



MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #520

SEPTEMBER 2026

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 83 reviews, contributed by:

Tony Party	Gonza Perez
Jake Joyce	Biff Bifaro
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D. Gregory	Willis Schenk
João Seixas	Daniel Z.
Sir Bobos	Mama Goblin
Romain Basset	Alex Howell
Jeff Cost	
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Nick Odorizzi	
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Tim Janchar	
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THE COUNTERFORCE

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

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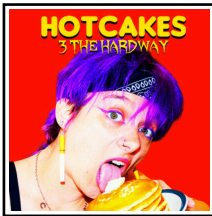
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3 THE HARDWAY – Hotcakes EP

I am immediately drawn in by the simplicity and hazard, stumbling-forward Detroit proto-punk quality that these songs have. Bustin Brooklyn's vocal delivery is a see-saw between boredom and aggression, while Sloppy Joel's guitar, somewhat repetitive riffs nodding to haunting space-rock drive her lyrics with a much more calamitous impact. These four songs trickle Detroit with every note, and will leave you feeling empty and somehow wanting more. Maybe it's the Michigan soul or the "heavy-handed swamp-voodoo electricity" (MRR review of LAUGHING HYENAS' *Merry Go Round*, issue #56), but somewhere in this, I'm reminded of the LAUGHING HYENAS' *Merry Go Round* 12". Either way, this is a very melancholy and wonderful listen.

Reviewer: Tony Party

Label: Found Sound / Showtime Detroit / Trixie's / Zon Zon

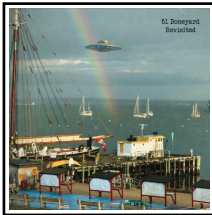


51 BONEYARD – Revisited CD

Your standard garage rock/punk rock'n'roll out of Tampa. As is often the case with these types of bands, *Revisited* begins to evolve into more of a MIS-FITS-esque brand of horror punk around the midway point. The production is decent for a self-released album, but I wish the vocals were a bit louder and the guitar had a little more treble layered onto it. Otherwise, this is a charming and catchy disc. "Lost in the Neon Graveyard" is the standout track, and ironically enough, a dream of mine (being lost in a neon graveyard, that is). I don't know how often I'll spin this again, but if I lived in Tampa, I'd try to catch these guys live as often as possible.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce

Label: self-released



ACTIVE INGREDIENTS – Discography 2xLP

In case you're not familiar with the humor-infused hardcore of Kentucky old schoolers ACTIVE INGREDIENTS, here's the whole enchilada, all wrapped up in a tasty gatefold package covered in vintage pics and flyers. This double LP captures everything they did, compiling the band's two EPs, sole full-length cassette, and unreleased demos. Their first 7" from 1984 is a classic, providing a perfect introduction to their zany ripping with "Service With a Smile," a swarming guitar attack punctuated by a CRAMPS-ian chorus, followed



by "Take From the Poor, Give to the Rich," a speedy little ditty with DEAD KENNEDYS-style sarcasm. The wise-assery continues across 1985's *Bringing Down the Big Boys* EP. When you hear their mocking reappropriation of the famous MTV ad riff on "I Hate MTV," it's such a no-brainer that you wonder how no one else thought to do it. And then when you learn that New Jersey's TEENAGE DEPRESSION had an almost identical song concept around the same time, you nod your head and go, "okay, yeah." Keeping in line with the fashion of the era, the band had evolved to a heavier sound by the time they released their full-length *Fly Again* tape in 1987. Tracks like "Sleeping in the White House In '88" bring *Vicious Circle*-era ZERO BOYS to mind, and there's some ill-advised rapping on there, too. The demos are a particularly interesting portion of this collection, as fans will find that the unreleased songs are just as good as anything that made it onto their records, and there are also alternate versions of old favorites. If you dig it, there's plenty to dig through.

Reviewer: Jason Harding

Label: Street Rats

ALIENTO DE PERRO – Éxitos Rotundos??? LP

A new collection from these Buenos Aires punk vets that compiles thirteen tracks across their almost two-and-a-half-decade deep catalog. These tracks are melodic and catchy, with a palpable playfulness to them that makes it feel like settling into a sugary-cereal-fueled Saturday morning cartoon marathon. Purists will always have something to say about "best of" compilations, but if they serve as gateways to finding your new favorite band, then they're doing their job. Even as a compilation, the sequencing of the tracks feels deliberate, creating some nice dynamism throughout—"Me Kedo Conmigo" is a great change of pace the listener might not even know was needed 'til it hits, and then the fun ramps right back up with the ensuing "Tal Vez." A sunny collection that deserves the windows down, volume up treatment.

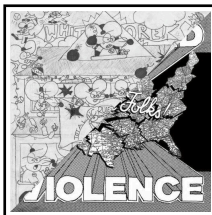
Reviewer: D. Gregory

Label: Discos Cara Dura



ANIMATED VIOLENCE / TOTAL VACATION – split LP

Two servings of fast and loose West Coast hardcore punk on ANIMATED VIOLENCE and TOTAL VACATION's split LP. Both bands draw from a similar well of influences; each plays snotty, '80s-inspired USHC, but with enough variation in style between the two to merit sharing twelve inches of wax. First up is ANIMATED VIOLENCE, and it must be said: this band fuckin' rules.



a modern powerviolence band whose debut tape I was sent to review when it first came out. HUMAN kicks off the sampler, and their track is immediately followed by a modern pop punk band, BLANKET OF M. I made the connection right away to the old Skull Duggery 10" compilation, *Fallen Upon Deaf Ears*, a really cool comp that put extreme music powerhouses like NAUSEA and DROPDEAD side-by-side with nasty pop punk acts of the time like SCREECHING WEASEL and the VINDICTIVES. I picked up a copy of that comp years ago and always thought it was a really unique concept, reminding punks that for all the sub-genre nitpicking we tend to do, things are actually far more closely related than we may give them credit for at a glance. That memory ended up being the best thing I got out of this tape sampler. Most of the tracks here are some variation of modern powerviolence and extreme music, which is generally what I had expected. It was the attempts to push beyond that sound that left me more than underwhelmed. The over-five-minute nü-metal track by MINDROTT, the novelty modern pop punk tracks with phonybaloney angry vocals by RADICAL FUN TIME, and the sloppy street punk song by RIVER CITY REJECTS getting chopped abruptly short make the whole compilation feel less like a curated introduction to a record label and more like someone just haphazardly threw a bunch of songs onto a tape. By the time this cassette compilation came to an end, I had started to wonder if I should have paid closer attention to its title. Perhaps it was meant as a warning.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro

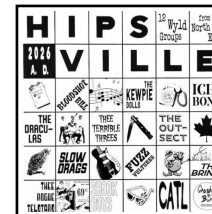
Label: Hey Fuck You

V/A – Hipsville 2026 A.D. LP

With no thanks to PAT BOONE, this comp is a hit! Inspired by the Toronto outsider garage rock event Welcome to Hipsville and comps of the yesteryear like *Pebbles* and *Back From the Grave*, it features ten tracks of fuzzy garage punk, rockabilly, and surf, with most paying homage to relics from the past. Toronto's KEWPIE DOLLS and THEE TERRIBLE THREES, along with the USA's East Coast rippers DRACU-LAS and the OUT-SECT, cook up their trash-and-bash takes on classics, with the OUT-SECT's version of the MAKERS' "Do What I Wanna" being the cream of the crop, so good that I had to turn the needle back and listen twice. Elsewhere, you've got legends like the ICHI-BONS and BLOODSHOT BILL doing what they do best. One look through the liner notes and accompanying zine will prove evident that this is more than just a compilation. It's a well-penned and planned-out love letter to Canadian garage rock. Toronto rules and has always been a favorite city of mine for punk and garage, and anyone interested in the latter would find this as a great starting point. There are more names, bands, and dates listed than I could mention, and it will take multiple views to digest it all. I love to see this level of detail and fun put into a project. Well done.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos

Label: Crash 'n' Burn / Ugly Pop



WET DENIM – Bite Back LP

A rock'n'roll punk stomper, this one is. From the weird armpit known as Indianapolis, WET DENIM probs learned their songs while drunk, so they can muscle-memory through the parts live. There's a little punk honky-tonk, CANDY SNATCHERS, starts and stops, calling folks "baby" a lot, so what more could you want? I feel like their club contact would be written on the back of an overdue internet bill and just say "WET DENIM 1) will only play after dark, 2) wants some drinks, 3) \$/¥ of the door or just a lot of our friends can come in, 4) did we mention the after dark thing? Baby, we'll figure it out." Here you get eight punk'n'roll tunes that keep the pace, and have maybe anchored themselves into the category of best party record for 2026. Oh, the record is transparent blue, too, just like wet denim? ~_(_)/~

Reviewer: Tony Party

Label: Mean City



course. I love this band. And while I may disagree with my chivalric colleague, I applaud his willingness to write a negative review. We can't all like everything. I'll also say this: 69 minutes is a lot of SIMPS. So, I really appreciate the concision of a 7" as a follow-up. And these two tracks are some of the best these dudes have laid down! "Quality at Your Feet" is almost a HOME BLITZ-ian mangled power pop number, and it features one of my favorite vocal performances from Joe—there's a scream he gives at 1:40 into the song that makes me smile every time I hear it. "More Lies" is closer to standard SIMPS fare, borrowing heavily from VELVET UNDERGROUND, but by sticking to what they know best, they end up with one of the catchiest tracks in their catalogue. Once again, shout out to Goodbye Boozy for keeping the 7" alive. For my money, this one's about perfect.

