



The Big Takeover #48 was published in June of 2001. I wrote the following reviews for publication in this issue; most did appear, although some may have been edited slightly or cut due to space limitations.

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#### the 440s

##### hot to go

(steelcage)

These bands with number names are getting as prevalent as “super” bands a couple years ago...I used to confuse this outfit with the Forty Fives, but there'd be more justification for juxtaposing them with the Creamers, since they've got a very similar style. It starts with lead singer **Sparkle Plenty** (uh, probably not her real name). She's got a rich and slightly sleazy tone like the Creamer's Leesa used to exhibit, but in addition there's the high powered backing band which plays with a comparable energy level and guitar style to either the Creamers or like-minded outfits like the Lazy Cowgirls. Not a terribly meaningful listening experience, but a lot of fun. (huss@steelcagerecords.com)

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#### the anchormen

##### punk rock is awesome

(unstoppable)

The artistic success of a CD with a title like this one depends heavily on how firmly the tongues of the creators are inserted in their cheeks. Fortunately, the answer here is VERY firmly.

These songs are simultaneously whacky and intelligent, with topics that seem like impossible candidates for lyrical inspiration somehow beaten into forms that are memorable and lasting. Musically this Boston area band has the same kind of fractured punkish edge as groups like the Embarrassment, Human Hands or Mortal Micronotz...not relying on Marshall-amped crunch for power, but instead using jagged, jabbing chords that slice rather than bludgeon. Simultaneously amateurish and skilled, this is an intriguing CD. (www.anchormen.com)

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#### ann beretta

##### new union old glory

(lookout)

This is the third (or fourth?) album by this Clash-like outfit from Richmond, Virginia, and it's got lots more of what made their earlier records so good. There's husky voiced, passionate singing to go with lots of shout-along anthemic 77-style punk rock tunes. Lyric topics are timely – “Straight Shooter (Election Day)” leads off with commentary about the choices we got last fall – and they seem to consistently hit a mark with the one fairly ghastly exception of the closing “Jump Start”, a call to action that sounds like way too much of a cliché to be taken seriously. (www.lookoutrecords.com)

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#### the bellrays

##### grand fury

(vital gesture)

The band may hate it, but there's no avoiding comparing the BellRays to your favorite dream combination of 60s blues influenced hard rock band and female soul wailer. Me, I hear the Who playing “Young Man Blues” on *Live At Leeds* with a young Tina Turner giving Daltry the boot, but the choice of the Who is as much because of the powerhouse rhythm section as anything...**Bob Vennum's** bass just drives this music like a locomotive. But I also hear guitar player and principle song writer **Tony Fate's** mid-90s band the **Grey Spikes** loud and clear. The dark and brooding feel Fate's writing gave the Spikes is everywhere here, but augmented by an extra dose of energy...check the remake of the ace track “Stupid Fuckin' People” from the *Year Zero* CD. *Grand Fury* is even better than the solid BellRays' debut CD *Let It Blast!* ...stronger, more consistent song writing, and a better mastery of the band's non-conventional approach to recording really show through. Of course the dominating feature of the BellRays is **Lisa Kekaula**, who has a set of pipes that in these vocalist impaired times sounds more like a primal force of nature than something as humble and human as a mortal woman. And just in case you thought she's nothing but a raver

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and shouter, take a listen to the gorgeous soul ballad "Have A Little Faith In Me"...this would've had a legitimate shot at being a top ten hit if today was 1967 when Stax/Volt was cranking out songs with this kind of emotion like it would go on forever. At a time when high energy music with originality almost doesn't exist, the BellRays are a beacon in the night. (www.thebellrays.com)

the celibate rifles

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### a mid-stream of consciousness

(oracle)

