



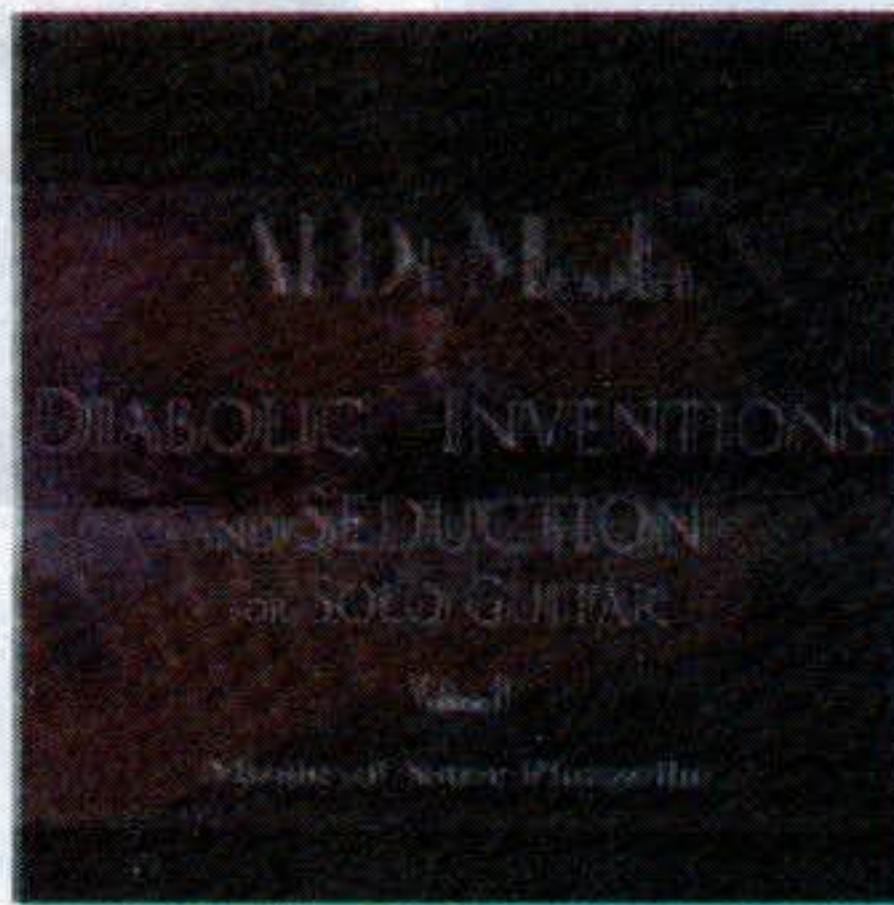
**Acumen  
Nation – *What  
The F\*ck (10  
Years of Armed  
Audio Warfare)*  
(WTII  
Records)**



Not so much a retrospective as a rarities collection, this lengthy 14-tracker includes a wealth of unreleased pieces from this veteran Chicago industrial-metal act. Opening with the new cut "The Wreck Of Us" (with guest vox by 16Volt mainman Eric Powell), Acumen Nation unleashes a torrent of hardbeat rock gems that don't expand the genre, but are heavy and well-enough produced to compete with the heavyweights. KMFDM frontwoman Lucia guests on "Life's Last Breath," and the rest of the tracks are either remixes or unreleased demo versions of Acumen classics like "Revelations Per Minute," "Queener," or "Gun Lover." All-in-all, *What The F\*ck* is a solid intro to a band existing just outside the mainstream, and who've quietly produced some of the most solid heavy electro-metal of the last decade.

— **Todd Zachritz**

**Al Di Meola – *Diabolic Inventions  
And Seduction For Solo Guitar*  
Volume 1: Music of Astor  
Piazzolla  
(Inakustik via MVD Audio)**



Di Meola is a serious master of his craft, winning a gamut of awards from the prestigious *Guitar World* magazine, among others, and this interpretation of Astor Piazzolla's brilliant and romantic classical-influenced tango music is altogether uplifting, reverential and beautiful. Di Meola befriended the late Piazzolla before the Argentine legend passed away in the early 90's, and his friendship with the influential and trailblazing composer forever changed Di Meola's musical outlook. *Diabolic Inventions* (a term Piazzolla used to describe his own music in the face of tango traditionalists) is a wonderful and engagingly easy-on-the-ears experience, and a joy to listen to. Di Meola's sparse and intricate guitar pluckings are both acrobatic and harmonious, conjuring images of warm climes, cool drinks, and old-world beauty. I dig it.

— **Todd Zachritz**

**To Kill A Petty Bourgeoisie – *The  
Patron*  
(Kranky)**



This slice of malevolent beauty comes from a Minneapolis duo who mix angelic female voices with harsh and often



jaggedly crunchy ambient/electronic sounds. Jehna Wilhelm's fleeting and ethereal voice reminds me of Rose McDowell (of Strawberry Switchblade/Current 93/Coil infamy) while the sound (courtesy of Mark McGee) is a varied and swirly vapour of textural dreams and fuzzy hallucinations, sometimes heavily rhythmic and at other times with a decidedly sinister ambient (even post-industrial) slant. One standout, "You Guys Talk, We'll Spill Our Guts" is a dark nursery rhyme, like the transfiguration of a soul into the great unknown. The nearest parallel would have to be the amazing and magickal Coil "Solstice" singles, but To Kill A Petty Bourgeoisie conjure their own spirits on this compelling and mysterious debut.

— **Todd Zachritz**

**Dave Gahan – *Hourglass*  
(Mute)**



The second solo effort from Depeche Mode frontman Gahan is a subtle and cohesive collection of tunes that move further from the rock-oriented directions of his previous solo work, and actually rival (or surpass) Depeche's own pieces of late. "Kingdom" is the obvious single, and is a top-shelf electro-rock anthem, whereas "Use You" is an industrial-tinged slice of bad-vibe and malediction. It seems that Gahan's tough-living bout in the 90's is well behind him, as he's making some of the most mature and intelligent music of