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REVIEWS FROM DAGGER

10/13/06 (DVDs):



BAD BRAINS- LIVE AT CBGB 1982- MVD- The Bad Brains were certainly a sight to behold on stage back in the day. I caught them for the first time on 12/26/86 (it would have been a few years earlier but they kept cancelling gigs (normal for them back then) at City Gardens in Trenton, NJ on a butt cold night. This footage was 4 years before that, culled from 3 consecutive nights at the (now defunct) CBGB's the band was on fire. The grinding rhythm section of Darryl Jennifer on bass and Earl Hudson on drums (singer H.R.'s brother), incredible guitarist Dr. Know and upfront, maniacal vocalist H.R. This is when the band was in their prime (I still think their ROIR cd/cassette is their best, not the SST release I AGAINST I) and hits like "Banned in DC.", "Big Takeover", "Pay to Cum", and "How Low can a Punk Get" are all torn to bits (they even toss in some reggae tunes to slow things down a bit). The footage is shakey and the sound shakier (some of the crowd shots are hilarious including guys stage diving and at times no one catching them....oops and other folks getting drilled when they weren't looking) but hey, it's the Bad Brains from 1982, what are you waiting for ???! (www.musicvideodistributors.com)



LUNA- TELL ME YOU MISS ME : A FILM ABOUT LUNA- RHINO- NYC'S Luna called it a day last year and decided to film their final tour for a documentary. The docu was shot and directed by Matthew Buzzell (I never heard of him either) and shows the band, singer/guitarist Dean Wareham, bassist Britta Phillips, drummer Lee Wall and guitarist Sean Eden on stage, at home and in the van (arguing) and is an interesting look into the life of one of the longer-lived indie bands. It has them reading some of their own reviews while in the van (and getting frustrated at the writer's description of them), has Wareham playing with his young son, Eden telling a harrowing story of when he got cold-cocked, knocked unconscious and ended up in the hospital, and the like. Some of the live footage includes versions of "Fuzzy Wuzzy", "California (all the way)", "23 Minutes in Brussels", "Sideshow by the Seashore", and plenty more. The documentary, while a bit slow in parts, is very Luna and what you would expect as a goodbye from them. Maybe now Dean and Britta can focus on another one of their duet records, I loved their first one! (www.rhino.com)



SHAM 69- HERSHAM BOYS IN CONCERT- MVD/ SECRET FILMS- No band (and I mean NO band) can get the boot boys all revved up like Sham 69 could (and still can). This gig was from Brighton, England on 4/10/02 at the Concorde 2 and has the band in all of their goofy glory. Not sure if these guys are still around or if this was a special reformation gig but man, leader Jimmy Pursey looks old! Hell, he IS old, he and UK Sub Charlie Harper (older than Keith Richards) were among the first of the UK first wave of punk. On here you get to hear old classics like "Hersham Boys", "Hurry Up Harry", "Tell us the Truth", "If the Kids are United", and, of course "Borstal Breakout" (the most covered song in punk history?). Being more of a fan of American punk and hardcore I never thought I'd like this band but when I finally bought one of their records years ago I loved it! Tons of melodic singalongs and real easy to like...give them a shot. (www.mvdb2b.com)



V/A- THE KNIGHTS OF FUZZ: THE GARAGE AND PSYCHEDELIC EXPLOSION FROM 1980 TO NOW- DIONYSUS- Tim Gassen must be an expert on the 60's garage scene and here he narrates this compilation of 21 videos (17 regular and 4 bonus ones) from some of the 80s and early 90's best garage acts. He first gives a brief introduction and tells a bit of the story and then the first video is by New York's classic Chesterfield Kings with the raw "99th Floor" and then blasts right into The Fuzztones with "Ward 81" (from 1985) then cuts right to The Miracle Workers doing "You'll Know Why" (also from 1985). Other garage stalwarts are the amazing Girl Trouble (if you have never seen G.T. live do yourself a favor and rectify this...one of the best live bands on the planet), The Woggles, Plasticland (a band I have almost forgotten about), Yard Trauma, and even a few I have never heard of like 10 Commandments, Fortune and Maltese, Freddy and the Four Gone, etc. I guess the dvd-rom (which I have not checked out yet) has the entire contents of the 300 page book of the same name and a 26 song audio compilation. I really enjoyed this and hope there's a part 2! (www.dionysus.com)

10/10/06:



