



Big Takeover #46 was printed in the summer of 2000. The reviews below were all written for this issue but due to space limitations some of them may have been edited or cut.

american steel

rogue's march

(lookout)

Anyone who has spent much time listening to the great Leatherface CD "Mush" will instantly think of this as being a poor man's version of that band. They have the same acid-blasted vocal chord singing, similar guitar styling, and the overall passionate feel of their British counterparts. And calling them a poor man's version may be a disservice, because it's not like this is a weak CD. It has a pack of riveting songs, and what's more, they've stuck the best ones in the second half of the disc, so it just seems to get better as it goes. "Whiskey, Women and Blackguarding" is the point where the band kicks it into high gear, and from there on things pretty well smoke. (www.lookoutrecords.com, POB 11374 Berkeley, CA 94172-2374)

ann beretta

to all our fallen heroes

(lookout)

To Our Fallen Heroes is the second CD by this Richmond, Virginia punk outfit, and if this is sophomore slumping then more bands ought to be

taking this course load! "To Our Fallen Heroes" smokes most of today's punk competition with an incendiary set of anthemic tracks that merits comparisons to "Give 'Em Enough Rope" era Clash, first lp Stiff Little Fingers, and more recent bands like Rancid. There's about 8 songs here that are so powerful and catchy that most bands would count it a crowning achievement to have written just one of them. "Eye For An Eye", "Mad At The World", "Rumour Town"...one after the other. If you've been complaining that today's punk bands can't match the past, you need to try this one. (www.lookoutrecords.com)

backyard babies

total 13

(scooch pooch)

This is a US release of a CD that this Swedish band issued in their own country a couple years ago. It's one of the best examples going of the current Scandinavian epidemic of Stooges-like punk rock bands, a movement that includes outfits like the Hellcopters, Gluecifer, Turbonegro, and the Deadbeats, and it's a big improvement on the BBs own earlier efforts. This is a musical form that straddles a fine line in which bands can descend into cock-rock headbanging music, but when they get it right...and the Babies got it VERY right on this CD...the results can be explosive. The stuttered "c-c-c-c-can't do anything" line on "UFO Romeo" nails that song as a classic, and overall the Backyard Babies show a remarkable ability to be out-and-out ferocious without losing track of tunes and hooks. (www.subpop.com/scoochpooch, 5850 West 3rd St. Suite 209, Los Angeles, CA 90036)

bulemics/river city rapists

full on hate fuck (split CD)

(man's ruin)

Two bands from Austin combine to serve up a slab of furious, pedal to the metal Stooges influenced punk rock. The singer for the Bulemics has been studying too many high elbow action singers...isn't it getting a little stale to sing like some speech impaired maniac who can't hold his own drool in his mouth? The band behind him plays with fury but the songs lack any kind of a distinctive edge. The River City Rapists have a less annoying singer but more annoying songs. These are bands for people who thought GG Allin had something worth listening to. (mansruin@sirius.com, 610 22nd St. #302, SF, CA 94107)

consumed

hit for six

(fat)

The first full length CD by Britain's Consumed fulfills the promise they showed on their *Breakfast*

At *Papa's* CDEP of a year ago. These guys play with the same kind of full on attack that makes countrymen China Drum so great...the songs are aggressive and hard hitting as hell, but they're also stuffed full of little bits of guitar frosting that lift them high above the realm of simple 3 chord rock. The combination of speed and precision on display here at times is mind-boggling, but the songs themselves never get lost in pointless displays of technique. Consumed play like their lives depend on it...this is urgent, passionate, blazing white hot music and it ranks as one of the best CDs of the year. (mailbag@fatwreck.com, POB 193690, San Francisco, CA 94119)

the deadbeats

the deadbeats

(fueled up)

