

Bert Susanka "Onward Christian Slater" (Cornerstone R.A.S.) As a member of the Ziggens Susanka is a cult hero to many in the surf music scene, and considering the novelty element of that band's music, and the funny album title, I expected this to be a super weirdo goofy record, but it's not. It is an amazing exploration of surf music, with the diverse tunes ranging from traditional twangy guitar surf to traditional Hawaiian music to a long spoken-word Mexican wave-rider epic. Best of all, this doesn't sound like a crusty veteran of the music scene eking out one more release, it is a profoundly youthful record.

Suspected Terrorists (adept) This is profoundly punk, some of the most kickass music we've heard in a while.

Richard Swift "Dressed Up for the Letdown" (Secretly Canadian) Swiftly ascending upwards to genius mountain! Should be named Righteous Gift and the album should be called "Dressed Up for an Induction Ceremony into the Musical Genius Hall of Awesomeness!"

Swift Ships "Rebel Renaissance" (New Boy pob 2537 NY NY 10009) Can you believe there's such a thing as an indie rock/blues rock hybrid? And that it's good?

Swinging London - The Accidental Genius of Saga Records (RPM) This label sounds like it is populated by musicians and composers from the incidental scoring scene trying to pass off somewhat hacky mood music as groovy. But I guess anything that gets you in any kind of groove is kind of groovy, so this is far from the worst 60s comp.

Keith Sykes "let it roll" (Fat Pete Records, www.fatpete.com www.keithsykes.com Fat Pete Records-PO Box 86, Mohnton, Pennsylvania 19540) This is admittedly laidback, occasionally bluesey, Honky Tonk Rock 'n' Roll. The opener, "Midnight in Tupelo," which is set to some tasty slide guitar action, makes spending a night in the box sound like Paradise (as long as there's frozen margaritas and Elvis on the radio). Songs like "Old Rock 'n' Roller" evokes Sean Tyla or his better known peer, Mark Knopfler, with an easy pace that belies more stinging slide guitar lines. Mellow to a degree, but with a built-in edge. The uncluttered nature of the production, here, makes Sykes' guitar work stand out without ever having to crank it up too high. Dylan's influence runs through many of these tunes, though, not to the extent that Sykes has to smoke four packs before entering the studio. The lyrics are decidedly straightforward, but, Zimmy sometimes appears to be standing over Keith's shoulder...I mean, how many people would rhyme "Zeiderze" with "Celebrity Jeopardy?" The most rockin' number in this set would be the hilarious "Tearing The House Down," but, by and large, this is a latenight album, much like Sal Valentino's recent CD, also on Fat Pete. Even if you lean more toward hard-edged Roots Rock stuff, this may very well grow on you.

Symphorce "Become Death" (Metal Blade) SymPhuck yeah!

"Tales from the Australian Underground Vol. 2 1977-1990" (Shock) Wow - we're seriously going all the way to 1990 on this? This double disc comp frontloads things a bit kicking off with a one two punch of Radio Birdman "New Race" and a Saints song. And if I was from Oz and knew all these bands I might not be impressed with this, as the bands I know (Hoodoo Gurus, Triffids, Scientists, and an OK Birthday Party cut - I can think of twenty better choices) were not my faves. But the now sounds of Tactics, Sekret Sekret, Severed Heads and Primitivie Calculators really got me good. Two hours that sound better than koala meat tastes!

Marvin Tate "Family Swim" (IVR) Tate's eclectic, powerful, challenging new CD is bolder than his groundshaking D-Settlement work, if only because he's not afraid to go ANYWHERE. Funk, poetry, rock, storytelling, Tom Waits-core, spirituals and gospel all get stellar treatment, with the latter two providing the most dynamic moments, only because I couldn't tell if Tate was embracing (what I assume is) the Christianity of his upbringing, or criticizing. He sure sounds sincere, but after all Tate's deconstruction and radicalism it's hard to take anything at face (or faith) value.

Teha Cedecius.XX (Listen Loudest!) This is music made by the haunted house haint that drank hot coffee right from the spout.

Temple of Brutality "Lethal Agenda" (Demolition) Not the heaviest extreme music offering, but a fine example of nasty musical marauding. Nice to see rock singing (and not cookie monster vocals) atop all the other brutal metal attributes.

