



Big Takeover #44 was printed in the summer of 1999. The reviews below were all written for this issue, but not all appeared in it, and some were shortened because of space constraints...

angry samoans
the 90s suck and so do you
 (triple x)

It's still Metal Mike Saunders singing and Bill Vockerth on drums, but this version of the Angry Samoans certainly doesn't pack the wallop the band had in their early days with smashes like "Get Off The Air" and "Lights Out". Instead you get a batch of basic punk/pop songs that have the feel of some of the slower tracks on the first Ramones lp but without the sharp hooks, and Saunders' vocals have a dull, prozac laced sort of feel to them – there's no fire or spirit. A downer. (PO Box 862629, LA, CA 90086-2529)

davie allan and the arrows
fuzz fest
"shape of things to come" 7"
 (total energy)

Largely unknown though he's been around for years, Davie Allan specializes in the sort of tasty guitar instrumentals that might have been heard in the 60s if Jimi Hendrix had played with the Ventures. Flashy but still tasteful, Allan's guitar swoops and soars through 17 rocking tracks that speak volumes without a word being sung. To call

it surf music doesn't do justice, since it hits hard and nastier than almost any surf instrumental band I've ever heard with the possible exception of the Mermen (another great group). The non-CD single is subtitled "Never mind **MAX FROST AND THE TROOPERS**" (the studio-only band who recorded the original version of "Shape Of Things To Come" for the soundtrack to the movie *Wild In The Streets*) and is two more tasty sides. Very fresh sounding and highly recommended. (POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

the andersons!
separated at birth
 (lime vinyl)

The debut CD by this LA power pop group brings me back to 1979, when bands like The Records were touted as the hereafter for a music world that was trying to reject punk. The Andersons pack nice tight harmonies into tunes with clever lyric ideas and cheerily inoffensive but reasonably strong guitar backing. While they lack a signature song of the class of "Teenarama" or "Starry Eyes", they do manage a consistently solid standard. I suspect that in a live show where the edges are allowed to show more that these guys are a hoot. (15030 Ventura Blvd., #22-302, Sherman Oaks, CA 91403)

the candysnatchers
human zoo!
 (go kart)

With some kids testosterone makes them explode into acne, but others explode into rock and roll bands. We seem to have a particularly severe case here. Although *Human Zoo!* is little more than mindless and directionless energy, it's so well done that it slots in with some of the better punk releases of the past year. Lots of tasty guitar flourishes to go with a singer who yells and screams a lot not so much because he's pissed off as because, well, sometimes it just feels good. (PO Box 20, Prince Street Station, NYC, NY 10012)

the criminals
tomorrow's too late
 (new disorder records)

This is a rather average example of high elbow action punk rock, and it reminds me of nothing less than the legions of mid 80s California hardcore bands that pretty much made a wasteland of indie music for 3 or 4 years. That scene is gone, and for the most part it has been good riddance to 'em. There's little about The Criminals that should excuse them from the same dismissal. (445 14th St., SF, CA 94103)

the dripping lips
ready to crack
“my heaven” 7”

(alive)

A pleasant surprise indeed to hear **BRIAN JAMES** (the founding member of **THE DAMNED** whose wild solos were a lot of what made their first album so great) once more. The guy has been all but invisible for years now, but he's back with a full length CD and a single vinylizing two of the CD tracks. While inconsistent and loaded with hack lyric writing, *Ready To Crack* still has enough tracks with first rate instrumentation ideas that it's well worth hearing. There's a fistful of powerhouse Detroit punk styled songs, but there's also several slow and bluesy numbers that break the tempo. A pleasant welcome back from an old hero. (POB 7112, Burbank, CA 91510)

even
“one side not” CDEP
“no surprises” CD single
come again

(rubber)

Melbourne's Fab Three, Even, strike again with a trio of releases representing a substantial batch of songs, especially if you are fortunate enough to score the bonus disc that comes with early copies of the full length *Come Again* CD. With the exception of the strong and buzzing single “No Surprises”, there's no overlap in songs between these discs, so all are worth tracking down for their infectious and hook laden songs with jangling pop guitars and harmonies straight out of Liverpool, 1965. The band are maybe a touch less rocking and more low key than in the past, but the material is strong and memorable regardless. A desperate sounding cover of **BLONDIE**'s “Presence Dear” from the bonus disc caps things nicely. (PO Box 32, Hawksburn, Vic 3142 Australia)

fortune and maltese and the phabulous
pallbearers
fortune and maltese and the phabulous
pallbearers

“leave no stone unturned” 7”

(get hip)

