the bass can be overpowering at times, and I wish the guitars hit a little harder. Lyrically, vocalist Tyler Fassnacht angrily questions his dedication to the craft, the idea of "success," and what it means to a mid-thirties DIY punk who has spent most of his life on tour and making records. "If you give it nothing, what can you expect in return?" The answer is nothing. Fucking nothing. But if you give it everything, time and time again, you may end with an LP full of piss and vinegar, yet still poppy enough to leave hooks in your head for days.

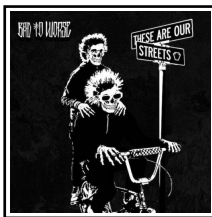
Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Night Bell



BAD TO WORSE – These Are Our Streets cassette

One of those bands that isn't really sure what they want to sound like. Swapping between an amalgamation of HOT WATER MUSIC, O PIONEERS!, CROMAGS, and CHOKING VICTIM, the only consistent variable is the vocalist who maintains the same dynamic throughout the entire record. While the stamina is impressive, the lack of vocal nuance is a tad dry. The gang vocals laden throughout sound great and pepper in a much needed charisma boost. A release where everyone involved is obviously quite talented, but it all sounds a bit dated. The whole orgcore motif combining the posi-tough-guy image with the sentimental longing for "home" was fresh fifteen years ago but still hasn't hit its nostalgia period, it just sounds stale. However, if you still pine for that era, then you'll love this.

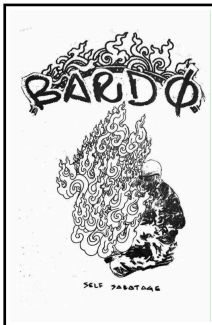
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released



BARDØ – Self Sabotage cassette

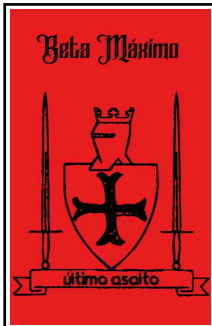
Described as "old fuckers on a PV bent," and that's exactly what it is. Very raw-sounding, unpretentious power violence with obligatory intro samples. INFEST and NEANDERTHAL are high on their influences list, as they take some of their cues and use them to perfection. Old school to the core. What else to say? Let's fucking go!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Rip



BETA MAXIMO – Último Asalto cassette

As is more often than not the case, Knuckles on Stun brings us yet another absolute smash hit! BETA MAXIMO is a wildly prolific garage punk band from Spain with more releases than some bands have songs. Eight catchy and driving tracks, most of which are pushed over the top by having almost sickeningly poppy synth licks. I absolutely love this! I truly hope that my Spanish not being very good might mean there is a chance that *Último Asalto* is not the band's way of telling us that this is their final release. If that is the case, then I really hope I am of the lucky 25 people to get a copy of the forthcoming BETA MAXIMO discography cassette on Knuckles on Stun, as that is the



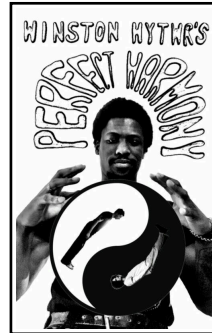
through with their hauntingly dark take on hardcore/post-hardcore. Their riff-layered, abstract take on the heavy music of their day remains fresh, with Eugene Robinson's vocals coming through with a soft but fervent croon. *Dysillusion* is absolutely worth checking out, especially tracks like the gothic "Myster Magi" and the bluesy closer "Junkman," and if you're a mega music history nerd, then you'll probably find the original recorded banter between the band and Klaus amusing.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Blackhouse

WINSTON HYTWR'S PERFECT HARMONY – Perfect Harmony cassette

Buckle in for this Ohio-based adventure; an ever-meandering river of jangle pop/lo-fi bedroom pop/egg-punk/indie rock awaits on this seven-song cassette. As soon as you think you've got the band figured out, WINSTON and co. throw you a curveball, leaving you guessing once more. The unexpected post-punk track "Subject of Interest" is unbelievably catchy and memorable, from its repetitive bass lines, noodly guitar leads, and impressively lackadaisically delivered vocals. It almost feels like the band is trying to play a slightly different sub-genre of the greater punk world with each track on this cassette. Perhaps this is being done to show us, the listener, that all of these sub-genres can in fact exist in *Perfect Harmony*.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Clean Demon



XRAY XEROXX – Nevermind, Whatever cassette

The forgotten Ramone was surely Egg Ramone, no? XRAY XEROXX embodies the spirit of this made-up Ramone by giving us fourteen tracks of egg-ed-up, RAMONES-meets-DEVO sugar rushes. While RAMONES and DEVO certainly get called to mind almost immediately, as the album goes on, those comparisons start to (d)evolve into something more like the QUEERS and the AQUABATS—the immaturity of the lyrics, the performance/persona behind the music. These songs are definitely fun and snotty, but it does have me wondering if today's mainstream high schooler views this type of egg-punk in the same way a normie twenty years ago viewed REEL BIG FISH or the MAD CADDIES? Are lots of synth punks today just former marching band kids? Does SNOOPER sing along to MEPHISKAPHELES? Did



PRISON AFFAIR perform in their high school musicals?

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Robot Cannibal

偏執症者 (PARANOID) – Vanished Resilience / False Control 7"

偏執症者 continue to exert mastery over D-takt in a way that few others even approach. Of a piece aesthetically with a slew of recent releases, this two-song ripper embodies the band's general imperative: the perfection of a craft. Distinct from so many dis-clones in form and function, I think of PARANOID as "boutique" D-beat. To the matter at hand, both tracks unsurprisingly rip. Upbeat and punk forward on both accounts, the topside "Vanished Resilience" contains a fun trick where they switch from a fast, raging D-beat to a slower (still raging) D-beat. It may sound minor, but this is exactly the type of punk acrobatics that a lesser band would never consider, much less pull off so seamlessly. If you're not sufficiently lured in by the rad art, this moment alone makes for required listening.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: D-Takt & Råpunk / Paranoid Northern Discs



high-profile, the most talented, or the most remarkable among the legions of D-beat and crust bands during the '90s, but I personally really enjoy the primitive and hyperbolic gruffness of their sound. This is for the real crust die-hards.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Phobia

V/A – Chaos for Christmas CD

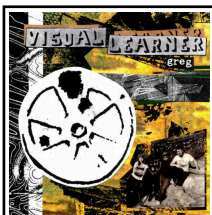
This starts with a real heartbreaker of a seasonal song about not singing door-to-door because the singer is awfully sad about things and stuff (sad face emoji). I bet these songs were a real hoot to write (hoot emoji). The songs are mostly upbeat in sound but downbeat in jolliness, and are peppered with language that will get you on the "naughty list" for certain (uh-oh emoji). My friend Derek loves Christmas-themed punk stuff so he can sprinkle in a few tunes he enjoys between the MARIAH CAREY and BING CROSBY family favorites Xmas playlist (thumbs up emoji), so at least one of these is already in a stocking in Michigan (shrug emoji).

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Rejected Youth

VISUAL LEARNER – Greg LP

Debut full-length from this Minneapolis quartet that at its core has the working-class realism of the ARRIVALS and AMERICAN STEEL. Lyrics that are equally dead serious and tongue-in-cheek; angsty and optimistic. There is an element of urgency and that almost slightly out-of-control feeling as they crash through the ten tracks in a short twenty-six minutes, particularly on the track "Cure-All" when bassist Morgan Purcell takes over vocals. The mastering by MARKED MEN's Jeff Burke adds to the punch. Also telling is the young band getting an invite to play the Recess Romp this year at the Sardine. The band is relatively new but has the feel of well-worn sounds from earlier times, particularly the first few albums from fellow Minneapolitans HUSKER DU and the REPLACEMENTS.

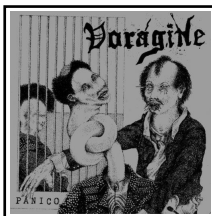
Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Bloated Kat / Salinas



VORÁGINE – Pánico EP

VORÁGINE is Peruvian D-beat, punk *crudo* at its best. *Primitivo* in presentation and production, the *Pánico* EP will absolutely get your fist pumping. Seven tracks that contain bursts of Motör-punk forming bridges between noise-blasted lyrical delivery and everything happening at terminal velocity. If you're lacking in recent D-beat face-meltings, then you should probably check out VORÁGINE.

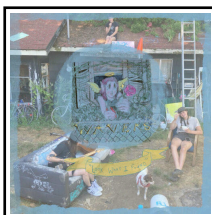
Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Discos Asalto / Little Jan's Hammer / Metadona / Tvmbalavalla



WAVERS – Look What I Found LP

The cyclical nature of music continues to resound as young folks renew and revise the spirit of '90s indie, centering bright hooks and big guitars. WAVERS, from Olympia where American indie has always thrived, sound familiar and novel at once, striking the perfect balance between the current crop of loftspace DIY rock and giants that came before—even rhyming with early PAVEMENT in some of their guitar work. Vocalist/guitarist Rosie's soaring voice is smartly featured up front and center, bolstered by a smart and well-weathered backing band that knows what they like and how to play it. Drummer Charlie also sings sumptuous harmonies that will mist your eyes more than once, guaranteed. Totally gorgeous and self-assured emo-tinged indie that will ring true regardless what era it's heard in.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Reach Around / Salinas



WHIPPING BOY – Dysillusion: A Muru Muru Remix LP

The *Dysillusion* LP issued by Blackhouse Records is an intriguing reissue/remix of WHIPPING BOY's 1984 seminal album *Muru Muru*. If you're unfamiliar with WHIPPING BOY, that's okay because they were a niche band in Southern California during a time



when bands were ubiquitous. *Muru Muru* was originally recorded by the DEAD KENNEDYS' Klaus Flouride while *Dysillusion* is remixed by Grammy winner Joe Chiccarelli and remastered by John Golden, each having extensive histories working with noisy post-hardcore mega-acts like the MELVINS and SONIC YOUTH, respectively. In reality, *Dysillusion* is a refined reworking of *Muru Muru* with a better instrument-to-vocal balance. WHIPPING BOY still shines

standard amount that label makes of each of their releases (this one included), so get one while you can.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Knuckles on Stun

BEZETTE STAD – F.A.N.O.N. 12"

Belgian hardcore band BEZETTE STAD has been releasing music for about five years now. Their latest release *F.A.N.O.N.* is a six-song 12" that explores our contemporary global scenario with articulate hardcore blended with D-beat, as if PAINT IT BLACK started hanging out with DISCHARGE. From the bass-heavy opener of "Reform" to the metallic pummeling and digital glitching in closer "28 Days" the *F.A.N.O.N. 12"* is six slices of hardcore hellion heaven, and you need to put it in your ear holes posthaste.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Shield



BIG LAUGH – Days of Disarray LP

Possible swan song from this Milwaukee hardcore band, and it's a ripper. This 12" EP contains four tracks of complex punk, mixing big riffs, metallic palm-muted chugging, and layers of intricate sonic variations that keep each moment exciting like a blend of INSIDE OUT's attitude with FUCKED UP's compositional intricacy. The whole record is great, but "Vacation" stands out with its blend of aggression and textural minor-key fuzz. Check this one out, and let's cross our fingers that it's not the last from BIG LAUGH.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Convulse



BURGERS GONE WILD / DRU THE DRIFTER – Do the Shplit! split cassette

Following in the lineage of Jay Reatard and Drew Owen, DRU THE DRIFTER is a prolific young purveyor of lo-fi garagery, and the A-side of this tape showcases four new transmissions from this the incorrigible punk upstart. On the flip, BURGERS GONE WILD is a tam-bourine-shakin' one-man force to be reckoned with in the spirit of King Louie Bankston (R.I.P.) If you like it cheap and cheeky, you'll be rocking this one until you need a pencil to help spin its guts back inside.

