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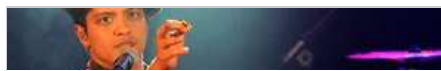
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INTERVIEW

Five albums people wouldn't expect Dwarves' Blag Dahlia to like

Dwarves (Blag Dahlia at center)



By Jason Heller May 3, 2011

Naked ladies, animal carcasses, hard drugs, pedophilia, STDs, and, of course, a little person: **Dwarves'** Sub Pop-released breakthrough, 1990's *Blood Guts & Pussy*, had it all. Since then, frontman **Blag Dahlia** has led his notorious, dick-flashing, prank-happy punk gang through numerous albums and incarnations. (The most current lineup includes **Mondo Generator** leader and **Queens Of The Stone Age** co-founder **Nick Oliveri**.) The band's new album, *The Dwarves Are Born Again*, is one of its strongest, nastiest releases in years—but despite Dahlia's crude lyrics and antics, he's occasionally dabbled in everything from bluegrass to writing novels to contributing a song to *Spongebob Squarepants*. To set the record straight, Dahlia put on his music-critic pants and gave *The A.V. Club* a list of five albums that no one would expect a three-chord miscreant like him to enjoy. (Well, except maybe for that last one.)

Lily Allen, *Alright, Still*

Call it *Vexed In The City*. Not since "I Will Survive" has anyone so audaciously summed up the agonies of the single female as **Lily Allen** does on *Alright, Still*. Allen's lyrics are at once rude, poignant, truthful, ridiculous, and sublime, as is the cover picture of her on something like a moped. Producer **Mark Ronson** singlehandedly saves both dancehall and ska from irrelevance by devolving ever backward into the same bag of tricks he used to elevate **Amy Winehouse** from a great singer to a great artiste and, eventually, a great hairstyle. "Friday Night" defines going out for the current era much like *Saturday Night Fever* did for the Me Generation. Recommended for girls trying to convince themselves they haven't just made the biggest mistake of their lives.

William Shatner, *Has Been*

If all he had done here was resurrect Pulp's annoying "Common People," that would have been plenty. Instead, what Captain Kirk does on his album *Has Been* is lay his soul bare and lend his singular voice to the task of defining his legacy. With visionary producer and collaborator Ben Folds guiding the way, Shatner takes turns at every style—moving deftly from country to pop to beatnik rants and duets culled from a life lived at the extremes. What emerges is the word portrait of a mythologized man throwing glorious globs of colored prose at Folds' handcrafted sonic vignettes. This record has boldly gone where no cliché has gone before. Recommended for those who like a good cigar on a cold, windy day.

Mystikal, *Tarantula*

Unlike punk rock, hip-hop still produces bona fide geniuses amid the bling and limp vocal effects that are now its hallmarks. One master of the form languishes in prison, and I can state for the record that he is James Brown's nephew, a Soul Train Award winner, the Black Elvis Presley, and Prince Of The South—the mighty, majestic Mystikal. One part gangster rapper, one part lowdown soul crooner, and one part jheri-curved Lothario humping your grandma's leg, this is the MC for those who don't know they need him yet. On *Tarantula*, Mystikal has more soul than other MCs and more immaculate snaps than any rap cat you'd care to name. The hardest-working man in show business, Pharrell, offers his best track ever, "Bouncin' Back." Recommended for egomaniacs and the women who love them.

Guys And Dolls Original Soundtrack

The success of *Glee* has brought those of us who love musicals out of the closet and smack into a dilemma: Modern musicals suck. It's not their fault; it's just a little pathetic, like watching a fat girl pretend to be Bettie Page or a bald guy trying to channel Mr. Clean. So treat yourself to *Guys And Dolls*, the timeless classic produced in the '50s, written in the '40s, and based on New York novelist Damon Runyon's '30s cast of gambling misfits. How exactly can you go wrong with Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando singing and dancing? (They did the movie—bonus points to those that pick up the original Broadway cast record—but if you've read this far, you're already gay.) "Luck Be A Lady" brings romance to the craps table. Recommended for those who look better in a suit than a tracksuit.

Dwarves, The Dwarves Are Born Again

Well, I couldn't wait around for *The A.V. Club* to review it, could I? The **Dwarves** have been the best band ever since they began breaking up in 1986. Nine albums deep, one would think they'd said all that could be said about chaos, death, and debauchery. But the last punk band standing has brought it all back home with this slab of timeless wax. And there's nudity too! While *The Dwarves Must Die* genre-hopped like your little sister's iPod on OMG random, *Born Again* indulges mixtape tendencies without straying from the Dwarves' trademark, gut-wrenching rock 'n' roll. "You'll Never Take Us Alive" reminds listeners that 25 years can pass in the blink of an eye if you're high enough and getting yours on the regular. Recommended for young ladies with braces.

"YOU'LL NEVER TAKE US ALIVE" BY DWARVES

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