

# CD reviews

## Unpersons

Self-Titled

Life is Abuse

Unpersons = Cult of Luna + Her Blacklist + Mastodon

If I were feeling suicidal, I wouldn't write a song directly about it. I'd write a 15-minute opus like the one track that is *Unpersons* with words like "A river of concertance against a blade so worn down ... apocryphal son lying prone in the heart of the garden ... the garden is but sand." There's something really horrifying about Unpersons' terse, unconventional take on hardcore/metalcore that's about as far from Trustkill as you can possibly get without being from Sweden. Their churning riffs, ruthless bass attack and atmospheric, cavernous renderings of production + vocals create a multi-layered, crisp, deep, thunderous experience that spits out a twisted wall of exposed barbs underlying surface technical prowess. It'll make you swear the seventh seal's just been broken. Unpersons recall the whole Isis/Neurosis camp at moments, Mastodon (in their sophisticated guitar whirlwind) at others and straight death metal during the rest. —Rebecca Vernon

## Valis

Head Full of Pills

Small Stone

Valis = Fireball Ministry + Nebula + Black Sabbath

I love Valis, but all the Small Stone bands are going to have a hard time topping *The Glasspack*. Valis, fronted by former *Screaming Tree* bassist Van Conner, spin out better-than-average stoner rock, bending farther back to their roots than most modern stoner does: *Black Sabbath* saturates the riffs and plodding pace of *Head Full of Pills*, but peeks through the most in the reverby vocals. When the riffs get faster, more driving and catchy, the specter of *Fu Manchu* hovers in the background incessantly. I could do without the skull artwork and sound of motorcycles preceding "Motorbike," but overall, even though they're not doing anything original, Valis are masters of the catchy riff (especially in "We Got a Situation," "Perpetual Motion Machine" and the glammy, druggy, T. Rex-ish "Across the Sky") and have given a solid contribution to the magical world of stoner rock. —Rebecca Vernon

## Various Artists

Kicked Out of Purgatory

Psychobilly US

Kicked out of Purgatory = Misfits + the Stay Cats

I'm sure you think you know what psychobilly is. You've heard one or two

bands and you think you're an expert. I'm also sure that most of you don't know shit about psycho. *Kicked out of Purgatory* is going to change that. It's all here from the originators like the **Guanna Batz** and **Demented Are Go** to newcomers like **12 Step Rebels**, and the **Koffin Kats**, not to mention Salt Lake City's very own **Pagan Dead**. This comp really shows the diversity of psychobilly, from the poppy sounds of **The Peacocks** to the hard-hitting **Banane Metalik** (who could be mistaken for a hardcore band) and everything between. As much as I hate to say it, all 26 tracks of this beautiful comp can be found in your local Hot Topic for only six bucks. I normally wouldn't send you in there, but this is worth it. —James Orme

## Voodoo Glow Skulls

Adiccion Tradicion Revolucion

Victory

Voodoo Glow Skulls = Descendants + the Specials + Union 13

While not as inspired as, say, *Band Geek Mafia* or *Who Is This Is*, the latest from Voodoo Glow Skulls is an alright record, but just alright. The Casillas and company give the same energized performances they give on all the other VGS releases, but I have to admit, I expected more progression. "Smile Now, Cry Later" are the scintillating songs on the record. The faster, more metal/punk rock stuff can be blasé and repetitive, which may be the effects of being on a label like Victory. The great humor is still there: "She'd rather pound some beers and listen to the *Ramones*," a lyric from "DD Don't Like Ska," brings to mind several girls I've known. The Voodoo fans will love—and probably already have—this, but for anyone else, I'd recommend either of the records previously mentioned over this one any day. —James Orme

## Saul Williams

Self-Titled

Fader Label

Saul Williams = Zak de la Rocha + James Brown - Christianity

Williams adds nicely to his body of three poetry books, a movie and one other audio album (and other misc.) with this new disc—which is saying something, since his previous works are some of the most scintillating, intelligent, cohesive and touching pieces of accessible art produced in the last 10 years. His lyrical abilities are not quite as refreshing as his spoken-word poetry, but thick beats and melodies

produced by many instruments (electric violins, guitar, bass, drums, four-track, etc) fill in the overall sound to make something moving and what rap/rock should have been after its initiation into the world by **Run DMC** and (ugh) **Aerosmith**. Vibrant politics, social issues and the most important theme, love, are all laid down with as good a mix of lyrical steez and smarts as you will find nowadays. Check out his 11/3/04 show review at [www.slugmag.com](http://www.slugmag.com). —Nate Martin