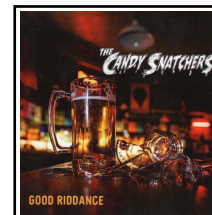


Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Knuckles on Stun

CANDY SNATCHERS – Good Riddance / Round Up 7"

Two new tracks of pure, unadulterated rock'n'roll from Virginia Beach's own CANDY SNATCHERS, now entering their thirty-third year of existence. What's left to say about a band that's been consistently active for the last three decades? Vocalist Larry May sounds like a combination of MEAT LOAF and Lux Interior of CRAMPS fame. May's range and energy is equal parts impressive and inspirational. Some folks begin phoning it all in after a measly ten years, but Larry's still out there spitting venom—full of piss, vinegar, and Mountain Dew. I'd be remiss if I didn't talk about the music itself. This slab sounds fantastic; beautiful production and tight as hell. I'm a tad shocked at how much I love this little piece of wax. Proof that punk can get better with age.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: I-94



CELEBRATION SUMMER / WOLF-FACE – DCxPC Live, Volume 42 split LP

Recorded live at The Fest, *DCxPC Live, Volume 42* pairs CELEBRATION SUMMER from DC with Florida's WOLF-FACE for two distinct takes on melodic punk energy. CELEBRATION SUMMER lean into earnest, '90s-style melodic punk showing their JAWBREAKER and TILTWHEEL influences. WOLF-FACE counters with a more playful set that mixes their *Teen Wolf* basketball-punk personas with solid, tuneful, orgcore-flavored "whoaaaaa" sing-alongs, including a cover of TV ON THE RADIO's "Wolf Like Me" and a live version of "I Wanna Be a Homo(sapien)" with a hirsute wink toward SCREECHING WEASEL. The recording quality is rough, but it feels like an honest snapshot of two bands connecting with a crowd. Limited to 200 copies on this yellowish color that someone decided to call "summer moon."

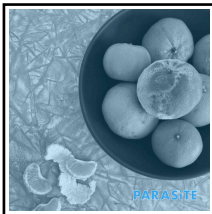
Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: DCxPC



CELL ROT – Parasite LP

This Bay Area grindcore outfit mixes with sludge and powerviolence in a recipe for chaos at its most unrelenting. CELL ROT's *Parasite* is a slab of total aggression—eleven tracks that sound like they were recorded inside a pressure cooker. The production is dense but not dull; each blastbeat and low-end rumble slices through with terrifying precision. Vocals are guttural, halfway between a scream and a cave echo, backed by riffs that refuse to stay in one tempo for more than two seconds. There's a sharp political and existential edge here—nihilism meets confrontation. Convulse keeps releasing records that make the underground feel dangerous again.

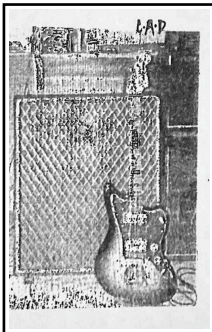
Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Convulse



CHRISTOPHER ALAN DURHAM – Basement Debris 2021–2025 cassette

Well, there's a confusing one in every batch. This C.A.D. cassette, which doesn't have the full name of the artist on it anywhere (and the top of the "C" on the front cover is cut off to the point that I would have sworn it said LAD), is a solo acoustic cassette of four-track songs recorded by CHRISTOPHER ALAN DURHAM. He is a member of a full band out of Detroit, Michigan under the name C.A.D. AND THE PEACE-TIME CONSUMERS, which is more throwback, freak-out rock'n'roll stuff. This tape, however, I just kind of can't understand. Super lo-fi, jangly guitar, jazzy, jammy art. There's drums on at least one of the songs which kept my interest a little more, but the acoustic stuff just feels like a budget bastard amalgamation of REED, DYLAN, and BEEF-HEART, and I'll let you in on a little secret...it doesn't mix well. The final track, "Walk in the Park," certainly did not live up to its name—what an absolute slog to get through, clocking in at over four minutes and confusing me the entire time. It did receive a little baffled interest from one of my cats though, looking around with complete bewilderment whenever the sampled bird whistles were peppered in.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: All Gone



CLASS ACT – Malaise LP

CLASS ACT from Kansas City follows their debut tape with *Malaise*, a grimy and offbeat LP that toggles from full-speed West Coast-style hardcore punk to lumbering mid-tempo noise rock. There's offbeat, angular guitar work, some instrumental interludes, and vocals that gleefully rant and rave throughout. It's a frantic and at times chaotic listen; fans of MINUTE-MEN and SACCHARINE TRUST will find lots to love here.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Under the Gun



COLD SUMMER – Den Umständen Entsprechend 12"

Good mix of post-punk and more classic punk rock—their ability to go from the classically post-punk guitar in verses into a distorted explosion in the choruses was awesome. I really appreciated the noise and intensity that they kept up throughout, definitely a solid record.

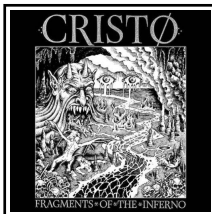
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: It's Eleven



CRISTØ – Fragments of the Inferno cassette

Dark, evil-sounding hardcore punk from Los Angeles, CA. CRISTØ follows up their first digital release from two-and-a-half years ago with a ripping seven-song cassette. It might not be heard by everyone, but the songwriting and vocal patterns sound to me like the band wisely took a page or two out of the NUCLEAR ASSAULT playbook. This recording really shines when leaning into the speed-metal-inspired aspects of their sound. With the cassette release only limited to a mere fifteen copies, good luck getting your hands on one.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: self-released



of space for trans identities in a world that insists on conformity. The music is a vicious hardcore punk assault sung in Spanish (Eva Leblanc is originally from Venezuela) that borders on faster hardcore acts like DROPDEAD. *Una Mujer Trans Sin País* is both a personal and political statement, a soundtrack for anyone who has ever felt displaced or unwelcome for who they are. TRAIIDORA's journey of resistance is one of both internal and external struggle, as the project challenges the borders that seek to limit. This album is a cathartic scream for belonging, a reminder that, even without a country, one should still carve out a space to exist. This is the main goal of punk: to liberate the mind and body!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus

TRAMADOL – Crucifixion EP

Blistering second release from West Yorkshire's TRAMADOL, whose muscular brand of D-beat takes cues from the best of Scandinavian and British hardcore. At any given moment on *Crucifixion*, you can hear echoes of ANTI-CIMEX, TOTALITÄR, MOTÖRHEAD, and of course DISCHARGE. Raw but in a refined sort of way (listen and that'll make sense), the production here sounds great. The bass is springy, the drums pop, and there's a particularly bright tone to the guitars that just really fuckin' hits, especially on the title track. If any of the aforementioned bands are your cup of tea, this one's a no-brainer.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Donor



TRAUMATIZER – Nuclear War Machine EP

Since their self-titled debut from last year, I've been a big fan of TRAUMATIZER's brutal brand of D-beat, and on their new EP *Nuclear War Machine*, they sound gnarlier than ever. Each of the five tracks here showcases their ability to seamlessly meld their influences into a streamlined sound that is entirely their own. Excellent riffs, excellent drumming, and excellent vocals, what more could you ask for? For fans of ANTI-CIMEX, SACRILEGE, and MOTÖRHEAD, this one's a no-brainer.

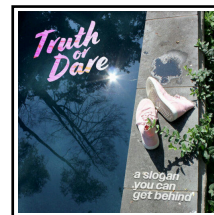
Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Discos Enfermos



TRUTH OR DARE – A Slogan You Can Get Behind CD

Remember those bad Punk Goes... compilations? *Punk Goes Pop*, *Punk Goes '80s*, *Punk Goes Crunk*, etc.? Remember KIDZ BOP? This sounds like *Punk Goes KIDZ BOP*. Yeeesh. Skip this and blast some CHUMPED instead.