What a fabulous thing to have a whole CD full of new Celibate Rifles songs! Twenty years since they began, the Rifles continue to make vital, driving music that appeals to the head and the heart. **Damien Lovelock's** voice is still dust and gravel as he serves up dry and witty observations of life down under, as always targeting commonly accept values and social positions. Behind him is one of the tightest and hardest rocking combos of all time...blazing wah-wah fury from lead guitarist **Kent Steedman**, driving rhythm playing from **Dave Morris**, and the killer intensity of drummer **Nik Reith** and bassist **Jim Leone**. The fabulous "I Shoulda" is as good a song as the Rifles have ever done with a murderous guitar hook, great lyrics and superb production. When it seems like it can't get any better, the bridge comes along and ups the power ante to a point where it feels like your head is going to explode. "G's Gone" is the perfect follow up to this...still rocking but driven by piano and a hauntingly evocative melody. These songs are the two clear aces, but elsewhere it's still a great ride with a mix of slower tracks and full on rockers blended for a terrific overall effect. Like most Rifles albums, this one not only holds up to repeated plays, but it sounds better each time. (crankinhaus@optusnet.com.au)

jeff dahl

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### pancake 31

(triple x)

Holed up like some rock'n'roll outlaw in his Cave Creek, Arizona hideout, Jeff Dahl continues to crank out a new solo record about once a year. His latest is better than some of the things he's done lately, but still doesn't measure up to brilliant efforts like the early 90s *Wicked* or the first two *Sympathy Ips*, *Scratch Up Some Action* and *Vomit Wet Kiss*. The main thing that seems to be missing is the *band*. Here Dahl plays all the instruments, and though he's a truly great, fluid guitar player in the Thunders/Cheetah Chrome school, he's surprisingly kinda stiff as a drummer and bassist. The result is that this CD has a demo-ish feel about it...like if he could just team up to record these songs with one of those line-ups that

could just about make your jaw hit the floor when they played LA clubs around 1990, he'd have something that'd really shake some action. (www.triple-x.com)

the demons

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### come bursting out!

(gearhead)

By all appearances the Demons are yet another Stockholm band trying to cash in on the lint they've picked up from the coat tails of the Hellcopters and Backyard Babies. The press kit tries hard to dispel this idea, pointing out that members of the Demons have been playing this sort of thing since 1988. But the fact is, there's been so damn many CDs of this ilk in the past couple years that even someone as willing to hear old seams mined as myself has to wonder if there's really no more to life than energetic music played through Marshall amps. This stuff provides about the same feeling of real creative passion as a Stephen King novel. (www.gearheadmagazine.com)

the dickies

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### the incredible shrinking dickies

#### dawn of the dickies

(captain oi)

Founded in LA after seeing the Damned on the first US tour in 1977, the Dickies quickly became chart hogs in the UK with their whacko brand of cartoonish warp speed new wave punk rock. With 7 of 13 songs under 2 minutes long (and only one over three), *The Incredible Shrinking Dickies* took the Ramones ethic of keeping it short and exciting to a new level. Their drag strip cover of Black Sabbath's "Paranoid" stood heavy metal on its ear, and they liked that enough that they demolished the Monkees' "She" and Barry McGuire's "Eve Of Destruction" for good measure. The covers were so unique that it was easy to overlook that their own tunes like "Give It Back", "Waterslide" and especially "You Drive Me Ape (You Big Gorilla)" were also terrific. This CD reissue tacks on their "Silent Night"/"Sounds Of Silence" single (two more songs that will never recover their dignity) and the "Banana Splits" single. Insanely fun.

Released as the 70s were ending, *Dawn Of The Dickies* was at first a bit of a let down. The songs were getting longer and a little slower...more of an amped up power pop than punk rock. There were more originals, too, with only a crazed cover of the Moody Blues "Nights In White Satin". But this one's worth it for the opener "Where Did His Eye Go?", the brilliant Pep Boys auto parts piss-take "Manny, Moe and Jack" and the wonderful ode to a fetching LA newscaster on "(I'm Stuck In A Pagoda With) Tricia Toyota". It includes the "Gigantor"

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single as a bonus. Great to have both these available after many years. (oi@captainoi.com)

died pretty

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**everyday dream**

(citadel)

