

Album Charts

College Music Journal

1. Camper Van Beethoven  
*Key Lime Pie*
2. Red Hot Chili Peppers  
*Mother's Milk*
3. Sugarcubes  
*Here Today, Tomorrow ...*
4. Big Audio Dynamite  
*Megatop Phoenix*
5. Mighty Lemon Drops  
*Laughter*
6. Bad Brains  
*Quickness*
7. Meat Puppets  
*Monsters*
8. B-52's  
*Cosmic Thing*
9. The Mekons  
*... Rock-n-Roll*
10. Tracy Chapman  
*Crossroads*

WXYC

1. Spacemen 3  
*Playing with Fire*
2. Muscikas  
*The Prisoner's Song*
3. Mudhoney  
*Mudhoney*
4. Mekons  
*... Rock-n-Roll*
5. Various Artists  
*Passion Sources*
6. Lenny Kravitz  
*Let Love Rule*
7. Neil Young  
*Freedom*
8. Various Artists  
*Live at the Knitting Factory*
9. Das Damen  
*Mousetrap*
10. Lush  
*Scar*

# Drummer's return heralds heyday

## Psychedelic Furs

Book of Days  
Columbia  
●●● 1/2

The Psychedelic Furs' first three albums, *Psychedelic Furs*, *Talk Talk Talk*, and *Forever Now*, were musical landmarks. The two subsequent releases, *Mirror Moves* and *Midnight to Midnight*, were pale imitations (we won't discuss the band's perfectly wretched remake of its own "Pretty in Pink" for the film of the same name). On *Book of Days*, the band comes close to fulfilling the promise of its first records.

One reason for the Furs' resurrection is the return of drummer Vince Ely, who left after *Forever Now*. Ely dominates the album with his driving, powerful sound. Lead vocalist Richard Butler sounds slightly less self-assured than he did on the band's other albums. He fails to make use of the rhythmic monologues that have characterized Furs tunes such as "Pulse" and "Run and Run."

Guitarist Tim Butler and bassist John Ashton work to create the band's original, complex sound, once termed "beautiful chaos" by Richard Butler. But the sound is muddy in places, missing the raw saxophones of the first two albums. Producer David M.

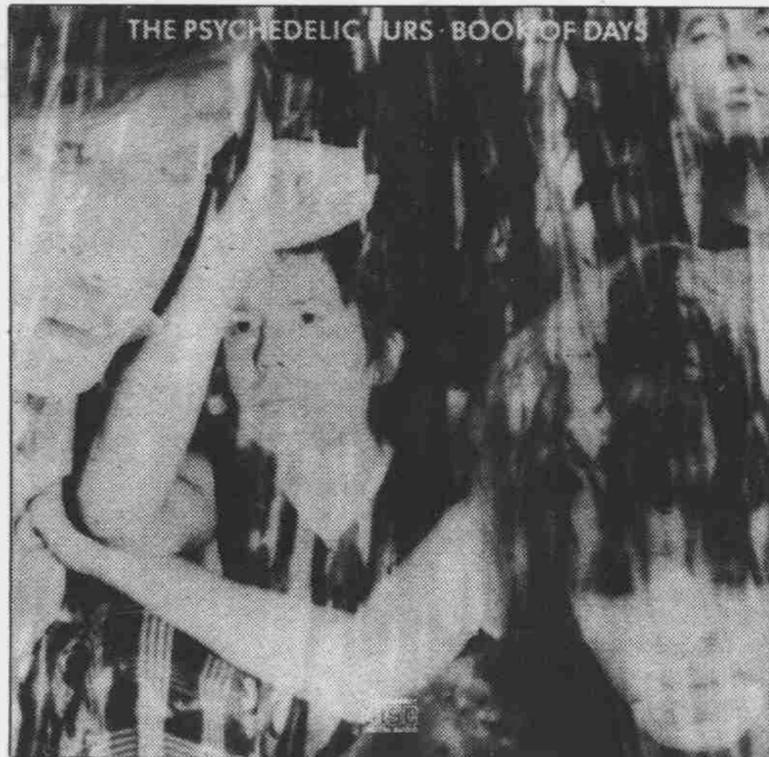
## BRIAN SPRINGER albums

Allen, known for his work with the Cure, has given the Furs a Cure-ish sound on several cuts.

*Book of Days* is divided into two contrasting halves — the slower, brooding first side and the upbeat, rather sparse sound of side two. Side one is rather rough going in places. It lacks a well-positioned mood-breaker in the vein of "We Love You" or "Mr. Jones."

The first few cuts work to fill out the sound of "Sister Europe," from the band's debut. "Shine," "Entertain Me," and the title track float like smoke, with vocalist Butler adding such gloomy lyrics as "I feel the dark even closer now" (from "Shine") or "I fear for my life/The road is poison" ("Book of Days"). The songs, though often droning, work rather well. Again, less repetitive sequencing would have helped. Side one's final tune, "Torch," is a different sound for the Furs, with its quiet acoustic guitar.

