

dated by the time I saw these guys) aside, this album is not without merit. In this generation of Punk-Garage bands that sound like they're all playing in different rooms, The Hickoids could be a hit, and, as it happens, they're BAAAAAACK. (and to be fair, my Brother, who disliked 'em more than I did, spoke very highly of one of their recent shows).

Missy Higgins "On A Clear Light" (Reprise) Missy and her music are so lovely they gave me a higg on!

High Llamas "Can Cladders" (Drag City) Sounds like Bread with a little mustard or America with a little immigration problem.

High Tension Wires "midnight cashier" (Dirtnap) This is exactly what a punk rock n roll album is supposed to sound like.

The High Water Marks "polar" (HHBTM) Got me high, wet, and marked. Note to band: let the girl sing ALL the songs! She's awesome.

His Electro Blue Voice "fog" b/w "das" (S-S, s-records.com) I can't tell you how many hours my friends have tried to convince me that T.S.O.L.'s "Dance with Me" wasn't a prank - a gothy goof designed to piss off politico-h/c zealots. Thusly, you can spend as long as you want trying to convince me that this perfect platter is anything but a "Dance with Me" tribute and you likely will be wasting your breath.

The Holloways "So This Is Great Britain?" (TVT 23 E 4th St NY NY 10003) Hollo-way out!

Hollywood "Girl?" ep (Big Neck) This single actually stuck to the sleeve like pages of a 12 year old kid's porno mag.

Holy Shit! (Criminal I.Q.) Following the lead of Canada's Fucked Up, this genuine hardcore band reveals that nothing's more hardcore than having a name that can't be printed in a newspaper or on a marquee. This is batshit crazy punk rock so intense it scrambled my cortex.

Home Blitz (Gulcher) Like a whiny, rockin' Jandek! Compiles singles and rarities you'll never find, though you may not have been looking for, though maybe you should have been...

Hot Hot Heat "Happiness Ltd. (Sire) Hotter, hotter and heatier than ever!

Howling Hex "XI" (Drag City) Despite actual honking skills, somehow the sax on this sounds like the sax on X-Ray Spex, which is AWESOME! This has the rock like a geologist's knapsack.

Donny Hue and the Colors "Folknote" (The Kora Records) Hue's on first? Pleasant mellow psyche-ish music, that's Hue!

Glenn Hughes "Music for the Divine" (Demolition, demolitionrecords.com) Let me first continue my tradition of likely being the only reviewer in America to insist on pointing out that this is not the Glenn Hughes who was the leatherman in Village people (R.I.P. Leather G.H.) but rather the esteemed metal journeyman vocalist. And let me further point out that he is a vocal genius and this album is ambitious, dynamic, and spectacular!

Hungry Ghost (myspace.com/hungryghostband) Hauntingly unremarkable.

Ideal Free Distribution (HHBTM POBox 742 Athens GA 30601) This band sounds exactly like an authentic 60s psych-tinged pop act, but the act they sound like is some second tier one that isn't that great or original. Yet somehow, what would be dismissible in '67 is actually-pretty engaging, bordering on fascinating, in '07. I want to not like this, but I keep on listening and smiling.

I Keee You! A Collection of Overheards (Atomic 1100 W. 36th St. Baltimore MD 21211) The modest ambitions of this comic (illustrations of bizarre snippets of overheard conversation) makes it one of the best anthologies I can remember, certainly the best themed one in a long while. I recall way back yonder when Rip Off Comix tried to do themes, and one was "Vampire Cowboys" and half the artists just riffed on how they couldn't come up with a good vampire cowboy story and the other half demonstrated the same quandary with their shitty comics. By having such a simple, surefire theme this book makes the hodgepodge of styles a bonus instead of a stumbling block.

Ilad "National Flags" (POB 13076 Richmond VA 23225) Ilove!

The Illustrated "Alphabaggage" (Livid, POB 276132 Boca Raton FL 33427) Super dramatic algebra-punk jazz that illustrated a point - the point is this band kicks ass!

Imagination Head "the stale and sparkling air" (myspace.com/jranderin) Acoustic folk-ish/singer-songer rock sung so nasally they should be called Imagination Nose. But good songs.

Immaculate Machine "Immaculate Machine's Fables" (Mint POB 3613 Vancouver BC Canada V6B 3Y5) This band has leaned on one of the most tired, outdated gimmicks in music history - they have crafted an album of all great songs! How are bands playing with them in clubs or sharing cyber or CD shelf space supposed to compete with these enchanting, engaging "fables?"

Impious "Holy Murder Masquerade" (Metal Blade) Sonically eviscerated me!

Inca Babies "plutonium" (Anagram/Cherry Red) Forget the forthcoming Madchester, scene, in the early-to-mid eighties this band was Mad Scientist-cester, making Cramps-like horror music, and riffing on Nick Cave's murder music with more consistent creepiness and cinematic flair (although never with the actual grace of the Birthday Party, whom they were often accused of aping). This retrospective seems pretty thorough - I never knew they had more than a couple of albums, and I've heard less than half this stuff, but it's not particularly chronology or history oriented. Rather it's a well-sequenced, strong collection of a strange, somewhat-forgotten band.



Incendiary Words soccer zine (4821 W. Fletcher St. #2 Chicago, IL 60641) Pudgy gets a kick out of soccer! But his bitterness kicks in when he deals with myopic modern history-uninterested soccer fans. Thus, this is, alas, the last issue for a while.