If there was an Australian rock and roll hall of fame, Died Pretty's longevity and the quantity and quality of their body of work would have to make them inaugural inductees. *Everyday Dream* is the latest in a line of something like 10 albums. It's probably their quietest effort yet, and like many Died Pretty albums, it's one that doesn't begin to reveal its strengths until it's been played quite a few times. **Ron Peno** sings in a much higher and softer register than he did in the early days, and **Brett Myers** continues as the most self-effacing lead guitar player around, always preferring understatement. Like other Died Pretty records, *Everyday Dream* focuses on soundscapes that build and break moods sonically more than lyrically. But the biggest difference from previous releases is the heavy reliance on electronic instruments here...synthetic drums and blippy-bleepy sounds pepper much of this disc. For a person like myself who has a natural antipathy to this kind of thing, this was tough to absorb. But having been through the experience of bad first impressions on 15 years worth of Died Pretty records, I kept listening and damn if it hasn't start finding a home in my heart just like all their others. (citadel@ozemail.com.au)

dogwood

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**building a better me**

(tooth and nail)

amen

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**we have come for your parents**

(virgin)

San Diego's Dogwood play a brand of Bad Religion meets Naked Raygun punk rock that's pretty engaging instrumentally. If there's a generic Epitaph sound, this would be it. The music is buzzing and powered by intense rhythm guitar with few leads, while the passionately voiced lyrics are densely introspective and personal, and in fact, some of them are flat out religious (no surprise that the band website is [www.christcore.com](http://www.christcore.com)). Ignoring this last issue, the overall feel is still a little claustrophobic for my tastes. The title track and the following "Comes Crashing" are two of the strongest here, with good, tough melodies. I tend to like music that reflects a strong belief on the part of the band, but I'm still not ready for Christian punk rock myself.

Of course, there's always the other extreme. I thought Amen's CD might be a nice humorous spin on the Dead Boys' similarly titled second lp. But

instead it's mostly ranting death metal that might charitably be given credit for sounding a very little like Killing Joke at their harshest. The intensity of "Under The Robe" managed to connect with me a little, but the fact that they are pretty much the polar opposite of Dogwood's lyrics doesn't mean I get any value out of tracks like "Dead On The Bible" or "Here's The Poison".

([www.toothandnail.com](http://www.toothandnail.com) and [www.virginrecords.com](http://www.virginrecords.com))

the dragons

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**r.l.f.**

(junk)

With one brother a founding member of **the Zeroes** and another having played with **the Nuns**, Dragons frontman **Mario Escovedo** has had a tough time in the past ten years making a record that's the best to come out of his own home, let alone his own hometown. I've seen this group dozens of times, and though it was always clear that a CD like this one was what they were headed towards, it was never a given they'd hang in there long enough for it to happen. Influenced equally by the New York Dolls trash glam thing, punk rock, power pop and garage, the Dragons pull it all together on their fourth CD to make a worthy descendant to all of these roots. *RLF* is loaded with anthemic, hook riddled tunes and singing that packs punch but cares about notes and harmony. That 4 note ascending pattern in the opening "Insatiable" sells the whole CD by itself, but good as that track is, there's 3 more right after it that are every bit as exciting and several more scattered amongst the rest. For my money, this is the best album ever to come out of San Diego. ([dianafly@aol.com](mailto:dianafly@aol.com), [www.thedragons.com](http://www.thedragons.com))

gaza strippers

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**electric bible – new testament**

(triple x)

If you haven't heard either the Strippers or frontman **Rick Sims'** previous band, **The Didjits**, think Cheap Trick on a steroid/amphetamine cocktail. This disc is more of an odds'n'sods collection than a real new release, but it's still a first rate blast and certainly doesn't pale in comparison to anything else they've put out. The rationale for choosing the songs isn't totally clear...you get the *Laced Candy* ace hit "Throttle Bottom" and several other album tracks, both sides of the debut "Transistor" single, some compilation cuts, and a few outtakes from previous recording sessions. Pick of the litter is the totally rampaging take of **Elvis Costello's** "Lipstick Vogue", which despite an almost complete disregard for time keeping by the rhythm section is still an energetic triumph. ([www.triplex.com](http://www.triplex.com))

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the hives

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**veni vidi vicious**

(burning heart)

