

hardcore with powerful, melodic vocals. If you like Dag Nasty, Lifetime, 7 Seconds, or Gorilla Biscuits, and you need some cheering up, this is the antidote to your blues. Let me put it this way, this record made me smile while I was folding my fucking laundry. —CT Terry (Underground Communiqué, undercomm.org)

**FLESHIES: *Brown Flag*: LP**

Weirdo DIY punk and arena rock coming together like chocolate and peanut butter, Fleshies, are really one of the most interesting bands in a long time. It's funny, because before *Scrape the Walls* was released, I was predicting it to be their most straight forward effort, and then turned out to be very, very wrong. But now that they've settled into their own personal studio, taking their sweet time to really polish this one (and bring on more subtle Guns'n'Roses/arena rock comparisons). It's definitely their most straight forward, and is absolutely great, though it still leaves me a little conflicted, because that weirdness was the charm of their older records. Though after repeated listens, there's still some weirdness, it's just a little more buried/subconscious. Either way, Fleshies records are like apples and oranges—you can't compare them on their own, but they're all still excellent in their own way. And hopefully they'll be back from this "hiatus" nonsense. —Joe Evans III (Recess)

**FLIPPER: *Love*: CD**

Flipper has once again shaken off the dirt of death and risen up—this time with assistance from former Nirvana bass playing giant Krist Novoselic—to discomfort the world with more of their sonic elephantiasis. Ten new apoplectic, apocalyptic dirges pustulating with more ennui and existential ooze than all the fidgeting hamburger that was ever in John Paul Sartre's head. These are the lullabies of an autopsy; an autopsy that's somehow turned into a Hermann Nitsch performance, where the entrails are hung on the walls like garland and warm and rubbery vital organs become unspeakable sex toys. Back in the early '80s, Flipper was obviously a dissonant deconstruction of punk, but now it might be more accurate to say that they're a dissonant deconstruction of post-punk. It's dirty work, but somebody's gotta do it. My only gripe with *Love* is that their dadaistic sense of humor, exemplified in classics like "Ha Ha Ha," "Brainwash," and "The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly" sadly seems to have been packed into the um along with the remains of Will Shatter. And Flipper without their absurdist humor is like a thalidomide baby without a clown nose. Hopefully the twisted sense of humor will grow back like a happy little tumor in time for the next album. What's important now is that Flipper is back and primed to jerk the chains of all sanctimonious punks everywhere. And I, for one, couldn't be happier. —Aphid Peewit (MVD audio)

**FONTANA: *Self-titled*: CD**

Some bands sound like Black Flag, but Fontana picked the *My War* era to be inspired by. Hell yeah. Moody waves of dark, screechy guitar and strained vocals—speedy to slow—and then shove the song into reverse while going 100 mph. Real tight, real catchy, real damn good. I don't mean a retreat of the early '80s, dirt but a real exciting new band with that vibe and doesn't seem to take themselves too seriously. Not to mention you can usually trust the taste of X! Records. The back has Pettibon-style drawings and tiny fucked up sentences. At first, I thought that was taking the Flag image too far. But then I realized it says, "You just see what you think, not what you see" over a drawing of a duck head. Hell yeah. —Speedway Randy (X!)

**GEARS: *Rockin' at Ground Zero*: CD**  
**D.I.'S, THE: *Rare Cuts*: CD**

*Rockin' at Ground Zero* is one of those releases that anyone even remotely interested in underground music should have in their collection, period. No discussion, no hall pass, no excuses. Yes, it is indeed that goddamned essential, a pitch-perfect example of what happens when girl-crazy, A-bomb fearin' teenage brats intent on giving punk a rockabilly undertow instead stumble upon bona fide art. It's been released in a number of incarnations and formats over the past nearly thirty years, and this time they've augmented the album's original fifteen tracks and the oft-included three-track *Let's Go*

to the Beach EP with five additional demo tracks, so if you happen to be one of the total dweebs who has yet to procure a copy, now's the time, bucko. Not long after the Gears threw in the towel, Axxel and Dave started a new band, the D.I.s, and for the next few years L.A. punks confused them with Casey Royer's band D.I., another legendary Southern California punk rock band in its own right. Axxel 'n Dave's band took the Gears sound as its foundation and veered off in a number of interesting ways, first following many of their early Hollywood punk peers into roots rock and then slowly adding in some of the hard rock and glam influences that, by the end of the '80s, dominated the L.A. club scene. Collected on *Rare Cuts* are twenty-two tracks spanning their ten-year existence and feature a slew of sidemen who made their bones in some of L.A.'s greatest bands. Maybe it's age, 'cause I clearly remember seeing the D.I.s a number of times when they were around and really not thinkin' too much of 'em, but what I'm hearing here causes me to revisit that assessment. Most of what's here complements *Rockin' at Ground Zero* quite nicely, illustrating what happens when you get enough of a chance to take an idea so far that you end up back where you started, which is pretty much what happened—as I recall, once the D.I.s bit the dust, the Gears were back in action, and they've more or less remained so ever since. —Jimmy Alvarado (Hepcat)

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