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Goodbye Boozy

TIEBREAK – Prodigal Sons LP

You might not have thought there was a throughline that connected KORT PROSESS and '90s youth-crew-obsessed Euro hardcore, but you might not have heard TIEBREAK. Dark, determined, dedicated hardcore punk from Norway, first active in the late 1990s when it made sense, but then reformed in the 2020s when punk needed them. This reviewer listening to TIEBREAK in 2026 is like this reviewer listening to OUTLAST in 1999...it's a lifeline. "I'm sorry I can't keep up / I love you but I can't keep up."

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Crucial Response

TOTAL CON – Idolatry EP

Short songs. Big anger. Zero patience. Leeds's TOTAL CON wastes absolutely zero time in getting the deal done—ten tracks in ten minutes, and every second is pure hardcore hostility. This is UKHC stripped down to the fucking bone, fast and politically venomous. Sounds like HERESY getting dragged through the UK82 sewer, with RIPCORDER rattling around in the engine room. The targets of anger are plentiful, and *Idolatry* unloads on all of them with glorious contempt. Riffs, rage, and a boot straight to the teeth of the oppressors.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Brainrotter / Unlawful Assembly

TROIKA – Una Vida + Demo cassette

Discography release for this Madrid-based feminist punk outfit, covering both their demo and only 7". Being Colombian, this first plucked the string of my memories of POLIKARPA Y SUS VICIOSAS, but with less of a tendency toward melody. Being Spanish, you can hear that base of ESKORBUTO, but maybe mix in some of the later, more idiosyncratic approaches of bands like LAS MORSAS. Regardless of comparison, this is simple, straight-to-the-point street punk with a lot to say and no patience for bullshit gender norms. Generally, this isn't really my bag and I can't say this is an exception, but I can appreciate it as a strong release for the genre and for what they're trying to do. The lyrics in Spanish are beautifully full of rage, and my favorite thing on this is probably the vocals.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Decline Humano / Exabrupto

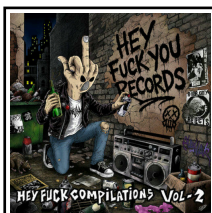
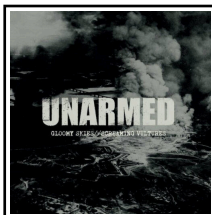
UNARMED – Gloomy Skies

Veterans of the crust war UNARMED have returned with their *Gloomy Skies // Screaming Vultures* full-length, and it captures these punk warriors in all their glory. Deep, guttural vocals bark over bass-heavy D-beat rhythms, while soaring guitars frequently dive in with epic runs—could there be anything better? Champions of the '90s era crust aesthetic, UNARMED has the sound that many of us of a certain age grew up on, which makes a release like *Gloomy Skies // Screaming Vultures* feel refreshing and restorative.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Phobia

V/A – Hey Fuck Compilations, Vol. 2 cassette

Dating back to my early years of getting into underground music, coming across a sampler for an unknown record label with the music they've released has remained one of my favorite things—what a simple and easy way to discover a bunch of new music. Hey Fuck You! Records out of Arkansas has been cranking out releases for the past three-and-a-half years. Scrolling through the lot of them, the only ones I had previously been aware of were LACK OF INTEREST, who seem to have re-released cassettes from their discography on the label, and HUMAN, who are



Seven tracks of urgent and snarling hardcore punk with twangy, beefed-up guitar tones and a sort of playful vibe, as heard most prominently on the cloyingly catchy "Super Toys Last All Summer Long." It may be early September, but this is a summer anthem if ever there were one. On the flipside is TOTAL VACATION, whose track list doubles ANIMATED VIOLENCE's in length and whose style is a little more rambunctious and offbeat, with shrill vocals accompanying much more spastic drumming that is absolutely pummeling. The gang vocals they pepper throughout remind me of ADOLESCENTS, bringing a rowdier vibe to the proceedings. All said, both sides are strong, but ANIMATED VIOLENCE really steals the show. Highly recommended; for fans of G.U.N., IN-VERTEBRATES, Unlawful Assembly.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Cease and Desist

ANTI-DOGMATIKSS – Rompan Filas!!! cassette reissue

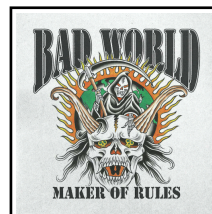
This is hardcore before anyone figured out how to make it safe. Barcelona HC legends ANTI-DOGMATIKSS, formed in late '83 and were right there at the birth of the city's hardcore scene. This is their classic 1984 *Rompan Filas !!!* tape, remastered for the fifteenth anniversary of the Polze De La Mort label. Pure early Spanish hardcore fury—the big reference points, besides early Spanish punk, are DISCHARGE, DISORDER, BGK and the faster UK/Italian hardcore stuff, but there's something unmistakably Barcelona about the sound. Eleven tracks, with songs like "Fuego a la Moncloa;" "Anti-USA," and the ten-second blast "Ellos o Tú" delivering maximum confrontation. Historic, savage, completely fucking essential.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Polze De La Mort

BAD WORLD – Maker of Rules EP

Moshers rejoice, BAD WORLD returns with vengeance, dishing out another dose of classic crossover that's groovy as hell and as hard as a brick to the face, backed by precision drumming and furious riffage. The guitar player absolutely rips—the opening track "Maker of Rules" opens with the sickest divebomb solo, and the last track "Ninevah" features a shreddy solo that quickly combusts into a crushing mosh riff. The band is super tight, and the vocals are typical, but I appreciate the fact that I can understand the lyrics. I'm a firm believer that 7"s are best served with two songs played loud, but I can't fault them for putting out three rippers such as these. Pick this up and mosh 'til you puke.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Convulse



BAIT – Diáspora 12"

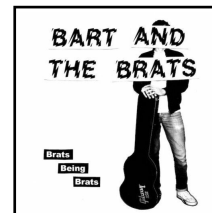
Diáspora is the third record of the Barcelona-based hardcore band BAIT, this time back with a 12" including seven new songs released through a collaboration between no less than eight labels. The lyrics are in French, Spanish, and English, which gives the band a welcome additional edge. Musically, there are a lot of things happening in BAIT's music, and possibly too many ingredients to make it perfectly appetizing to my delicate tastebuds. From NYHC-style mid-paced mosh parts, fastcore moments, Scandicore riffing, and good old punk rock, maybe too much is happening in just thirteen minutes, and it sometimes sounds like the band is unsure of where to go. This said, the music is tight, energetic, angry, and certainly intense (and if you have seen them live, you know what I am talking about), and I can imagine many punters being into it. As for me, well, there are already many bands going for this sort of stomping hardcore, and I don't think it particularly stands out.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: 83 Records / Don't Trust the Hype / Nothing to Harvest / Kremón / Lada / Little Jan's Hammer / Purga / XCementerioX

BART AND THE BRATS – Brats Being Brats EP

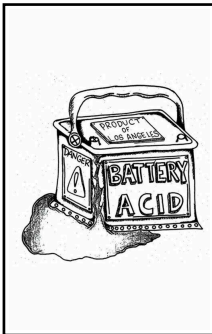
Bart De Vraantijk runs BART AND THE BRATS by himself out of La Rochelle, France, and he has churned out a ton of releases in the last few years, including contributions to a bunch of splits with acts such as JACKET BURNER, MITCH KRAMER, the BATTLEBEATS, and TENEMENT RATS. *Brats Being Brats* is four more songs of late '70s garage/budget punk, over in eight-and-a-half minutes, which is exactly the right length for this stuff. My favorite is "Collision Course," 90 seconds of coiled tension with a guitar line that made me think of Andy Gill (GANG OF FOUR), and no surprise that it's also the shortest thing here. A lot of this genre runs together on me. These four tracks didn't. On a 45 with the big hole from Big Neck. What have you got to lose?

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Big Neck



BATTERY ACID – Battery Acid cassette

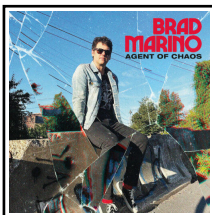
Another scorcher from the SoCal hardcore punk scene, which seems to be on a roll lately. L.A.'s BATTERY ACID mixes the speed of KORO with the brutality of NEGATIVE APPROACH, peppering their breakneck attacks with mid-tempo stomps that sound massive and nasty. The drums really stand out for their intensity, but my favorite aspect has to be the vocals, which sound thoroughly disgusted on standouts "Slums" and "Tweaked and Geeked." BATTERY ACID is a fast favorite, and joins the ranks of other notable acids PUBLIC ACID and ACID CASUALTIES. Recommended.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Cease and Desist

BRAD MARINO – Agent of Chaos CD

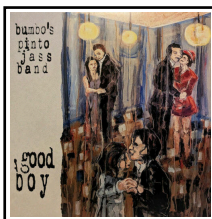
BRAD MARINO has been working the seam between rock'n'roll and power pop for a long time now, first with New Hampshire's the CONNECTION and now five albums into a solo run. He covered the RAMONES' *Subterranean Jungle* front to back in 2020, then put out a 2024 EP called *Ramones and Stones* whose title track happily admits he doesn't much need anything else. *Agent of Chaos* works that same ground, but sounds closer to *Pleasant Dreams* than *Too Tough to Die*. What keeps it from being a costume is that it doesn't feel like MARINO is impersonating anyone. He's carrying the thing forward rather than wearing its skin. Thirteen songs in thirty-three minutes, with Gene Champagne of TEENAGE HEAD behind the kit for most of the way, and my favorite tracks are "Voodoo" and "Devil May Care," the latter breaking up the formula with some lap steel from James Cap Nunn. I usually want records louder and faster than this, and mid-tempo is a hard sell for me, but these songs just sound exactly like what they ought to be. The CD has a bonus cover of the JESUS AND MARY CHAIN's "Between Planets."



Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Beluga / Ghost Highway / Spaghetty Town

BUMBO'S PINTO JASS BAND – Good Boy LP

Wow, this is cool as hell. Trippy punk jazz that brings to mind CAPTAIN BEERHEART or the RESIDENTS mixed with the energy of the MINUTEMEN, specifically in the vocals and the bass runs. Very neat shit, and probably one of my most favorite things I've gotten to review here. Tongue-in-cheek lyrics paired with utter chaos. There's a little bit of a surfy element incorporated here as the guitars are more often than not coated in a fine film of reverb. The layering of percussion and back-up vox really make it seem like the walls are closing in on you, but in a fun way! This one's for the true weirdos and may not be for everyone, but this type of boldness definitely deserves a couple spins from the masses.



Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Bumbo

BURN KIT – Check It Out 10"

If you've ever wondered what some of NEGATIVE APPROACH's songs would sound like if they were recorded with modern production value, you're in luck, as Boston's BURN KIT presents straightforward takes on some of Bran-non and co.'s best tunes. Not much to say here; all of these covers sound fine, but nothing new is brought to the table other than scrubbing out the grit and charm of the originals with the aforementioned squeaky clean production. An OK if not slightly pointless release.



Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: self-released

CAR VS. DRIVER – Deja Grateful LP reissue

This record came out during the big schism of the mid-'90s when Tim Yo sharpened the focus of the MRR review policy, thus giving way to the launch of large numbers of publications (*Shredding Paper*, *HeartattaCk*, *Punk Planet*, etc.) channeling the areas of the musical underground that were left uncovered. However, I always thought that *Deja Grateful* should have had a stab at an MRR review—although it fell into the "emo/non-reviewable" category of the time, I'd always felt it had more of the DC-style hardcore/punk melody of other bands that were favored within the pages of MRR. MONSULA, SCHERZO, FUEL, and VINE all come to mind when hearing this again, and clearly CAR VS.

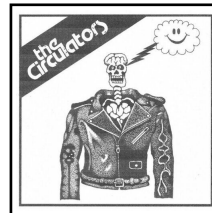


heard CRIMINAL DAMAGE and SMOKERS, which is high praise from this lowly reviewer. There's a just world where this shit is absolutely huge, the songs and the delivery are that good...I just don't think this world is ready.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: self-released

THE CIRCULATORS – Pointless Game / I Can't Swim 7"

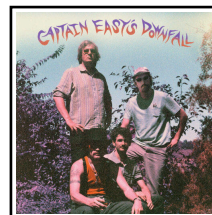
Here we have a refreshing splash of the CIRCULATORS, for whom we have been thirsting since 2024's stellar debut LP. Rocking and snotty, "Pointless Game" further demonstrates the ripping pop sensibilities that made the album a smash, while "I Can't Swim" brings low-budget, good-time vibes to your local public pool. Capping it off in grand style as a bonus on the digital release, they cover "My GTO," a classic killer that was originally written for TEENGENERATE by none other than the fabulous Andy G of the DEVIL DOGS! Shut up and take my ten bucks, already. And then shut up again.



Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Total Punk

THE COWBOYS – Captain Easy's Down-fall LP

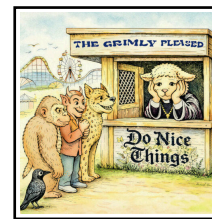
That Bloomington, Indiana has been a bastion of adventurous punk sounds for half a century is a beautiful thing. From the land of JOHNNY COUGAR, the COWBOYS offer up their newest collection of perfectly pleasant oddities. Fans of SPARKS will be in love within three tracks, if it even takes that long. There are damn near twenty tracks here, and they are all wonderful explorations in not getting pinned down, in playing with sonics, in non-masturbatory psychedelics. In 49 states it's just music, but this is Indiana after all.



Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Feel It

THE GRIMLY PLEASED – Do Nice Things EP

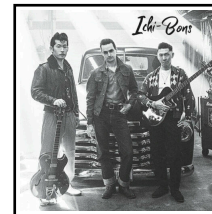
It's fun, it's bouncy, it's cowpunk! It's packing a little more fun than I usually go for, but it's weird enough to keep my attention. The vocals kinda have a Jello Biafra/DEAD KENNEDYS vibe, albeit less menacing. Lyrically, it's intelligent, sardonic, and downright fun, like early VANDALS without the nihilism "He found that hat / Now he thinks he's a fucking marine." I have a cousin like that, true story, a total dipshit! There's an undeniable THEY MIGHT BE GIANTS influence to the music, and even a little MEAT PUPPETS, too. It's got a weird energy with cool intertwining guitar leads. The album art is a perfect companion to the nature of these tunes, silly and sinister, which is an excellent way of describing GRIMLY PLEASED.



Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: self-released

THE ICHI-BONS – Little Lil / The Witch 7"

Toronto trio ICHI-BONS play '50s rock'n'roll the old-fashioned way, pulling from early rock, surf, and rockabilly. For this 45, they brought in Spencer Evoy, who leads London's MFC CHICKEN, to blow the horn. The A-side is "Little Lil," a 1959 rockabilly number originally cut by MEL DORSEY, and the flip is "The Witch," the SONICS' first single from 1964. Both songs come from an age before seatbelts and, uh, murderbots, when a song just needed two minutes, three chords, and some guy coming unglued over a girl. Drummer Paddy Burn bellows "The Witch" like he's genuinely terrified of this lady. I could picture them in a battle of the bands with the 5.6.7.8'S, though I think they could learn a thing or two about cutting loose from those wild women from Tokyo. This was my first time hearing them, both sides sounded good to me, and now I want to hear what else they've got.



Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Ugly Pop

THEEE RETAIL SIMPS – Theeeeeee Retina Lamps 7"

The nerve of these Canucks! After their last record drew considerable ire from the venerable Sir Bobos, you'd think they'd have the decency to hang it up and leave this whole punk rock business to the professionals. But no, here's two fresh piles of sub-par slop they're serving up for us to choke down! I'm kidding, of



flies" and "Bright" that feature theatrical droning vocals akin to P.I.L. efforts of this era. And "Sharpen the Shears," a wistful power pop track presented in demo quality, caps off the album with one of the most charming moments to be had here. It's a concrete addition to the zeitgeist overall, and will surely leave some wondering how it managed to stay in the dark for so long.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Obsolete Universe

SPUCKE – Zustand cassette

Nine-song debut release out of Hamburg, Germany —this recording was also released on vinyl by No Front Teeth Records. Fittingly, given the digital collage used for the album art, the music on this cassette feels similarly slapped together. This recording essentially sounds like the audio equivalent of a collage. With four different singers and presumably just as many songwriters, it is hard to pin down exactly what SPUCKE is trying to be. This is kind of a street punk recording, but also has wailing rock'n'roll guitar solos, repetitive garage punk song structures with monotonous barking vocals, and one song that inexplicably sounds like it wants to be QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE. Take all the ideas, throw 'em in a blender, and pour them into nine separate portions to whip up one debut album. There is a reason that the tried-and-true method within punk is releasing a demo tape before jumping straight to a record. While I am a proponent of finishing all ideas, not every idea is fit for consumption. If SPUCKE is to withstand the test of time, I can almost guarantee that their next release will sound much more like a record rather than just a smattering of song ideas.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: La Pochette Surprise

STRANGLIGHT – Modern Phones 12"

Clean, lightly distorted, full-bodied guitars paired with high-octane, non-melodic vocals. Not a novel idea, but STRANGLIGHT pulls this off really well. It's music for the mature punk, akin to bands like O PIONEERS! and PRETTY BOY FLOYD AND THE FALLEN ANGELS. What are we calling orgcore these days? Cuz that's what this is. Very solid work here. *Modern Phones* goes by pretty quickly, so give it a couple spins.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: self-released



SVAVELDIOXID / WAR//PLAGUE – Absurd Depravity split EP

It's time for armaments and anguish again, as the spike-laden energy of this ripping split sits heavy on the turntable. On Side A, Minneapolis's WAR//PLAGUE executes a burly stenchcore assault via two charging battle anthems. Are they musicians or barbarians?