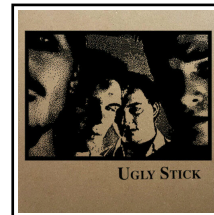
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: self-released



UGLY STICK – Debut LP

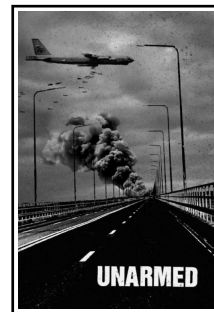
From Ohio in the late '80s and early '90s, this is definitely my sort of thing, but they're brand new to me. It's definitely got a REPLACEMENTS feel to it. It's jangly and raw and has a good dash of country and folk going on. I gather from the liner notes and some online research that this is a reissue, but that's not a certainty for me. There's an honesty in this one that's compelling. It's also pretty well-done. It's catchy and melodic, gritty, and really both fun and cool to listen to. Other similarities...what if you crossed the DILS with RANK AND FILE? And does anyone remember (IMPATIENT) YOUTH? Good shit.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Good Times Rock N Roll Club



UNARMED – Unarmed cassette

For some unfathomable reason, I completely missed out on this tape released about a year ago on Phobia Records in spite of my usually infallible and reputable crust detector (just imagine a punk version of Jiminy Cricket yelling in my ears whenever it spots a trace of crust music). I have of course long been familiar with Sweden's UNARMED, pretty much the epitome of the typical '90s Eurocrust style—or rather perhaps an era-defining take on the genre. UNARMED does exactly what you'd expect a common crust band to do between 1994 and 1999: old school raw cavemen hardcore music inspired by DOOM, 3-WAY CUM, HIATUS, or WARCOLLAPSE, done with Swedish taste and a bear behind the microphone. They are certainly not reinventing the wheel, and a full discography with no less than 28 songs will be hard for most to take unless you are as monomaniacal as I am. I love these kinds of projects because they play a crucial role in archiving and recollecting our collective history, to save it from oblivion, for posterity. UNARMED was never the most



and her lyrics. An easy listen that underlines a quirk I've noticed several times where pop punk bands have a pronounced edge live they tend to hide on record. Good stuff.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: DCxPC

THE MAR-MARS – Demo 2025 cassette

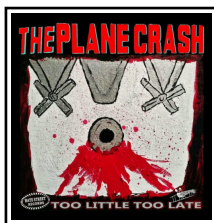
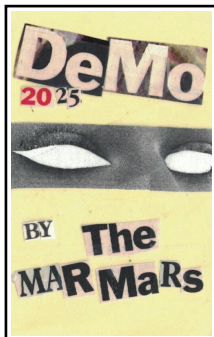
Quirky lo-fi punk rock from Savannah, GA. *Demo 2025* is the second full-length cassette from the MAR-MARS, and their first release featuring a full-band lineup. Their self-titled cassette was re-released as a solo project and has something of a dark, broody street punk aspect to it. This new MAR-MARS release has versions of five songs off the first cassette, so it's easy to listen back and forth to the progression of the project. A solo project turning into a full band can bring a new excitement to what was once only able to be a recording project. Unfortunately, in the case of the MAR-MARS, the main things that seem to have changed are that the recording of this new cassette is considerably more lo-fi, and the songs sound as if they are holding on for dear life to keep from falling apart at the seams. I was surprised to see that there was a label associated with the release of this, presumably run by someone from the band, as their other release is also on it, but nowhere on the cassette or shell can that information be found.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Split Ends

THE PLANE CRASH – Too Little Too Late EP

The aspiration here is to make nostalgic, gritty rock'n'roll, but there's something charmingly off-kilter about the presentation that makes it more than just a pale shade of something we've all heard before. Mark Death's vocals have that sort of monotone sociopathy to them, while the guitar has a direct-in compression that gives everything a sort of detachedness that manages to elevate the tightly-written material from "JOHNNY THUNDERS knock-off" to something much more odd and a hell of a lot of fun. There's a meager few tracks here to sink your teeth into, but the hand-hewn quality (see also: the horrorcore high school notebook cover art) makes it worth your time.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Hate Street



THE WHISKEY BATS – DCxPC Live & Dead, Volume 7 EP

Another edition of DCxPC's *Live & Dead* series which sees the featured band contributing a handful of both live and studio-recorded songs ("live" and "dead" get it?). This time around we've got Pennsylvania's WHISKEY BATS bringing us two tracks from the studio, and two live tracks from Camp Punksylvania in the summer of 2024. This is your typical pop punk/orgcore affair, sounding a bit like DILLINGER FOUR meets LAWRENCE ARMS meets DEAR LANDLORD. You know the deal. I'll always go to bat for these DCxPC releases. This is the type of pure punk archiving that you just don't see anymore. The live recordings are raw, unedited, and uncut. You can hear every fuck-up as well as every victory. It might sound a bit ironic, but that's pure perfection to me. I really appreciate what DCxPC has been doing and you should too. Grab this slab and a couple of their other releases. You will not regret it.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: DCxPC

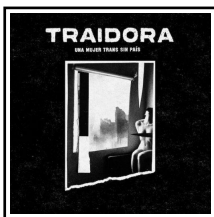
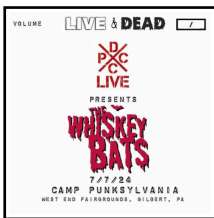
TOP DOLLAR – Objects of Misfortune EP

Get ready for the TOP DOLLAR stomp! *Objects of Misfortune* is an eight-track beast of an EP from New York's TOP DOLLAR released on 11PM Records, the go-to label for all the best "modern" hardcore releases. Two years after their excellent demo, TOP DOLLAR unleashes their New York youth-crew-styled hardcore played at maximum velocity, with an unpredictable edge à la Youth Attack Records. All bangers, no fillers, with impeccable energy throughout, this is a record that will be spinning on my turntable for a long time.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: 11 PM

TRAIDORA – Una Mujer Trans Sin País LP

A trans woman without a county. TRAIORA's *Una Mujer Trans Sin País* is an exploration of the isolation and displacement faced by trans women, particularly those without a homeland, both physically and emotionally. The album's title speaks directly to the experience of being a trans woman who doesn't fit within the confines of traditional gender or national boundaries. Opening with "Grito Ausente," TRAIORA introduces a sonic picture that is both unsettling and intimate. The themes of alienation are clear, with tracks like "Disforia Eterna" and "Ella" addressing the absence



CRUDE IMAGE – Crude Image cassette

New London-based hardcore punk project from Lindsay Corstorphine of VIOLIN. CRUDE IMAGE cites inspiration from a few corners of the world, but the Midwest influence is most prominent. All of the instruments are quick, muscular, and tight, and the vocalist sounds like they popped a few blood vessels laying these tracks down. A real pressure cooker of a record, For fans of INMATES and the HELL.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: self-released



D.U.N.C.E. – Demo 1 EP

Coming out of the gates sounding like a menacing version of PRISON AFFAIR and then settling in with their own thing entirely, D.U.N.C.E. does a killer job of introducing themselves to the masses with this demonstration. There is a sheen of effortlessness that coats this offering, especially on the highlight "Shark," that is not too unlike the energy of a SPIRITUAL CRAMP or a HANK WOOD AND THE HAMMERHEADS. Demos should seek to turn a head or grab an ear, and D.U.N.C.E. successfully stops the listener in their tracks and makes them whip their head. Excited for what's to come, but glad for what we've got.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Human Future / No Human



DESTINY BOND – The Love LP

Extremely solid effort that kicks into full gear immediately. Blistering guitar solos paired with a blood-curdling screamer and a tight, lightning-fast rhythm section. There's a little bit of keyboard action laced throughout that I wish was a bit more consistent and louder, but that's my only real complaint. Sounding a bit like their labelmates GUMM, DESTINY BOND also combines the best parts of youth crew hardcore (gang vocals and groovy, mosh-inducing tempos) with classic rock'n'roll mentality (charismatic singer, catchy riffs, and palpable energy). This is a great record and a fantastic addition to the Convulse library, which has hosted some real ten-out-of-ten albums over these last few years.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Convulse



DISOLVENTE – Guerra cassette

Some mid-tempo headnoddors from Barcelona's DISOLVENTE. Nothing too complicated here; this is very much your meat-and-patatas bravas UK82-flavoured street punk. It does chug along at a decent pace, but is nothing that'll stay with me beyond the end of the record. I'm sure they are a laugh live, at the least.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Todo Roto



EL SANCHO – Roll Right Over You LP

Oh my golly! A punk band from Hawaii! EL SANCHO, I wasn't expecting something so transportive to my teenage years. This emulates PROPAGANDHI with lyrics defining personal politics, wrapped in subtle humor. I think this record is a perfect jumping-off point for kids that are drawn to punk and underground music. EL SANCHO's *Roll Right Over You* LP is budding with sing-along choruses and lyrical depth that float this record substantially above many other records in the same sound pool. Drawing sonically from the DWARVES and the HARD-ONS, this makes for a great, well-rounded LP. For me, this record should have had four or five fewer songs that could be used as a follow-up EP in a few months, but that's just me.

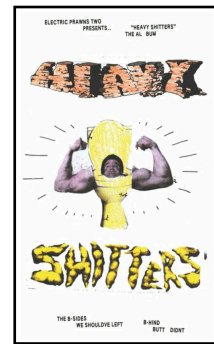
Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: self-released



ELECTRIC PRAWNS 2 – Heavy Shitters cassette

Insanely catchy collection of garage punk tunes from Australia that was almost scrapped by the band? Folks, why? It's so good. If you like JAY REATARD or TEE VEE REPAIRMANN, give it a listen and soak in the rock'n'roll grit, the near-bubblegum vocals on tracks like "Mine Tonight" ("Make you mine tooooo-niiiiighttt"), and the old school kicks that bubble up like ? AND THE MYSTERIANS playing with the SPITS. Hooks hooking into more hooks on every song had me writing one word next to each song while listening: classic. Like the song "Bored to Rock," ELECTRIC PRAWNS 2 were in fact bored to rock.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Knuckles on Stun



EM GEE – NMA cassette

I admire this project because it is unapologetically about being things that the punk world at large tends to scoff at these days: it's a hyper-personal, bedroom-pop-feeling, ukulele-forward bit of folk punk. It takes huge balls to put that combination out into the world, so I have to commend that courage. It comes close to working for me, but sadly it doesn't quite get there. It sounds like a lo-fi, back-alley performance (is "back-alley punk" a thing? it should be) version of the spirit of the WORLD INFERNO FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY through a Plan-it X Records filter. There is a ton of charm here, confessional and simply direct lyrics that very much have a personality, and some beautiful little moments, but on most tracks, that slightly off-meter folk punk vocal delivery just doesn't come together with the song. The fact that there is a full band and some interesting instrumentation (there's a trombone in here) comes so fucking close to making it work, too. I didn't hate this, I can tell it's just not my thing more than any objective flaw in the music, but I'm glad this is out there.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Broken Sound

EMMA GOLDMAN SACHS – Everything Up Until Now cassette

Get ready for some scratchy, growly vocals. These guys were playful, diving into some more Western sounds or kind of groovy punk. The vocals stand out to me the most, as they really take the song into different places. Super fun band.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Knuckles on Stun



EMPIRED – Strikes Back CD

What if TEXAS IS THE REASON was a radio pop-rock band from Southern California? That's the vibe I'm getting here, for better and worse. On the positive side, elements of when pop punk goes hard into the pop realm (think the melodic work bands like BROADWAY CALLS have made their bread and butter) are deftly executed and mixed with '90s post-hardcore. When the needle is more on the post-hardcore/punk-adjacent side as opposed to the alternative/radio rock end of the spectrum, the record works best and goes at all



cylinders. A couple quasi-corny radio rock and ska-ish moments would simply make the songs better by not being there. Lyrically, these guys seem to be fairly punk in their thinking, which I appreciate, but I wish the EVERCLEAR or cod reggae moments were cut to give the good elements more time to shine.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Hey!Fever