THE BROTHER KITE- WAITING FOR THE TIME TO BE RIGHT- CLAIRE- Hailing from Providence, RI, maybe The Brother Kite will revive that music scene back to the glory years of the early 90's when bands like Velvet Crush, Honeybunch and Small Factory ruled the indie pop world. Ok, so maybe that isn't likely to happen anytime soon but still, TBK have made a helluva sophomore record. These guys take the hazy pop textures of bands like Mercury Rev and The Flaming Lips, add a dash of My Bloody Valentine and top of all off with some smiling Beach Boys and the results are occasionally staggering. 'Out of Sight' has waves of guitars wash over pounding rhythms, swirling keyboards and dreamy vocals while 'The Finest Kind' reaches for the stars and occasionally can extend

their arms and touch a few (stars, that is). Main guy Patrick Boutwell and his crew have obviously spent a lot of time crafting this record and it paid off in spades. Do not miss this. (www.clairerecords.com)



THE ELECTRIC SOFT PARADE- THE HUMAN BODY ep- BETTER LOOKING- Have heard of this bunch before, reads a few reviews (I think a positive one in MOJO) and then it dropped into my po box and it's a dandy! The band, who hail from the UK, and is basically the work of two brothers, Thomas and Alex White, mix all sorts of styles into one enjoyable 7 song ep. The opening "A Beating Heart" sounds a bit Granddaddy-ish while the 2nd song, "Cold World", is an upbeat piano led tune (think Ben Folds). They then delve a bit into Brit-pop on "Stupid Mistake" and on "The Captain" (the U.S. bonus track) the slow things down a touch and drive the car all over the place, occasionally sounding prog, but I still liked it (and I don't like most prog rock). Where this band goes from here is

anyone's guess but I will keep following (and listening). (www.betterlookingrecords.com)



NICK GARRIE- THE NIGHTMARE OF JB STANISLAS- REV-OLA- Rev-Ola scores yet again with this obscurity from a UK folkie named Nick Garrie, and, not surprisingly, I have never heard of him. From reading the back of the cd, it says he was barely out of his teens when he recorded this record (while hitchhiking around Europe) but unfortunately, the record label president (on a French label) died a few days after it's release and the record slipping into obscurity. But now that it is reissued, do not let it slip again, it's terrific. He has a pleasant voice and the song take on basic folk-rock leanings but most of the songs have lovely orchestration with strings all over the place. The first 2 songs, the title track and the self-deprecating "Can I Stay with You" are both stunning then "Bungles

Tours" is sillier and more whimsical. Then next song, "David's Prayer", is more orchestral beauty ...and, well, the whole record is steeped in superb songwriting with those gorgeous instrumental passages (not to take anything away from Nick's pleasant voice). In the liner notes Nick says he was a bit put off by the 56-piece orchestra that the producer (Eddie Vartan) brought in but I think it adds to the his songs, not takes away from them. My only problem with the reissue at all is in the copious liner notes they put the black print against a gray background (most of it, anyway) and it makes it very difficult to read! Not a good idea but otherwise... priceless. (www.revola.co.uk)



THE MEETING PLACES- NUMBERED DAYS- WORDS ON MUSIC- Another notch in the belt of the already notched-up Words on Music label. Ex-Amnesia/ Alison's Halo guys, from Los Angeles, turn the attitude down (well, they DO live in L.A.) and the guitars up and NUMBERED DAYS has the fat trimmed as 10 songs clock in at under 35 minutes, just the way I like it. The band seems to be taking the basic blueprint left on the sidewalk by bands like Echo & the Bunnymen and the Jesus and Mary Chain (left there for a new generation to carry on, no doubt) and bring it to new heights with blistering guitars (thanks to vocalist/guitarist Chase Harris and lead guitarist Scott McDonald),

pounding rhythms (from drummer Dean Yoshihara and bassist Arthur Chan) and a general sense of strength throughout. The reverb is in full effect while the band delivers hook after hook or strong chorus after strong chorus. "Until it's Gone" and "Nothing's the Same" are two of the best tracks here while "Mumble" slows things down to a gentle, comfortable walk (instead of a power walk). The Meeting Places seem to know exactly where they want to go and do it with a minimum of wasted time or space. (www.words-on-music.com)

10/1/06:



