THE *COUNTER*FORCE

MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL REVIEWS #519

AUGUST 2026

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MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL

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This issue contains 104 reviews, contributed by:

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Tim Janchar
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D. Gregory
Jake Joyce
Sir Bobos
Romain Basset
Mama Goblin
Matt Casteel
João Seixas
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Willis Schenk
Eric Anderson
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THE COUNTERFORCE

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Print It Yourself.

"Mountain Song" by the CRUCIFUCKS, which made me like them automatically before I even listened to the rest of the record. But sure enough, these dudes rule.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: AND / Ugly Pop

ZOOPARTY – XX LP

ZOOPARTY has been cranking out the hits since 2006, and *XX* doesn't miss. Mid-to-fast-tempo songs with melodies and propulsive guitar hooks reinforce the idea that you only need to look to Sweden (or Canada) for this perfect blend of ripened punk/pop mod rock. Thirteen songs that go by way too quickly, all with equal parts of social commentary, sorrow, longing, hope, and gobs of detailed introspection. "I Miss Me" and "Power Play" emerge as heavy favorites on this LP, but only by the width of an atom, given ZOOPARTY's unwavering attention to making every song great. It's going to be a while before I take this off my turntable.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Sunny Bastards

discriminately applied to any kind of guitar music. I, for one, will be calling it like I see it: WEALTH GAP is a pretty cool small-town hardcore band.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Broken Cycle

WICKED DEAD – Poker Face EP

This is the best lo-fi Maine horror speed-punk I have ever heard. It's also the only entry into that particular gnarly niche that I've encountered, but let's not split hairs. The songs are fast and thrashy, reminding me a bit of the earliest EVIL ARMY material, which feels like an even more appropriate comparison after discovering that they were recorded around the same time in the early 2000s. This three-piece was apparently short-lived and highly revered, and now you can treasure 'em forever on this blood-red 7".

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Mutants of the East

WORST WORRY – Piece of My Art / Nice Gone 7″

Sparse solo downer punk from Lisa Lynn Wallace, formerly of *nouvelle vague* garage gang BLACK TIME (where she went by the *nom de punk* Janie Too Bad) and the noisy/bratty post-Slampt duo SEXAPHONE. Neither of these two songs are worlds away from the less raucous side of BLACK TIME—the Janie-sung "I'm Gonna Haunt You When I'm Gone" from 2008's *Double Negative* LP is a solid point of departure; the overall vibe here is definitely more BLACK TAMBOURINE than *Black Monk Time*. Wallace's sung/spoken delivery lands somewhat out of phase with the drum machine drone, tambourine rattle, and minimal slashes of post-punk guitar in "Piece of My Art," not unlike a disoriented and even drowsier version of the twee-psych beat of early SLUMBER PARTY, as "Nice Gone" juxtaposes Wallace's way-up-front, double-tracked, and increasingly tension-edged vocals against comparatively charged guitar strum and off-kilter cymbal crashes, bringing to mind some hypothetical band that would have played with MECCA NORMAL at a bookstore circa 1992 (not a diss).

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Spacecase

ZAC-A-RAMA! – Hyena!+ cassette

Ahh fuck *yeah!* ZAC-A-RAMA! out of Boca Raton does noisy, bad things with synthesizers, and I want more. This cassette is the ZAC-A-RAMA! *Hyena!* demo with an additional banger included. Punk, metal, hip hop, and co-opted media swirl in the *basura* slurry ZAC-A-RAMA! creates. Self-deprecating lyrics screech through blown transistors over equally distorted, mile-a-minute synth beats, chopped up with sound clips that beleaguer the joke, and breakdowns that make me want to throw on baggy joggers and put cardboard on the floor. Industrial punk, synth-punk, I don't care, ZAC-A-RAMA! fucking brings it all and is sure to blow the roof off any party.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: XTRO

ZANJEER – Seher-e-Maqhoor سحرِ مقهور LP

Since their inception, the now-Berlin-based ZANJEER has proven themselves to be a band uniquely gifted at capturing the raw anger and frustration of the moment with both a powerful message and powerful sound. On their latest LP, they reach new heights of intensity, taking musical cues from legacy bands like RAW POWER and RATOS DE PORÃO and speaking on the ongoing genocide in Palestine, religious extremism, and exploitation happening the world over. Across its ten tracks, *Seher-e-Maqhoor* سحرِ مقهور (*Dawn of the Oppressed*) is well-produced and has a big sound, with heavy riffs and pounding drums accompanying lyrics sung in Urdu, a lingua franca that bridges the gap between Pakistan and India and their respective diaspora. A totally essential and powerful record that shows solidarity in its righteous indignation. Recommended.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Neon Nile

ZERO BARS – Fear of Future, Future of Fear 12″

ZERO BARS coming in hot with some particularly sharp and addictive hardcore punk out of Toronto. Wet your beak on the brief yet ripping "Goon," or check out the menacing riff on "Nervous Wire" for some immediate proof. Collecting the band's 2023 demo and last year's *Life and Hell* cassette EP, this fat 12" spins at 45 rpm to bring you up to speed. Full disclosure: they cover

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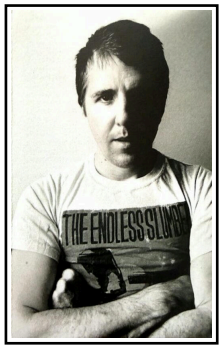
- **Resonance Extra** via DAB+ in the UK to Brighton, Bristol, Cambridge, London and Norwich, and worldwide online Wednesdays at 1:00 am BST/GMT
- **Space FM**, 101.1 in Seattle, WA Friday nights at 10.00pm
- **UMFM (CJUM)**, 101.5 FM in Winnipeg, MB, Canada Fridays at 6:30 am (Good morning, Winnipeg!)

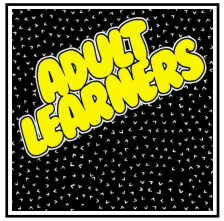
168 – By Myself & Damaged Again cassette



168 is a solo project out of Houston, Texas, with Ryan Preble-Gaitz handling absolutely every aspect: writing, performing, recording, mixing, and mastering. That's an incredibly impressive undertaking, especially considering the sheer scope of this release. This cassette clocks in at roughly 90 minutes long, consisting of two very long LP-length recordings, one on each side of the tape. It's an enormous amount of music to throw at a listener, especially when it spends so much time hopping between genres. But before I start complaining, there is a lot here worth celebrating. The coolest thing about 168 is how genuine it feels. There isn't an ounce of posturing here. It feels like someone making exactly the kind of music they want to make, simply because they love punk, not because they're trying to impress anyone. When 168 sticks to its strengths, it is legitimately good. The '80s USHC-worship is convincing without feeling like a carbon copy. The guitar tone on the instrumental surf tracks is perfect, making the songs feel pretty damn timeless. Even some of the novelty street punk songs, mostly centered around aging and laughing at yourself, are entertaining, funny, and surprisingly memorable. Across this tape, I counted fourteen songs that I would call anywhere from solid to genuinely great. Sounds like a glowing review, right? Well, there are 47 songs on this cassette. Yes, I understand it's technically two full-length albums bundled together, but that doesn't make it feel any less exhausting. Whatever happened to leaving people wanting more? Even if you think your songs are all incredible, do you really believe each of these albums needed to run more than twice the length of *The Crew* by 7 SECONDS? My biggest problem isn't even with the runtime, it's the constant detours. Pop punk, screamo, acoustic songs, mandolin-driven folk-punk, atmospheric noise, novelty sea shanties... it's as if the project refused to leave a single musical impulse unexplored. The frustrating part is that the great material is buried under so much of the merely okay and outright forgettable. When all is said and done, 168 is an impressive project whose output is mostly simply not for me. The high points are high enough that I'm probably going to make myself a new tape with just the songs I enjoyed and see how they flow on their own.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: self-released

ADULT LEARNERS – Nothing to Do EP



Wow. This is off to a great start. Female-fronted pop music with some (a lot) of organ/keyboards and a ton of energy. Five cuts, they all rock, and not a single one of them is over two minutes long. Now you're speaking my language. Super catchy and just fun to listen to. The vocals are both pretty and interesting. While this is poppy and pretty, make no mistake, this is not sticky sweet; it's got some guts.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Saccharine Tryst

ADULT MAGIC – Are You Even Happy Now? LP

It's been over seven years since their pre-pandemic debut album, and ADULT MAGIC is back with the same heart-on-sleeve ethos but tighter, more focused, and more earnest. The mid-tempo heavy guitars have that sound that might have originated somewhere before SEAWEED, matured through FUTURE VIRGINS (R.I.P. SEXY), and currently landing with DEAD BARS. Lyrically, they have the insistent honesty and authenticity of CAVES and RVIVR. Songs like "Burned Out" and "Sore Eyes" cautiously and nostalgically lament past and current times. "A Little Light" is an early '00s burner, and "Drift and Drive" could have come from Paul Westerberg's canon. All members contribute vocally and lyrically, and have quite the past and present pedigree in IRON CHIC, BROADCASTER, CROW BAIT, SISTER KISSER, RADAR, and GET BENT. Hopefully we don't have to wait another seven years for the next one.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Dead Broke

ALTAR OF EDEN – The Grotto Screams II LP

In 2020, ALTAR OF EDEN (assembled from members of ...AND YOU WILL KNOW US BY THE TRAIL OF DEAD, NOSFERATU, CREAMERS, and more) released *The Grotto Screams* full-length. Returning in 2026 with *The Grotto Screams II*, ALTAR OF EDEN has once again created a deathrock soundscape that heralds the apocalyptic descent of our world. Ten songs full of thick bass, screaming jangles of guitar work, and jazzy but primal drumming that support a lyrical delivery that is spot-on for Rozz Williams. In all, *The Grotto Screams II* is a creeping, dark journey

ULTRA LIGHTS – Pleasure's All Yours LP

PAVEMENT was the first thing that came to mind when I put this one on. The second song sounds like the STROKES. That's basically this record in a nutshell; a '90's indie rock amalgamation without a modicum of originality. The band plays well, and the production is great, but I can't get past how safe and unoriginal it comes across. I won't be coming back to this one.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Chunklet Industries

V/A – Comp Punksylvania Live! Vol. 5 LP

With every compilation I have ever listened to, I always look for a few distinct things. First, did these bands give their best, or did they submit throwaway tracks? Second, do I get the feeling that I'd want to stop into their hometown for lunch and record shopping? Third, and most importantly, do I want to seek out music from bands I've never heard before? Before I get started, there are two things to keep in mind when you read this review. The first is that this is a live record, but the sound is clear and the bands all deliver a high-energy performance that makes you feel like you are right there. The second thing is that I love this very, very much. When I see a DCxPC record in my in box, I get stoked, and this one seems to have set a new bar for me. I'd like to call out a few fave songs but I would be listing every band and their accompanying song. On this record, you've got it all: punk, hardcore, ska, charged politics (personal and global), circus music, a boundless energy, and commitment to the art. So, where are we as far as my personal questions about comps? Did these bands give their best? Yes. Do I get the feeling that I'd want to stop into their hometown for lunch and record shopping? No, I'd want to hang out with them instead of shopping and maybe we'd become friends. And most importantly, do I want to seek out music from bands I've never heard before? Oh my golly, I might not make a car payment this month, but that's OK because I'll just stay home and listen to all of the records I just bought. Also, the vinyl is a beautiful neon pink, so it has that going for it.