This is the second full length CD by yet another band of Swedish guitar terrorists, and the first to get a US release. And these guys are a long step ahead of a lot of their countrymen, too many of whom are satisfied with loud and fast and not much else. The Hives on the other hand put together songs with memorable and tasty hooks and clever words (how many punk lps have titles in Latin?) that you'll never figure out without the thoughtfully provided lyric sheet. Musically the band doesn't concede an inch in the flame throwing energy stakes. They sound like a cross between the Didjits and the Swinging Neckbreakers...way over the top huge guitars with lots of attention grabbing bits like those killer up-picked chords on "Get Together To Tear It Apart", or the stop/start bits on "Outsmarted". And how about the concept of a song called "The Hives Introduce The Metric System In Time"? The only niggling objection is that the vocals are buried a little too much for words this clever. "I wanna be ignored by the stiff and the bored" goes one line. Not a chance around my house. Not a chance. ([info@burningheart.com](mailto:info@burningheart.com))

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the hives

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**a.k.a. i-d-i-o-t ep**

(gearhead)

The lp seemed like such a good idea that Gearhead has also imported the Hives' debut 6 song ep. Good thing, too, because there's two killer tracks here that by themselves justify the entire disc's existence. The title song is one blistering example of rave up energy and insanely catchy tunefulness. Then there's "Outsmarted", which in addition to pumping like a fiend has a terrific guitar hook. The other four songs are less memorable, but they all drive with an almost unstoppable fury. ([www.gearheadmagazine.com](http://www.gearheadmagazine.com))

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wayne kramer and the pink faries

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**cocaine blues**

(total energy)

I don't really know what's more impressive about this CD – the rough edged, high energy performances on the disc, or the confessional Wayne pens in the liner notes, where he very pointedly accepts personal responsibility for everything that went wrong in his post-**MC5** life. After getting out of prison in 1978, Kramer played a gig at Dingwalls in London with the **Pink Fairies** as his band. The first four songs here are from that, and 3 of those are really solid – a take of the Fives' anthem "Kick Out The Jam", a cover of Bob Seger's "Heavy Music", and another of Mose Allison's "If You're Going To The City". The next

four tracks are from studio sessions that same year...an interesting version of the old Dave Clark Five hit "Do You Love Me?" and a great rocking take of Jimmy Cliff's "The Harder They Come". These four tracks are also notable for the surprise presence of **Ace** and later **Squeeze** keyboard player **Paul Carrack**. Finally, the disc closes out with rough versions of "Get Some" and "Ramblin' Rose" from a 1974 record. Not the proper introduction to Kramer, but a neat artifact for fans. ([www.alive-totalenergy.com](http://www.alive-totalenergy.com))

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ed kuepper

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**smile...pacific**

(hot)

Ed Kuepper is one amazingly versatile and talented guy and it's just another example of how unfair the world is that he isn't a household name. The guy never does a record without a stash of memorable songs, and he can kill you with a howitzer like he did in his primordial records with the ferocious late 70s punk pioneers **The Saints** and his later reprise of that group, **The Aints**, or he can slice you to ribbons with a more subtle power, like he does here on yet another brilliant solo disc. Acting as orchestra leader to a band full of friends (including **Died Pretty** drummer **Simon Cox**, who provides rock solid backing), he molds a set of songs that all sound remarkably different but fit together like pieces in a puzzle. The evocative feel of the horn and piano powered "I Still Call This Failure" gets it my vote for pick hit, but the darker and pumping drive of "Baby Well I" isn't far behind. And Cox and Kuepper serve up the most totally, well, *feverish* version of the old torch classic "Fever"...you've never heard a drummer playing brushes sound so *on-the-attack*, and those guitar sounds Kuepper wrings from his piece are just unearthly. The only song that doesn't connect for me is "Pay Me My Money Down", but the rest of this is typically first rate Kuepper. (Kuepper fans should also know that Hot has just issued a re-mastered version of 1991's superb *Honey Steels Gold* that includes enough bonus tracks to nearly double the original running time.) ([hotrecords@pavilion.co.uk](mailto:hotrecords@pavilion.co.uk))

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the leftovers

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**667 – the neighbor of the beast**

(fueled up)

The title's clever, but it's been used before, and that goes for most of the rest of what this band is doing. This is high energy but one dimensional thrasharama punk with the requisite gravel-voiced vocalist singing about being wild, driving cars, and getting or being fucked up. The tunes have their moments...I particularly liked "13 Needles And A Doll", where some good backing vocals give the