This rock'n'roll business is so damn confusing...let's review the rules here a bit. Stooges good, Guns'n'Roses bad. Yes, yes, that was how it went. New York Dolls good, Kiss bad. Yes, that was right, too. But, really, this is not much help in figuring out what to say about the case of Sweden's Deadbeats, a band that blasts away with primal energy and animal instinct and avoids letting the brain interfere as much as possible. At times I'm inclined to toss this away as a bunch of second rate hard rock, and other times I feel like it's a great slab of Detroit metal. This is a CD filled with hair-flying, head-banging, Bic-lighter moments, but as repulsive as that makes it sound, it's really a shit load of fun. Ann Arbor good, Stockholm even better, file this one under MOR (Mayhem Oriented Rock). (PO Box 14815, Fremont, CA 94539-4815)

deep reduction

deep reduction

(get hip)

Deep Reduction are a collaboration between ex-**RADIO BIRDMAN** legend **DENIZ TEK** and the **STUMP WIZARDS**, which was born out of Tek's production efforts for a CD of the latter band a year or so back. The result is an entertaining collection...not the fairly inaccessible sound of Tek's last solo lp, but not the sort of full on attack that might have been expected either. The variety works well...cutting from the bluesy "Yellow Engine Carcass" to the more rocking "Safety" (with Wizard **JACK CHIARRA** grabbing the mike) and then flipping over to a surprising cover of the **VIBRATORS** classic "Whips And Furs" keeps the interest up. The closing "Really A Flathead" tries to replicate the incredible rave up ending of Tek's great song "Outside", but doesn't quite make it. Overall this is a good effort, but one that's most likely to please people who were already Tek fans.

(gethip@gethip.com, Columbus and Preble Aves, Pittsburgh, PA 15233)

died pretty

out of the unknown

(citadel)

You simply can't afford to ignore this "best of" collection by one of the mostly gravely underrated rock and roll bands of the last 15 years. Perhaps it's because they don't fit any easily recognized slot, perhaps it's because they're from Australia, perhaps it's just cruel fate, but how can Died Pretty not have struck a chord in the hearts of more fans of inventive and heartfelt music? In my house at any rate, all these songs are so highly regarded that I hardly know where to begin in describing this set. The bludgeoning, thunderous drumfest of "Winterland", or the lush, gorgeous rock pop of "Blue Sky Day"? The dark moodiness of "Final Twist"? And what about the mid-period tracks from marvelous records like *Doughboy Hollow*...the piano fueled "D.C." or "Godbless". And even towards the end (and I'm not at all sure they're done), they made plenty of superb songs as can be seen from cuts like "Stops'n'Starts" or "Radio". Playing this today brings me back to seeing Died Pretty live in Sydney in 1987 for the first time...watching singer **RON PENO** crawling across the stage floor screaming out the words to "Stoneage Cinderella", seeing drummer **CHRIS WELSH** puff out clouds of smoke that caught in the blue lights as he pounded out the fills to the moody "Desperate Hours", or listening to **BRETT MYERS** play those searing, razor edged leads in "Life To Go". All those moments and more are reprised here. Early copies come with a bonus disc loaded with hard to find b-sides and other tracks. Not to be missed! (citadel@ozemail.com.au, POB 316, Darlinghurst, NSW 2010, Australia)

dorian gray

the sounds of dorian gray

(zip)

Swedish power poppers in the tradition of bands like the fabulous This Perfect Day or the Merrymakers (whose **ANDERS HELLGREN** and **DAVID MYHR** produced this), Dorian Gray debut strongly with a CD full of nifty songs and killer sound. Their formula is based around making each song have a big moment...one of those places where it seems like about 30 extra musicians and backup singers joined the mix and the song blossoms into something huge. Singer **TORBEN FREYTAG** is at times a little heavy on the melodrama...you can almost picture him at the mike with his arms flung wide, legs apart, eyes closed and lower jaw quivering with intensity as he holds a note. But schmaltz factor aside, there's no

complaints for songs like “She’s With The Band”, “Heroin”, or the CD’s ace track, “Delirious”. (ziprecords@earthlink.com, 116 New Montgomery St., Suite 200, SF, CA 94105)

the explosion

s/t

(jade tree)

