

touring with the band he's had this decade and films each jaunt—25 cameras and 5.1 digital sound and all. The "behind the scenes" footage, celebrity interviews (**TONY BENNETT** and **BILL CLINTON**, together at last), and historic places visits are no big whoop. But the 30-something songs are the real hook, once again so very well-chosen, as if the many dregs of his many drekky **WINGS** and later solo records never happened (just the good stuff like *Band of the Run*), and with so much **BEATLES** gold as to be breathtaking. (New thrills this time include "I'll Get You" "I Will," "Eleanor Rigby," "Fixing a Hole," and 1971's *Ram*'s "Too Many People") It's hard to imagine that at any concert involving a Beatle you could ever watch anyone else, but it shows how entertaining extroverted big bear black drummer extraordinaire **ABE LABORIEL JR.** is, that he draws your attention so often and anchors everything; and guitarists **RUSTY ANDERSON** and **BRIAN RAY** are power-pop purists that make all the difference, keeping the licks tight and terse instead of boogie-bad, and supplying the sterling harmonies. This great young group has been kicking the 64-year-old Sir Paul's butt pretty seriously these '00s, an absolute, total, unforeseen "see it to believe it" re-energizing of one of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century's towering talents. Someday, when he sadly follows his fallen bandmates to the grave, we will think these tours, of overwhelming rebirth, were utter miracles. To watch it any time you like on screen is not the same as being there. But it sure approximates it! (aetv.com)

rob mccolley & the heather

**ROB MCCOLLEY & THE HEATHER**  
(ROB MCCOLLEY & THE HEATHER)

In what is a trend of the future, this album is only available, for free, streaming or download, online at McColley's Web site. They ask but don't require donations—a virtual hat-passing. While the "music business" struggles to make people still pay for music (see my editorial) after 117 years, some artists are scoffing at them thusly. "I made this, please have it" has now gone global and requires neither expense nor copy duplication nor personal interaction any more! So what's here? 15 bedroom-sounding pop ditties, with Urbana, IL singer/songwriter McColley and poet/illustrator **HEATHER** singing (it's charming when their alternating vocals affect a conversation of affection). It's so spare and friendly (the lyrics are more society-satiric) you don't even notice ubiquitous local power-popster **ADAM SCHMITT**'s contributions, among others. I'd say more, but why not just listen for yourself? Any time you please!... at: (robmccolley.com)

glenn mercer

**WHEELS IN MOTION**  
(PRAVDA)

For his first solo LP (yeah, that caught me by surprise, too!), veteran **FEELIES** founder Mercer is in a slower, gentle-guitar pop mood. Quietly jangling and clinking in a Velvet Underground way ("Get it Back") with

equally unobtrusive organ or piano, two-note bass, and fills-free drums, and singing softly, he oddly sounds a lot like what Luna took from The Feelies—outside of drummer **STAN DEMESKI**, who appears here, as do other ex-Feelies, other drummers **VINNY DeNUNZIO** (from the original 1977 lineup), **ANTON FIER**, and (**WAKE OOLOO** bandmate) **DAVE WECKERMAN**, as well as bassist **BRENDA SAUTER** (now in the exceptional **WILD CARNATION**). The more silent Mercer gets, the more haunting his career-long simple-riff repetition becomes. Flashes of Badfinger electrics on "Wheels in Motion" foreshadow the louder, faster "Until it's Clear" and "Whatever Happened," just in case old fans needed something a little more patented! (pravdamusic.com)

midlake

**THE TRIALS OF VAN OCCUPANTHER**  
(BELLA UNION/WORLD'S FAIR)

**TUCKER PETERTIL** reviewed this LP in the last issue, but this modest and winsome piano-dominated pop, with underexcited but friendly vocals, is worth a second look-see. Tucker mentioned Fleetwood Mac's *Rumours* as a reference for this sophomore LP by the latest greats from Denton, TX, and one hears a tug of that. But what might hit modern listeners harder are the strains of lighter '90s Radiohead. Take "Exit Music for a Film" and "Karma Police," subtract their delicious, heightened drama, or Thom Yorke's urgency amid bitter darkness, and imagine a lighter, calmer disposition. **TIM SMITH** (not The Adverts' Tim "TV" Smith) sounds a lot like Yorke when Yorke sings quietly, and the overall warmth and pastel moods satisfy as much as Smith's songs when combined with the quintet's supple playing (which comes to a rare high volume on "Young Bride"). Music of this confidence and fidelity has historically come from Britain, but Midlake is more proof that, bizarrely, Texas has become an American outpost for sinewy sound. (bellaunion.com)

