

music charts

WXYZ

- Falling off the Planet**  
compilation (local bands)
- Musci/Venosta**  
A Noise, a Sound (world collage)
- Dog Faced Hermans**  
Hum of Life (Scotch/Dutch punk)
- Superchunk**  
On the Mouth (local punk)
- New Bomb Turks**  
Destroy-oh-Boy (punk rock)
- Paris**  
Sleeping with the Enemy (rap)
- Treepeople**  
Just Kidding (Idaho punk pop)
- Digable Planets**  
reachin' (lounge jazz rap)
- Charlie Feathers**  
Uh Huh Honey (rockabilly legend)
- Basehead**  
Not in Kansas Anymore (hip hop)

Top 10

- Snow**  
Informor
- Silk**  
Freak Me
- Dr. Dre**  
Nuthin' But A "G" Thing
- Whitney Houston**  
I Have Nothing
- Jade**  
Don't Walk Away
- Whitney Houston**  
I'm Every Woman
- Duran Duran**  
Ordinary World
- Arrested Development**  
Mr. Wendal
- Ugly Kid Joe**  
Cat's In The Cradle
- Bon Jovi**  
Bed of Roses

—Billboard

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Cappuccino music keeps listener warm

Bettie Serveert

Palomine

Matador Records

●●●● 1/2

**B**y golly, it's only April, and already critics are hailing this record as 1993's *Imperial f.f.r.r.* (Unrest) or *Slanted and Enchanted* (Pavement). Reviews of Netherlands fuzzpop quartet Bettie Serveert have run in *Spin*, *Alternative Press*, *Sassy* and *Rolling Stone*. So were the glowing reviews justified?

"Leg," the opening track, was the warm and cozy. Slow, chiming guitars gradually speed up, drums are hardly there and bass keeps the quietness nailed to the ground as lead singer Carol van Dijk croons "Tuesdays and Fridays, I wait at the bus stop/And guess who won't show up/I'm tired of waiting ... for you." Van Dijk's and Peter Visser's guitars are jangly, and they mingle with those old pals feedback and distortion. Along with Herman Bunschoeke's rumbling bass and Berend Dubbe's sloppy drums, you could easily compare them to Pavement, except you don't get the Lou Reed/Ray Davies-with-a-stuffy-nose singer this time around.

Van Dijk possesses the voice that has been criminally missing in rock: an amazing blend of the quiet sensuality of Margo Timmons (Cowboy Junkies), the sunny warmth of Edie Brickell and the assured toughness of Chrissie Hynde (Pretenders). She croons, shrieks and whispers, often in the same line, and

album

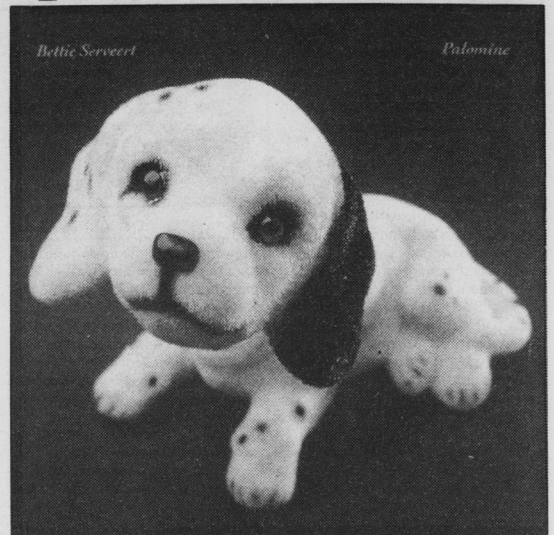
KRISTI TURNBAUGH

always with soulful beauty.

Bettie's songs seem meant to be listened to when it's raining outside and you're inside — keeping warm, staring out the window and sipping cappuccino. When listening, you get the feeling of familiarity that you've heard this stuff before (and I don't mean Pavement), but you don't know where and you don't really care except that you're hearing it now and that's all that matters.

