



MUSIC BRIEFS

**Axe Hero** by Rancid Hell Spawn. A+ This British combo has been wowing critics and fans alike for years with chart-topping LPs like *Jumpin' Jack Flesh* and *Chainsaw Masochist*, and this album will not disappoint!

Like Ministry doing bubblegum pop, they pump a cheesy Casio keyboard through a really noisy distortion pedal, turn it all the way up, and let it rock! The kids dig it, and how could they not with surefire hit singles like "Vermin Sewer Rat From Hell" and "I'm In Love With A Gangster's Moll"?

If you love a bunch of really short, stupid, noisy songs that all sound the same, then honey child, this is the record for you.

**Linger Fickin'** by Revolting Cocks. F+ This band is basically Ministry and their friends trying to do dance music. They'd been at it for a while before finally putting out a really decent record called *Beers, Steers, and Queers* in 1990.

Nobody really expected the Revolting Cocks to make another record as good as *Beers, Steers, and Queers*, and nobody was mistaken.

Replacing the catchy bass lines and pleasantly over-distorted drums with over-production and lame attempts at humor, the Cocks have created an incredibly dull and unimaginative little record here. They cover "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy." TEE HEE! In a nutshell, the Cocks suck.

**No Borderline** by Copernicus. A+ Boy, here's some catchy stuff! If the idea of a kooky old gentile fellow spewing out pseudo-philosophical drivel like "Does that cigarette exist? Nothing exists! It's all an illusion, my friend!" while overdone theatrical music and cheesy jazz flail around in the background appeals, then, my favorite sweetheart baby sugarplum, this is the record for you.

Apparently this is his fifth record, so he must have some fans somewhere. It doesn't kick my butt as hard as, say, the last Distorted Pony album, but it definitely has its moments.

**Thunder Perfect Mind** by Nurse With Wound. A+ This hot new slab of wax is sure to take Alternative Nation by storm! Sounding a lot like what Pearl Jam would sound like if they replaced Eddie Vedder with a bunch

of sound effects and fired everybody else in the band, this band has developed a devoted following with their clever blend of primitive noise, recorded samples and grungy synthesizer bloop.

Although this CD contains only two tracks (the 24-minute "Cold" and the 33-minute "Colder Still"), it's bound to be right up there with Juliana Hatfield as the best progressive rock release of 1993. If you love amplified heartbeats and little beeping noises, then girlfriend/honey child fiancée, this is the record for you.

**Perverved By Language** by The Fall. Line Records A+ Actually, this album came out in 1983, but it's really good.

**Tenko Ikue Mori** by Death Praxis. A+ Death Praxis are two pretentious Japanese women who like to play electronic drums and wail out words in some weird language that's hard to understand. Kinda like the Indigo Girls except they don't have a huge lesbian following.

**Alapalooza** by "Weird Al" Yankovic. F+ I adore Mr. Yankovic. I own all seven of his previous albums. I've seen his movie three times. I even went to his concert with my mom. But this album sucks the skin right off my banana. He parodies "MacArthur Park," for Chrissake! If you like crap, then dude-o-rama, check it out.

**Koksofen** by Caspar Brotzmann Massaker. A+ This guy is a virtuoso guitarist, like Steve Vai or Ash Bowie, but this isn't rock by any means.

It's tribal and weird and German and scary and aaaaaah. Good giggly-wiggly guitars, though! If you consider yourself a guitar fan, check this thing out. If you survive all five songs (61 minutes worth), consider yourself a true young rocker, just like Evan Dando. Word.

**Not Richard, But Dick** by The Dead Milkmen. A+ Catchy as Dad's new fish. Most people forgot about this band after "Bitchin' Camaro" topped the college charts back in '85, but they're still at it, doing that simple, poppy-punky thing with the occasional wacky lyric.

This is their seventh album, and, although shorter than the central portions of *F West*, it is nevertheless bound to please with tunes like "The Infant of Prague Customized My Van," which is about how to preserve dead people so they don't rot, and "I Dream Of Jesus," about a woman who keeps Our Savior cooped up in a bottle.