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singing a little more character. But this song only highlights how much better this genre of rock and roll could be if there was more attention paid to vocals. (necrop@necropolisrec.com)

niagara

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**02**

(bliss)

Contrary to the picture of overwhelming power and energy that might be suggested by their name, Niagara play mostly understated pop. Lightly strummed guitars, synthesizers, and breathy vocals are the rule here. "On This Side Of The River" provides the biggest power surge with a catchy pop tune, and "Cigarettes and Rock'n'Roll" is also memorable new wave pop. But there's too many songs that convey a drowsiness that doesn't satisfy much. And it may be a sexist thing to say, but I'm not sure I needed a male vocalist to cover the **Divinyls'** "I Touch Myself". I suppose that was the point. ([niagara1@earthlink.net](mailto:niagara1@earthlink.net))

the peepshows

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**mondo deluxe**

(scooch pooch)

This Swedish outfit has received a lot of praise from European friends on an e-mail discussion group I'm part of. On listening to the CD, I can partly understand...the tunes are energetic slabs of garage/punk and live the Peepshows probably are a hoot. But although the songs are good, there's not that much that really stands up and says "play me again, now" when it goes by. It says something about the vocalist that the hottest moment on the record is the instrumental break in "Thy Will (Not Mine)"...the phrasing is just too clumpy with every syllable falling directly on a drum hit. You could do worse, but you could also do better. ([www.scoochpooch.com](http://www.scoochpooch.com))

the phuzz!

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**american pop**

(beach)

Sometimes bands would be better off if they strangled their publicists. Take the Phuzz, for example. Their press kit makes a major deal of the idea that they represent some kind of consummate pop outfit, and in fact it claims that principal songwriter **Matt Leonard** wrote the best pop song of the 90s (conveniently on a record other than this one). The fact is that this band plays pleasant enough pop/punk in the vein of the Queers or the Riverdales, and without all this press hype I'd probably be concentrating on how tuneful and enjoyable it is. But listening to this it's hard to imagine that they've ever made a song that can rival some of the real great power pop groups going, like the DM3 or the Yum Yums, who write stronger songs and feature far sharper playing and

production. Still, this is decent enough for a half hour's listen. (thephuzzm@aol.com)

poor rich ones

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**happy happy happy**

(rec 90/five one)

For those whose view of Norwegian rock is limited to the garage heritage of the That's Entertainment label or the power punk of the Wonderfools, we bring you the Poor Rich Ones, whose record sounds like it could've been what Radiohead discarded when they decided to forsake accessibility to make *Kid A*. Loaded with lush, unhurried pop songs, *Happy Happy Happy* is pretty nifty background music when you're looking for something quiet. The vocal experience provided here is much like the visual impact of that sexy gal in the movie *The Crying Game*; a full throated, highly expressive woman's voice that turns out to belong...to a man. The instrumentation matches well; these songs are warm and inviting and a pleasure to the ears. (fiveone@relaypoint.net)

red planet

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**revolution 33**

(gearhead)

Not the standard greasy Gearhead fare at all on this one; Red Planet play a glammy sort of power pop that sounds like a more consistently rocking and slightly snottier Cheap Trick, or to be more up to date, like Possum Dixon, the Beat Angels or Tsar. Musically there's a neat mix of emphasis on bass, guitars and synthesizer, with each taking turns at carrying the tune. And the varied songs are almost uniformly first rate – there's been lots of attention paid to writing strong hooks. Best of the batch are the rocking pair "Satellite Radio" and "Dean Taylor" which are big, loud, 60s styled, and radio friendly if radio would only reciprocate. ([www.gearheadmagazine.com](http://www.gearheadmagazine.com))

red planet

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**let's get ripped**

(gearhead)

This band seems to have releases lined up like baseballs in a pitching machine. They're already talking about a new album, but in the short interval between, here's a 5 track CDEP that adds three new tracks to a 7" single they did a while ago. The title track is from that record and is more first rate sleezy power pop, while the flip of the Dead Kennedys "Too Drunk To Fuck" is also pretty good, but not hard hitting enough to measure up to the original. The other tracks are fun but not spectacular...I'd look for the *Revolution 33* lp first. ([www.gearheadmagazine.com](http://www.gearheadmagazine.com))