ENTRAPPED – Světlo Je Mrtvý LP

Phobia Records never misses, and ENTRAPPED's Světlo Je Mrtvý ("The Light is Dead") proves it once again. Dark, desperate crust punk from Czechia that crawls out from under the ashes of human collapse. Echoing vocals, grinding riffs, and mid-tempo drumming build an atmosphere that feels post-apocalyptic yet oddly triumphant. The record feels cinematic—each track adds to a larger world of decay, but the energy never falters. Bleak, honest, and absolutely vital for the current state of European crust.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Phobia

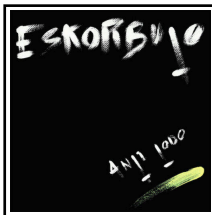
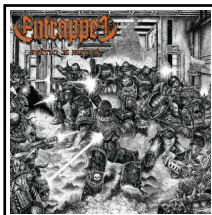
ENYOR – Catalunya En Blanc i Negre LP

Catalan Oi! that tosses an interesting curveball. Of all the stylistic mashups, an indie rock twist was about the last thing I was expecting. Musically, this lands squarely in lo-fi Revolution Summer territory, but the vocals are pure boot boy fodder. I'm convinced that with a different vocal delivery, this would fall into a vastly different genre altogether. Smash together RITES OF SPRING with the TEMPLARS, if you can imagine such an amalgamation. Nine tracks, with a NEGATIVE APPROACH cover for good measure. A pioneering attempt to be sure, but the incongruity is hard to get past.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Mendeku Diskak

ESKORBUTO – Anti Todo LP reissue

Reissue of a classic Euskara band's classic record. In many ways, it's pretty churlish of me to try and add to the big pile of discourse around this band and release. What more is there to say that hasn't already been said? A pivotal band in the development of punk en Espanyol, and this is them in the midst of a clear purple patch. A step change from the '77-inspired



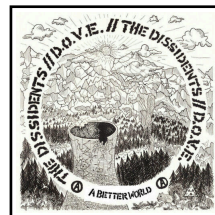
fun record without a ton of memorable moments, but deserving of a listen if you're into the schtick.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Moms Basement / Schuykill Beat

THE DISSIDENTS / D.O.V.E. – A Better World split LP

Now I didn't see this one coming, but it is a record that makes a lot of sense, not just musically but politically as well. Unless you have been living in total isolation in a cave for the past ten years, living off insects, dead snails, and moss, you will have noticed that the world is getting more oppressive, violent, and intolerant by the hour, and it is only logical that some punk bands, as a form of protest, use the medium to express their outrage in a way that is relevant to the present sociopolitical context. *A Better World* is a record embedded in our contemporary reality; it is a punk record of the old anarcho-punk tradition, a collaboration between two like-minded bands, united by a common message: the DISSIDENTS from Philadelphia (with the much-respected Bill Chamberlain on guitar, who tragically passed recently), and D.O.V.E. from California. I love the album a lot for its sincerity, its positive energy, and for the effort from both bands to write catchy tunes that have proved to be perfectly hummable. The DISSIDENTS, with their dual female vocals and dynamic, tuneful punk rock style, remind me of '90s and '00s bands like HARUM-SCARUM, the ASSASSINATORS, or even UK bands like DAN. The band manages to be melodic and angry at the same time in an old school fashion. I liked their split with VITRIOLIC RESPONSE, and this one is even better. On the other side, D.O.V.E. goes for a more classic '80s anarcho-punk sound (often renamed "peace punk" in the context of the '80s and '90s punk scene in Southern California), a genre I have always cherished dearly. Their first LP was very good but showed that D.O.V.E. was still learning how to fly. This new effort is more focused, the songwriting is more solid, diverse, and memorable, and demonstrates how great the band has become. At their most upbeat, classic UK bands like the SEARS or A-HEADS come to mind, but there is also a moodier post-punk vibe running through the music, and INDIAN DREAM, AWAKE MANKIND, and LOST CHERREES also got invites, while the band even dares to wander into proper OMEGA TRIBE-approved hippie-punk territory with the soft "Peace by Piece." If you don't like classic anarcho-punk, D.O.V.E.'s music won't really cut it (hopefully the message will), but I love the genre, and they gracefully tick all the boxes of genuine idealist anarcho-punk music—in a world full of bitterness and cynicism, this record feels fresh. You should definitely hurry.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Grow Your Own



THE GRIMLY PLEASED – I'll Choose It EP

This is short, to-the-point, and excellent. Bouncy cowpunk that inevitably brings to mind stuff like THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS and maybe the spirit of Hitler Bad-era VANDALS (in a good way). Consistency is impressive for these guys, they continue to deliver bouncy-to-the-point-of-dance-y jams with clever, even poignant lyrics. Music like this rewards multiple listens if you click with it, though I imagine the overall sunny disposition may put some people off. Not me though, this world is a fucking nightmare and spending eight punk, fun minutes with some clever music is decidedly on the menu.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: self-released

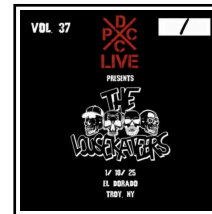
THE LAST SURVIVORS / VAXINE – split EP

The zipper on the front of this record should be a hint of what you're in for. The release notes promise a love letter to the UK82 scene "organically mixed with the sound of raw '80s global hardcore," and that's exactly what it delivers. VAXINE (NYC) tears through three politically-charged two-minute blasts that land somewhere between DISCHARGE and CHAOS UK, with a whiff of MOTÖRHEAD swagger in the intro to "War Criminals." LAST SURVIVORS (Tokyo) follow with two tracks that sound rougher, like a third-generation tape dub, but they still bring four minutes of pure basement energy. Both bands hit that sweet spot of raw, mid-range-heavy '80s-style punk without too much of the metallic drift some of their influences leaned into. Every song could've been trimmed by half a minute, but it's still a strong dose of unfiltered, boots-on-the-floor hardcore. For fans of the punkiest of punk sounds, this one's worth tracking down. The high point for me was VAXINE's "Thread of Hate."

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: General Speech

THE LOUSEKATEERS – DCxPC Live, Volume 37 LP

Live recording of a set played by this NY pop punk band in Troy, NY early this year. I'd put their sound somewhere between TILT and the MUFFS, with a penchant for more intricate rock'n'roll guitar/bass arrangements more indicative of the latter but a propulsive '90s pop punk edge easily ascribed to the former. The recording is clear and crisp, the band is playing pretty tight, and the singer seems pretty engaged with the crowd



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Lauren

STATICØ – Absurdity of This World LP

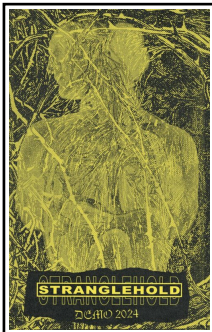
With a creative flavor of hardcore out of Serbia, this first full-length from STATICØ mixes influences to create a unique cohesion. Infused with relentless Scandi-punk pummeling, it pushes the spirit of UK82 to aggravated extremes, creating a fitting backdrop for their intensely passionate social and political commentary. This union is surprisingly natural, demonstrating the unspoken handshake that exists between the styles while creating a futuristic feel that rings maybe loudest in the chaotic title track. When the closing “The End” comes on, echoing the morbid march of SIEGE’s “Grim Reaper,” it’s hard to imagine a cooler conclusion.



Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Ayrán Sounds / Onesnaževanje Uma / Out of the Darkness / Refuse

STRANGLEHOLD – Demo 2024 cassette

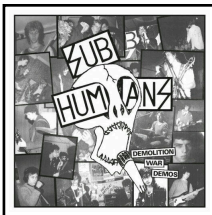
Birmingham hardcore (with a capital H) born from the ashes of SUPPRESS. Massive-sounding hardcore in the vein of STRIFE (or, as they put it, “bands that sound like they’re straightedge but aren’t”), with mosh parts and melody standing side-by-side, and hyped-up sing-along queues. This is the type of hardcore that gets the blood boiling, or the dance moves in check.



Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Cruzade / Rest Assured / Warpath

SUBHUMANS – Demolition Wars Demos 2xLP

Sealed Records unapologetically does it again, this time with an epic double album including SUBHUMANS’ three early demos recorded before the release of their iconic first EP *Religious Wars*. This massive undertaking is actually a reissue as Blueburg Records had released these three recordings on a tape entitled *Demolition War Parts I-III* in 1981, so it’s pretty unlikely anyone already has a physical copy these days anyway (beside that hammered old punk at the pub who rather embarrassingly claims that “punks were punks back in the days”—you know the sort, avoid at all costs). As ‘80s demos recorded cheaply at Warminster’s local



youth center and The Old Bell, the production is raw, but the band was already so skillful, tight, catchy, and proper energetic that it confers a new charm to otherwise well-known anthemic songs from their early period, and the record brings some further context to the band’s first steps with some interviews and collages. As a bonus, it even has three unreleased numbers in case you needed additional arguments. If you have never heard SUBHUMANS, I envy you, because you are about to discover a wonderful slice of snotty UK punk. This might not be the greatest point of entry into the catalog of one of the most respected and most consistent anarcho-punk bands still playing and delivering (which is more than can be said about legions of “reformed punk legends”), and 60 minutes of raw versions of (even undeniably great) old school punk songs could be a bit hard to take for a newcomer. However, it is obviously a mandatory purchase for anarcho lovers.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Sealed

TENSION PETS – Espresso Plaza CD

In just a few tracks, this Chicago group is able to explore a lot of exciting territory. From bad-vibe carnival punk to more earnest (if unhinged) punk-inflected indie, this group is clearly confident while at play. Talk about adventures in sound and richness of ideas, and yet while some bands can stretch themselves too thin, this band seems uncannily aware of their strengths (which are many). This is squiggly, artsy weirdo music, but heavy thanks to a syrupy synth underlying it all. The vocals are howling and manic, but stuck to the rhythm in a way that all but demands you shout along. One of the most singular, fun, and powerful releases of the year.



Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: self-released

THE BACARRUDAS – Bleed Out, Get Pushed Off a Cliff, Sink to the Bottom of a Lake, and Play a Halloween Monster House Party! LP

The title says it all, folks. A double LP full of campy, over-the-top, ‘60s-inspired monster madness straight out of Philadelphia. It’s worthy of a seasonal spin during your next Pagan house party or seasonal sock-hop. Songs like “Dracula’s Castle” and “She’s in Love with Frankenstein’s Monster” are loaded with all the reverb and tremolo of your fave ‘60s and ‘70s novelty records, and much to my enjoyment, they lean into the humor and campiness. It reminds me of the kind of stuff I would find in a used dollar bin and would scoop up without hesitation. It’s pressed at 45 RPM on 12” which adds to the novelty vibe. Overall, it’s a



early material into arms-aloft, “whoa”—infused choruses for the ages. “Es Un Crimen” is surely in the pantheon of the greats by now. Unsure if we really need to add any more onto the big critical landfill surrounding this record, or indeed what the point is in re-mastering punk records in general, but if it encourages you to give this a listen, then do it.

