

Manolo Turner became a professional gardener and former bass player and now guitar player (Rob switched from guitar to bass) Travis Nelson went to Thailand to live in a monastery with non-speaking monks. Apparently, both Travis and Manolo got sick of not speaking and planting flowers and decided that they wanted to play some music again. The music on this album, the first release on Rob Crow's own record label, Robcore, is pretty proficient and fluent indie-math rock. You can tell these guys are veteran musicians with solid off-time beats and song structure with minimal effects or bells and whistles. The clean-sounding band can become a bit bland by the end of the album. But, if you're into solid, pure math rock, this is definitely an album worth listening to. —Jon Robertson

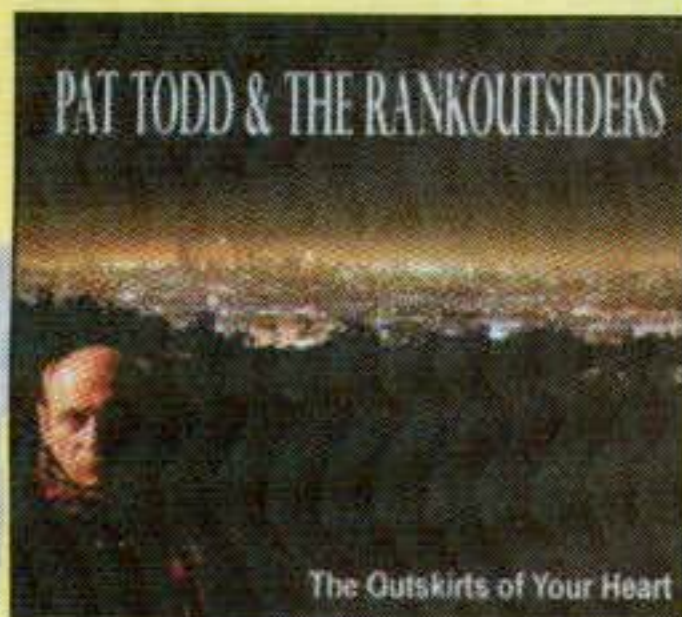
Pat Todd & the Rank Outsiders

The Outskirts Of Your Heart

Self-Released

Street: 04.17

Pat Todd & Rank Outsiders = Social Distortion + Supersuckers + Bruce Springsteen



The Outskirts of Your Heart

Pure rock n' roll has found its voice in Pat Todd. Once the leader of the L.A. based Cowgirls, Todd plays rock n' roll that can't be denied. The high energy gives you the hint of punk, but there is so much more, here that you can't pigeon hole this band. This two-disc 27 track monster ranges from blues to bluegrass influences. Songs like "November 11th" are sincere and pull you in for more. Flares of Chuck Berry guitars, and R&B break downs drive this record down a lonely country highway. It is tough to digest so much music at once, but "Thought I Saw My Future in a Grey Dress" stands out the moment you hear it. Pat Todd isn't trying to reinvent rock n' roll he's just trying to resuscitate it. —James Orme

Poison Arrows

Straight Into The Drift

File 13 Records

Street: 03.20

Poison Arrows = DJ Shadow + Sonic Youth

The Poison Arrows are composed of former members of Atombombpocketknife, Don Caballero, and some drummer from Chicago. Their second EP, *Straight Into The Drift*, is four tracks, each one an intense collage of sound. This EP definitely tests the listener's capability to understand and compute the lush and complex musical compositions contained here. All the different layers can get confusing, but the solid rhythm section of bass player Patrick Morris and drummer Adam Reach provide enough

overdriven power to keep the dissonant songs moving while Justin Sinkovich's vocals come across with a mellow spoken-word quality similar to Lou Reed. The most original and entertaining thing about this four-song EP is the instrumentation—with every listen there is something new to hear. The layers and layers of guitar, bass and drum tracks make the four songs seem like eight. If the Poison Arrows actually made a full album, it might take a lifetime to absorb all the sound and detail. Or it'll just make you insane and your head will pop off. —Jon Robertson

Realm

Suiciety/Endless War

Roadrunner/Metal Mind

Street: 11.09.06

Realm = Savatage + Exodus + Anthrax + Voivod



Prepare yourself for a lesson in the ways of old school thrash metal. *Endless War* was released in 1988 and *Suiciety* released in 1990, and the band didn't last much longer after that, but what does stand is the effort and maximum metal prowess displayed on the albums. The vocals are high and the music, while based in thrash, holds a huge progressive element. The bass lines are wicked and guitar solos even sweeter. Realm may have been a little late in the timeline of thrash metal, starting out in the late 80s when metal took a dive on the slopes. That probably explains the break-up so soon after the band's inception. Fortunately for metal fans, Roadrunner and Metal Mind decided to rerelease both of their albums on gold discs, upping the production value of each record. Realm may not find themselves inducted into the *Rock n' Roll Hall of Fame* or known by the masses, but the die-hards will always have a special place in their heart for the short-lived band, because albums this metal stand the test of time. —Bryer Wharton