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MARK PRINDLE

Tribe's Third Grooves On With a Mellow Vibe

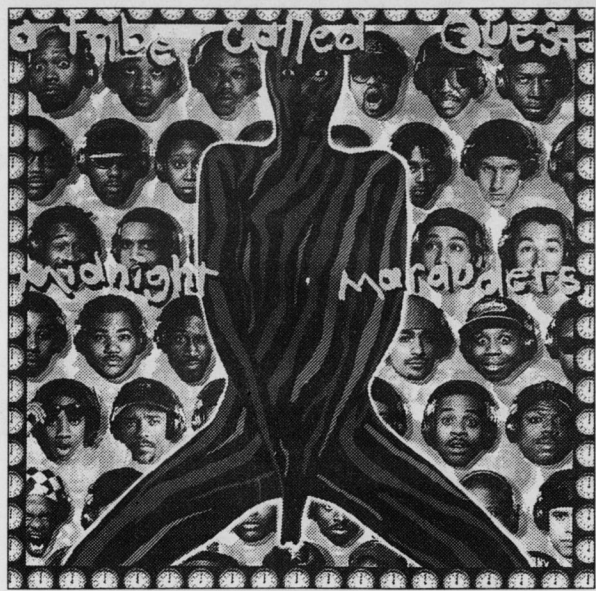
If you are one of those people who only reads the first or last sentence of any particular review in order to find out the answer to your one question, I'll make it easy on you: Yes, this CD is worth the \$12.95 that it will cost you.

True hip hop fans, read on. *Midnight Marauders*, the latest release from A Tribe Called Quest, the rap group by which other mellow acts are now measured, is on target. While *Marauders* lacks some of the humor and roughness of the Tribe's first two albums, it is full of grooves and lyrics that other rappers are far from matching.

The album is narrated by the Midnight Marauders Tour Guide, who sounds disquietingly like Caroline. Her voice appears as the introduction to the album and as commentary on most of the songs. The album's first song, "Steve Biko (Stir It Up)" is completely original and bears no resemblance to either Bob Marley's or Peter Gabriel's songs with those titles.

It's laid back with a smooth rhythm track, which contains Bobby McFerrin-type body noises. The rappers' soft-spoken style remains refreshing even on their third album, with lyrics from Phife like, "I'll take it back, I'm the Indian Giver/MC's take notes as I stand and deliver."

"Award Tour" is a great song that the Tribe played at their Memorial Hall concert and is a flat-out hit. The drums are a



Phife and Q-Tip's soft-spoken style is refreshing on "Midnight Marauders," although the album lacks some of their previous humor and roughness.

little more upbeat than on most of this album's cuts, and the background synthesizer has a cool melody. Q-Tip pushes it along with his lines: "Lyrically I'm Mario

Andretti on the Momo/Ludicrously speedy or infectious with the slo-mo." The chorus is smooth, and, background voices name off cities between verses.

A disappointing cut is "8 Million Stories," which recounts bad things that happen in the city and remains pessimistic throughout. This is atypical of the Tribe's style, and the group comes off sounding crabby.

"We Can Get Down" has an old-school beat with a funky bass line, and sounds like it could have been on Tribe's second album. Phife brings forth a smile with his rhymes: "I be three albums deep but I don't wanna go pop/Too many candy rappers seem to be at the top."

The track that will really take you back to Tribe's old stuff, though, is "Electric Relaxation," which they also played at their concert here. Finally, some of their original sense of humor shines through, as Phife says, "I like 'em brown, yellow, Puerto Rican or Haitian/Name is Phife dog from the Zulu nation."

"Lyrics To Go" is a strange song with a psychedelic sample in the background but almost no drums. It seems like the listener is waiting for the beat to finally kick in during the whole tune, but it never does. Still, Q-Tip rescues the track with his lines: "If they're in my path, I'll overstep the critters/Give y'ass the willies and ya moms'll get the jitters."

The slowest and mellowest tune on the CD is called "Keep It Rollin'." This is a smooth track, and Phife kicks lyrics like, "Styles be fat like Jackie Gleason, the rest like Art Carney/People love the Dog like the kids love Barney."

Read the first sentence.

BRANDON SHARP

Music Review "Midnight Marauders" B+

Guitarist's Acid Jazz Goes a Little Too Commercial

Acid jazz has the same relationship to jazz that dancehall reggae has to reggae: purists don't dig it, old folks don't get it, but the kids understand.

Jamaican-born guitarist Ronny Jordan, one of the key players in the acid jazz scene, will be familiar even to those who don't follow obscure British trends: his song "No Time to Play" is one of the highlights of Guru's *Jazzmatazz*, and his aesthetic vision—that hip hop and acoustic jazz are both branches of the same tree—dominates Guru's record.

Jordan's warm tone and fresh, soulful

improvisational style, devoid of cliches or predictable phrases, has made him one of England's most popular jazz players. In Britain his status rivals that of tenor (and fellow 4th and B'way artist) Courtney Pine. Unfortunately, Jordan shares with Pine not only considerable technical gifts and crossover charm but a weakness for muddy production and fusion-y instrumentation.

Three quarters of *The Quiet Revolution*,

Jordan's new one, is groovy, provocative, danceable stuff. The opening cut, "Season For Change," featuring a didactic rant by Guru, offers both rhythmic drive and melodic inventiveness.