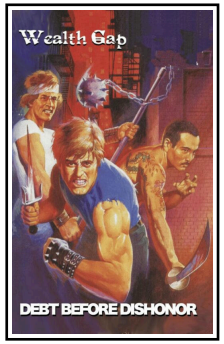
Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: DCxPC

V/A – Left Without Much Fuss LP

Disguised as an unassuming compilation LP, closer inspection reveals *Left Without Much Fuss* to be an elaborate love letter from Ugly Pop Records founder Simon Harvey to the music and culture that has driven him for decades. Tapping his colorful roster of Canadian punk buddies in groups like CULT CRIME, the ICHIBONS, and the VAPIDS, Simon has assembled a fun collection of cover tunes spanning a range of favorites and lesser-known bangers from the RAMONES, MOTÖRHEAD, FANG, JAWBREAKER, and many more. This diverse lineup is chock-full of solid renditions that make for a rewarding listen, but the thick booklet that comes with it is what really makes it a unique package. Filled with an essay, band bios, collages of classic cover art, and even a list of 500 killer songs to expand your horizons, this shiny insert provides plenty o' tasty grist for the ever-churning mill of punk obsession. One could spend hours just poring over the hundreds of EP sleeves depicted and updating their Discogs want list. It's a noisy and sincere celebration of the good stuff, brought to you by a trusted source of chaos for over 27 years.

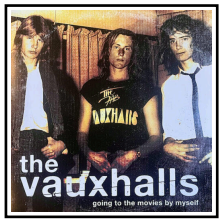
Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Ugly Pop

WEALTH GAP – Debt Before Dishonor cassette



Melodic hardcore from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Eleven songs of toe-tapping, catchy, driving hardcore. My big question is about the band's self-proclamation of being "groove punk." What in the fuck is groove punk? If you mentioned that term to me, I would assume you were talking about bands like MENTAL or RIGHTEOUS JAMS, who I frankly couldn't stand in the first place. That style always just sounded like some clean-cut jock hardcore that had no business even claiming to be punk. So, if WEALTH GAP is a "groove punk" band, would that make RIGHTEOUS JAMS a proto-groove punk band? Or if we're retroactively making up genre terms for bands from the past, can we take punk away from their genres, leaving them with groove hardcore, or perhaps groovecore? Holy hell, these sound awful. There are a lot of aspects I like about WEALTH GAP. They might make some decisions in their songwriting that I wouldn't make, but there are undeniably some very cool moments in their recording, like the spooky beginning of "Imperial Cereal," or that wildly catchy guitar lick in "Makes Me Sick." I don't think we need new genre names to describe the tried-and-true styles we all play. We just need to stop letting people get away with co-opting the already established terms and allowing words like "punk" and "hardcore" to be so in-

THE VAUXHALLS – Going to the Movies By Myself EP



Super catchy punk music that's got a little bit of jangle to it; this is amazing. When you find out that it's from New Zealand from the late '70s/early '80s, you can definitely hear it, but it also makes it all the more impressive. You can hear the influence of the CLEAN in there, for sure. Also, just a fantastic title for a record.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Leather Jacket

THEM WRANCH – My Friend / You're Too Much 7″

Here's two tracks of bastard blues, courtesy of long-defunct Columbus unit THEM WRANCH. Recorded in 1999, the A-side, "My Friend," is a raw, early version of a song that would go on to appear on the band's first album, *Big Noise From East Maynard*, which is a bountiful trove of garage punk twang. The second song, "You're Too Much," is a live cover of a 1966 tune by British freakbeat troupe the EYES. And there ain't nothin' wrong with this groovy little 45 at all, even if its sole function is to introduce you to this cool-ass, lesser-known group.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Good Times Rock N Roll Club

THIRSTY GIANTS – Escape the Junkyard LP

Three power chords, fast drums, palm-mutes, and snotty vocals. Honestly, it's amateur hour here, but I would have loved this shit at twelve years old. Fuck the haters. These dudes keep ripping and keep putting out records, and that's what it's all about. The vocals have improved and are much more prominent in the mix than on their previous efforts. My favorite part of the record is the phlegm-producing sound at the end of the second track, "This Thing Called Junk." It's snotty and confrontational and the exact kind of shit you throw in your Walkman while trying to ollie that three-stair over at the local middle school.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Round Bale

TWISTED TEENS – Florida Water Blues LP

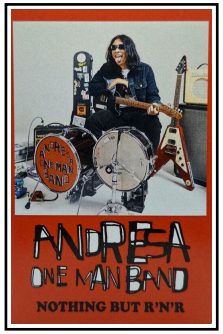
Folks fucking love this band. Read anything about the New Orleans duo, and you'll find them held up next to all sorts of giants: GREG CARTWRIGHT, BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN, the GUN CLUB. *Yellow-GreenRed* even asks you to imagine them as GEORGE THOROGOOD under the influence of SWELL MAPS and NEU! They're simultaneously reviving and reinventing down-home garage rock! And I sort of get the hype. There is something undeniable in the timbre of singer Caspian Hollywell's voice and the soul he's able to effortlessly impart to these compositions, and Razor Ramone's woozy pedal steel really helps tie together the dusty scene they are painting. The pair also cut quite the dashing figure on the covers of their records, each of which sticks to a simple but striking aesthetic. Dudes have nailed their branding! And when I disengage with all of this and the music on *Florida Water Blues* just enough—like softening my focus to let a Magic Eye poster reveal the image of hobo carrying a bindle—I can sort of buy in, maybe even think something like, "huh, neat!" The second I give it any thought, though, that illusion of depth is shattered, and the branding is kind of all that's left. Personally, I find the whole train-hopping, Southern-fried yarn-spinner schtick corny as hell. I've always felt similarly about SPRINGSTEEN, so I get that comparison. But as much as I dislike his music, the Boss can write the hell out of song. With *Florida Water Blues*, I don't so much have a problem with the tunes, but these lyrics—holy shit! They range from a smattering of hacky tropes (swamps, old highways, cans of beans), to PARQUET COURTS-style tedious cleverness ("Concealed Weepin'" can fuck right off!), to outright crimes against language ("I know you're wetter than a drowning fish / So I'm coming right over just to eat your dish"). And while I can hear the comparison points mentioned above (except for NEU! and SWELL MAPS...seriously, what!?), I was also reminded of a bevy of much lamer bands: SOCIAL DISTORTION, FLAMING LIPS, BECK, or WEEN. I even caught a whiff of SUBLIME on the album opener! Which is not to say they're trying to sound like these bands or even that it's bad to. Look, I know I'm going against the tide on this one. But my honest opinion is that this shit is a mix of just fine and decidedly not for me...and also that some of y'all need to calm down.

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: Going Underground

that occasionally lets ALTAR OF EDEN loose to create immersive, danceable, macabre rock. Absolutely check this out if you're into CHRISTIAN DEATH.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Drunken Sailor

ANDRESA ONE MAN BAND – Nothing But R'N'R cassette



Solo budget rock out of Bandung, Indonesia, ANDRESA ONE MAN BAND pretty much says it all in its name. This is the side project of Andresa Nugraha, who you may know from the Indonesian garage punk band the BATTLEBEATS. Wait a minute, I had thought that the BATTLEBEATS was also a solo recording project, one that played live with a full backing band. Surely this can't be the same guy doing another solo project in a similar style, can it? Well, as it turns out...the differentiation between these two projects is admittedly pretty minimal and difficult to distinguish based solely on their recorded output. The BATTLEBEATS have been cranking out nasty, driving garage punk for the better part of a decade now, and ANDRESA ONE MAN BAND does not stray too far from that formula. If I had to speculate, I assume the main difference is that while the BATTLEBEATS play shows as a full band, ANDRESA seems to do gigs similar to the way Mark Sultan does, sitting in front of a kick drum and using different foot pedals to trigger various drums while accompanying himself on guitar and vocals. If nasty, riff-heavy garage punk is your thing, there is plenty to like here. It may sound cheesy, but in my opinion, there are not enough rock'n'roll songs that are simply about loving rock'n'roll. It's a proven formula that never gets old, and ANDRESA has a few more of those for you on the five-song debut of this project. And if you somehow haven't already come across the BATTLEBEATS, you now have two projects of this ilk to dive into.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Junglestomp

BAD MOTIVATOR – The Album LP

If you've ever turned up early and caught the local openers before a SUPERSUCKERS show and walked away pleasantly surprised, that's roughly the territory that BAD MOTIVATOR is working in, and there's real charm to it. The five-piece out of Los Angeles shares a singer and guitarist with the early '00s band the TAKEDOWNS, and this record doesn't stray far from that lineage. Their sound pulls from garage rock, new wave, punk, and a bit of '70s rock'n'roll, with keyboards worked in tastefully rather than laid on thick. This is their first proper full-length, following an earlier singles collection, and the players clearly have some miles on them, but they move through these songs with plenty of piss and vinegar. Most of the ten tracks land right around the two-minute mark, so nothing overstays its welcome. "Troubled Chances" and "Information Overload" are the standouts for me, and "I Don't Think I Want To V2" brought the LOAD LEVELERS to mind, maybe because of the vocal twang. This isn't a masterpiece, but it's a solid, likable record. Next time I would nudge the guitar just a little higher in the mix.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Wolf on a Bridge

BASTARD – Comfort / Doctor Gong 7″

Now this is the kind of music obsessive, crate-digging, lifer stuff that can only feel like a fever dream once unearthed! Over fifty years in hiding, these two tracks from the short-lived project of future DAMNED guitarist Brian James and future ELTON MOTELLO frontperson Alan Ward have been unleashed on the masses. "Doctor Gong" is exactly what you would hope for, given the era and the pedigree: a rollicking, sleazy, four-minute affair crammed with riffs and attitude. The B-side opts for a bit more fretboard exploration, taking on an almost heavy psych feeling that wouldn't be too out of place on a *Brown Acid* compilation if they expanded to sounds across the pond. Absolutely essential listening for the curious, the completist, and the casual.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Wap Shoo Wap

BELMONT BEACH WEIRDOS – Beach Hard With... LP

Here's a game: look at the band name. Now look at the album title. Now look at the cover art. You have two guesses to tell me what this record sounds like. If you said Gen-X DICK DALE worship mixed with BOBBY "BORIS" PICKETT and a much more grounded MAN... OR ASTROMAN?, then you never needed a second guess at all.

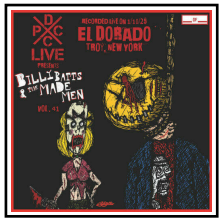
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Trash Wax

BIG KISS – Great Grief 12″

Six quick, blistering, angular tracks that have that sinister ominousness of the single DEAD LOW TIDE release along with glass-chugging vocals reminiscent of Chuck Ragan of HOT WATER MUSIC. The secret sauce is the momentous bass lines that keep the pace at almost too much (but just the right amount) of an anxious rush. It's an awesome balance of a more pissed-off WIRE and MY DAD IS DEAD.

Reviewer: Tim Janchar
Label: Die Slaughterhaus

BILLY BATTS & THE MADE MEN – DCxPC Presents Live, Vol. 41 LP



Here we have Atlanta's BILLY BATS & THE MADE MEN ripping through 21 tracks of scrappy dual-vocal punk reminiscent of GUTTERMOUTH or even the QUEERS, but not as good. The double vocals keep things interesting; without them, I'm not sure I would have gotten as far as I did. You get what you expect with songs like "Long John Silver's Feud in Augusta," "My Job Sucks," and covers of BLACK FLAG, SUICIDAL TENDENCIES, and...BILLY IDOL. Their drummer Nub Nub rips behind the kit and helps keep it all together, but it does nothing to minimize the juvenile nature of some of the songs. At the end of the day, it's refreshing to see a young band touring their asses off and giving it their all. While the music isn't my favorite flavor, you can hear that these dudes rip live and are absolutely doing their part to keep punk young. The more of these DCxPC records that I hear, the more I love them.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: DCxPC

BIRDS ON A KILL – Brace for Impact LP

Classic post-hardcore affair, like a poppier FUGAZI. Very polished recording—really loved the reverb on the drums, it gives them that nostalgic '80s feel akin to latter-era HÜSKER DÜ and REPLACEMENTS. What really stands out the most to me are the vocals completely clashing with guitar work. Sounds like a complaint, but it's an awesome combination. While the guitars are melodic and oftentimes airy and flowery, the singer is brash and comes with a bite. There are tracks where the music mirrors the energy of the front man—"Pinion" and "Desert Mind," for example, have much doomier energy—but a large chunk of this slab is twisted pop/rock anthems. Great stuff.