This Boston punk band has strong instrumental abilities but a vocalist and lyrics that let them down too often. “Heroes” and “Channels” are the two best songs (the latter good enough to justify listening to the whole CD), and it’s no coincidence that they are also the slowest, since there’s room for the guitars to put some sense of dynamics into things. The intro to the closing “Simple Lives” sounds like a heist from the Clash song “Complete Control”. Elsewhere things aren’t much above adequate. (jadetree@jadetree.com)

the guttersnipes

chaos as usual

(tmr)

Here in San Diego there are places stashed away in industrial complexes where you can rent a rehearsal space for a band on an hourly rate. You walk down the halls of these buildings and hear a cacophony of sounds from behind every door. For some reason, this band reminds me of that feeling...four guys struggling to make some kind of a sound with no clear sense of direction or purpose. These songs are rocking and energetic, but the singing is bad, the lyrics are worse, and the musical backing is all over the place. (68 Tulip St., Bergenfield, NJ 07621)

high school sweethearts

passing notes

(get hip)

This one’s pretty easy to describe...imagine taking Debbie Harry from around the time of the first two Blondie lps and having the Devil Dogs back her. Add just a light touch of cheesy organ and you’re there. That gives you the general sound, what you don’t know yet is that the tunes are there, too...these sound like songs that were written for top 40 girl group hits in 1963 but through some clerical error the backing band that showed up for the sessions was a great punk rock group. Best track of the bunch is the rip-roaring “Cat Got Your Tongue”, but there’s nothing on this that isn’t a ton of infatuious and high octane fun. (gethip@gethip.com, Columbus and Preble Aves, Pittsburgh, PA. 15233)

hi standard

making the road

(fat)

This band of Japanese punk poppers are reputed to be hugely popular in their homeland, and while they have their moments, they don’t stack up with the best of a very talented crop of punk groups currently playing. They play that kind of cartoony pop-punk that bands like NoFX are known for but which irritates a lot of more “serious” punk fans so much. I gotta admit that the conga-line stomp of “Teenagers Are All Assholes” is pretty funny one time through, but the joke quickly gets annoying. On much of this the band is playing too fast for their own good...at times it sounds like the guitarist and drummer weren’t even listening to each other. Sonically the band is what you’d expect from a band on Fat...meaty guitars and professional production. Just not much protein. (mailbag@fatwreck.com, POB 193690, SF, CA 94119)

hoven droven

more happy moments with hoven droven

(northside)

Another totally predictable Swedish band...you spin this up and the usual death metal, bass heavy intro starts, the guitars grind away, and then the accordion comes in, quickly followed by the fiddle solo and then the big wash of Hammond organ...hey, this isn’t the script! Easily the most bizarre band of the issue, Hoven Droven mix Swedish traditional music with standard rock’n’roll to make a listening experience that’s great for days when you want something completely different. Most of these songs are instrumentals, but a few have sweet Swedish milking maid vocals riding over the top. An odd one. (www.noside.com)

ice cream hands

sweeter than the radio

(rubber)

Compared to his previous and wonderful band, **THE MAD TURKS, CHUCK SCATT’s** 1990s power pop band the Ice Cream Hands is pumping out CDs like a machine. This one’s the best yet...they lead with subtlety on the soft ballad “Can Anyone Be Hypnotized”, but then they bust out with the rocking “Spirit Level Windowsill”, and from there on it’s a great pastiche of all kinds of pop chestnuts, including one sure classic in bassist **DOUG ROBERTSON’s** brilliant and Beatles-like “Yellow and Blue”. But even on a less rocking song like “You Could Be Reported” that’s just Scatt and an acoustic guitar, that quality of the songwriting and the strength of the singing makes it hold your attention. (info@rubberrecords.com, POB 1032, Hawksburn, VIC 3142 Australia)

the martinets

love! hate!