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the saints

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**spit the blues out**

(last call)

For some time now the Saints have pretty much lost all semblance of being a real band, being essentially **Chris Bailey** and whoever he happens to feel like having a jam with. But that doesn't mean that the music's lacking. Bailey's one of those guys whose voice just sounds good almost no matter what he does. He's tackled rocking blues songs before (check that great cover of "Dizzy Miss Lizzy" from the *Paralytic Tonight, Dublin Tomorrow* ep), but this is the first time he's done it for a full CD. The result is a solid and enjoyable effort that lacks any exceptional high points. Bailey's voice is versatile enough so that he can growl like Tom Waits on "Who's Been Talking?" and then sound like Squeeze when he provides his own backing vocals on "Where Did My Mind Go?", but he's at his best on tracks like "Waiting For God", where he just sounds like himself. (lastcall@club-internet.fr)

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scientists

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**blood red river**

(citadel)

In some circles, the Scientists are seen to be among the giants of rock and roll, and this retrospective will either provide proof positive or leave you wondering why, depending on your readiness to accept their truly alternative view of pop music. Despite lifting its title from their 1983 mini-lp on Au-Go-Go records, this disc pulls songs from all their 1982 to 1984 releases, a period where the Scientists were at their creative peak and showed what could've been a totally different answer for where rock should head after punk. Emerging from the Perth wreckage of the late 70s pop/punk incarnation of the band, frontman **Kim Salmon** re-emerged in Sydney with a new line-up dedicating to taking the swamp-rock created by predecessors like the Cramps and the Gun Club a huge further step into a realm of noise and twisted, off beat rock. They announced their new approach with the 1982 single "Swampland", a track that would have to be on any compilation CD of the most important Australian songs ever, and they followed this by building a repertoire of dark classics like "We Had Love", "Set It On Fire", "Demolition Derby" and "When Fate Deals Its Mortal Blow". They're all captured on this disc, and nearly two decades later, these songs are every bit as vital, haunting and challenging as they were when they first burbled out of the ooze. ([citadel@ozemail.com.au](mailto:citadel@ozemail.com.au))

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the sewergrooves

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**guided by delight**

(low impact)

Here's an example of why I keep listening to Swedish rock bands despite the fact that so many of them descend into drunken hard rock excess. The Sewergrooves aren't that different from a lot of their mates, except that the singer doesn't come across like a load of bullshit and the musicianship and songs have a good deal more swing than normal...sort of like an updated version of the first Saints album. The guitar playing is especially a treat on this, with first rate rhythm duels crossing and re-crossing each other. Check "Paralyzed" for a primo example...what a neat riff! This one's a treat. (lowimpact@hotmail.com)

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sixer

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**saving grace**

(tko)

After a fine debut CDEP last year, Sixer hit with their first full length lp. Like the first disc, this one's chock-a-block with anthemic punk tracks. Singer **Leer Baker** has that smokey sort of style that will immediately make people compare Sixer to the Clash, Rancid, or the Swinging Utters. The latter pairing is probably the closest, since the band doesn't play as fast as Rancid and doesn't have as much variety in its tunes as the Clash. But that's not to say they don't have a good flare for a pop hook in the middle of their punk outpourings. "Tear It Down" is a great example of this with a stuttering chorus and some great tag-team "woah-oh" harmonies. "Ground Zero" is another great one, with an irresistible sing along chorus. This one's assured to please fans of rabble-rouser punk. ([sales@mordamrecords.com](mailto:sales@mordamrecords.com))

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some tree

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s/t

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**magic bullet fan club series CD**

(magic bullet)

This is an awful lot to ask anyone to sit through...the self titled disc by this German band sends 10 songs sprawling out over more than 60 minutes. That's over 6 minutes a tune for the people in the crowd who cut math class, and it's about 4 minutes a song more than what's needed. The singer sounds like U2's Bono wailing away at his emotive and incomprehensible best (or worst, depending on your outlook), while the band plays mid-tempo grunge backing with all the passion they can muster. The fan club (there's really a fan club?!) disc offers up two more tunes at a snappy nine minutes fifty. The first of these shows a little life and rocks along in a way that by comparison to the rest of this stuff is a positive relief. But track 2 is back to the dirge. (magicbullet@hotmail.com)