Tena Novak (Listen Loudest) On a scale of one to ten this-a is-a a-a Tena!

Tenderhooks "Vidalia" (Rocksnob, rocksnobrecords.com) Vicious hooks! Twang and nasalisms applied to off-kilter southern pop in a concoction that creates serious combustion.

Ten West (Blue Label, bluelabelentertainment.com) So middle of the road that you would have to look under the white lines on the asphalt to find it. If the Curious George song by Jack Johnson is too radical for you this might be more your speed.

The Terminals "Forget About Never" (Dead Beat) This is pure trash garage that reminds me of when the Mummies and Supercharger came out and erased all the bad 80s Midnight and Voxx 60s revivals bands that got it wrong. This is a 33 rpm record of your favorite band played at 45.

Terra Diablo (Nocturnal, nocturnal-records.com) Terra-fic!

Terrible Twos "A+A" ep (Big Neck) Should be called the Tenable Twos because this punk trash band rocks so awesome their existence is justified in a fair or rational way and is able to be defended.

Test Pilot (myspace.com/testpilotdc) If you are in college and get high this is your favorite band, or should be.

That's My Daughter "Virgin Appeal" (www.thatsmydaughter.net) Pretty rockin' and pretty goddamn sexy, but maybe a wee too nineties-ish. But that's coming back!

They Might Be Giants "The Else" (Idlewild) "Here Come the 123s" (Disney) On their new (grown up) CD, big, meaty, slick production makes esoteric quirks sound like big, meaty, slick esoteric quirks. Longtime fans will appreciate the excursions to Mesopotamia and parts unknown, but newbies will be pleasantly duped by the two opening tracks which are just straight up great rock n roll songs, novelty and neuro-firing be damned! As far as the "know where their bread is buttered" department goes, the Possible Behemoths return to kiddie music, taking it to the next level by taking their number songs/less educational Schoolhouse Rocks-ers directly to the Disney Channel. This might work out for them, as several other regular rockers turned kiddie rockers also appear on Disney's AM kiddie block (like Ralph Covert and Dan Zanes). However, while TMBG have easily vanquished all of their hipster parent-appealing contemporaries, they may meet their match coming up against the unhip acts they will now be bumping sippy cups with. I mean, dude, the Doodlebops are a freaking primary-colored skinned, magical, gay pixie rock band with a guitarist that combines Joe Strummer's and Peter Allen's stage moves...how can you hang with that?

The Thieves of Kailua (Mill Pond 555 N. El Camino Real ste. A #449) Island paradise music that doesn't sound like surf retreats (though you can hear the waves breaking), exotica (though they borrowed a few nature sounds) or Beach Boys (even if Mike Love is reclaimed from the hater rack as a vocal hero here). AloHEY!

This Is Me Smiling (Sony/Red Ink) This is me having no discernible expression on my face.

thomas lunch "diagrams without instructions" (thomaslunch.com) Sparks-arific!

Keith Thompson "Below the Line" (KeithThompsonSound.com) Classic country sung in a rich, deep voice that recalls the best Opry stars of the past and your favorite uncle from down South.

Through the Sparks "Iazarus beach" (Skybucket 2783 BM Montgomery St. Briming ham AL 35209) Sparkless.

Thunderboss (Poptown POB 51 Lincolndale NY 10540) What would you call a fraction of the Dictators? I'd have opted for The Dics, but drummer Thunderbolt Patterson and Ross the Boss opted for this amalgam, and it's good they did, because this ain't the Dictators. This is straight up rock and straight up roll and you can tell a drummer wrote this, because the thuds and bangs are driving this thing! Not that Ross is any less awesome than usual, a guitar God even to atheists! You will dig.

The Thunderchiefs "Dig" (Wormtone 3837 King Street Denver CO 80211) Sure you can't surf in Texas, but the reason you can still make amazing surf music there is that you also can't snowboard, thus, no "extreme" leanings! This puts the Urph! In Surf!

Thunderhead Underground Falls by Joel Orff (Alternative Comics) I'm surprised to see this comic book- a warm, convincing, ponderous story of a dude getting ready to go to

the army - get published. Not surprised because of the subject matter, but more because the combination of quiet, reflective pacing and loose, gestural linework means that you have a hefty, heavy book that does not have the slickness usually required to get someone to print a massive graphic novel. Kudos to Alternative Comics, Orff, and everyone who takes a chance and buys this fine read.