ALLEN CLAPP- SOMETHING STRANGE HAPPENS (FOUR TRACK CASTS 1990-2000)- BUS STOP- Always great to see some new (or in this case old) music from Allen Clapp, one of the all-around good guys of the indie music scene. This had been promised for quite some time and Mr. Brian Kirk of the always reliable Bus Stop Records came through. As the title states, this is stuff Allen recorded on his trusty 4-track and released on a variety of labels usually in the 7" single form. Some of my old faves are on here like "A Change in the Weather" (also released on Allen's wonderful solo record, AVAILABLE LIGHT), "Mystery Lawn", "The Girl with the Smile" and the title track, to name just a few. Allen's version of pop music is usually described as "breezy" and I don't think I can

come up with a better word for it than that and while most (or all) of it is 4-track recorded it does not sound "lo-fi." Comes in a nice fold out digi-pak sleeve with photos of all of the 7"s. I say get anything with his name on it (which includes 3 full-lengths by his band The Orange Peels). (www.busstoplevel.com)



THE JET AGE- BREATHLESS- SONIC BOOMERANG- Maryland's Hurricane Lamps (led by the elusive Eric Tischler) called it a day last year but that does not mean that its members have stopped playing music. On the contrary, Tischler and H.L. bassist Greg Bennett have carried on at The Jet Age and have picked up drummer Pete Nuwayser along the way. Nuwayser has a much more powerful style than the Lamps drummer (Jason Merriman) and with the 'Tisch cranking up more power chords

the Jet Ages take off like a rocket to some other planet, sorta like comparing an old GTO (The Jet Age) to an newer Mustang (The Hurricane Lamps) not better or worse, just a different animal altogether. The record opens with "Sometime you Win, Sometimes You Lose" a song which starts off with an acid rock guitar lead (which, quite frankly, scared me a bit) but from that point on it back to the usual riffing from Tischler. More of the Unrest/Wedding Present hyper strum that he has become known for. "Denny and Michelle" is more low-key while "I Gave Up on Justice and Reason" shows why they got that new drummer in the first place with some killer Keith Moon-ish fills all over the place. I was an unhappy camper when Hurricane Lamps left us but with The Jet Age it's a comfortable new beginning. (www.thejetage.net)



NATIONAL FLOWER- FAREWELL MICHAEL MEANWHITE- NATIONAL FLOWER MUSIC- Have never heard of this bunch but they reside right here in Portland and have dropped on us an unsuspecting audience, a wonderful pop record with hooks a plenty and a more than solid batch of hummable tunes. And I do mean hummable....."Gravity" is a chewy pop tune and the horns on "Days of Greatness" ascend that tune to "one of the best songs of the year" status. The band is led by East Coast transplant Michael Sheridan who pulled up stakes in his native N.Y. and headed west young man. He seems to have found a formidable bunch to work with in the Rose City with Scott Pemberton on lead guitar (and some pedal steel) and Ji Tanzer on drums (secret weapon Joey Cunningham plays sax, melodica, Rhodes, and glockenspiel). The band, however , is no one-trick pony as "Don't Forget Me" shows a soulful, low-key side to the band as does "Just One of Those Things." It's obvious that Sheridan is as true talent, able to turn a clever phrase or come up with a knowing hook seemingly with ease. Watch out for this bunch. (www.nationalflowermusic.com)



THE NOW PEOPLE- THE LAST GREAT 20TH CENTURY LOVE AFFAIR- BIRDSONG/ PARASOL- If you didn't know of leader Steve Stanley's love of baroque 60's pop you might think this was a lost artifact from that era but nope, this is a current day L.A. band led by Stanley who do such a great job of recreating "that sound." Stanley is no stranger to obscure 60's music as he writes a lot of the liner notes for the fantastic UK label Rev-Ola (part of the Cherry Red family). This record says classic all over it , from the melodic/string-0laden opener, title track and from there it goes into the soft pop/ bossa nova-esque "A New Life for Us" right into the Beach Boys-ey "Something Happened" and on and on and on. I don't know how long they worked on this record for but it must have been quite along time as the songwriting and arrangements are all top notch (to quote Ted Knight in CADDYSHACK "top notch, top notch !!") and this sort of music is definitely not written overnight. Anyone who has been a longtime reader of DAGGER knows that I'm a sucker for this sort of stuff and I have to say that this bunch do it better than nearly everyone I have heard. Definitely one of 2006's best records. (www.thenowpeople.com)

9/26/06:



