

MPE Band "Maggi, Pierce and E.J." (EMPrecords POB 41056 Philadelphia PA 41056) This ambitious triple disc takes the trio through a day of changes. Disc one is "Morgen" a journey through a morning of lovely little acoustic music, with strings and sunshine and cuteness and preciousness. "Mittag," the afternoon disc, is bright, peppy Beatles/indie pop. And "Nacht" reveals the dark rocking side of the night, with ominous electric guitars, and a devil sex song. Of course, the band never sounds particularly evil (I think the afternoon disc was their Bruce Wayne, and the other two are their Batman secret identities). And whenever sweet Maggie sings lead everything seems innocent. Hell, even the devil sex song (sung by Pierce, who can sound wicked) turns out to be an angel love song.

The M's "Future Women" (Polyvinyl, polyvinylrecords.com) Masterfully magnificent music made by marvelous musician men merrily mimicking Minks. Er...I mean Kinks.

Mystechs "Warriors & Warlocks (Omega Point) Romantic songs about sweaty barbarians, hillbilly zombies, robot Jesuses, Mt. T., and football. The beauty of great novelty rock is that no matter how brilliant a song may be there always is a tinge of "Grandma Got Run Over By A Reindeer" awfulness. Yet conversely, no matter how bad something is it's infused with either a sense of absurdity or a sense of joy that redeems it. There's more dangerously wacky great stuff here than still-funny bad stuff (since there is a Whitman sampler of rock styles being spoofed here - from death metal to classic rock to 70s MOR pop [all sounding suspiciously like casio-loving electronica] there is a wide array of stuff on sonic display) but ultimately this CD is triumphant like Conan standing atop a mountain of bloody bodies. The title track is so great in its celebration of Dungeon and Dragonry that it alone justifies that you MUST buy this. Ideally instead of cash you can trade charisma points for it.

Narc! zine (POBox 820102 Portland OR 97282) This magazine is prettier than Phil Niekro!

The Negatones (Skylab) I would love to love this, baby, but I don't get understand what the hype is about? I like moogs and rock and nuttiness, but this isn't moogy, rocking or nutty enough.

Duane Nelson "Ambient Fixtures" (elevenrocks.com) Better than Nelson and Pink Lady and Jeff!

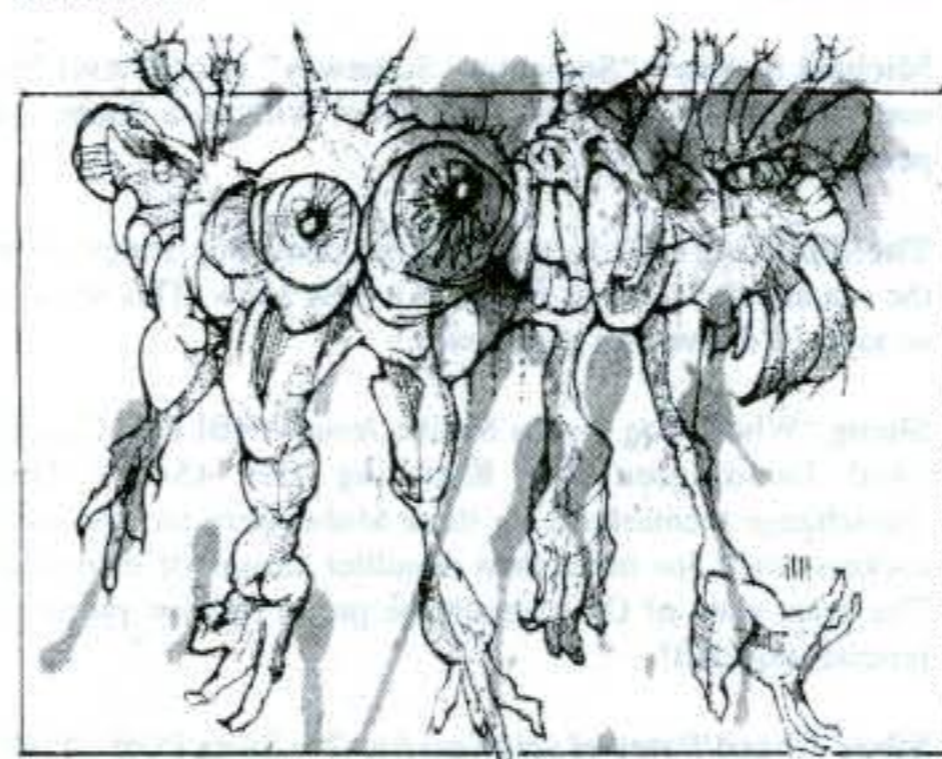
New York Dolls "All Dolled Up" DVD (MVD) You should be just as happy if you had to pay double for this DVD. It's an avalanche of "So-rare-you-didn't-know-it-existed-did-you-jaded-hipster-motherfucker" footage of The Dolls in their prime (and some in their decline, which is still interesting). Celebrated Rock lensman Bob Gruen followed The Dolls around with a video camera (a major technical innovation in itself at the time) for a period of three years (!). Some of this footage turned up in Gruen's film, *Lookin' For a Kiss*, but it looks SO much better here than on any bootleg copies you might have. YOU ARE THERE as Gruen follows The Dolls from humble beginnings at Kenny's Castaways to Max's Kansas City, The Whisky A-Go Go (L.A.), The Matrix (San Francisco), Club 86 in New York (a drag club the band had established a rapport with, and actually the only show they ever did in full drag, barring Johnny "Butch" Thunders), to their T.V. appearance on *The Real Don Steele Show* (hip 60s-70s radio/T.V. personality Don Steele went on to star in *Death Race 2000* and *Rock n' Roll High School*. He died within weeks of his co-stars Paul Bartel and Joey Ramone), and their last NYC area shows at The Little Hippodrome, in which they don't sound *bad*, just not as full bodied as before. Bear in mind, it is all in black and white, and the sound isn't laser-light quality (though it's surprisingly good, given the source), but this is extraordinarily important footage, and you can't say no when you've got that invitation to "That 70s Expose," and you're the blonde Queen of The Ball, baby. The historic New York Dolls Waldorf Astoria Ball, that is, where the band is joined by Dracula, The Wolfman (THEE WOLMAN JACK!!!) and even Ace Frehley (or a very early wannabe) in actual T.V. news footage. That, and Johansen's hilarious interview segments, plus the obligatory scenes of backstage debauchery (which amount to mainly drinking and acting silly), with the obligatory underage L.A. Groupie Queens (sorry, I never got it with Sable Starr -- Cynthia Plastercaster looks better NOW than she did, then. Besides,

