

# THE GUESTLIST

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## MUSIC REVIEWS



2\*Sweet

Sleep Without Dreams

Self-Released

Being from Chicago, I am always pretty excited when I find out about a new band from this area that is starting to branch out and build their fan base as is the case with 2\*Sweet. Then when I read that AP voted them the #1 Unsigned Band of 2007, my interest was peaked just a bit more. I popped the CD in and hit play and was met with an intro, really not my thing, but whatever, and as the first track "Rested Eyes Tell No Lies," kicked off I was quite impressed. I was instantly reminded of a modern version of an old band called Animal Chin," but after this track those comparisons quickly disappeared much to my disappointment. Musically I really dig what 2\*Sweet is all about. They play a great brand of rock music that fuses together with modern, heavy guitar riffs and a bit of a ska beat in the bass lines tossed in for good measure, but the vocals just weren't my thing at all. The original leads that caught my ear quickly faded to the backgrounds and for the rest of the album it just seemed to fall flat in the vocal area as they presented a very monotone aspect to the upbeat songs. Unfortunately because of this I quickly found myself not digging this album that I was excited about from the get go.



T4 PROJECT

Story Based Concept Album

Mental Records

The T4 Project was created with an idea in mind; to capture the spirit of the punk rock revolution. With the idea in place, Shannon Saint Ryan started to collect musicians from the likes of Strung Out front man Jason Cruz, Pennywise guitarist, Fletcher Dragge, as well as members of Bad Religion, The Buzzcocks, Subhumans, and more, and create what would eventually become the T4 Project's debut album. Because this is a labor of love for Saint Ryan he put his vision for the project's sound into motion. No outside producer was going to say it isn't mainstream enough, no label would criticize what they created, and no walls or boundaries were in place, but rather what they felt like doing they were going to do. This is the spirit of punk rock surrounded by the raw feelings that range lyrically from politics to the everyday aspects of living life. The crunching punk rock guitars on tracks like "Underground" and "Jumped," to name a few, will no doubt satisfy those fans of the original punk rock sound. This is loud, fast, music with a whole lot of spirit mixed in and nothing is watered down. As with most collections like this one, some of the sound bytes that find their way to the finished project will leave you going, huh??? But then again isn't that the aspects of an idea like this that make it genius?



**THREE MILES OUT**  
**Nobody**  
**Big Dog Head Records**

Good pop tinged, alternative music isn't that hard to find these days, you just need to know where to look. If you turn your head and look at Cleveland, you will find Three Miles Out; one of the best-kept secrets in the rock music world. On their latest effort, "Nobody," Three Miles Out brings forth an album that no doubt is going to set these guys out on a path for greatness. Right from the get go you are met with the blistering guitar riffs on "All The Same," and the straight ahead vocals not masked by any studio tricks, but rather pure adrenaline. From here you get thrust into a chorus that will no doubt catch your attention and have you singing along. This trend is one that I found to continue throughout the album and from song to song I quickly realized that this is one of those albums that just keeps getting stronger and stronger as you dig deeper into it. On tracks like "Peace of Mind" you will find yourself swaying along with the classic rock tinged guitars, and on a track like "Perfect," you will have no choice but to get up and move, and be warned you might just pump a fist in the air and sing-a-long with this chorus as it is the catchiest one on the album in my opinion. From the great guitar work that walks that fine line between what is pop rock and what is alternative, to the great lead vocals that always hit the notes spot on giving the songs life, to the extraordinary harmonies spread throughout the choruses, this is the rock band to keep your eyes on for 2008.



**THROW RAG**  
**Tee-Tot**  
**Acetate Records/MVD Audio**

Over the years, Throw Rag has become a staple amongst the underground, gritty, punk rock scene. Their live show offers all the energy that a rock-n-roll influenced punk rock show should, and they have built up an incredible fan base with spots on the Warped Tour, Joan Jett's tour, and more. Their first release when the band was very young was an album called "Tee-Tot," and was only available at their shows back in the day, until now. The album has been re-mastered and as always with reissues of albums, a few bonus tracks were added to the album. This is a band that has always been what it is on the surface and nothing more and the beauty of a release like this one is that it really shows you the rawness of a band in it's early days compared to the band we have come to know over the years. During the days when the Dead Kennedy's were ruling the scene, it's safe to say that the members of Throw Rag were cranking up their hi-fi's and taking notes. This is straight up, in your face punk rock just as you would expect from Throw Rag, and while the kids of today's scene may not care about a band like this so much, "Tee-Tot" will make a great addition to any Throw Rag or true punk rock collection. Raw, punk rock, with a rock flavor thrown in, and a nice look back at the beginnings of a band that would go on to become a staple amongst punk rockers.



**THROW RAG**  
**2nd Place**  
**Acetate Records/MVD Audio**

On the same date that Throw Rag's earliest work hits stores (see review of "Tee-Tot) so does their latest album, "2nd Place." After listening to the gritty, raw "Tee-Tot, I popped this bad boy in the CD player and was very happy with what I heard blaring from my speakers. After the odd, Spanish flared intro, you get tossed into a world of smoothly delivered guitars that beg to be compared to the rock-n-roll greats of the early days of rock music like Eddie Cochran, Gene Vincent, etc... The vocals kick in and you are instantly met with a rough around the edges punk rock vocal that brings forth comparisons to Jello. The simple beats and toe tapping rhythms that instantly command you to listen up continue throughout the album and keep you bouncing right along through the 17 tracks. Over the years, as is

evident if you listen to "Tee-Tot" first, Throw Rag has honed in on their rock-n-roll influenced sound and mastered what they were trying to do and went above and beyond anything they have done in the past with this album without ever really straying too far from their original goal of making simply good, rough around the edges, rock-n-roll music with a dash of punk tossed in for good measure. Great album for the true punk rockers out there!



**TOASTERS**  
**Live 2002 - CBGB The Bowery Collection**  
**MVD Audio**

After 25 years in the business, The Toasters are easily one of the most legendary bands of the ska scene and after a 14 year hiatus they returned to the legendary CBGB's stage in 2002 to show just why they are the stuff that legends are made of. MVD Audio was there to capture the show and they now present it to us in its entirety. The Toasters onstage enthusiasm brings the crowd to life as you kick into the album with "Shocker." You can almost see the crowd skankin' right along with the band as the horns blow and the walking bass line commands the song and will make you move as the band introduces themselves to you. As you dive into the album the songs continue to bring a charm that only the Toasters can bring to their live show as they roll into familiar tunes like "Shebeen," "Run Rudy Run," and "2Tone Army," to name a few. Though most of the focus of the songs is on the music itself, making the songs usually top the 4-minute mark, the smoothly delivered vocals of front man Bucket Hingley remain one of the aspects of the band that makes them the Toasters. Hingley has a great onstage presence as is displayed in his ramblings between songs on this live album. He connects with the crowd perfectly and makes them be a part of the show as if it is just himself and a bunch of his old friends gathered together for a party. This is a great look at a Toasters live show without actually being there and seeing it.