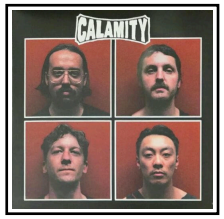
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Ripping

BÖDEL – Dödsbringaren LP

When you have a visibly decaying (very) grim reaper on the cover of an album by a Swedish punk band, you can bet your one good kidney that they are going to unleash dark and heavy galloping hardcore for the masses. Well, your kidney is safe, because BÖDEL plays straightforward, beefy käng with enough shades of D-beat speed to keep things interesting for twenty minutes. It sounds how it is meant to: relentless, punishing, and energetic. Let's not D-beat around the bush here, because BÖDEL does not endeavour to innovate and modify a formula that has been working since a bunch of scruffy kids came up with the systematization of a very specific beat in Stoke-on-Trent in 1980. Know who I mean? In the grand spectrum of the D-takt, I would place these Göteborg punks somewhere around early VICTIMS, WARVICTIMS, or GEFYR for a modern reference, with a great, heavier production highlighting the unstoppable vibe of the music. A couple of moments of the LP suggest a fondness for the more epic, moodier side of WOLFBRIGADE, which I do not disapprove of. Very classic and predictable but in a good way, and the fantastic female vocals, angry and manic on the verge of explosion, do take the band to the Premier League of käng hardcore in my opinion. A very enjoyable album that undeniably stands as one of this year's strongest instances of this peculiar subgenre.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Cimex / Flyktsoda

CALAMITY – Calamity LP



This Hamiliton, Ontario four-piece dropped this LP earlier this year, and it's full of power pop-ish rock'n'roll. It's ten tracks, and most of them blend together. I could chop it up to the production and use the song "Stone Cold" for example. It's got a riff, it's got a chorus, and both blend into each other without any real dynamics. It never really hits, and had me ready to hit the ol' skip button. I think with some better production or dynamics, this would come across a little more rocking. They mention a heavy Flying Nun influence, but aside from a couple of moments that I had to really look for, I don't hear it. It's a shame, because if that influence would have been front and center, I may have enjoyed this a lot more.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: AND

SVAVELDIOXID – Misär O.D. LP

Is SVAVELDIOXID one of the most prolific hardcore bands of our time? For all I know, there could be powerviolence bands out there proving to be even more generous in terms of releases, but SVAVELDIOXID is definitely the most fertile act when it comes to the D-takt käng realm, with seven LPs and eight EPs in about ten years—even though a significant number of these records are splits, it remains fairly impressive. They are no AGATHOCLES, but they are having a right go. These Swedish masters of the craft do not disappoint with this latest album *Misär O.D.*, and their brand of heavy, dark, and beefy käng always hits the mark. Think WOLFPACK, BOMBRAID, and early SKITSYSTEM having an orgy, basically. There are hints of death metal in some riffs, which works on the whole and is not overwhelming. If you haven't enjoyed SVAVELDIOXID's earlier material, this LP is pretty similar, so you'd better stay away from it, but if you have, well, I think you already have it, right?

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Phobia

TANK DIVISION – Chewin' Ice EP

This EP Austin's TANK DIVISION features four re-recorded demo tracks and four new songs of ugly, dour hardcore that is fairly manic and hectic. Listing bands like Rollins-era BLACK FLAG and OUT COLD and shouting out CHEETAH CHROME MOTHERFUCKERS and GORDON SOLIE MOTHERFUCKERS (in the same song) gives you an idea of where their heads are at. On paper, this sounds like something I'd really dig, but it just didn't do much for me. I've given it a couple of spins, and maybe it's the ranting vocals or the unusual song structures, but overall, this one's a pass.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: All Viceroys United

TEENAGE FACES – Hearts in Transit LP

A full-sized serving of fun, earnest, catchy power pop. It's apparent right from the jump that TEENAGE FACES have an ear for this style, even beyond just wearing their influences on their sleeves. I assumed their namesake was an EXPLODING HEARTS reference before I clocked the tracklist containing three cover songs—one from Portland's finest, one NERVES track, and the third tackling Elvis Costello's "Welcome to the Working Week." These covers are done well and are clearly little love letters to the genre. The originals that make up the meat of the record probably won't surprise the listener at this point, but again, they make for a great little listen. Those originals skew a little more early '80s power pop, with a bit more emphasis on the pop than the power, and the vocals sound like they could be your coworker, or your cousin, or the bank teller, but I think that adds to the charm here. I've spent most of my life obsessing over this music and I see it like pizza. There's no such thing as bad pizza.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: My Ruin

THE JAGGERNAUTS / THE KNOWN UNKNOWNS – Meet Skeleduck / Intel 101 split EP

Ah yes, my greatest nemesis: bands releasing a split album and then parsing the whole thing between two separate Bandcamp accounts, defeating the purpose of doing a split in the first place. This kind of thing gets under my skin so much that I was hoping I'd hate this slab, but I am disappointed to report that I actually kind of like it. The JAGGERNAUTS have two songs on their side: "Skeleduck," a track that brings to mind a much more light-hearted ANTISEEN, and the punk epic that is "I Won't Go Back," chock-full of scorching guitar solos and soaring gang vocals. The KNOWN UNKNOWNS' side only features one track, "Intel 101," and it reminds me of a more sinister DEVO mixed with POOPY NECROPONDE. Yeah, damn. This thing rules. Wisconsin is full of hidden punk gems.

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Crustacean

THE STRANGE CHORDS – The Strange Demo cassette

Oh, they're introducing some "mood" very early on here. And then it develops into a super twangy western thing, like it could be a Clint Eastwood spaghetti western soundtrack, only on acid. Don't let the cassette format kid you, this is some serious shit. The first couple of songs almost sound like they'll be instrumentals, but then the vocals kick in. Great job setting a kind of eerie mood. Garage and mood and punk? Yeah, bring it.

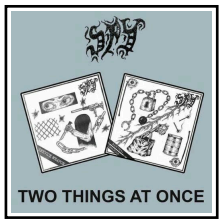
Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Razor Bob's Closet

SOUTHPAW – Longitude CD

SOUTHPAW is doing everything right when it comes to what they are doing, perhaps. If you are into more of later-period SAMIAM, and what I think FARSIDE and SENSE FIELD prolly sound like, then you most likely will like this record a lot. SOUTHPAW's songs are tight with personal and introspective lyrics that I am certain get the fists pumping and the crowd singing along. Musically, it sometimes reminds me of maybe AUTOGRAPH or early/mid-period DOKKEN on a couple songs, while still having that "foot on the monitor and singing out over the crowd" quality. I have no doubt a young person will discover this *Longitude* CD, or have SOUTHPAW be their first show, and SOUTHPAW will become their new favorite band, and *Longitude* will become their way to break into the punk underground. Be sure to check them out if they are playing near you.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Fixing a Hole

SPY – Two Things at Once CD



Two doses of SPY for the price of one, *Two Things at Once* includes both of SPY's first and arguably strongest releases, *Service Weapon* and *Habitual Offender*. For those who don't know, SPY formed in 2020 and they play pretty straightforward and nasty hardcore, in line with bands like GAG, GULCH, BIB, etc. I love their earlier sound; the dirty, punky, mid-tempo churn of these songs really packs a punch that their debut LP didn't fully deliver on. I'm no hater, but this material scratches an itch the later stuff doesn't.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: To Live A Lie

SUBTLE TURNHIPS – Septentinoriel LP

First record in seven years from France's SUBTLE TURNHIPS—they've actually been at it since 1992(!), with the project going fairly quiet until a string of records in the mid-'00s to early '10s that crested the wave of what could probably best be described as *Terminal Boredom*-core. Much like fellow lifers TYVEK, SUBTLE TURNHIPS reconstituted their art-punk garage/art-garage punk from the most primitive and trebly *Messthetics* entries, a FALL/Mark E. Smith-informed approach to both repetition and agitation, and shambling DIY (UK or otherwise) pop amateurism, and it's thankfully still just as much of a gleefully chaotic jumble now as it ever was. "Laughing (Total Control)" *détournés* everyone's favorite post-millennial Aussie post-punks and completely reflects the concept of laughing at the system in the process (if the system is tuning, timing, and the incorporation of more than three chords), "Tweedle Dum" and "Easy" scratch and collapse in an especially SWELL MAPS-damaged sort of way, and "Hitch Hike" (not a KLEENEX cover, as much as I would love to hear that) punctuates its stripped-down quasi-jangle with skronky meltdown noise blasts as if the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES had been more concerned with where Jad Fair lives. Fifteen fabulously fractured freak dispatches, total top-shelf shit.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: SDZ

SUBVERMES – Rumo ao Pior CD

Brazil's SUBVERMES don't waste time dressing up their message. *Rumo ao Pior* is fifteen tracks of D-beat-fueled crust that occupies land somewhere between DISCHARGE, LÄRM, and RATOS DE PORÃO. With enough grind flashes to keep things frantic, the production is filthy without turning into mush. Lyrically, it's all anti-fascism, anti-authoritarianism, environmental destruction, Indigenous struggles, and class warfare. Protest music in the best sense, backed by real conviction. Tossing in covers of DISCHARGE and DOOM makes perfect sense, because SUBVERMES clearly understand the tradition. Loud, fast, and pissed.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Subkultdethwish

SUN WITHIN – Synthesis and Realization / Luminous Events 7″

When I saw that the digital download for this was $9 on Bandcamp, I scoffed at first, but following the conclusion of the first track "Luminous Events," I thought, "Okay, fair." The vocals here are absolutely incredible. The range, dynamics, and control are god-tier. They sound like a total pro, so much so that I had to listen to these tracks a handful of times because I kept getting sucked into the singer's spell! The music itself is very desert/space rock-ish. Reminds me a bit of early MONSTER MAGNET and QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE. Come to think of it, this sounds like it came from a time capsule buried in the '90s. Solid work here; it goes by fast, so give it a couple spins like I did.

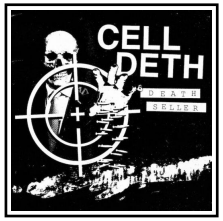
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Exotic Fever

CAVING GROUNDS – Become Soil cassette

Marquette, Michigan's CAVING GROUNDS bring together four slow and heavy hardcore tracks for their new release *Become Soil*. With their grim, tremolo-picking riffs reminiscent of old school death metal and slow-to-mid-tempo pacing getting into sludge territory, the band finds a nice middle ground on which to settle their sound. The lyricism and overall compositional choices of this release remind me of DYSTOPIA. So, no complaints at all.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: self-released

CELL DETH – Death Seller EP



A skull-bludgeoning follow up to their 2024 EP *Catholic Guilt*, CELL DETH is back with ten tracks of raging hardcore punk. Cues have been taken from classic USHC sources, like JERRY'S KIDS and the F.U.'S, but there is something else in their DNA that isn't as obvious. While I wouldn't call them fastcore, they certainly do play fast as fuck, and have tapped into the uncanny GAUZE-like ability to impart a sense of speed and velocity into their songs even when the actual tempo isn't so elevated. This innate sense of urgency is the band's superpower, and when folded in with some tasty riffs, seething vocals, and a chainsaw raw recording quality, the resulting EP is a standout record in a year jam-packed with noteworthy hardcore records. Ten songs on seven inches, with the longest cut landing at one minute, thirteen seconds. Fuck yeah!