I quit doing teenagers when I made 20. Honest), plus a night at Rodney's English Disco, are worth the price of admission. That, and TONS of great music, beautiful photos, and hilarious commentary by Gruen, Syl and Dave make this The Feel Good Hit of The Year.

no parachute DVD (HHBTM.com) This is a collection of music videos by indie bands that proves that indie bands make the best videos because they all have friends in art school. Apparently if you make lo-fi pop you are required to have associates who either do animation (cutesy or experimental), know how to use chromakey, or own a super-8 camera (or know how to process video to look like Super-8). Some of these bands are awesome (Canannes, Lil' Hospital, Hidden Cameras) but all of them have good videos. This is the only video compilation you will watch all the way through and love. Funny narratives (Palomar's search for a drummer), ultra low budget frolicking (Boyracer in the snow), and just pure fun (Bright Lights in superhero costumes on Coney Island) combine for a better hour than MTV has broadcast in 20 years.

The Oblio Jones "Swallow the Moon" (Twisted Kite 624 South Higgins Ave Missoula MT 59801) Too oblong for me to jones for, this strives for odd-pop greatness but gets lost somewhere in 80s Athens, GA.

The Pink Swords "Shut Up and Take It" (Gearhead) Texas trash punk as intense and absurd as its supposed to be. This will make you want to break Lone Star bottles and fondle armadillos.



The Plastic Constellations "Crusades" (Frenchkiss 111 E. 14th St. #229 NYC 10003) Squiggley, supergroovy mood music for spaz prom (including slow dance tunes).

Possum Hollar "Substantially Blue" (PH) The angel-voiced singer croons much more beautifully than a possum hollering.

The Priscillas "Aloha From Holloway" (Damaged Goods) Goofy Glam-Garage Girl Group goo grooves!

Program the Dead (low altitude) Proudly dumb rock this grand and stupid should suck, and kinda does, but I still was actually rocked by it.

Propagandhi "Potemkin Coty Limits" (Fat) You can't question the band's political dedication, intelligent lyrics, driving guitar punk on the fast parts, or Canadian-ness. But I can't get with the melodic singing that sounds like someone with an average voice trying to audition for Journey.

