

# Vinyl Reviews

By D.J. Short



## THE VELOCET *A Quick and Dirty Guide to War*

Even after name-dropping past acts members of The Velocet have worked with—including the Brian Jonestown Massacre and Damon Albarn—there's reason to pay attention to these New York indie rockers beyond their connections. Okay, so they're another somewhat ragged post-punk group of Brooklyn-ites. But the strong and wiry opener, "Chinatown," which leads into the bouncy alternative pop/rock of "O, Concertina," proves The Velocet know a thing or two about writing catchy songs, which should help them survive the currently clogged scene. Melodious and subtly aggressive, the band emits a fair amount of class and, weirdly enough, British-ness throughout the record that's better suited for a walk down the street (with a spring in your step, of course) than a late night of debauchery at whatever divey club is the new hotspot this week. They're mellow yet upbeat; lighter than, say, Interpol, but not quite Killers (before those guys fell in love with the Boss, that is). The Velocet remain cool and confident, which earns them points on an enjoyable record that, while not groundbreaking, still brings more to the table than the standard hipster crew.

[Eyeball, eyeballrecords.com] Corey Apar

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## THE YARROWS *Plum*

Yarrow is a plant that has flat, yellow leaves, which sheds some light on the sound of The Yarrows. Vocals by the Backes bothers could have been cut by Tom Petty attempting his best Neil Young imitation after sucking on a few mint juleps, which really compliments the quiet sweetness of *Plum*. These songs will not be heard over beer and Texas Hold 'em games, but would be a solid addition in a disc shuffle while lazing around a sunny lakefront cottage resting up for the night's shenanigans. Coincidentally, many of the songs were written and practiced in a log cabin in a 200-acre forest in New Jersey and the simplicity of that environment floods *Plum*. The middle of the album forgets its charm when the lyrical content takes an artsy-fartsy spin through the ambiguity aisle. "Queen of the Air" and "Cellophane" need help, but padding them with uncertain lyrics like "I laid down the ghost of you" or "take a look into the lines of light" take the earnest effortlessness away. "You're Cruel" and "Impossible One" are little gems that would have reverberated the dust off the Jersey cabin walls, and also give a little insight into The Yarrows' growth potential.

[Empyrean, empyreanrecords.com] Dickson Kent

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## STREETLAMPS FOR SPOTLIGHTS *Here It Come 7"*

Streetlamps for Spotlights, a garage-rock trio from Fort Wayne, Indiana, would have fit in nicely with '90s slacker-dom. You know, back when people collected pogs and alternative rock was an actual radio format. Unfortunately for them, neither is very cool anymore.

[streetlampsforspotlights.com] WW



## CRIMSON SWEET *Wired for the Last Move 7"*

NYC's Crimson Sweet just broke up, however they garnered quite a reputation by churning out kick-ass 7"s. Too gritty for straight forward

rock, yet too saccharine for traditional punk, Polly Watson's vocals can spin on a dime. The ironically and appropriately titled *Wired for the Last Move* has many wondering what her next move will be. [crimsonsweet.com] WWW



## ABIKU/KID CAMARO *Split*

Abiku, once a four-piece, is now down to a duo. But that doesn't make them any less weird or abrasive. Aphex Twin's influence on Kid Camaro is apparent, and that's probably by design. "Drop" borrows bleeps and bloops from nearly every Nintendo game ever made, it seems. Konami Code, anyone?

[Automation, automationrecords.com]

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# DVD Reviews



## CRY OF THE CITY *The Legend of Cornbread*

Philadelphia looks, sounds, and smells like any other aging north-eastern US metropolis. The murder rate often soars higher than the summer temperature. Amidst the noise, stench, and constant threat of impending gun squalls, Philly also boasts walls of murals and vast stretches of "urban art" (i.e. graffiti). We can thank the elusive Philly legend Cornbread for much of it. Starting in the late '60s, Darryl McCray (a.k.a. Cornbread) set out to scrawl his name on every surface he touched. Sean McKnight's DVD biography offers a glimpse into who Cornbread is and why. Relying on extensive interviews with the man himself, as well as friends, relatives, associates, and even a former Philly mayor, the documentary does a handy job of excavating the Cornbread phenomenon. Most may not remember his exploits, such as tagging an elephant in the Philadelphia Zoo or managing to emblazon his moniker on the Jackson 5 jet. Tales of womanizing, drug abuse, and being swindled by Hollywood ensue. The film's attempts to link Cornbread into the evolution of hip-hop are intriguing, but not entirely convincing. If they found hip-hop artists who expressed direct influence,

perhaps their case could be strengthened. Nevertheless, *The Legend of Cornbread* offers an illuminating glance at one of the City of Brotherly Love's more curious and entertaining figures.

[Cinema Alliance, cinema-alliance.com] Casey Boland

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## JOHNNY CASH *The Man, His World, His Music*

Billed as a fly on the wall account of Johnny Cash in the late '60s, *The Man...* isn't quite as unobtrusive as it claims, with Cash looking over to the camera and commenting on it at certain points, but it's still an interesting, un-narrated collection of footage, documenting one of music's finest. Sometimes the lack of any thread to tie clips together can be annoying, but it's worth overlooking to see 20-plus live performances from the Man in Black, and hear him tell a number of stories from his bus. There's also a duet with Bob Dylan, a number of songs with wife June Carter, a hunting expedition, and backstage auditions. As far as cinematic masterpieces go, fans will want to stick with *Walk the Line*, but for real footage of the great man during a specific period of his life, *The Man...* is a great way to waste an hour and a half.

[Cherry Red, cherryred.co.uk] William Jones