## Zolar X

Timeless

Alternative Tentacles

Zolar X = Chrome + Kansas + Spacehogs

The first couple of tracks on "Timeless" are reminiscent of *Hedwig & the Angry Inch* covering glam classics in a Pizza Hut, and you're thinking, "Hey, this isn't so bad." Then as the album progresses, it becomes more like the kind of "progressive" rock brought to us by the likes of **Kansas**, **America**, and that dude who performed on an ice-skating rink. Plus, it has poor production values. The liner notes are worth checking out, however. They say you can't put lipstick on a pig, but I guess back in mid-70s Memphis, they figured it was worth a try. It worked for NY Doll **David Johansen**. Supposedly it was Jello Biafra's idea to re-release this thing despite the fact that he hated glam. It all seems like a big inside joke, and you'd be better off buying another copy of *Jello + The Melvins* and giving it to a friend. —MC Welk

## DVD Reviews

### Against Me!

We're Never Going Home

Fat Wreck Chords

WNGH = Westway to the World + Get on the Bus + Billy Bragg

Neither a historical documentary nor footage of one legendary show, *We're Never Going Home* presents viewers with a glimpse of the inspiration and fuel for the music *Against Me!* makes—their lives. It just so happens that their lives (during April 2004 when this was filmed) consisted of touring, playing shows, drinking and being courted by major labels (Virgin, Universal, Island/Def Jam, Sire). The music is dirty Southern soulful with sincere punk rock with subject matter solely concerning their personal views and experiences gained through eight or nine months spent out of every year on the road; poor and drunk and anarchic. *We're Never Going Home* has lots of concert footage, shows the band drinking label suits under the table on corporate expense accounts (and turning down their offers), locking *Taking Back Sunday* in their dressing rooms at an Ashbury, N.J., festival and much more. I wouldn't go home, either. —Nate Martin

## Kylie Minogue

Body Language Live

Capitol

Kylie = Cats - T.S. Elliot.

Kylie's best live performances to date were the *Intimate* and *Live* shows when her spectacle and artistry were at their peak. These were midst the least commercially successful days of her career. *Body Language Live* was a multi-million dollar production that serves as more of an introduction to her newest album than a greatest hits performance. The live show is only as strong as the new material which in this case wasn't nearly as successful as it was experimental. Her previous live DVD, *Fever Live*, is a more representative Kylie concert experience but many will be pleased to find the original version of "Can't Get You Out of My Head" is included here rather than the "Can't Get Blue Monday Out of My Head" version that was on *Fever Live*.

## The Screemers

Live 1978 in San Francisco

Music Video Distributors/Target Video

The Screemers = The Screemers

For an aging punk lost in a cesspool of banality and progressing time, this is *Excalibur*, the greatest thing ever. The Screemers have always been legend—basically unrecorded and short-lived many years ago, but talked about with obscene reverence. And goddamn, these guys were beyond "too cool," beyond "ahead of their time." This DVD documents a concert coupled with a few in-studio performances and leaves me to plead why there couldn't have been more. A band with only two keyboard players and a drummer that was punker than anybody or anything? Wow. It has to be seen to be believed. Somebody needs to invent a time machine and go make these guys stay together so that they can save the musical world from itself—now!!! This is better than true love. If you don't obtain this DVD as soon as possible, you simply don't love music. —Jesus Harold



Eddie Izzard  
Unrepeatable, Defining Article & Glorious  
Anti-  
Eddie Izzard =  
Jerry Seinfeld  
+ Robin Williams  
+ BBC Comedy  
+ Mac Counter

\* In America the 90's found Jerry Seinfeld and his quirky sense of everyday humor while the British discovered Eddie Izzard. \* Seinfeld went to television and Izzard took to the stage. Seinfeld could be your next door neighbor. Izzard could be if your neighbor is a transvestite fueled by whatever it is that drives Robin Williams to the brink of insanity. \* These three DVD's capture Izzard as he finds and perfects his unpredictable brand of chaos comedy in the mid-90's preceding his 1998 masterpiece *Dressed to Kill*. \* Those who found his recent release, *Circle*, disappointing will be pleased to know that these three concerts have far more energy, insanity and edge confirming that Izzard is more often than not the funniest man alive. \* \* \* \* \*

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