(scooch pooch)

The Martinets debut CD ought to be required listening for any band looking to record a punk rock CD in the new millennium. It's loaded with what made the original punks sound so refreshing...varied songs with well thought out lyrics, tons of hooks, tasty guitar that's not overplayed, a rhythm section with that intangible sense of swing that few bands have, and a singer who conveys intensity but knows how to time his phrasing. The band includes late period **RAMONES** guitarist **DANIEL REY**, but the style is closer to a poppy Johnny Thunders circa *So Alone*. There's a batch of songs destined for year's-best-music mix tapes, including "I Don't Follow", "Die Everyday", "Air Conditioner", "Falling", and most of all, the closer with its classic line "Next time there just won't be a next time". Superb! (www.subpop.com/scoochpooch, 5850 West 3rd St. Suite 209, Los Angeles, CA 90036)

pesotum

fading from the strength of the rust

(bombardier)

What was at best a slightly above average set of songs making up this CD has been pretty thoroughly ruined somewhere in the process leading from mixing to CD fabrication. I can't believe that the intent was to have the overall sound be as distorted as it is. And if I'm wrong, well, this was a seriously bad idea. Assuming you can stand the sonics enough to listen to this thing, the underlying songs (which on the plus side are very concise and snappy) are an OK sort of droney indie-rock with off-key vocals that never really hit any big highs. There's a difference between low-fi and bad-fi, and if you want a demonstration, you're looking at it. (2110 S. Halsted, Chicago, IL 60608)

the pushbacks

no strings attached

(veto)

Minnesotan **JOHN FREEMAN** once fronted a terrific punky/pop group called the **MAGNOLIAS**, who released a batch of great records in the late 80s/early 90s but somehow got lost in the glare behind other Minnesota groups like the Replacements and Soul Asylum. But now Freeman has resurfaced with a new band, and their debut CD might finally bring him the acclaim he deserves. It wouldn't be a stretch to think of this as just the next new Magnolias' release...it's got that same compressed and crunchy rhythm guitar sound, the same no-nonsense 2-3 minute songs built on poppy hooks and played with punkish energy, and most of all, it's got Freeman's

snotty kid vocals riding over the top. (27 35th Street West, Minneapolis, MN 55408)

the real kids

down to you CDEP

(tko)

Boston's Real Kids are one of those star-crossed bands who deserve every ounce of their cult legend status. That they re-united in the late 90s (after about 20 years!) and actually played in my town seems like a minor miracle to me, and getting the four new studio tracks on this ep is a huge bonus. Live the band is one of those few groups that makes almost everyone else seem like untogether amateurs, and on these tracks they show they can still record a tune. Bashing pop hooks played with passion and topped off with **JOHN FELICE's** wistful vocals...isn't this guy one of the classic voices of rock? These tracks are as good as they've ever done, and that's saying a mouthful. (PMB #103, 4104 24th St., SF, CA 94114)

the retardos

s/t

(scooch pooch)

Norway has been a source of a disproportionate share of great bands for the last couple years, but it's inevitable that some dross slips out from time to time. Can't complain about deceptive advertising with the band name here...these guys basically just want to make a bunch of racket in the Turbonegro / Gluecifer mode and shout some lyrics about getting drunk and laid with as much cursing as possible. The presence of a GG Allin cover says it all.

the rockinghams

makin' bacon

(not lame)

The power pop Rockinghams debut isn't an unqualified success, but then it's far from a total write off. The biggest strength is that most of the songs have nifty guitar hooks and a good punchy sound, like "Hello Mary Jane", "Uncertain", or "More Than One Way". The downside is that lyrically this band is pretty threadbare. I mean, how much yardage can you get out of lines like "Wake up and smell the coffee/It's the only thing I like/I don't own a car right now/That's why I ride a bike"? Bad lyric work can sometimes be played down by hiding the words in the mix, but here there's little mystery in the presentation. In a live show I bet these guys are good fun. But maybe letting them into the confines of your own home isn't the best idea for the relationship. (popmusic@notlame.com, PO Box 2266, Ft. Collins, CO 85022-2266)

rollercoaster

s/t

(spinning top)