DEAD MOON- ECHOES OF THE PAST- SUB POP- Some of you non-Portlanders might wonder where this mythical 'urb of Clackamas really is? Does it really exist ? Yes indeedy.....basically a suburb of Portland where not much existed until recently when the suburban sprawl began (oh, and they have a really big mall, the Clackmas Town Center).Anywho...worshipped in Europe and nearly unknown here and with a combined age nearing 175 (and LOTS of hair) Clackamas' Dead Moon don't give a shit if you know who they are and ya' know what? They seem to show no signs of slowing down. This is a 2-cd set (49 songs) of the best of what this band has released (mostly on their own Tombstone label). "Graveyard" opens things up and Fred shows why his howl should be used in some Hollywood films (maybe it already has ???) while "A Miss of You" shows the bands nearly tender side and "Johnny's Got a Gun" is as close as they'll get to a pop song. You'll also hear "Dagger Moon" (a tribute tome?), "Can't Do That", "Area 51", and "Last Train", and LOTS more. Dig in, my friends. (www.subpop.com)



AMY MILLAN- HONEY FROM THE TOMBS- ARTS & CRAFTS- Why Amy Millan wastes here precious time with the overrated (IMHO) Broken Social Scene is anyone's guess but she is an integral member of her "other" band Stars and on HONEY FROM... she has released her first solo record and it's a doozie. She breaks out with her inner folkie and the gal obviously has loads of talent . I lover her raspy vocals (a slight bit like Edie Brickell or the gal from Bettie Serveert when she's not rocking out) and the picked acoustic guitar on the opener sets the tone for what is, while not a country/bluegrass record, a terrific low-key, mostly acoustic record. I love the tender melody of "Skinny Boy", the heartbreak of "Baby I", and the fun hoedown effect of "Blue in Yr. Eye" (in which she's joined by Toronto bluegrass band Crazy Strings). While I love what she does in Stars and the work she has contributed to other folk's records pardon me for saying this is my mostest favoritest thing Ms. Millan has ever done. (www.arts-crafts.ca)



NAZI DOGS- CHASE THE MAN- TKO- I must admit, not a whole lot of current punk does it for me.....when I reach for my revolver it's usually old records Bad Brains, Adolescents, Minor Threat and the like but the Nazi Dogs are one current band making me stand up and take notice. With a hilarious record cover (a scene from EASY RIDER but with Dubya and Hitler's faces put where Peter Fonda and Jack Nicholson's are supposed to be !) the Nazi Dogs let her rip with 10 songs in under 30 minutes (my kinda record !) and they have good taste in covers to as they give the N.D. treatment to The pagans classic' What This Shit Called Love", and Devo's "Mongoloid." They sound like the real deal too. Most of what passes as" punk" these days us a friggin' joke but the Nazi Dogs prove how life into a beaten to death genre of music. Their own tunes like "Hookers", "Detention Zone" and "No Way" (not The Adolescents song) all tear the roof off the joint. The way it should be ! (www.tkorecords.com)



POINTED STICKS- WAITING FOR THE REAL THING- SUDDEN DEATH- Reissuing the classic

Canadian power-pop record by this band , PERFECT YOUTH (originally supposed to be on the UK's Stiff label) , was a nice enough favor by the Sudden death label but now they one up themselves with the 24-song WAITING FOR THE REAL THING, a collection of singles, b-sides, demos, tv and radio recordings and he like. The thing is, I have always liked this sorta jerky, spazzy, ultra-melodic, skinny tie power-pop but if you admitted to liking this kinda music in the 80's (at least around my punk rock friends) you would've gotten laughed out of the state (New Jersey, thank you very much). Ironic as this is D.O.A.'s Joey Shithead's label and back then DOA fans are some of the ones who would beaten the tar out of you for liking this stuff but time heals all wounds, I guess. Put on WAITING FOR THE REAL THING and hear one great song after another from "What do you Want me to Do?" to "Real Thing" to "Lies" to "True Love" and many more...all with classic choruses , a million hooks and those awesome roller-rink keyboards throughout. If you've read this far and are still interested get this now and thank me later. (www.suddendeath.com)

9/23/06:



PELLE CARLBERG- EVERYTHING NOW!- TWENTY SEVEN- With a name like that ,might be thinking that Pelle is on the Swedish pro tennis circuit (he just defeated Andy Roddick !) but nope.....Pelle was born to rock ! Or at least pop ! As vocalist of the now-defunct low-key Swedish act Edson, Pelle Carlberg had his priorities in the right place, meaning he and his bandmates took their myriad of influences (Belle and Sebastian, Simon and Garfunkel, ABBA .etc.) and whipped them into his own stew . Edson called it a day last year but Carlberg soldiers on and after hearing this record , I'm really glad he did. EVEYTHING NOW ! is full of gentle, melodic, pensive pop that bands like The Smiths and Go-Betweens did so well and Mr. Carlberg is carrying the torch for bands like those.