These crusty war marches blur that distinction. And then on Side B, SVAVELDIOXID demonstrates their absolute käng mastery across a pair of punishing D-beaters. "Sarajevo '94" is a speedy evocation of a devastating historical tragedy, and "Mass-sykos" zooms out to ponder just how entire populations come to casually accept such atrocities. Just 100 of these rugged slabs of orange wax were made, so only the fastest leather-and-patch-clad arms will get to grab one.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Phobia

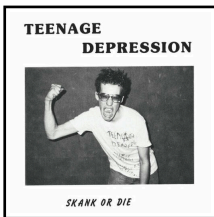
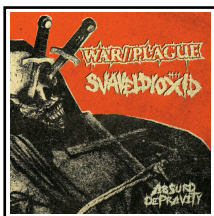
TEENAGE DEPRESSION – Skank or Die + Bonus Tracks LP

Originally released as a nine-song EP in 1984, TEENAGE DEPRESSION's sole release has received the bells-and-whistles treatment, beefed up with demos, live tracks, and rehearsal sessions on this thirty-track collection LP. Within their no-frills, old school approach, this group of Jersey hardcore jokers takes the piss out of the CLASH, Henry Rollins, MTV, Ronald Reagan, and other prime targets of their time. Fans will delight in hearing songs that didn't make the record, including "Scalding Shit Soup" and "Bob Don't You Send Me to the Llama Ranch," and this archival package comes complete with lyrics and liner notes to bring you the whole sordid story.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: BCore

THE BURROW – The Burrow CD

Killer PNW shit with shades of heavy alt/grunge and '90s melodic punk. Every song feels like a dead simple earworm that will make other musicians wonder "why didn't I think of those two chords?!", while regular listeners will be drawn in by super-fuzzed guitars and a rhythm section that lands somewhere between KARP and WIPERS fronted by gruff, melodic, and poetic vocals. Looking for modern comparisons? The BURROW hit me like the first time(s) I



DRIVER was impacted by those bands. It was during this splintering that folks started narrowing their focus to emo, pop punk, screamo, etc., all things we are familiar with now but that were new(-ish) at the time. However, there was a big middle ground that bands like CAR VS. DRIVER cruised through, blending decisiveness and melody as well as aggression in a way that was more than parts pushed together or striving for a breakneck pace. When I first heard the record, it may have been the first time I'd listened to kids my age have a sense of total picture in the sequencing of their songs, each one building off the previous one for a rollercoaster of an album. I'm excited for people to have the chance to grab this record without having to dish out big bucks.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Lunchbox / Stickfigure

CHIEN FLIC / V.V.M. – Tourist Complex split cassette

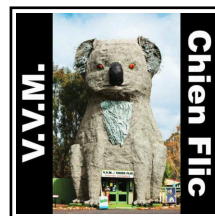
V.V.M. starts the *Tourist Complex* split on a very high note with their fast and loose hardcore with super fun genre-bending moments. Kickass riffs, super tight drumming, cutting basslines...it's all there with its modern flair and old school attitude. And when we switch over to CHIEN FLICK's side, they don't fail to follow up at all with their unique take on the powerviolence sound with less angry and more expressive vocals. From complete chaos to more steady and straightforward composition, the band definitely stands out. All in all, I think this split is an amazing pairing of two likeminded and equally good bands that I won't be getting tired of anytime soon.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Dirty Slap / Faggianello / Goat Power Recreation / Lower Echelon

CIMITERIUM – Somnabulist EP

Pure death-soaked menace. Melbourne's CIMITERIUM doubles down on filthy stenchcore with three crushing tracks that balance D-beat aggression with death metal heft, creating a bleak atmosphere where only the stench of decay dwells. The riffs ooze HM-2 grime without sacrificing the sound, while the cavernous vocals and pounding rhythm section keep everything steady in a relentless march to the grave. Fans of SANCTUM, STORMCROW, DEVIATED INSTINCT, and HELLSHOCK will feel right at home with this darkness.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Phobia



CIVIC MIMIC – Civic Mimic cassette

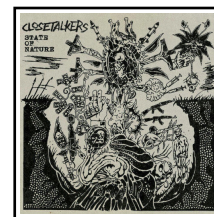
This is what's up. After five years, CIVIC MIMIC graces us with three new tracks that just rip in a way that only New Jerseyans know how to make happen. If you're looking at the album art, and "Can't Be Cruel" is your introduction to the project, you might think you've stumbled upon a new eggy project through a Don Giovanni Records lens, but then a minute-and-a-half in, the coda hits and you realize this is way more a TENEMENT through Don Giovanni Records lens...okay, that already exists, but whatever. There's some TONY MOLINA here, some MIDNIGHT RERUNS, and it's easy to picture these guys sharing a New Brunswick basement with the ERGS! or HUNCHBACK back in the day (or even now, as those acts will still make appearances). Can't get enough here.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: self-released

CLOSETALKERS – State of Nature LP

For some reason, Calgary's CLOSETALKERS completely flew under my (admittedly rusty) hardcore punk radar. I understand they released an EP on Neon Taste in 2024 and enjoyed some kind of success among hardcore nerds, making it even more surprising that I had not heard of them. The internet tells me that CLOSETALKERS sound like UK crust and Scandicore, but the internet must be drunk because I don't hear it at all on this first LP. To me, the band sounds like yet another act influenced by US hardcore, with intricate riffs, a stomping, aggressive vibe, rawer by way of good production, and low-pitched gruff vocals. Undeniably, the band knows what they are doing, they do what they set out to do well, and it sounds and looks good. Some parts of it bring WORLD BURNS TO DEATH or TRAGEDY to mind, but to my ears, it is mostly a soundtrack to mosh hard. Not bad, but certainly not for me.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: No Norms



D.F.C. – Igreja Quadrangular Do Triangulo Redondo CD reissue

A reissue of a 25-year-old record that was reissued 5 years ago, this time with fewer tracks. Brazilian punx D.F.C. (DISTRICT FEDERAL CHOAS) rip through over twenty tracks in less than twenty minutes! It's as political as you can get, and there's a really dated '90s feel to most of the tunes. "Tambo Sou Positivo" is a perfect example—the riff is straight out of '94, and the rap vocal delivery (entirely in Portuguese) and turntable scratches remind me of tons of bands I would hear on cassettes when I was coming up. It's a cool listen and would be enjoyed by anyone seeking out politically heavy Latino punk that isn't your typical thrash-and-bash hardcore.

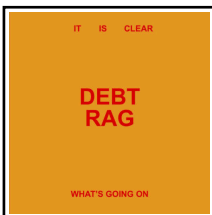


Reviewer: Sir Bobos

Label: Rejected Youth / Stay in Sound Promotion Group

DEBT RAG – It Is Clear What's Going On LP

New LP from Olympia's DEBT RAG featuring atonal, no-wave-inspired punk jams that comfortably ride the line between playful and pretentious. Sonically akin to ERASE ERRATA or NAPE NECK, the tracks feel improvisational at times, like on "Drumbo" and "Drumbo 2," where it feels like listening in on the band working out promising syncopated drum loops, and buzzing art-punk at others, like "Cold Kitchenette," a blaze of fierce snare downbeats and call-and-response hooks that sounds like a lost MELT BANANA outtake. It's fun and weird and occasionally funky, but probably impossible to dance to. The short tracks and experimental stabs at ideas (a crawling sax solo on "Fish of the Week" with Tomata du Plenty-aping yelps, the somewhat traditionally structured synth punk on "Gary's World") consistently confound expectations and evoke a group of talented oddballs having fun together. What could be better?



Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi

Label: Post Present Medium

DIAL – Watch CD

New collection of expansive experimental jams from this long-running collective, featuring members of no wave OGs UT. The atmospheric tracks drift in and out, like a minimalist blend of BODY/HEAD, the DEAD C, and SONIC YOUTH's early '80s guitar scrape era. There are abrasive moments, like the repetitive riff and mechanical drum beat on "Metal Fun," and the moody industrial menace of "Slaughter," but much of *Watch* is a contemplative, droning affair that begins with a mysterious blend of ERIC SATIE-style piano and guitar exploration on "I Interrupt You." The sequencing and ominous, cavernous production are so well done that the album is best listened to as a start-to-finish experience, recalling the best underground guitar experimentation of the past several decades.



Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi

Label: self-released

DISSEKERAD – Vaggarna Rasar LP

Here's an instant grip for all the mangel-olds out there. DISSEKERAD continues to crank out flawless D-beat albums, thirteen-plus years in, building on a lineage tracing back to Sweden's most iconic and influential bands, including TOTALITÄR and AVSKUM. Start to finish, this album is a complete scorcher. I'll try to avoid the most obvious comparisons and just say that if you have any taste at all for käng, or like ripping punk music really at all, then don't waste time reading about something that you could blissfully destroy your eardrums to. I'm not being hyperbolic in saying that this album is at the pinnacle of punk fucking mastery. Eleven tracks, absolutely no filler. I'll be listening to this non-stop for a long while.



Reviewer: Matt Casteel

Label: Phobia

DOROTHY – Not Responsible for Loss or Damage 12"

The latest from British Columbia's one-man proto-glam band (LAURICE) who's been releasing music since the '70s. Danceable, sexy synth punk, like if Michael Ne-smith had a leather and whippets fetish. It would land with current day fans of anything Shannon Shaw is up to, and reminded me of how punk the MO-DETTES' video for "White Mice" is.

