

**Roomanitarian • Henry Rollins • 2.13.61**

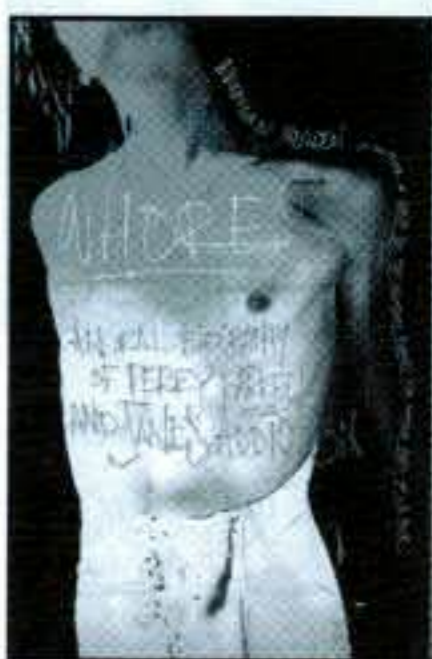
Although he's never made any secret of his affection for writers, in recent interviews and spoken word performances Henry Rollins has been all the more outspoken in his admiration for his literary heroes, particularly the "Lost Generation" authors of the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The influence of those writers, and the maturation of Rollins' own style, is on full display in *Roomanitarian*, a schizophrenic book that combines some of the best work he's ever done interspersed with satire that only occasionally hits the mark.

The "serious" sections of *Roomanitarian* ("Ended", "Walking the Chasm", and "Song of the Solipsist") have all of the impact of his earlier non-tour journal books, but there's something new happening; a polishing of the sentence structure, a more assured use of rhythm, and a sense of dread that creeps and strangles rather than bludgeons. In particular, a post-apocalyptic exploration of L.A. culture that reads like current events and several pieces that are written from the point of view of peasants in totalitarian regimes (sometimes Russian, sometimes American) showcase a refined Orwellian sensibility that induces a real, and sustained, sense of horror in the reader.

Where the book falters is in the satiric chapters ("To Ann Hitler With Love" and "Letters to Whitey"). While satire is often a strong point for Rollins in his spoken word, here the material seems a bit overripe. While I loathe Ann Coulter, it seems that allotting her 24 pages is more effort than she's worth; similarly, the letters to "Whitey" tend to become monotonous.

Taken as a whole, *Roomanitarian* is well worth the money and has some truly powerful writing in it; one simply wonders if Rollins wouldn't be well served to get some outside editorial input to weed out some of the lesser material.

**Brian Martens**



**Whores: An Oral Biography of Jane's Addiction • Brendan Mullen • Da Capo**

I'm a sucker for these 'oral history' books. In case you're new to the genre, they are essentially a collection of interviews assembled chronologically, epitomized by the New York punk scene bible *Please Kill Me*. Originally envisioned as a lone article for a glossy music magazine that will go unnamed, *Whores* seemingly took on a life of its own to encompass over three hundred pages.

Despite my continued affection for punk rock, the first band I remember truly falling in love with was Jane's Addiction; they simply sounded like how I felt rock should sound like, and no one has come close to achieving their mastery since the dawn of *Ritual de lo Habitual*. The book does a fairly admirable job of presenting a well-rounded account by those involved, never shying away from the drama, debauchery, ego flare ups and drugs, drugs, drugs that made Jane's one of a kind.

Vocalist and 'modern shaman' Perry Farrell is given much of the book's attention, and he wouldn't have it any other way. Easily one of the most charismatic frontmen of the past century, Farrell's ego seems fully intact. One would be hard pressed to even try to imagine the band without him, yet his demanding of extra royalty rates makes the reader feel for the other band members.

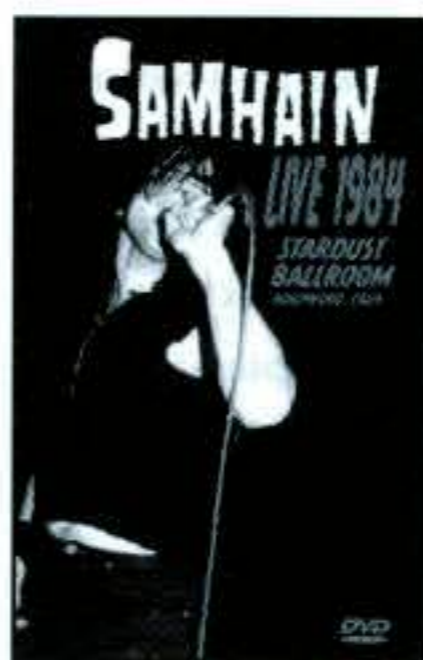
Several previously unknown details come to light in *Whores*, specifically concerning the band's early immersion in the L.A. goth scene. Did you know the band toured as the opening act for Love & Rockets, or that they once played a benefit show sandwiched between Red Hot Chili Peppers and Fishbone? Me neither. Much is also made of guitarist Dave Navarro's tragic coming-of-age (murder

plays a part), and while Jane's has always been associated with heroin, the news that Farrell had run the streets during the L.A. riots with a handgun while on a crack binge made me want to invest in some Kevlar.