Shadows Fall

Threads of Life

Atlantic Records

Street: 04.03

Shadows Fall = Metallica + Exodus + Testament

Striving to find a hard-working modern metal band with an older yet updated sound? Then look no further than Shadows Fall. The band's fifth record, *Fallout From the War*, was released in June 2006 and now, less than a year later, the band has come up with *Threads of Life*. Continuing in the path plowed by *Fallout From the War*, extreme

thrash tendencies bombard the senses with plenty of bountiful guitar solos. The only thing that really makes Shadows Fall sound remotely modern is the addition of the style of clean singing that Brian Fair uses. While at first the album doesn't catch on, *Threads of Life* is one of those albums that grows on you after repeated listens. It is strange how Shadow Fall started out in a more metalcore style, gradually progressing into more of a thrash beast with an old-school aesthetic to please the tastes of old and new metal fans. *Thread of Life* may have even been rushed since it is their major label debut, regardless, the band somehow found time to record an album while not touring in support of their last record. Now that is a work ethic to be proud of. —Bryer Wharton

The Shaky Hands

Self-Titled

Holocene Music

Street: 04.10

Shaky Hands = Rooney + The Strokes + Tripping Daisy



The Shaky Hands are part of the 60s revival hung-over garage-rock sound. But, there is a little bit more sunshine involved in the band's music (as if the band was hung over on the beach). Listening to this album makes you wish that it were summertime; the music shifts from distorted power chording to psychedelic acoustic jam-outs. All the while, the band does the best it can to involve quiet background noises including an assortment of horns, organs and hand percussion to keep the listener in their euphoric state. Singer Nick Delffs' vocals sound like a tired, more relaxed version of Tim DeLaughter's during his time in Tripping Daisy. You can't help but enjoy the laid-back vibe that The Shaky Hands provide. The band should give up on the garage rock sound. Their music is more effective when the power is turned off and the tempo slowed down to give way to the relaxed and wandering acoustic sessions. —Jon Robertson

Sterling

Cursed

File 13

Street: 03.20

Sterling = Explosions in the Sky + Mogwai + your favorite horror flick

Cursed begins as Sterling drops a layer of sonic fuzz over the first track, only to break it with a repeated guitar riff that is simultaneously creepy and soothing. The drums, bass and piano all follow suit, delivering music with a definitely sinister bend. Purely instrumental music (and all

music for that matter) always runs the risk of losing its audience's attention, but Chicago's Sterling have created a record that functions equally well as either a completely immersive musical experience or fully competent background music. Pianist Andy Lansangan steals the show when he is allowed to take front and center, building upon the already creepy ambience created by the rest of the band. The metal-influenced guitar of Eric Chaleff is also a highlight, as he jumps from the background with a wicked lick and drops back as support without anyone noticing. This is the perfect kind of music for mute serial killers and their admirers who, as socially damaged as they may be, deserve a soundtrack as much as the next man. —Ricky Vigil

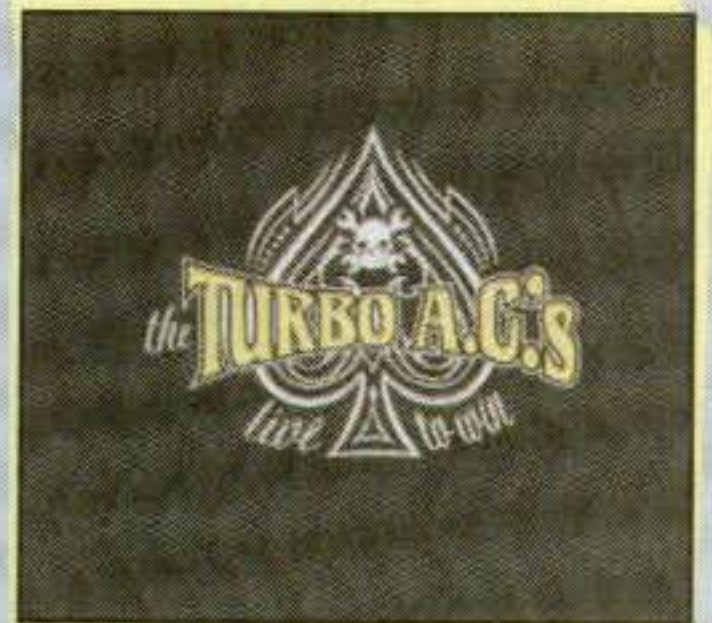
The Turbo A.C.'s

Live to Win

Acetate Records

Street: 03.20

The Turbo A.C.'s = Motörhead + Angel City Outcasts - sick as hell guitar solos



Like a Pontiac GTO loaded with rocket fuel, The Turbo A.C.'s kick off *Live to Win* at full throttle with "Nothing's Forbidden." The song opens with what sounds like a 14-year-old girl losing her virginity and loving every second of it. The song slowly builds and then rocks away as backup vox exclaims that "nothing's forbidden." The Turbo A.C.'s blaze through "Genuine," displaying their Motörhead-esque sound. Unfortunately, they shift into low gear for the next four songs, which really kills the vibe of the album. Their bare-bones rock n' roll finally begins to pick back up after the over-extended intro to "Nomads" and sticks strong throughout the rest of the album. "HKWC" is a clever little track telling a story similar to "Mohawk Town" by The Vandals, but instead of being about punks and skins, it's about White Castle. I'll admit, it gave me a few chuckles. With an acute rhythms guitar (which thinks it's better than it is), a deep and fast bass also reminiscent of Motörhead, and a plethora of drum rhythms, The Turbo A.C.'s will kick your ass. —Josh McGillis

The Twilight Sad

Fourteen Autumns & Fifteen Winters

Fatcat

Street: 04.03

The Twilight Sad = Kitchens of Distinction + Sigur Ros

Halfway through the opening track, "Cold Days from the Birdhouse," I stop surfing the net to focus. Did I really hear that crescendo build, tease and subside in chaotic beauty? "That Summer..."