The last ten years has seen an excess of these 60s revival bands for my tastes. While I enjoy the handful of good ones, there are way too many who throw together songs without enough care to make something worthy of a CD. F&M are a little better than the average competition, but it's a telling sign that all the songs that make you take notice on this CD are covers. Like Jack I've been spending a lot of time listening to **PAUL REVERE AND THE RAIDERS** lately (their **SPIRIT OF '67** smash, “Louise”, appears here), and you know, you can't beat the original. The single tracks aren't on the lp

and it leaves a much better taste, maybe because the dose is smaller. (PO Box 666, Canonsburg, PA 15317)

garage fuzz
comfortable dimensions for suitable structures
(spicy)

I listen to tons of bands from countries outside of the mainstream, and one of the most common problems they have is an inability to complement good songs (when they have 'em) with powerful production. No such problem for this band of Brazilians...*garage* - my bleedin' eye! This is take no prisoners punk rock sprung straight from the womb of Husker Du and imbued with an absolutely gargantuan sonic attack. It's a strong statement to make, but their own material stands equal to, and maybe above, their cover (or the original) of the powerhouse **BULLET LAVOLTA** masterpiece “Dead Wrong”. An intense, awesome slab of five songs whose only fault is having an ending. (Caixa Postal 3811, SP-SP 01060-970 Brazil)

the gaza strippers
laced candy

(man's ruin)

RICK SIMS, former frontman of the brilliant mid-west band **THE DIDJITS** shows off his sensitive side on the Gaza Strippers debut CD. That happens in the spaces between songs...on the rest of this CD, he lets loose with the sort of monstrous rock and roll that levels entire city blocks. Having cleared waivers from a stint as DH with the **SUPERSUCKERS**, he's now free to return with his own band to the sort of thing the Didjits specialized in...intense, guitar mongering punk rock that's what might have resulted if Cheap Trick had tried to be the Dickies in 1978. And of course, being bereft of a single serious bone in his body, Sims serves up some of the most ridiculous lyrics around...guaranteed to turn you into a blathering 15 year old overnight. Terrific.

the ladonnas
rock you all night long

(scooch pooch)

Speaking of the Didjits, this little disc features the kind of full on blistering guitar/drums/bass attack that you'd normally have to buy a Didjits record to hear. Perhaps the best reference point I can give for this is to say that every one of these ten songs reminds me of the Stooges classic “Search and Destroy”, including an aggravated assault of **THE UNDERTONES** 2nd lp sleeper track “Hypnotized”. The only weak spot, and it's a minor one, is a singer who sounds like Popeye on amphetamines. Woah! (5850 West 3rd Street, Suite 209, Los Angeles, CA 90036)

the lazy cowgirls
"don't count me out" 7"

(chatterbox)

Longevity can be a curse...it can leave even a good band with nothing but a small die-hard group of followers and no hope to pick up new fans no matter how good they are. Singer **PAT TODD** has been fueling the Cowgirls high energy country-cum-Saints styled punk act since the mid 80s, and off a show I just saw last week, they haven't lost a thing despite replacing every other member of the band over the years. This single isn't their best, but the Dylan-esque acoustic flip side shows a new twist that suits Todd's voice really well, while the A side is the familiar pedal-to-the-metal approach that has served this band so well through the years. (PO Box 6492, Burbank, CA 91510)

million six
clean head

(satellite)

It's a fair bet that most punk rock bands that try putting 21 songs on a single CD will run out of ideas about half way through, but Million Six actually do a decent job of mixing things up and keeping it interesting. Part of the trick is lots of sub-two minute tracks, and part of it is good hooks and an ability to augment 3 chord rhythm guitar with some interesting leads and complementary vocals. Tracks like "Strike" and "Co-dependents" stick quite nicely to the ribs. The band seems a little short on ideas for words, but the wise move of omitting a lyric sheet helps this out...the singing sounds plenty good and rough without 'em. (920 East Colorado Blvd #151, Pasadena, CA 91106)

ninetynine
767

(endearing)

More or less a solo project for Australian **LAURA MACFARLANE**, this quirky set of 15 songs seems like something that would be at home on a label like Flying Nun. The unpolished production and mix leave this CD almost devoid of any bottom end, which combined with the little schoolgirl vocal style give the whole thing an amateurish charm that reminds me of things like early Swell Maps records, or more recently, perhaps something by Chris Knox. This one's a grower, but the question is still open as to how big it will grow. (PO Box 69009, 2025 Corydon Ave, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3P 2G9)

outpatients
outcasts II '85-'95

(free association)

