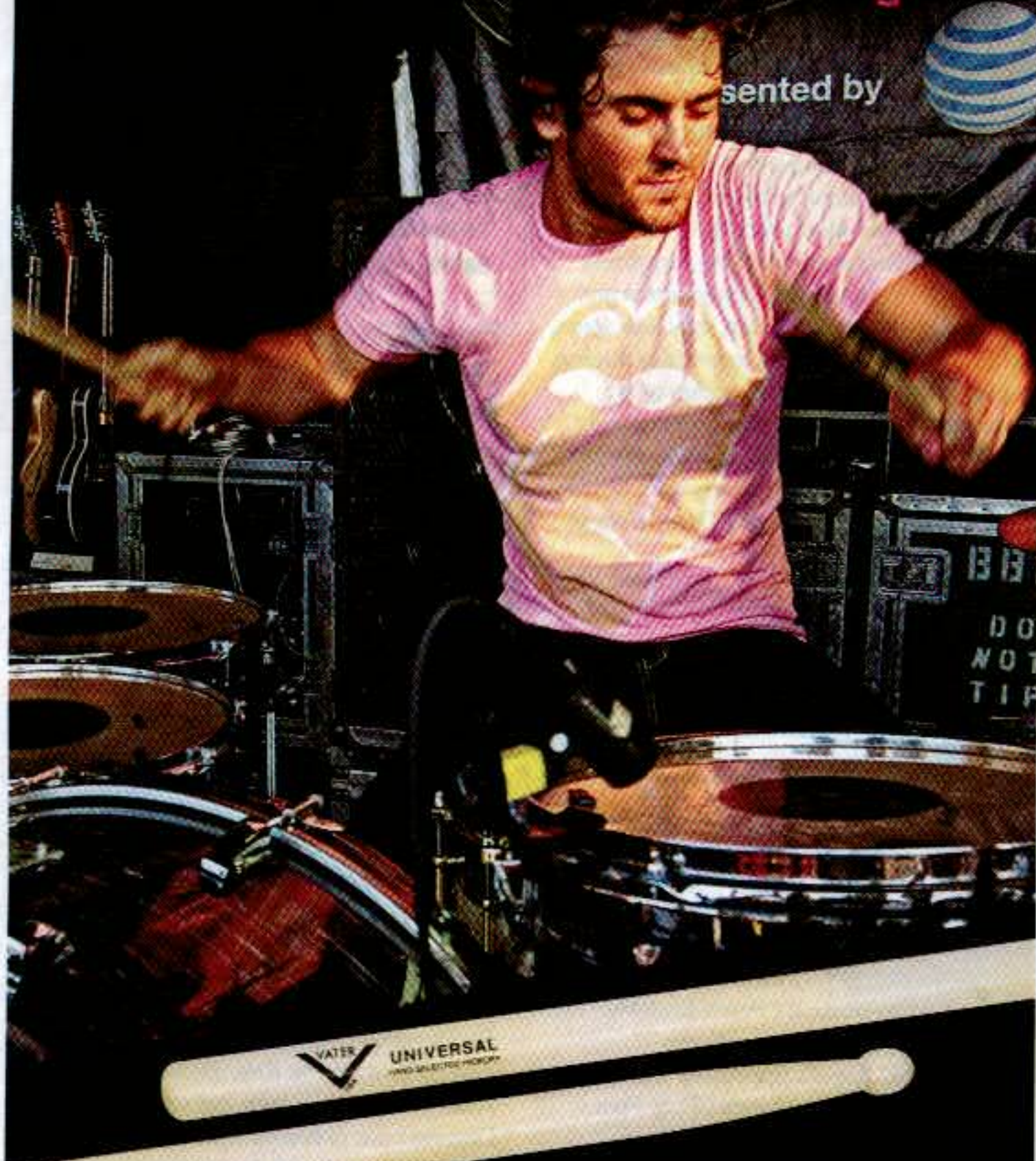


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charging 1986-style synth-pop with a slight glam twinge ("Whitesnake"), a jam session of Tom Waits and Scissor Sisters ("The Bears Are Coming") or scrappy gutter-prog ("VW"), LOTP cram tons of stylistic inversions into 43 minutes. We had no idea attention deficit disorder could sound this majestic. (ASTRALWERKS) Jason Pettigrew

O PIONEERS!!!