The Ink Spots "Instant Classics" (Cherry Red) I can't not love the Ink Spots, but I also can't fully embrace them, as one ear hears their harmonies teeter towards pre-rock 'n' roll doo wop, and the other listens to them dance around the outer edges of the best Your Hit Parade pop star music, but my brain in the middle never can process them one way or the other. But this is certainly a VERY pleasant (if confusing to me) collection.

Inspector Owl "Life Finds Away" (Third World Industries, thirdworldindustries.com 1342 West Huron #2R Chi IL 60622) Interstellar owl howls that crash land on planet Awesome Rock.

Instant Karma - The Amnesty International Campaign to Save Darfur (Warner Brothers) Like I'm going to say anything bad about Lennon or Darfur.

Intellectuals "invisible is the best" (Dead Beat) Brilliantly stupid and about as intellectual as Iggy making a peanut butter and blood sandwich, this snotty, angular, bucket of rock n roll trash is my favorite platter of the moment.

Intelligence "deuteronomy" (In The Red) Futuristic caveman music that turns trash rock into space age recyclable art product. A record so good you would gay marry it even if you lived In the Red states.

The (International) Noise Conspiracy "Live At Oslo Jazz Festival" (Alternative Tentacles) Swinging Swedes the (International) Noise Conspiracy could be considered a progressive punk band, but only when compared to the regressive nature of their punk brethren. In this reissue of a previously rare album the band ostensibly gets progressive-er

by having Swedish jazz musicians sit in with them during a stellar live set at a Swedish festival. But what happens, joyously, is that for the most part the guests begin to harken back to the early days of rock 'n' roll when sax and piano were regular components of swinging combos, and in many ways the band becomes more traditional and old timey. And it is GREAT! Fans of the band will love hearing these versions (it is a pristinely recorded live album, as good as a studio venture) and new fans will really dig this introduction. Plus: all Swedish stage banter!

Ion Dissonance "Minus the Herd" (Abacus) So goddamn Metal this can't get through airport security!

Matt Isbell "Rock Lotto" (no label) Rock Jackpot!

The Its! "M!stakes" (PWMD) The Its is the shit! (or should I say, "the Its! Is the shits!") Angular pop that sounds like the band you would want to be on stage when you walked into a club in your movie before some kind of major plot shift or fight went down.

I Walk the Line "Desolation Street" (Gearhead) Keep stepping!

the Izzys "The Violent Bear It Away" (Fat Man) Makes Neil Young sound like Neil Old!

Jandek "Austin Sunday," "Newcastle Sunday" DV! (Corwood POB 15375 Houston TX 77220) Having finally caught Jandek live I now understand how his concerts differ from his legendary recording career. His collaborators really define how he will sound, as a pickup band playing with someone as unusual musically as the J-man can't begin to recreate the recordings as you would do backing up Chuc Berry or Tommy Tutone or Arthur Lee. The Newcastle DV. (though it doesn't show anyone but Jandek and occasionally just his shadow) has a band that allows Jandek to sound positively psychedelic at times (the ethereal blue lighting, doesn't hurt, either). But the double disc Austin CD is pretty fascinating because it really, really sounds like a Jandek record - his collaborators have caught Corwood Fever and I was shocked every time the applause kicked in at the end of compositions.

Janelle "The Vocal Complex" (VS) Neo-soul is an uneven genre to deal with; for every Raphael Saadiq who gets it right, there's a Lauryn Hill who reminds you of every bad, humorless, Afro-Boho "love, peace & hair grease" cliché going. If you're still interested in the field, singer-songwriter Janelle is a worthwhile artist to check out. None of that mystic-crystal-revelation malarkey that sidetracked India.Arie - Janelle just tells the story with a groove that takes off from '70s soul without imitating it, keeping the electronic effects and rap cameos to a bare minimum.

Japanther "Stuffed Up My Huffy" (Menlo Park) Did I mention this fucking rules. Seductive pop processed through so much overmodulation and damaged recording equipment that it sounds like it's in your memory somewhere, not on your stereo (or earbuds or harddrive or whatever the kids today use). Contains more clever movie dialogue samples than the Charles Bronson catalogue and a bucket of late 90s metal demos combined.

Jazz June "The Scars To Prove It" (MVD) Though the Jazz June died soon a while back they revived long enough to play some radio shows and concerts and this collection of archival tracks and live stuff and oddities and endites showcases all the things that emo and prog rock have in common: clever song titles, tight musicianship, acceptable smugness, and a sense of humor that might be funny unless they aren't kidding at all in which case, yeesh!

JDJBand "Cruel Way" (RPG POB 913 Lotus CA95651) Five of the ten songs have the word "Everybody," or "knows" or both in the first line. That's because *everybody knows* this band ROCKS!

The Jennifer Echo "Be Dangerous on Rock Guitar" (Jumping Jupiter 5136 NE Glisan St Portland OR 97213) Eechhh-o.

Je Suis France "Afrikan Majik" (Antenna Farm POB 29855 Oakland CA 94604) Je SWEET! Apparently Kraut Jam is no longer just a spreadable sandwich fixing made of sauerkraut and fruit preserves. Majikally delicious!

Joan as Police Woman "Real Life" (Cheap Lullaby) Joan as Police GODDESS!

George Jones "Live from the Church Street Station" (Quantum Leap) The greatest country singer ever in concert in the early 80s, which is a great time to catch him as he not only