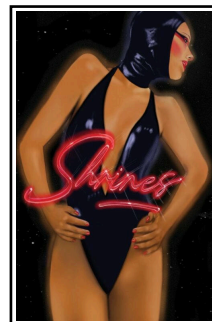


Reviewer: Tim Janchar

Label: Mighty Mouth Music

SHRINES – Shrines demo cassette

One of my biggest pet peeves is when the term "post-punk" is used interchangeably for "goth," but Chicago's SHRINES effectively collapse any distinctions to be made between the two—the four tracks on this demo are shrouded and dramatic without placing style over substance, guided by a righteous, unquestionably punk-rooted rage often lacking with other black-clad creatures of the night. The switch-off vocals from Skout and Angelica are frequently delivered in desperate shouts, driving rhythms push and pull against searing, needles-and-pins guitar lines, and subtle waves of synth fill the negative space like trails of smoke from a clove cigarette. The A-side is especially fierce, with "Cathartic Life" posing stern questions ("It's all I know / But will it suffice?") over danceable deathrock without waiting for answers, as "Sombra Vaga" casts a brooding and ominous XMAL DEUTSCHLAND/EUROSHIMA big-hair-and-eyeliner darkwave spell for its first minute only for SHRINES to slam the accelerator for a final 30 seconds worth of echo/chorus-saturated sinister hardcore whiplash. Some wear leather, some wear lace, SHRINES chose both.



Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth

Label: Barely Fluent

SISTEMA DE ENTRETENIMIENTO – Arcade Punk EP

Spain has an undeniably characteristic scene of synth punk and adjacent genres, but SISTEMA DE ENTRETENIMIENTO has always been one of the most instantly recognizable of them all. With their aptly-titled new EP *Arcade Punk*, they keep the flame going. The classic SISTEMA sound is still there: bright drum machine beats, sharp guitar melodies, signature synth parts, and vocals swimming in reverb...but leaning a bit more towards the gloominess of darkwave, it sounds darker and catchier than ever. Fans of the band will be more than satisfied.

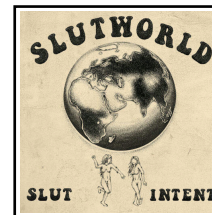


Reviewer: Mama Goblin

Label: Prison

SLUT INTENT – Slutworld 10"

On rare occasions, punk gives you what you need instead of what you thought you wanted. SLUT INTENT's 10" is one of those occasions, and their discordant, intense hardcore is going to spend some serious time living rent-free in my brain. There are moments like "Glitch" and "Girls Night" where I feel like they could stand alongside SNAPCASE and BOTCH, but the thing about SLUT INTENT is that they don't stand alongside anyone—they stand alone. This is advanced and complex thinking punk. "But the taste of spite in my mouth / Keeps me going long enough to remind them / That if they're going to balance every human need on a knife's edge / They should remember it cuts both ways." See, it's not just the music, it's everything. This band demands your attention, and they are more than worth it.

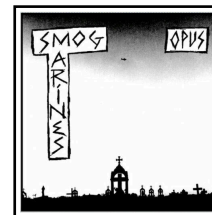


Reviewer: Robert Collins

Label: Mpls Ltd

SMOG MARINES – Opus LP

Formed in Los Angeles' Silver Lake neighborhood, home to acts like the SCREAMERS and the FLESH EATERS, the band known as OPUS changed their name on New Year's Eve 1979. Adopting a snappy new moniker to better suit their punchy sound, they forged a sonic imprint that bridged the gap between the DEAD KENNEDYS and X, incorporating Jello's exaggerated vibrato, speedy agitation, and prominent dual vocals into their brawny and eclectic compositions. The resulting melodic racket wouldn't have been out of place on Dangerhouse Records, but that particular "what if?" scenario wasn't to be. As the band was beginning to burn their brightest, the label was in the process of fizzling out, positioning SMOG MARINES as torchbearers of the first-wave L.A. sound. However, by the time they recorded their full-length album at Hollywood's Mystic Studios in 1980, hardcore was on the rise and record companies were following the emerging trends. The material was ultimately shelved, and would remain buried in the sands of time for decades. After 46 years in purgatory, archival label Obsolete Universe has dug it up and delivered it straight from the original masters. Though diverse in style, the album is instantly recognizable as a product of its specific and prolific place and time, capturing the group in the midst of evolution as they embraced the harder and faster sounds of the era with their old school roots still showing. It leads with crisper recordings of the two songs from their 1979 7" that's known for sitting prohibitively pricey on collector want lists. They cover "These Boots Were Made for Walking" with a guitar tone that reveals how the NANCY SINATRA hit likely inspired the lead-in riff to Black Flag's "Rise Above." They're sometimes referred to as deathrock, the case for which is most apparent in eerie tracks like "Butter-



SACRED HATE – Bold as Love LP

This album was recorded in 1989? How in the hell is that possible? This sounds like it was tracked just yesterday! They must have done an insane job mixing and mastering this slab because it sounds immaculate. *Bold as Love* kicks off with a track called “Jam,” and it’s pretty much exactly as described: random instrumental meandering around a half-baked solo. Kind of an odd way to open up the record, but we’re immediately launched into what can be best described as latter-era BLACK FLAG being mashed up with BLUE ÖYSTER CULT. Yeah, I know that’s a wild combination, but that’s what this is and it works. Spooky, dark guitar riffs paired with a manic rhythm section and a headstrong vocalist who cuts through the noise with piss and vinegar. Fantastic work here.

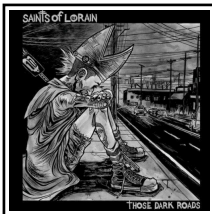
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Loud Statues



SAINTS OF LORAIN – Those Dark Roads LP

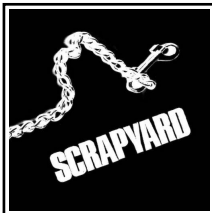
The roots of SAINTS OF LORAIN are clearly drinking from the shore waters of Lake Erie because this is clearly scuzzy Cleveland punk/hardcore that can only come from a specific Rust Belt area that can have a good time in the face of overwhelming sorrow and self-doubt. Musically, the twelve songs on *Those Dark Roads* aren’t anything that you haven’t heard before, although where this style can often fall into nihilistic partying and semi-violent songs, SAINTS OF LORAIN have a humanity, weight, and honesty in these little nuggets that’s more in tune with community and friendships lost too soon. Lyrically, most of the songs are clouded around very personal experiences and anchored by local landmarks that impacted their lives. For a debut LP, I think this is a great start.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Eleventh Hour



SCRAPYARD – Scrapyard CD

New Jersey’s SCRAPYARD plays hardcore with a strange amount of swing in its bones. There’s plenty of straight ’80s punk here—the guitars keep wandering into wiry, melodic shapes in the vein of early POISON IDEA, but carrying some of that same sense that punk riffs can bend, move, and get a little weird without losing their bite. Then come these odd cadences that almost feel pulled from blues, only sped up, roughed up, and shoved through an ’80s hardcore band. Fourteen



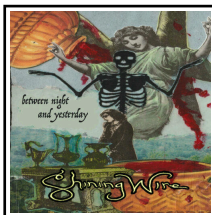
songs and enough variation in the guitar work to keep the whole thing from turning into another retro HC exercise. Raw, catchy, slightly crooked. This one has character.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Thirsty Mutant

SHINING WIRE – Between Night and Yesterday LP

Seattle’s SHINING WIRE plays dark rock that is equal parts deathrock, goth, and psychedelic. The resulting sound is something like a less metallic WITCH MOUNTAIN or really gothic JANIS JOPLIN. Needless to say, *Between Night and Yesterday* might not be for everyone, but if you enjoy doom-infused rock, then definitely go check out SHINING WIRE.

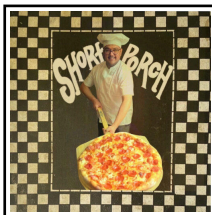
Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Six Feet Distant



SHORT PORCH – Hot & Ready cassette

By-the-numbers rock’n’roll from Brooklyn, NY. Well, at least on the A-side. The songs are catchy enough, the recording is very pro, and the musicianship is solid, but this is essentially Americana rock *en général*. Particularly “Not Enough Lovin,” which sounds like a band whose biggest aspiration was opening for BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN in the ’80s. Flip the tape over, and things get faster and grittier, with more of a noise-rock-inspired take on garage punk. It almost feels like they discovered LOST SOUNDS and decided they wanted to be nasty for a while. Taken as a whole, the tape gives me the impression of a band dipping their toes into different flavors of rock’n’roll in the hopes that one of them might stick. The one thing that remains consistent from side to side is the singer’s heavily digitally processed vocal warble, which doesn’t sound cool or Jello-esque, it just sounds phony and distracting.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: self-released



DRILL AMERICA – High Speed Straight Shank demo cassette

Bedroom one-man synth punk freak shit from New York, with a quasi-demented construction worker theme. Punk isn’t supposed to make sense, so inject ’80s Wax Trax into *Blood Visions* and just fu*kkn see what happens, I guess. *High Speed Straight Shank* happens, apparently.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: self-released



EKGS – Jealous as Fuck cassette

Covering “Jealous Again” the song wasn’t enough—Pittsburgh hardcore smashers EKGS covered the artwork of the classic EP as well. There’s five original blasts of excellent blunt-force punk here too, but just in case you weren’t convinced of how deeply inspired the band was, they close it out with a cover of “Let Your Fingers Do the Walking.” Yep, a cover of a spoken word track from *Family Man*. Bet you weren’t expecting that on the follow-up to last year’s blistering self-titled tape.