Perhaps the greatest unearthing within *Whores* is the previously overshadowed talent of bassist Eric Avery. Directly responsible for arranging some of their greatest work (his presence is strongly felt on their opus *Nothing's Shocking*), the 'quiet one' sheds some light on the inner-workings of the band, giving his side to why he refused to join the recent 'relapse' tour. The strength of Jane's catalog and the talent of the players carried that live outing to great heights, but one needs only listen to *Strays* to reaffirm how vital Avery was to their dynamic.

A fast, highly entertaining read, *Whores* is recommended homework for anyone interested in expanding their musical trivia skills. **Justin Habersaat**

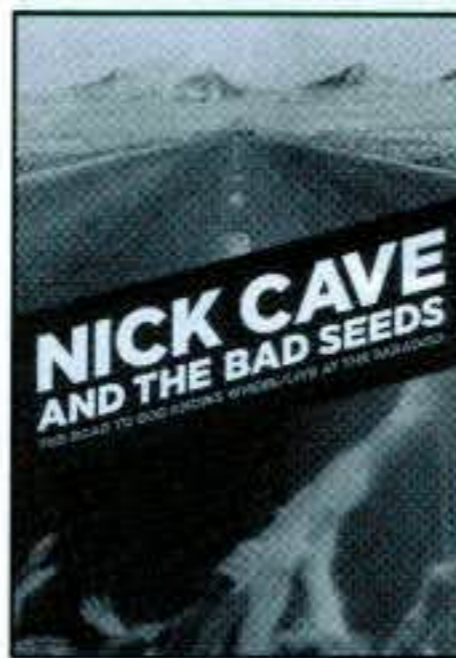
**Samhain • Live At The Starland • MVD**



A DVD version of the first ever Samhain show, at a venue that no longer exists? For music history junkies like myself, footage like this amounts to the equivalent of discovering the fabled 'lost ark'. It's all here – the crappy sound, the raw fluorescent overhead lighting, and the weight of high expectations. By and large, ol' Glenn delivers the goods pretty well; granted, the crowd is so psyched to be at the first show of his 'new' band that they probably could have opened with 'Shiny, Happy People' and gotten thunderous applause.

Heavy on the rock and minimal on theatrics (save the mandatory devil locks), Samhain blast at breakneck speed through such life-affirming anthems as "Unholy Passion", "The Howl" and "I Am Misery". Old-school fans are given a few rare treats as well, including sing-along inspiring takes on "Die, Die My Darling" and a revamped, alternate-lyric version of "Horror Business" simply dubbed "Horror Biz". It takes the unleashing of "Halloween II" for the audience to reach total frenzy mode, and the raw live sound can get grating, but for the most part the film delivers 48 minutes of worthwhile viewing for that graveyard dweller hiding inside you.

**Justin Habersaat**



**Nick Cave • Road To God Knows Where /Live At Paradiso • Mute**

A double offering DVD of the fan favorite 'road film' and live concert recording from Amsterdam. Long condemned to VHS purgatory, it's great to finally see these released on a modern format.

*Road To God Knows Where* attempts to strip the viewer of any pre-conceived notion of what it means to be a rock star, subjecting fans to an endless cycle of graffiti-covered green rooms, sound checks and soul-draining interviews ("why do you write?"). Some of the photo shoot scenarios are borderline hilariously awkward, and Cave is clearly embarrassed yet accepting of his constantly being singled out. The live material, while few and far between, does contain some treats, including an extended version of the murderous "Saint Huck".

In stark contrast to the humdrum black and white world of tedium portrayed in its companion film, *Live...* is a thrilling jolt of excitement. Simply one of the best live films out there, I've treasured my tape copy for years. The Bad Seeds rip through a barrage of hits including "Deanna", "Tupelo" and a maliciously aggressive version of "From Her To Eternity". Beautifully filmed, *Live...* is worth the price of admission alone, and does a landmark job at capturing the essence and genius of Cave in the live setting. A DVD set that will cause music fans to rejoice and technology purists to grieve.

**Justin Habersaat**