Side two is much more interesting. "Wedding" is the album's best cut, with its stripped-down sound. Richard Butler seems more at home with the faster songs. "House" starts quietly, then erupts into the rock sound of "Into You Like a Train"



from *Talk Talk Talk*, complete with distorted guitar. Butler spins a yarn of divorce, which does "shake this house."

"Parade" uses an approach akin to the Cure's "In Between Days" or "Love Song," with a similar bass line. "Mother-Son" and "I Don't Mine" continue the trend of upbeat tempos with noisy guitar.

*Book of Days* is a return to form for the Psychedelic Furs, which is certainly welcome after two lackluster releases. While the album lacks the magic of the band's first two LPs, it is a solid effort that should sound good in concert. Sequencing is the album's most serious flaw. The album doesn't find the Furs at their absolute best, but it's sure great having them back.

# Major-label debut doesn't squelch sense of humor

## NRBQ

Wild Weekend

Virgin  
●●●●

Here comes Terry, here comes Al, here comes Joey, here comes Tom. The boys from NRBQ are back, with their first album of new material in several years, and they don't disappoint on this consistent 12-song disc. *Wild Weekend* is the band's debut release for Virgin Records and marks a new stage in its 20-year history.

Without a major record deal for

## DOUG EDMUNDS albums

most of its career, NRBQ managed to build a loyal national following by touring relentlessly and releasing numerous quality LPs on the relatively small but well-respected Rounder label. *Tiddlywinks*, *Grooves In Orbit*, and *At Yankee Stadium* (the last on Mercury Records), contain some of the group's finest work and make it hard to understand why the New Rhythm and Blues Quartet never became bigger stars in the late '70s or '80s.

Then again, these four skilled musicians sure don't look like your

average pop stars and never really seemed too concerned with reaching the kind of mass audience they deserve. They were too busy crafting their unique blend of pop, rock, R&B and writing witty, high-spirited, slice-of-life songs to get caught up in the race for fame.

But as anyone who has heard or seen the band knows, NRBQ is hard to resist. The financial and creative support of Virgin Records should help expand the group's audience and may even secure it some long-overdue commercial radio airplay.

*Wild Weekend* certainly has hit potential, even though it stays true to the NRBQ tradition of tight rhythmic grooves, simple and often silly lyrics, a mixture of old-fashioned pop styles and three distinct lead vocalists. The record by no means redefines the band's sound, but a greater emphasis on production and more densely-layered arrangements than in the past does push NRBQ a few steps closer to the musical mainstream.

Luckily, the songs are strong enough to withstand this slicker treatment. "It's A Wild Weekend," an old surf instrumental to which the band added lyrics, somehow transcends its cliché-ridden melodic structure and sounds like the freshest rock'n'roll party song in years. Tom Ardolino's distinctive snap-crackle-

pop drumming actually carries the song, providing it with that elusive element musicians call "feel."

The next track, "Little Floater," a love song about an automobile, bounces along on Joey Spampinato's punchy bass line and Terry Adams' carnival-like piano part. The stop-and-go arrangement here is a wonderful complement to the song's "driving in my car" theme and proves the band's ability to breathe life into even the most banal topics. "If I Don't Have You" showcases a fine melody and vocal by Joey that sounds like early Marshall Crenshaw.

NRBQ's zanier side appears on "Boozoo, That's Who!," a rollicking tribute to Zydeco hero Boozoo Chavis, who lends some accordion during the song's instrumental break. The nursery-rhyme simplicity of the tune's lyrics indicate the healthy sense of humor in the band. (These are the same guys who recorded an album with pro wrestling guru Captain Lou)

Side two's opener, "Poppin' Circumstance," revolves around its clever title, a phrase Adams uses to describe all the little perks in life. Among the things he cites as poppin' circumstances are "a hole in one and a red squirt gun," "me and the girls on a tilt-a-whirl," and "a fresh macaroon and a new Monk tune." Silly as it sounds, it works beauti-

fully. Al Anderson's blazing guitar work makes "Immortal For A While" more than just a standard R&B jam. He gets to show off his talents more here than anywhere else on the disc, but for many fans this might not be enough. "Not enough Big Al!" is one of the few complaints about *Wild Weekend*.

The last two songs on the LP set up the contrast between NRBQ's quiet, pop-ballad side and its more rocking rhythm and blues side. "This Love Is True" could have come straight out of the Beatles' catalogue, right down to the tight-knit harmonies, while "Like A Locomotive" chugs along appropriately down a familiar R&B track.

No big surprises here, but certainly *Wild Weekend* is a welcome return from one of today's least pretentious, easy-to-like bands: NRBQ, that's who!

## What The Ratings Mean

- — miserable
- — mediocre
- — enjoyable
- — quite good
- — unmissable

**Mariakakis'**  
**Restaurant & Bakery**  
**A Chapel Hill Favorite!**

A friendly, family-owned restaurant serving superb Greek & Italian dishes • handmade pizza • beer & wine mixed drinks • desserts & pastas • banquet rooms

Serving Mon.-Sat. 11 am-9 pm  
15-501 ByPass, next to Eastgate Shopping Center  
942-1453•968-8610•(Across from the Holiday Inn)