Neon Creeps

★★★★☆

Tearing everything down to build it back up.



After releasing *Black Mambas* in 2006, Houston's O Pioneers!!! faced an uphill climb to be the band they showed promise of becoming.

After numerous 7-inch releases and lineup changes, *Neon Creeps* answers that challenge with a glaring, "We did it." The band still sound like a youthful Hot Water Music, and the addition of bassist Matt Clark gives *Neon Creeps* the depth *Black Mambas* lacked. The disc won't be the feel-good record of the year, but for every mention of problems (and there are plenty), frontman Eric Solomon responds with calls for self-determination. Each initially bleak tale is injected with hope, as especially evident in "The Architect Of Disney World," "9 A.M. Everyday" and "Stressing The Fuck Out." Despite occasional sloppy moments, the songs on *Neon Creeps* are the best O Pioneers!!! have ever written. (ASIAN MAN; asianmanrecords.com) Ben Conoley

PUNK ROCK KARAOKE

Punk Rock Karaoke

★★★½☆

Dude, you're in the band.



L.A. punk old-timers Punk Rock Karaoke are exactly what their name sounds like: A live punk backline supporting anyone who has the balls to

get up onstage and play frontman to guitarists Eric Melvin (NOFX) and Greg Hetson (Bad Religion), bassist Steve Soto (Adolescents) and drummer Derek O'Brien (Social Distortion). The band's self-titled debut, which includes an actual karaoke DVD, sounds like a live show—dirty, loud and full of classic Black Flag, Dickies and Circle Jerks tunes. With punk vets (including Dicky Barrett of the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, New Found Glory's Jordan Pundik and Matt Skiba of Alkaline Trio) manning the mic, high points include Dave King's (Flogging Molly) call to arms on Bad Religion's "Fuck Armageddon... This Is Hell," and the Vandals' Warren Fitzgerald sneering through Buzzcocks' "What Do I Get." (MVD; mvd2b.com) Casey Lynch

THE STILETTO FORMAL

iFiesta Fiesta Fiesta Fiesta!

★★★★☆

Apparently, one of the Ds in ADD stands for "danceable."



Phoenix-based five-piece the Stiletto Formal set the stage on their full-length debut, *iFiesta Fiesta Fiesta Fiesta!*, with ringing guitar chords dramatic enough to rock an old Spaghetti Western film. But by the time Kyle Howard hits you with his high-pitched wail, it's pretty clear this self-described "eccentric rock 'n' roll band" are after something approaching a mash-up of every conceivable genre, from the reverb-heavy, surf-as-Metallica-might-have-done-it guitarwork of that opening track, "We Are All Muckrakers," to the guest rap from Murs on "Sleeping Our Way To The Top," a cello-driven post-rock track. The album's most compelling moment, though, may be its most straightforward, the slow-burning R&B drama of "Bearskin Rugs Of The Future." We're still not sure how to categorize the Stiletto Formal, but we know we like it. (EYEBALL; eyeballrecords.com) Ed Masley

FIGHT FAIR

Settle The Score EP

(TRIPLE CROWN; triplecrownrecords.com)

★★★★☆

WHO? The latest in an increasingly long line of bands playing "happy hardcore," a trend intent on sweeping the nation faster than crunkcore.

SOUNDS LIKE? The entire New Found Glory catalog distilled into a shade over 20 minutes.

HOW IS IT? Sure, this genre's already getting pretty watered down, but you can't deny that this shit is fun. Fight Fair aren't breaking any new ground, but at least they're not Brokencyde.

ROCKS LIKE: FOUR YEAR STRONG
HIT THE LIGHTS
NEW FOUND GLORY

THE SIDEKICKS

Sam EP (WHOA OH; whoahrecords.com)

★★★★☆

WHO? Cleveland-based punk quartet returning with a four-song slab of wax (don't worry, there's a digital download code in the 7-inch's sleeve).

SOUNDS LIKE? Motivational, uplifting orgcore that reignites the torch Latterman so unceremoniously extinguished last year.

HOW IS IT? Fuckin' awesome. Grab yourself a PBR tallboy, head to your nearest basement show and party on, Wayne—odds are, these dudes are already there.

ROCKS LIKE: LATTERMAN, AMERICAN STEEL
THE LAWRENCE ARMS

SCANNED