A side project for a couple members of Perth power pop band **THE CHEVELLES** and ex-**STEMS** drummer **DAVE SHAW**, Rollercoaster started out with just a single on the French Hellfire Club label, but that came out so well that they decided to make this full length CD. Which was a wonderful idea, since although the Chevelles are good, THIS is terrific! They explore powerpop from end to end, crunching on "Flowers For Kylie", "Six Million Dollar Man", and "Use Me", going sweet on "Insane" and "Tartan Dress", and loading up on trash garage keyboards for "All She Wants". Fans of the Stems will flip. (spintop@avon.net.au)

various

here we are nowhere

(substandard)

The launch CD from another Bay Area punk label, seems like a ho-hum event, but hey! this is miles above the usual compilation fare. I'd usually feel blessed to find one band I want to hear more from on a disc like this, but instead, there's a pile. **DOUGLAS** hit with the power house "20 Year Itch" and the more quirky "Incomplete". **LIBERTINE** impress with the Pistols styled "I Don't Belong Here" and "Hey Yankee". **DEAD LAZLO'S PLACE** deal out some high tension and great rough-edged harmonies in "Another Crime Story" and "Waiting For Ammo". **JACK KILLED JILL** have me imagining Penelope Houston fronting the Buzzcocks on "Next Stop Dallas". The **UNSEEN** pull out the stops and let it rip on "In The City"...and that's just a few. Add the budget price to the great selection of tracks, and you can't lose. (john@substandard.com, 218 Lakeshore Court, Richmond, CA 94804)

various

scene killer vol. 2

(outsider)

Another overload compilation of 30 punk bands, with the style being geared towards the late 70s Brit dole queue sound. Ancient Brit punks **MENACE** do the catchy "C&A" nicely. **DROPKICK MURPHYS** contribute a blazing cover of **STIFF LITTLE FINGERS'** classic "Nobody's Heroes". **BONECRUSHER'S** "Modern World" is instrumentally first rate but the ranting singer lets it down. **ANTI-FLAG** do their usual solid job with "No Difference". Fossils **NINE NINE NINE** reprise their 1978 hit "Nasty Nasty"...the original was better. The **STAGGERS** have a singer who actually has some unique character in his voice and seem worth finding out more about. **DEAD EMPTY** surprise with loads of tasty guitar on "White Trash Ghetto". Most of the rest is fairly

generic mosh pit punk, but there's enough of interest that I'm not unhappy to have a copy. (www.outsiderrecords.com, POB 92708, Long Beach, CA 90809)

various

start your engines

(side one dummy)

This compilation seems to focus on funny-punk and good timey bands with a dose of surf and rockabilly for variety. The highlight by a fair amount is the **GAZA STRIPPERS** doing "Medicine Man" (which was far from the best song on their debut CD). **MATT HOLE AND THE HOT ROD GANG** shamelessly steal the signature riff from the B-52's "Rock Lobster" for their rockabilly workout. **LOS INFERNOS** play interesting surf punk. But too much of this sounds like rednecks playing punk rock, and usually when rednecks pick up a music form, it's a sure sign things are going to hell. (www.side1.com, 6201 Sunset Blvd., Suite 211, Hollywood, CA 90028)

various

punk ass generosity

(one foot)