Reviewer: Ben Marshall
Label: Munster

FAKE – Unamerikan EP

Debut release from the four-piece Memphis group FAKE. This definitely lies on the outer fringes of MRR coverage: a little garage-y, a little poppy, a little hokey, with clean guitars and a fairly low BPM. With all its quirks and silly asides, this reminds me of PAUL LEARY’s *Born Stupid* album. This certainly isn’t offensive or annoying, it’s just there, like a misfit cousin no one invited, but who just keeps showing up. Maybe this fake music is your thing. Give it a chance?



Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Spacecase

FAN CLUB – Stimulation EP

Formerly known as LYSOL, Seattle’s FAN CLUB hits a new high on *Stimulation*, a five-song, six-minute blast of incendiary hardcore punk with a rock’n’roll undercurrent. The songs tear forward with relentless motion and sharp, swaggering energy—closer to SEUDO YOUTH in pace and delivery than the slower grind of a lot of their earlier material. It recalls “Blessures Graves,” the standout from LYSOL’s *Soup for My Family*, where they ditched mid-tempo for full-throttle attack but somehow held on to the strut. It’s a sound that feels urgent, alive, and fully realized. One of the best things I heard all summer, and I swear this band keeps getting better the faster they move.



Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Feel It

FLYING HEADS – Flying Heads LP

Tell any punk who grew up in Chicagoland that FLYING HEADS feature members from TV SLIME, and they’re going to jump at it immediately. Incredible noise/crust punk that brings to mind some of the best to do it, like ELECTRO HIPPIES and DOOM. There’s also a sludge element much like MELVINS and KILSLUG. This is one

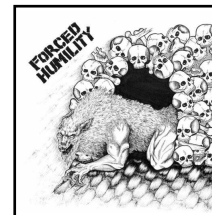


of those records where you have no other choice but to listen to it loud as hell—it imposes that upon itself. If you’re not blasting this into your eardrums, then you ain’t living, friend. Chicago is known for an array of different punk-adjacent genres, but this sloppy, raucous rock’n’roll feels most at home to me. This pairs perfectly with an Old Style and a shot of Malort.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released

FORCED HUMILITY – Burning Inside EP

Burly, punishing hardcore that draws from the well-spring of ‘80s NYHC like the ABUSED or the MOB (the good stuff). Everything is outsized and menacing, with gang chants and guitar leads as you might expect, particularly if you’ve encountered their demo from 2023. Sharing members with FORESEEN may also be a helpful bit of knowledge to have, another band to masterfully modernize old school influences. FORCED HUMILITY doesn’t spare the hooks and isn’t afraid to introduce a harmony, but make no mistake—this shit is brutal and unsparing. An ass-beater, to be sure.



Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Mendeku Diskak

FRETBUZZ – Nothing is Just Nothing / It’s So Hard 7”

My comparisons will draw some very solid lines as to whether you want to grab this: stir in some modern MOVING TARGETS + FEELIES + GIN BLOSSOMS + later 2024-era SOUL ASYLUM, pleasant-sounding indie rock, and you get the picture. These FRETBUZZ songs hover in a cloudy space where if they actually had some fret buzzing going on, or pushed a little harder in any direction, it would stand out more. Look, at the end of the day, this is a great single that hits on power pop in the ‘90s Midwestern style and has all the right points of a good record. The flipside “It’s So Hard” is a bit more driving, but still not speeding through any school zones.



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Target Earth

FRIGÖRA – Fullständig Frigörelse LP

All punx rejoice, as General Speech continues doing the work to bring us the absolute goods! In this case, we get the complete studio discography of '90s Tokyo legends FRIGÖRA, compiling 27 tracks of buzzsaw punk with a mängel bent. My theory is that they must have heard *Kärnvapen Attack* and dove all the way in. Tight, ferocious blasts that never outstay their welcome. Only one cut crosses the two-minute mark, and most don't come anywhere close. Damaging waves of distortion make for a tidal wave of destructive punk, all done up in a luscious package with a sweet booklet. This is a limited release that will undoubtedly get snatched up fast, so do yourself a solid and hop on it!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: General Speech



G.A.Z.E. – G.A.Z.E. 12"

Ever wondered how PAINTBOX would sound if they were Finnish? Helsinki's Burning Spirits-influenced hardcore heroes are back with more vicious melodies. Many have tried and many have failed to emulate the sound that the Japanese NWOBHM-influenced punks crafted so well. G.A.Z.E. is an exception to that rule. They nail the style so well because they strive to retain the high-energy, uplifting mood that characterized the classics like DEATH SIDE or JUDGEMENT. It's supposed to be a constant yin/yang of brutality and melody, but always very bright. The guitar leads are performed to perfection, the vocal delivery is complete with the classic gang shouting, and the songs are very unpredictable, thanks to a great usage of tempo shifts. There is even time for out-of-the-box instruments to make an appearance, like saxophone, violin, and double bass. They have studied their lesson well. Essential listening.

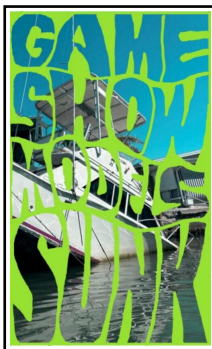
Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: D-Takt & Råpunk



GAME SHOW MODELS – Sunk cassette

A quick collection of delightfully lo-fi and charmingly blown-out RA-MONES-inspired buzzsaws. You can hear a lot of other sounds in these four tracks, from JAY REATARD to GEE TEE to SICK THOUGHTS, but the overall package of sounds helps this gem stand out. With three of the four tracks clocking in at less than two minutes, GAME SHOW MODELS aren't here to ponder and pontificate. The guitars sound fantastic and make an amazing racket, while the vocals dare you to pick them out of the mess, like trying to stab an ice cube with a plastic fork, which simply adds to the replay value here.

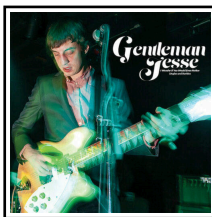
Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Knuckles on Stun



GENTLEMAN JESSE – I Wonder if You Would Even Notice: Singles and Rarities LP

This Atlanta four-piece plays upbeat, hook-driven power pop built on clean guitars and tight melodies. Sharing some of the same DNA as EXPLODING HEARTS or the TRANZMITORS but with a lighter, less aggressive touch, GENTLEMAN JESSE trades in most of the speed and harshness for classic pop songwriting. Formed in 2006 by Jesse Smith with drummer Dave Rahn (both from CARBONAS), the band's early singles captured a scene steeped in melody and a fascination with the late '70s band the NERVES. This collection gathers sixteen tracks from those first five years, most around two minutes long, offering a concise picture of their evolution. Later songs like "I Want What's Mine" and "I Can't Hardly Take It Any-more" stand out for their extra bite and momentum, but damn if my brain doesn't keep going back to the first track, "I Don't Wanna Know (Where You Been Tonight)," which is just a really good pop song. The collection as a whole works as a snapshot of an era when a bunch of punks started playing pop music. The lyrics, true to style, stick pretty close to affairs of the heart.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Beach Impediment



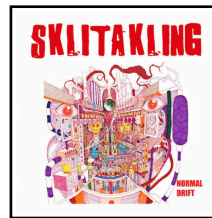
It sounds a lot better than it did in '94 and has a couple comp/single bonus tracks too, a fine release overall.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Dead Broke

SKLITAKLING – Normal Drift LP

Loved these guys! Their layering really made the songs feel super whole and created this tense, thick atmosphere. I loved the bass lines and cascading vocals, which were both screamy and melodic at the same time. If you like anything punk, check these guys out.

Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Back to Beat



SNAREWAVES – DIY flexi EP

Four quick jammers on this release that equals about two minutes of music total. It's fun and raucous: LUMPY AND THE DUMPERS-style gross-out vocals, reverbed garage punk guitars, and digital drums, all played very fast. There isn't much information online about SNAREWAVES, but they have quite a few of these micro punk capsules and a lot of colorful artwork. If you like what you hear, go down the rabbit hole.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: self-released



SOGA – Corrosión LP

Blistering punk from Mexico City masters SOGA. Their 2018 demo made a huge splash, ultimately making its way to vinyl thanks to the good folks at Iron Lung, so naturally their debut album has garnered a frenzy of excitement. No need to be coy here, it's fucking good. I think what sets SOGA apart is the curiosity they employ, pulling on threads that are woven into the broad tapestry of hardcore punk. At times they're unrelenting and ferocious, like on "La Respuest," and "Aniquilar." Without breaking character or missing a beat, they can flip a switch and delve into a catchy, '77-style rave-up like "Voy Por Un Mai Camino." Gloriously genre-bending, pissed-off, political punk. Sign me the fuck up!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Iron Lung



SPLIT SYSTEM – No Cops in Heaven / Pull the Trigger 7"

Aussie five-piece SPLIT SYSTEM has released their third 7" of 2025, and the A-side "No Cops in Heaven" is killer '70s-style punk with clenched-jaw propulsion. It's mid-tempo, but the rhythm section plays like they're sprinting forward at full tilt, locked into a locomotive groove that gives the song that RADIO BIRDMAN-esque push where everyone else has to keep up or get steamrolled. Guitars leave zero breathing room, and the whole thing has that piston engine momentum that made me want to play it again the second it ended. "Pull the Trigger" doesn't hit quite as hard, but it's still a solid shot at war profiteers. The more I hear from this band, the more I dig 'em.

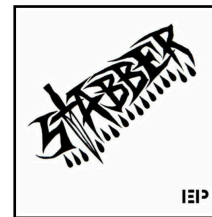
Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Legless / Static Shock



STABBER – Shut Up EP

Sick debut from this Norwegian outfit. A potent compound of two parts USHC and one part rock'n'roll. A couple of the licks reminded me of early ANNIHILATION TIME. A couple more made me think of CAREER SUICIDE. Clear production works to their favor, especially when the tempo downshifts and the bassist tramps up and down the fretboard. "Repeat Offender" feels like the completed distillation of what they're, uh, stabbing at, but this is a tight EP from start to finish.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Kick Rock / Stab!