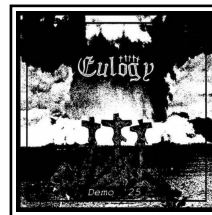
Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Kill Enemy



EULOGY – Demo ’25 EP

EULOGY is a Montreal based five-piece who released their inaugural recording in late 2025. Their six-song *Demo ’25* EP is a whirlwind of D-beat-driven raw punk with the bulk of influence being drawn from DISCHARGE. EULOGY uses a brutal rhythm section to maintain a bass-heavy attack, while the lead guitar shreds psych-punk riffs just above a gravelly, full-throat vocal delivery. In other words, an absolute must-listen if you’re an aficionado of loud, fast punk.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Broken Skull



FACE-OFF – Lethal Dose EP

Wakefield’s FACE-OFF comes out swinging with five blasts of compact USHC that understand exactly when to sprint and when to let a riff do the damage. Three of the four proper songs barely scrape a minute, but nothing feels underwritten: drums stay sharp and urgent, guitars cut with that dry, early ’80s attack, and the vocals bark from right on top of the mix. There is an obvious Hermosa Beach pull here, but this never reads like dress-up. “Lethal Dose” and “State Surveillance” hit fast and disappear, while “Pull the Pin (I Will Explode)” stretches past two minutes without losing the record’s nervous pressure. Recorded lean, mastered loud, zero wasted motion. A nasty little 7” with enough personality to stand outside the revival pile. Recommended.

Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Donor



FALSE FLOWERS – Secret Futures / Beat My Guest 7”

FALSE FLOWERS from Sacramento followed up their self-titled mini-LP from last year with a fresh single and an ADAM & THE ANTS cover this year. Lyrically, “Secret Futures” questions the authenticity of contemporary life while instrumentally walking a tight line between goth, new wave, and ’77- era punk. Haunting yet catchy, “Secret Futures” is a great single on its own, but to back it up with a raucous cover of “Beat My Guest” really sets the tone for what FALSE FLOWERS is about.

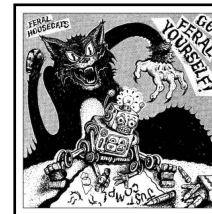
Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Nightflash / Strange Club



FERAL HOUSECATS – Go Feral Yourself! CD

Laid-back, rockabilly-adjacent Midwestern punk. Like a dark and loose garage rock band playing at the bar you weren’t supposed to go to because it’s dangerous there, but you went anyway and it felt like you were at a revival but the revival was a party with guitar solos.

Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: self-released



FEROCIOUS X – Med Vilken Ratt EP

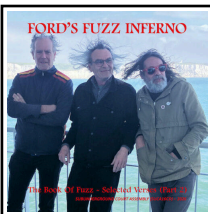
In 1983, the actor and comedian Andy Kaufman utilized a gag in his TV special that intentionally distorted the on-screen image, meant to lead viewers to believe their television set was broken. An unwitting listener may have a similar experience with this 7". Japan's FEROCIOUS X peddles five blasts of completely blown-out noise punk, showcasing their distinct mangel-influenced approach, including lyrics written and "sung" in Swedish. Fuck with your stereo all you want, there is no amount of knob-turning that will conjure any fidelity here. Noise, speed, and aggression are all that you'll find within these grooves. But make no mistake, this EP exhibits a masterful grasp on the material. The band has been cranking this shit out for a near quarter-decade. A relentless sonic punishment layered with unforgiving chaos. Try flipping it over and you'll get the Andy Kaufman treatment once more...it's a one-sided record!



Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Distort Reality

FORD'S FUZZ INFERNO – The Book of Fuzz: Selected Verses (Part 2) CD

FORD'S FUZZ INFERNO might be coming close to having the most MRR reviews, as this will be their thirteenth. *The Book of Fuzz* is a best-of with a few unreleased tracks, so I'm going to start with those. Tracks one, four, nine, and eleven have a weathered, grumpy, thoughtful, and haphazard psych/mid-tempo punk rocking approach. If FORD'S FUZZ INFERNO were a local Northern Michigan band, I would go see them every single time they played. The closing track "Never Confess" sounds like it could be a NASHVILLE PUSSY demo track that didn't quite make the cut for them, but it is perfect for FORD'S FUZZ INFERNO. Tracks two, three, seven, eight, and ten are from their *Ultimate Fuzz Frequencies* release, so I'm going to quote fellow reviewer Emma Miller, who said in MRR #508: "With a more droning, noise-focused guitar in 'Why Are We Here and Who Are You?' to an explosive start to 'Conquerors,' I feel like these guys really started to pick up the pace." And finally, tracks five and six are from *Electrofuzzification*, of which Jeff Cost said in MRR #499: "Straight-up rock'n'roll that wouldn't feel out of place in a sticky-floored New Jersey dive bar, while the earlier songs, recorded live-in-studio, feel harder-edged, probably because of how they were recorded. Props to these aging punks for keeping the fire alive." So there you go, three people have favorable opinions of sorts about the same band. Check out FORD'S FUZZ INFERNO.



Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Subunderground Court Assembly

GIDIM – Demo 2025 cassette

Chicago's GIDIM returns with a four-song tape that drags black metal through a hardcore basement without sanding off either side. The three originals are headed for a future LP, joined here by a MERKIT cover, and the demo already feels more substantial than a placeholder release. "Quiet Planet" opens in a bleak, collapsing atmosphere before the riffs start biting; "Stolen Squalor" is tighter and meaner, while "The Boot" stretches to four minutes and lets the metallic weight really settle in. The vocals stay harsh and buried enough to keep the record ugly, but the riffs remain readable instead of dissolving into raw-production mush. There is punk economy underneath the metal vocabulary, plus an openly anti-authoritarian streak that gives the tape a clear spine. Grim, riff-heavy, handmade stuff. Worth hearing now; the LP should also be worth looking out for.



Reviewer: Gonza Perez
Label: Hip Kid

GRAPHIC VIOLETS – Endless Parade LP

The first full-length for Rob Garcia's one-man project. The album covers heavy themes, but comes off sounding optimistic in its post-Dunedin-sound delivery. Harkens to the more accessible songs of LAVENDER FLU's catalog or the missing tracks from SIC ALPS U.S. Ez album. Rumors are he's pulled a band together and will be playing these tunes live, which would be a show not to miss.



Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: HoZac

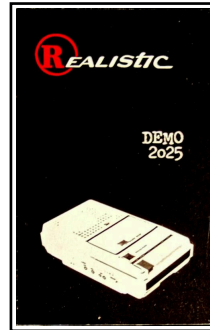
HACKER – Memory Cache LP

Cleverly-titled LP compiling this Melbourne hardcore band's output thus far, including their *Psy Wi-Fi* EP from 2024, *Pick a Path* 12" from 2022, and their 2019 demo. They sequenced the songs in a way that is more interesting than just keeping all the releases flowing from one to the next. The production quality varies some, but this approach actually works really well with the sound clips interspersed throughout. If you missed out on those releases, this is a great time to catch up. HACKER rips! Modern hardcore that draws from classic-era USHC and injects dystopian tech themes to great effect. Sick!



REALISTIC – Demo 2025 cassette

A fastcore/hardcore supergroup if there ever was one. Featuring members of REPLICA, CONQUEST FOR DEATH, SICK BURN, NO STATIK, SCHOLASTIC DEATH, and even the almighty JUD JUD, these people know what the fuck they're doing. Nine songs in less than seven minutes, delivering bursts of righteous anger and furious thunder while dipping into skank beats, D-beats, and some unexpected moments that thankfully keep this interesting. If your attention span is shorter than your pinky and you love loud shit, this here is for you.



Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Thrash Tapes

REPEAT OFFENDER – Weapon Fetish LP

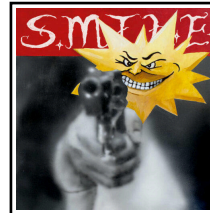
Burly debut full-length from Southern California's REPEAT OFFENDER. This album fits neatly into the Convulse catalog. The band is incredibly tight, wound-up, and primed to detonate. Crystal clear production allows all the nuisance to cut through, and there is more articulation than can be found on most hardcore records. Nothing subtle to be found here—everything is direct and in-your-face. The riffs are lean, complex yet digestible, with prominent bass runs for added spice. The deep and guttural vocals sound as though they're delivered from the frothing mouth of a rabid beast. The songs feel hewn from familiar materials with some sequence of blazing fast punk to pogo beat or breakdown and fast again sensibility, but they're not predictable or formulaic. My sole gripe is that the squeaky-clean recording quality cuts against the intensity a bit. How's that for an insult? Your record sounds too good so I don't like it as much as I could've! If ya dig ALIENATOR, S.H.I.T., or ARMOR, this should find its way into your rotation.



Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Convulse

S.M.I.L.E. – Shut Up and S.M.I.L.E. LP

Shut up, S.M.I.L.E. is on! Dishing out their own brand of Rubber City hardcore since 2021, Akron, Ohio's S.M.I.L.E. own 2026 with a full-length that is just a massive brawl in sonic form. Expect hardcore punk with a nasty metallic edge, very riff-heavy and completely unhinged. One foot in the classics like CRO-MAGS



and NECROS, and another in that distinctly Midwest sense of controlled chaos. Fans of PIG PEN or even INVERTEBRATES should check this one. Most tracks barely stretch beyond two minutes, while the sarcastic "Gimme a Minute" clocks in at a blistering 38 seconds. Expect the unexpected!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Delayed Gratification

S.U.G.A.R. – III 12"

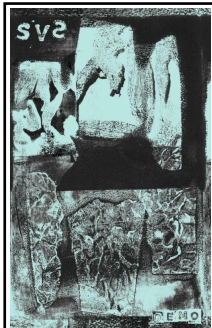
Five years back, S.U.G.A.R.'s self-titled debut showed up with enough piss and vinegar to do some justice to the late '70s SAINTS and TESTORS records these Berliners love. *III* is somehow...smoother. The debut had teeth, and this one has a leer. Eight songs in twenty-six minutes at 45 rpm, and the prevailing mode is a low-rent sleaze, the sound of a band that picked up the bad habits along with the riffs and would rather work the room than start a fight. Whether that's a trade you want depends on what you came for. My own preference runs to the version of this band with sharper edges, but a band that has backed Toody Cole knows exactly what it's doing, and if the greasy end of rock'n'roll is where you live, there's plenty here. Out on crystal vinyl from Alien Snatch!



Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Alien Snatch

SVS – SVS demo cassette

Buffalo must have some gnarly punk virus in the water supply—SCIENCE MAN, HAVANA SYNDROME, and FOOT FETISH, to name just a few of the current crop of punk freaks from western New York's gritty hardcore haven. SVS rips through nine cuts of USHC-tinged punk that keep the riffs in-your-face, with a few hints of nuance and just the lightest shade of melody. Prime example of how songs can be catchy without a pop infusion. They don't sound much like POISON IDEA, but the vibe ain't so different. The longest track doesn't cross the two-minute mark. No reason to belabor the point: this is a properly killer demo.

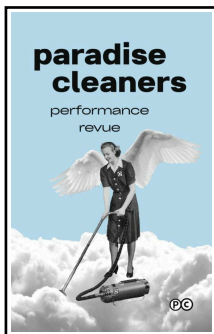


Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: self-released

Reviewer: Nick Odorizzi
Label: Hey Fuck You

PARADISE CLEANERS – Performance Revue cassette

At first listen to Portland, Oregon's PARADISE CLEANERS, all I could think was that I wish they had used their cleaning skills to tidy up whatever dubbing set-up was used to duplicate their cassettes. Upon further inspection, it seems that the recording itself is what requires the polishing. Wildly lo-fi, mid-tempo, plodding noise rock. There are some very cool synth licks and some super heady HAWK-WIND-esque bass walks throughout the recording, but they get a bit lost in the combination of the recording and tape dubbing quality. PARADISE CLEANERS really shine when their songs stay under three minutes long; the five-and-a-half-minute flanger dirge is a little too out there for me. Normally, their proclamation of being "goth FLIPPER™" would drive me out of my mind with rage. However, after noticing that the last song on the tape has almost the same riff as "Ha Ha Ha" but with added vocal noise and a less catchy performance, perhaps that assessment is more self-aware than I had given them credit for.



Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Rotten Princess

PIG RIDES – These People Are Not Your Friends cassette

This one is taking me a while to process—modern maximum-energy, fuzzed-out chaos freak punk, but there are Japanese hardcore solos and the vocals are glass shard, fire-throat destruction. But there's something else, there's something slightly off...holy shit, this is Matt from SOCKEYE. I have so many more questions now, but I am more convinced than ever that Matt is a genius. You're going to hear everything here; you're going to hear all of the punk. But you're going to hear it through a freak filter that's impossible to describe unless you just...unless you know. All you need to know now is that you need PIG RIDES and that you should listen to your elders.

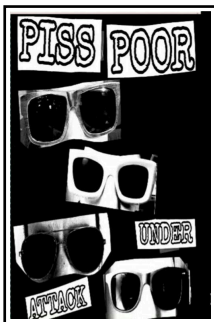


Reviewer: Robert Collins
Label: Color and Time Tonight

PISS POOR – Under Attack cassette

New Haven, Connecticut hardcore punk, with six songs recorded live and released on the Big Neck Records subsidiary label Primitive Screwhead. This is what a hardcore punk band should sound like. The recording sounds dingy and fucked-up, without being punishingly lo-fi. You can hear the room and the imperfections, but nothing feels so buried or blown-out that you lose the songs themselves. The tracks are fast, short, and sloppy, and the guitar is ever so slightly out of tune. This panic-inducing PISS POOR cassette sounds like it could fall apart at any moment. All the little nuances where you can't quite tell if you're hearing an intentional choice or a mistake are exactly what makes this sound right. Those imperfections give this recording an impact that a cleaner, more polished recording certainly wouldn't have. There isn't anything particularly novel happening here, and I don't think there needs to be. This is straightforward, nasty hardcore punk that feels like it could have come from almost any point in the last few decades.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Primitive Screwhead



REAKTORÍ – Radiation Sickness EP

Exactly the kind of record you want spinning while civilization collapses. REAKTORÍ is a "fall-out punk" trio, representing Vancouver, and previously heard on their excellent 2024 demo. Four tracks of end-of-the-world racket equipped with the most vicious D-beats, metallic riffing, and enough radioactive feedback to make your ears bleed. The influences sit somewhere between DISCHARGE, ANTI-CIMEX, WOLFPACK and the nastier side of Japanese hardcore, but REAKTORÍ keeps it crusty, primitive and gloriously pissed-off. "Devastating Chaos," "Bomb Blast Inferno," "Radiation," and "Fallout" are four short blasts of apocalypse-ready punk violence. No survivors!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Phobia

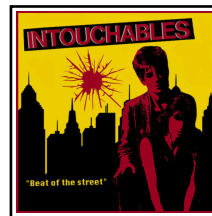


Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Phobia

INTOUCHABLES – Beat of the Street LP

Showcasing previously unreleased 1982 recordings from this Parisian unit led by legendary axeman Henri-Paul Tortosa, *Beat of the Street* comes with some serious pedigree. In the early '80s, Paris had become a second home for exiled New York icon JOHNNY THUNDERS. The troubled punk legend found respite in the vibrant and welcoming French scene, where Tortosa and his band LES INTOUCHABLES were an established fixture in French clubs like the Gibus. Recognizing his shared penchant for hypnotic rudimentary rock'n'roll à la CHUCK BERRY, THUNDERS hit it off with Tortosa immediately. He became JOHNNY's go-to guitar fill-in when touring Europe, then a core member of his UK-based backing band the BLACK CATS, and eventually the fourth axis in LA COSTRA NOSTRA, which was effectively a HEARTBREAKERS 3.0, alongside Jerry Nolan and Billy Rath. Listening through these nine sharp tracks, it's easy to see why. The sound beautifully fuses old school rock with the artistic French punk of the era, decorated with tasteful touches of sax and propelled in equal measure by Tortosa's tough guitars and Charlotte Catherine Peyre's haunting vocals, except for their cover of "These Boots Are Made For Walking," where Henri-Paul takes over mic duties as well, delivering a performance that gives THUNDERS a real run for his money. "Garden of Love" is a clear-cut example of the group's equation, offering an electric balance of bright and burly drenched in wasted hit single potential. Tortosa also sings on the album's fantastic title track, maintaining the rhythm amidst a wiry, decompressed mess which maybe best demonstrates his capacity for comfort within chaos; the very quality that led to him being called a "savior" in the liner notes to JOHNNY's final studio album, *Que Sera, Sera*. It's the grand finale in an undeniably impressive display.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Cameleon



JET HAG – Sounds From the Gutter LP

Creepy-crawly, overblown garage punk with killer triple off-kilter harmony vocals, written and delivered with maximum bad attitudes! "White Noise" stands out for its righteous and nasty vocal performance juxtaposed against a wall of fuzzed-out guitar and bass. "Put Out (Or Drive Me Home)" shows a slightly more playful but still menacing side, with lyrics like "Give me dick, dick, dick / Until I'm sick, sick, sick." They sound like EXCUSE 17 or SLEATER-KINNEY combined with the COATHANGERS, and I'm into it. Good shit.

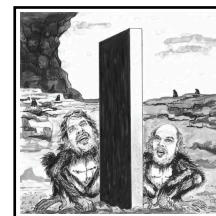


Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Hovercraft

JIMBO EASTER / TIMMY VULGAR – split EP

When legendary Detroit weirdos and long-time buds Timmy Vulgar (the EPILEPTIX, CLONE DEFECTS, TIMMY'S ORGANISM) and Jimbo Easter (PIRANHAS, DRUID PERFUME, PARADISE HOAX) team up to make a record, you can safely expect a thorough and enthusiastic mindfucking. Timmy's side spans from fuzzy outer space rhythm and blues to primitive and poetic synth, while Jimbo conjures unsettling funhouse haunts and eerie shamanic juxtaposition. Listen to the whole thing and you'll be seeing trails.