The opening , oddly-titled "Musikbyran makes me want to Smoke Crack" is a gorgeous little ditty as is the following "Bastards Don't Blush." In fact the record is full of exquisite, unfolding gems that are low-key yet top-notch. And there's even talk of Carlberg coming to the US of A this year for some gigs. Now that would be a big deal (in my household, anyway). (www.twentysevenrecords.com)



THE JOLENES- GET IT TO GO- GOOD FORKS- The Jolenes are 3 gals from Portland (and one guy-damn, there goes my excitement for raving about a cool ALL-FEMALE band) , Katy, Candy, Christina and Jake who don't know whether they want to rock your ass off or impress you with their stickly sweet pop melodies so they do both !! I like this kinda stuff....they have more pop smarts than bands like The Donnas but rock a little harder than the All Girl Summer Fun Band (who I love) and really, when you get down to it it's only rock and roll but I like it. The Jolenes aren't reinventing the wheel here, just having a good time and allowing us to do the same. The smokin' riff of the opening "Ice Cream" will have you playing some serious air guitar as will the next one, "Daddy Needs \$." In

fact, all 12 of these songs have that meaty yet melodic guitar that I never get sick of. "Sugar" isn't an Archies cover but it's damn close and you also gotta hear "Leather and Lace", "Poison", "Make Me", "He Broke My..." and a few others. The Jolenes are daring you to listen and like....come on.....DO IT ! (www.goodforks.com)



MORTIMER- S/T- REV-OLA- It really does exist ! The only mention of Mortimer I has ever heard was when Cardinal (duo of Eric Matthews and Richard Davies) covered a song by them on their one and only (amazing) 1994 full-length. They covered "Singing to the Sunshine" and it sounded, to me, like it coulda been a Cardinal original. Well, thanks to the good folks at Rev-Ola (once again), they have reissued the lone Mortimer record complete with 6 bonus tracks and copious liner notes. Mortimer was a late 60's NYC folk-pop band (formerly known as The Teddy Boys) who recorded two records (the 2nd record, which was supposed to come out on The Beatle's Apple label, never surfaced) and this debut shows why the band were the toast of the town, for a few minutes anyway (Judy

Garland was a big fan). The band were definitely out of step with other east coast bands for their soft-pop leanings, sounding much more like a left coast band (a bit Mamas and the Papas or The Association) but one listen to the lovely harmony vocals, gentle acoustic guitars and slight congas tapping in the background and you'll wonder why Mortimer wasn't huge. The previously mentioned "Singing to the Sunshine" is here sounding as charming as ever (tho' I still think I like the Cardinal version better) as well as other gems like "Where Dragons Guards the Doors", "Mortimer's Theme", as well as a few demos and mono 45 mixes as bonus tracks. Listen to the Mortimer record and you'll hear yet another fine gem that the Rev-Ola label has unearthed for our eager ears ! (www.revola.co.uk)



POP IS ART- EPIPHANY- POP IS ART- Scott McGinley ? Don't worry....i never heard of him either and if I only had the cd cover to go on I woulda trashed this thing like last nights dinner (cover shows the back of some guy's head staring at a roadside sign-umm..i think it's Scott). Luckily I actually listened (and for more than 10 seconds) cos' had I not I would have missed out on one of the years most wonderful pop treats ! From the amazing opener, "All I Know" until the closing "Smile!" and all 9 tracks in between this is one of the best pop records you'll hear this year. The Beach Boys-ish opener to the Beatlesy "Let Me Be the One" right into the more rockin' "Are you a Boy or a Girl" into the tender "Here Comes' the Music" (is that a 12-string acoustic i hear??? Love that instrument !). I'm

shocked....i mean, I don't know who this guy is or where he came from but EPIPHANY is chock full of amazing melodies and beautiful harmonies and seems to have come out of left field. Drop this guy a line because this is certainly worth you hard-earned dough. Give us more Scott....give us more ! (www.popisart.com)

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