mission of burma

**NOT A PHOTOGRAPH: THE MISSION OF BURMA STORY**  
(DVD)  
(MUSIC VIDEO DISTRIBUTORS)

With the narrative concentration of a BBC special, the illuminating perspective of a hidden camera, a plethora of live footage, and refreshingly candid offstage interviews, *Not* is compelling viewing about an insanely remarkable group. Whether you're a returning old fan from Boston's Burma's 1979–1983 heyday or merely curious about the hubbub, bub, this'll suck you in, quick. *Not* begins with value for converts by eliciting remembrances and testimonials from cult-famous fans/contemporaries to supplement surprising salad days footage (even some of the band's 1978 precursor, **MOVING PARTS**). But unlike a standard storyline begging a bygone era, lamenting art lost to time, the kicker in this film is its linkup leap to the more fascinating history happening right *now*, ready as it unfolds. The cameras catch a multitude of instantly elevated emotions,

both within the group during its unexpected return in January 2002 and without, in the disbelieving audiences in Boston and New York. I attended these triumphant concerts, and *Not* feels like a perfect record of what went down: with the much bigger crowds' bursting appreciation levels, '00s Burma were—and remain—actually *more affecting*, and no less aggressive, than four New York gigs I fondly recall in 1981–1983. Plus, the bonus footage of eight full songs, from then and now, scratches the lone lingering itch left by the doc. Finally, newcomers will likely be floored by Burma's *still* unprecedented, peculiar mix of killer hooks, unconventional song structures, punkish blasts, and ear-catching atonalities. (mvdvisual.com)

the morning line

**STAY MY SATELLITE**  
(THE MORNING LINE)

**MARCEL FELDMAR** tipped me off to this spry Boston trio, and reviewed their demo EP three issues ago. The group is led by ex-**SALEM 66** second guitarist **STEPHEN SMITH**—am I the only one who misses them? It's been 20 years since I saw the Salems 50 times, though I never saw him with **MICHAEL QUERCIO**'s post-**THREE O'CLOCK** band **GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL**. On this first ML LP, he's joined by drummer **DAVID SHOLLENBARGER** (**AGENT ORANGE**, **BLOOD ON THE SADDLE**), and **DAVID KNUPP** (**JOE BUCK**), and they remind of chunkier '80s bands like Smith's old Homestead labelmates Big Dipper and Windbreakers, Crippled Pilgrims, or Velvet Crush, whose Paul Chastain has a very similar voice to Smith. "The Ugly Truth" is even like Neil Young with R.E.M. backing vocals. And with such experience, they play with extra power-pop/indie guitar/bass/drums oomph from guys who lived the life when "my space" meant a dingy rehearsal room. Really strong record!!! (themorningline.net)

novi split

**PINK IN THE SINK**  
(HUSH)

Folk-pop resurgence? Last decade, Nick Drake was "discovered," Kristen Hersh suggested "quiet was the new loud," Billy Bragg and Wilco made LPs from old Woody Guthrie lyrics, and Elliott Smith hit the movies. Yet, the genre seems bubbling *now*, after breakouts by Shins, Bright Eyes, and Death Cab For Cutie—all exquisiteness and depth. On this second LP by San Pedro bedroom-recording maestro **DAVID JERKOVICH** (also of **KIND OF LIKE SPITTING** and **ILL LIT**), who made *Pink* nearly by himself, one is draped in folk's warm, translucent, light-melancholy (plus a closing C&W gem). It's like Smith's lighter touch, Hersh's *Hips & Makers*, Bragg and Wilco's "California Stars," or Nico's somber "These Days." It's best when Jerkovich's piano and violin invade like welcome houseguests, adding tenderness to acoustic guitars. And Jerkovich sings with a featherlike touch, as if to keep us from waking from his dulcet daydream—even on a **BEYONCE** cover. Ummm. (hushrecords.com)