"Protect - A Benefit for the National Association to Protect Children" (Fat) Because ultimately the 2004 election didn't work out for the people of earth it's easy to not discuss the money and effort Fat Records put into fighting against the regime, and more tangibly, it's easy to overlook how excellent the two *Rock Against Bush* CDs were. They had excellent songs by an amazingly diverse sampling of punk and punk-friendly bands, plus the bonus video material with political comedy and dissemination of genuine info. I suppose the frustrations of the non-results of that effort led to the more humble goals of this benefit comp. It is raising money for a children's advocacy group that can use any new member and loot it can get. Now, this isn't as good a comp as its predecessors, but it has some real highlights. The Tim Version is a great, furious band who are really powerful, especially amidst the acoustic guitar, and sensitive songs on the disc. Anti-Flag boldly do a pre-feminism song despite their macho fanbase ("This is what a

feminist sounds like...homophobes fuck off"). The Soviettes futuristic New Wave seems less novel than usual when tackling serious subject matter (a non-romanticizing song about a teen runaway). Many of the bands do a good job staying on point, doing songs that actually address domestic unrest. That said, some of these bands I could do without. It's hard to believe that the beyond-annoying pop punk of MXPX can still legally be played in 2005. But overall this is worth getting, and the pro-kids benefactor of the benefit seems worthy (though I'll let you decide that by going to protect.org).

Pseudo Mellor (cloudniz@hotmail.com) Sounding like an impressive bedroom recording project (if there is more than one dude playing I'm shocked) this has some genuine punk anger sprinkled into mostly introspective, sometimes even dreamy, music. But the singer's voice always has the kind of affected edge of yearning that makes demos so much better than real records.

Radio Reelers "The Next Best thing" (Dead Beat) This is the kind of unrelenting poppy punk trash that is just the boiled down, concentrated definition of fun. If you don't like this you don't like rock. And if you don't like rock, you are probably a sad person. Cheer up. Like this!

Rah Bras (Lovitt POB 100248 Arlington VA 22210) This is the most futuristic band in the galaxy, yet they never lose the organic, twisted biological vibe of being cavemen-with-synths (as opposed to being robots playing their inner electronics). Despite a dearth of actual rocking and rolling THIS is rock and roll!

Rancid Vat "vs the Rest of the World" (Steel Cage, steelcagerecords.com) This is a double CD 25th anniversary compilation album of RV's greatest non-hits! I think to not progress at all in 25 years is as impressive an achievement as Bill Gates' work during the same time period. Confederacy of Scum bands pride themselves in providing filthy, nasty, ugly rock without apology, and the awesome excess here, from the slightly hardcore inspired "Low Blow" to the recent tracks where the Whiskey Rebel's road damaged and deepened voice is the only significant difference from the early days, this is a fine buffet of dangerous-earfood. If you've never heard this rotating-cast band of miscreants, than you need this. And you need a drink.

Amy Ray "Prom" (Daemon POB 1207 Decatur GA 30031) I like how when this Indigo Girl goes solo she is just a raw rocker. Some of this music not only draws upon the teenage desire to rock out, but also recalls Amy's excitement and dread about being a gay kid in a pre-*Will & Grace*/*L-Word*/Indigo Girls world. Basically this is one of the most mature teenage music albums you'll hear.

Razorcake magazine (POB 42129 LA, CA 90042) The words in *Razorcake* are better than the words in *MRR*.

Reglar Wiglar zine (reglarwiglar.com) Made me more reglar than bran. Though I like to say "bran" out loud more than I like to say "reglar wiglar." Try saying "bran," you'll dig where I'm coming from.

Reatards "Not Fucked Enough" (Empty) Of all the storied acts from Eric Oblivion's garage trash Goner label, the Reatards is the purest. Guitar Wolf turned out to be a real band, John Schooley turned out to be a genius, and the Oblivions became the Grand Funk of trash rock. But the one Reatarded kid who kept vomiting up music that was so ridiculously ugly and beautiful and punk and stupid and unfake-a-ble holds up as what the label was supposed to be about. The fantasy that modern kids can capture the mythic trashabilly-garage-blues past is a pipedream because the impossibility of authenticity-- who (other than maybe King Louie at his fattest and drunkest -- can even start to be "real" in this context. Well the fucking kid who made these Reatards records could, and hearing these unearthed tracks proves it. This is what danger and dumbness sounds like when set to "music."

Retconned "Game Sounds" (Stickfigure) The dance-punk equivalent of playing "Pong."

Rex Libris comic by James Turner (Slave Labor Graphics) This is the best comic I've read in years, as it tells the adventures of a cosmic librarian and his cursed bird friend. The heart of the book isn't freaky dimensional travel or