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Broken Skull

CHISME – Fuck What You Heard demo cassette

Six cuts of pissed-off hardcore that will put you in the zone for a warehouse fight. CHISME is locked in a constant flow of anger, avoiding metalcore excess in favor of street-level aggression. Fans of NECROS and NEGATIVE APPROACH will find plenty to chew on. A proper demo that sounds made to start pile-ons and not be featured in polished playlists. Confrontational and with a very rough aesthetic, like a flyer that was stapled to a telephone pole five minutes before the show.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: self-released

CITY SLANG – CS1 demo cassette

Recording project from East Dallas, Texas. On this recording, one person handles all the instrumentation and programs the drum machine, while the other is on vocal duty. Uptempo repetitive riffs with gritty, gravelly, gruff vocals. The songs are catchy enough, everything is played well, and the recording is done very professionally. "For the Boys" feels like the latest installment of a modern band trying to write an Oi! classic. Seven songs in total, six originals and a COCKSPARRER cover which doesn't feel particularly necessary, more like padding to make the release just a little longer. The best song, in my opinion, is the rock'n'roll-inspired "OKMF," purely for the piano part. I think this recording project has turned into a full live band since the release of this cassette.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Raggie Budget

CLAYFACE – Nichts Ist In Ordnung LP

Nürnberg's CLAYFACE cranks out thirteen tunes of politically-wired hardcore punk as their second release. These songs hit with the urgency of classic German punk while keeping one foot planted in modern crust-leaning punk. The lyrics tear into militarism, reactionary politics, social media brain-rot, and middle-class complacency without sounding like a lecture. As for the music, they keep everything moving with sharp riffs and just enough rock'n'roll swagger to appease non-hardcore listeners. Furious punk that sounds like it actually has something to say.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Golem

CLUSTERFUX / CONFLICT RESOLUTION – split EP

An excellent pairing, which is always a good first step for a split, with two bands on the ever-growing spectrum of thrashcore. CLUSTERFUX has been around for almost three decades at this point, and has spent time drawing from crust, thrash, hardcore, and crossover to varying degrees (and varying degrees of success). Here, they lean into the thrashcore idea somewhere between D.R.I. and TEAR IT UP. Punker but with the flourishes of thrash metal, they hit great

and politically on the right side here ("*Chinga la migra*, fuck ICE" chants always win). They have a few six-to-seven-song releases, and the four tracks on here are a very sweet spot in length for this kind of stuff. I was not familiar with CONFLICT RESOLUTION, but it was a pleasant surprise to find them here. It's still thrashcore, but you hear more LEEWAY/SUICIDAL TENDENCIES touches, paired with a production/riffing style in line with '00s hardcore like CARRY ON. Some people will be put off by them dipping harder into bouncy, almost rap crossover moments that can call to NYHC, but to me, they use those moments insanely effectively. Big fan of both sides of this split; kind of a bummer we don't get lyrics for the CONFLICT RESOLUTION side, but oh well. A great record for thrashcore fans, fans of old school crossover, and USHC that dips its toes in the pools of thrash metal.

Reviewer: Daniel Z.
Label: Chain Reaction

CORGI WAVERIDER / THE DEMOLITIONS – Surfin' My Garage!!! Vol. 1 split cassette

Split cassette between two bands from Tacoma, WA. The DEMOLITIONS are an instrumental surf rock band, with a name I recognized from a review I wrote a while back of RITCHIE MAGNUM & THE DEMOLITIONS. I'm not sure if they dropped RITCHIE or simply shortened the name, but their four tracks on this split are even better than the RITCHIE MAGNUM cassette. Very cool, timeless, reverb-drenched instrumental surf tunes. Their side includes a mix of covers, reworked surf tunes, and one full original. Whatever their sources, the DEMOLITIONS clearly know the sound they are chasing, and they nail it. Onto the B-side and CORGI WAVERIDER—I knew nothing about them going into this cassette. From the three songs on their side of the tape, there are definitely surf influences, but they lean more toward vocal garage rock. Mid-tempo, nasty, but still pretty catchy. A modern take on any number of *Back From the Grave*-style garage-rock bands. A fun background listen, but ultimately not the most memorable thing.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Razor Bob's Closet

CROSS – Human Spirit 12″

A collision between the bleakness of DIE KREUZEN, the paranoia of DEEP WOUND, and the crushing intensity of HERESY. There's a metallic edge, but the foundation is pure hardcore anxiety. Fast, dark, and completely unforgiving, *Human Spirit* sounds like a nervous system overloaded by a world built on lies, isolation, and collapse. Lurching between chaotic violence and cold precision, CROSS perfected a fast hardcore sound, while the vocals cut through like a transmission from someone trapped inside the machine. The artwork carries that same hostile energy: stark and stripped of anything decorative, like a warning label. No positive vibes, no fake redemption arc, only survival instinct turned into sound. *Human Spirit* is hardcore as a pressure valve.

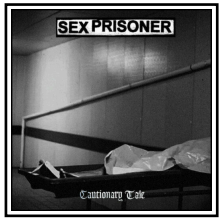
Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Roachleg

CÁNIDOS – Dis-cografía (2017—2025) LP

Although this Tijuana-based three-piece has apparently been going for eight years, I had never heard of CÁNIDOS prior to this review, which is a bit of a shame since the band evolved in the dense, busy, brutal D-beat crust galaxy, a place inhabited by studded punks with a questionable sense of hygiene who I feel close to. This record is a discography—or rather *Discografía*—with twenty songs, so it might be a bit much to take in one sitting (not for me though, I am no poseur). The remastered version of "Canis Latrans" opening the LP stands as especially convincing. Stylistically, CÁNIDOS knows what they are doing and displays solid dispositions for the genre. I am reminded of bands like CONSUME, local crust mafia heroes COACCION, or indeed COP ON FIRE, who they wisely choose to cover. I like the expressive gruff vocals and the galloping D-beat crust style they go for, with that typical cymbal play that gets the fist pumping. I have no idea whether or not these *perros* were involved in other bands before, but I'd love to know. It's a yes for me.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Exabrupto / Fiadh Productions

SEX PRISONER – Cautionary Tale CD



It's always a blessing to wake up to new SEX PRISONER material. TL;DR for this review: if you are already a fan of the band, expect everything you love about them but cranked up to eleven. If you're new, oh boy, just buckle up and get ready for the sonic annihilation you're about to witness. They cover (and stress) the whole spectrum of human hearing with their thick, grinding guitar riffs following the chainsaw tradition, sizzling bass that sounds like a chemical warehouse on fire, cutthroat vocals that are almost as pissed-off as my neighbours when I'm blasting this album at maximum volume, and supercharged drumming that could be a testimony to the durability of whatever drumheads they use. Occasional blasts of tastefully abrasive noise and feedback definitely help set the noise floor of the chaos that you are experiencing. I've always thought of this band as the epitome of the modern grindcore/powerviolence sound, as they always sound armed to the teeth and lethally dangerous. I'm happy to hear that they still are, and I have nothing but high praise for this album.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: To Live A Lie

SHOP TALK – Shop Talk LP

After a handful of short-form releases, New York's SHOP TALK finally delivers their first full-length, produced by James Mechan of the SLEEVEENS. The three-piece gallops through ten songs in twenty-six-and-a-half minutes, led by Jonathan Garcia's psychobilly-inflected guitar playing and his singing that lands somewhere between Jello Biafra's nasal sneer and Leonard Graves Phillips of the DICKIES, and I mean that as real praise. But under the snottiness, there's a genuine power pop instinct, the kind those Denton bands have, driven at a punk rock pace. The record manages to sound old and new at once, aware of its history without being ruled by it, and it's really fucking good. My favorite moments are where they loosen their grip, like the tail end of track eight, "Golden Afternoon," where things come apart in the best way. Definitely worth your stinkin' time.

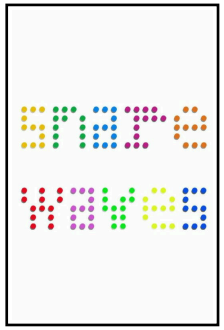
Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: One Track Mind

SMOG MARINES – Scheme EP

Pressed in tandem with the band's previously unreleased *Opus* LP, the three tracks here were hewed from the same 1980 recording session which has been unearthed by the good folks at Obsolete Universe. Deranged L.A. punk that fits right in with pre-hardcore greats of the era like the PLUGZ, the SCREAMERS, and BLACK RANDY AND THE METRO SQUAD. The opening track "Scheme" is a bona fide earworm that essentially demands repeated listens. The two other tracks are driven more by novelty and shock value, as evidenced by the song titles "Suffocation Plastic Bag," and "Amazonian Throb." In case you couldn't tell, this all equates to KBD gold. Steer clear if you have no taste for the tasteless. Otherwise, this is a no-brainer in more ways than one.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Obsolete Universe

SNAREWAVES – 4 Tracks cassette

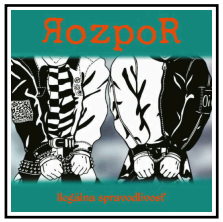


Four songs of dingy, lo-fi, blown-out garage punk. With incredibly limited information available, the best I can discern is that SNAREWAVES is a solo recording project based out of Lansing, Michigan. This tape is exceptionally short, containing only about three-and-a-half minutes of music—I think that makes these cassettes C-2 length, which to me means as soon as I sit down after hitting play, I'm already getting up to flip the tape. I have probably listened to this thing 30 times while trying to write this review. The songs are solid, even if they don't leave much of a lasting impression individually. With a previous cassette out on garage rock powerhouse Painters Tapes and now this one on Knuckles On Stun, any garage or egg-punk enthusiast should have a pretty good idea of what they're getting themselves into with SNAREWAVES. If you end up being one of the 25 people who get a physical copy of this cassette, whatever you do, do not get the O-card even the slightest bit damp. Merely picking it up to scan the cover for information on the band (of which there is none) made the ink begin to smear all over the damn place.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Knuckles on Stun

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Mendeku Diskak

ROZPOR – Ilegálna Spravodlivosť LP



Originally a CD-R released in 2002. This is political punk/Oi!/hardcore from Bratislava, Slovakia, budding with exactly what you'd want from a band that's been causing an aural commotion for over twenty years. I gotta admit that I have no idea what they are saying, so when I'm on a walk and singing along, I hope my echolalia is accurate enough that ROZPOR wouldn't be embarrassed that I'm a fan, and not so inaccurate that a passerby that who speaks Slovak doesn't think I'm singing something wildly off-base. I need to mention that within the weight of music and vocal tone, ROZPOR doesn't miss an opportunity to randomly sneak in surprises that subtly underscore their sense of humor and humility. I was completely consumed by this LP, and I think you might be, too.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Papagájův Hlasatel

SCARBORO – Hate Season LP

Hate Season starts off making you think that you're about to venture down a path of basic meat-and-potatoes punk and hardcore. However, by track three ("Sin Futuro"), you quickly realize this is something unique, a wave that is powerful, devastating, and disinfecting. The songs rocket through and blend perfectly, almost as if the entire record were a laid-out rock opera, or perhaps a Greek tragedy. Sharp, fast bursts are crafted around starts and stops, and out of nowhere, weird little instruments pop in and out so fast that you question whether you even heard them. As the fifteen songs carry on, they start to lose a bit of the unhinged quality and adopt a more direct and melodic hardcore and punk design, without giving up the vibrant and compelling parts that work to make *Hate Season* so terrific.