The award for the most bands on a compilation this issue...46 on two discs! That's about 2.5 words per band at the BTO review size guidelines. There's not a lot of major gems among these, but most of it is at least listenable. **CRANK'S** "Blind" shows that a band can play at warp speed and stay tight. **DYNAMITE BOY** play a pleasantly energetic "Hard Times"...nothing new but a good song. Brazil's terrific **GARAGE FUZZ** shine above the crowd with "Replace". **HIVES** "Automatic Schmuck" has some great tough guitar bits. Other favorites are tracks by **HORACE PINKER**, **KID WITH MAN HEAD**, **LIQUID SPIDER STATION**, **ONE HIT WONDER**, **RIVER FENIX**, **THE TANK**, and **THREE YEARS DOWN**. Prize for strangest song goes to **NO USE FOR A NAME** for their punked up cover of "Evita" (!). Not a bad CD to dub from for a mix tape, but too much to be taken in one bite. (damn8r@aol.com, POB 30727, Long Beach, CA 90853)

various

trash on demand vol. 3

(ultra under/amsterdamned)

Compiled by **JEFF DAHL**, this internationally flavored CD contains a set of songs by bands driven by glam salted garage rock. It's uneven, but there are some choice moments. **THE 440's** are probably the best, with a blistering fem-punk rock contribution. Finland's **COSMIC GOBLINS** and **CRYSTAL ECSTASY** both do honor to their country's traditions, ex-**SLICKEE BOY KIM KANE** resurfaces with a band called **DATE BAIT**, and

Arizona's finest **THE BEAT ANGELS** make a neat contribution. There's also a track from **FREDDY LYNXX**, who could be called the French Johnny Thunders. In between there are also some lowlights as usual, but there's enough interesting bands to make this well worthwhile. (POB 1867, Cave Creek, AZ 85327)

v spy v spy
mugshots – the best of v spy v spy

(tronador)
Completely overlooked outside of Australia, V Spy V Spy were a major force within that country during the early 80s. Sharing management with Midnight Oil, they played an earnest sort of new wave that might be compared to early U2, Echo and the Bunnymen, or Teardrop Explodes...sort of thin sounding but ringing guitars, big, echo-ey drums, and passionate vocals that convey a sense of overwhelming concern about SOMETHING, but it's usually not too clear exactly what. There's 30 songs here, and most of them make very pleasant listening for those times when you want the aggro level a little lower. (tronador@uol.com.br)

the unseen
so this is freedom?

(a-f records)
I was impressed by the controlled fury of their track "In The City" on the *Here We Are Nowhere* compilation, so I had good hopes for this CD. Unfortunately, despite some strong and at times anthemic musical backing, the ranting oi-punk vocal style ruins the experience. Some of the lyrics are actually funny in a pathetic sort of way, like the line from "Punks Attack" that goes "When the punks attack, we'll have your back / 20 years gone and we ain't done shit". True of this sort of punk, anyway. (www.anti-flag.com)

watts
s/t

(estrus)
DAVE CRIDER has been a one man champion for garage music for the last 15 years through his group the **MONOMEN** and his Estrus record label. Now he's got a new band, and it's a refreshing change...the Monomen consistently cranked out tough sounding records, but they tended to run together after a while. Watts are similar, but there's enough difference to make this sound fresh. The most important change is getting a new singer. Crider's not a bad screamer in his own right, but he's a little one dimensional, and while **JEFF BRAIMES** isn't Wilson Pickett, he's not bad. As with the Monomen, Watts have one small drawback compared to their heroes, the Sonics, which is that they don't quite manage the same kind of memorable hooks on a consistent basis.

But otherwise, this is first rate tough, gummy garage punk. (PO Box 2125, Bellingham, WA 98227)

you am i
...saturday night, 'round ten

(bmg)
Despite being an ardent follower of Aussie rock, I'd never really clicked with one of their most respected bands, You Am I. That changes with this live CD...for some reason the concert setting just captures a whole lot more spirit than what I've felt from the couple of their studio lps I've owned. I'm not sure what term to use to describe You Am I other than straight ol' rock'n'roll. The band doesn't rely on speed for power...they just lay out a batch of songs with crunching guitars, heavy drums, and lots of nimble bass to go with some impassioned singing. And the songs are growers...the variety and interesting twists make me like this thing better each time I play it. Supposedly early copies had an extra bonus disc...mine doesn't. (www.bmg.com.au)