Here's another one of those retrospectives that's made possible seemingly more by the falling price of CD manufacture than of a surge of demand for

the music. The Outpatients are reputed to have been one of the first hardcore bands in western Massachusetts (a distinction of no less merit than owning the first autobody shop in Winooski, Vermont, I suppose), but by the time they recorded this material they had clearly decided that metal would play better in Agawam. Lots of that grunty Marshall sounding guitar, deathly chord changes, and pointless leads. Ugh. (Radio City Station, PO Box 2195, New York, NY 10101-2195)

the panadolls
from the glitter to the gutter

(headmiles)

Got this one courtesy of the band's drummer, **ASHLEY THOMSON**, who's been on the Sydney scene since way back in the early 80s when he was with the excellent punk band, **THE KELPIES**. This band is quite a stretch from there...and it's a tough one to slot. They're heavy and grungey, but the ability of the players really shows through. Thomson told me to be sure to pay attention to the lyrics, and they for sure show more thought in one song than many bands can summon up for a full CD. It's a little complicated for my tastes, but I can imagine people who dig things like Catherine Wheel might flip for it. (po box 1700, double bay 2008, NSW, Australia)

the pills
wide awake with the pills

(monolith)

With their hyperactive style of power pop, Boston band The Pills leave the impression that their band name is also a code to live by. This disc is loaded with rocking amphetamine fueled songs with all three players going a hundred miles an hour at once...bass lines constantly running up and down the frets, drums beaten mercilessly and attention deficit disorder song writing that never holds the same thought for more than a couple bars. The chaos is held together by great singing...tough and punchy but right on the melody and with lots of killer backing. The songs themselves are maybe a little long on flash and short on memorable substance, but this CD is still great fun. (PO Box 990980, Boston, MA 02199-0980)

pin ups
lee marvin

(spicy)

An e-mail friend in Brazil sent me a tape of some of his favorite local bands, and then sent me CDs of the bands I liked best off it...the best way to find out about new groups! This outfit isn't a juggernaut like labelmates Garage Fuzz, but they have their own charm. Layer upon layer of moody drone pop guitars lie beneath a layer of innocently understated female vocals. The songs aren't

complex and they don't have big hooks, but they do have that little something that makes them stick in your head and get stronger with repeated listenings. (Caixa Postal 3811, SP-SP 01060-970 Brazil)

the posers
worse than nothing ep

(oink!)
Four tracks of high elbow action oi punk rock. Yeah, it's well produced with a meaty guitar sound and solid drums, but it's that same old deathly boring mid-80s rant-punk with dull buzzsaw guitar chording that's about as hook free as possible. It's really hard to believe that people are still playing this stuff. (PO Box 27813, Washington, DC 20038-7813)

road rage
nothin' to declare

(radical)
This issue I seem to have been blessed with an unusually strong pile of punk CDs to review...here's another one. From the northern UK, this band plays the kind of warp speed powerhouse anthems that just sound right when topped with snarling UK accents from a singer who seems like he's about to bust all the bloodvessels in his forehead. You know the sound; UK Subs, Angelic Upstarts, Sham 69, etc, but then make 'em play mid 80s hardcore with 90s production and you're about there. A nice feel for hooks doesn't hurt...starting with the killer vocal/guitar interplay of "Borderline" and continuing through "When We Were Boys" to the closing "Danyell". Not one to drive to! (77 Bleeker St., NYC, NY 10012)

smack
on you

(amsterdamned)
As a big fan of Finnish underground music, I've known for a long time that many great bands from that country have cited Smack as a major influence. Up to now all I'd actually heard of them was a couple single sides that didn't make much of an impression. This CD is a retrospective of their mid-80s career, and to these ears it sounds a little too much like another metal band who happened to have some Stooges records in their collection. There are some decent moments in this, but it's very Hanoi Rocks or GNR styled hard rock with at times too much emphasis on the WE RAWK MAAN aspect of things. (PO Box 862558, Los Angeles, CA 90086-2558)

l.e.s. stitches
lower east side

(ng)
When the opening "Down The Drain" hits with that mind blowingly tasty intro guitar lick, it seems like this second CD by New York's L.E.S. Stitches is going to be one for the ages. The vocal performance pulls it back to the pack a bit with a little too much of the "I wanna be like Stiv" schtick, but even with that, this is certainly a *macho grande* serving of big time punk rock guitar and sing along hooks that would've made Sham 69 run hard to keep up in their heyday. There's a load of super tunes other than that first one..."Rustic City", "NYC Is Dead" and "Could Just Die" to name three examples. The lyrics in general let the band down a bit, but it's still a great blast at the gut level. (61 Van Dam St., 2nd Floor, NYC, NY 10013)