STAR 99 – Gaman LP

"Kill," the first song, is terrific, with melody, clarity, and drive. I love songs that can pin a time of year outside of basic imagery associated with color, touch, smell. When Saoirse sings about cicadas, it collapses on time of year with sight, smell, and sound with one word; she has delivered a near-perfect line. However, after this song the LP starts some twists and turns that flow into dream pop, indie rock, and things like that. There are two distinct songwriters, and their styles vary in a way that makes me wish this were a split LP with two different bands. Both styles are similar but different enough to make the Gaman LP not flow. Also, I personally get a bit bored with broken-hearted boys with troubles, and half of this LP is that. I'd say this is for folks that like the MEASURE, P.S. ELIOT, RADIATOR HOSPITAL, the AMBULARS, and such.



eyed. This record is for you if you like beer, bars, and places that have punk shows that have been around so long that smoking cigs inside has been grandfathered into the building's lease.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Human B-Side

SAKURA – Violencia flexi EP

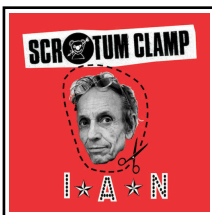
The three-song *Violencia flexi* was created by four-piece Las Vegas band SAKURA, and it fucking rips! Drawing heavily upon the extensive sound catalog of Japanese hardcore, SAKURA melds noisy, terminal velocity punk into songs that immediately call to mind other things that rip, like RESIN's 2021 *Pot Overdose* or DEAD CITY's 2022 *Banned from L.A.* What I'm saying is that if you're into that punk crudo that makes your inner ear feel like a kick drum, or when feedback sounds like an M-80 in a bowl of Rice Krispies, then you're going to want to pick this one up.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Discos Enfermos

SCROTUM CLAMP / THE SCUTS – I*A*N / Miss Information split EP

Fun split from across the pond, with both bands showcasing their own flavor of street punk while sounding different enough to keep things interesting. SCROTUM CLAMP plays a lighthearted, tongue-in-cheek Fat Wreck style of pop punk akin to GOOBER PATROL and FRENZAL RHOMB. The SCUTS sound as if they could have come from an early A-F Records comp sandwiched between THOUGHT RIOT and the CODE; melodic hardcore with lyrics drenched in politics. "Miss Information" is sung from the perspective of a right-wing bigot, and I'll be honest here—if it wasn't for the song title, I may have missed the irony. However, this is a really great split EP and is well worth a couple spins.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released



SENSOR GHOST – Irritation on Demand LP

Art-punk from DC that mixes angular post-punk rhythms with nasally vocals, like ERASE ERRATA meets THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS. Lyrics like "Back then we were the uncouth cream of the crop / Screaming on the stage / Boppin' around like an

unkept cadre of lollipops," from "Lamentations of the Scene," are bouncy and catchy, and notably less serious than what I usually associate with a Dischord release. The vocals ride a fine line between quirky and off-putting, but if you spend some time with the tracks, they start to make sense in their own weird little orbit. The LP was recorded with Ian Mackaye and Don Zientara at Inner Ear Studios, so you know it sounds incredible. Most striking is the feeling of genuine oddball fun SENSOR GHOST seems to be having. They are probably not a band for everyone, but the energy is contagious if you give it a chance.

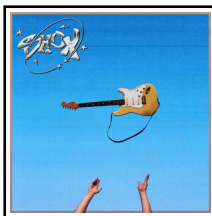
Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Dischord



SHOX – Human Furniture cassette

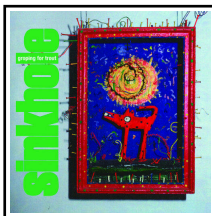
Wow. This is almost like perfect pop music. Vocals are soft, but assertive. The music itself is also soft, but with some excellent distortion. They marry remarkably well, which I suppose shouldn't really be a surprise, but it was noteworthy to me. The pace is measured and deliberate. Kind of reminds me of early BLUR or the DANDY WARHOLS. If you're familiar with the band GLITZ, that also comes to mind.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Quality Time



SINKHOLE – Groping for Trout LP

Vinyl re-release for the originally CD-only debut album by this '90s pop punk standout. I have a pretty positive memory of this band from that era; they seemed more invested in songcraft than a lot of their contemporaries, and listening to it now that rings even more true. There's just more going on musically even when the goal is catchy, melodic punk rock. The recording has a new mastering job that elevates the different components, putting the guitars and melodious vocals right in your face. I will say, the band always lacked a little bit of bite for my taste and that still holds true now, but not to the massive detriment of the record. Somewhere between WESTON and SQUIRT-GUN with a dash of GAMEFACE, this is very, very '90s.



GERBER AND THE BABIES – Gerber and the Babies cassette

GERBER AND THE BABIES capture the egg-punk/garage Midwest thing very well. At times, the vocals remind me of WALL OF VODOO. Sometimes this style can go too far into synth or too far into scream-babble, but GERBER AND THE BABIES ride perfectly within the guardrails to make a really fine cassette of catchy and silly tunes. There are nine tracks, making this the perfect length of a listen. The only issue I have with this is that it is put together so well that it has all the elements of a one-time-band release, and then I'll have to start tracking down the members to see what they do next.

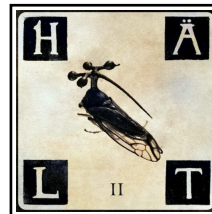
Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Indolent



H.A.L.T. – II 12"

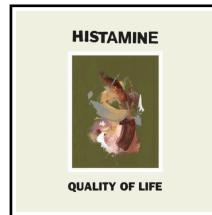
H.A.L.T. out of Vancouver, BC recently released their second full-length 12", affectionately entitled II. Their latest release brings more pop, more punk, and more goth to their already gloom-infested sound. The eight-song II is sonically dense with its shifting, danceable rhythms, intriguing organ/synth work, and gnarly guitar tones. Personally, the second song "Forever Dead" is my favorite with its defiant perspective, and I love how that song transitions into the spectral "Voices." In all, this is a fantastic work of dark delights.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: self-released



HISTAMINE – Quality of Life LP

Quality debut LP for this Australian band. Punk-centered, stompy-as-fuck hardcore that is drenched in the echoes of the vocals to an interesting/unique effect. The band also manages to sprinkle some metal leads and unexpected melodic moments throughout the duration to keep shit from getting boring. I'm a big fan of this type of hardcore being produced largely and cleanly, and it does a killer job of filling out the sound here. Convulse is on roll of releasing HC punk in this vein recently, and they snagged a winner with HISTAMINE. Could have used a little more variety in the slim fifteen-ish-minute runtime, but that's a nitpick; solid hardcore is always welcome.

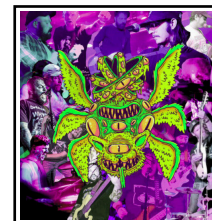


Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Convulse

HEAVY LAG / SEKUNDERNA / TEENAGE BIGFOOT / TV COP – split LP

I love splits. This one is a cool showcase of the current dirt pop scene, with each band contributing two original songs and one cover. If that's not enough for you, it even comes with a fifteen-page zine. The whole affair gives off heavy MARKED MEN or RADIOACTIVITY vibes, so it should come as no surprise that three of the bands either recorded or mastered their tracks with Jeff Burke. The original songs are a good example of what each band brings to the table, but the covers are the real gems here. TV COP covering MOLLY HATCHET just might be my favorite track on the split; pop punks covering Southern rock and doing it justice??? I'm into it. The TEENAGE BIGFOOT originals remind me of walking into a Hot Topic circa 2003. Not into it. On the other hand, their cover of "Dreams" by the CRANBERRIES was stuck in my head for days, and I really dislike that band! For the uninitiated, I don't feel like anything on here will make any of these bands your new favorite. But for existing fans, Jeff Burke worshippers, or anyone looking for a few killer dirt pop covers, this LP will feel right at home in your collection.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Bloated Kat



HELLSHOCK – XXV 12"

It seems not so long ago since HELLSHOCK's 2022 LP came out, a record I could not quite totally get into, I must admit, because it relied too much on classic death metal and it basically lost me—of course, it was certainly more than good enough when in the mood for mean, BOLT THROWER-flavoured music. The fantasy-themed cover of this new LP looks like a scene from *The Lord of the Rings* and is (I can barely write it) in colour, undeniably a blasphemous cardinal scene in the crust realm. I was more than a little skeptical before playing this, and how wrong I was. The lugubrious BOLT THROWER worship still rules, but the recruitment of Todd Burdette on second guitar brings a significantly different vibe to the songwriting, making it more epic, murkier, but still generating that ominous atmospheric heaviness. The songs are rather long, thoughtfully built, and tell great, albeit really fucking dark, stories. HELLSHOCK are still certainly themselves, and the album will not disappoint fans of gruff metal crust and stenchcore revivalists, but they also offer something more articulate, progressive even, and dare I say it, subtle here (assuming the perfect soundtrack for a malevolent skeleton armies and being growled at by a zombified bear fit the concept of subtlety). The LP has been on heavy rotation here,



and I see it as the perfect evolution for the band. XXV is bound to become a classic crust album, not because it abides by the rulebook, but because it creates something new and inventive without discarding the band's identity. They do not sound alike, but I see records like COUNTERBLAST's *Balance of Pain* or SKAVEN's EP in much the same way. You know what to do.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Agipunk / Black Water

HYPER MINDS / PIZZA STAINS – split EP

It's a little freak show on wax, with an A-side showcasing some Rip-Off Records-style garage spiked with the shadowy psych of the SCIENTISTS courtesy of L.A.'s HYPER MINDS. The PIZZA STAINS out of San Gabriel Valley occupy the B-side with two tracks of bass-heavy and bare-bones RAMONES-y rocking, no brains required. While not directly demonic, these sounds are sufficiently twisted for ass-shake-inducing Halloween party bumpage.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Wolf on a Bridge



IMPLODERS – Targeted for Termination LP

Static Shock delivers the second LP from IM-PLODERS, a maddeningly fast, no-frills hardcore strike. Quick riffs, shredded vocals, constant energy—tight and well-executed, but familiar. A solid, enjoyable record that stays in its lane. Ideal for listeners wanting straightforward speed and power.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Static Shock



JET! – Everybody Plays the Game / Hear Me Sheila 7" reissue

Until about five years ago, JET! was seemingly a complete unknown, nary a footnote in the annals of New Jersey power pop (which is actually New Jersey's top export as a state, not "chemicals" as the internet may try to make you believe). JET! formed in Toms River, cut two of the greatest power pop 45s ever, and disappeared. Luckily, a NJ collector uncovered a stack of deadstock copies of those two singles, and soon us obsessives got our grubby little hands on copies of our own. And now, the immaculate Fish & Cheap



