

**Pierce the Veil – *Selfish Machines*  
(Equal Vision)**

★★★



As this is being written the Vans Warped Tour is in full-tilt, touching down at locales across the Fruited Plain. Among the many, many bands on the various stages is progressive post-hardcore outfit Pierce the Veil. Whether they masterfully exploit the genre is wholly subjective, but to my own ears, they put together a well-thought-out arrangement of quiet/loud/quit/scream that's endeared the band to fans. Who want their introspection, rage and yes, self-pity all in one outfit.

Yeah, it's formulaic. Yeah, there are times when vocalist Vic Fuentes' whiny whine gets a little old. But I have to give the band props for their ability to mine the depths of hardcore and splash a rather lovely patina of pop sensibility on top of it all.

Hailed as *Alternative Press*' "Most Anticipated of 2010," *Selfish Machines* delivers about what anyone familiar with the band would expect. Newcomers will take to it right away or leave feeling that they've heard it all before. As a stand-alone release, the album is a solid buy for fans – for those wanting a bit of this and that from the CD, standout tracks include the opener, "Bestitos," "Caraphernelia," the laid-back "Stay Away From My Friends" and "Disasterology." Avoid "Million Dollar Houses (The Painter)." Its AutoTune on the vox is horrible.

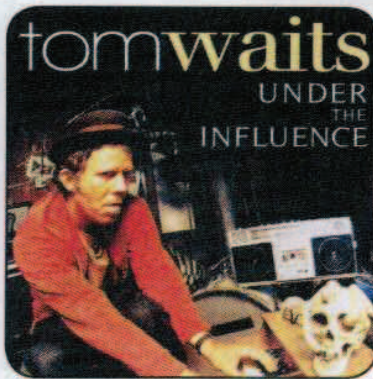
Taken as a whole, though, it's an average effort from a band that has a thousand compatriots.

-- Dylan Gibbs

**Tom Waits – *Under the Influence*  
(Chrome Dreams via MVD Visual)**

★★★★

These unauthorized critical examinations are really well-done, but generally essential only to the already-devoted fan. This is no exception. Waits, it needn't be said, is an enigma, and an American songwriting legend at this point. His music is instantly identifiable, from his gruff froggy vocals to his ramshackle, old-time vaudeville vagabond beat-poet persona. *Under The Influence* tackles exactly what inspired Waits through the years, and through the eyes of his collaborators and journalists, we see some of the jumping-off points that led Waits



to forsake "pop culture" and embrace a timeless, historical context within his music and art. Beginning with the beat poets (especially Jack Kerouac), we get portraits of writers like Charles Bukowski and Ken Nordine, and musicians like Captain Beefheart, the Rolling Stones (chiefly friend and collaborator Keith Richards), avant-composer Harry Partch, and European songwriters Kurt Weill and Bertold Brecht. Waits' widely-disparate influences make sense, and this DVD does a fine job examining, and proving these inspirations to be likely truths. That's not to say that Waits has emulated any of these composers too greatly, as his vision and personality are uniquely his own. Well worth a look to any Waits collector, but if you don't consider yourself already interested in the man's impressive body of work, this won't convince you.

-- Todd Zachritz

**D.O.A. – *Kings Of Punk,  
Hockey and Beer*  
(Sudden Death Records)**

★★★★



Vancouver's venerable legends of hardcore punk rock just keep on truckin', and they have not tempered their attack at all over the course of their long and influential history. This new selection of 13 tracks pay homage to some of the band's biggest inspirations – punk, hockey and beer. There are anthemic sing-along choruses galore here, strong classic punk-style songwriting, and a requisite sneering sense of roughneck humor.

"Donnybrook" starts off the face-off with a fast and fun-loving punk/hockey mashup anthem. I enjoyed "Beer Liberation Army," too, which needs no explanation. "Pencil Neck Geek" covers wrestler

www.News4UOnline.com • August 2010

Classy Freddie Blassie to good effect, and the breakneck "Logjam" is full-on ragin'. "Coctail Time In Hell" is a good, old-fashioned drinkin' song, and the closing cover of BTO's "Taking Care Of Business" somehow fits. Rowdy, raucous, catchy, raw, and a good time all the way through, D.O.A. are at the top of their game here.

-- Todd Zachritz

**The Ready Set – *I'm  
Alive, I'm Dreaming*  
(Sire)**

★★



I still believe that if it's too loud, you're too old. But what if what's loud is too... *bad*? That's the first thing that sprang to mind when I popped in this... this... thing. The Ready Set's bio has such phrases as "mammoth pop sound," "super melodic tracks," "pop stuff, techno, rock – there's everything." Except rock. Not much rock here.

The "mammoth pop" thing is accurate, however. Syrupy, tummyache-inducing and machine-like, *I'm Alive, I'm Dreaming* was the creation of one young man (and I'll have to give a moderate kudo to a fellow Hoosier) – Jordan Witzigreuter, a Ft. Wayne native who spent his high school years writing songs, learning instruments, singing, and dreaming of – as he puts it – "to just keep writing and touring and not to have to worry about living paycheck to paycheck..." In other words, his intent from the beginning was to sell out. Boy has he succeeded.

Who is responsible for all this, other than one-child mastermind, the young Mr. Witzigreuter? Who other than Pete Wentz of Fall Out Boy ('scuse me while I color myself surprised). In a story we've heard from the annual of both great (not this) and not-so-great music (this), Wentz saw gold when his finely-tuned musical ear first heard The Ready Set; right away, the band (Witzigreuter) was signed to Wentz's own label.

Now we have this. And I can't really go into it. Cheese has fallen from the sky like frogs and locusts; saccharin (the real, uncut, powdered stuff) is clogging every open surface in this room and I just... can't. I've had *I'm Alive, I'm Dreaming* spinning for a couple of hours now, and I can safely

August 2010 • Call for Advertising Information (812) 962

MAILER #4  
295-5510

LINE 5-9988  
Bubble Mailer #4  
1-800-295-5510

LINE 5-9988  
Bubble Mailer #4  
1-800-295-5510

LINE 5-9988  
Bubble Mailer #4  
1-800-295-5510