the strike
shots heard round the world

(victory)
Lovers of the early Clash, Stiff Little Fingers and **NEWTOWN NEUROTICS** (their haunting "This Fragile Life" gets covered here) should read this review carefully, because The Strike are a band to play alongside those three. This second CD builds on their first...more anthemic calls to arms for poor and oppressed of all types. And this time they've augmented the sound with trumpet pieces that accentuate the rally-like atmosphere. All the sloganeering would go for nothing if the tunes weren't there, but this CD is loaded with catchy 77-styled punk rock songs. By the time they close with a stirring song about Frank Little, a mining union organizer who was lynched for his work in Montana around the time of the first world war, you'll be ready to march, too! (PO Box 470605, Chicago, IL 60647)

swinging utters
the sounds wrong ep

(fat)
This terrific five track CDEP is the perfect tonic for anyone whose life has been empty since the demise of the Clash and Stiff Little Fingers in the early 80s (assuming you've missed the Strike CD above!). Dated haircuts aside, I've been a fan since their first release, but there's something about the short, concise wallop this particular release packs that makes it my favorite. The guitar sound could've been sampled from *Inflammable Material*, the vocals have that same Jake Burns growl, and lyrically these guys have a thing or two to say with a poetic touch in how they say it. (PO Box 193690, SF, CA 94119-3690)

twigs

beast

(straight bloke)

no more 24

(sunspot)

Although they come from rainy Bergen on Norway's west coast, the droney but energetic and tense pop/rock sound of Twigs seems very English to this listener. Double tracked guitars back **KATY PENNY'S** vulnerable vocals, which remind me a bit of the style of the early 80s UK band Girls At Our Best. The songs here are growers, and after about ten plays I've found that every song on *No More 24* is turning into an attention grabber. When it isn't the music doing the grabbing, it's the lyrics. Best of these might be the powerful "Postscript To Her Letter". *Beast* is the earlier release, and though it has fewer tracks, boasts a great opener in its title song. (Gronnevollen 14, N-5016, Bergen, Norway)

various

nuggets (boxed set)

(rhino)

This fabulous CD repackaging of the legendary *Nuggets* compilation lps provides an unbeatable combination: on the one hand, the importance of these songs to the development of rock and roll simply can't be understated, and secondly, far from being some fossilized piece of musical archeology, it's loaded with great songs that feel as alive and fresh coming in glorious Reed-Solomon encoded digital sound in 1999 as they did thirty five (!) years ago when the bands documented here first recorded, or even 27 years ago in 1972, when **LENNY KAYE** (ex-**PATTI SMITH GROUP** guitar player) lovingly compiled the first double lp *Nuggets* compilation for release on Elektra Records (the label that brought you the Stooges, too).

The liner notes here aptly describe it: most of the bands here *wanted* to be the next Beatles, Rolling Stones, or Kinks, but lacked the musical talent to match their heroes. But as has so often happened in rock music over the years, sometimes something magical happens when a band tries to achieve things that are beyond their physical capabilities but not beyond their imagination. Even if for many of these bands the magic happened only on one song in their set, Lenny Kaye wanted to capture it in *Nuggets*.

Many of the first wave of punks in the late 70s feasted on *Nuggets*, and when those bands were ultimately succeeded by the garage revival of the late 80s, the relevance of *Nuggets* became even greater. The proof of this is that even if you've never heard the original of any of these songs, if you've been a fan of underground music from 1977

on you will find this loaded with familiar and loved tunes. Bands as diverse as the Nomads, the Inmates, the Rezillos, the Voodoo Dolls, the Undertones, the Lazy Cowgirls, the Mummies, the Ramones, the Plimsouls, the Marshmallow Overcoat, the Philistines, Eddie and The Hot Rods and Stiv Bators (just a sampling!) have covered *Nuggets* tracks.

Some *Nuggets* bands achieved substantial levels of success in their day and clearly had talent to match – **PAUL REVERE AND THE RAIDERS**, **THE TURTLES** and **THE STANDELLS**, for example. Most were relatively unheralded or completely unknown even in their own time, but on *Nuggets* it's the music that matters, and there are bands you've never heard of here that will take your breath away...whether it's the **KNICKERBOCKERS'** "Lies" – as good as any 1964 Beatles hit, **THE CHOIR'S** brilliant power pop standard "It's Cold Outside", **THE OUTSIDERS'** "Time Won't Let Me", **THE NAZZ** with their buzzing psychedelic "Open My Eyes", or **THE COUNT FIVE** roaring through "Psychotic Reaction" or any of the 112 other tracks here, you can't possibly fail to find your own pile of favorites.