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streetwalking cheetahs

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**waiting for the death of my generation**

(triple x)

The Streetwalking Cheetahs have been around for more than half a decade now and they've been steadily pumping out one CD after another. Past efforts have disappointed me despite the high energy Detroit rock and roll approach because it's always seemed like there's a surplus of generic tunes and a little bit too much of that "rock'n'roll, yeah!" kind of vibe. The first couple songs of this one leave the same taste, but when the Cheetahs veer away from the formula on the Brit-pop flavored "Automatic", things begin to feel fresher and more interesting. Then there's a faithful but still strong cover of the **Saints** ace second lp smash "Know Your Product". And after that there's a string of three first rate originals that combine neat guitar hooks with well designed vocal parts to make something memorable. Overall about half this hits hard, but there's still room for improvement. ([www.triplexrecords.com](http://www.triplexrecords.com))

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teen machine

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**after school special**

(pop squad)

If you like your power pop loaded with big guitars, glittery songwriting, multi-layered backing vocals and anthemic hooks the way it's been practiced by bands like the Vandalias, Tsar, or going back a bit, the Archies, then Teen Machine are your ticket. Because the band includes a healthy 3-4 guy to girl ratio, lyric topics span a much greater range than the standard cars/girls theme...expanding by a full 50% to cover cars, girls AND boys. Picks of the litter are the irresistible "Bitchin' Camaro" (not the Dead Milkman song) and "Hot Mom", where the distressed vocalist is being used by all the boys wanting to see her mother. Elsewhere, "Demolition Girl" ain't the Saints masterwork, but it does lift that Gary Glitter "Rock'n'Roll" drum beat perfectly, and there's also room for a cover of that bubblegum classic, "Yummy Yummy Yummy". Makes me wanna re-register for high school. ([www.popsquad.com](http://www.popsquad.com))

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teenage frames

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**the kingsize sessions**

(starttime)

One of my Big Takeover cohorts gave the Teenage Frames' *1% Faster* CD such a strong review in issue 47 that I ran out and bought it, and I can report that it was all that was promised. So I jumped at the chance to write up this new CDEP. It's got the same elements of that earlier disc...bratty, punkish vocals and rough edged pop/new wave tunes, but maybe not quite as strong a set of tunes. "Happy Birthday" is campy, but it's probably the best of the four originals here,

with a good driving tune. The cover of the MC5's "High School" is pretty neat, too. ([www.startimerecords.com](http://www.startimerecords.com))

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the weird lovmakers

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**live – bigger than a cookie, better than a cake**

(empty)

Amateurish and sloppy in the most positive kind of way, the Weird Lovemakers whip up 17 tracks of rocking chaos capable of knocking the lot of professional punk bands on their collective asses. If you like big time production and mistake free playing, look elsewhere, but if you want a string of energetic rave-up tunes with that adventurous try-anything-it-might-work spirit of '77, get in line! For one thing, the Lovemakers aren't sucked into that standard Gibson/Marshall crunch sound that 95% of punk bands are using these days...their guitar sound immediately leaps out at you. Then it's the snappy, to-the-point songs, which are loaded with catchy phrases and cool riffs...just when you thought every hook possible has been used - three times, even - here's one song after another of new ideas (even if "Capt. Ugly" is basically "Another Girl Another Planet"). Finally, the between song banter is so nerdy it's pretty clear that these guys just might be rehearsing in the garage next door to your house. A wonderful CD. ([www.weirdlovmakers.com](http://www.weirdlovmakers.com))

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wilmer x

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**silver**

(emi svenska)

