

# THE GUESTLIST

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## MUSIC REVIEWS



**BANGKOK FIVE**

[We Love What Kills Us](#)

[Long Live Crime Records](#)

By writing "We Love What Kills Us" while out on tour, The Bangkok Five has made you a part of their day to day lives and make you feel the pains, hurts, and every day aspect of being a band on the road while away from home as they display on the title track from the album. With that being said, The Bangkok Five is a perfect band to emerge in the current rock scene that seems to be confused as to what true rock music actually is. This is the perfect combination of bands like the Misfits and Urge Overkill in that there is no question that this is pure adrenaline driven, rock music (see Party Machine), but also retains a pop edge on tracks like "Straight Fell Off." They have no qualms about putting their minds out on their sleeves as they display on "This One's For The Haters," and have no problem displaying their emotions on tracks like "Outlines of Us." As an added bonus, after the last note of track 5 is struck and track 6 begins, you quickly realize that you are hearing the EP over again, but this time sung in complete Spanish.



**BIRTHDAY MASSACRE**

[Looking Glass EP](#)

[Metropolis Records](#)

The minute that I hit play on The Birthday Massacre's Looking Glass EP I was instantly transported back to the 80's industrial era. With a drumbeat rolling right into a key board laden intro on opening track "Looking Glass," I was pretty hooked on their brand of the 80's industrial sound pretty quickly. When the vocals kicked in I was hooked even more. Chibi, the female lead singer has the perfect voice for this style. It is sweet, innocent, and not rough around the edges at all, adding a bit of a pop element to the songs the way that Deborah Harry did for Blondie. Once you are pulled into this EP, you will love everything about it, as The Birthday Massacre sticks to a particular sound throughout the 8 tracks. Just as they have done throughout their careers, they don't really stray too far from what their fan base loves but rather just perfect their signature sound. However, the music is only half the fun of a band like The Birthday Massacre. Check out a video or two and you will see that fashion, visual art, and more all play a part in creating the overall artistry of The Birthday Massacre.



**BLACK BOX REVELATION**

[Set Your Head On Fire](#)

[Self-Released](#)

It is always a very positive thing when a younger generation catches on to true rock-n-roll and goes out on a mission to create music that is heavily influenced by it. This is the case with Black Box Revelation. Made up of two teenagers, Jan (18) and Dires (16), they hit the studio to record their full-length debut and brought along with them their influences that range from the Rolling Stones to Led Zeppelin to Iggy Pop and the Stooges. The end result is "Set Your Head On Fire." This is one of those bands where what you see is what you get. A no frills band, rough around the edges, that mixes rock with pop with the best of them, and offers a left of the dial style of music that can best be classified as a modern take on classic rock music. In this day and age where bands like the Hives, Jet, and countless others bring a raw rock sound to the table, Black Box Revelation is going to fit right into that mold. You will be tapping and singing along with their pop sensibilities and the rock aspects will be more than enough to give it the edge you want from a band like this. "Set Your Head On Fire" is a good, solid, effort that is well worth a spin if you like any of the bands playing the current garage rock style.



**BLACK HALOS**  
**We Are Not Alone**  
 Acetate Records/MVD Audio

After a few Sub Pop releases, a switch of labels to Century Media, countless tour dates with the likes of Social Distortion, Sum 41, and more, The Black Halos are primed to release their fourth full-length album "We Are Not Alone." If you aren't impressed with their history, then what the heck is wrong with you? That was enough to peak my interest in this band and as I hit play I was digging the sound I heard. The guitars that kick off the album provide a modern take on a rocking sound while the bass lines beg to be compared to those of Social Distortion. So you are probably wondering what I thought of the vocals. Well, unfortunately that is where this album lost a little bit of my excitement. I personally was not a big fan of the lead vocals throughout the album. They are just way too raw for this rockabilly/punk rock style of music. Think of early Social Distortion, and while some of those songs are great songs, today's Mike Ness sounds better singing them because he isn't as rough and raw; same thing here. The songs are indeed the stuff that great songs are made of. The catchy choruses will easily have you singing along, the rhythm section will make sure that you are bouncing, and the simple guitar licks provide the extra bounce that you want in music like this. For my liking the vocals are just too rough around the edges, but other than that this is a solid album.



**BUDDAHEAD**  
**Ashes**  
 Self-Released

Buddahead's 2004 debut album, "Crossing The Invisible Line" gained them comparisons to the likes of Radiohead, Coldplay, etc... and with "Ashes," their sophomore effort, they seem to be on a mission to prove those critics right. Continuing with the trend set by the 2004 release, Iranian native Raman Kia lets his stories of heartbreak, drama, and the dark sides to every day life unfold before the listeners. Lyrically, while the subject matter tends to lean towards the darker sides of life, Kia makes it a point to craft the lyrics in such a way that they come across positive even when speaking of something negative that he has gone through. His voice, which is very reminiscent of Thom Yorke's, is the focal point that helps to bring the songs and the lyrics to life as the music is simply there to accompany his vocal throughout the album. However, the music does have its times where it seems to pick the perfect moments to hit you with a guitar driven assault as is evident in the chorus of "Brake" and the intro to "Burning Out." When everything comes together you get a very solid sophomore effort that is well worth a spin.