The four CDs in this set are also available individually, but do yourself a favor and buy the box...it costs less per CD and you get a great 100 page booklet packed with liner notes, photos, sleeve art, and a paragraph on every song in the set. If you don't have the cash, hock your mom's microwave. This is one collection you can't afford to let slip by. (10635 Santa Monica Blvd., LA, CA 90025)

various

pop goes the world

(rpm)

This is at least the third power pop compilation on Greg Colburn's RPM label, and on this one he comes up with a hand of all aces. Having heard seemingly hundreds of power pop compilations with no more than a couple of good tracks each, I've been happily playing this one over and over and finding it loaded with heaps of catchy and rocking tunes that really stick in my head. Naming a couple standouts slights dozens of other worthy contenders, but I'll just say that old Aussie favorites like **EVEN**, **ICE CREAM HANDS**, **THE EARLY HOURS** and **KNIEVEL** are well complemented by tracks from bands like Sweden's **DORIAN GRAY** and **SODASPLASH**, Finland's **LEMONATOR** and the **SANDBUGS**, the hyperkinetic drumfest of Britain's **GARFIELD'S BIRTHDAY**, and ample stateside representation such as **HUGH**, **BROKEN DIAL RADIO** and **SHAKING DOG**. A radio station

with a playlist this good would be a fine thing indeed! (PO Box 10216, Baltimore, MD 21234)

various
world class punk
(roir)

For those who missed it, ROIR was an indie label from the early 80s that only released on cassette. They started promisingly enough with the first Bad Brains lp, the Fleshtones' *Blast Off*, the Stimulators' *Loud Fast Rules* and many others. Some were real gems. Others, including this one, didn't cut it. Intended to showcase great punk bands worldwide (27 countries represented), it instead shows how pervasive the infection of hardcore thrash was at the time. Most of this is bad songs, badly played and badly recorded, with the only merit being energy and enthusiasm. It could've been forgotten if they'd only spared us this reissue. (611 Broadway, Suite 411, NYC, NY 10012)

various
music to kill for
(dummy)

With 21 mostly first rate 90s punk and punk/ska tracks skimmed off an assortment of Dummy Records releases and sold for a list price of around \$4, it's hard to beat this collection. Unlike the usual compilation fare of leftovers and b-sides, what you get here is apparently the ace tracks by each band. **CUSTOM MADE SCARE** score the signature hit with the rollicking "White and Lazy", which conjures up images of the Circle Jerks doing "Wasted" many years back. Other highlights are tracks by **ODD NUMBERS**, **SWINGING UTTERS**, **NO USE FOR A NAME**, **SCREW 32**, **THE PILFERS**, and **THE SMOOTHS**, but there's little wrong with any of this. (6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 211, Hollywood, CA 90028)

various
deep thoughts
(nitro)

On a superficial level it might seem that this set isn't that much different from the Dummy compilation reviewed in this same issue. Both bristle with energetic punk tunes, and this one certainly has more well known bands on it. But too much of this is the kind of punk rock that goes over well in college frats...bands like the **VANDALS**, **SLOPPY**, **SECONDS**, **OFFSPRING**, **GUTTERMOUTH**, and **JUGHEAD'S REVENGE** rank pretty low on the meaningful music scale, unless your idea of meaning is the sort of statement that's conveyed by flatulence. Not to say that only songs with meaning have value (god knows I love tons of really silly music), but most of the jokes here are on the level of bad sitcom TV.

(7071 Warner Ave., Suite F736, Huntington Beach, CA 92647)

various
punk archives – 25 punk singles
(jungle)

Good value in bits per dollar with over 75 minutes of music, this compilation is a rather disjointed collection that wobbles back and forth between first and second wave punk bands. Despite that, it contains a fair number of classics...**JOHNNY THUNDERS** doing "Born To Lose", **THE NEUROTICS** great take of the **MEMBERS** "Solitary Confinement" (reworked into "Living With Unemployment"), **URBAN DOGS**' slashing "New Barbarians" (with **UK SUB CHARLIE HARPER** snarling out vocals), **ART ATTACKS**' comedic but brilliant "Punk Rock Stars" and a shambolically wonderful live **ONLY ONES** "Another Girl Another Planet". In between are many tracks that as singles languished for years in sale bins marked down to 49 cents, often for good reason, but are now regarded as holy relics in some circles. (13428 Maxella Ave., #251, Marina Del Rey, CA 90292)