The record's other highlights—"Come With Me," "Under Your Spell"—reflect the first Brand New Heavies record in their simultaneously relaxing and invigorating feel.

Too bad "The Morning After" and "Vanston Place" sound like out-takes from a Whitney Houston album complete with cheap organ washes, drippy sound effects

and wan playing. And, though the drive is intact on "Tinsel Town," the synth playing could be right out of Kenny G.

This kind of overproduction was typical of '70s jazz and early '60s soul, but if Jordan's trying to bring jazz to the masses he's got to keep commercial pressures from rubbing the edge off his music. Or perhaps *The Quiet Revolution* is aiming for Quiet Storm radio?

Incidentally, the good Ronny Jordan can be heard on Island's recent *Rebirth of Cool* collection, along with Stereo MCs, MC Solaar and Freestyle Fellowship.

SCOTT TIMBERG

Music Review "The Quiet Revolution" B

Fanclub's 'Thirteen' Sticks in Your Head

Pity the poor state of rock and roll in the United Kingdom in the past few months. Indie-dance has come and gone, the "shoegazers" have been the target of savage derision by the ever-fickle British music press, and even the Suede backlash appears imminent. All Britain seems left with is a morass of techno-glop (even U2 embraced techno with their latest album).

Meanwhile, in America, rock and roll is flourishing. Up-and-comers like the Smashing Pumpkins, Urge Overkill,



England's Teenage Fanclub explores heartache and bliss without sappiness on "Thirteen." Their affection for early '70s power pop is obvious, but they offer a tribute to it rather than simply mimicking the Big Star sound.

MERRETTE MOORE

Music Review "Thirteen" A-

the Breeders and Belly are poised to join heavyweights Nirvana, Pearl Jam, and REM at the top of the pop music mountain. The Yanks have even managed to make major waves in Britain, much to the widely-publicized chagrin of the bands overseas.

Hope is on the horizon for the Brits, though. This fall's British releases include pleasant surprises from veterans James and The Wonder Stuff as well as a vastly improved Blur. And now Teenage Fanclub is set to do major battle on both sides of the Atlantic with their current release *Thirteen*.

Way back in 1991, just before "grunge" became a household word, TFC released *Bandwagonesque*, which SPIN magazine claimed was the "best album by white people in ten years."

*Bandwagonesque* was indeed an LP of simplistic brilliance. Owing a huge debt to Big Star and a smaller one to Neil Young, the Fanclub whipped out a classic batch of tunes which fondly recalled the glory days of rock and roll while sounding vitally fresh.

*Thirteen* sees TFC back in fine form and not straying too far (thank heavenly goodness) from the formula which made the last album so superior.

Like those on *Bandwagonesque*, the songs on *Thirteen* are mainly about one thing:

girls—talking to them, thinking about them, and being in love with them. TFC manages to explore the heartache and bliss of relationships without succumbing to the sappiness that you hear in so many songs about love.

All of the tracks on *Thirteen* will stick in your head. Like the best Big Star tunes, these songs employ ragged harmonies and gently rocking rhythms, making them irresistible to all but the most jaded rock and roll fan.

Among the best cuts is "The Cabbage," a sort of heroic "Our love will conquer the world" tune that recalls the innocent charm of early '70s power-pop. Another gem is "Radio," a rocker on which guitarist Raymond McGinley sings about the joys of riding in his car, "listening to the AM" and thinking about his girl.

On the all-too-brief "Ret Liv Dead" guitarist Norman Blake tries to convince himself to stop thinking about a lost love. When he exclaims in vain "I don't know what to do," you want to tell him that we've all been there before and that everything will be alright.

Other highlights include "Tears Are Cool," where McGinley croons to his lover over a jangly guitar riff, and "Gene Clark," a reference to the former Byrd, which would sound entirely in place on Neil Young's 1969 album *Everybody Knows This Is Nowhere*.

For those smart enough to buy an early copy of *Thirteen*, the album includes an additional six tracks.

These bonus tracks include a faithful folkie rendition of Phil Ochs's "Chord of Fame" and a catchy, playful cover of Gram

Parson's "Older Guys."

Some people will dismiss this album as a Big Star rip-off or yet another attempt by Generation Xers to live in someone else's past.

True, TFC may wear their Big Star influence on their sleeves and obviously love their early '70s power-pop records, but they rework these influences effectively into a compelling sound for the '90s. That is what rock and roll, in this decade, or any other for that matter, is all about.

So maybe Teenage Fanclub will help uplift the malaise that currently exist in the British pop scene. At the end of "Norman III," Norman Blake sings "Yeah, I'm in love with you/ And you know that its true" over and over again.

It makes you want him, as well as Teenage Fanclub, to go on forever.

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