

Teamers, but West Coast aces: guitarists Phil Baugh, Lewis Talley, and Billy Mize, with Ralph Mooney playing pedal steel. On the June date, in Hollywood, Baugh and Mooney backed him on "Someone Told My Story," another try at "I Threw Away The Rose" and the never-issued "Hang Up My Gloves," where Haggard introduced Baugh's solo.

Jackson's tunes are all country, not rockabilly. They include the 1956 ballad "Step By Step" accompanied by Joe Maphis, Buck Owens (then a Capitol L.A. session regular), and Mooney. Buddy Emmons backs her on two 1960 tunes: an early attempt at her future hit "In The Middle Of A Heartache" and "The Wrong Kind Of Girl." Three come from 1961-62 Nashville sessions.

The Jones material includes duets with Melba Montgomery with Shot Jackson accompanying them on Dobro. Jones generally recorded in Nashville but "I Saw Me" comes from a rare L.A. session, backed by Howard Roberts, Billy Strange, and Red Rhodes.

Apart from the other three, the Buck set consists of the Eagles standards "Take It Easy," "Lyn' Eyes," "Peaceful Easy Feeling," and "Tequila Sunrise," recorded in 1976 and 1978 with the Buckaroos (post-Don Rich) as backing tracks for *Hee Haw* performances. While pleasant enough for TV, mellow California country rock was clearly not his style and no threat to his classic "freight train" sound. — **RK**



**Chris Stamey**  
**Lovesick Blues**

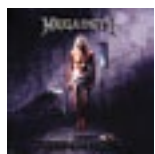
Yep Roc Records

Going for the pretty can be tough. For the Beach Boys, the Association, and Donovan, it was second nature. Nick Drake pulled it off well; sometimes, so does Coldplay. But for most, it's an artifice to distract from flaws of depth and character. Yet somehow Chris Stamey manages to go for the pretty and still keep things in check.

A lot of Stamey's songs here sound like variations on the theme of Paul Simon's "A Dangling Conversation" as flavored by a little Edith Piaf and Chet Baker. Some of them, like "I Wrote This Song For You" and "Astronomy," teeter toward the pretentious. You might expect that of a writer who collaborated with Yo La Tengo. But most of Stamey's songs are so darn pretty. That makes them tough to resist — and they're nowhere near as somnambulistic as much of Yo La Tengo's work.

In "Anyway," he takes inspiration from Arthur Lee and Love's *Forever Changes* and John Lennon's *Walls and Bridges*. He proves he's not just pedaling filigree by presenting yet another lovely melody strengthened by imaginative and equally lovely orchestration, including judicious employment of acoustic rhythm guitar as a foundation.

A song like "The Room Above The Bookstore" may again quote Simon musically and thematically, but there is something in almost every song to draw you in, however begrudgingly. — **RA**



**Megadeth**

**Countdown to Extinction: 20th Anniversary Edition**

Capitol/EMI

The year was 1992. Riots raged across Los Angeles in response to the Rodney King verdict, George H.W. Bush was seeking re-election, and Megadeth was experiencing first world problems. They needed a follow up to their highly successful *Rust in Peace* album. Out of the smoke and ashes came *Countdown to Extinction*, the album that became the band's biggest-selling record to date.

It's now 20 years later, and guitarist/vocalist Dave Mustaine is celebrating the anniversary of this groundbreaking album by offering this special edition of *Countdown*. It's a two-disc set that includes the original album re-mastered, along with a 1992 live show at the Cow Palace in San Francisco. It comes packaged in a lift-top box that also contains postcards of the band members, a 24x36 poster, and an essay by music journalist Kory Grow.

Overseen personally by Mustaine, this re-mastered version sounds brutally awesome. It has more punch and bite than the original album, and really shows off that classic lineup of Mustaine on guitar and vocals, Marty Friedman on guitar, David Ellefson on bass, and Nick Menza on drums.

But it's their live show at the Cow Palace that's the big draw. The sound quality is excellent but still retains an intimate-but-raw bootleg quality that's the next best thing to being there. Their 16-song set features seven tracks from *Countdown* plus a few other ditties including "Wake Up Dead" and "In My Darkest Hour."

*Countdown to Extinction* was the album where Mustaine pulled back the reins and went for a more straightforward, traditional metal sound. He backed off on the thrash, simplified arrangements, and cut to the chase. Still, Mustaine and Friedman shred masterfully throughout, making this a sweet deal for Megadeth fans. — **OJ**

**Books**



**Not Only Women Bleed: Vignettes from the Heart of a Rock Musician**

By Dick Wagner

Desert Dreams Productions

Dick Wagner was a force in rock music from early on. Hailing from Saginaw, Michigan, he was part of a bruising group of take-no-prisoners rockers — including the MC5, Iggy Pop, Grand Funk Railroad, Bob Seger, and Ted Nugent — that made Detroit the center of the universe, at least in the Midwest.