Thunder Lip "The Prophecy" (Lucid) Could rock more...if they were from Mt. Olympus! Best Thunder band ever!

● **Johnny Thunders** "Who's Been Talking?" DVD (MVD) I wish Gentleman John Battles was watching this DVD with me so he could tell me if this is a well-known previously released concert DVD, if this is, in fact, his last recorded concert as claimed on the cover, and who that zaftig female vocalist is. But on my own, as a mere JT fan and not a worshipper, I can say that a) this Osaka stadium concert footage is of a fantastic show with Johnny in full control of powers as he wows the crowd with classics (including some Dolls and even Monkees material, and b) This looks like it was shot off of Youtube. Mind you, the original concert is pro-shot with well-edited multi-cameras, but this DVD is blurry like a low resolution computer file.

Thunderwing "Bang" (Thee Liars Club Municipal Recording Co., Chicago, ThunderwingUSA.com Myspace.com/Thunderwing) This is easily one of the finest, no frills, High Energy R&R Band to come out of Chicago since The Mystery Girls (I mean the REAL Mystery Girls, who debuted 20 years ago, and stuck it out for about 10 years, albeit with a name change). Not unlike the M.G.s, Thunderwing has drawn from various late 60s-early 70s influences (e.g. The Stooges, Alice Cooper Group, Flamin' Groovies, MC5, T Rex - hence the name, and plenty of lesser known bands, too), and come up with something of their own, that's not an outright imitation (hello, Mooney Suzuki!). The fact that lead guitarist and pedal pusher (by that, I mean wah-wah pedal), Casey "The Baron Von" Sass, took guitar lessons from Brownsville Station's Michael Lutz isn't hurting them any. If you've been looking for some loud, fast, hard rockin' that has nothing to do with hardcore or Speed Metal, these boys are the ticket. I've seen local bands try to do, more or less, the same thing, and while some have been successful (particularly The Lust Killers, who I think have played three times in Chicago in the past 15 years. I think only The Cunts have broken THAT record!), too many of 'em seem to be just young enough to believe Guns n' Roses are relevant. While Thunderwing should be seen live to get the maximum effect, this will do just fine. It would be difficult to boil the energy from one of their live gigs down to a single shot, I mean, their bass player "The Flying Chris" Kolodz, once jumped off the stage and landed on me, and that's just one of the things I've witnessed that I CAN mention in print. They aren't trying to be "Bad Boys," however. They do live their music, but, they bring some much-needed humor back to the realm. What sets them apart from a lot of their peers is they can rock out with their cocks out, but, they remain focused. They've got SONGS. In this case, 11. They sound like they were at least nearing in the red, but, we never descend into true chaos. Still, controlling THIS madness is no easy feat. Drummer Dave "Dave" Horniak acts as the perfect foil for singer/guitarist, Kevin "Pistol Pants" McComb (no idea why they call him that) and Casey "The Aforementioned" Sass when they create a cacaphony comparable, at times, to the early Who. Most of these songs are just balls out crazy rockin' enough. Just like (unbeknownst to her) cover girl, Cynthia Myers (who still looks incredible, by the way), when you've got it all together, a little bit more or a little bit less might not kill the whole deal, but it's a hell of a balancing act, keeping such an explosive force of nature at bay. William S. Burroughs, also featured in Casey "I mentioned him twice already" Sass's cool Pop Art collage cover, was known for firing his guns off now and then, too. Burroughs inadvertently created the genre term, "Heavy Metal." Thunderwing takes it back to a time when Heavy Rock was actually heavy, and there's no guilt in THAT kind of pleasure.

Tiger Army "Music From Regions Beyond" (Epitaph/Hellcat) So Oi-riffically anthemic it made me get tiger stripe tattoos. "Sorry, Roger. You Tiger now!"

Tiger Cried Beef "The Facts About Fascism" (Carbon Records POBox 10718 Rochester NY 14610) Kitty cried tofu.

The Times "This Is London" (Art Pop/Cherry Red) This is a pretty awesome reissue of a record I wish I heard somewhat less than a quarter century late. The Times were a bastardized version of Television Personalities, sorta, and this is a new-wave/mod/super clever pop masterpiece with lots of rollin' R's and more hooks than Kareem Abdul-Jabbar's career.