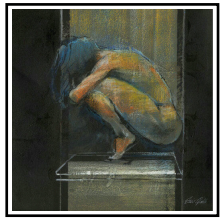
Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Sell the Heart / WTF

SCUD – Dirt cassette

Quirky punk with an unexpected biology motif, featuring songs about dirt, pesticides, snakes, worms, and more. This isn't some nerdy science shit, though—more like utilizing the thematic content to analogize existential dread in a fun and slightly disturbed way. The description may read as goofy, but the execution is sharp and captivating. The songs themselves are well-constructed jammers that remind me of the fantastic EPs of PRIMETIME crossed with NEGATIVE SCANNER. The lazy comparison is to fellow Aussies AMY AND THE SNIFFERS, though I find SCUD to have more depth and dimensionality, both lyrically and sonically. See the one-minute ripper "Pest" to substantiate this claim. They round out the release with a country song about the life of a weed slayer. I now need to check out their other releases, as this latest one sets the bar pretty dang high.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Noise Merchant

SEVEN CROWNS – Haunted Head LP



Holy cow, this rules. Stick with me here, because this doesn't make much sense on paper, but SEVEN CROWNS somehow combine the grooviness of Dio-led BLACK SABBATH, the energy of THURDAY/*Black Sails*-era AFI, and the absolute musical chaos of MR. BUNGLE, melded into one big ball of timeless, melodic hardcore porridge. The musicianship is great, but the vocalist stands out among the rest due to their versatility, range, and (please pardon the cliché) pure attitude. The moment the singer kicked into gear during their first track ("Haunted Head"), I came to attention and stopped everything else I was doing and just listened. A perfect way to interrupt your day—listen to it now! Make sure you check this out on Bandcamp, as there's a special bonus remix of their song "Side Effects" with an intro that sounds like it came straight from *Pure Moods Vol. 2!*

Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Negative Press / Pale Wizard

DAVE MASUD – Three Quarter Life Crisis CD

Three Quarter Life Crisis is a fine-to-good CD done entirely by DAVE MASUD. I see where DAVE is trying to go with this, but I feel like a full band, or at least calling in some pals to help develop the songwriting, might have made these songs stronger. There are ten fine songs that seem a bit uninspired. The lyrical topics fall across the board from basic life contemplation and how you fit in given that everything dies, to battling family dynamics and self-imposed cultural divisions. I have absolutely no doubt that DAVE MASUD has a lot to say and should be heard, but I do think he should grab a bunch of pals and front a band himself and maybe his songs would feel more organic.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Voted Best

DE STIJL – Sleeping Tigers / To Be Your King 7″ reissue

Years after the 1978 formation (and subsequent disbandment) of DEMOB, Terry Elcock had a short-lived project in 1985 by the name of DE STIJL, who released (I believe) this single 7". Now, over 40 years in the future, Dead Wax has kindly pressed a reissue. The A-side "Sleeping Tigers" starts off with a lonely guitar riff and a distant scream that sets the table for the coldwave/post-punk masterpiece that follows. The verses chug along, moody and melancholic, while the chorus opens up bright and bold with big sweeping chords and soaring vocals. The second half of the chorus trades that open sound for jittery hi-hat hits and a synth-led crescendo, only to drop us back in the rut of the verse. This formula feels familiar not only in post-punk and new wave, but in alternative and indie rock over the decades and especially into the early 2000s. "To Be Your King" may follow a similar formula, building and falling, and it may be B-side material compared to "Sleeping Tigers"—but that's a high bar. Still a very catchy track that leaves me wanting more. Speaking of which, this reissue comes on the heels of Dead Wax's compilation reissue of KISS THE BLADE, Elcock's project that followed DE STIJL, with the same haunting vocals, but a different instrumental lineup.

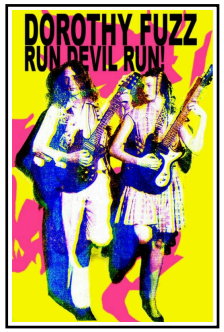
Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Dead Wax

DEAD FINKS – New Plastik Abyss cassette

Let's get this out of the way. "Anodyne" is the best song of the year so far, and I don't think it's particularly close. That track is the reason this review is like a month late; I simply could not get past it. The student loans of amazing post-punk. There is tension, there is release, there is a catchy-as-hell chorus and urgent guitars. With that being just the second track, it was almost impossible for the rest of the album to live up to what came before it. But that said, the rest of the album is indeed great. The energy and desperation in the vocal performances are consistently brilliant, the guitars continue to feel urgent, and the battle between tension and release rolls along from track to track. A behemoth of a record that may peak early, but I think you need the last seven tracks just to come down from the heights you reach early on anyway.

Reviewer: D. Gregory
Label: Bretford

DOROTHY FUZZ – Run Devil Run! cassette



Two-piece recording project from out in La La Land, Los Angeles, California. Across seven tracks, DOROTHY FUZZ delivers lo-fi garage punk with a heavy reliance on toy synthesizers. Does that make it synthwave? I'm skeptical, but I don't think I really care either way. What becomes impossible to ignore is the lack of rhythmic variation on this cassette. Every song uses the standard basic rock beat, programmed into a drum machine and left to run without a single fill, break, or change. In fact, the beat often keeps going even after the rest of the instruments have dropped out, continuing until someone finally switches the machine off. The most interesting moment comes with "Is That All There Is?," which trades the grunge-inspired barked singing for spoken word storytelling over that same unchanging beat and a simple bass groove. However, at more than six minutes in length, that novelty starts to wear thin. Oddly enough, the track "Running, Running" somehow feels even longer with how grating and repetitive it is. Two-and-a-half minutes has never felt so long. After all the questions posed on "Is That All There Is?" and once the tape had finished, I was left with a question of my own: is that all there is to making music? Is that really all there is to being a band?

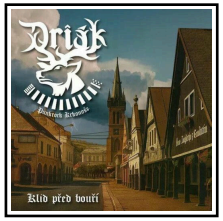
Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: XTRO

DOUBLE BUBBLE – DCxPC Live & Dead, Vol. 8: Redemption LP

I've been impressed with the quality of the live recordings in the DCxPC series, and this is no exception. This all-female four-piece is right up my alley. Mid-tempo and super catchy pop and punk music is kinda my thing. And no song over four minutes, though one does approach that. Five of the thirteen cuts are studio tracks, with some duplication with the live tracks. Nicely done. The last song, "Don't Talk to Me," is a standout for me.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: DCxPC

DRIÁK – Klid Před Bouří CD



Dang, duder! Czechia has been putting out some wonderful and interesting sing-along punk rock lately. These eight tunes sit solidly in the mid-tempo punk vein, lending the CD to a perfectly consistent fist-in-the-air, head-bobbing energy. The gruff vocals work very well, but it's the accordion that really elevates this entire album. From start to finish, *Klid Před Bouří* is a great listen. Go grab one, please.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Guns of Bystrec

DRYACID / THE SLADS – split EP

Alright! Here's a killer split that pairs up two bands that know what the fuck they're doing and don't muck about getting to the point. Split releases almost always beg comparison, but that's no issue with these two burgeoning titans of Oi! Both sides will surely leave deep boot prints on your ass. DRYACID may just be Japan's answer to the TEMPLARS, blasting out two tunes that feel like instant classics. Crack a cold one and flip the wax for two more cuts of rock'n'roll-tinged street anthems from the SLADS. Tuneful, with the perfect balance of grit and gravel, these earworms will burrow deep. Pure punk; a total package front to back and side to side.

Reviewer: Matt Casteel
Label: Mister Face / Oi! The Boat

ECLECTIC BLEND – Live at My Apartment cassette

A debut cassette release out of Rochester, NY. ECLECTIC BLEND is the side project of Jake Razor from LEAKING HEAD, with Jake sharing writing duties, playing guitar, and handling all vocals. Those who go back a little farther with that group of punks might also remember Jake as the vocalist of the criminally underrated western New York crossover band DEATH CAMP. A first release can really set the tone for what a band hopes to accomplish. With this debut being a live cassette, complete with fake crowd sounds between tracks, one might assume this is a novelty throwaway. Well, one would be wrong. The songwriting here is undeniable, with songs like "Anything But Human" sounding like a long-lost punk classic, now unearthed for the first time. To be this intrigued by a band based solely on a live cassette debut release seems a little crazy, but I am dying to hear the studio demo that has allegedly been in the works for years. In modern punk, there is a current trend of bands glomming onto the Oi! tagline and aesthetic, even when a band's music sounds nothing like classic bands of that genre. With vocals as gruff as Jake's, ECLECTIC BLEND could easily lean into that, but they don't. Jake and company simply make the kind of punk they want to make, without attaching an easy and trendy label to their band.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Good

EKIBYO – The Final Goodbye EP

Although "ekibyo" is the Japanese word for "pestilence," this band lives far from Osaka—Tampa, Florida, a place with significantly more shorts than crust pants. *The Final Goodbye* is the band's third (and hopelessly not final) recording, and they haven't changed in terms of influences, nodding lovingly to the distorted, crusty hardcore sound from Japan. This is a rather lo-fi affair, and I can appreciate that they don't try to go for the total blown-out crasher crust and are probably closer to a spontaneous and energetic blend of LEBENDEN TOTEN and UNARM, and I can't help thinking of ANTIPRODUCT, too (possibly because of the shouted vocals). At times, I don't totally understand what they are going for and it can get a little messy, but I certainly like the raw DIY spirit of the band (shoutout for the sloppy cut'n'paste cover that I absolutely love), and would grab the EP if I came across it.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: self-released

The band included the singer and guitar player of LINK, who were undeniably a reference in the genre in the late '00s up until the late '10s, and this newer take on the subgenre does objectively sound solid and ticks the boxes it is meant to—like a blend between early CULT OF LUNA, FALL OF EFRAFA, and some unstoppable Swedish band like WOLFBRIGADE or something. They certainly are honest and passionate, but it's not punk enough for me and just not my subjective cuppa.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Loner Cult / Phobia / Shove

PLOT – Food Chain LP

PLOT is a three-piece from Philadelphia that has been at this for a while now, and their new album leans into a dark, uneasy mood which should be familiar to fans of their previous releases. Jake Rhoda's keyboards sit right up front, and his vocals come drenched in reverb, often to the point where the words are hard to make out. On the peppier songs, the bass and drums do a lot of the work, pushing everything forward with a low, dirty churn. You can hear the music reflecting influences from industrial to post-punk to noise rock, and few tracks even edge toward dance punk, though they never fully cross over into something you'd call fun. I could see PLOT sharing a bill with USA NAILS or early POP. 1280. For me it works best on the noisier, rockier songs, and "The Convenience of Meat" is the high point, a dark, grinding standout. They also stretch out in places: "Infiltrator/Party World" is a slower, layered, six-minute drone that could be an ordeal for some, or a good track to zone out to during a study session. I found my attention wandering during a few of the less aggressive stretches, but when PLOT leans into the grit, it really connects.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Mpls Ltd

POISE – Iron Foot EP

Politically-minded hardcore punk with smoking hot riffs from the Pacific Northwest? What more could you ask for? POISE's second offering *Iron Foot* is thrillingly savage, mostly thanks to its maniac vocals and wildly over-the-top guitar work. Listing POISON IDEA, LOS CRUDOS, and ANNIHILATION TIME as main influences is a hefty order, but POISE pulls it off, with each of those bands' respective threads of DNA being heard here. Even with a brief nine-minute runtime, the band keeps it interesting by breaking up the tracks with a moody little instrumental halfway through, a small touch that goes a long way in elevating an EP from "good" to "fucking great." Check out "Snake Oil."