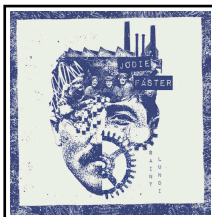
Records continue to do what they do best and get another obscure slab to the masses. "Everybody Plays the Game" and "Hear Me Sheila" represent the band's second single, with the A-side being a little more driving than their first single "Please Mister Radio." While the decision to be a bit more rocking may have caused the rift in the band that led to their split, they still managed to capture lightning in a second bottle. If you have even a passing interest in punky power pop, all four of their songs are an absolute must, and Fish & Cheap are making it so the sounds aren't confined to the greasy collectors shelves. With any luck, they'll give the first release the reissue treatment as well. Get this, now.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Fish & Cheap

JODIE FASTER – Saint Lundi LP

Nineteen songs of feverish hardcore punk from France. No distortion, no breakdowns, no songs over 1:45, and no time to slow down! Super-political, super-fast, and the origin of *Saint Lundi* has me wanting to quit my job and go slam a pint! JODIE FASTER has been dishing out "short songs played fast" for a decade, and it truly shows on *Saint Lundi*. My favorite moment on the record is when vocalist screams "fuck that!" during a split-second pause in "S.O.R.G.A." This shit rules.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Don't Trust the Hype / Drinkin' Beer in Bandana / La Agonia De Vivir / Loner Cult / No Time / Pasidaryk Pats / Spastic Fantastic / TNS



KIRATXA – Giza Ustelkeria EP

KIRATXA out of Spain plays blistering, noise-blasted punk that rips. The *Giza Ustelkeria* EP is seven songs that go harder than anything else you've recently listened to. I promise.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Diy Kontraatak / Emprenadur / Heriotza Ta Suntsiketa / Lagunak / Vic-tim / Zaragoza Desorden



REGIMIENTO SPANSUL – Sorpresas en el Barro EP

A short-lived unit out of early 1980s Valencia, REGIMIENTO SPANSUL left only the four tracks on this 7" behind as evidence of their rowdy little run. The sounds here range from spirited first-wave inspiration ("Haciendo Surf en Marte") to prickly and groovy post-punk ("La Ejecución"). If you've been itching for some catchy and obscure Spanish nuggets, pick up this EP and consider yourself scratched.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: El Mascarat / Prohibido Bailar / Zaragoza Desorden



RIPCORD – The Damage is Done LP

For those living under a rock, RIPCORD was a seminal hardcore punk band from the seaside town of Weston-super-Mare, England, active from 1984 to 1988. These lads played extremely fast hardcore punk with elements that positioned them among the first UK bands to push toward grindcore territory. Their music combined the speed and aggression of US hardcore with the rawness of UK82 punk, having been cited as one of the flagship bands of the UK's mid-'80s hardcore scene alongside bands such as HERESY (for whom RIPCORD's founder Steve "Baz" Ballam played) and NAPALM DEATH. RIPCORD's *The Damage is Done* was first released in 1986, originally as a flexi. From the start, *The Damage Is Done* doesn't waste any time; each track barrels forward, maintaining a relentless intensity throughout its runtime. One of the standout features of this album is the band's ability to balance chaos with structure. While the songs are undoubtedly fast and abrasive, there's a clear sense of purpose in the way they build tension and release it. Lyrically, they don't shy away from heavy topics: anti-authoritarianism, personal frustration, and critiques of societal hypocrisy. The production is appropriately raw, giving the album a live-wire energy that enhances its punch to the gut. It's not polished to the point of losing any of the rough edges that make hardcore so captivating, but it's clean enough to make every instrument shine through, even in the most chaotic moments. Overall, RIPCORD proves 39 years later that they captured the essence of punk in a way that feels timeless and entirely of this present moment. *Free Ola!*

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: La Vida Es Un Mus / Quality Control HQ



ROACH SQUAD – Roach Squad LP

The gruff-throated singer Hugo Mudie (the SAINTE CATHERINES) joins forces with two members of the mighty LEATHERFACE, including Frank Stubbs, to craft more great melodic punk with dive bar conviction and grit. If you're a fan of this particular thread of punk for songwriters, and I very much am, there's a treasure trove here for you to dive into. Collectively, their sound is big and beaty, and the hooks are undeniable. Stubbs, thankfully, contributes his timeless voice to "I Wonder," and while I applaud that this band mostly sounds like a group of musicians not trying to recreate their past glories, I can't help but greet his presence like an old friend. But this isn't some vanity project to relive the past. These players are here for keeps, and this is a flag planted confidently in the ground to announce a new chapter for everyone involved.

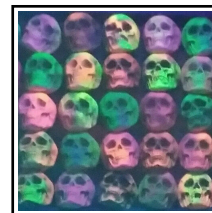
Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Little Rocket / Rad Girlfriend



RUBY RASH – Merit Badges cassette

Heavy goth and deathrock-inflected synth punk with fuzzy low-end crunch, pounding electronic drums, and melodic, melancholic vocals. Tempos range from creepy crawlers like the gorgeous shoegaze-y alternate reality club hit "Dream Eater" to the faster punk beat of "Broken Moon," but all maintain the same morose power. Recommended for fans of bands like HORROR VACUI and PINKISH BLACK, RUBY RASH creates dark, subwoofer-rattling atmospheres perfect for those of us who enjoy spooky season year-round.

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Skeleton City Souvenirs



RYAN KIDD – Rock n Rule LP

RYAN KIDD is rock'n'roll punk with sass and swagger, pulling in elements of DEAD BOYS and the SAINTS. This comes in punchy and will hook you with catchy choruses, but you'll stay for the oddball guitar work that punctuates the verses from time to time. I'd be remiss to not include that some of these tunes reflect EXPLODING HEARTS and Dirtnap Records with their melody and power pop hooks. There is yelling on this *Rock N Rude* LP, some "woo-woo's," "yaaaohh's," snotty Stiv Bators vocal stuff, and most of the songs are perfectly lyrically vague enough that you could get away with singing them around town without getting dis-



Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Sabotage

PETTY CRIME – Brighton, UK, 1999 EP

A year after putting out one of the best 7"s of the '90s (1998's *Forfeit Intent* EP) on one of the greatest labels of the '90s (Slampt Underground Organisation forever), Helen White and Layla Gibson of PETTY CRIME took their short, sharp girl-gang post-punk missives to the domestic interior space of a literal bedroom, recording three new tracks to cassette that remained unheard until now. Intimate, immediate, and with a joyously shambolic recklessness, *Brighton, UK, 1999* is not unlike eavesdropping on conspiratorial plots being devised from the other side of a paper-thin wall—when Helen and Layla sing and shout about truth and detachment and misplaced trust, it's always with an underlying sense of danger. Taut bass weaves around sparse scratches of guitar, desperate rhythms are pounded out on household objects functioning as makeshift drums, and the ultra-lo-fi presentation of it all truly underscores the feeling of stumbling on a radical secret straight from the organizing committee of the boy/girl revolution. A life-affirming document!

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Jabs / Raw Sugar

PRISE RAPIDE – Trop Plein cassette

Goddang, you ever just hear a band that means what they say and plays it well? Admit it, it happens fewer times than you think. Well, let's take a look at PRISE RAPIDE from Paris (not Texas). This music feels like it wears its heart on its sleeve, and drives it home like a stake through a vampire's heart. The hooks and melodic turns here will keep you locked in throughout its relatively short runtime (just under 30 minutes). The bass is honey bright with presence, anchoring otherwise zig-zagging melodic post-punk without ever getting too dour. It's good stuff, I don't know what else to tell ya.

Reviewer: Luke Henley
Label: Dirty Slap / Jour du Pluie / Yoyodyne



PROFIT AND MURDER – Doomed to Fail LP

"PROFIT AND MURDER? Are they still around? How long have they been playing? Since the 19th century?" is likely to be the most common reaction to this brand new album, *Doomed to Fail*. It was certainly mine as I strongly, and perhaps irremediably, associate this German band with the '00s so that I am constantly surprised to hear about them. I hadn't listened to them in ages and only had a vague memory of what they were supposed to be about: rather typical old school crust punk. And to my great relief, Alzheimer's is still a long way off, because PROFIT AND MURDER plays precisely old school traditional crustcore, with two vocalists and something to say. Hurray! Despite being around since 2000, it seems that trends and fashion have had no effect whatsoever on the band's sound, impervious to change, which in this case is commendable in my opinion. *Doomed to Fail* can be said to be a trip down the '90s and early '00s Eurocrust memory lane, one I am happy to take, not out of nostalgia but because it's very well-done, with sincerity. Pummeling, fast, with a Scandi touch and a sense of confident simplicity that clicks. Bands like HIATUS, '00s VISIONS OF WAR, or 3-WAY CUM got invites of course, and PROFIT AND MURDER is one of the last instances of this peculiar species. I love that one.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Bomb-All / Uwaga レコード / Wild Wild East



PSYCH-WAR – Psychotic Warmonger LP

Yoooo, this record fucking smokes! Scandinavian-style crust coming straight from the city of brotherly punk. An absolute Philadelphia skull-basher! Muscular riffs accompanied by searing guitar solos and pummeling drums. The menacing vox pull everything together with gravelly precision. I hear some elements of CRUDE SS, WOLFPACK, and ACURSED, beyond the more obvious influences. Unabashedly rockin', there's a nice Motörcharge on tracks like "Screams at the Sky" and "Criminal Mission." Throughout the eleven cuts, the shredding solos burn with a heat that risks melting the wax right off yer turntable. Undeniably sick artwork completes the package, placing it easily among the top releases of 2025. Never mind the brain cell battle, this is brain cell warfare!