Though they're relatively unheard of outside of Scandinavia, I've got stacks of Wilmer X records and CDs in my collection. There was a period in the late 80s when they had some ambitions towards international breakthrough and recorded their lps with English lyrics, but for most of the 90s they've been Swedish only. That's the case on *Silver*, another CD of first rate pop/rock tunes with a Dr. Feelgood-like r'n'b flavor. The band sticks to the formula...after nearly 20 years they're unlikely to break any new ground at this point, but nevertheless they always seem to serve up a batch of boozey and bluesy tunes that don't take long to hook in. **Nisse Hellberg** has a great voice for this sort of thing, and no translation is needed to make you get the general idea as he conveys wistful angst on one song and tough aggression on the next. (PO Box 24058, Linnegatan 87D, SE-104 50 Stockholm, Sweden)

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various

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**disarming violence**

(fastmusic)

While I don't think many indie records devoted to causes really do anything (because they rarely make enough money to cover costs), the timing of

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this one is poignant, seeing as its goal is to promote control of guns and I'm writing the day after the Santee school shootings 25 miles from my house. It leads off with a not so hot punkish cover of the Boomtown Rats' "I Don't Like Mondays" (about another San Diego area school shooting) by **Divit**. From there on it's 24 more tracks of typical punk compilation fare...some too thrashy to be enjoyable, some too polished and lacking in heart, but a few gems. These include **Dag Nasty's** driving "Incinerate", **Luckie Strike's** teen pop punk "New Dress", **Cooter's** neat guitar work on "Indebted", **The Phobes'** tense "Which Side Are You On" with a really cool 60s bridge, and **Ann Beretta's** "Lock, Ready and Load". ([www.fastmusic.com](http://www.fastmusic.com))

various

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### gearfest

(gearhead)

Gearhead Magazine threw a party in Stockholm and had all their fave bands play. Then they took the best couple tracks by each group and slapped them onto this disc. The result is not always the greatest in terms of sound, but it's pretty high on energy and fun. The **Flaming Sideburns** are highly touted but suffer compared to their studio work. Better are the **Strollers**, whose keyboard and Vox guitar sound reminds me of the early Miracle Workers. The **Turpentines** were a let down...the material here is much less distinctive than other tracks I've heard by them. The **Backyard Babies** on the other hand sound tight and powerful on "Get To You" and oldsters **Sator** do a great job with "Pigvalley Beach", probably the best song on their decade old *Slammer!* lp. The **Sewergrooves** track shows better vocal creativity than is normal for this sort of music and I want to hear more of them. The **Nomads** hammer the **Damned 2<sup>nd</sup>** lp track "Problem Child" and generally stand out in the crowd like usual. The **Hellcopters** close out with the nifty "Hey!". A lot of good bands grace this disc, and if the sound was a little better it'd be a great intro to this brand of Swedish rock. ([www.gearheadmagazine.com](http://www.gearheadmagazine.com))

various

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### old skars and upstarts 2001

(disaster)

Unlike a lot of compilations that appear to be tossed together with little thought, this 30 track effort is an obvious labor of love by label boss **Duane Peters**, whose own band **The Hunns** boots off the disc with a marvelous cover of the under-appreciated 1978 smash by Britain's **Flys**, "Love and a Molotov Cocktail". From there on, it's an amazingly coherent set of bands and songs, with perhaps the only objection being that it might be

too coherent...an almost non-stop parade of passionately Strummerite singers fronting buzzing outfits with that overdriven Les Paul/Marshall guitar sound. The odd group like the **River City Rebels** that shakes up the approach (in this case with a horn section) leaps out of the pack, but there's no shame being part of that pack if you're into the general style targeted here. ([www.alive-totalenergy.com/disaster.html](http://www.alive-totalenergy.com/disaster.html))

various

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### terror firmer – original motion picture soundtrack

(go-kart)

Not sure what this movie is all about, but it's sure got a lot of punk rock songs in it. The usual compilation sluts abound here, with **Anti-Flag** stealing most of the show as they often do with their anthemic SLF flavored political punk. **All** turn in the nifty "World's On Heroin", **the Parasites** give good value on the poppy "Hang Up", and **Southport** provide the tasty buzz of "Pilot". Other brand names involved include **the Lunachicks**, **Melvins**, **NoFX**, **GWAR**, **the Vandals**, **the Candysnatchers** and **Down By Law**, but these all acquit themselves in fairly pedestrian fashion. ([www.gokartrecords.com](http://www.gokartrecords.com))