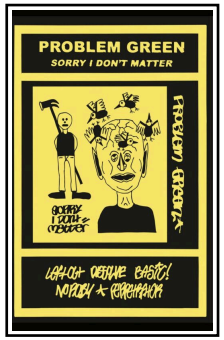
Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Discos Enfermos

PRIVATE HELL – To Dust You Shall Return EP

Big, chugging riffs abound on PRIVATE HELL's latest EP *To Dust You Shall Return*, a tasty four-track metallic hardcore/crossover EP. Bands like SEPULTURA and NAPALM DEATH are cited as influences, and while the depth of my knowledge in regard to this style is limited and a little basic, I think it's fair to say they sound like POWER TRIP. Some blastbeats here, some great, groovy bass lines there, and loads of buzzsaw guitar work add up to a heavy eleven minutes. Recommended; check out the final track, "Charred Remains of a Dying Star."

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: self-released

PROBLEM GREEN – Sorry I Don't Matter cassette



This is an interesting one. The music is sort of poppy punk and the female vocals are soft-ish and kind of pretty, but the lyrics are intense and focused on isolation and not belonging. Here and there, you get teased with the Australian accent. Sometimes mid-tempo and sometimes slowed down a bit, it's always catchy. I like it when punk gets back to its roots of anger.

Reviewer: Kenny Kaos
Label: Knuckles on Stun

RESTRAINING ORDER – First Four Years Odds & Sods LP

A ripping collection of demos, compilation tracks, outtakes, and covers that captures RESTRAINING ORDER perfectly. Punishing, hook-heavy hardcore with equal parts youth crew and early Boston rage. Every track is stripped to the essentials of hardcore: sharp riffage, stomping breakdowns, and sing-along choruses without a wasted second. Fans of bands with classic '80s hardcore DNA like VIOLENT REACTION and CAREER SUICIDE will appreciate this honest offering. This collection catches the West Springfield crew at their rawest and most explosive. Old school hardcore without simply reproducing it.

years, have the sort of honesty and immediacy that comes from shared intuition and trust, where any technical "limitations" are an asset rather than a hindrance—the fewer walls that are put up, the more freedom there is. Kim Kincaid's matter-of-fact vocals are the perfect vehicle for lyrics at the intersection of personal, political, and poetic ("Results are clear in front of my feet / I can make a decision / Make a conclusion"), backed by the revved-up jangle of Jennifer LoBianco's guitar, Pat Baum's steadily crashing beats, and KT Kincaid's sneaky, melodic bass lines positioned as the beating heart at the center of it all. By *Crumbling Myths*, the NEO BOYS sound was more refined and of a piece with femme-centered post-punk of the era while remaining singularly their own, from new guitarist Meg Hentges's pointillist lines in the haunting, all-timer "Time Keeps Time" to the sparse and contemplative art-punk gallop of "Cheap Labor." What an unassailable epitaph for a band that started out as teenage amateurs; one can only imagine where things might have led had they continued on into the mid-'80s. Essential history, and a roadmap for future dreamers.

Reviewer: Erika Elizabeth
Label: Mississippi

NIGHTFREAK – Midwest Rattlesnakes 12″

A good kick in the ass here out of Chicago, courtesy of the gnarly, screaming rock'n'roll racket of NIGHTFREAK. Cloaked in black leather, bullet belts, and bandanas, these guys serve up a style of hessian hardcore that reeks of early HOOKERS and impending hangovers. Fast and heavy with spidery guitar leads and serrated edges, this 12" gives you six nasty cuts that leave you wanting more.

Reviewer: Jason Harding
Label: Big Neck

ODOR EATER – But For Who? LP

Olympia/Portland-based ODOR EATER released their first long-format album last month. The eleven-song *But For Who?* LP is a synth-driven voyage that brings elements of classic new wave to support lyrics that poetically criticize our current authoritarian world. Using the time-tested artistic method of disarming oppressive forces through abstract whimsy, ODOR EATER has created an album that is as much fun and sweetness as it is aggressive denunciation. While it's easy to pick out DEVO, the B-52'S, the MOTELS, DEPECHE MODE, and the like in ODOR EATER's sound, I'm more frequently reminded of 2005's *Stop the Future* by the EPOXIES. Either way, ODOR EATER creates synth punk that is easily digestible and endlessly danceable.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Feel It

OMTZIGT KOMMANDO – KGB EP

"There must be something in the water" is a pretty tired cliche, but whatever, I'm going to use it here. What is in the water in Haarlem? The hardcore scene there is really coming up, as evidenced by ripping slabs from the likes of TRAUMATIZER and INSIDE JOB coming across my review pile in the past few weeks. Next up is OMTZIGT KOMMANDO, a total unit of a band influenced by equal parts '10s USHC and '80s Swedish hardcore (as evidenced by the gnarly SHITLICKERS cover at the end of this EP). I was expecting some Oi! based on the cover, but this ain't that. Fast and reckless with burly vocals mixed right in the middle of the chaos, this shit slaps. Highly recommended, and further evidence that you should be keeping an eye on the Haarlem punk scene.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: 11 PM

ONE REASON TO RISE – Lost & Found CD

Calling Bogota, Colombia their home, ONE REASON TO RISE combines early the '90s Fat Wreck sound with melody and a relentless guitar-and-drums aural assault. *Lost & Found* delivers personal lyrics while maintaining a sense of humor and humility. There are enough slower songs and hints of hardcore, ska, and rock riffs to make this a fully-realized, fist-in-the-air punk rock album.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Punk Rock Radar / Soundspeed

PLAGUE THIRTEEN – Eroded 12″

I have regularly seen the name PLAGUE THIRTEEN on gig posters in Europe, and hailing from Belgium (or Hellgium as proper punks call it), they are fairly local to me, but I have never been arsed to actually checking them out. It seems like laziness is just like DISCHARGE's final bloodbath: just around the corner. I am not going to beat around the bush, and unfortunately, I did not enjoy this LP. It is described as a cross between TRAGEDY and NEUROSIS, which is really ambitious indeed, but PLAGUE THIRTEEN is more at home with '00s so-called neocrust and all the bands that have been trying to infuse dark Scandicrust with even darker. heavy post-hardcore and guitar melodies.

END STATE – Blessing in Disguise flexi EP

This is a hard-hitting hardcore record. If the band END STATE was a wrestler, they would belong to the brawling category like Fit Finlay, Jon Moxley, or indeed the infamous Brooklyn Brawler—a rather fitting comparison since they are from New York City, clearly "the place to be" these days. END STATE can be said to be of their time, by which I mean that they blend several schools of hardcore with a raw punk mixer. In the present case, the main ingredients are beefy New York hardcore and cavemen käng hardcore, although I would bet that they grew up with the former rather than the latter. I don't know or care much for American hardcore, to be quite honest, so some breakdowns and the second song "Nosedive" are totally lost on me. However, when END STATE gets to work on the primitive D-takt sound of SVART PARAD, AGONI, and also even HIATUS or SAUNA at times, they do get the fist pumping. The vocalist does a remarkable job at sounding gruff as hell and he reminds me of DOOM and early crust bands, although it might not be intentional (perhaps more NYHC-influenced?). Only four songs and about five minutes of music on this single-sided flexi, so it does a good job at bollocking the listener anyway, and it is a solid first record.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: R.I.P. Peace / Total Peace

FABRIK DER FREUNDSCHAFT – Wow! What a Show! cassette

Hectic, raw, and straightforward hardcore punk from Nuremberg. It makes you want to smash a bottle over your own head and stab some guy at a musty dive bar. Not much else you need to know. Just hit play and stay away from those bottles, you punk.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: self-released

FALSE FRONT – Valley Stomp EP

Seven minutes of pure floor-stomping hardcore. McAllen, Texas's FALSE FRONT play stripped-down skinhead hardcore with one boot planted on WARZONE, NEGATIVE APPROACH, and the TEMPLARS, and another boot on newer bands like LIBERTY & JUSTICE (with whom they collaborate on track three), with additional blastbeats à la early AGNOSTIC FRONT and DEAD KENNEDYS surf riffs here and there. Each breakdown catches you off guard, as FALSE FRONT manages to make things groovier and more aggressive with each twist and turn. Lyrically, it's all about protecting hardcore from tourists, poseurs, and fake scene politics, and these boot boys ain't playing around, so they just might revoke your hardcore card.

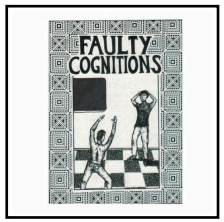
Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: All Viceroys United

FAUCHEUSE – Comme Un Poignard LP

FAUCHEUSE out of Bordeaux, France plays killer street punk, and on their latest release *Comme Un Poignard*, they rip through ten tracks without mercy. Wild guitar leads and full-tilt rhythms create the instrumental environment for howling French vocals. Rock'n'roll, D-beat, and classic French punk sounds collide in perfectly controlled chaos, indicating the adept musicianship FAUCHEUSE draws upon. If you like high-octane punk rock that packs each track with complexities, then you've got to check out FAUCHEUSE.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Black Water / Foundation / Symphony of Destruction

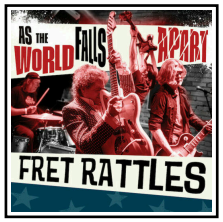
FAULTY COGNITIONS – Demo 12″



Although they're from San Antonio TX, FAULTY COGNITIONS have a '90s(-ish) NorCal pop punk sound and a today(-ish) SoCal pop punk sound blended together—I guess into a Central Texas pop punk sound. Look, I dunno. At its core, this re-released demo tape, now on vinyl, has some memorable, humble, simple, "best pals hanging out in a basement" pop-punk-influenced songs. Undeniably catchy while both silly and heartfelt. And my golly if the final track, "Let the Kids Have the Scene," doesn't just hit me between the eyes. This 12" has sensation laced throughout the lyrics, quilting a perfect feeling that isn't sorrowful or cathartic; maybe wisdom is the word I'm looking for. I could also be full of shit and it's just a good record. You be the judge.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Dirt Cult / Fail Harmonic

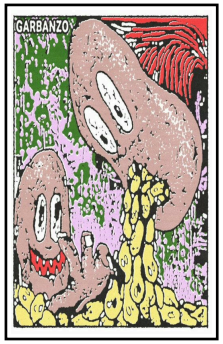
FRET RATTLES – As the World Falls Apart LP



Minneapolis sons FRET RATTLES' third full-length runs thirteen songs in thirty-six minutes of the loud, fists-up action rock revival style that was pretty exciting a couple decades ago, and it's played with total commitment and zero risk. The music they're inspired by (MC5, STOOGES, HELLACOPTERS) was made by people who were a bit of a public safety problem. This album kind of sounds like the average of everything recorded in their wake. It includes gassed-up runs at the DEAD BOYS' "What Love Is" and the BOYS' "Living in the City," the former featuring the late Rob Tossava, a fixture of the Minneapolis scene, on guitar. In a bar, this would be a great time. On record, it's a toe-tapper that might not fully capture your attention. LP is on 180g black or colored vinyl.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Fret Rattles RnR / Ghost Highway

GARBANZO – Garbanzo cassette



After a handful of cassette EPs and a split tape, GARBANZO delivers their first full-length recording. Fifteen tracks of drum-machine-driven, dingy, garage-y egg-punk from Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. A solo recording project that has been turning some heads for a few years now, GARBANZO has always left the listener wanting more. Now we have fourteen original tracks as well as a GEE TEE cover to digest in a single sitting. If you like warbly guitars playing repetitive, flanged-out riffs with snotty, juvenile lyrics lackadaisically droned on top, then you're going to love this. I know I do.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: Knuckles on Stun