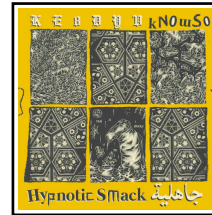
Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Agipunk



KNOWSO – Hypnotic Smack LP

Cleveland duo KNOWSO, consisting of Nathan Ward (CRUELSTER, PERVERTS AGAIN, the CARP) and Jayson Gerycz (CLOUD NOTHINGS), return with *Hypnotic Smack*, a wiry, offbeat LP that fits neatly into the city's long tradition of bent punk weirdos. Earlier MRR reviewers have namedropped DEVO, CAPTAIN BEEFHEART, NOMEANSNO fronted by Steve Albini, and SERVOTRON when trying to pin this band down, and those touchpoints still make sense: jerky rhythms, odd vocal phrasing, and a nervous, sci-fi pulse that feels both mechanical and human. Must be something in the water in Cleveland, turning out band after band of weirdos who twist punk into performance art and still make it catchy. It's got humor, it's upbeat and angular, but it doesn't quite stick for me. All those reference points are ultimately more interesting than what comes through here. Maybe I'm just wishing they'd lean harder into it. The track "Sacred Mystery" was a high point, a glimpse of the extra bite I wish the rest of the record had. In today's world, this isn't that weird or abrasive. Maybe it's a nonthreatening entry point for a voyage toward more esoteric pleasures. Eleven songs, thirty minutes.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Sorry State



LA ISLA ELECTRONICA – No Digas Nunca EP

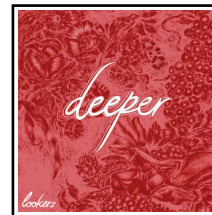
Following their 2024 demo, Portland, Oregon's LA ISLA ELECTRONICA is out with their debut EP. Spanish, femme-fronted vocals over a synth-heavy darkwave type of thing—moody, poignant, haunting, with a steady-as-can-be dance beat. Like RIKI, but with a little more edge. I'm all in for this one.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Distort Reality



LOOKERS – Deeper LP

Sounding like if PJ HARVEY smoothed out all her edges, LOOKERS offer up ten tracks of self-described "dark pop" that don't seem to firmly plant roots in the listener's brain. The words "pleasant enough" come to mind over and over as the album moves along, but these tracks feel like they want to feel more confrontational—again, the sleekness unfortunately dampens the fervor. This isn't to say this album is a total drag, but it just feels like there is a discrepancy between what is trying to be conveyed and what the



end result becomes. The vocals can be interesting when they go unexpectedly minor-key or intentionally flatter than you were expecting, which keeps the interest piqued a bit, but they can also do the opposite, like when certain words are just repeated too many times that don't really have any gravitas, which happens more than a few times throughout (including right from the jump with the words "TV dinner" repeated seemingly ad nauseum). Needed more raucousness, less innocuousness.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Almost Ready

LOVE STORY IN BLOOD RED – Everything's Everywhere LP

Presumably compiling their entire oeuvre, the ever-reliable Good Times Rock N Roll Club out of New York has provided us with the works of a mid-2000s gem of a project entitled LOVE STORY IN BLOOD RED. With 27 tracks in all, there is more than plenty to digest here. For fans of the vocal stylings of JONATHAN RICHMAN, this collection comes highly recommended. The main brainchild here, Jason Frederick, along with a handful of bandmates over the lifetime of the project, has a real knack for attention-grabbing lyrics and instrumentation. The band/project seemed to exist for only about four years in the Chicagoland area, and while I can't speak to their influence or impact at the time, getting the chance to dig into these songs twenty years later is a real treat. Surely meant to be digested over time, these dozens of tracks feel like an awesome time capsule that is worth the time to take in its entirety, even if that takes several listens.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Good Times Rock N Roll Club



LUTHERAN HEAT – Hi Again LP

Sophomore album of shambling, poppy indie punk from Minneapolis. They pull from multiple influences—Motown, '60s pop, Brian Wilson, Phil Spector, Flying Nun Records, and contemporaries the BABIES—in the same way Fred Thomas did with SATURDAY LOOKS GOOD TO ME. They nail that mix of scruffy punk attitude with melodic hooks the way that ex-BANANAS drummer Scott Miller did with his bands NAR and especially BRIGHT IDEAS.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Piñata



MAKIN' OUT – Living in a Glass House LP

I love this sort of thing—kind of soft, kind of jangly female-fronted pop music. That said, it always has to be done well. She'll probably hate the reference, but the singer has great range and can hit highs that remind of Dolores O'Riordan of the CRANBERRIES. But this one does have its moments of grittiness, with the pretty vocals occasionally drifting into distress.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Dead Broke



MECHT MENSCH – Anthology LP

Absolutely legendary early '80s Wisconsin hardcore. The "Mechanical Men" tore through the dairyland with mechanical precision when they dropped one holy grail of Midwest punk, the *Acceptance* EP, in 1983, a furious little record that nailed paranoia, politics, and pure punk anger to the classics wall. They didn't stick around long, but their sound seeped into the underground. No Coast resurrected MECHT MENSCH's entire recorded catalog with *Anthology*, pulling together the aforementioned *Acceptance* EP, compilation tracks, demos, and live recordings, all remastered from the original reels, even sourced from Henry Rollins's archive. To complete the deluxe treatment, there is a gatefold sleeve, full-size zine packed with flyers and interviews, plus a huge poster. More than a nostalgia piece, it is a hardcore time capsule. A loud reminder that hardcore will never die.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: No Coast



MEXOFF / NEGATIVE PATH – split LP

Jesus Christ, did they find enough labels to help release this thing? Classic fastcore powerviolence, but both bands sound different enough to keep things interesting. MEXOFF pulls double grunting vocal duties, sounding like MAN IS THE BASTARD and CAPTAIN THREE LEG with a very prominent, heavy bass. There's a bit of a crusty edge here as well. NEGATIVE PATH leans a little closer to the D-beat side of the spectrum and is a tad more guitar-heavy, with thrash-like solos and unique vocal tones; they sound like a pack of wild coyotes. There's over two dozen tracks piled onto this disc and none of them go over a minute-and-a-half. That's pure perfection right there.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Correctional Facility / Crapoulet / Drinkin' Beer



in Bandana / Here And Now / Hecatombe / Loner Cult / Nothing to Harvest / Svab

MISERE – Misere 12"

MISERE is a new band out of Berlin who recently released their inaugural recording. Their self-titled 12" is etched with seven tracks of gloom-laden post-punk that frequently borrows from proto-goth. Groove-riding bass lines, angular guitars, and shuffled, mid-paced drumming makes MISERE easily danceable for all the party bats out there. If you like XMAL DEUTSCHLAND, then absolutely check out MISERE.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Static Age



MORWAN – Vse Po Kolu, Znovu LP

MORWAN began as a solo project by Alex Ashtau in Kiev, Ukraine around 2019, but now MORWAN is a full band out of Berlin with Alex at the helm to guide the band into the darkest and heaviest post-punk territory ever to be explored. Their new album *Vse Po Kolu, Znovu* is an emotional journey through inspirations, ranging from things that sound like KILLING JOKE and MINISTRY to noisy psych rock à la OH SEES. The guitar work on this album is really cool with its maximum-velocity plucking that is very surfy but also very rhythmic at times, and with its droning repetition, the sounds begin to distort in your mind as other influences emerge. This album would be perfect for a winter night while watching snow fall, especially the epic, nearly eight-minute closer "He чекай" as it enters a shoe-gaze/post-hardcore realm.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Feel It



NECK BREATHER – Set cassette

Powerviolence is a micro-genre that strives at extremes, be it in velocity, tempo shifts, drama, or self-awareness. It became somewhat oversaturated some years ago with the rise in popularity of some bands, then went back "underground" (it was never mainstream, but it used to be very niche), and only the strongest survived. NECK BREATHER is one of those cases—some of the freshest-sounding modern powerviolence that I've heard in a while, not the silly comedic powerviolence but the apocalyptic, nihilist kind like IRON LUNG. The sonic violence only gets amped up by the genius mastering by maniac James Plotkin (go



check out OLD LADY DRIVERS or KHANATE if you're ready to die).

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: self-released

NO PEELING – Can I Pet That Dog? EP

Short and sweet, hyper-focused, chaotic egg-punk. I loved how much was happening in every track; there were so many layers and things going on, I felt almost overwhelmed, but also not at all. They had a couple more melodic and lighthearted tracks as well, which caused a good balance. Overall, so much fun, I would recommend them if you need an extra shot of energy.

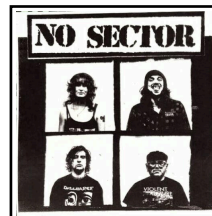
Reviewer: Emma Miller
Label: Feel It



NO SECTOR / PERACETIC – split EP

Representing New Zealand and Nova Scotia respectively, NO SECTOR and PERACETIC prove that hardcore is still spoken fluently across the globe on this ripping split. NO SECTOR is deliciously dialed-in across their three tracks, serving up a satisfying splash of intensity in just four minutes. It's hard to pick a favorite from this addictive little set, but if I had to, it's "Bootcamp." Thrasher and less compressed, PERACETIC manages to shoot out six tunes in roughly the same amount of time, each one surrounding the listener like a tornado of razors. Glorious.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Sewericide



OFENSA – ¿Cual Humanidad? cassette

Genre-bending metal punk from Barcelona, with one foot on the classic UK crust sound and another in the cold buzzsaw death and black metal from Scandinavia. The crusty NIILIST tone gives the guitars a new dimension of heaviness, and the very politically-minded vocals still make this a very punk-oriented record. OFENSA almost fits the neocrust label, reminding me of bands like AMBULANCE or EKKAI, but somehow they are something else. A bleak piece of music for bleak times.



Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: A World Divided

PENA MAXIMA – Alentando Hasta El Fin LP

Spanish-sung Oil from Miami, Florida, with lots of gang vocals, gruff football chants, and anthemic guitar leads. PENA MAXIMA has been around since 2016 and is just now releasing their debut, which is evident in the polished production, skillful playing, and tight songwriting. It isn't really my taste, but I can appreciate the talent on display here, and can certainly see the appeal for the Samba-wearing crowd.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Street Rats



PERSONAL HELL – Window Painted Shut LP

Lumbering and nasty hardcore from West Yorkshire's PERSONAL HELL, who occasionally wade into neo-crust territory on their new LP *Window Painted Shut*. It sounds like the band spared no expense on the production of this album: the guitars are thick and crunchy, the rhythm section is low and burly, and the vocals are desperate and right at the front of the mix. There isn't a bad song in the bunch, but I prefer the quicker cuts, like the excellent "The Brine."

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Natural Sciences



PETROGRAD – A.B.C. LP reissue

Benchmark LP from some extremely prolific and melodic Luxembourg anarcho-punks. A.B.C. was released in 2000 (the only PETROGRAD release I previously knew except for the AC-TIVE MINDS split), and it is a master class in infectious, intense, and accessible punk. You're going to hear LEATHERFACE, EA80, hints of the things that made '80s BAD RELIGION so timeless, and the roots of emo/indie through a political punk filter (most notably on the B-side). The vocals are the focal point even if they aren't the highlight; it's the embodiment of an "earnest" and honest delivery and it makes you want to listen to everything else with a concentrated ear. There's a reason why thirteen labels were involved in the initial release, and a damn good reason why Sabotage reissued the record a quarter-century later...it's a fucking masterpiece.