Captured as a series of linked vignettes rather than a straight narrative chronicle, this is a readable document of the adventures of a talented young guitarist trying to make it big while sampling, often to excess, the epicurean delights that were codified in the sex, drugs, and rock and roll lexicon of the time. His greatest successes were with Alice Cooper's band in the '70s, and Cooper duly offers a foreword to this memoir. In addition, Wagner wrote songs for Lou Reed, Aerosmith, Kiss, and more.

Wagner has a good memory, and has stayed in touch with his colleagues, so his remembrances are clear and distinct all the way down to loaning his Gibson ES-345 to B.B. King for a show after the loss of the trusted Lucille.

The impact of the book comes from Wagner's self-awareness, achieved through maturity over the years. He now realizes that actions in the partying years were not only self-destructive, but also hurtful to others. Failed marriages and sometimes difficult relationships with children can be a sobering reality, and Wagner embraces his mistakes.

On the equipment front, Wagner indirectly led to the beginnings of West Amplifiers, which he used for years as well as Michigan-made Gibson guitars. He later had an endorsement deal with B.C. Rich. Wagner is still involved in making music today, playing PRS guitars.

The hardback edition of this book includes two CDs of Wagner's unreleased music from over the years. — **ECS**

**DVDs**



**Peter Frampton**  
**FCA! 35 Tour**

Eagle Vision

Peter Frampton toured the entire *Frampton Comes Alive* album last year, and this DVD captures one of the dates in San Francisco, the same town the landmark live album was cut in all those years ago. But if you expect a rote performance by some aging rocker, put on your seatbelt and prepare to be blown away by this stellar performance.

Even 35-plus years later, Frampton's voice is in perfect shape, and his backing band — including original bassist Stanley Shelton — is terrific. Even better is Peter's simply blistering lead work, which is pumped to the max throughout.

Disc 1 kicks off with "Somethin's Happening," a pop-stomper with guitar solos galore and, lo and behold, Frampton wailing on the modded 1954 Les Paul Custom that was stolen and rediscovered a short time ago. "Doobie Wah" is an earthy funk workout and, again, Frampton delivers a sizzling lead, marked by his notably jazz-influenced style.

Peter also offers fun anecdotes between songs. Before "Show Me The Way," he recalls how a record company staffer suggested using the song as the

single for *Frampton Comes Alive*, much to Frampton's deep skepticism. But Peter eventually agreed, and the results were rock and roll history, as he now notes with a laugh.

Disc 2 continues the fun with other great tracks, like Humble Pie's "I Don't Need No Doctor," Soundgarden's "Black Hole Sun," and the Beatles' "While My Guitar Gently Weeps." There's also bonus material covering his reunion with the famed '54 Black Beauty.

In all, *FCA! 35 Tour* is one of the best rock DVDs in recent memory, a real event worth watching over and over. And again, it's hard not to be dazzled by Frampton's ace axe work, vocals, and enthusiasm for the classic material. It's an epic guitar fest. — **PP**



**Color Me Obsessed: A Film About the Replacements**

MVD

If you too are Mats obsessed, this documentary film may be your color. Or maybe not.

It's an interesting experiment. This might just be the only music documentary without the band's music as the soundtrack. In fact, the film doesn't include a snippet of any Replacements songs, which were driven by the incisive songwriting of Paul Westerberg and the twin-guitar attack of Westerberg and the phenomenal, unsung hero Bob Stinson. Nor does it feature any live footage of the band's performances or infamous onstage antics, such as Stinson unreeling Kiss-influenced guitar heroics while dressed in a tutu. Or not dressed at all.

Director Gorman Bechard explained, "I thought, people believe in God without seeing or hearing him but rather through the passion, faith, and stories of others." Thus this film is a pure oral history of the band, featuring fans, roadies, journalists, and the fellow famous, such as Grant Hart and Greg Norton of arch-rivals and best friends Hüsker Dü, Minneapolis devotee Craig Finn of the Hold Steady, Colin Meloy of the Decemberists, Tommy Ramone, and many more.

It's been hailed as "the rock version of *Rashomon*," the samurai film by director Akira Kurosawa renowned for retelling the same story from multiple vantage points. And fittingly, the documentary is subtitled "The potentially true story of the last best band."

All that is fine and dandy in an arthouse theater. But with 123 minutes of talking heads about a band that eschewed introspection in place of spontaneity in both their music and their shenanigans, the film seems to miss the point.

Still, the tales told — true or not, as the subtitle warns — inspire you to go back and listen to the band's best. Spin "Color Me Impressed" with the relentless punk guitar of Stinson careening from driving rhythm to solo tomfoolery in under three minutes, and you get the real picture. — **MD VG**