GIRTH CONTROL – What Got You Stoked in the First Place 10″

I had no idea what to expect from a band calling themselves GIRTH CONTROL, with sleeve art of an over-served radical octopus, and songs like "Girthquake" and "Alright Mom." To be honest, I had given up on ska punk for the last thirty or so years, until two friends added weight to what I thought was a dead sound. The first was a woman named Sally who lives in Kalamazoo MI. After she explained very plainly and unapologetically the nuances and positive psychological effects that ska punk can have on a person living in the gray, cloudy, Midwest, I was open to giving it another shot. The second was when Aaron P, one of my favorite drummers I've had the pleasure of playing with, told me that he'd been doubling his duties in TWO MAN ADVANTAGE and a new ska band he'd been playing with. I mean, if Aaron and Sally are giving it a shot, then who am I to pick something up and put it down in front of progress? I mean ska-gress. However, with no expectations, *What Got You Stoked in the First Place* has somehow landed exactly where it has to be, where there is no other place it could be. GIRTH CONTROL is exactly the right part of the fun, partying, honest good time, sip-swiggin' ska punk band they need to be. I love the group vocals, mirroring all the best Rad Girlfriend bands, and the choruses have tunneled into mine brains to now live forever. I think it is important that the one thing that Sally, Aaron, and GIRTH CONTROL proved to me is that although ska punk songs can sound happy, silly, bouncy and so on, they can be much more than that with a reflective sadness, community, and authenticity blended in. Pick this 10" up and put it down on your turntable.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Fail Harmonic

GUDON – Devil of Mediocrity EP

Hiroshima's legendary GUDON played a major role in the storied history of Japanese hardcore punk, bridging the gap between early '80s bands like the COMES and the EXECUTE and later acts like BASTARD and JUDGEMENT (both of whom are projects of former GUDON guitarist Zigyaku) with their fast and thrashy sound. After originally splitting in 1990, the band reformed in 2023 with a new lineup but the same intense style, laying down a new EP, *Devil of Mediocrity*, one year later. Featuring two new tracks and two re-recorded classics, GUDON hasn't missed a beat and sounds as tight as ever, completely retaining the speed and ferocity of their older material. Non-stop blazing guitars and a breakneck rhythm section speed along as former bassist Guy fully delivers on vocal duties. A crucial and impressive slab from this legendary group.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: SPHC

vocal delivery that is truly rage-fueled, MEM//BRANE lays out eight songs which crescendo with crusty, metallic breakdowns and rabid social criticism. Personally, this album is quickly gaining a status in my collection that finds itself alongside NUX VOMICA's *Embrace the Cycles* EP, UNARMED's *World of Shit*, and AGE OF COLLAPSE's *Burden of Beast* LP. In other words, it's gnarly as fuck in all the best ways.

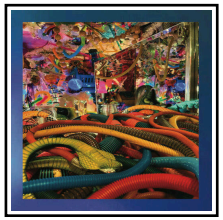
Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Phobia

MERIENDA – 1243 cassette

After practicing just a handful of times over the course of the spring of 2024, three Berliners got together for a single loose recording session. The result is this four-song cassette of shouty but melodic Spanish-language punk. Three of the four tracks are mid-tempo numbers that remind me of late '70s/early '80s West Coast punk—maybe something in between the AVENGERS and RIKK AGNEW—and the other is more of a monophonic dirge. You can tell these folks are having a good time, and the tunes' tossed-off nature makes for a compelling listen. Probably not essential, but still worth your while.

Reviewer: Alex Howell
Label: self-released

MISCOMINGS / SEA MOSS – Big Tube Scene split CD



Portland, Oregon duo SEA MOSS starts this split off with pure sorcery of gnarly synths and electronics layered on top of masterful drumming that conjures rhythmic seizures. Even though it's stripped down in its instrumentation, it's by no means a type of music you could call minimalistic. It's very "extra" in every way that actually counts, and scratches a part of my brain that not much else can reach—that explains why I fell in love with this split in the first ten seconds. And when we switch over to the MISCOMINGS side, we are greeted with more of a conventional band setup of guitars, drums, bass and vocals... but of course, the music is anything but conventional. It's extremely chaotic, unbelievably fun, and reminiscent of some of my all-time favorite bands PRE and LOCUST. From eerie and deranged melodic parts to noisy, grinding sections, MISCOMINGS deliver all that you could ever need from a noise rock band. I know I wouldn't be able to do it justice if I were to dissect their sound further, so I'll just say that it's some of the best music I've heard in a while. On top of both bands giving this split their absolute best individually, the two amazing and aptly-titled collaborative tracks, "Seacomings" and "MissMoss," perfectly summarize the whole split. Even though SEA MOSS and MISCOMINGS don't sound that much alike, they're spiritually the best pair possible and the chemistry between them is priceless. All in all, *Big Tube Scene* is undoubtedly a ten out of ten in my book, and I'm ready to die on this hill.

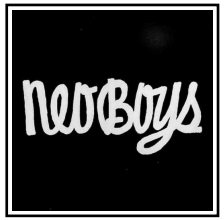
Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Zum Audio

MORDE – Morde 12″

Damn, this is an epic one, or rather an epic ride through time, back to the '00s when skinny black jeans were a compulsory item to get into gigs. MORDE is a new band from Czechia formed by members of BAESTIEN, a rather well-respected neo-crusty post-hardcore act. However, where BAESTIEN relied on atmospheric parts to create their soundscapes, MORDE gets straight to the point with a heavy Scandi D-beat crust basis without giving up on the epic, and sometimes overwhelming, melodic leads. So yeah, basically metallic neo-crust. Fans of ACURSED, the DAGDA, EKKAIA, or early FALL OF EFRAFA will rejoice, and so will lovers of early WOLFBRIGADE. There is no doubt that it is a well-executed effort with a dark and heavy sound and a Swedish-styled production (were it not for the Czech language, I would have thought that they were from Scandinavia), but I can't really get into this one, as I usually don't open the boxes MORDE are bent on ticking on this first LP. Just too much of an '00s vibe, I guess?

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Phobia

NEO BOYS – Neo Boys LP



As far as I'm concerned, NEO BOYS are the single most important band in the history of Portland punk—shirts bearing their name should honestly be just as ubiquitous (if not more so!) as those of the WIPERS or DEAD MOON or POISON IDEA. Until nature has fully healed in that regard, this lovingly remastered collection of the band's two proper releases (a three-song 1980 EP and 1982's *Crumbling Myths* 12") pays some major respects, complete with a massive, LP-sized booklet that presents an oral history with the band and some incredible reproductions of flyers and photos from the archives. Stated comparisons to the RAINCOATS and KLEENEX aren't inaccurate, representing just a few of the links in a much longer psychic chain connecting women in disparate corners of the world, many of whom were self-taught and learning as they went along, who carved out similar spaces for themselves in punk (and soon post-punk) in the late '70s and early '80s, from SPORTEN ÄR DÖD in Gothenburg to the DISHRAGS in Vancouver, from the NIXE in Utrecht to CHALK CIRCLE in Washington, DC. The tracks from NEO BOYS' debut EP, released after the band had already been playing together for two

World" pegged as my favorite, a one-minute bop that gets in and gets out. Then the bass that opens "So Shut Down" came out of nowhere and took the tape over. Then I braced for the five-minute double song, "The New One"/"Low Lesson," to lose me, and it ended up being the first thing I had to play again. This is good shit, and proceeds go to a Eugene youth advocacy charity. More, please.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Strange Mono

LONGFRIEND TIMEFRIEND – If Me Dies, Me Dies LP

Melody-driven, jangle-conscious punk songs budding and popping to life all over this South Philly band's *If Me Dies, Me Dies* LP. LONGFRIEND TIMEFRIEND fits in perfectly with JEFF ROSENSTOCK, NANA GRIZOL, RADIATOR HOSPITAL, and such. There are several songs on this record that people should hear if only because dealing with parents and bullies that extend into adulthood is a real and valid thing that all too often seems to get shuttered away as obstacles only faced in adolescence. Somewhere since the emo explosion of the '90s, vague dream journal lyrics became hyper-specific points in time that are identifiable while congruently unknown, eliciting more of an empathy for the moment contrary to appreciating the prose; does that even make sense? Moving on, these seem like songs that would be hard to sing along with live, but I bet it happens due to the raw undercurrent that lets this flow effortlessly from one song to the next. Look, you already know if you're gonna grab this. Look, also, I have to be honest, I don't know if this is good or not good, but it feels authentic, thoughtful, and reformative. Now you try.

Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: Fail Harmonic

LOS MENTIROSOS – Grandes Éxitos Vol. 1 LP

Fun, bluesy Spanish-language punk. The holy quadrant of the unadulterated summer jam, pure party punk at its finest. What else can I say about this record? It's a good time! This slab was released only about a month ago and they're already sold out of their vinyl copies. This band rules; throw this into your late summer playlist and watch the sun sink into the horizon.

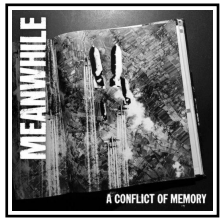
Reviewer: Jake Joyce
Label: Discos Cara Dura

MAGIC OF THE MARKETPLACE – The Spectators are Leaving CD

This has to be the worst album cover I have seen all year. My god, what were they thinking? It truly baffled me when I started the record, and I was greeted with some throaty gravel vocals and melodic pop punk. "When the Story Ends" sounds like a more safe and polished LARS FREDERIKSEN AND THE BASTARDS B-side. You could also make comparisons to LEATHERFACE or even OFF WITH THEIR HEADS, although they don't quite have the songwriting chops of the latter. If you're a fan of any of those bands, you will feel right at home with this. I kind of hate it, but can't deny there's a fanbase out there aching for this kind of shit.

Reviewer: Sir Bobos
Label: Engineer / Just Say No To Government Music

MEANWHILE – A Conflict of Memory EP



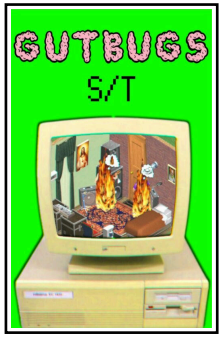
A Conflict of Memory is proof that D-beat doesn't need to be reinvented. After eighteen long years, MEANWHILE rips into classic D-takt with enough power to remind you why the style refuses to die. Four tracks of DISCHARGE-worship done right: chainsaw distortion, killer D-beats, and bleak melodies that owe as much to the masters of dD-beat as they do to the band's own decades-long legacy. The black-and-white cover is stark and symbolic, with its fractured imagery echoing the title's meditation on memory, conflict, and historical amnesia. Uncompromising hardcore delivered by lifers who still sound like they're playing because the world keeps giving them reasons to. If it ain't broke, don't fix it!

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Kick Rock

MEM//BRANE – Mem//brane LP

Having an affinity for metal in my formative years and then entering punk through CRUCIFIX and AUS-ROTTEN really set me up to be a stenchcore enjoyer, and MEM//BRANE never disappoints. This LP has already been surpassed by fresh material from the band, but as this particular full-length is only a little over six months old, it means two things. First, MEM//BRANE churns out crust punk epics, and second, I've had time to thoroughly digest the album. Harnessing a monolithic wall of instrumentation that includes ample, downtuned, pentatonic riffing, burly drum smashing, and dirty bass rumble to back a deep, full

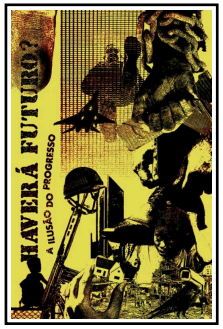
GUTBUGS – S/T cassette



Four-song debut cassette from this kooky egg-punk project out of Toulouse, France. The tracks are surprisingly long given the usual frantic, short attention span nature of the genre GUTBUGS has chosen, with each song averaging almost three-and-a-half minutes. Quirky, spastic, sound-effect-heavy songs all with driving drum machine beats, short halted barked vocals, and more warbles than a broken Speak & Spell. I make a point to only write reviews from listening to physical cassettes, which feels important to me. You get to experience the release as it was meant to be, analyzing the cover art, inspecting the lyrics when included (none here), and taking in the release as a complete package. With GUTBUGS, however, I had to review the songs through their Bandcamp page because the tape I received is completely blank on both sides. Limited to 25 copies; I have no idea how many of them actually contain the recording.