The eerily quiet "Brain-Tag" especially highlights van Dijk's warm vocals: "Down under lock and key, there's a brain-tag to every secret/Now comes a time to figure out whether we should keep it/Feel familiar and I wanna feel some more/Have I ever laid my hands on you before?" In "Tom Boy," the first single, she shows her vulnerability when she sings, "From where I stand I can see/They've got the upper hand on me" but in the chorus, she fights back by asserting "You call me a tom boy/And I love it/'Cause only a tom boy/Could stand above it." Even in the wistful, lonely "Leg," van Dijk explodes, screaming, "You won't have me worried. I can still take care of myself."

Obvious influences like the Velvet Underground and Neil Young apply, but don't live by them. Live by this: the presence of Karen Carpenter's drum riffs (it says so in the liner notes). Bettie earns extra cool points for having the impeccable taste to cover a Sebadoh song, "Healthy Sick." I guess that makes



Bettie's small stuffed dog

up for their dumb name, which comes from Dutch tennis legend Betty Stove (Bettie Serveert means "Betty serves").

Most of the songs on *Palomine* start slow, slowly speed up and maintain some sort of mid-tempo groove with the same three or four chords played over and over and over. (Only one tune, "Kid's Allright" flat out rocks from start to finish, complete with the double tracking of van Dijk's voice.) And com-

ing from someone who worships fast, punky tunes with little concern for understandable vocals, this wouldn't seem to be my flavor o' the month. But I sit alert, attentive and Indian-style in front of the stereo when listening to Bettie Serveert, entranced by its loveliness. Check them out when they hit *Cat's Cradle* on April 15. That should be kinda lovely, too.

How much do they suck? Let us count the ways

FIREHOSE

Mr. Machinery Operator

Columbia Records

**M**y roommate argues that it's not fair to give this album only one blob. He argues that the only reason I don't like this album is because I don't like funky bass stuff and faster jazz stuff.

He may have a point. I'm not real fond of the Sex Police, and I'm not real

album

MARK PRINDLE

familiar with jazz technique. He thinks this record sounds OK. In fact, he kinda likes it.

I kinda liked the old Minutemen stuff, but I've never been real fond of FIREHOSE; I just don't think their stuff is as interesting.

Yeah, me neither. So when I picked up this *Mr. Machinery Operator* thing, I thought, "Hey! I bet I'm not gonna like this!"

But I was willing to listen. And I kinda enjoyed the first song, "Formal Introduction," which has an enjoyable screwy guitar line with words like "I fuck the U.S. Army and they fuck me," and "you scratch my back, I'll scratch your jock-itch."

Now there's a great pick-up line for ya! You just can't get any more romantic than personal fungi.

The vocals were atrocious, but then, I can't sing worth a flaming pile of dog doo either.

Then that second song was kinda generic, but still it was OK, and I started to have high hopes, but the next three songs were real bad!

One sounded just like newer Dinosaur Jr, and one was a boring instrumental, and the other one ... well, it just hurt.

But I liked "Powerful Hankerin'." I shook my groove thing to the neat



The decapitated members of FIREHOSE

wiggly harmonic guitar thing, and there were more dumb sex lyrics ... at least I think they were sex lyrics.

Truthfully, I have no clue. Might be about fishing, for all I know. But I liked it!

But then what happened?

The next eight songs all bit my big kangaroo! That's what happened! I couldn't sit through any of them!!!

Not even the minute-and-a-half drum solo!

The Meat Puppets cover was even more boring than the Meat Puppets themselves, and the rest were just atrocious, and the vocals were horrible.

Superchunk's own "Mac" did a guitar solo on one of the songs, but the song still sucked, although I really LIKE Superchunk, and ... why does this record have to suck so bad?!!

I'm gonna get more threats on my

answering machine from people who take their music too seriously.

FIREHOSE are playing at the *Cat's Cradle* on April 12, and somebody's gonna tell them, "Hey -- some reviewer guy trashed your album. You want me to give you his address?"

Mike Watt's gonna hate me, but I did like the Minutemen, and I can tell that these guys can really play their instruments, but the songs are abysmal.

ratings

- — forget it
- — wait for a bargain bin buy
- — tape it from a friend
- — buy it
- — buy two copies

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