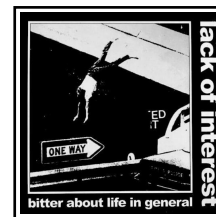
Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Celluloid Lunch



LACK OF INTEREST – Bitter About Life in General 5xCD boxset

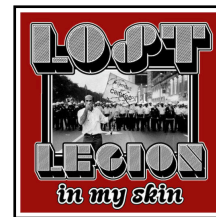
A slick five-CD collection of crucial L.A. powerviolence outfit LACK OF INTEREST's discography spanning 1993 to 2013. Across two LPs and various splits and comp features, LACK OF INTEREST showcases ultra-fast, violent playing that is evenly matched by the uniquely over-the-top barked vocals that are a hallmark of the band's sound. In addition to the influence of early powerviolence bands like INFEST and CROSSED OUT, there's definitely some '80s Midwestern hardcore like NEGATIVE APPROACH (their cover of "Pressure" is included here) informing the band's earlier style. And while some evolution can be heard over the course of the band's output, they never lose any of their feral energy. Very cool set worth checking out; includes a booklet with lyrics and photos.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Deep Six / Hey Fuck You



LOST LEGION – In My Skin LP

This is a killer compilation of singles, demos, and unreleased tracks from one of Chicago's most prolific Oil/punk bands of the last decade. Existing fans will love having all these tracks in one place while newcomers will get a taste of the auditory evolution of the band through twenty tracks, running the gamut between Oil, post-punk, and '77-style street punk. Standouts for me are the danceable "Stuck in One Place" (trust me, it takes a lot to get a caveman like me to move, but this song



does it) and the lo-fi riff-raff of "Dressed Up Like a Warrior" which makes me want to fuck shit up. The vocals are gruff, the guitar work is killer, and the message is well-received. LOST LEGION is great at crafting genuinely catchy songs that have substance and meaning. That's a rare feat, and this collection has me stoked to see how they evolve over the next decade. Highly recommended.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Under the Gun

LÜGER – 5 Track EP

LÜGER is a raw, D-beat punk band originally formed in Zagreb, Croatia. They've been recording and releasing since 2020, and have a quiver of demos, EPs, and splits. Their latest release is a brutally aggressive rollick that lyrically dismembers our present sociopolitical world, all while ferocious, noise-slathered punk demands retribution. My favorite track is the closer, entitled "Fucking Leaders..."—the vocals are gnarly, the guitar flips through distortions at every opportunity, and the driving rhythm keeps the rock'n'roll adrenaline dose flowing.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Onesnaževanje Uma

MARK BALBONI – AKA Hash'd Out cassette

A California-based powerviolence-style band with short songs, mostly about smoking hash, littered with as many goof-ball sound clips and samples as there are blastbeats. If that sounds like it's pretty well-worn territory, it might be because it is, but don't let that impact your thoughts about the band. If you're an extreme music enthusiast and this style sounds like it might be up your alley, then it's very likely is. From the wording within the cassette J-card, I have to assume that this is a retrospective collection of everything the band did, on a single cassette. All the songs are incredibly tight and short, flowing into one another seamlessly. Seventeen songs are over before you realize it. There is an interesting take on "Still Pist" by the PIST, but a straight-up grindcore rendition of it. That was the only song that really grabbed my attention across the tracklist individually, but it is likely because of the song's recognizable lyrics coming through the blastbeat cacophony. There isn't much here that is going to reinvent the wheel, but if this flavor of powerviolence is your thing, I doubt you are looking for someone to reinvent it anyway.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Goat Power Recreation



MARS – Live at the Village Gate LP

For a band that released exactly six songs while they were an active concern (more or less from 1975 to 1978), the sheer amount of archival MARS material that has surfaced in the 21st century is head-spinning. In the last fifteen years alone, we've gotten LPs of two different live sets, a 3xLP (!!!) of rehearsal tapes and alternate takes, and a three-part LP series collecting other odds and ends, so the big surprise is that a very early and primitive take on "3E," the eventual A-side of their 1978 single, is the only track of eight on *Live at the Village Gate* to have been previously released in any iteration. Recorded in August 1977, the stumbling, VELVETS-on-uppers skronk on display here is more aligned with the ELECTRIC EELS or HALF JAPANESE (check the detuned guitar clang over wildly tumbling beats in "Cry" and "Look at You") than the sharpened no wave attack of MARS's contributions to the genre-defining *No New York* comp, but it's also not difficult to connect the dots between where they were coming from and where they would be going in just under a year. The sound quality is surprisingly good, the songs stand on their own separate from any "historical curio" angle, and the lack of content overlap within the ever-expanding MARS discography really seals the deal.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: HoZac

MERWULF – In the Golden Age LP

MERWULF kicks in with some THOMAS DOLBY keyboards and balances that with AmRep/SHEL-LAC throaty, buzzing bass. I'm caught completely off guard, in a great way. All the way from Portland, OR, they've pulled in elements of VICTORY AT SEA from Boston, MA. Merri's vocals are haunting and comforting within the abundance of open space in these songs, which can sometimes be a disaster. But with Misty on bass and Larry on drums, that isn't the case here. Somehow this record feels like an uncomfortable and intimate rock opera, or reading through a friend's diary that fell open when they left the room. This is what they think. I shouldn't be reading this. I can't turn away. *In the Golden Age* undulates, and while not at the urgent pace of most hardcore or punk, it establishes an urgency and turbulence within the simplest of structures. It builds tension so gradually that you may not even realize that you've been holding your breath until suddenly, your chest hurts.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Moodkiller



NAVAJA – Sin Sangre cassette

Seven tracks of hardcore punk from Chicago, IL. The songs are short, the riffs are driving, and the vocals are barked in a maniacal way. All songs are sung in Spanish. Nothing here is particularly memorable or mind-blowing, but they are certainly a solid, nasty hardcore punk band that sounds like they would be very powerful live. Tapes exist in a quantity of only 30, so get on it if you're interested in having a physical copy. There is no differentiation between the A-side and B-side on the tape itself. No labels, no printing, no marker writing. Mine came with the B-side rewound, causing my first listen of the band's preferred track list to be experienced backwards. My favorite part of NAVAJA's physical media package was getting to enjoy and appreciate the juvenile, castle-storming, belligerent insert artwork while the songs played.

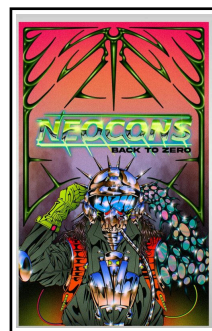
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Ragdoll



NEOCONS – Back to Zero cassette

Los Angeles-based NEOCONS have returned with a fresh batch of tracks to torment your psyche. NEOCONS is a masked duo, blending metal, punk, electronic, and samples to create a very distinctive sound. Their latest release questions our contemporary reality as filtered through the lense of recent history, or how American propaganda distorts the perception of the citizenry to allow the political machine to continue to fuck us while waging endless warfare. The nine-song *Back to Zero* cassette explores all that and more while our two heroes create a cacophony you can shake your ass to. So, yeah you should go listen to it now.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Over Pop



OFF CONTACT – Can You? LP

Before today, I only knew of NO DIRECTION from Rapid City, South Dakota, so it is exciting to hear new bands from that state! OK, OK, OK, OK. I didn't know what to expect and I know a lot of folks would say that this harkens back to the angular and danceable post-punk hits of the late '70s and early



'80s. However, to me, this feels like NYC in the mid-to-late '90s with RADIO 4, the FLESH, the RAPTURE, LIARS a bit, COMPUTER COUGAR, INTERPOL, etc.—the elements are there from the pioneers of the post-punk stuff, but it is different and fresh, can you dig it? There are ten songs here; some are huge sonic landscapes and others are shorter day trips to the fuzzed-out countryside. *Can You?* is a loud late-night drive record, or at least a loud headphones listen when you just want to block out the world. In fact, I'm going to listen to it again right now so I can neglect some important-ish things that I should be doing.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: self-released

ORSINI – Ezin Atera LP

Debut LP from Bilbao, Spain's ORSINI, a four-piece doing heart-felt post-punk with a mix of '90s Fat Wreck Chords sounds on the vocals—reminds me a bit of SWINGIN' UTTERS with the backing chants. More contemporarily, it reminds me of Athens's CHAIN CULT, who I reviewed a while back. The lead guitar phrasing is really nice, soothing almost, and consistent with the genre, it acts as the throughline for each track. While I don't know exactly what they're singing about, the album description shares that they were "looking back at that huge black hole we ended up in, and how, in the end, making it through actually made us stronger." Even to ears unfamiliar with Basque, the deeply personal storytelling is evident in the feel and tenor of the songs, balancing a sense of longing with hope, or at the very least, acceptance. Not sure if that's what they were going for, but it's how I'm left after repeated listens to *Ezin Atera*. This feels like a good end-of-summer record, so tune in now.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Andalucia Über Alles / Antídoto / Crapoulet / DDT Banaketak / Tough Ain't Enough



PAINIST – Too Many Clunkers cassette

Hell yeah. Piano-based crust with ultra distortion and hollered vocals. No guitars or bass because PAINIST (get it, like a pianist but with pain?) doesn't need them. Not too many background details on this four-song tape, but the songs blast and have a weighty sense of depth to them. It reminds me a little of BOTANIST, the hammered-dulcimer-based black metal project, just in the sense that the unconventional instrumentation takes you aback for a minute and then proceeds to absolutely shred. Opening track "Crustaccatto" has such a good title, and it rips. I would love to see PAINIST do a tour of airport lounges or piano bars and annihilate them with this 88-keyed weapon.