Reviewer: Biff Bifaro
Label: XTRO

HAVERÁ FUTURO? – A Ilusão Do Progresso cassette



Relentless TOTALITÄR-worship from the minds that brought you DISHUMAN and SISTEMA OBSOLETO, HAVERÁ FUTURO?'s debut cassette is a total crusher that takes beefy Swedish käng and infuses it with Brazilian hardcore aesthetics without getting too flashy (ANTI-CIMEX said it best: "just evil, plain DISCHARGE-type hardcore, just the way it was meant to be"). Muscular guitars and raging drums accompany vocalist Marina Castro's vicious delivery, with lyrical content informed by the current political climate and personal experiences of the band members themselves. Excellent stuff and highly recommended; for fans of NISEMONO and DELETÄR.

Reviewer: Eric Anderson
Label: Educacion Cinica / Roachleg

HIATUS – Realm of Nightmares 12″

Damn, this is a difficult one to review. I have loved HIATUS since I first heard them in the early '00s (a time when they were inactive), and as a result, looking at this new album objectively and critically is no easy task, a bit like when an old mate asks if you like his new haircut. Tricky, indeed. This is also the first HIATUS record without Wills who sadly passed away in 2024, so it cannot have been easy for the band to keep going and writing new songs without their charismatic singer. I have to confess that I could not get into their 2023 LP *Out of Hand*, which I felt a little bad, if not guilty, about, and when I got assigned their new record for review, I felt almost nervous. Well, I think it really holds its own. The sound is powerful, the songs are solid, and it definitely packs a good crusty punch. If you were to draw comparisons with the band's older body of work, *Realm of Nightmare* would sit well between *El Sueño* and *The Brain* (basically, the mid-'90s). You will get some all-out crustcore attacks, but also mid-paced, heavy hardcore punk numbers with the trademark HIATUS style: inventive, thrashing riffs and clever songwriting to hook the listener without giving up on the intensity and the energy. I mean, the band basically invented Eurocrust, so they know what they are doing (and drinking). I can hear hints of CELTIC FROST in the vocals, now handled by guitar player Azill and bass player Paskk. The one criticism that I have is that the album is quite short and I would have enjoyed two or three more songs, but one cannot have everything. By the way, if HIATUS ever plays in your town, do yourself a favour and go—they are one of the best live bands I have ever seen.

Reviewer: Romain Basset
Label: Agipunk / Archaic

IGNORANTES – No Hemos Inventado Nada Ni Nos Interesa Hacerlo 12″

IGNORANTES aren't here to reinvent punk, but they are here to prove nobody ever needed to. Primitive pogo violence stripped down to the bone, with the kind of frantic, catchy chaos that links early UK punk, South American street punk, and Japanese noise-worship. Like the title states, no innovation, no progress, no evolution. Every song is loaded with nihilistic contempt, with that irresistible *tupa-tupa* rhythm that turns any gig to a pogo fest. They channel the spirit of CHAOS UK, DISORDER, and GAI, plus the classic Chilean punk attack of ANARKIA, with a killer BBS PARANOICOS cover for good measure. The problems stay the same, the system changes its clothes, and punk keeps crawling back from the grave to spit in its face.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: General Speech

ILE DE GARDE – Rage Blossom 12″

Taking their name from the Benedictine abbess and polymath Hildegard of Bingen, ILE DE GARDE presents their debut 12", *Rage Blossom*. Consisting of three women on keys, drums, and vocals, this trio performs driving, melodic, and dark synthwave-adjacent songs. Evident in the album title, elements of anger and bitterness inform these six tracks, with lyrics like "Heard you said I'm such a slut / I don't think I give a fuck" from "Birthday Girl." From the album artwork to the shadowy synth lines to the lyrical tension, the whole thing feels like it's cloaked in Hildegard's medieval mysticism—perhaps not in practice, but in symbolism. Calling this "spooky" is too cheap, and doesn't do it justice. It's angry and urgent and evocative and it might just make your night.

Reviewer: Willis Schenk
Label: Born Bad

IT'S A SETUP – Bleeding Out at Recess EP

Spokane, Washington's IT'S A SETUP played their first show in 2024, which makes the confidence on this EP genuinely impressive. Eight chaotic hardcore songs in ten minutes, screamo vocals pitched high enough to read as almost androgynous, and a low end heavy enough that the speed never comes at the expense of the weight. They've got both, and they swing between the two with the kind of powerviolence tempo shifts that keep you off balance. You can hear a little IN/HUMANITY in the DNA, that same fast and furious streak, but IT'S A SETUP keeps things blunt and right in your face. It's not the heaviest record ever made, or the fastest, or the screamiest, but it sits in a really good spot that's fucking infectious, and the production is dialed in exactly right for these songs. The politics are just as sharp: fuck the NRA, fuck the arms trade, fuck religion in government, fuck the tough-guy posturing, fuck the elites, and fuck the borders that trick people into forgetting we're all the same tribe. These kids have their heads screwed on straight, and it gives me some hope for the future.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Two Two One Press

JAZZ – ...Der Irrtum Hat Mal Wieder Gewonn! LP

I'll hold your hand while I'm telling you this, but this JAZZ record? Well, it ain't no jazz record. Bummer? No. Not really. It's still an amazing record. The energy is unmatchable, and there is so much fun to be had in all of the thirteen post-post-punk bangers it offers. Expressive vocals, earworm bass lines, sharp guitars, clever drums, and creative synth parts just add up to something so unique, refreshing, and weird in a very endearing way. I absolutely adore everything about this record.

Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Turbo

JEFFY & THE SUNKEN HEADS – Get Sunk! LP

I don't pretend to know anything about the spirit world or what comes after we leave this mortal plane. However, the song "Ham Ghost" has me terrified. Some time ago, BORIS THE SPRINKLER, the LIZARDS, the VINDICTIVES, and SUPERNOVA gathered at the brown rim of the Mighty Mississippi River and poked their eggs into the murk where, some years later, crawling from those historic river banks, came JEFFY & THE SUNKEN HEADS. Twenty-five well-crafted songs spanning topics such as outer space, horrible fonts, and times when marijuana was scarce in 1986. Jeffy, Gerry, Rex, and McBob aren't afraid to confront their demons and the troubling parts of friendship, as evidenced in the song "McBob is a Left Lane Cruiser." These songs were thought about, thoroughly researched for accuracy with pen to paper, practiced, and distilled down, and range in length from twelve seconds to two minutes, thirty seconds. JEFFY & THE SUNKEN HEADS fascinate and frighten me with their sci-fi tune "Barf Cars From Mars," but bring it back home and calm my nerves with "Breastfeeder." I know you think that JEFFY & THE SUNKEN HEADS are a one-trick pony, but I can assure you that these ponies have a lot of tricks. Look, if you aren't sold on the music or similarities they have with the above-mentioned bands, then you should feel comforted in their promise that they "won't fart on you." I mean, sometimes that's all you need to start a new friendship.

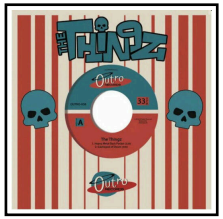
Reviewer: Tony Party
Label: JeffyCo

KINETIC ORBITAL STRIKE – The Terrifying Power of Bombardment LP

If DISCHARGE taught the world how to turn the guitar into an air-raid siren, Philadelphia's KINETIC ORBITAL STRIKE has figured out how to make a whole recording sound like a city after the bombs have landed. Across thirteen tracks, the band delivers a barrage of fuzzed-out riffs, relentless D-beats, and scorched-earth vocals that channel the spirit of DOOM and DISCLOSE without sounding like a tribute act. The production is dense and suffocating, giving every song the weight of a collapsing building. Highlights such as "Nuclear Confrontation," "Ceaseless Genocide," and "Essential Aid Denied" prove there's more here than sheer aggression. Beneath the distortion are memorable riffs, smart pacing, and enough dynamic shifts to keep the bombardment of sound from becoming monotonous. *The Terrifying Power of Bombardment* is the kind of record that demands repeat listens, and feels destined to appear on plenty of 2026 year-end punk lists.

Reviewer: João Seixas
Label: Phobia

KING FLAMINGO / THE THINGZ – split EP



The THINGZ from Long Beach take the A-side with "Heavy Metal Back Pocket," a lo-fi stomp run almost entirely on organ and bass, and the lyrics really capture a moment in four lines: "AC/DC concert shirt / Sit cross-legged in the dirt / You are mine eternally / Outside of society." That's the sound of being a kid next to your crush, and I was really touched by it. "Gastropod of Doom" follows as the theme song to a slug invasion, with vocals that reminded me of the B-52'S. KING FLAMINGO, a California duo who describe their music as "astro surf" or "goo wop," take a more laid-back approach on the flipide: "Astro-Blast-Off/Re-Entry" lays spoken vocals and organ over twangy reverb, and "Moonbeam Beach" drops the tension for something prettier, a half-sung memory of a night on the sand. They're going for atmosphere, where the THINGZ are going for a house party. It's a good pairing, though I kept flipping back to the THINGZ side.

Reviewer: Jeff Cost
Label: Outro

LES FEÜÍLLES MÖRTES – Las Ruinas de Bizancio LP

Spain's LES FEÜÍLLES MÖRTES deliver some darkwave and post-punk-infused electro-punk that gets your body moving. With its mood swings between gloomy to energetic, it's not hard to find something you like. I personally wasn't really moved by it, but I'm sure more devoted fans of the genre would appreciate it more than I did.

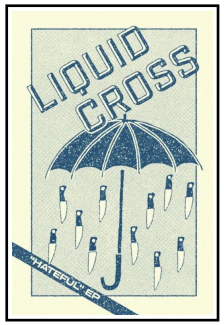
Reviewer: Mama Goblin
Label: Andalucia Über Alles / Chivani / Discos Binarios / Entes Atómicos / L'Esklafit / Producciones Tudancas / Rebel Yell / Street Rats / Suburban Relapse

LIFE'S TORMENT / MERKED – Regurgitated Misinformation / Life Wants You Dead split EP

LIFE'S TORMENT is out of Las Vegas, and their dual-vocal delivery reminds me of CIRCLE TAKES THE SQUARE, but way more punk (is that possible?). MERKED out of San Jose is a three-piece that plays hardcore that drifts from what sounds like COMBAT WOUNDED VETERAN to beatdown to youth crew in a single volley. If this split had arrived in the early '00s, there's no doubt in my mind this would have been a top listen. Yeah, it's a chaotic trip, and yes it's noisy, it's these qualities that make it fun.

Reviewer: Seth McBurney
Label: Alder / Goat Power Recreation / Here And Now / Hey Fuck You / Jib / Nagai Industries / Nothing But a Nightmare / Panic Inc. / Phage / Rotten to the Core

LIQUID CROSS – Hateful cassette



Eugene, OR trio LIQUID CROSS follows 2025's *Don't Think* with their new tape *Hateful*—four songs plus one hidden track, and there is no open space anywhere. Reverb fills every gap, nothing in the mix sits closer to you than anything else, and somehow it never turns to mud. It's thick but it never drags, and the pop bones stay legible throughout. The WIPERS are a frequently cited influence, but my brain went to the '80s by another route: the cavernous murk of ECHO & THE BUNNYMEN's *Heaven Up Here* crossed with the everything-at-once mix of HÜSKER DÜ's *New Day Rising*. I had "This